

# **NORDIC INCIDENTAL MUSIC: BETWEEN MODERNITY AND MODERNISM**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis argues for the centrality of incidental music in early twentieth-century music history, based on a study of Swedish and Finnish theatre music between 1908 and 1926. The central claims made are firstly, that incidental music is an integral part of music history in this period, supporting a narrative about modernity that does not focus exclusively on “high art” concert music. Second, the Nordic countries were part of a cross-continental discourse concerning modernity that did not revolve solely around, or stem from, central European capital cities such as Vienna or Paris. Third, dramatic literature was fundamental to the development of twentieth-century music in Sweden and Finland.

Through an examination of productions with music by Jean Sibelius (*Svanevit*, 1908, and *Scaramouche*, 1924), Wilhelm Stenhammar (*As You Like It*, 1920), and Ture Rangström (*Till Damaskus III*, 1926), the thesis demonstrates that the early 1900s in these countries were characterised by stylistic plurality. For the first two decades of the 1900s, when Sibelius composed the majority of his works, multiple modes of expression were referred to as ‘modern’ with no clear hierarchy between them. By the 1920s, however, ‘modernism’ was emerging as a term consistently used to refer to atonality and concurrent theatrical styles dominant in central Europe. Rather than adopt these stylistic languages, Stenhammar and Rangström used ‘modernism’ as a category to define themselves *against*, presenting themselves as *modern* but not *modernist* composers.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all images are courtesy of the Musik- och Teaterbibliotek, Stockholm

## TRANSLATION AND TERMINOLOGY

A substantial portion of the source material presented in this thesis uses Swedish that predates the orthography reform of 1906. Where older spelling is used, I have retained the author's original (e.g. *hvarje* instead of *varje*, and *lefva* instead of *leva*). Unless otherwise stated, if the original text is provided in the footnotes the translation is my own.

There are several terms which have no direct equivalent in English, the most problematic of which is *smälta*, which Per Lindberg uses to describe his creative process. *Smälta* has multiple meanings, translating as 'melt' and 'liquefy', as well as 'coalesce' and 'fuse' but without the mechanical connotations of 'weld'. Lindberg uses the term in a manner that plays on its various meanings, evoking a combination of its connotations. In the context of the passages quoted here, I have opted for the term 'melting', but it should be borne in mind that the word implies a process of fusion through this change of physical state.

Swedish has the definite article at the end of the word (*-en* and *-et*). Where this is integrated as part of a newspaper's title, for example *Svenska Dagbladet*, I have not included a definite article in English.

I have used the original spellings of work titles and provided an English translation the first time they appear unless the text is better known by an English title, in which case I have used that throughout.

## THE STAGE IS SET

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Even if my spiritual flesh is stronger than the corporeal, I cannot go without food forever. I believe that I got a taste at the evenings at the Intimate Theatre — I got a glimpse of how food tastes, but I could not eat my fill.<sup>2</sup>

For the Swedish composer Wilhelm Stenhammar, drama provided him with abundant artistic stimulation and creative fulfilment. He wrote the letter quoted above in 1909, complaining about Gothenburg's lack of artistic life. But he did not compare musical ventures in Gothenburg and Stockholm. Instead, he held up productions at the capital city's Intimate Theatre as the pinnacle of artistic achievement, providing the 'spiritual food' that he so desperately craved.

Stenhammar was not alone in his interest in drama. As one of the most popular middle-class art forms, theatre dominated cultural life in Nordic cities throughout the late nineteenth- and early twentieth centuries. From Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879) to August Strindberg's *Miss Julie* (1888), Scandinavian dramas were a continual source of public discussion, both at home and abroad. Despite the proliferation of theatrical productions in the Nordic countries at the turn of the century, the music that was written and performed for these productions has yet to receive a full-length study. This thesis, therefore, is concerned with Nordic incidental music — music written to accompany stage plays — and its roles in early twentieth-century theatrical life.

Theatre music at the start of the twentieth century covered an astonishing variety of forms and genres, from cabaret to opera. Incidental scores could encompass anything from a single diegetic song or dance, to a full score for small orchestra including a prelude, entr'actes,

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<sup>2</sup> 'även om mitt andliga hull är kraftigare än det lekamliga, så kan jag icke i evighet suga på ramarna. Jag tror att jag fick knäcken de där kvällarna på Intima teatern - jag fick då åter känna hur mat smakar, men jag hann icke äta mig mätt.' Wilhelm Stenhammar, 23/03/1909, quoted in Bo Wallner: *Wilhelm Stenhammar och hans tid Vol. III* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1991) 323-4.

postlude, and underscoring. All of the music for the case studies presented here — by Jean Sibelius, Wilhelm Stenhammar, and Ture Rangström — are of the latter variety, scored for chamber orchestra and a combination of other instruments including organ, piano, percussion, and choir.

For composers in the Nordic countries during this period, the theatre was as prominent a platform as opera and the concert hall. In many cases, incidental scores surpassed the prestige of operas, ranking among composers' best-known works.<sup>3</sup> Extensive scores were often commissioned for new productions — directors did not just rely on previously composed music. All of the scores discussed in this thesis were commissioned for specific productions, and were central to the performances' conception and reception. The composers' names were used to generate publicity,<sup>4</sup> and the plays were presented as an opportunity to hear major new works by some of Scandinavia's most famous musicians. Essays on the incidental scores appeared in the Swedish and Finnish presses, analysing the music both independently of and within the confines of the plays that they were designed to accompany.

This thesis analyses four theatrical scores in the context of productions spanning from 1908 to 1926. The first two case studies are dedicated to Sibelius, and his music for August Strindberg's (1849-1912) play *Svanevit* ('Swanwhite', 1908),<sup>5</sup> and *Scaramouche* (1913), set to a scenario by the Danish playwright Poul Knudsen (1889-1974). I look at *Svanevit*'s premiere at the Swedish Theatre in Helsinki, arguing that this production followed the vogue for

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<sup>3</sup> As with Sibelius's 'Valse triste', which originally came from his incidental score for Arvid Järnefelt's play *Kuolema*.

<sup>4</sup> The composers in question very often conducted their scores as well; the only performance studied here that was not conducted by the composer was *Scaramouche*, which was conducted by Wilhelm Stenhammar.

<sup>5</sup> Although Sibelius's music was composed in 1908, Strindberg wrote *Svanevit* in 1901.

symbolism in the early years of the twentieth century, and that in the context of this performance Sibelius's music was viewed in terms of contemporaneous discourse about gender. *Soanehvit* was Sibelius's only collaboration with Strindberg, who at the time was Sweden's foremost contemporary playwright and the clear leader of the modern theatre. Exploring this production demonstrates both how much Sibelius admired Strindberg, and how formative the author was for Sibelius's thinking. Literary modernism as embodied by Strindberg was embraced by Sibelius, even as he turned away from the musical modernism of the Second Viennese School.

*Soanehvit* was premiered shortly after it was written, but *Scaramouche* had to wait nine years for its first performance at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen. It is an enormous score constituting over an hour of music, but remains very little studied. Nonetheless it is a crucial score for understanding Sibelius's stylistic crisis from 1909-1914.<sup>6</sup> It represents in microcosm the crux of Sibelius's crisis years, fluctuating between symbolism and expressionism. My third chapter focuses on *Scaramouche*'s second performance, at the Stockholm Royal Opera in 1924, arguing that under Johannes Poulsen's direction, this production brought out the stylistic tensions in *Scaramouche*.

The second half of the thesis takes a slightly different approach. It is structured around two productions by the same director, Per Lindberg (1890-1944), rather than being arranged according to composer. Lindberg is one of the seminal figures of twentieth century Swedish theatre — the Scandinavian equivalent of Max Reinhardt or Edward Gordon Craig. His significance for early twentieth theatre is difficult to overstate. He studied with Max Reinhardt in Berlin, and brought the ideas and techniques he had learned in the German capital back to Sweden to experiment with at the Lorensberg Theatre in Gothenburg, where

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<sup>6</sup> For more on the 'crisis years', see James Hepokoski: *Sibelius: Symphony No. 5* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 10-18

he was the artistic director from 1919-1923. He collaborated with some of the most prominent cultural figures of the nineteenth-hundreds, and his productions provided a fruitful creative meeting space for practitioners from Sweden and abroad. Frederick J. and Lise-Lone Marker claim that Lindberg produced 'the most influential new Swedish theatre of the period', and that his creative teams were 'the leading revolutionary force in Scandinavian theatre.'<sup>7</sup> Alongside his directing he was also a theorist and author, disseminating his ideas through both talks and publications. His output in this area was so extensive that Stenhammar's biographer, Bo Wallner, posits that Lindberg might be the most prominent writer about the theatre that Sweden has ever had.<sup>8</sup>

Lindberg worked extremely closely with the creative team for each production to create a final product that aligned with his personal vision as much as possible. Consequently the composers with whom he collaborated were present throughout the rehearsal process and often composed on set. This, then, results in quite a different collaborative process and final product compared to *Svanehvít* and *Scaramouche*. Sibelius wrote these scores to accompany the play's *texts* — he only made minor alterations during the rehearsal process for *Svanehvít*, and was not present at all during the production period for *Scaramouche*. Stenhammar and Rangström's scores, however, are production- and site-specific.

Chapter Four examines Stenhammar's music for *As You Like It* (1920), written to accompany Lindberg's first Shakespeare production at the Lorensberg Theatre in Gothenburg. The Lorensberg Theatre project was decisive for the direction of contemporary Swedish theatre throughout the 1920s. The 1910s and 20s saw a cultural and political shift within Sweden,

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<sup>7</sup> Frederick J. & Lise-Lone Marker, *A History of Scandinavian Theatre* (Cambridge, 1996), 227, 232

<sup>8</sup> 'om han inte med sina stora kunskaper (även kulturhistoriskt) ... är den främste teaterskribent som vi överhuvudtaget haft.' Wallner, *Wilhelm Stenhammar Vol. III*, 344. All translations are the author's own, unless otherwise stated.

during which the term 'modern' became attached to culture—of any discipline—that aimed to be popular, accessible, and politically-minded, befitting the increasing popularity of social democracy.<sup>9</sup> Lindberg deliberately set himself in opposition to Stockholm's more established stages, establishing his vision as that of 'modern' theatre in Sweden. Consequently *As You Like It* was designed and marketed as an explicitly popular production, aimed at attracting a wide audience. Stenhammar's music was central to this process, and I situate his score in the context of the emerging vogue for naïve culture, arguing that the production is best understood as an example of naïve theatre.

Lindberg's 1926 production of Strindberg's *Till Damaskus* (III), which is the focus of Chapter Five, built on his attempts at the Lorensberg to build a popular theatre. By 1926, Lindberg's ambitions were on a much grander scale: *Till Damaskus* was the inaugural production of his 'People's Theatre', based in Stockholm's Concert House. With six years between them, *As You Like It* and *Till Damaskus* were radically different in both style and tone. Where *As You Like It* had capitalised on the contemporaneous vogue for naïve art, by 1926 tastes had changed, and Lindberg presented a blend of expressionism and realism for his conception of a modern, popular *Till Damaskus*. Rangström's music was tasked with eradicating any distinctions between the real and imaginary so that the entirety of the drama seemed to play out in a dream world. In comparison with each other, these two productions demonstrate the quickly changing stylistic traits associated with the term modernism.

### **WHY SCANDINAVIA?**

Despite various revisionist attempts to redirect our sense of cultural-geographical orientation through studies of composers such as Sibelius, as Daniel Grimley has observed, 'patterns of

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<sup>9</sup> In the 1920 general election the Social Democratic Party remained the largest in the Riksdag.

geographical thought remain remarkably resistant to change'.<sup>10</sup> Nordic composers still lie on the outskirts of musicological accounts of the early twentieth-century.<sup>11</sup> When they do appear, they have frequently been referred to in the terms set out by John Horton in his book *Scandinavian Music*: he writes that the Scandinavian countries are places of 'remoteness, mystery and grandeur'.<sup>12</sup> The tone of much scholarship on Nordic composers written before the 1990s can be defined by Peter Davidson's statement that 'North ... represents a place of extremes that is also a place of wonders'.<sup>13</sup> Personalities such as Sibelius are portrayed as inherent 'Outsiders'<sup>14</sup> due to their home lying north of Central Europe.

This stance has seen welcome rejoinders from scholars such as Grimley and Tomi Mäkelä, who have sought to contextualise and 'demystify' these composers. Mäkelä's 2011 book on Sibelius viewed Finland as its own geographical centre, claiming that Sibelius's 'northernness consisted primarily of the fascination that the Mediterranean and antiquity had for him ... Sibelius can be characterised as a typically "Nordic" artist precisely because he admired the south.'<sup>15</sup> Regarding Finland's — and Sibelius's — relationship with the rest of the world, Mäkelä continues that 'neither Finland's contemporary artists in general nor Sibelius were responding to specifically Finnish problems but rather ... to problems that pertained to all of humanity, which, of course, took their own specific form in *fin-de-siècle* Finland'.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Daniel M. Grimley: *Carl Nielsen and the Idea of Modernism* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2010) ix

<sup>11</sup> See for example: Laura Tunbridge (ed.): 'Round Table: Modernism and its Others', *JRMA*, Vol. 139/1 (Apr. 2014) pp. 177-204; Arved Mark Ashby (ed.): *The Pleasure of Modernist Music: Listening, Meaning, Intention, Ideology* (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 2010)

<sup>12</sup> John Horton: *Scandinavian Music: A Short History* (London: Faber & Faber, 1963) 87

<sup>13</sup> Peter Davidson: *The Idea of North* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005) 9

<sup>14</sup> Hepokoski, *Sibelius*

<sup>15</sup> Tomi Mäkelä: *Jean Sibelius* trans. Steven Lindberg (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2011) 412

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

The material presented in this thesis aligns with this scholarship, presenting the inhabitants of the Nordic countries as participants in a progressive, international dialogue rather than mysterious outsiders in a geographical outpost. This rejects the centre-and-periphery model which still retains potency in musicological scholarship on this period, and sees the relationship between regional, national, and international as a constant site of negotiation in which Nordic composers participated as much as other individuals across Europe. For Scandinavian composers, the Nordic countries *were* their centre, and they were often well-travelled and well-read, drawing influence from various countries and genres.<sup>17</sup> Newspapers and theatrical writings testify to Scandinavia's interconnectedness with the rest of Europe, Russia, and the US, with publications including reviews of literature, exhibitions, and theatres in a broad spectrum of countries, as well as foreign performances of Scandinavian works. Scandinavia was a thriving site of cultural exchange, both importing and exporting extensively through performance and print, with critics playing a particularly active role in this process (as discussed below).

I have chosen to focus on Sweden and Finland because of their intertwined cultural heritage and shared language (Swedish), and to limit the scope of the thesis. Finland had been under Swedish rule until 1809, when it was ceded to Russia as part of the peace settlement of the Finnish War between Sweden and Russia. It remained a Grand Duchy under Russian authority until independence in 1917, and during this century Finland experienced fluctuating linguistic and legal emphases according to the inclinations of the Tsar. Swedish and Russian remained the aristocratic and administrative languages, while Finnish was from the 1830s a symbol for nationalism, the language of the working classes and a language of

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<sup>17</sup> For an extensive discussion on the trend for Nordic composers to travel abroad to study, see Anne Macgregor: *Portrayals of Identity in the Romanser and Reception of Ture Rangström* (PhD Thesis: University of Nottingham, 2017) 32-26

resistance. Sweden enjoyed a far less turbulent political history: by the turn of the century Sweden still had a monarchy, but was moving towards social democracy through expanded voting rights. All of the Nordic countries have related cultures and histories, but Sweden and Finland's conjoined political history and common language places them particularly closely.

## MUSIC AND LITERATURE

Both of the English-language survey histories of Scandinavian music emphasise the importance of the relationship between music and literature during this period. The two books in question are by Anthony Hodgson and John Horton, both bearing the title *Scandinavian Music*. Horton's history covers the music of Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Finland in a grand sweep from music of the Bronze Age to space opera. Running throughout his narrative is the prominence of literature in the musical development of these countries. He writes that 'The happy relationship that had existed between literature and music in the earlier years of the Scandinavian romantic period continued unbroken throughout the nineteenth century', adding that there is a strong 'bond of brotherhood between musician and dramatist ... in Scandinavian cultural history.'<sup>18</sup> Hodgson, meanwhile, takes a much smaller chronological scope and focuses in on Sweden and Finland. His history begins with Frederik Pacius (1809-91) in Finland, and Gustav Vasa's accession (1532) in Sweden. He asserts that the 1890s saw a change in Swedish musical style, and that 'basically the change was literary, spilling its influence over into music.'<sup>19</sup>

This is, however, as far as the authors go in exploring or justifying the claim that literature had any particular significance for the development of Nordic music. Having declared the

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<sup>18</sup> Horton, 124, 135

<sup>19</sup> Anthony Hodgson: *Scandinavian Music: Finland and Sweden* (London: Associated University Presses, 1984) 105

importance of literature to Nordic composers, Hodgson is so intent on portraying Sibelius as a symphonist first and foremost that he pronounces *Scaramouche* 'The most down-to-earth ... generally untroubled music'<sup>20</sup> that Sibelius produced between 1912-13, an interpretation which ignores both the context of the score's creation and its literary and musical content. Hodgson's account is more centred around symphonies than Horton's, who mentions in passing the incidental music of Albert Rubenson, J. P. E. Hartmann, Niels Gade, Edvard Grieg, Johan Svendsen, Johan Halvorsen, Sibelius, and Nielsen, saying that Gade and Hartmann 'founded a minor school of stage music whose best-known exponent was Edvard Grieg.'<sup>21</sup> The vast chronological scope of these books, and the broad range of composers that they attempt to cover makes it almost impossible to go into further detail regarding the links between music and literature — Rangström's life and output receives only two short paragraphs in Hodgson's book.

Horton's and Hodgson's histories therefore lay the foundations for more in-depth scrutiny of the interaction between Nordic music and literature, and the impact this relationship had on how composers thought about 'modern' composition. All the composers discussed in this thesis turned to literature for inspiration — even Sibelius, whose literary connections have frequently been underplayed or rejected in favour of portraying him as an 'instinctive' character.<sup>22</sup> Not only did poets and playwrights discuss political, philosophical, and aesthetic issues that similarly preoccupied these composers, but for Rangström in particular, creating the musical equivalent of lyric poetry seems to have held a greater attraction than embracing atonality as the foremost direction for modern music. This was not aiming at a synthetic fusion of music and word, but instead the notion of cultivating an individuated

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 53

<sup>21</sup> Horton, 125

<sup>22</sup> Mäkela, *Sibelius*, 73

compositional voice that focused on what Rangström termed ‘a meeting between poetry and tone’.<sup>23</sup> For these composers, the musically new lay in interactions between music and contemporary poetry, plays, and prose. Here, I focus on the contribution that dramatic literature made to their outputs.

## MODERN, MODERNITY, AND MODERNISM

This thesis is in accordance with musicological literature that stresses the plurality of practice at the turn of the century. Morten Kristensen has argued that the 1890s in Austria presented a ‘bewildering coexistence of diverse and competing styles’, of which ‘contemporaries were fully cognisant.’<sup>24</sup> The same was true in Sweden and Finland. In the first years of the twentieth century multiple styles co-existed that were considered *modern*. None of these were unanimously agreed to be superior to the others. Certain styles were fashionable at different times — realism was the rage in the 1880s, while symbolism was especially popular in the 1890s and 1910s — but they existed in fruitful agonism with a plethora of other styles, sometimes even in the same production, as in the case of *Scaramouche*.

I do not argue, however, that these various styles were *modernist*. In his study of Carl Nielsen, Grimley cautions that ‘it is all too easy for modernism to become a self-canonising category’, and that labelling composers as *modernists* ‘simply elevates their work into a particular academic museum or pantheon, and often reflects more the political state of the discipline than the actual status of their work.’<sup>25</sup> Recent revisionist enterprises have argued for readings

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<sup>23</sup> ‘ett möte mellan dikt och ton.’ Ture Rangström: ‘Ungdomsminnen: Nordisk sånglyrik kring sekelskiften’, *Vår Sang* (Vol. 2, Apr. 1940)

<sup>24</sup> Morten Kristiansen: ‘Richard Strauss, “Die Moderne”, and the Concept of “Stilkunst”’, *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 86 / 4 (Winter, 2002), pp. 689-749, 695, 694

<sup>25</sup> Grimley, *Nielsen*, 6

of composers such as Elgar as *modernists*,<sup>26</sup> typically finding, as J. P. E. Harper-Scott puts it, 'the source of the music's progressiveness ... in the music's *form* rather than just its sounding surface.'<sup>27</sup> Consequently *modernism* has so many definitions, particularly when viewed from an interdisciplinary perspective as is necessary for incidental music, that Susan Friedman writes that the terms *modern*, *modernity*, and *modernism* 'constitute a critical Tower of Babel, a cacophony of categories that become increasingly useless the more inconsistently they are used.'<sup>28</sup>

Other than elevating Sibelius, Rangström, and Stenhammar into a particular canon, there seems little to be gained by referring to them as *modernist*. All of these composers were concerned that their music should be modern in the sense that it was innovative and progressive. One of the ways in which they did so was to turn to literature for inspiration, as discussed above. But as Friedman indicates, 'The *-ism* of *modernism* turns the noun *modern* into an advocacy, a promotion, a movement presumably centered around a systematic philosophy, politics, ideology, or aesthetics.'<sup>29</sup> None of these composers thought of themselves as *modernists* in this way, nor were they received as such in the decades discussed here.

Beyond this, in some respects to call these composers *modernist* would actively counteract the significance that the term has historically held. To avoid the process of selective canonisation outlined above, Grimley calls for more attention to be paid to the historical context in which

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<sup>26</sup> See J. P. E. Harper-Scott: *Edward Elgar, Modernist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

<sup>27</sup> J. P. E. Harper-Scott: "'Our True North": Walton's First Symphony, Sibelianism, and the Nationalization of Modernism in England', *Music & Letters*, Vol. 89/4 (Nov. 2008), pp. 562-589, 563

<sup>28</sup> Susan Friedman: 'Definitional Excursions: The Meanings of Modern/Modernity/Modernism', *Modernism/Modernity*, Vol. 8/3 (Sept. 2001), pp. 493-513, 497

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

the terms *modern*, *modernity*, and *modernism* were invoked.<sup>30</sup> In early twentieth-century Sweden and Finland, the words *modern* and *modernity* were used relatively freely. To call a piece of music *modern* did not necessarily connote that it articulated an experience of *modernity*, but was more often invoked to describe the relative novelty of the piece in question. *Modernism*, however, only entered into standard parlance in Swedish in the 1920s, and then it was used quite specifically to refer to what is now called ‘high modernism’, focused on changes in formal languages.<sup>31</sup> This was a category that Nordic artists frequently defined themselves *against*. For Ture Rangström, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, setting himself in opposition to European *modernism* was a powerful form of national and self-identification, and integral to what he considered to be a *modern* path for Swedish culture. To refer to the personalities in this thesis as *modernist* would erase the ‘performative categories’, as Christopher Chowrimootoo describes with respect to Benjamin Britten, ‘that shaped the way composers, critics, and audiences understood musical culture in their own time.’<sup>32</sup>

One of the questions which this thesis addresses, then, is how *modern*, *modernity*, and *modernism* were understood and used in relation to culture in early twentieth-century Finland and Sweden. I am concerned, however, that the question of whether or not works were conceived and received as *modern* or *modernist* does not become blinding, obscuring other concerns and enquiries. Within scholarship on Sibelius, his relationship with modernism has been a popular topic of discussion, given his seemingly conservative tonal

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<sup>30</sup> Grimley, *Nielsen*, 6

<sup>31</sup> In this respect, my narrative of early twentieth-century use of the term modernism concurs with previous scholarship by Mäkelä (*Sibelius* 31), Michael North (*Reading 1922: A Return to the Scene of the Modern* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999] 6), and Jean-Michel Rabaté (*1913: The Cradle of Modernism* [Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007] 215-6)

<sup>32</sup> Christopher Chowrimootoo: ‘“Britten Minor”: Constructing the Modernist Canon’, *Twentieth-Century Music*, Vol. 13/2 (Sept. 2016), pp. 261-290, 262

idiom and later compositional silence.<sup>33</sup> As I argue in Chapters 2 and 3, however, the innovativeness of his music when compared to his contemporaries was only one of his anxieties. Critically loaded appellations such as *modernism* and *modernity* have a habit of hiding the individuals and contexts to which these labels are applied, so these chapters are dedicated to exploring the intimate and personal desires behind *Svanehvít* and *Scaramouche*. The years between 1908 and 1912 were not just those of a ‘New Music crisis’, as Hepokoski calls it.<sup>34</sup> This was a period of intense personal re-evaluation for Sibelius, when he attempted to come to terms with his increasing age and physical maturity. These worries should be taken into account both when considering Sibelius’s motivations for choosing *Svanehvít* and *Scaramouche* as texts, and assessing the music that resulted. Similarly, the scores’ modernity of expression was not the only consideration for their reviewers. While the critics of the 1924 production of *Scaramouche* were interested in historicising Sibelius, discussing how his score might be considered modern, on the whole they were more interested in the music’s eroticism, and its subsequent engagement with ideas about gender and the body.

## EXISTING LITERATURE

### INCIDENTAL MUSIC

Incidental music is one of the least discussed genres in musicology — there are no English-language monographs on incidental music as a genre, and until recently scholarship on this area was scant.<sup>35</sup> Thankfully more books, chapters, and journal articles are starting to appear that deal with music in the theatre. These will hopefully reach a critical mass that negates the

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<sup>33</sup> See for example Tomi Mäkelä: ‘The Wings of a Butterfly: Sibelius and the Problems of Musical Modernity’, *Jean Sibelius and his World*, ed. Daniel M. Grimley (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), pp. 89-124

<sup>34</sup> Hepokoski, *Sibelius*, 19

<sup>35</sup> A search for ‘incidental music’ on the University of Oxford’s library search engine returns an erotic novella by Françoise Sagan — a stark contrast to the tens of thousands of relevant hits for ‘opera’.

need for most writing on incidental music to begin with a variant of the phrase 'dramatic works typically receive the least recognition or respect.'<sup>36</sup>

Discussion of Nordic incidental music is limited almost entirely to scholarship on Sibelius. The most extensive examinations are by Eija Kurki,<sup>37</sup> Daniel Grimley,<sup>38</sup> Jeffrey Kallberg,<sup>39</sup> Tomi Mäkelä,<sup>40</sup> and Glenda Dawn Goss.<sup>41</sup> All of these writers stress the centrality of Sibelius's incidental music to his output, a theme which I continue in this thesis. These studies also share the conclusion that Sibelius's theatre music reveals his aesthetic sympathies as a symbolist. Goss argues poetically that Sibelius's music for *Kuolema* ('Death', 1903) 'proved how infinitely inspiring the Symbolist aesthetic was for him',<sup>42</sup> while Kallberg connects Sibelius's symbolist proclivities with his outlook regarding modernity, saying that his tendency to set music for symbolist plays 'shows the contemporary nature of his tastes.'<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Eric Saylor: 'Music for stage and film', *The Cambridge Companion to Vaughan Williams*, ed. Alain Frogley & Aidan J. Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 157-178, 157. See also for example Gerard McBurney on Shostakovich: 'In the first twenty years of his career, Shostakovich wrote a dozen incidental scores for the theatre. In length and variety they represent a substantial part of his output, yet they are surprisingly little known.' Gerard McBurney: 'Shostakovich and the theatre', *The Cambridge Companion to Shostakovich*, ed. Pauline Fairclough & David Fanning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 147-178, 147

<sup>37</sup> Eija Kurki: 'Sibelius and the Theater: A study of the incidental music for Symbolist plays', *Sibelius Studies*, ed. Timothy Jackson & Veijo Murtomäki (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 76-94. Her doctoral thesis in Finnish was also on Sibelius's incidental music. Eija Kurki: *Satua, kuolemaa ja eksotiikkaa: Jean Sibeliuksen vuosisadanalun näyttämömusikkiteokset* (Helsinki: Helsingin Kaupparokkeakoulun, 1997)

<sup>38</sup> Daniel M. Grimley: 'Storms, Symphonies, Silence: Sibelius's Tempest Music and the Invention of Late Style', *Jean Sibelius and his World*, ed. Daniel M. Grimley (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), pp. 186-226

<sup>39</sup> Jeffrey Kallberg: 'Theatrical Sibelius: The Melodramatic Lizard', *Jean Sibelius and his World*, ed. Daniel M. Grimley (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), pp. 74-88

<sup>40</sup> Mäkelä, *Sibelius*, 198-217

<sup>41</sup> Glenda Dawn Goss: *Sibelius: A Composer's Life and the Awakening of Finland* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2009). Goss's discussion of the incidental music is distributed throughout the volume, but see for example pp. 233-238

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 237

<sup>43</sup> Kallberg, 'Melodramatic Lizard', 75

While *Svanehoit* similarly falls into this category, *Scaramouche* presents a more complicated case. I argue that *Scaramouche* fluctuates between symbolism and expressionism, indicative of Sibelius's stylistic experimentation and wider existential crisis in the years around 1913.

For incidental music outside of the Scandinavian countries, the literature divides into writing with either an analytical or historiographical focus. The most significant in the former category are articles by Elizabeth Paley and Laura Tunbridge, both on Schumann's *Manfred*. They stress the link between incidental music and evocations of the supernatural; Paley highlights that Schumann's music 'bridges the gaps between the invisible and the visible, the silent and the spoken, and the living and the dead.'<sup>44</sup> As will become apparent in this thesis, the trend for music signifying the supernatural continued into the twentieth century. Tunbridge explores the role that Schumann's music played in rendering Byron's play stageable, stressing that it was not originally intended for performance. She argues that 'in Schumann's version music became a negotiating force between realistic and fantastic representation, between external and internal discourses, and between actual and mental theatre.'<sup>45</sup> Her observations about how music was used to make the play convincing in performance are particularly pertinent in relation to Strindberg's *Till Damaskus* (III) (1904), which was also considered unstageable — Schumann's *Manfred* is an important precursor for Rangström's setting of this play.

Paley, meanwhile, turns her attention to the melodramas in *Manfred* — moments of rhythmic text declaimed against a musical accompaniment. She centres her analysis around a single scene, looking at the communicative relationship between music, text, and silence. Her

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<sup>44</sup> Elizabeth Paley: "'The Voice Which Was My Music': Narrative and Nonnarrative Musical Discourse in Schumann's *Manfred*", *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 24/1 (Summer, 2000), pp. 3-20, 4

<sup>45</sup> Laura Tunbridge: 'Schumann's "Manfred" in the Mental Theatre', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, Vol. 15/2 (Jul., 2003), pp. 153-183, 154

analysis of the score is accompanied by the caution that ‘analytical claims based on text layout’ are subject to ‘the interpretive authorial power of the performer’.<sup>46</sup> While she speculates about how different declamations might impact on the interpretation of the score and text, the emphasis of both Paley and Tunbridge’s work is textual, concentrated on Schumann’s score. While a significant portion of this thesis is dedicated to textual analysis, greater prominence is given to the scores as one part of a performance event, which is the route that Tamara Levitz takes in her book *Modernist Mysteries: Perséphone*.<sup>47</sup> This book is discussed in greater detail below in the methodology section.

Melodrama as a genre is currently enjoying something of a scholarly renaissance — there are increasing numbers of texts and conferences dedicated to melodramas of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. *Melodramatic Voices*, edited by Sarah Hibberd, represents some of the most recent research in the field, comprising a collection of essays with a wide theoretical, chronological, and geographical scope.<sup>48</sup> In her introduction, she laments that ‘The genre has traditionally been ignored by musicologists, owing in part to its simple, clichéd vocabulary ... [and] the ephemeral nature of its materials.’<sup>49</sup> Precisely the same issues beleaguer incidental music. This is particularly the case for theatre music of the twentieth century — its closest relative is the melodrama, relying on its established vocabulary of musical gestures in order to be effective. This compositional strategy is anathema to modernist scholarship, which has historically sought to stress — often with a veneer of elitism — the individuality

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<sup>46</sup> Paley, 17

<sup>47</sup> Tamara Levitz: *Modernist Mysteries: Perséphone* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012)

<sup>48</sup> Sarah Hibberd (ed.): *Melodramatic Voices: Understanding Music Drama* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011)

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 1

of musical expression at the turn of the century.<sup>50</sup> Twentieth century incidental music's close relationship with melodrama is perhaps partly responsible for its relative neglect in relation to other genres, with authors seeking to distance composers from any association with popular culture, and the musics associated with it. Kirsten Shepherd-Barr notes that the similarities between melodrama and Ibsen's *When We Dead Awaken* have remained unmentioned 'perhaps because we are so set in thinking about Ibsen as a pioneer who moved drama *away* from melodrama and spectacle. But ... [this] is to miss entirely its organic connection to the theatrical conventions of its time.'<sup>51</sup> I suggest that precisely the same is true of composers and incidental music, and that by embracing these relationships we can gain access to a repertoire that offered ways in which composers could be *modern* without being *modernist*.

The majority of other texts approach incidental scores from a historiographical perspective. The most valuable for ascertaining an overview of contemporary theatrical practice in countries outside Scandinavia are *Debussy and the Theatre* by Robert Orledge,<sup>52</sup> articles by Christopher Moore and Elinor Olin on Saint-Saëns, and by Jessica Payette on Schoenberg and monodrama.<sup>53</sup> There are a significant number of texts on sound studies and theatre history whose focus is not incidental music, but they nonetheless give a valuable insight into the use of sound in turn-of-the-century theory and practice. The most extensive monograph from

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<sup>50</sup> See Peter Franklin: 'Modernismus and the Philistines' (185) and Christopher Chowrimootoo: 'Reviving the Middlebrow, or: Deconstructing Modernism from the Inside' (188) in Laura Tunbridge (ed.): 'Round Table: Modernism and its Others', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, Vol. 139/1 (2014), pp. 177-204

<sup>51</sup> Kirsten Shepherd-Barr: *Theatre and Evolution from Ibsen to Beckett* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2015) 84

<sup>52</sup> Robert Orledge: *Debussy and the Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982)

<sup>53</sup> Christopher Moore: 'Regionalist Frictions in the Bullring: Lyric Theater in Béziers at the Fin de Siècle', *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 37/3 (Spring 2014), pp. 211-241; Elinor Olin: 'Reconstructing Greek Drama: Saint-Saëns and the Melodramatic Ideal', pp. 45-60, and Jessica Payette: 'Dismembering "Expectations": The Modernization of Monodrama in *Fin-de-siècle* Theatrical Arts', pp. 137-158, both *Melodramatic Voices: Understanding Music Drama*, ed. Sarah Hibberd (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011)

sound studies comes from Adrian Curtin, examining the idea of a theatrical avant-garde at the start of the twentieth century.<sup>54</sup> Within theatre history, particularly useful studies are those by Laurence Senelick,<sup>55</sup> Edward Braun's monograph on the Russian director Vsevolod Meyerhold,<sup>56</sup> Patrick McGuinness on Maeterlinck,<sup>57</sup> and Peter Jelavich's work on theatrical life in Munich.<sup>58</sup>

## NORDIC DRAMA

Studies of Swedish drama at the turn of the century largely cohere around Strindberg, the most prominent figure in Swedish literature. He had a prolific output in an extraordinary number of fields (his collected works in Swedish extends to fifty-five volumes) encompassing fiction and non-fiction works as well as letters and articles. Only a small portion of this has been translated into English, but Michael Robinson's edited volume of essays is an excellent inroad into comprehending the range of issues that Strindberg had an interest in, bringing together some of his writing on topics stretching from alchemy to photography through biology, history, and psychology.<sup>59</sup> Robinson has also undertaken the task of publishing a

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<sup>54</sup> Adrian Curtin: *Avant-Garde Theatre Sound: Staging Sonic Modernity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)

<sup>55</sup> See particularly his edited compilations of primary source materials: *Russian Dramatic Theory from Pushkin to the Symbolists* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1981); *Stanislavsky: A Life in Letters* (New York: Routledge, 2014), and his monograph on Anton Chekhov: *The Chekhov Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>56</sup> Edward Braun: *Meyerhold: A Revolution in Theatre* (London: Methuen Drama, 1998)

<sup>57</sup> Patrick McGuinness: *Maurice Maeterlinck and the Making of Modern Theatre* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000)

<sup>58</sup> Peter Jelavich: *Munich and Theatrical Modernism: Politics, Playwriting, and Performance 1890-1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985)

<sup>59</sup> August Strindberg ed. Michael Robinson: *Selected Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Michael Meyer's biography also gives valuable insight into Strindberg's background and interests — Sue Prideaux's more recent book is a fascinating example of apologism, defending Strindberg's attitudes towards women. Michael Meyer: *Strindberg* (New York: Random House, 1985), and Sue Prideaux: *Strindberg: A Life* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2012)

selection of his letters, in two volumes,<sup>60</sup> while Egil Törnqvist and Birgitta Steene have edited an invaluable collection of Strindberg's theoretical writings on theatre.<sup>61</sup> When presented together in one volume, the documents collated by Törnqvist and Steene throw into relief how quickly Strindberg changed his mind on theatrical topics, constantly reassessing what constituted 'modern' writing and performance styles.

Amongst secondary literature on Strindberg, most influential for this thesis has been Hans-Göran Ekman's study of the chamber plays.<sup>62</sup> He examines Strindberg's use of the senses in these works, arguing that 'his drama builds upon the way the protagonists react to the external world with all of their senses.'<sup>63</sup> The book not only presents a textual analysis of the chamber plays, but Ekman relates them to Strindberg's novels and poetry, situating both against Strindberg's personal fears regarding sensory perception (he was convinced, for example, that hearing Schumann's 'Aufschwung' would presage his own death, and this motif surfaces in his semi-autobiographical novel *Inferno*).<sup>64</sup> That Strindberg frequently wrote his life into his work is a theme that recurs throughout secondary literature on the author — Strindberg blurred the line between fact and fiction such that nearly all his writing can be interpreted as an act of self-representation.<sup>65</sup> In comparing the novels and poetry, Ekman discusses the differences in sensory possibilities between the two genres, and argues that the primary way in which Strindberg imbues his plays with physical impact is through his stage directions. Consequently he concludes that 'his stage directions should be read as carefully

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<sup>60</sup> August Strindberg ed. Michael Robinson: *Strindberg's Letters* (London: Athlone Press, 1992)

<sup>61</sup> August Strindberg ed. Egil Törnqvist & Birgitta Steene: *Strindberg on Drama and Theatre: A Source Book* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007)

<sup>62</sup> Hans-Göran Ekman: *Strindberg and the Five Senses: Studies in Strindberg's Chamber Plays* (London: Athlone Press, 2000)

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 5

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 37

<sup>65</sup> See for example C. A. Falgas-Ravry: 'The Riddle of *Inferno*: Strindberg, Madness, and the Problem of Interpretation', *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 106/4 (Oct. 2011), pp. 988-1000

as the dialogue',<sup>66</sup> and that the plays have a greater impact in performance than on the page. This thesis regards plays primarily as performance scripts, so both my chapters on plays by Strindberg focus equally on stage directions and spoken dialogue. The stage directions offer the most variance in live performance, and their rendering is as formative as the actors' depictions. Additionally because composers are often scoring moments that have no dialogue, their music interacts with the stage directions directly. How composers interpret these moments, therefore, is illuminating both with respect to their approach to the text, and to how the unscripted scenes helped to shape the direction and style of the production in question.

Frederick J. and Lise-Lone Marker's *History of Scandinavian Theatre* provides a survey history of drama in the Scandinavian countries.<sup>67</sup> They place Ibsen and Strindberg as the pioneers of twentieth-century theatre — Ibsen for his adoption of realism, and Strindberg both for his written experimentation in multiple styles and for his innovations as a theatre practitioner, ground-breaking both as a writer and as a director-producer.<sup>68</sup> They establish a broad narrative which is corroborated by the majority of English-language writing on Scandinavian theatre, which sets the first 'breakthrough' in the 1870s-80s with Ibsen and realism,<sup>69</sup> followed by a stylistic shift in the 1890s precipitated by Strindberg, culminating in a diversification of practice at the turn of the century that laid the foundations for the proliferation of styles present on Scandinavian stages in the 1910s-20s. Marker and Marker's

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<sup>66</sup> Ekman, xi

<sup>67</sup> Frederick J. Marker & Lise-Lone Marker: *A History of Scandinavian Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

<sup>68</sup> See also Bradbury & McFarlane, who refer to Ibsen and Strindberg as a modernist 'axis' within Scandinavia. Malcolm Bradbury & James McFarlane: *Modernism: 1890-1930* (London: Penguin Books, 1991) 44

<sup>69</sup> Toril Moi offers an additional nuance within this narrative, that it was Ibsen's meta-theatrical self-consciousness and rejection of *idealism* that constituted his major contribution to modern theatre, rather than just his adoption of realism *per se*. Toril Moi: *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) 2-14

approach is particularly useful as they do not focus only on playwrights, but consider theatrical practitioners as part of their account of modern theatre, including the work of directors such as Emil Grandinson (1863-1915) and Per Lindberg.

Without a central figure such as Strindberg and lying outside of the Scandinavian bloc, English-language scholarship on Finnish theatre tends to be more diffuse than for Sweden. The 2013 *World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre* provides a brief documentary overview introducing the major dates and personalities of Finnish theatre, particularly the establishment of the Finnish Theatre (later the National Theatre) in 1872, which produced Finnish-language plays in opposition to the previously established tradition of Swedish-language performance.<sup>70</sup> The co-existence of both Finnish- and Swedish-language theatre through the turn of the century characterises the tone of Finland's theatre history in this period, and the importance of nationalism for Finnish theatrical developments dominates accounts by S. E. Wilmer, Timo Tiusanen, and Pirkko Koski.<sup>71</sup>

For the most part, however, Finnish drama of this period is handled within the context of broader studies of Finnish literature.<sup>72</sup> *A History of Finnish Literature* by Jaakko Ahokas<sup>73</sup> and

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<sup>70</sup> 'Finland' in Peter Nagy, Phillippe Rouyer & Don Rubin (eds.): *World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre Vol. 1* (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 250-272. This has sections on Music Theatre and Dance Theatre, as well as on dramaturgy, directors, and performers. Swedish-language theatre, however, is given very little coverage at all, and the overall focus is predominantly from 1918 onwards.

<sup>71</sup> S. E. Wilmer: 'Finland', *The Cambridge Companion to Theatre History*, ed. David Wiles & Christine Dymkowski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 104-115; Timo Tiusanen: 'Introduction to 20th Century Drama in Finland', *20th Century Drama in Scandinavia*, ed. Johan Wrede, Ulla Terling Hasán, Irmeli Niemi & Clas Zilliacus (Helsinki: University of Helsinki Press, 1979), pp. 43-66; Pirkko Koski: 'Justification as National Throughout Changing Times: The National Theatre of Finland', *National Theatres in a Changing Europe*, ed. S. E. Wilmer (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 99-110

<sup>72</sup> There is a commemorative publication for Finnish Theatre's 100th anniversary that largely consists of photographs of productions at the theatre, but it contains scant textual accompaniment. Ritva Heikkilä: *Suomen Kansallisteatteri: The Finnish National Theatre* (Porvoo: Werner Söderström, 1972)

<sup>73</sup> Jaako Ahokas: *A History of Finnish Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973)

*A History of Finland's Literature*, edited by George C. Schoolfield,<sup>74</sup> are the two most comprehensive volumes on the subject. Both divide their histories by language, with chapters dealing with Finnish- and Swedish-language literature separately from 1860 onwards. In Schoolfield's volume, this allows for the authors of each chapter to be relatively extensive in their discussion of their chosen authors (given the chronological scope of the study, from the Vikings to the 1980s), but it leaves the impression that Finnish- and Swedish-language literatures came from two entirely separate countries.<sup>75</sup> While the language divisions within Finland were immensely formative for the development of both its politics and its arts, completely separating the two linguistic spheres in this way imparts a sense of distance to extremely closely related events, making it difficult to establish interactions between the language cultures. For example the establishment of the Finnish Philosophical Society in 1873 — a Finnish-language association established for academic debate — was followed by the Swedish Club in Helsinki in 1880, a competing association cultivating the Swedish language, set up by Swedish-speakers concerned for their diminishing status in Finnish society. There were only seven years between these events, but the 300 pages separating them in Schoolfield's volume understates their interconnectedness. This is especially unhelpful when dealing with figures such as Sibelius, who married into Finland's most prominent Fennoman family despite being a Swedish speaker, and had links with both Finnish and Swedish-speaking communities.<sup>76</sup> Nonetheless, Kai Laitinen's chapter on Finnish-language literature from 1860 to 1916 in this volume provides a nuanced survey of

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<sup>74</sup> George C. Schoolfield (ed.): *A History of Finland's Literature* (Lincoln; London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998)

<sup>75</sup> Additionally, the book is hampered by an erratic approach to referencing: footnotes are not used, only chapter bibliographies, except for half of Schoolfield's chapter on Swedish-language literature which adopts a variant of the Harvard system halfway through the chapter.

<sup>76</sup> Fennoman refers to supporters of the Finnish nationalist movement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Finnish writing in this period.<sup>77</sup> He stresses the importance of foreign influences during the 1880s and 1890s, particularly from France and Russia, and how closely intertwined different art forms were in these years, especially in the 1890s. Plays are mentioned as part of the discussion about authors' entire outputs, but inevitably due to the book's textual focus very little attention is paid to performances of these works.

Ahokas's volume is the shorter of the two, so does not have as much space to devote to socio-political context as Schoolfield's. The account is entirely structured around authors' lives individually, such that it is difficult to gather any sense of collective chronology and this sometimes gives the impression that Finland's authors were writing in a cultural vacuum. His partitioning of Finnish- and Swedish-language literature from the 1860s is more severe than Schoolfield's, claiming that the two bodies of writing 'have progressed in the same direction since the end of the nineteenth century without influencing each other.'<sup>78</sup> While there is some truth to this statement, the wholesale rejection of interaction between the two literary cultures is an exaggeration — to name only a few instances, many of Juhani Aho's and Arvid Järnefelt's works were translated into Swedish,<sup>79</sup> and by Ahokas's own admission, both Runeberg and Topelius were translated and taught in Finnish schools, proving immensely formative for Finnish-language literature of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth centuries.<sup>80</sup> And this is to say nothing of the reactive atmosphere cultivated by two competing linguistic cultures. Ahokas affords Swedish-language literature less time (and sympathy) than its Finnish-language counterpart, but on the whole plays are granted a considerable amount of space within his discussion of authors' outputs. As in Schoolfield's

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<sup>77</sup> Kai Laitinen: 'The Rise of Finnish-Language Literature, 1860-1916', *A History of Finland's Literature*, pp. 64-147

<sup>78</sup> Ahokas, 385

<sup>79</sup> Schoolfield, xxi

<sup>80</sup> Ahokas, 385

volume, very little is mentioned about performances of these plays (particularly Swedish-language drama), but he does draw attention to the increased prominence of workers' theatre in Finland from 1880 onwards.<sup>81</sup>

## METHODOLOGY

2012 saw the publication of two quite different books on stage works by David Beard and Tamara Levitz, connected by their emphasis on the importance of disagreement and difference in collaborative projects. Beard's monograph on Birtwistle's stage works started from the premise that despite similarities between the pieces, 'what follows is rather more focused on differences.' In the process of writing a stage work, 'Original intentions and priorities change, become compromised or are jettisoned altogether, leading to tensions and contradictions that are instructive and distinctive to each work.'<sup>82</sup> Levitz's study, meanwhile, focused on a single performance — the Paris Opéra's 1934 melodrama *Perséphone*, a collaboration between Stravinsky, Ida Rubinstein, André Gide, Jacques Copeau, and Kurt Jooss. Determining her critical approach, she writes that 'I depart in my analysis of *Perséphone* from the premise that theatrical meaning reveals itself in *aporias*',<sup>83</sup> the inevitable contradictions between media that arise when bringing together 'a multitude of actions and conflicting intentions of a disparate team of collaborators.'<sup>84</sup> Both authors stress that stage

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 115

<sup>82</sup> David Beard: *Harrison Birtwistle's Operas and Music Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 1

<sup>83</sup> Levitz, 24

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 17

works are the products of multiple authors, with all the arguments, compromises, inconsistencies, and alterations that entails.<sup>85</sup>

From here the books proceed in divergent directions. Beard's analytically formidable account is entirely textual, considering Birtwistle's scores and their libretti, and the relationships between composer and librettists. Levitz, however, approaches *Perséphone* as a performance event, resulting in what she calls a 'microhistorical investigation of music as performed historical event.'<sup>86</sup> She draws together an array of archival sources to analyse the performance in its context, the different influences that each collaborator brought to the production, what it meant to each of them, and how the performance was received by contemporaneous critics. She concludes that 'The meaning of *Perséphone* emerges not from the score but rather from the collaborators' multidimensional involvement in philosophical, sociopolitical, and artistic debates of their time and the intersection of their ideas in the event of *Perséphone*'s performance.'<sup>87</sup>

It is Levitz's approach that I have chosen to adopt for this thesis. I treat the four productions in question as unique moments of convergence between the collaborators, and use each show as a springboard from which to explore the specific socio-cultural circumstances that led to its production and reception. This provides the basis for my analytical conclusions about the possible meanings that might be derived from these productions. I have opted for Levitz's 'microhistorical' approach because it quickly becomes apparent that without the context of the production, much of the original significance of these works is lost, as is the motivation

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<sup>85</sup> The same theme is brought out in Katharina Clausius's study of *Pulcinella*, writing that 'the stage design for *Pulcinella* proved a subject of discord among the project's collaborators'. Katharina Clausius: 'Historical Mirroring, Mirroring History: An Aesthetics of Collaboration in *Pulcinella*', *Journal of Musicology*, 30/2 (Spring 2013), pp. 215-251, 221

<sup>86</sup> Levitz, 21

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 26

for many of the compositional decisions that were made. These scores were designed to accompany specific productions, and remained unpublished and unperformed after the original show run unless the composer gave them an afterlife, in altered form, in the form of orchestral suites.<sup>88</sup> The other elements of the production were in some sense part of what the music *was*. As Gerard McBurney writes in relation to Shostakovich's theatre scores, 'it requires imagination, curiosity and sympathy to get the most out of these pieces. And for that reason it is probably best to begin not with the scores, especially when they exist only in scraps, but with the historical context of the original productions for which they were written.'<sup>89</sup>

The most obvious missing element in this approach is the object of study itself. Frantisek Deak observes that 'the theatre scholar who accepts the premise that theatre as art exists in performance ... has no tangible, material subject from which to create his discourse ... As a first step he must describe and reconstruct the object of his study.'<sup>90</sup> My starting point with each production is to attempt to gain some sense of how the various media might have interacted with each other. Using primary sources wherever possible (see below on 'Sources' and 'Critics'), I have begun each analysis with reconstruction, while accepting that any attempt at reconstruction is an act of interpretation in and of itself.<sup>91</sup>

Scholars such as Laurence Senelick and Roger Savage have produced reconstructions of Edward Gordon Craig's Moscow *Hamlet* (1911-12) and the 1905 Stratford production of Ben

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<sup>88</sup> See for example Sibelius's *Svanehvitt Suite* for Orchestra, Op. 54.

<sup>89</sup> McBurney, 152

<sup>90</sup> Frantisek Deak: *Symbolist Theatre: The Formation of an Avant-Garde* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1993) 7

<sup>91</sup> As Deak puts it, 'the reconstructed production is both the work and its interpretation.' *Ibid.*, 9

Jonson's *Pan's Anniversary*, respectively.<sup>92</sup> The former is the focus of an entire monograph, while the latter is an appendix in a book of collected essays on Vaughan Williams's stage music. Both authors render their reconstructions linguistically, and do not include scores or recordings. The following is representative of the musical moments in each case:

Before the curtains part, the audience hears a women's choir singing a wordless hymn, mingled with sound effects of raging wind and roaring sea. The intended effect is of an "harmonic wind" and, to cover the human quality of the voices, the melody is played by first and second violas, cello and bass viol. This hymn and the sound effects continue long after the set is revealed and are punctuated intermittently by the doleful sound of a gong.<sup>93</sup>

Music II (RVW), cued to v. 40: 'The colours China, and the light the sky.' (This and subsequent cues taken from Jonson's text are written in Vaughan Williams's score.) 'Loud music', *moderato*, energetic but very brief (eight bars), for brass and timpani. Rather than emulating the sort of Jacobean "loud music" that the dramatist himself would have had in mind to accompany the scene-change he stipulates at this point, Vaughan Williams chooses to use the cue to characterise the Fencer musically. (Jonson says he enters "flourishing".)<sup>94</sup>

Their reconstructions are meticulously presented, and give a clear sense of how the music and text might have coexisted, as well as the general atmosphere of the production in question. However, I have diverged from their methods of presentation in a number of ways. The first is that where I have included reconstructed moments, I have incorporated scores. This is partly because out of all the scores I discuss, only *Scaramouche* has been published. Without scores, therefore, it is extremely difficult for the reader to get any sense of the sounds of the music in question, which robs this thesis of much of its purpose and motivation. Additionally, I would rather include the score to allow the reader to decide whether or not they agree with my evaluations of the music, rather than trusting them to concur with my linguistically mediated rendition of how the music sounds and functions.

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<sup>92</sup> See Laurence Senelick: *Gordon Craig's Moscow Hamlet: A Reconstruction* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982), and Roger Savage: *Masques, Mayings and Music-Dramas: Vaughan Williams and the Early Twentieth-Century Stage* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014), 359-364

<sup>93</sup> Senelick, *Moscow Hamlet*, 155

<sup>94</sup> Savage, 360

The second, more significant dissimilarity stems from my belief that performance is a valuable method of research (particularly when writing about performance). I have therefore performed and recorded some of the movements from Rangström's *Till Damaskus* as part of my reconstructive methodology, and have included these recordings alongside the text and score where relevant.<sup>95</sup> Amongst other things, the performance process illuminated the balance between carefully choreographed speech and more expansive expression that actors would have to negotiate in underscored passages. Performing was most illuminating for underscored, melodramatic moments — we had to experiment with putting the text at numerous different places and speeds before reaching a mutual consensus on which combination was plausible both for the orchestra and the actor. And where the text *was* placed changed the meaning and emphasis in each case.<sup>96</sup> Additionally, experimenting with different timbres in dissimilar spaces revealed how large an impact the theatre space would have had on the sound of the production, and indeed on how the actors would have had to speak in order to be heard over the sometimes considerable forces playing through their speeches. In particular, working with an actor who narrated the scenes with text demonstrated why the debate about declamation styles discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 was considered so significant. Besides the balance between musicians and actor, the *sound* of the production changes according to how the actors speak.

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<sup>95</sup> See attached CD. I am indebted to Matthew Reese for conducting this enterprise and locating players (Benjamin Cunningham, Victoria Gill, Linden Hogarth, Theophilus Kwek, Sarah Moynihan, Bethan Rose, Annet Westhoek), Felix Westernen for his acting, and to Thomas Herring and Sansara Choir.

I have not included recordings of the Sibelius and Stenhammar scores as there are recordings available of either the entirety or majority of these works, all of which are available on streaming platforms such as Spotify. While I performed these scores from a piano reduction with friends (whose eternal patience and enthusiasm I am immensely grateful for), financial constraints prevented me from performing these with their full orchestrations for the purposes of thesis research.

<sup>96</sup> This corroborates Paley's assertion in her study of Schumann's *Manfred* that 'performers take charge of the inflection and, especially, the placement of their speech against the musical background, which ... can radically alter the meaning of the work.' Paley, 17

This leads me to one of the main reasons why I have not included any reconstructions in the vein demonstrated by Senelick and Savage, which is that their format treats basic media (i.e. the score, script, lighting design) as uniformly distinct and separable. For example, describing Act I sc. ii of *Hamlet*, Senelick writes that '[Ilya] Sats' "Hamlet's Solitude" theme is intoned by a wordless choir of male and female voices under the soliloquy'.<sup>97</sup> The basic media in question are by two different authors (Shakespeare's text and Ilya Sats' score), so are treated as two separate entities. However, as demonstrated by our recording of the Act I monologue from *Till Damaskus*, music and spoken word impact on each other, changing the balance and intonations of each.<sup>98</sup> They may be *materially* distinct, but they are both part of the *perceived* sound of the scene. Particularly in underscored moments, it is necessary to have a conceptual apparatus that allows us to view moments vertically / synchronically, as well as horizontally / diachronically if we want to account for effect of the production as a whole. These kinds of definitions of and overlaps between media boundaries are the basis of intermediality studies, a field particularly popular in Swedish and German scholarship. One answer to the question of how to account for the difference between *materiality* and *perception* of media is proposed by Lars Elleström, who provides a model of four types of modality, one of which is *sensory modality* — i.e. delineating media by the sense through which we perceive them: sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell.<sup>99</sup> Obviously, viewing the productions in this fashion is not always appropriate. Critics' reviews attest to the fact that they *did* distinguish between basic media — they refer to Sibelius's score, Knut Ström's designs, etc. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that in a multimedia form such as theatre, modes of

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<sup>97</sup> Senelick, *Moscow Hamlet*, 158

<sup>98</sup> In the case of *Till Damaskus*, at some moments Rangström wrote snippets of Strindberg's text into his autograph manuscript; here Strindberg's words have, in some sense, become a part of the basic medium of the score.

<sup>99</sup> Lars Elleström: 'The Modalities of Media: A Model for Understanding Intermedial Relations', *Media Borders, Multimedia and Intermediality*, ed. Lars Elleström (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 11-48, 17. His other modalities are *material* (the media's physical interface, e.g. sound waves or human bodies), *spatiotemporal* ('structuring of the sensorial perception of sense-data of the material interface into experiences and conceptions of space and time'), and *semiotic* (culturally mediated signs). 17-21

perception are variable, and can and do fluctuate throughout the course of a production. An audience member may focus on the overall *sound* of the production in one moment and directly on the composer's music in the next, have in mind their knowledge about the famous actor before them in one scene and acknowledge the purely physical presence of their body in another. Having the flexibility to negotiate between multiple modes of perception seems to be a necessity for evaluating historical theatre performances, and only by doing so can we account for comments made by contemporaneous reviewers about the overall *sound* of the production, as well as those about the composers' scores in isolation.

In all my case studies I started by asking what role the music played in the production — how did the music interact with other elements in the performance, why were deletions or additions made, what can they tell us about the process of composition and performance? On a practical level, what considerations impacted on the compositional process, where were the performers situated and why, what forces were available to the composer? More specifically, was the music used primarily for scene setting or characterisation, and how was this achieved — are particular instrumental combinations and/or harmonies associated with certain characters or ideas? And finally, how was the performance received, and what were the predominant socio-cultural ideas and trends that influenced its conception and reception? The methodological emphasis is slightly different in each chapter according to the slant of my argument, but underlying the entire thesis is the assumption that contextualising these scores requires an interdisciplinary approach. The ideas that I have drawn on, therefore, come from a variety of disciplines — Chapter 3 on *Scaramouche*, for example, is heavily influenced by scholarship in dance and performance studies,<sup>100</sup> while I draw more on texts from sound studies and art history for Chapters 4 and 5 than I do in my chapters on

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<sup>100</sup> Especially Ramsay Burt: *The Male Dancer: Bodies, Spectacles, Sexualities* (London: Routledge, 2003), and Amy Koritz: *Gendering Bodies/Performing Art: Dance and Literature in Early twentieth-century Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995)

Sibelius.<sup>101</sup> Nonetheless, historical and analytical studies in both theatre and musicology have formed the core of my approach, the most formative being those by Daniel Grimley,<sup>102</sup> Laurence Senelick,<sup>103</sup> Toril Moi,<sup>104</sup> and Tomi Mäkelä.<sup>105</sup>

Readers will gain most from this thesis if they have a copy of the play texts to hand, because many of my observations about the scores rely on references to the play texts. While I have tried to offset this as much as possible by including plot summaries and explanations of scenes that I discuss in detail, the music is so closely interwoven with the texts that these descriptions are often insufficient as they cannot give the full context of the play. Similarly, the movement layouts provided in the appendices cannot give a sense of how extensively or sparsely accompanied particular sections were without reference to the complete text.

Including entire plays as appendices is not feasible, but thankfully these plays are readily available, both in Swedish and in English. Shakespeare's *As You Like It* is, of course, widely accessible (I have used the 2006 Arden edition).<sup>106</sup> *Svanevit* and *Till Damaskus* are a little more difficult to source in English, but *Svanevit* has been digitised by the Online Library,<sup>107</sup> and Esther Johanson and Graham Rawson's translation of *Till Damaskus* can be read online

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<sup>101</sup> Particularly Adrian Curtin *Avant-Garde Theatre Sound*; and Cecilia Widenheim (ed.) trans. Bard Graduate Center for Studies in Decorative Arts, Design, and Culture NY: *Utopia & Reality: Modernism in Sweden, 1900-1960* (London: Yale University Press, 2002)

<sup>102</sup> Grimley, *Nielsen*; and Daniel M. Grimley: *Grieg: Music, Landscape, and Norwegian Identity* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006)

<sup>103</sup> Particularly his studies of *The Chekhov Theatre* and *Gordon Craig's Moscow Hamlet*.

<sup>104</sup> Moi, *Ibsen*

<sup>105</sup> Mäkelä, *Sibelius*

<sup>106</sup> William Shakespeare: *As You Like It* ed. Juliet Dusinberre (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2006). Carl Hagberg's Swedish translation, which Lindberg used for his production, is available online from Project Runeberg. See William Shakespeare: *Som ni behagar* trans. Carl A. Hagberg (Lund: Gleerups Förlag, 1861) <http://runeberg.org/hagberg/f/> Accessed 08/08/2017

<sup>107</sup> See August Strindberg: *Svanevit* trans. Francis J. Ziegler (Philadelphia: Brown Brothers, 1909) <https://www.archive.org/stream/swanwhitefairydr00stri?ref=ol#page/n5/mode/2up> Accessed 08/08/2017

from Project Gutenberg.<sup>108</sup> The scenario for *Scaramouche* is included in the score published by Wilhelm Hansen.<sup>109</sup>

## SOURCES

The majority of the sources referenced come from the Musik- och Teaterbibliotek (Music and Theatre Library) in Stockholm. The library has an extensive collection of primary and secondary source material relating to Scandinavian theatrical productions, including autograph scores by Rangström and Stenhammar, and some of Per Lindberg's rehearsal scripts. Their archive at Gäddviken is also home to the Stockholm Royal Opera archive, which contains scores, production documents and photographs, stage and costume designs, and in some cases costumes from opera and ballet productions. Both Finnish and Swedish newspapers from the turn of the century have recently been digitalised and are available online, although newspapers in Sweden after 1900 are only accessible from computers in the Stockholm Royal Library.

Outside of Sweden, other institutions consulted were the Library of Congress for the autograph score of *Svanevit*,<sup>110</sup> and the Robert Lienau archive in Germany which holds a copy of his 1912 revision for German theatres.<sup>111</sup> From Finland, I have used material from the Svenska literatursällskapet (Swedish literature society), and the National Library of Finland.

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<sup>108</sup> August Strindberg: *The Road to Damascus* trans. Esther Johanson & Graham Rawson (Released September 2005, Ebook #8875) <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/8875> Accessed 08/08/2017. Note that the texts for neither *Svanevit* nor *Till Damaskus* will align precisely with the translations offered in this thesis as I have worked from my own translations of these plays.

<sup>109</sup> Jean Sibelius: *Scaramouche* (Copenhagen: Wilhelm Hansen, 1918)

<sup>110</sup> Jean Sibelius: *Svanevit* (Library of Congress, ML96.S4962 Case)

<sup>111</sup> The score in question is Jean Sibelius: *Svanevit* [sic.] (*Schwanenweiss*) *Partitur Fassung: Bühnenmusik* (Robert Lienau Musikverlag, no shelf-mark given)

The majority of this documentary material remains unpublished, emphasising the need for critical editions of scores, and source books to facilitate both further research and teaching on this topic. Very few of these documents have yet to make their way fully into scholarship in any language, let alone in English.

## CRITICS

The thesis is in part a work of reception history. In each chapter, I use critics' reviews as a starting point for discussing how these productions might have been heard by their audiences.

On one level, my extended use of reviews is pragmatic. Reviewers gave detailed descriptions of how the performances were staged, ceding information about the stagings that are not apparent from photographs or other production materials. As Leon Botstein points out, 'Only through individual and collective memory and the translation into descriptive language do accounts of performances survive. We have little else to help correlate the text and past performance.'<sup>112</sup> This is particularly pertinent for historical theatre scholarship, for the reasons outlined above. The object of study no longer exists, so reviewers are a vital point of contact between performers and analyst when attempting to gain a comprehensive picture of the original performance conditions.

More broadly, however, I have focused especial attention on these writings as they can communicate something of an individual's response to the performance in question, and in doing so illuminate some of the broader aesthetic priorities that conditioned the cultural context of the music examined in this thesis.

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<sup>112</sup> Leon Botstein: 'Music in History: The Perils of Method in Reception History', *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 89/1 (Spring, 2006), pp. 1-16, 2

This is especially pertinent where there are points of divergence between how critics heard these musics, and prevailing views of the composers now. Benjamin Korstvedt argues in favour of paying particular attention to these moments, as ‘the fascination and the critical opportunity offered by seemingly strange critical responses subsist precisely in the spaces of difference they create against our established patterns of comprehension.’<sup>113</sup> While the music of Ture Rangström and Wilhelm Stenhammar is relatively uncharted territory in English-language scholarship<sup>114</sup> — it is difficult to claim that there are established critical norms in present reception of their music — Sibelius is another matter. The most popular category associated with his music is that of landscape,<sup>115</sup> but none of the reviewers quoted here mentioned landscape when assessing his theatrical scores. While ideas about landscape were often invoked in relation to his symphonic scores, his incidental music reveals a reception history that was more concerned with Sibelius as a cosmopolitan figure. Reviewers referred to *Soanehvait* and *Scaramouche* in more intimate terms than the symphonies, talking about eroticism and stylistic flexibility rather than making any grand statements about landscape evocation. Situating these responses requires turning to the broader cultural context in which Sibelius wrote these scores and, as in Chapters 2 and 3, exploring some of the discourse around gender and the body in the Nordic countries at the turn of the century.

By focusing on critics’ responses to these performances, I am of course privileging the concerns of one particular socio-cultural group — namely the educated Swedish-speaking bourgeoisie of Stockholm, Helsinki, and Gothenburg. But one has to start somewhere. We do

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<sup>113</sup> Benjamin M. Korstvedt: ‘Reading music criticism beyond the fin-de-siècle paradigm’, *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 94/1/2 (Spring/Summer 2011), pp. 156-210,161

<sup>114</sup> Although Anne Macgregor’s PhD thesis has begun laying the foundations for English-language Rangström scholarship.

<sup>115</sup> See for example Daniel M. Grimley: ‘The tone poems: genre, landscape and structural perspective’, *The Cambridge Companion to Sibelius* ed. Daniel M. Grimley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 95-116

not yet have the variety and range of nuanced scholarship on Scandinavian criticism of this period as there is on Viennese, for example.<sup>116</sup> I hope that the material presented in this thesis will demonstrate that there is scope for a similar level of enquiry into these countries and encourage further study of musical life in the Nordic countries, to expand our knowledge of the priorities of socio-cultural groups who are beyond the reach of this thesis.

For present purposes, the newspapers of these three cities offer an insight into how the Swedish-speaking middle classes spoke to and amongst themselves. Heated debates between critics are often where these articles are at their most enlightening, as these sharp differences of opinion expose fault lines in Swedish-speaking society. The clash of 'realist' and 'non-realist' theatrical cultures explored in Chapter 4, for example, is indicative of a larger confrontation between conservative and liberal cultural politics. By the 1920s, Sweden was in the final stages of transitioning from an autocracy to a social democracy with a globally competitive industrial economy. In the rhetoric around Per Lindberg's productions we see a social class in the process of readjusting and redefining itself, with Lindberg and his supporters positioning his new 'democratic theatre' against the better established, more 'conservative' stages such as Stockholm's Royal Theatre. Choice of location, repertoire, and performance styles became explicit symbols of ideological affiliation in a way that is only implicit elsewhere. In this instance, it is rare to find a newspaper review that sided with the Royal Theatre over Lindberg. This was a case of the press versus the institutions, with middle-class critics presenting themselves as advocates for a new liberal Sweden and keen to do away with theatrical — and, by association, social — elitism.

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<sup>116</sup> See Korstvedt 'Reading Music Criticism', Botstein 'Music in History', and Margaret Notley: *Lateness and Brahms: Music and Culture in the Twilight of Viennese Liberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006)

There is a constant dialogue between these authors, their readers, and wider social context, but it is important to remember that the people behind these texts are *individuals*. Even in their slightly elevated role as critics, which has allowed their opinions to survive the last hundred years, they cannot be taken unquestioningly as spokespeople for an entire social group. They had their own agendas and sympathies, and often very personal axes to grind. As Botstein notes, 'so much of the local implied but not asserted in the discourse derives from the context, not the event, and vanishes from the sight of the historian — the character of the author, the personal interrelationships, rivalries, petty intrigues, ephemeral events, and ambitions. ... These documents are less about music than they seem.'<sup>117</sup>

Polemic criticism, for example, could be valuable for furthering the career of the critic in question, or for bestowing upon the reviewed parties a veneer of notoriety. As Korstvedt has explained in his study of *fin-de-siècle* Viennese criticism, a bad review was not always as negative as it first appeared. Additionally, 'cruelly brilliant phrases and images are indeed tempting to pass around in conversation — this was surely part of the intention behind them,'<sup>118</sup> ensuring that both the critic and their subject became a subject of discussion. Sales follow scandals, as demonstrated when Strindberg was prosecuted for blasphemy in his book *Giftas* ('Getting Married') in 1884. At the time, Strindberg was living in Switzerland, and his publisher, Albert Bonnier, first advised Strindberg to return to Sweden to use the prosecution for publicity, and then told him to stay in Switzerland as the book's infamy was doing wonders for sales.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Leon Botstein: 'Witnessing Music: The Consequences of History and Criticism', *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 94/1/2 (Spring/Summer 2011), pp. 1-8, 3

<sup>118</sup> Korstvedt, 162

<sup>119</sup> Meyer, 135. He quickly changed his mind when the prosecutor announced that if Strindberg did not return to Sweden to stand trial, Bonnier would be arrested in his stead. Bonnier then sent his son to Switzerland to implore Strindberg to leave.

In this regard, the relationship between the Lorensberg Theatre and the Gothenburg-based critic Birger Bäckström is particularly complex. For all intents and purposes, Bäckström was the Lorensberg Theatre's *bête noire*, producing some of the most damning critiques of the company. This escalated to the point that in 1931, the Lorensberg company refused to perform while Bäckström was in the audience. This resulted in a very public stand-off between Bäckström and the newspaper he wrote for, *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, and the company and theatrical associations such as the Swedish Theatre Association, who supported the revolt against the famous critic. Bertil Nolin records that this followed on from a number of exchanges between Bäckström and Lorensberg members, such as a public letter written by designer Knut Ström in 1927, which condemned Bäckström's writing as 'destructive for Gothenburg's theatre life and lethal for artistic satisfaction and ambition. Your [Bäckström's] criticism is negative in its essence. It knocks down — it does not build up.'<sup>120</sup> Thomas Forser, however, notes that much of Bäckström's criticism was fair and considered, writing that 'in Bäckström Lindberg ... had a critic who could interpret the new scenic language which Lindberg introduced with astounding sensitivity and who was, albeit it in a largely controlled way, very positive about his work.'<sup>121</sup> When he wanted to be, Bäckström could be either vituperatively acerbic or constructively encouraging, and it is unclear to what extent the former was motivated by genuine despair of the work at the Lorensberg, or for more commercial reasons. With all newspaper articles, it is worth bearing in mind that the critics had their audiences as much as the actors did, and that their writerly

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<sup>120</sup> 'för Göteborgs teaterliv fördärlig och för konstnärlig arbetsglädje och ambition dödande. Eder kritik är nämligen till sitt väsen negative. Den river ner — den bygger icke upp.' Open letter from Knut Ström to Birger Bäckström, dated 15/11/1927, published in *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, quoted in Bertil Nolin: 'Den omutlige kritiker och Lorensbergsteatern', *Lorensbergsteatern 1916-1934*, ed. Bertil Nolin (Gothenburg: Gothenburg Theatre History Museum, 1991), pp. 115-119, 115

<sup>121</sup> 'I Bäckström hade ... Lindberg en kritiker som men häpnadsväckande sensibilitet kunde tolka det nya scensprak som Lindberg introducerade och som till övervägande del om än på sitt kontrollerade vis ställde sig mycket positiv till hans arbete.' Tomas Forser: 'Modernismen, Per Lindberg och Lorensbergsteatern', *Lorensbergsteatern 1916-1934*, ed. Bertil Nolin (Gothenburg: Gothenburg Theatre History Museum, 1991), pp. 120-132, 130

personas were in large part performative. This, in itself, is informative: the identities that these writers chose to adopt can tell us a great deal about how middle class society wished to project itself, and we can make inferences about the priorities of readerships according to what writers and editors believed would appeal to their buyers.<sup>122</sup>

Where possible, I have identified the authors behind the reviews, and have provided a guide to critics in Appendix 1. The nuances of critical exchanges are complicated, however, by the fact that many of these authors wrote anonymously, or under pseudonyms that are difficult to identify. But those who are identifiable present a representative sample of the types of personalities who made up Swedish and Finnish critical circles.

The most obvious observation to be drawn from these figures is how interconnected they are.<sup>123</sup> Many critics were also practitioners, meaning that they had personal friendships and rivalries with the people whose work they were reviewing. Karl Fredrik Wasenius, with whom Sibelius signed a contract to publish, amongst other scores, *The Swan of Tuonela* and *Lemminkäinen's Return*,<sup>124</sup> wrote under the pseudonym "Bis" and reviewed the premiere of *Svanehvít*. Viking Dahl, writing on the aesthetics of dance for *Svenska Dagbladet* in 1919, was a composer who would compose the music for *Maison de fous* for the Ballets Suédois only a year later.

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<sup>122</sup> See for example Peter Andersson's discussion of Hjalmar Söderberg, in Peter Andersson: 'Distinction and Vulgarity: Dandyism in Late Nineteenth-Century Sweden', Conference paper delivered at The TORCH Nordic Network, Oxford, 14/10/2016

<sup>123</sup> The small, slightly incestuous nature of the Swedish music-critical circle provided the source of a satirical article by Rangström in 1945: Ture Rangström: 'Den blodige musikrecensenten', *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, 06/05/1945

<sup>124</sup> Andrew Barnett: *Sibelius* (London: Yale University Press, 2007), 139

Small and incestuous Swedo-Finnish critical circles may have been, but these authors were extremely well connected and well travelled. They and their articles were a window to the rest of the world, through which Scandinavians could both see and be seen. Bengt Idestam-Almquist aka “Robin Hood”, for example, studied in Finland and Stockholm, and worked in Russia and China. When he came to review Lindberg’s 1926 production of *Till Damaskus* he was able to compare Lindberg’s staging to developments in Russian theatre, informing his readers about the Russian theatrical scene as much as offering his critique of Lindberg’s production. Particularly in previews, authors used their column inches to situate composers’ music in a broader historical and geographical context — some articles read as much like educational pieces as critiques. Newspapers also republished articles from foreign presses, to keep readers abreast of opinions in other countries.<sup>125</sup> They would also send correspondents to review exhibitions and performances abroad, sometimes stretching as far afield as Spain, England, and Ukraine.<sup>126</sup>

Women were also present within these critical circles. Writing under the pen name “Quelqu’une”, for example, Märta Lindqvist interviewed Per Lindberg ahead of his *Till Damaskus* production, in her role as a critic for *Svenska Dagbladet*. She was also a foreign correspondent for the newspaper after the First World War, and produced books based on her experiences as a journalist, including *Palestinska dagar* (‘Palestinian days’, 1931), and *Hos filmstjärnor i USA: Snapshots från New York och Hollywood* (‘At the houses of US film stars:

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<sup>125</sup> See for example Else Wiesenthal: ‘Dansens väsen’, *Björneborgs Tidning*, 15/03/1912, a reprint of an article on dance first published by the *Neue Freie Presse*.

<sup>126</sup> See for example: *Dagens Nyheter*, ‘Kulturhistoriska föreningen och Parisutställningen’, 09/01/1900 and ‘Sveriges konst på Parisutställningen’, 12/01/1900, and ‘Ibsen och Norges nationalscen’, 04/01/1900; *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*: ‘Spanien och den moderna konsten’, 14/07/1920 and ‘Ny dansk berättarkonst’, 28/07/1920. Over this period *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* also ran a series on Carl Nielsen as a ‘Modern composer’, and extensive coverage of a Ukrainian art exhibition in Berlin. *Göteborgs Morgonposten* ran features on Dostoevsky on both 06/03/1922 and 15/03/1922, and published articles by C. D. Marcus on culture in Berlin. (‘Från den tyska filmvärlden’, *Göteborgs Morgonposten*, 07/04/1922; ‘Från Berlins musikvärld’, *Göteborgs Morgonposten*, 29/03/1922). When the dancer Maggie Gripenberg toured the UK, her performances were covered in the Finnish Press: see “Glen”: ‘Maggie Gripenberg i London’, *Dagens Tidning*, 18/07/1913

Snapshots from New York and Hollywood', 1924).<sup>127</sup> As demonstrated by the distinct lack of female composers within this thesis, Nordic turn-of-the-century composition was dominated by men. But literature was a genre in which women were particularly active, producing some of the most popular and controversial works of the early twentieth-century.<sup>128</sup> The extent to which women shaped and contributed to critical discourse in the Nordic countries is sadly beyond the scope of this thesis, but there is ample material for further research into this area.

## CONTEXT

### FOUNDATIONS: SWEDEN & STRINDBERG

Sweden's theatrical origins are royal. For the majority of the eighteenth century, the primary Swedish stage was the Drottningholm Palace Theatre, built by Queen Lovisa Ulrika (1720-1782).<sup>129</sup> She adored the theatre, and under her reign the court performed predominantly French dramas.<sup>130</sup> The theatre was cultivated by Lovisa Ulrika's son, Gustav III (1746-1792) — Marker and Marker call his reign 'one of the most luminous periods in eighteenth-century European theatre.'<sup>131</sup> Gustav both wrote and acted himself, but most significant was his determination to foster a national theatre, to exist alongside the court theatre. He founded first the Royal Opera in 1773, and later the Royal Swedish Dramatic

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<sup>127</sup> She also worked as a translator, and wrote widely on modern dance — she translated Isadora Duncan's *My Life* from English to Swedish.

<sup>128</sup> See for example the works of Minna Canth (*Anna Liisa*, 1895), and Victoria Benedictsson (*Pengar* ['Money'], 1885)

<sup>129</sup> The Drottningholm Palace Theatre started out without a formal building, as performances within the grounds. After a theatre proper was erected, it burned down during a performance in 1762. Lovisa Ulrika, however, had another larger theatre built in its place in 1766, which is the building which stands in Drottningholm today.

<sup>130</sup> Marker & Marker, 71

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 76

Theatre in 1788.<sup>132</sup> After Gustav's assassination in 1792, the Drottningholm Palace Theatre fell into disuse, but the Royal Theatre continued to stage performances. The Royal Theatre remained Stockholm's predominant stage until 1842, when the Nya Teatern (New Theatre) was established. Their repertoire was dominated by figures such as Adam Oehlenschläger (1779-1850) and Shakespeare,<sup>133</sup> with Bjørnsterne Bjørnson (1832-1910) and Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) coming to Swedish stages from the 1870s onwards. These productions were staged naturalistically, which became the dominant performance style throughout the 1880s, cultivated by both the capital's main stages.<sup>134</sup> Realism was initially championed by Russian theatres such as the Moscow Art Theatre (led by Konstantin Stanislavsky [1863-1938], with a repertoire comprised mainly of Anton Chekhov and Ibsen) and Nordic theatres followed suit. Thanks to the Royal and New Theatres' monopoly on theatrical life, there was little in the way of stylistic innovation at the end of the nineteenth century in terms of writing or performance. The predominant influence was still French, with the 'well-made play'<sup>135</sup> being the standard format for dramas on the Royal stage.<sup>136</sup>

This was the theatrical world of August Strindberg's early life. Throughout the course of his career he revolutionised European drama through the sheer variety of genres in which he wrote, producing a series of Swedish history plays (from *Gustav Vasa* in 1899 to *Gustav III* in 1902), seminal naturalist plays in the 1880s such as *Miss Julie* (1888) and *The Father* (1887), before moving on to symbolism in *Svanevit*, and plays such as *Till Damaskus* (1898-1904)

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<sup>132</sup> A version of the Royal Theatre had been in existence since 1772 — when Gustav III ascended to the throne he ordered an old theatre at Bollhuset to be renovated, and it is this theatre which later became the Royal Theatre in 1788. *Ibid.*, 77-92

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 101-106

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 181

<sup>135</sup> A dramatic genre which followed a particular plot arc, following Aristotle's ideal of Greek tragedy in his *Poetics*. It involved a dense plot with many storylines, building suspense to a climactic denouement when all the tensions of the play resolve to give a happy ending.

<sup>136</sup> Evert Sprinchorn: *Strindberg as Dramatist* (New York: Yale University Press, 1982) 231

which have earned him a place in history as a 'forerunner of expressionism'.<sup>137</sup> Such was the impact of Strindberg's writing that Marker and Marker claim that 'to a very significant extent, the development of the Scandinavian theatre in the modern period has been shaped and defined by the efforts of directors and actors alike to meet the challenge represented by his extraordinary dramatic imagination.'<sup>138</sup> Certainly by 1918, the Swedish author Pär Lagerkvist (1891-1974) was able to announce that 'Ibsen can be circumvented ... But Strindberg is in the middle of the road'.<sup>139</sup> Whether or not Lagerkvist's statement was tempered by national pride, eschewing the Norwegian Ibsen in favour of his Swedish contemporary, his statement demonstrates Strindberg's prominence in Swedish theatrical life from 1900 onwards.

Nineteenth-century social conservatism meant that a number of Strindberg's plays were initially either censored or banned. Many of his works gained fame and popularity abroad before they were first staged in Sweden. *Miss Julie*, for example, had already been staged successfully by Max Reinhardt (1873-1943) in Berlin and André Antoine (1858-1943) in Paris before its Stockholm premiere in 1906.<sup>140</sup> Strindberg's answer to this problem was to try and establish his own theatre to house his dramas. He first raised the proposition of starting a small, touring company to the actor August Lindberg in 1887, writing that he envisaged a theatre which would perform only his own plays, written 'in such a way that it won't be necessary to lug along any costumes, sets, or props.'<sup>141</sup> Several abortive attempts to establish

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<sup>137</sup> Richard Bark: 'Strindberg's Dream-Play Technique', *Strindberg's Dramaturgy* ed. Goran Stockenström (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), pp. 98-106, 101

<sup>138</sup> Marker & Marker, 193

<sup>139</sup> Pär Lagerkvist: *Modern Theatre: Points of View & Attack* trans. Thomas R. Buckman (New Orleans: The Tulane Drama Review, 1961) 24

<sup>140</sup> Eszter Szalczer: 'Stockholm-Berlin-Moscow: Strindberg and Avant-Garde Performance in the 1920s', *The International Strindberg: New Critical Essays* ed. Anna Westerståhl Stenport (Northwestern University Press, 2012), pp. 27-48, 30

<sup>141</sup> August Strindberg to August Lindberg, 03/06/1887 in *Strindberg on Drama and Theatre*, 56

theatre companies followed, including the short-lived Scandinavian Experimental Theatre in Copenhagen which lasted less than a year.<sup>142</sup> It wasn't until 1907 that he finally set up the 'Intimate Theatre' in Stockholm with the director August Falck, modelled on Reinhardt's *Kammerspiele Haus*.<sup>143</sup> In his 'Memorandum to the Members of the Intimate Theatre', Strindberg detailed the significance of Reinhardt's theatre, writing that it was 'the concept of chamber music transferred to drama. The intimate action, the significant motif, the sophisticated treatment.'<sup>144</sup> This new form of theatre inspired Strindberg's set of Chamber Plays (1907), written specifically for the Intimate Theatre, designed to run without an interval to increase their claustrophobic impact. These short, one-act plays were conceived in opposition to the multiple-act dramas that were favoured at the Royal Theatre, based on the French well-made play.

Strindberg's changes in style were motivated by an overarching desire to be modern. Fascinated by technology and captivated by scientific developments, Strindberg felt that it was imperative for authors to shape and respond to the world in which they lived. This demanded flexibility, and a willingness to find new forms to give expression to new ideas. While writing *The Father*, an idea that preoccupied him was what he termed 'soul murder', or the idea that rather than physically murdering a man, one now 'tortures him to death by lies or drives him insane instead of killing him.'<sup>145</sup> Strindberg picked up this idea from reading contemporary psychology, and Laura and The Captain's relationship in *The Father* is an

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<sup>142</sup> Prideaux, 160-61

<sup>143</sup> The collaboration between Strindberg and Falck would only last three years. After 1910 the building was used only sporadically as a theatre, reopening fully in 2003 under the leadership of Ture Rangström, the grandson of the composer Ture Rangström discussed in this thesis.

<sup>144</sup> August Strindberg: 'Memorandum to the Members of the Intimate Theatre from the Director, 1908', *Strindberg on Drama and Theatre*, 127

<sup>145</sup> August Strindberg: 'Soul Murder (Apropos *Rosmersholm*)', *Selected Essays*, 67

exploration of this idea. The play chronicles The Captain's descent into madness, instigated by Laura's goading.

A year later, when writing *Miss Julie*, his interests had shifted slightly. In the Preface to the play, he explained that it was a 'modern psychological drama',<sup>146</sup> but his focus here was not soul murder but telepathy and evolutionary theory. Strindberg drew on his reading of Darwin and Nietzsche to inform the course of the play and his characters' personalities. Miss Julie is described as the 'man-hating half-woman', who is 'synonymous with degeneration'<sup>147</sup> — she is destined to be overcome by Jean as 'he is ... superior to Miss Julie in that he is a man'.<sup>148</sup> And if these figures were imperfect, Strindberg wrote, this was only because they were designed to document the fragility and franticness of modern living. As they were 'living in an age of transition more urgently hysterical...than the one that preceded it', he decided to depict his characters 'as more split and vacillating, a mixture of the old and new'.<sup>149</sup> Meanwhile he explained that Jean's final dominance of Miss Julie is achieved by insinuation, writing that he 'made use of "waking suggestion"', and 'facilitated *Gedankenübertragung* ['telepathy'] via an inanimate medium (the Count's boots, the bell).<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> August Strindberg: 'Preface to *Miss Julie*', *Miss Julie and Other Plays* trans. Michael Robinson (New York: Oxford World's Classics, 2008) 67

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 60. 'Half-women' was Strindberg's preferred term for feminists and women without children. He had caused uproar among Swedish feminists for his 1884 book *Giftas* ('Getting Married'), a collection of short stories which argued for equal rights for women, but on the grounds that women already had too many privileges and were turning men into slaves, and that their primary role was as child bearers. In a letter to Carl Larsson while the scandal was ongoing, he wrote 'now the hemaphrodites (Edgren, Agrell, etc.) along with their pederasts (Ibsen) will want to break my balls', and later referred to childless women as 'a freak of nature...and her views...should not be taken seriously.' August Strindberg to Carl Larsson, 30/09/1884, *Strindberg's Letters Vol. 1: 1862-1892* ed. Michael Robinson (London: Athlone Press, 1992) 54; August Strindberg: *Getting Married* trans. Mary Sandbach (London: Quartet Books, 1977) 41

<sup>148</sup> Strindberg, 'Preface to *Miss Julie*', 62

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 59

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 60

Strindberg continued to try and express his experience of modern life throughout his career, making increasingly complex demands on stage technologies in order to do so. Where *Miss Julie* asked for only the interior of a kitchen for its backdrop, by the turn of the century Strindberg's attitude to stage design had undergone a complete reversal. The Prologue to *Ett drömspel* ('A Dream Play', 1901) opens with the instruction for a backdrop which 'represents banks of clouds resembling crumbling mountains of slate, with ruins castles and fortresses. The constellations Leo, Virgo, and Libra can be seen, with the planet Jupiter shining brightly above them. Indra's Daughter is standing on the highest cloud.'<sup>151</sup> Besides the more elaborate construction of these designs, the stage transformations that Strindberg asked for went above and beyond what most theatres were capable of at the time: *Ett drömspel* later involves a scene in which 'By lightning, the organ is transformed into Fingal's Cave. The sea surges in under the basalt pillars, producing the combined sound of wind and waves.'<sup>152</sup> Plays such as these provided a challenge for future directors and scenographers, moving the Swedish theatre far from the naturalist style that was dominant at the start of Strindberg's career.

The impact of Strindberg's work was so long-lasting partly because of its variety. By the time of his death in 1912, Stockholm's theatrical scope had been significantly increased, and he had provided a body of plays to populate the new theatres appearing across Europe.

Strindberg had written dramas for every kind of theatrical space imaginable, from established state-sponsored theatres to touring companies of only a few members.

Additionally, the scope of his vision was such that theatres had to be created to stage his plays, even after his death. In Sweden this was some time coming — the country had to wait until 1916, when the Lorensberg Theatre was built in Gothenburg, for a theatre that was technically advanced enough to cope with the demands of his stage directions in the

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<sup>151</sup> August Strindberg: 'A Dream Play', *Miss Julie and Other Plays*, 178

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 199

symbolist and expressionist dramas such as *Ett drömspel* and *Till Damaskus*. Between 1900 and 1930, Strindberg's plays became as central to the Swedish repertory as Shakespeare, becoming a testing ground for new directors. Strindberg productions helped to create the careers of directors such as Knut Ström (1887-1971), Emil Grandinson, and Per Lindberg, all of whom brought their particular vision to his dramas.

Strindberg also put Sweden on Europe's theatrical map, standing alongside Ibsen as one of the foremost Scandinavian dramatists of the early twentieth-century. It was international performances of Strindberg that truly cemented his status as Sweden's national playwright: he was not immediately embraced as such within Sweden. As Eszter Szalczar documents, the initial Swedish reception of many of Strindberg's plays was that of uneasy ambivalence or outright hostility, and that 'the image of the proto-expressionist Strindberg was created retrospectively, following performances of these texts in Germany and Austria.'<sup>153</sup> Swedish Strindberg was created abroad. Where *Ett drömspel* remained largely misunderstood and unperformed in Sweden after its 1907 premiere, it was taken up in Germany by Rudolf Bernauer (1880-1953), who staged it in Berlin in 1916. Strindberg's work found an audience in Russia from 1905 onwards, staged by directors such as Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874-1940), and Strindberg found loyal champions in Antoine and Reinhardt, who repeatedly staged his plays.<sup>154</sup> Rejected first in his home country, his chamber plays only found an audience in Sweden when re-presented to Swedish audiences by Reinhardt's touring productions to Stockholm from 1916. Consequently, Anna Westerståhl Stenport writes that Strindberg's work and its first reception embodies the 'challenge' posed by late nineteenth-century European existence, which rejected 'any firm national affiliation' but had an 'uneasy

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<sup>153</sup> Szalczar, 'Stockholm-Berlin-Moscow', 32-33

<sup>154</sup> Laurence Senelick: "'More Looked at than Listened to": Shaw on the Prerevolutionary Russian Stage', *Shaw*, Vol. 27 (2007), pp. 87-104, 89. Strindberg's plays were subject to increasing censorship after the revolution, however.

relationship to international modernity.<sup>155</sup> Strindberg's reputation has been formed by a procedure of constant negotiation, the modern identities portrayed by his characters reticulated at each new performance site. Throughout the 1910s and 20s this process resulted in Sweden reclaiming Strindberg as a national figure. The boundaries between national and international remained in flux, but as the decades progressed Swedish artists showed more willingness to delineate themselves from international trends, taking pride in their national — and sometimes more importantly, regional — identities in a way that was less prominent at the end of the nineteenth century.

In the final decades of the nineteenth century, then, the monopoly held by the royal theatres started to subside. The country's shift in political emphasis from an autocracy to a democracy was reflected in its theatrical culture, symbolised by Oscar II handing financial responsibility of the Royal Theatre to the government in 1881. A combination of this theatrical devolution and the experimentation encouraged by Strindberg allowed for the diverse voices and styles that populated Swedish stages between 1908 and 1926, the years covered by the case studies in this thesis. In these two decades the theatres in Sweden underwent as many changes as they had in the twenty years between 1880 and 1900. Not least among these was the establishment of the Lorensberg, decentralising theatrical power within Sweden, followed by Helsingborg City Theatre in 1921, which would later be managed by Ingmar Bergman (1918-2007).<sup>156</sup> Nonetheless, the 1910s and 20s were not defined purely by change. There were significant lines of continuity as well, particularly where performance styles were concerned. Many twentieth century theatre practices

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<sup>155</sup> Anna Westerståhl Stenport: 'Introduction: The International Strindberg', *The International Strindberg: New Critical Essays* ed. Anna Westerståhl Stenport (Northwestern University Press, 2012), pp. 3-26, 7

<sup>156</sup> Helsingborg City Theatre replaced a pre-existing theatre built in 1877. This had been built on the site of a small theatre which had been existence since 1817, but was demolished to make way for the City Theatre. Helsingborg has a relatively strong theatrical tradition, premiering Ibsen's *Ghosts* in 1883, but the establishment of the City Theatre was nonetheless significant as it was the first city theatre to have its own resident company. Prior to 1921, the theatre had housed touring ensembles.

contained traces of melodrama, which dominated theatres in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Although the ‘modern psychological drama’ that Strindberg envisaged was essentially the polar opposite of melodramatic writing,<sup>157</sup> composers and designers often relied on the tropes established by melodramatic theatre in their scores, sets, and costumes. Additionally, the Royal Theatre continued to stage lavish productions that provided a bastion of conservatism for the theatrical modernisers to lambast — the heated debates of the early twentieth-century would not have been possible without the presence of multiple conflicting viewpoints, creating a forum for exchange.

#### **FOUNDATIONS: FINLAND**

Without a royal family, Finland’s theatres developed quite differently to Sweden’s. Its theatre history is more defined by nationalism, and the coexistence of both Swedish and Finnish as national languages. S. E. Wilmer writes that ‘The linguistic identity of National Theatres was often one of their most crucial aspects’,<sup>158</sup> and this is nowhere more apparent than in Finland, where the country’s divide in linguistic cultures is enshrined by Helsinki’s two foremost theatres, the Swedish Theatre and the National Theatre, which stand opposite each other on Helsinki’s central square.

Before 1860, Finnish theatre was performed in Swedish. Prior to Tsar Alexander II’s language manifesto of 1863, publishing in Finnish was prohibited, and Swedish was the main administrative and educational language despite being the first language of only 20 percent of the Finnish population. This did not stop Finnish nationalists dreaming of a Finnish-

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<sup>157</sup> Peter Brooks defines melodramatic writing as follows: ‘Melodramatic good and evil are highly personalized: they are assigned to, they inhabit persons who indeed have no psychological complexity but who are strongly characterized.’ Peter Brooks: *The Melodramatic Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) 16

<sup>158</sup> S. E. Wilmer: ‘National Theatres in 18th and 19th Century Europe’, *National Theatres in a Changing Europe*, 17

language theatre: in 1847, Zachris Topelius (1818-1898) proposed a permanent theatrical company that hired Swedish actors, but incorporated snippets of Finnish in the programme until eventually Finnish became more accepted as a cultural language. The hope was that in time, Finnish and Swedish stages would be able to separate, so that 'Finland would then own a national theatre next to the Swedish one.'<sup>159</sup> This would take several decades to be realised, however, but in 1872 the Suomalainen (Finnish) Theatre was founded, which would eventually become the National Theatre in 1902.<sup>160</sup>

From 1863 onwards, Finnish-language publication accelerated at a formidable rate, providing the repertoire for the National Theatre. The most formative figure for Finnish-language drama was Aleksis Kivi (1834-1872), who not only produced the first Finnish-language novel *Seitsemän veljestä* ('Seven Brothers', 1870) but also the play whose production led to the formation of the National Theatre.<sup>161</sup> Minna Canth (1844-1897) followed Kivi as the foremost representative of Finnish-language theatre, writing dramas that were staged by the National Theatre between 1885 and 1895. The critic and philosopher Georg Brandes' call for literature to 'subject problems to debate' was as popular in Finland as in Sweden, and all Canth's plays can be described as quasi-melodramatic societal examinations. Laitinen calls her play *Työmiehen vaimo* ('A Worker's Wife', 1885) 'the first explosive charge of realism' on the Finnish stage,<sup>162</sup> dealing with women's rights and social equality when both were charged topics within Finnish society. In the early 1900s the theatre also staged a

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<sup>159</sup> Zachris Topelius: 'The Future of Theatre in Finland', quoted in Wilmer, 'Finland', 107

<sup>160</sup> George C. Schoolfield: 'A Sense of Minority', *A History of Finland's Literature*, pp. 354-452, 356. Although the theatre did not become known as the National until 1902, I refer to it as the National throughout for the sake of clarity.

<sup>161</sup> The production in question was *Lea*, performed on 10 May 1869, which Laitinen claims can be 'considered the beginning of the activities of the Suomalainen... Theatre.' Laitinen: 'The Rise of Finnish-Language Literature', 75

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 88

considerable body of non-Finnish symbolist plays in translation, Maeterlinck's *Pelleas et Mélisande* with music by Sibelius being just one example.

Established in 1827, the Swedish Theatre has a claim to being the oldest theatre in Helsinki. It initially housed productions by touring companies predominantly from Sweden, Russia, and Germany, gaining a permanent company with Swedish actors in 1867.<sup>163</sup> Under the directorship of Nikolai Kiseleff (1820-83), the theatre was home to both plays and operas, presenting a balance of 'serious and classic *drama* repertoire along with operas, operettas and Singspiels' from 1867-1876.<sup>164</sup> Up until 1916, when the theatre was declared the Swedish national theatre in Finland, the Swedish Theatre staged a combination of plays and musical productions. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that so many of Sibelius's incidental scores were premiered at the Swedish Theatre, including *Kung Kristian II* ('King Christian II', 1898), *Finlandia* (1899), *Pelléas och Mélisande* (1905), *Belsazars Gästabud* ('Belshazzar's Feast' 1906) and *Ödlan* ('The Lizard', 1908). As far as dramatic repertoire was concerned, the theatre hosted a combination of contemporary and classic plays in translation, but the mainstay of its repertoire was Nordic drama and it staged only a limited number of works written by Swedish-speaking Finns.

Realism was adopted by many Finnish dramatists in the 1870s and 80s, largely thanks to the influence of Brandes, and the overwhelming presence of Norwegian playwrights on Finnish stages. Ibsen and Bjørnson were especially popular: *John Gabriel Borkman* (1896) received its world premiere in 1896 at both the National and Swedish Theatres simultaneously, performed in both languages, and *A Doll's House* was performed in Helsinki in 1880, only a

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<sup>163</sup> Anneli Suur-Kujala: 'Finland', *World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre Vol. 1*, pp. 250-261, 250

<sup>164</sup> Ulla-Britta Broman-Kananen: 'Beyond the National Gaze: Opera in Late 1870s Helsinki', *Critical Music Historiography: Probing Canons, Ideologies and Institutions* ed. Vesa Kurkela & Markus Mantere (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 69-78, 72

year after its Norwegian premiere.<sup>165</sup> Such was the domination of Norwegian drama that Ahokas writes that 'For approximately ten years ... according to a popular saying, Finland was a literary colony of Norway.'<sup>166</sup> Just as Strindberg conceived *Giftas* as a response to Ibsen, the Swedish-language author Ferdinand Wahlberg (1847-1920) wrote an answer to *A Doll's House* in 1881 entitled *Det omöjliga möjligt* ('The impossible possible'), in which the heroine is reconciled with her family. Wahlberg was overshadowed, however, by his contemporary Gustaf von Numers (1848-1913), who wrote comedies which were translated into Finnish as well as being published in their original Swedish, which contributed towards his popularity.<sup>167</sup>

Just as with the other Nordic countries, literary realism was challenged by symbolism towards the beginning of 1890. Brandes lectured on symbolism in 1887,<sup>168</sup> and Kasimir Leino presented a lecture on 'New Trends in French Literature' in 1891 following his studies in Paris.<sup>169</sup> After these introductions, symbolism was enthusiastically adopted by many in Finland, influenced by symbolist trends first and foremost in France, but also in the other Scandinavian countries. As Dawn Goss writes, 'For Finns struggling to formulate a national profile without isolating themselves from the vitalising stream of contemporary thought, Symbolism presented an exquisite solution: an international rationale for nationalistic thought.'<sup>170</sup> Juhani Aho (1861-1921), one of Finland's leading literary figures, adopted

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<sup>165</sup> Pirkko Koski & Pirjo Vaittinen: 'The Theatre System of Finland', *Theatre Worlds in Motion: Structures, Politics and Developments in the Countries of Western Europe* ed. Hans van Maanen & S. E. Wilmer (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998), pp. 161-192, 164, and Ahokas, 109

<sup>166</sup> Ahokas, 109

<sup>167</sup> Schoolfield, 'Sense of Minority', 389

<sup>168</sup> Laitinen, 99

<sup>169</sup> Dawn Goss, *Sibelius*, 163

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

symbolism after visiting France in 1889,<sup>171</sup> alongside Arvid Järnefelt (1861-1932) and Mikael Lybeck (1864-1925). Despite being the predominant artistic and literary movement in Finland throughout the 1890s, symbolism was under-represented amongst Finnish dramaturgy. Järnefelt's *Kuolema* was one of the few examples of symbolist theatre written in Finnish, while Swedish-language theatrical symbolism was largely represented by Lybeck and his plays such as *Ödlan* — both plays received incidental music written by Sibelius.

In many senses, the repertoires of the Swedish and National Theatres were not dissimilar. From its inception, the National Theatre was led by the siblings Emilie and Kaarlo Bergbom, who retained artistic control of the theatre until 1905.<sup>172</sup> Under Kaarlo's direction, the theatre's repertoire included Shakespeare, Molière, Holberg, and Schiller as well as more contemporary authors in translation such as Ibsen, Gogol, and Tolstoy.<sup>173</sup> Here, however, the similarities ended. The National's *raison d'être* was to create a nationalist stage, and their programme and casting choices were driven by this. Besides premiering the works of Kivi and Canth, much of the repertoire staged at the National was influenced by myth and the *Kalevala*, including stagings of Juhani Erkkö's *Aino* (1893) and *Kullervo* (1895). When the theatre was formally reopened as the National in 1902, it was Erkkö's play *Pohjolan häät* ('The Wedding at Pohjola') that was chosen for the ceremony.<sup>174</sup> The National Theatre became a political and cultural symbol in a way that had no parallel in Sweden: as Wilmer observes, 'That the National theatre is one of the most imposing buildings in Helsinki ... is testimony to the efforts of the Finnish-speaking people to provide an impressive edifice to express great pride in their culture.'<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Ahokas, 125

<sup>172</sup> Laitinen, 79

<sup>173</sup> Suur-Kujala, 251

<sup>174</sup> Ahokas, 143

<sup>175</sup> Wilmer, 'Finland', 109

Outside of the two main theatres, as in Sweden, the late nineteenth-century saw a diversification in theatrical life, both in the capital and across the country.<sup>176</sup> Most significant among these were the workers' theatres, which began appearing from the 1880s onwards. As Anneli Suur-Kujala documents, 'The labour movement adopted theatre as one of its main cultural interests and used it as an instrument in its fight for cultural and socio-economic change. Often, two theatres would be founded in the same locality — a workers' theatre and a so-called middle-class theatre.'<sup>177</sup> This was the case in Tampere, where the Workers' Theatre was founded in 1901, followed by the Tampere Theatre built in the National Romantic style in 1904. These theatres were not limited to the capital: although some of these enterprises were located in Helsinki, such as the 1902 Helsingin Työväenteatteri ('Workers' Theatre of Helsinki'), the majority were based elsewhere, allowing for a similar blossoming of regional theatre as in Sweden.

Both Finnish- and Swedish-language communities established journals, newspapers, and periodicals in order to discuss the ideas circulating around the country and across the continent. The most prominent Swedish-language periodicals were *Ateneum* (1898-1903), *Euterpe* (1901-1905), and *Argus* (1908-). Finnish-language writing was most extensively represented by *Päivälehti* ('Daily' 1899-1904, at which point it became *Helsingin Sanomat* ['Helsinki Newspaper'], which grew to become one of the largest newspapers in Finland today), and its arts supplement *Nuori Suomi* ('Young Finland').<sup>178</sup> It is here that treating Swedish- and Finnish-language culture separately becomes especially problematic when dealing with composers like Sibelius — he spoke both languages and was associated with

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<sup>176</sup> A Russian Theatre was also built in Helsinki, performing in Russian — the Alexander Theatre, which opened in 1880.

<sup>177</sup> Suur-Kujala, 251

<sup>178</sup> The term 'Nuori Suomi' was also attached to a political group established in 1894, which grew out of a cultural group established by writers such as Canth, Aho, and Arvid Järnefelt.

the circles surrounding *Euterpe* and *Päivälehti*.<sup>179</sup> Far from the two cultures being entirely separable, as Ahokas argues,<sup>180</sup> as far as Sibelius was concerned the 1890s were characterised by artistic and linguistic exchange. He had premieres of his music at both the Swedish and National Theatres (despite his outburst against those associated with the Swedish Theatre in 1892),<sup>181</sup> and wrote incidental scores for plays in both Finnish and Swedish. Even if very few authors wrote in both languages, they socialised with musicians and artists who bridged the two cultures. Far more pertinent for Sibelius is Laitinen's observation about the intermixing of arts during this period, such that 'The same motifs might move from one form of art to another',<sup>182</sup> with musicians taking inspiration from literature and art, and vice versa.

#### STYLISTIC PLURALITY, STYLISTIC CHANGE

Throughout the early twentieth-century, theatres in both Sweden and Finland were active members of a cultural network that spanned Europe, Russia, and more remotely the United States. They both participated in and responded to the changing stylistic trends across the continent — the early 1900s in these countries were home to the same stylistic potpourri that characterised the rest of Europe's theatres, both in terms of playwriting and performance. Ideas spread on paper and in person, as the Nordic countries both imported and exported texts in translation, and practitioners travelled extensively — they studied, lived, and performed abroad as well as in Scandinavia. Consequently whether these trends originated in the Nordic countries or were imported from elsewhere, they took nationally and

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<sup>179</sup> Erik Tawaststjerna: *Sibelius Vol. I* trans. Robert Layton (London: Faber & Faber, 1976) 100-101, and 270-71

<sup>180</sup> Ahokas, 385

<sup>181</sup> Prompted by his frustration with Wegelius, who tried to dissuade Sibelius from mixing in Fennoman circles, Sibelius wrote to Aino 'I can't swallow that sort of thing! That goes for the whole of the Swedish Theatre faction, all those imported Stockholmers; I loathe them.' Nonetheless as Tawaststjerna points out, this letter was probably written 'with the thought of Aino in mind', and despite Sibelius's protestations, 'matters never came to a head' and he continued to socialise with both Swedish and Finnish speakers. (Tawaststjerna, *Sibelius Vol. I*, 103)

<sup>182</sup> Laitinen, 101

regionally inflected forms as they made their way from country to country, tailored to the specific socio-political circumstances of the text's or production's origin. The history of the early-twentieth century in Scandinavia is one of constant reciprocal exchange, and of balancing the expression of regional, national, and international identities.

The two most prominent performance styles in the early years of the twentieth century were, as at the end of the nineteenth century, realism and symbolism. By 1908, however, realism had largely been abandoned, except by the larger theatres, who retained realist performance styles into the 1920s. In this year, Strindberg wrote to August Falck that realism was 'passé',<sup>183</sup> and the Russian theorist and novelist Andrey Bely declared that 'Modern art is defined as symbolist art.'<sup>184</sup> The boundaries between realism and symbolism were, however, blurred, both in performance and on paper. Bely claimed in 1904 that realist theatre such as Chekhov's became symbolist almost by accident. In a study of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, first published in a Russian symbolist journal, Bely wrote that 'an instant of life taken by itself as it is deeply probed becomes a doorway to infinity ... Tell such an artist that he has penetrated *the world beyond*, and he will not believe you ... He does not believe that the reality he depicts is no longer, in a certain sense, reality.'<sup>185</sup> The porous boundary between realism and symbolism is perhaps best demonstrated by Stanislavsky's use of sound when staging Chekhov. He used thunder machines to create pathetic fallacy, and employed the sound of frogs 'to give the impression of total silence.' As Stanislavsky explained, 'on stage silence is expressed by sounds, and not by their absence',<sup>186</sup> and the sense of ominous

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<sup>183</sup> Strindberg to August Falck, 25/04/1908, *Theatre in Europe: A Documentary History. Naturalism and Symbolism in European Theatre 1850-1918* ed. Claude Schumacker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 309

<sup>184</sup> Andrey Bely: 'Theatre and Modern Drama', *Russian Dramatic Theory*, 160. First printed in 1908 in *Teatr: Kniga o novom teatre*.

<sup>185</sup> Andrey Bely: 'The Cherry Orchard', *Russian Dramatic Theory*, 89. First printed in 1904 in *Balances*.

<sup>186</sup> Stanislavsky to Nemoriovich-Danchenco, 10/09/1898, *Stanislavsky: A Life in Letters*, 110

foreboding supposed to be being experienced by the characters was only possible to convey through the *impression* of silence. Leonid Andreyev, in an article of 1912, explained that Chekhov's sound effects — and Stanislavsky's renderings of them — were so significant because they articulated the psychology of the play and its characters. According to Andreyev, Chekhov must be performed by not only people but by the scenery and sounds as well: 'In *The Cherry Orchard* Chekhov suddenly intrudes a ... sound that is impossible to reproduce — but it is indispensable, an indispensable part of the soul of the play's protagonists; without it they would not be what they are, without it there would even be no Chekhov.'<sup>187</sup>

The role that sound and music played in psychological expression on the stage became an increasingly theorised topic throughout the early twentieth-century. Symbolism had prompted authors to explore how media other than words and gesture might aid the articulation of an inner experience of, or communication with, a symbolic otherworld. This manifested itself in multiple forms, including authors incorporating music and sound in a symbolic fashion in their scripts. Strindberg used music to stand in for characters: in *Ovänder* ('Thunder in the Air', 1907), Gerda's partner never appears onstage, but his presence is felt through the music he plays, Chopin's 'Fantasie Impromptu'. The offstage sound of the piece is used as a means of causing psychological distress, discomforting the protagonist who asks 'Who is that playing my impromptu?',<sup>188</sup> unsettled by somebody else encroaching on his mental and physical space by adopting 'his' music. Maurice Maeterlinck's (1862-1949) writing, meanwhile, was characterised by prolonged silences and noises which were, in Adrian Curtin's words, designed to 'unsettle, thereby introducing a necessary alterity, a

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<sup>187</sup> Leonid Andreyev: 'Letters on the Theatre', *Russian Dramatic Theory*, 240. First printed in 1912 in *Maski*. In this article, Andreyev called music 'psychism's most direct and sharpest weapon ... more suitably than anything else for artistically psychological purposes.' (270)

<sup>188</sup> August Strindberg: 'Thunder in the Air', *The Chamber Plays* trans. Eivor Martinus (Oxford: Amber Lane Press, 2004) 48

quotient of mystery or abstraction in keeping with symbolist ethos'.<sup>189</sup> Theatrical practices had to catch up with authors' requirements — where realist productions might have only used diegetic music, or very little sound at all,<sup>190</sup> symbolist theatre and its successors allowed for far more expansive use of incidental music.

As the first decade of the 1900s progressed, symbolist stage directions developed into ever more impossible sounds, provoking debate about whether symbolist dramas were better performed or read. From Chekhov's breaking string and Maeterlinck's pregnant pauses grew sounds such as in Andreyev's *Anathema* (1909), which contains the instructions for a sound which is 'like one footstep, but many people are coming; they are silent, but the silence is already quivering ... somewhere below, in the invisible distance, on earth, long trumpets, carried by hands uplifted high, are blaring in rebellious, grasslike tones.'<sup>191</sup> Instructions such as these are a challenge to a director, but in some respects they are utterly impossible to achieve. The nuance which Andreyev conveys on the page is inaccessible in performance. Subsequently many theorists argued in favour of symbolist dramas staying off the stage. Bely wrote that 'The theatre is no place for symbolist drama.'<sup>192</sup> Others envisaged ways in which reading and performance might be incorporated, Fyodor Sologub arguing in favour of a drama where a reader sits on a stage and reads an entire play, including the preface and stage directions.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Curtin, 36

<sup>190</sup> See for example *Miss Julie*, where the only music accompanies a Midsummer dance. Strindberg asks that the director 'select this music with great care so that the wrong associations are not aroused by recollections of the latest operettas or dance tunes or by the use of ultra-ethnographic folk music.' Strindberg, 'Preface to *Miss Julie*', 65

<sup>191</sup> Leonid Andreyev: *Anathema* trans. Herman Bernstein (Unknown: Pendle Hill Classics, Print on Demand) 13

<sup>192</sup> Bely, 'Theatre and Modern Drama', 166

<sup>193</sup> Fyodor Sologub: 'The Theatre of a Single Will', *Russian Dramatic Theory*, 147. First published in 1908 in *Theatre: A Book on the New Theatre*.

Underlying many of the disapprovals of symbolist theatre in performance was what Martin Puchner has identified as an undercurrent of 'anti-theatricality' running through some early twentieth-century writing. He writes that many authors and theorists felt that 'the theatre's reliance on human actors is its greatest liability',<sup>194</sup> and that actors should be disposed of altogether. Both Maeterlinck and Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966) famously proposed a theatre of marionettes, so that the author could directly communicate with the audience without the disruptive influence of the actor, who is him/herself a symbol. Closet dramas such as Stéphane Mallarmé's *Hérodiade* (1864-67) were the antidote to the problematic actor — small dramas designed to be read rather than performed, for an ideal audience which Puchner describes as 'an extension of ... [a] poetry reading.'<sup>195</sup>

This was offset, however, by others who embraced the theatrical, the flamboyant, and the spectacular. The Austrian director Max Reinhardt staged enormous site-specific performances, in venues chosen for their size and capacity for spectacle. Most remarkable of these was his 1911 production of a pantomime called *The Miracle* at the London Olympia, which seated 8000 and boasted a cast of 2000 actors and 700 musicians, with music by Engelbert Humperdinck.<sup>196</sup> In the same year Reinhardt brought a smaller-scale production with a similar impetus to Stockholm, staging *Oedipus* in the circus at Djurgården. Reinhardt's productions bear some comparison to the vogue for 'total spectacle' in France, best represented by the Festival des Arènes de Béziers. This was a summer festival which hosted open-air productions in a spirit of Hellenic revivalism, aiming to 'assert a common lineage between ancient Greece and modern France.'<sup>197</sup> Christopher Moore argues that the

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<sup>194</sup> Martin Puchner: *Stage Fright: Modernism, Anti-theatricality, and Drama* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 2002) 6, 5

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 69

<sup>196</sup> J. L. Styan: *Max Reinhardt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 100

<sup>197</sup> Moore, 213

productions at Béziers were conceived as an answer to 'the Wagnerian music drama',<sup>198</sup> with some critics terming the festival the "French Bayreuth".<sup>199</sup> Subsequently composers as prominent as Saint-Saëns and Fauré were commissioned to write music for productions at Béziers, as 'music ... was an integral part of a "total spectacle", which, while inspired by an ancient model, drew upon modern developments in music, poetry, and the technologies of theatrical production.'<sup>200</sup>

The idea of Hellenic revivalism, however, is where the Béziers productions and those by Reinhardt differed. Reinhardt's stance was not motivated by a desire to reconnect with ancient civilisations. He wanted to offer a counter to realism, and the socially elitist idea of theatre being cultivated by those such as W. B. Yeats (1865-1939), who expressed a wish to 'make a theatre for ourselves and our friends, and a few simple people who understand from sheer simplicity what we understand from scholarship and thought.'<sup>201</sup> Reinhardt's biographer J. L. Styan argues that Reinhardt's success as a director was at least in part 'due to its exuberant theatricality, its sense of life and colour after a period of drab realism', and the fact that he embraced the actor as a valuable — even essential — part of theatrical practice.<sup>202</sup> Where others sought to limit audiences and contain the drama within the realms of the text, Reinhardt's circus theatre was unashamedly performative, trying to appeal to as many people as possible.

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<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 214

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, 222

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 214

<sup>201</sup> William Yeats: 'The Theatre', George W. Brandt (ed.): *Modern Theories of Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 123. First published in 1899.

<sup>202</sup> Styan, 3

By 1910, then, symbolism was widely considered the most modern theatrical style in the Nordic countries, but had not entirely replaced realism — smaller more experimental theatres were quicker to embrace new ideas than the larger, more conservative stages, which continued to stage realist productions. The problems and possibilities presented by symbolist theatre provoked discussion about how *theatrical* theatre should be, what role music should play in the theatre, and most importantly who the theatre was *for* — whether it should aim for audiences in the thousands, or remain a predominantly bourgeois pursuit. These provided the foundations for the next twenty years of theatrical debate in Swedish-speaking culture, which largely centred around these issues.<sup>203</sup> In Sweden, this culminated in Per Lindberg's attempt to establish a 'People's Theatre', discussed at greater length in Chapters 4 and 5. Socialism gained prominence in Sweden from 1917 onwards, impacting on the country's theatrical culture. The idea of a 'People's Theatre' gained traction after the First World War, responding to the changing political situation in the country. Many cities in Sweden had witnessed bread riots in 1917 where workers protested over food shortages, inspired by political events in Russia.<sup>204</sup> While these never broke into full political uprisings, many escalated into large enough protests that the police were called in to control the crowds. In cities such as Gothenburg which had been sites for these riots, it became increasingly difficult to justify the small, bourgeois theatres beloved of symbolist drama. These fell out of fashion, with many Swedish practitioners and critics arguing in favour of a modern drama that reached as many people as possible.

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<sup>203</sup> Finnish-language theatre was dealing with quite a different set of problems and subsequent solutions. It did not have the entrenched associations with bourgeois culture as in Sweden — workers' theatres had been in existence throughout the 1880s and continued to thrive throughout the early years of the twentieth century, eschewing the need for a Lindbergian attempt at a 'People's Theatre'.

<sup>204</sup> Events in Finland took quite a different turn. 1917 was the year of the Civil War, which was won by the conservative royalists supported by German forces. The losing side was led by the Social Democratic Party, and although the resulting political situation was defined by democratic compromise, socialism did not gain the same kind of monopoly as it did in Sweden in the 1920s.

Symbolism and realism were not the only stylistic influences within the Nordic countries, however. Expressionism and vitalism also emerged as dominant cultural forces in the later years of the 1910s.<sup>205</sup> Reinhardt truly adopted Strindberg's attitude that to be 'modern' meant to be flexible and stylistically plural, for while he was exporting enormous productions abroad, at home in Germany he was cultivating the beginnings of German theatrical expressionism, creating the chamber productions that would begin to earn Strindberg his reputation as the father of expressionism. Expressionism was characterised by intense individualism, focusing on expression of on person's psychological processes. As Payette explains, the novel aspect of expressionism which distinguished it from symbolism was the 'attempt to transplant the audience *into* the protagonist's psyche, largely through a breakdown of language, in order to gauge the transpiring action and an understanding of the past *exclusively* from the protagonist's perspective.'<sup>206</sup> The emphasis on the breakdown of language meant that expressionism found a natural home in dance and pantomime, with authors such as Frank Wedekind (1864-1918), Arthur Schnitzler (1862-1931), and Poul Knudsen writing expressionist pantomimes throughout the 1890s and 1900s — Knudsen would provide the scenario for Sibelius's *Scaramouche*, the focus of Chapter 3.<sup>207</sup>

Vitalism stood in opposition to expressionism's intense and torturous explorations of internal psychology. Based on the biology of Hans Drieck and Henri Bergson's theory of the *élan vital*, vitalism's focus was on the body and its relationship with nature, positing that all of existence is interconnected by an eternally mobile, invigorating 'life force'. Daniel Grimley has explored this trend in Denmark and its relationship to Nielsen's music, writing that it

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<sup>205</sup> Anneli Suur-Kujala notes the significance of expressionism to Finnish theatrical performance as well as its writing, 251.

<sup>206</sup> Payette, 138. Emphases my own.

<sup>207</sup> Wedekind's *Tanzpantomimen* are *Die Flöhe oder der Schmerzenstanz*, *Der Münchenprinz*, *Bethel*, and *Die Kaiserin von Neufundland*; Schnitzler's *Die Verwandlung des Pierrots* was later turned into a ballet with music by Ernő Dohnányi.

‘expressed itself as a sense of crisis, a reaction to a feeling of the world in decline, which prompted the demand for a fresh start or reinvigoration of culture and society.’<sup>208</sup> This was no less the case in Sweden and Finland, where it persisted throughout the early years of the twentieth century, and continued to find support after the First World War, particularly from the architects Alvar Aalto in Finland, and Gunnar Asplund in Sweden.<sup>209</sup>

In the years around 1900, vitalism in Sweden and Finland was remarkably similar to the Danish Hellenism described by Grimley. It manifested itself almost as a cult of male adoration, focusing on an idealised synergy between nature and the athletic male body.

While a curvaceous and fertile figure was celebrated for women,<sup>210</sup> it was predominantly the male figure that preoccupied early vitalist art, ‘the dream of a modern Superman typified by health, energy, strength and beauty’.<sup>211</sup> The male ideal was athletic and muscular, a physique that could only be obtained through physical fitness — vitalism had no room for unruly and imperfect bodies. Consequently bodybuilders, gymnasts, and dancers were the icons of the vitalist movement, particularly J. P. Muller (1866-1938), author of *Mitt System — 15 minutter dagligt Arbejde for Sundhedens Skyld* (‘My System — 15 Minutes Daily Work for Better

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<sup>208</sup> Grimley, *Nielsen*, 67-8. This movement was well established in Norway as well — both Knut Hamsun and Edvard Munch took inspiration from and helped to shape Scandinavian vitalism (with works such as *Pan* [1894] and *Badande man* [1918] respectively).

<sup>209</sup> Asplund designed Skogskyrkogården (‘The Woodland Cemetery’) in Stockholm with Sigurd Lewerentz. The whole cemetery is a formidable example of architectural vitalism, including vitalist sculptures by Carl Milles and Carl Eldh. For further reading on the Woodland Cemetery, see: Malcolm Woollen: ‘Woodland Cemetery: Modernism and Memory’, *Rhetoric, Remembrance, and Visual Form: Sighting Memory* ed. Anne Theresa Demo & Bradford Vivian (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 67-88, and Peter Blundell Jones: *Gunnar Asplund* (London: Phaidon, 2011). For the influence of vitalism on Aalto, see Harry Charrington: ‘A Persuasive Topology: Alvar Aalto and the Ambience of History’, *The Cultural Role of Architecture* ed. Paul Emmons, John Hendrix & Jane Lomholt (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 102-113

<sup>210</sup> In 1913, a beauty contest was held in Stockholm, with the prize awarded to the woman who most resembled the Venus de Milo.

<sup>211</sup> Gertrud Hvidberg-Hansen & Gertrud Oelsner (eds.): *The Spirit of Vitalism: Health, Beauty and Strength in Danish Art, 1890-1940* trans. James Manley (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2011)

Health'),<sup>212</sup> and Émile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865-1950), developer of eurhythmics. As discussed in detail in Chapter 3, eurhythmics was especially popular in the Nordic countries, finding disciples in Sweden and Finland in the form of dancers Anna Behle (1876-1966) and Maggie Gripenberg (1881-1976), respectively, who taught and danced according to Dalcrozean method.

It is difficult to gain a comprehensive overview of musical and theatrical culture in the Nordic countries at the turn of the century without considering dance. Aside from the fact that many theatre directors also directed ballets and operas, dance was formative for the development of symbolism, expressionism, and vitalism, and was widely practiced in Scandinavia. Contemporary dancers such as Isadora Duncan (1877-1927) were reviewed and discussed in the press. Maggie Gripenberg, in particular, was promoted in Finland, where she was lauded as the Nordic answer to Duncan. The Nordic countries actively participated in both the cultivation of modern dance, and discussions about the future of the art form. Additionally there were plenty of opportunities to see modern dancers on Scandinavian stages. Michel Fokine taught in Copenhagen for a year in 1919, and in Stockholm in 1913, where he tutored the young Swedish dancers Jenny Hasselqvist (1894-1978) and Jean Börlin (1893-1930). Hasselqvist would later hold solo roles in Fokine's *Sylphides* and *Cléopâtre*, and toured throughout Europe as a dancer.

Much of the cast and crew for the 1924 production of *Scaramouche* were part of this cross-continental body of dancers. The choreographer, Emilie Walbom (1858-1932), was heavily influenced by Fokine, and her 1918 production of *A Night in Egypt* was closely modelled on his *Cléopâtre*.<sup>213</sup> Like Hasselqvist, Walbom travelled extensively, and established relationships

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<sup>212</sup> Grimley, *Nielsen*, 69

<sup>213</sup> Mary Fraker: 'Russian Influences on the Danish Ballet, 1915-1932', *Dance Chronicle*, Vol. 3/1 (1979), pp. 22-35, 25

with dancers such as Isadora Duncan, Anna Pavlova (1881-1931), and Loïe Fuller (1862-1928). Nonetheless she was recognised as a significant choreographer in her own right with a distinctive style of her own, becoming the first female choreographer at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen, and running her own dance school in the city from 1910-28.

There was a steady influx of ideas into the Nordic countries, but they also exported their own dance forms. Besides touring choreographers and dancers such as Walbom and Hasselqvist,<sup>214</sup> their most significant export was the Ballets Suédois, which George Dorris calls 'the company that provided the greatest challenge to the Diaghilev Ballets Russes.'<sup>215</sup> Funded by the Swedish impresario Rolf de Maré (1888-1964) and choreographed by his lover, Jean Börlin, the Ballets Suédois ran from 1920-1925, producing some of the most progressive art on Parisian stages.<sup>216</sup> Börlin received especial praise from the Parisian press, hailed as 'the equal of ... Nijinsky.'<sup>217</sup> Ebon Strandin (1894-1977), who danced Blondelaine in *Scaramouche*, had previously performed for the Ballets Suédois. She worked with Börlin on multiple occasions, dancing alongside him in four productions in 1923 alone.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Hasselqvist also performed with the Ballets Suédois from their first season.

<sup>215</sup> George Dorris: 'Jean Borlin as Dancer and Choreographer', *Dance Chronicle*, Vol. 22/2 (1999), pp. 167-188, 167

<sup>216</sup> They had an impressive list of collaborators, including Nils von Dardel (with whom Maré established the company), Jean Cocteau, Erik Satie, Darius Milhaud, Luigi Pirandello, Paul Claudel, Fokine, Debussy, and Ravel.

<sup>217</sup> Quoted in Lynette Miller Gottlieb: 'Images, Technology, and Music: The Ballets Suédois and "Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel"', *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 88/4 (Winter 2005), pp. 523-555, 525

<sup>218</sup> *La Création du Monde* (music by Milhaud) and *Within the Quota* (music by Cole Porter) at the Ballets Suédois in Paris, and *De Fåvitska Jungfruna* (music by Kurt Atterberg) and *Fågelhandlaren* (music by Germaine Tailleferre) at the Royal Theatre in Stockholm. *Fåvitska* and *Fågelhandlaren* were revivals of Ballets Suédois productions. Strandin also performed solos at the Ballets Suédois; *Trollflickan ur Bergakungen* with music by Hugo Alfvén, and *Tzigane* with music by Saint-Saëns. Börlin had previously choreographed for Strandin, including *Legende Dreng* in 1918 with music by Grieg, and danced with her in *Krigsdans* at the Stockholm Royal Theatre in 1919, with music by Berlioz and choreography by Fokine.

The Ballets Suédois also played a significant cultural role in exporting Swedish naïvism to Paris, a movement with roots in the naïve art of Henri Rousseau and Paul Gauguin. Naïvism gained in significance in Sweden throughout the late 1910s and 20s, and often drew on themes from Swedish folk art, presenting them in a deliberately childlike style and relying on intertextual reference for their effectiveness. One of Swedish naïvism's champions, Nils von Dardel (1888-1943), not only helped to set up the Ballets Suédois but also designed sets for the company. His set for *Nuit de Saint Jean*, produced in 1920 with music Hugo Alfvén (1872-1960), was unmistakably naïvist, as were Einar Nerman's (1888-1983) designs for *Les Vierges folles* ('The Foolish Virgins'),<sup>219</sup> staged in 1920 with music by Kurt Atterberg (1887-1974). Swedish naïvism, then, developed both at home and abroad, with a breakthrough exhibition in Stockholm in 1918 at the Nya Konstgalleri (New Art Gallery).

The first twenty years of the twentieth century in the Nordic countries were a stylistic melting pot, with theatrical practice becoming increasingly varied as the decades progressed. I have highlighted here only the styles most relevant for the case studies in this thesis, but various other movements were also present within the Nordic countries, not least futurism and spiritualism, both of which were adopted enthusiastically by authors such as Frosterus. All of these movements were considered to be modern at different times and by different people: there was no universal consensus on what the most progressive route for theatre should be. Nonetheless some general trends can be established — as the leading modern movement, realism was replaced by symbolism, which was then considered the most progressive style from approximately 1900 until 1908. Symbolism was in turn supplanted by expressionism and vitalism in the years preceding the First World War, followed by a rise in explicitly politically motivated theatre which adopted any number of stylistic combinations

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<sup>219</sup> Nerman's design was based on an 18th century Swedish painting, *De favitska jungfruarna*. Anna Greta Ståhle: 'What was Swedish about the Swedish Ballet?', *Paris Modern: The Swedish Ballet 1920-1925* ed. Nancy Van Norman Baer (San Francisco: Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 1995), pp. 56-65, 59

(although in Sweden the dominant trend moved away from small, socially exclusive theatres). Music was central to all of these developments, whether as the foundation for eurhythmics, part of the spectacle of popular theatre, or used to express psychological states in symbolist and expressionist drama.

### **WAGNER'S SHADOW?**

The figure hovering over early-twentieth century drama — especially dramatic music — was Richard Wagner. All of the figures discussed in this thesis had conflicted relationships with Wagner, both as a theorist and as a musician. This reflects the attitude to Wagner in Sweden and Finland as a whole. He had his fair share of devotees in the Nordic countries as much as in central Europe: August Söderman and Armas Järnefelt adored Wagner, and Adolf Lindgren's writings about the composer did much to raise awareness of Wagner as a political and theoretical writer as well as a musician. Nonetheless, enthusiasm for, and hatred of Wagner never reached levels of fervour in the Nordic countries comparable to those in France and Germany. Having some distance from mainland Europe, both geographically and culturally, meant that Wagner could assume a less domineering presence in Scandinavia than elsewhere. His impact on early twentieth-century Nordic drama should not be overstated at the expense of other, more contemporary influences such as modern art, dance and literature.

Hannu Salmi's book on the reception of Wagner in Finland and Sweden provides an excellent overview of these countries' reactions to the composer. He stresses the difference between Finnish- and Swedish-language reception, and how the different political situations in both countries tailored responses to Wagner. In Finland, fighting for independence and under foreign rule, 'Wagner's art [became] a complex and potentially divisive issue',<sup>220</sup> and

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<sup>220</sup> Hannu Salmi: *Wagner and Wagnerism in Nineteenth-Century Sweden, Finland, and the Baltic Provinces* (Suffolk: University of Rochester Press, 2005) 6

he was initially associated with upper-class, Swedish culture. As Halmi explains, in 1850 when Frederik Pacius's opera *Kung Karls jakt* ('King Charles's hunt', 1852) was premiered, 'the gulf between Finnish and Swedish culture in Finland was so deep at that time that newspapers like the *Suometar* dealt mainly with subjects such as the catechism and lichen bread, not opera ... there was no word for "opera" in the Finnish language at the time.'<sup>221</sup> Enthusiasm for Finnish-language discussion of Wagner was scant, and reception of his music and theories was mainly located in the Swedish-speaking press. Interest in Wagner grew as the century progressed, with figures such as Martin Wegelius embracing both his music and his anti-Semitic writing, but Wagner did not hold a God-like status within Finnish-language culture by the end of the nineteenth century. No music-historical books had been produced that were devoted to him, and Finland had to wait until 1904 for the first staging of a Wagner opera, meaning that Finns had to travel if they wanted to see a fully staged production.<sup>222</sup> Audiences could, however, hear Wagner's overtures at Robert Kajanus's concerts, or watch selected opera scenes at the Helsinki Music Institute concerts led by Wegelius. Mäkelä argues that Kajanus and Wegelius represent 'the conflict between ... two different forms of the Wagnerian reform stance in Helsinki' at the end of the nineteenth century, seeing themselves as modern pioneers and academic classicists respectively.<sup>223</sup>

Sibelius's first exposure to Wagner came from his tuition, and travels abroad. He studied with Wegelius, and when he travelled to Berlin in 1889 he enthusiastically documented his encounters with Wagner to his teacher, writing 'I've heard *Meistersinger* and *Tannhäuser* and am completely out of my mind. This music is just great.'<sup>224</sup> However as with all of Sibelius's correspondence, these remarks need to be read with a view to their intended recipient.

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<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 94

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, 103

<sup>223</sup> Mäkelä, *Sibelius*, 163

<sup>224</sup> Sibelius to Wegelius, 29/09/1889, quoted in Dawn Goss, *Sibelius*, 179

Sibelius wrote of unbridled enthusiasm to his Wagner-devotee tutor, but expressed himself in more candid and hesitant terms to his wife a month earlier: 'I was terribly enthusiastic about *Die Meistersinger*. But, strangely enough, I am no longer a Wagnerian. I cannot help it. My own voices are guiding me.'<sup>225</sup> It is likely that as Mäkelä suggests, Sibelius's more nuanced letter to his wife is indicative of his rejection of 'trivial Wagnerism'<sup>226</sup> rather than dismissing Wagner's music entirely. This is certainly corroborated by a later statement recorded by Karl Ekman, in which Sibelius remarked that 'My decided antagonism to Wagner in my youth was, I fancy, dictated to some extent by the fear of being subjected to an influence that I had seen taking possession of so many of my friends, both old and young.'<sup>227</sup> While he continued to express interest in Wagner's music throughout the early 1890s, visiting Bayreuth in 1894, he continually resisted the idol-worship espoused by the most effusive Wagner enthusiasts. Not least among these was his brother-in-law, Armas Järnefelt, who made comments such as 'When Wagner came into my life, it came like a fever which caught a man in an overwhelming, uncritical ecstasy, and which cannot be compared to anything other than an ardent falling-in-love, which neither judges nor reconsiders, neither hears nor sees.'<sup>228</sup> No doubt it was attitudes such as this which gave Sibelius pause when interacting with Wagner.

The circumstances surrounding Sibelius's attempts to write a Wagnerian opera are so well documented that they do not require further rehearsal here.<sup>229</sup> Unable to complete the operatic project *Veneen luominen* ('The building of the boat', 1893), Sibelius turned instead to tone poems, writing to Aino in 1894 that 'I am really a tone painter and poet. Liszt's views

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<sup>225</sup> Sibelius to Aino, 22/08/1894, quoted in Mäkelä, *Sibelius*, 157

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>227</sup> Karl Ekman: *Jean Sibelius: His Life and Personality* (London: Alan Wilmer, 1936) 245

<sup>228</sup> Quoted in Eero Tarasti, 'Sibelius and Wagner', *The Sibelius Companion* ed. Glenda Dawn Goss (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1996), pp. 61-75, 63

<sup>229</sup> See *ibid.*; Mäkelä, *Sibelius*, 200-202; and Tawaststjerna, *Sibelius Vol. I*, pp. 141-162

about music are most closely related to my own.'<sup>230</sup> He would also later turn to incidental music, composing the music for *King Christian II* in 1898, to a text by his friend Adolf Paul. Sibelius's dramatic proclivities found a more natural home in tone poems and incidental scores, in genres where he was better able to escape the influence of Wagner's music on his own. He lamented to Rosa Newmarch in 1913 that 'It strikes me ... that musicians are still writing in the post-Wagnerian style — with the same laughable poses and the still more laughable would-be profundity',<sup>231</sup> a situation that he was keen to avoid in his own work. Nonetheless, even in his non-operatic works Wagner continued to surface as a background influence — Strindberg's text for *Svanevit* is full of references to both *Tristan und Isolde* and *Lohengrin*, and moments in Sibelius's score are redolent of his 'Swan of Tuonela' (1895), in which, as Mäkelä shrewdly puts it, Sibelius 'only narrowly avoided crudely plagiarising the opening bars of the prelude to *Lohengrin*.'<sup>232</sup>

Strindberg, characteristically, had a love-hate relationship with Wagner that fluctuated between extremes. For the most part, he seems to have thought differently about Wagner the writer and Wagner the musician. In his autobiographical publication *Legender* ('Legends' 1898), he wrote that Wagner's brilliance was obscured by his music. The book contains sections from his diary, and the entry for May 3 1897 reads 'In reading Wagner's *Rheingold*, I discover a great poet, and understand now why I have not comprehended the greatness of this musician, whose music is only accompaniment to the text.'<sup>233</sup> This diary entry also

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<sup>230</sup> Sibelius to Aino, 19/08/1894, quoted in Mäkelä, *Sibelius*, 156

<sup>231</sup> Sibelius to Rosa Newmarch, 10/10/1913, quoted in Philip Bullock (ed.): *The Correspondence of Jean Sibelius and Rosa Newmarch 1906-1939* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011) 175

<sup>232</sup> Mäkelä, *Sibelius*, 155

<sup>233</sup> 'Vid läsningen av Wagners *Rheingold* upptäcker jag en stor skald och förstår varför jag icke har begripit storheten hos denne musiker, vars musik endast är ackompanjemang till texten.' August Strindberg: *Legender* ed. Ann-Charlotte Gavel Adams (Stockholm: Norstedts, 2001) 171

implies that Strindberg felt a particular connection to the text for *Rheingold*, claiming that the sections about gold were written directly for him, as an alchemist.<sup>234</sup>

Whatever admiration Strindberg might have had for Wagner did not last long, however — or at least not as far as he was willing to admit publicly. In his 1904 novel *Svarta fanor* ('Black Banners') he savaged Wagner and his devotees. He wrote of the music that 'Concerning Wagner's development of and innovations in the area of harmony, these are not innovations and there is no development',<sup>235</sup> while he reserved especial bile for 'Wagnerites', saying that 'When an insignificant, vapid person has no sense of identity, he can claim to be a Wagnerite.'<sup>236</sup> Of course, Strindberg's autobiographical writings should not always be taken literally. All his public self-portrayals are carefully crafted documents of performed identity, permanently cognisant of his audience. His private correspondence shows a much more measured perspective. In a letter to his friend the composer Tor Aulin (1866-1914), his assessment of Wagner was not complimentary, but struck far from the dismissive tone adopted in *Svarta fanor*. Discussing the future of Swedish music, he wrote that 'When an art form has developed over a long period and become complex (Wagner) and turned into a form of higher mathematics, as music has done, there is usually a return to simplicity.'<sup>237</sup> Here, Wagner's greatest crime is complexity which, while undesirable in the context of Strindberg's opinion expressed in the rest of the letter, is far from the previous accusation of being 'ugly, banal, baroque, and derivative.'<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> 'För övrigt är Rheingold skriven för min räkning.' *Ibid.*

<sup>235</sup> August Strindberg: *Black Banners* trans. Donald K. Weaver (New York: Peter Lang, 2010) 124

<sup>236</sup> Strindberg, *Black Banners*, 125

<sup>237</sup> Strindberg to Tor Aulin 28/01/1908, quoted in August Strindberg: *Strindberg's Letters Vol. II* ed. Michael Robinson (London: Athlone Press, 1992) 757

<sup>238</sup> Strindberg, *Black Banners*, 124

Why, then, was Strindberg so keen to disassociate himself from Wagner in public? As in most instances where Strindberg is especially vituperative, there is likely some aspect of self-defence lying behind his public scorn for Wagner. As mentioned above, much of *Svanevit* draws heavily on Wagner, and many of his fairy tales also contain images familiar from *Tristan*. Additionally, Strindberg's writing has often been described as letimotivic<sup>239</sup> — if Strindberg had indeed drawn on Wagner's compositional techniques to inform his writing this could be construed as less original or in some way less modern than Strindberg liked to claim, which may have provided a driving force for distancing himself from Wagner. Additionally, Strindberg's dislike of Wagner's *music*, as opposed to his writing or political views, remained consistent. It is perfectly plausible that he really just didn't like Wagner's music.

Another explanation requires turning to Wagner's reception in Sweden. It is possible that Strindberg chose to distance himself from Wagner because of the political and social associations that the composer had accrued. Salmi argues that due to the fact that Sweden was a stable kingdom throughout the nineteenth century, in Sweden Wagner 'could be regarded as merely an apolitical "artist of the future".'<sup>240</sup> While this may have been true for some personalities, in many instances precisely the opposite was the case — Wagner's reception in Sweden was explicitly politicised, and used as a platform from which to discuss class divisions. Swedish criticism did not remain focused on Wagner's music — his social claims for the *Gesamtkunstwerk* as an artwork for the people came under intense scrutiny. A particularly scathing attack came from *Aftonbladet*, whose coverage of the first Bayreuth festival in 1876 was damning. They ran a three-part series on the festival, the second article

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<sup>239</sup> See for example Eszter Szalczar: *August Strindberg* (London: Routledge, 2012) 101

<sup>240</sup> Salmi, 6

of which is representative of negative attitudes towards Wagnerian theatre. It opened by contrasting the excess of the festival against the simplicity of the town it was based in:

Of all the German cities none gives as grotesque an impression as Bayreuth: princely waste and Rococo-splendour beside a small working class idyll: the little schoolmaster Wuz against Titan's glory.<sup>241</sup>

The author then carried on to suggest that those who supported Wagner were largely driven by 'earthly motives', swearing allegiance to Wagner to gain access to previously inaccessible 'ministerial palaces'.<sup>242</sup> Overall, his attitude to the festival and its music was one of disgust, condemning the costliness of the festival and its subsequent elitism:

So Wagnerism has since 1870 been engaged in a constant growth: the holy throng has become a legion. But it is still not yet — an audience. For an audience, such as our poets and composers had heretofore, free, unforced: as the mood strikes each and every one, he lays off the worker's leather apron, saw, axe, or pen, stands up from the table or comes from the walk, to hear *Don Juan* or *Faust* ... How different here! It is a long ago invited company, who come together in the Wagner theatre; all or three quarters of the patron-tickets have been lying in a coffer ... we are all bound by our purses. Our grandfathers and grandmothers had it easier and cheaper: ... they could intoxicate themselves on Mozart's melodies and consider Schiller's wonder. The festival in Bayreuth demands of us money, travel, time. Ah, eternal gods, forgive the arrogance! To compare a free, large, assembly of the people, who come together for a national party, the victors of Marathon and Salami with us, thirteen hundred and forty poor children of humanity who occupy the cane chairs of this amphitheatre!<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> 'Af alla tyska städer gör ingen ett så groteskt intryck som Baireuth: furstligt slöseri och rocoprakt bredvid en småborgerlif idyll: den lille skolmästaren Wuz vid sidan af Titans härlighet.' Karl Frenzel: 'Richard Wagners festföreställningar i Baireuth', *Aftonbladet*, 17/08/1876. This article first appeared in *National-Zeitung*. Of all the German criticism of Bayreuth, this is the article that *Aftonbladet* chose to reprint. The first article in *Aftonbladet*'s series, written by a Swede, also expressed frustration at the elitism of the festival's audience. The third was more closely focused on the music.

<sup>242</sup> 'De jordiska motiven gripa in: mången, som det aldrig förunnats att erhålla inträde i ett ministerpalats, svär på den nya läran för att genom en dam i huset erhålla ett bjudningskort.' *Ibid.*

<sup>243</sup> Det är ett för länge sedan inbjudet sällskap, som kommer till sammans i Wagnerteatern; hela eller tredjedels patronbiljetten har legat i en kassakista ... äro vi alla bundna genom våra penningpungar. Våra far- och morföräldrar hade det lättare och billigare: ... kunde de berusa sig vid Mozarts melodier och betrakta Schillers under. Festspelet i Baireuth kräfvär af oss penningar, resor, tid. I, evige gudar, förlåten den förmätne [sic.]! Att jämföra ett fritt, stort folks församling, som kommer till sammans till en nationalfest, segraren vid Maraton och Salamis med oss, tretton hundra fyrtiofem fattiga menniskobarn, som intaga rottingstolarne på denna amfiteater!' *Ibid.*

Leaving aside the somewhat unrealistic nature of the author's utopian image of a workers' Mozart and Schiller, his portrayal of Wagnerism as an exclusive and extravagant highbrow haven was not unique (if other criticisms were not quite as colourfully expressed). Music historian Adolf Lindgren's 1881 book *Om Wagnerismen* ('On Wagnerism') highlighted Wagner's association with the upper classes, despite Lindgren having previously written about Wagner from an almost anarchist stance.<sup>244</sup> The Swedish papers entertained a wide spectrum of views on Wagner and, as Salmi has pointed out, Wagner's music did 'spread in popular forms, perhaps more than Wagnerians and Wagner scholars have been willing to admit.'<sup>245</sup> But for an author who continually tried to associate himself with the political left, direct affiliation with Wagner's deeply divided critical history could be fatal. Strindberg made a career out of pillorying the aristocracy and Stockholm's monied classes, so could hardly be seen to be a devotee of any practice described in the caustic terms cited above.

Twenty years after Strindberg, however, Per Lindberg's attitude towards Wagner was largely one of cool indifference. His mentor, Reinhardt, was interested in Wagner and his theories about the sensuality and mysticism of mass theatrical experiences,<sup>246</sup> and Lindberg was certainly aware of his writings and music in some detail. In *Kring Ridån*, his section on the 1800s referenced Wagner, stating that the *Gesamtkunstwerk* was 'For many decades the most powerful [form] which the theatre could offer.'<sup>247</sup> Nonetheless, he criticised Wagner's staging and focus on myth, saying that:

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<sup>244</sup> 'The same man that in his previous writings took the role of an anti-statist ... now wrote with sympathy about the state and even about the monarchy.' Quoted in Salmi, 162. Salmi also includes an extract from Lindgren's earlier 1875 piece, where he aligns himself with Wagner's earlier writings, to argue that 'the task of the future must be — to annihilate the state.' Salmi, 154

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, 8

<sup>246</sup> Styan, 12

<sup>247</sup> 'För många decennier det mäktigaste som teatern kunde bjuda'. Per Lindberg: *Kring Ridån* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1932) 32

The divorce between stage and auditorium was elevated by Richard Wagner to principle. He demanded “complete divorce between the ideal stage world and the real world, which the spectators represent.” Between the two worlds he placed the “mystical voice”, the orchestra pit. The scene passed at a mysterious distance. This distance suited perhaps Wagner’s gods and dragons, but it was distressing for dramas about people.<sup>248</sup>

For the rest of the substantial volume, Wagner is relatively absent. This is likely to be at least in part because Lindberg was keen to stress his modernity and the novelty of his theatre, preferring to emphasise his links to Strindberg, Reinhardt, and the practitioners from 1905 over Wagner. But nor did critics make links between Wagner and Lindberg, even in his early years. By the 1920s, Wagner was becoming an increasingly distant presence in Swedish theatre, for both critics and practitioners. In all the reviews for Lindberg’s 1920 production of *As You Like It*, Wagner and the *Gesamtkunstwerk* were mentioned only once in passing<sup>249</sup> — they didn't appear at all in the reviews of *Romeo and Juliet* in 1922, nor in the 1926 *Till Damaskus* coverage. For Lindberg and the theatrical world in which he worked, Wagner was a historical figure, subordinate to more contemporary influences.

For Swedish composers, Wagner was a little harder to sidestep. In his early years, Stenhammar was overwhelmingly influenced by the older composer. In his autobiographical writings he described his experience of listening to *Lohengrin* when just fifteen, and his later performances from operas including *Parsifal* at Oscar Levertin’s home.<sup>250</sup> This led to him composing two Wagner-inspired operas, *Gildet på Solhaug* (‘The Feast at Solhaug’) and *Tirfing*

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<sup>248</sup> ‘Skilsmässan mellan scen och salong upphöjdes av Richard Wagner till princip. Han krävde "fullständig skilsmässa mellan den ideala scenvärlden och den reala värld, som åskådarna representera". Mellan de två världarna lade han det "mystiska svalget", orkesterns vallgrav. Scenen åkte undan i ett mystiskt fjärran. Detta fjärran passade möjligen Wagners gudar och drakar, men det blev påfrestande för dramatik om människor.’ *Ibid.* 21

<sup>249</sup> In the review for *Göteborgs Morgen-Posten*, written by the writer under the moniker “T. R-E.”. They said that all the elements of the production ‘melt together to [create] *gesamtkunst*’, but complained that the Duke’s costume was inappropriate and would have been ‘better suited to a Wagnerian opera.’ ?T. R-E.”: ‘Som ni behagar på Lorensbergsteatern’, *Göteborgs Morgen-Posten*, 10/04/1920

<sup>250</sup> Quoted in Bo Wallner: *Wilhelm Stenhammar och hans tid Vol. I* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1991) 224-5

within two years of each other (1896 and 1898 respectively). Their reception was relatively lukewarm, with *Tirfing* being criticised for not being Swedish enough. In *Dagens Nyheter*, Wilhelm Peterson-Berger lamented that Stenhammar, as such a talented composer, had not thought to turn to August Söderman for his libretto. 'Would it be so daring to believe', he wrote, 'that out of the Swedish, the Södermanian ballad, the Swedish music drama would emerge ... Let us not forget him, even if we think of Beethoven and Wagner.'<sup>251</sup> This is characteristic of reception of Stenhammar's works before *Tirfing* — when his First Piano Concerto was premiered in 1894, the reviewer for *Aftonbladet* praised him from moving away from his previous Wagnerian sound. His previous works were allegedly tainted by 'Wagnerism's declamatory ossification and manic orchestration',<sup>252</sup> a problem the reviewer felt was resolved by the concerto.

Until 1898, Stenhammar's theatrical output is most profitably understood in relationship to Wagner and his influence, and was received as such. But *Tirfing* caused a crisis for Stenhammar. After the premiere, he wrote to a friend that he was experiencing a profound disappointment — that his self-esteem had taken a blow after *Tirfing* had not been the 'colossal success' that he dreamed of. But he believed that it was not the audience or critics who were at fault, but his own composition:

*Tirfing* was not written with my heart's blood. It is written with ink, black ink on white paper. Mrs Boberg wrote a text, I thought I could make an effective opera, and so I wrote, not the way I had to, but because I wanted to. The result was — an effective opera. But not an ounce more. Not an ounce of blood, or at least a very small quantity of that product. There are some places in *Tirfing* which I love, as my being vibrates when I think of them, but

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<sup>251</sup> 'Skulle det då vara så djärft att tro at ur den svenska, den Södermanska balladen skall det svenska musikdramat framgå. ... Låt oss icke glömma honom, fastän vi tänka på Beethoven och Wagner.' "t": 'Tirfing II', *Dagens Nyheter*, 11/12/1898

<sup>252</sup> 'wagnerismens deklamatoriska förbening och manierade orkestration' "A. L.": 'Symfonikonserten', *Aftonbladet*, 19/03/1894. Presumably the works to which the author is referring are *Florez och Blanzeflor* and *Snöfrid*.

they are scattered places, not an organic whole. *Tirfing* is a good and well-done work, but it is not a great artwork.<sup>253</sup>

Wallner presents compelling evidence that Stenhammar's relationship with Wagner was not the cause of his self-criticism, quoting a plethora of letters in which he praised Wagner's work and proclaimed his continued admiration for his music.<sup>254</sup> He rejects the idea that the *Tirfing* crisis was brought about by Stenhammar's personal confrontation with Wagner as 'a Wagner hater's wishful thinking'.<sup>255</sup> This seems, however, not to afford Stenhammar's situation requisite nuance. From the documentary evidence available, Stenhammar appears to have continued to turn to Wagner's music and writings for inspiration and orientation.<sup>256</sup> There is nothing to suggest that Stenhammar suddenly despised Wagner after 1899. But the problem with Wagner appears to have been the extent to which he encroached upon Stenhammar's own compositional sound. From 1899 onwards, Stenhammar's work moved away from the sound of *Tirfing*, which at times comes close to Wagnerian pastiche. In the letter quoted above, Stenhammar expressed irritation that he had not yet allowed his own compositional voice to emerge, his 'heart's blood'. Presumably Stenhammar recognised that

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<sup>253</sup> 'Tirfing är ej skriven med mitt hjärteblod. Den är skriven med bläck, svart bläck på vitt papper. Fru Boberg skriv en text, jag trodde mig kunna därav göra en verkningsfull opera, och så skrev jag, icke därför att jag måste, men därför att jag ville. Resultatet blev - en verkningsfull opera. Men icke ett uns mera. Icke ett uns hjärteblod, eller åtminstone ett ytterst litet kvantum av den varan. Det finns ju verkligen några ställen i Tirfing, som jag älskar, som min varelse vibrerar inför när jag tänker på dem, men det är spridda ställen, ej ett organiskt helt. Tirfing är ett gott och välgjort arbete, men ett stort konstverk är det icke.' Stenhammar to Henrik Henning 04/01/1899, quoted in Wallner, *Wilhelm Stenhammar Vol. I*, 589-90

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 595-597

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 595

<sup>256</sup> See for example the letter dated 03/06/1905 to Helga: 'I have learned something this last year, I have learned the inadequacy of the pure aesthetic ideal. Nietzsche pitted *Carmen* against Richard Wagner, — I think I can with more success pit Richard Wagner against *Carmen*. The ethical will against the aesthetic characterlessness. Only my own will can save my soul, all the beauty of the world does not help me. ... Helga — I dare hardly pronounce it — but I think and hope it's reality: I'm starting to feel a fixed point deep inside myself.' 'Jag har lärt mig något detta sista år, jag har lärt mig det rent estetiska idealets otillräcklighet. Nietzsche satte upp Carmen mot Richard Wagner, — jag tror att jag med större framgång kan sätta upp Richard Wagner mot Carmen. Den etiska viljan mot den estetiska karaktärlösheten. Endast min egen vilja kan frälsa min själ, all världens skönhet hjälper mig ej. ... Helga — jag vågar knappt uttala det — men jag tror och hoppas att det är verkligheten: jag börjar ana en fast punkt djupt inne i mig själv.' Quoted *ibid.*, 597

his lack of success was at least partly due to his previous heavy reliance on Wagner, prompting him to reposition the composer as an influence rather than a model. The *Tirfing* crisis was a matter of degree, not a case of binary oppositions.

As Stenhammar's career progressed, Wagner was relegated to being one influence among many. From 1909 Stenhammar began studying counterpoint, declaring his wish to find a 'clear, happy and naïve' form of composition, discussed at length in Chapter 4.<sup>257</sup> He also turned to modern art and literature. In 1916 he discovered Kandinsky and composed the music for Strindberg's *Ett drömspel*, encounters which expanded his palette of artistic possibilities. He said of the music for *drömspel* that 'The artistic work which I accomplished there and the artistic results which I put before my own self-critical court are the happiest I had in a long time'.<sup>258</sup> The score is remarkably dissimilar from anything which preceded it, and working on the piece gave Stenhammar the opportunity to experiment with sonority and timbre as a means of structuring a work, responding to Strindberg's allusive script which eschews narrative logic. For this kind of composition the resonant acoustic of the Lorensberg was an ideal performance space, giving Stenhammar the chance to try out new sound combinations and orchestral textures over an extended rehearsal period. Kandinsky, meanwhile, was quite a different stimulus. Stenhammar wrote on 2 March 1916 that

I cannot help that this Kandinsky has dug into something deep in my soul, so it vibrates like the pain and happiness of a young and great love ... I don't have the least inclination to jump on something new because it's new, but

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<sup>257</sup> 'klar, glad och naiv.' Wilhelm Stenhammar, letter to Bror Beckman, 18/09/1911 (Musik- och Teaterbiblioteket, Stockholm, Wilhelm Stenhammar Collection)

<sup>258</sup> 'Det konstnärliga arbete jag där presterade och det konstnärliga resultat jag då fann inför min egen självkritiks domstol hör till det gladaste jag haft på lange.' Stenhammar, unsent and undated letter, quoted in Wallner, *Wilhelm Stenhammar Vol. III*, 259. Wallner dates the letter to 1917.

this goes straight into me and I find myself standing face to face with a soul that is beautiful and deep and naïve.<sup>259</sup>

Perhaps in Kandinsky he found a potential route to the 'clear, happy and naïve' art that he was searching for. This letter also demonstrates Stenhammar's selective attitude towards modern art in general, taking what he felt drawn to and eschewing the rest — he felt none of Strindberg's compulsion to be constantly striving after the newest ideas and fashions.

Thanks to Rangström's career as a critic, many of his thoughts on Wagner (and, indeed, other composers) and his place in music history are well documented. Like Stenhammar, Wagner was an early source of inspiration for Rangström — his biographer Axel Helmer describes the formative experience of Rangström's first encounter with *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* in 1900, saying that Wagner's influence in 'youthful puberty' led to *Tristan* emerging as an 'important subject' in Rangström's later work.<sup>260</sup> But again like Stenhammar, Wagner became merely one of many influences for Rangström as the century progressed. He took from Wagner his interweaving of music and literature, but denounced composers who tried to imitate Wagner's music. In a 1920 review of Eugen d'Albert's opera *Myrkotte*, he criticised the work's 'Wagnerian chromaticism',<sup>261</sup> while he condemned Scriabin's *Poème l'extase* as 'sentimentally ostentatious ... not say[ing] much more ... than Wagner's *Tristan* said previously.'<sup>262</sup> In Rangström's typically colourful words, at the turn of the century Wagner's

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<sup>259</sup> 'jag kan inte hjälpa att denne Kandinsky grävt in sig någonstans långt in och djupt i min själ, så att den vibrerar som av en ung och stor förälskelses kval och lycka. ... jag har inte den ringaste åstundan att hoppa på det nya för att det är nytt, men detta går rakt in i mig och jag känner mig stå ansikte mot ansikte med en själ som är skön och djup och naiv'. Stenhammar 02/03/1916, quoted *ibid.*, 308

<sup>260</sup> 'ungdomligt pubertala ... så viktiga Tristan-ämnet'. Axel Helmer: *Ture Rangström* (Stockholm: Carlsson Bokförlag & Kungl. Musikaliska akademien, 1998) 18

<sup>261</sup> 'Wagnersk kromatik'. Ture Rangström, *Dagens Nyheter* 28/09/1920, quoted in Helmer 240

<sup>262</sup> 'sentimentalt braskande ... Scriabin säger icke heller mycket mer ... än vad Wagners *Tristan* sagt förut.' Ture Rangström, *Stockholms Dagblad*, 28/01/1920, quoted *ibid.*, 301

shadow hung over 'some parts of the world and a piece of the universe', and he considered it imperative that composers step out from underneath Wagner's shadow.<sup>263</sup>

Rangström advocated turning to contemporary literature as a source for the future of Swedish music. The importance of literature to Rangström cannot be overstated — he wrote poetry as well as music, and all his journalistic pieces testify to the fact that he saw literature and music as complementary and mutually dependent forms of expression. In a 1940 radio speech, published in transcription by the magazine *Vår Sång*, he laid out his view of musical development in the Nordic countries around the turn of the century. His premise was that music cannot thrive without an attendant cultural force in literature, and nearly the entirety of the article is about literature and how composers responded to the emergence of figures such as Ibsen, Bjørnson, Jonas Lie, Knut Hamsun, and Strindberg. For Sweden specifically, he stated that 'Without Fröding, Heidenstam, Levertin and Bo Bergman ... our musical herb garden would have appeared impoverished.'<sup>264</sup> He described how poetry had been the 'sovereign aid' of Swedish music during the 1890s, providing the impetus for the proliferation of Swedish lyric song during this decade.<sup>265</sup> His overview echoes Liszt, saying that 'Poetry and tone seemed to go hand in hand, the tone being led by the poetry, as it should'.<sup>266</sup>

For these figures, then, Wagner was a personality of diminishing importance as the century progressed. Both his music and his writing remained a formative thread in the cultural fabric of early twentieth-century Sweden and Finland, but his presence was not as overbearing as it

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<sup>263</sup> 'några världsdelar och ett stycke av universum'. Ture Rangström: 'Musikens självbesinning I', *Stockholms Dagblad*, 02/10/1927

<sup>264</sup> 'Utan Fröding, Karlfeldt, Heidenstam, Levertin och Bo Bergman ... hade vår musikaliska örtagård sett miserabelt fattig ut.' Rangström, 'Ungdomsminnen' (Apr. 1940), 27

<sup>265</sup> 'suveräna bistånd.' *Ibid.*

<sup>266</sup> 'Dikt och ton tycktes gå hand i hand, tonen leddes av dikten, som sig bör.' *Ibid.*

was in France and Germany at the end of the nineteenth century. Composers, authors, and directors had an exhaustive supply of other influences which they could draw upon, meaning that Wagner was just one of many sources for Nordic theatre. Of course, traces of his thinking can be located even where — or perhaps particularly where — he was staunchly castigated, particularly in Strindberg's case.<sup>267</sup> But for Lindberg, whose People's Theatre project may at first seem immensely indebted to Wagner, there are other forces at play. The predominance of French culture in Sweden is particularly relevant here, as Lindberg drew his theoretical stance more from Romain Rolland than Wagner, and cited his forebears as beginning with Diderot, and in more recent years Anatole France, Octave Mirabeau, and Emile Zola.<sup>268</sup>

For Sibelius, Stenhammar, and Rangström, literature — specifically poetry and plays — offered ways of moving beyond Wagner's influence. Sibelius rejected operatic music drama in favour of tone poems and incidental music, while Stenhammar used his incidental scores as a way of experimenting with new means of expression, moving away from his youthful Wagnerian idiom. For Rangström, embracing Scandinavian literature as a compositional impetus for Swedish music was a way of constructing a pan-Nordic musical identity — an identity which did not include Wagner.<sup>269</sup> According to Rangström's account, Swedish composers followed the innovations of Edvard Grieg and Christian Sinding, whose collective style he labelled 'lyrical Scandinavianism',<sup>270</sup> and later of Carl Nielsen, who Rangström

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<sup>267</sup> See, for example, the plot similarities between *Lohengrin* and *Svanevit*.

<sup>268</sup> Lindberg, *Kring Ridån*, 99-100

<sup>269</sup> I have opted for the term 'pan-Nordic' to avoid association with the more politicised Scandinavism and Nordism movements. Other composers such as Wilhelm Peterson-Berger were more interested in promoting a racially Nordic profile, and extending Wagner's national myth model to include the Nordic countries.

<sup>270</sup> 'lyrisk skandinavism'. Rangström, 'Ungdomsminnen' (Apr. 1940), 29

called 'the portal figure to a *new* time.'<sup>271</sup> He mentioned that Sibelius set Runeberg's poetry, but neglected to name any of the German authors whose texts Sibelius also composed music for. Sibelius and Stenhammar's textual choices for both songs and incidental music were predominantly Nordic but seem to have been dictated primarily by personal taste rather than a desire to assert a pan-Nordic identity, whereas Rangström appears to have thought about the relationship between music and literature in more territorial terms. All of these composers were constantly negotiating a balance between their personal, regional, national, and international identities, but only Rangström saw bypassing Wagner as a pan-Nordic priority.

Where Wagner was a receding figure throughout the early decades of the twentieth century, authors like Strindberg rose in prominence as an influence on contemporary composition. On a practical level, playwrights such as Strindberg provided the opportunity for multiple incidental settings. On a more conceptual level, composers engaged with the ideas and styles being explored by contemporary authors, both on-stage and off. Led by developments in literature, Wagner was stylistically supplanted by realism, symbolism and expressionism. In terms of content, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writing discussed present-day concerns that were more pertinent for modern composition than Wagner's national myths. Modern plays, novels, and poetry established models for Nordic composition that could be dramatic without being music drama.

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Theatrical and musical culture in early-twentieth century Scandinavia was characterised by stylistic plurality, driven by the continued exchange of ideas between Russia, Europe, and

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<sup>271</sup> 'portalfiguren till en *ny* tid.' Ture Rangström: 'Ungdomsminnen: Nordisk sånglyrik kring sekelskiften', *Vår Sang* (Vol. 3, May 1940). Emphasis original.

the Nordic countries. Strindberg in particular was partly responsible for the plethora of styles on Scandinavian stages, as directors attempted to respond to the technical and conceptual demands made by his dramas. In the first decade of the twentieth century, symbolism was the predominant *modern* style, replacing the previous trend for realist plays and productions. By the 1910s, the styles on Scandinavian stages had diversified, hosting nationally inflected interpretations of international trends such as vitalism, expressionism, and naïvism, all of which were influenced and shaped by modern dance and art. The incidental music produced for these plays was accordingly stylistically diverse, and whether it was considered *modern* by reviewers did not depend on the adoption of a particular (a)tonal idiom. Instead, they judged the music according to how effectively it interacted with the play's multiple elements, and assessed what role it contributed to the production as a whole. Consequently writing incidental music was a chance for composers to experiment with different styles and instrumental combinations, offering a way past the influence of composers such as Wagner.

As these scores were designed to work in conjunction with the other aspects of the production to varying degrees, without the context of the production much of the music's 'meaning' is lost. This is demonstrated by the next chapter, which looks at Sibelius's music for *Svanehovit* in the context of its 1908 premiere at the Swedish Theatre in Helsinki, a staging of Strindberg's play written seven years previously in 1901. Sibelius composed his score at the height of the vogue for symbolism, and reviewers considered his music essential for creating the ethereal, fairy-tale atmosphere needed for the play to work on stage, viewing it as an integral part of the production's overall design. They also pointed to the score's sensuality — Strindberg's *Svanehovit* is a deeply erotic text, and reviewers read these qualities into Sibelius's music as a result. In the coverage of both *Svanehovit* and the later *Scaramouche*, discussed in Chapter 3, Sibelius was hailed as a dramatist — critics based their view of

Sibelius as a dramatic composer on his numerous theatrical scores, rather than his lack of a completed opera.

## 'MY PRINCE COMES': SIBELIUS'S MUSIC FOR *SVANEHVIT*

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Both *Svanehvít* and *Scaramouche* are centrally concerned with sex and gender, from radically different perspectives. *Svanehvít* is a fairy-tale drama focused on youthful eroticism, penned by an ageing playwright besotted with Harriet Bosse, an actress twenty-nine years his junior. *Scaramouche* tells the story of a young woman, Blondelaine, who dances herself to death after being seduced by Scaramouche, a hunchbacked viola player. Despite their differences, both are underpinned by sexually charged violence. In *Scaramouche* this lies on the surface, with the pantomime culminating in the brutal deaths of both Scaramouche and Blondelaine. *Svanehvít* is less explicit, but its text contains a latent silencing of female voices and sexualities, both in the infantilisation of Swanwhite and the Stepmother's treatment at the close of the play.

Their preoccupation with sexuality and constructions of gender identity is not unique amongst Sibelius's output. Sex is a recurring theme in his music, from the carnality of 'Teodora', op. 35/2 (1907-8), to the anti-heroic narrative of *Kullervo* (1892). His considerable corpus of varyingly explicit instrumental and chamber works has been extensively discussed,<sup>1</sup> but his incidental music has yet to receive such notice. This is particularly surprising given that the interaction between text, image, and score in these works makes them invaluable resources for understanding Sibelius's attitudes towards these topics, especially as works in other genres share themes and techniques with his incidental music. Through their interaction with both the textual and visual, his incidental scores provide the

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Jeffrey Kallberg: 'Finnish modern: love, sex and style in Sibelius's songs', pp. 117-136, and Stephen Downes: 'Pastoral idylls, erotic anxieties and heroic subjectivities in Sibelius's *Lemminkäinen and the Maidens of the Island* and first two symphonies', pp. 33-48, both in *The Cambridge Companion to Sibelius* ed. Daniel M. Grimley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Peter Franklin: 'Kullervo's problem — Kullervo's story', *Sibelius Studies* ed. Timothy L. Jackson & Veijo Murtomäki (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 61-75

analyst with an invaluable directory of semantic gestures, transferrable to works in other genres.

The following two chapters place Sibelius's music for *Svanevit* and *Scaramouche* in the contexts of productions in 1908 and 1924 respectively, arguing that Strindberg and Knudsen's texts — and, subsequently, Sibelius's scores — formed part of early twentieth-century discourse about gender relationships, desire, and eroticism. The contextual backdrop of debates about women's place in society, known as 'The Woman Question',<sup>2</sup> tailored how critics considered Sibelius's work, influencing the reception of his incidental music. In this sense, the historical 'meaning' of Sibelius's music is indivisible from its theatrical context, and the reception of these plays highlights how intertwined musical and theatrical history was during this period.

These incidental scores also illustrate the considerable influence of literature on Sibelius's compositions. Strindberg and his works were an enduring source of inspiration for the composer; not only did he continually refer to Strindberg in his diary, but he used themes from *Svanevit* for his Fifth Symphony, rehabilitating Strindberg's fairy tale within the larger orchestral work. Discussing the significance of this recycling of material between works is beyond the bounds of this thesis, but there is scope for consideration of the links between *Svanevit* and the Fifth Symphony beyond the commentary currently available from scholars such as James Hepokoski and Erik Tawaststjerna.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See Prideaux, vii. This was a term first used in the 16th century to refer to the debate over whether women should study in university. It was used consistently to refer to issues about women's legal and social status throughout the succeeding centuries. By the early 1900s, the contemporaneous debates concerned women's rights within marriage, their right to vote, and their relative sexual status in comparison to men. Within Scandinavia, key writings in the debate were Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, and Strindberg's *Giftas*.

<sup>3</sup> See Hepokoski, *Sibelius*, 72, and Erik Tawaststjerna: *Sibelius Vol. II, 1904-1914* trans. Robert Layton (London: Faber & Faber, 1986) 90-92

*Svanevit*'s reviewers conceived of Sibelius's score in gendered terms, as they later would with *Scaramouche* in 1924. In this regard, the contemporaneous reception of the incidental scores offers another perspective on Sibelius as a 'landscape' composer. To his peers Sibelius was also an 'erotic' composer, capable of articulating the human within the landscapes that his symphonic works evoke. I argue that this historical nexus is indispensable for understanding the contemporary significance of Sibelius's *Svanevit* score. At the 1908 premiere at the Swedish Theatre in Helsinki, Sibelius's music was part of a production which displayed Swanwhite as a symbolist, childlike, and helpless figure, a trope familiar from *Pelléas et Mélisande*, but which Sibelius turned away from in *Scaramouche*. In the later score the gender relationships are more dynamic and complex, less obviously complicit in a societal subjugation of the feminine despite the heroine's death at the close of the play.

## THEATRICAL SIBELIUS

The popularity of Sibelius's incidental works during his lifetime is beyond dispute. Scholars such as Tawaststjerna have argued that Sibelius's music contributed to making *Kuolema* one of the most successful of Arvid Järnefelt's plays,<sup>4</sup> and Daniel Grimley has documented that the 1906 Helsinki performance of Hjalmar Procopé's *Belsazars gästabud* was 'eagerly awaited in the local press.'<sup>5</sup> Additionally, theatres had a substantial audience reach, and Sibelius's incidental scores led new lives outside the theatre in the form of concert suites, regularly performed at Robert Kajanus's 'popular concerts'.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, Glenda Dawn Goss observes that 'During the years from 1903 to 1911 Sibelius was probably best known in

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<sup>4</sup> Tawaststjerna, *Sibelius Vol. II*, 275.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel M. Grimley: "'Vers un cosmopolitisme nordique': Space, Place, and the Case of Sibelius's 'Nordic Orientalism'", *The Musical Quarterly*, vol. 98/4 (December 2016), pp. 230-253, 235

<sup>6</sup> Vesa Kurkela & Olli Heikkinen: 'Sibelius as popular composer: Music by Sibelius in Kajanus's popular concerts', conference paper delivered at *Sibelius 150*, Hämeenlinna, 06/12/2015.

Finland through his music for the stage,<sup>7</sup> and this seems to have held true for Sweden as well. By 1908, when Sibelius wrote the music for *Svanevit*, critics treated the premiere of a play with music by Sibelius as an occasion to hear a significant new work by the composer.

The journalistic attention that Sibelius's incidental music received went beyond uncritical adulation. During his own lifetime, Sibelius's theatre music was considered an integral part of his oeuvre, and given as much credence as his symphonic works when discussing his position in relation to both his predecessors and his contemporaries. His incidental scores were subject to analysis both before and after performances: ahead of the first production of *Svanevit*, the Swedish-language newspaper *Hufvudstadsbladet* ran a feature on Sibelius's music for Strindberg's drama, written by the critic Karl Frederik Wasenius. He applauded the score as a 'great musical triumph',<sup>8</sup> describing the 'intense interweaving' of music and language such that 'the music follows the fairy tale's sometimes light, sometimes dark passage to the apotheosis.'<sup>9</sup> He then went on to detail not only the orchestration (favourably comparing the sparse instrumentation with Richard Strauss's 'colouristic narcosis'<sup>10</sup>), but to give a movement-by-movement account of the incidental music, discussing everything from key to the cues for each piece.

This level of detail in the press was not unusual for theatrical scores by Sibelius. The 1924 production of *Scaramouche* at the Royal Opera in Stockholm prompted a number of features

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<sup>7</sup> Glenda Dawn Goss: 'Interlude III: Sibelius, Words, and Music', *The Sibelius Companion*, pp. 167-170, 168

<sup>8</sup> 'stor musikvinning'. Karl Frederik Wasenius: 'Jean Sibelius' musik till August Strindbergs sagospel 'Svanevit', *Hufvudstadsbladet* no. 97, 07/04/1908, (Bis)

<sup>9</sup> 'den innerliga anslutning, i hvilken musiken följer sagans än ljusa, än mörka gång till det apoteoserande'. *Ibid.* Given Wasenius and Sibelius's connections it is unsurprising that he viewed the piece favourably, but nonetheless his comments are illuminating with regard to how the work was perceived at the time.

<sup>10</sup> 'koloristiska narkos'. *Ibid.*

and analyses, including an extensive discussion by the composer Moses Pergament as to whether *Scaramouche* was a pantomime or, in fact, a melodrama.<sup>11</sup> Pergament's deliberation over the genre of Sibelius's work also illustrates that by the 1920s, Nordic composers and critics were still as concerned with genre definition and subversion as they had been in preceding decades. Both this article, and a piece in the Danish press by critic Gunnar Hauch, attempted to situate Sibelius within historical theatrical traditions, and subsequently to determine what was modern or new about Sibelius's contribution.<sup>12</sup>

When viewed in this fashion, Sibelius's incidental scores can help us to understand him as a fundamentally dramatic composer. Reviewers repeatedly referred to Sibelius's abilities as a dramatist, the critic for *Hufvudstadsbladet* writing that *Scaramouche* was 'dramatic music in the eminent sense.'<sup>13</sup> This is not currently a prevailing view of the composer — Aino Ackté's observation that 'Sibelius cannot compose opera music' and the unfinished opera project *Veneen luominen* loom large in investigations into Sibelius's dramatic enterprises.<sup>14</sup> The soprano's statement is certainly hyperbolic, given Sibelius's one-act opera *Jungfrun i tornet* ('The Maid in the Tower', 1896). Nonetheless, her comment should not be summarily dismissed.<sup>15</sup> Sibelius never completed a full-scale opera, and there is a considerable

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<sup>11</sup> Moses Pergament: 'Scaramouche: Pantomim eller melodram? Några anteckningar inför Sibeliusverkets framförande på Operan', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 28/09/1924 (M. Pergament). It also sparked a heated exchange between Kurt Atterberg and August Brunius. Brunius argued that Knudsen's text was a 'sin against the Holy Spirit' ('Det är syn mot den helige ande'), to which Atterberg responded that 'Our views on the matter in question are incommensurable.' ('Våra uppfattningar om saken i fråga äro inkommensurabla.') August Brunius: 'Balett och teater: En polemisk replik om Scaramouche', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 02/10/1924; Kurt Atterberg: 'Balett och teater', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 04/10/1924

<sup>12</sup> Gunnar Hauch: 'Sibelius og Scaramouche', *Nationaltidende*, 11/05/1922

<sup>13</sup> 'Det är dramatisk musik i eminent mening.' "S. S-m": 'Operans nya program: "Scaramouche" och "Noel"', *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 30/09/1924. The reviewer may have been the art historian Sixten Strömbom (1888-1983), although this is by no means certain.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Mäkelä, *Jean Sibelius*, 204

<sup>15</sup> See Mäkelä's comment that her statement 'need not be taken seriously.' *Ibid.*

difference between operatic and theatrical composition, which Sibelius himself acknowledged. He is recorded as saying that 'Opera is ... a traditional art form and should be cultivated as such',<sup>16</sup> and furthermore wrote in his diary that he found 'operatic style banal.'<sup>17</sup>

Of incidental music, however, he wrote to his friend Axel Carpelan that 'I have not been able to resist writing music for the theatre',<sup>18</sup> referring to his score for Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. The proliferation of theatrical music throughout Sibelius's career and corresponding lack of operatic writing suggests that the two genres presented different challenges and opportunities to the composer, and he found one genre more fruitful than the other. Grimley has observed that incidental music offered a 'less immediately threatening or confrontational genre for Sibelius's work'<sup>19</sup> than the symphony; it is plausible that Sibelius felt the same way about incidental music in relation to opera. Mäkelä corroborates this view, remarking that the incidental scores 'seem like blueprints for a new, extravagant genre that ... reveals a direction completely different from that of the great operas.'<sup>20</sup>

Working in the theatre allowed Sibelius the opportunity to work with literature that he both admired and enjoyed. Scholarship on Sibelius divides into two groups regarding his attitude towards literature. Dawn Goss and Mäkelä's observations on this topic are representative of each view: Dawn Goss writes that Sibelius's 'love of literature very nearly equaled his love of

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<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Ekman, 246

<sup>17</sup> 'Finner operastilen banal', diary entry 04/06/1911. Fabian Dahlström (ed.): *Jean Sibelius: Dagbok 1909-1944* (Helsinki: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, 2005), 78

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Kurki, 'Sibelius and the Theater', 76

<sup>19</sup> Grimley, 'Storms, Symphonies, Silence', 191

<sup>20</sup> Mäkelä, *Sibelius*, 211

music,<sup>21</sup> while Mäkelä states that ‘He was not a big reader,’<sup>22</sup> preferring instead to stress his interest in the visual arts and sculpture. A middle-ground between the two positions appears the most realistic: it seems implausible that someone with a committed disinterest in literature would have a personal library as extensive as Sibelius’s, with volumes ranging from Cicero to Knut Hamsun. Nor is Mäkelä’s description of his personality as ‘dominated by intuitions and visions’,<sup>23</sup> frequently critiquing the constraints of language, incommensurable with a love of literature. As previously discussed, anxiety about the veracity of language underpinned a vast amount of writing at the turn of the century, not least in the theatre. Sibelius identified with those writers whose works appealed to what Mäkelä calls the ‘daydreamer’ aspect of his personality.<sup>24</sup>

Strindberg’s synaesthetic, hallucinogenic approach to the world appears to have particularly interested Sibelius.<sup>25</sup> He was able to quote the author in his diary, choosing passages that coincided with his symbolist worldview. On 8 August 1910, he drew from *Ett drömspel*, saying that “‘It is almost impossible to be human.” (Strindberg),<sup>26</sup> following this with a comment on 22 October 1911: ‘Nature full of poetry. Strindberg believes the earth to be the haunt of judged souls. Perhaps! when music is of heavenly enough origin. Hence its indefinable nature.’<sup>27</sup> Sibelius used Strindberg’s words as a point of departure, relating them

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<sup>21</sup> Dawn Goss, *Sibelius*, 192

<sup>22</sup> Mäkelä, *Sibelius*, 75

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 73

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 74

<sup>25</sup> Sibelius owned 15 volumes by Strindberg, including the collected poetry and writings.

<sup>26</sup> “‘Det är näst än omöjligt att vara människa” (Strindberg).’ 08/08/1910 Dahlström, 50

<sup>27</sup> ‘Naturen full af poesi. Strindberg anser jorden vara ett tillhåll för fördöma själar. Måhända! Men — då är musiken nog af himmelskt ursprung. Därpå dess odefinierbarhet.’ 22/10/1911 *Ibid.*, 100

to his thoughts on music. He also made similar comments about Matisse in relation to Debussy, stating in his diary in October 1911:

Have been to the opening of the state art collection. Many good things. Although the influence of French art (Matisse) clear. What power this French art has on the senses. In Debussy's music!<sup>28</sup>

Sibelius's engagement with this material suggests that we should take seriously his youthful comment that 'The other arts fascinate me more than do other people's music',<sup>29</sup> and that when he criticised German composers in 1891, it was for their failure to respond to art and literature, which Sibelius considered to be the most progressive route for music. He wrote that Germans were 'following old paths too much. For example, they understand nothing about the latest trends in literature and art. ... One can't even talk about Scandinavians [with them]. They consider barbaric everyone who isn't embroiled in a conservative lie. ... They have no Zola, Ibsen, Tchaikovsky.'<sup>30</sup> Always concerned that his music should be progressive, if not modernist, for Sibelius the modern came from Scandinavia, France, and Russia, and specifically from their art and literature.

Strindberg's most provocative works were about 'The Woman Question'. His involvement ranged from open letters to essays, and naturalist plays such as *Miss Julie*, which stages the consequences of an aristocratic woman having an affair with her butler. The play was so controversial that it had to be cut before publication, and was not printed in Sweden in uncensored form until 1894. In *Svanevit*, however, he approached the topic of gender from quite a different perspective. He moved away from the violence of his naturalist plays and

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<sup>28</sup> 'Varit att bese öppnandet af statens konstsamling. Många goda ting. Ehuru påverkningen af fransk konst (Matisse) tydlig. Hvilken makt denna franska konst har på sinnena. I musik Debussy!' 04/10/1910, *ibid.*, 56

<sup>29</sup> A letter to Aino on 28th July 1894, quoted in Tawaststjerna, *Sibelius Vol. I*, 155

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Mäkelä, *Sibelius*, 271-2

embraced the more ethereal world of theatrical symbolism. For this drama — which he wrote when besotted with Harriet Bosse, the actress twenty-nine years his junior who would later become his third wife — he turned to Maeterlinck’s plays for inspiration, adopting a similar tone to *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *Princesse Maleine*.<sup>31</sup>

## SIBELIUS, STRINDBERG, AND COLLABORATION

It was Harriet Bosse who suggested Sibelius as a composer for *Svanevit* in 1906, after performing as Mélisande in a production of Maeterlinck’s play with Sibelius’s music. Tawaststjerna records the exchange between Bosse, Strindberg, and Sibelius regarding the commission, detailing Sibelius’s enthusiasm for the project.<sup>32</sup> Given the esteem in which Sibelius held Strindberg’s work, it is hardly surprising that he responded with such fervour, perhaps hoping that it would lead to future collaborations with the author. Certainly this is the picture that Sibelius later painted in 1950:

Strindberg’s play and his unusual personality fascinated me so deeply that I anxiously awaited an opportunity of getting in touch with him to connect my own composition to his play. I wanted to start an inspiring, all-consuming correspondence with the great poet.<sup>33</sup>

For whatever reason — presumably a combination of Strindberg’s acerbic personality and Sibelius’s tendency towards insecurity — this ‘all-consuming correspondence’ did not materialise. *Svanevit* was their only joint enterprise, and it was conducted at a distance.

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<sup>31</sup> See for example his diary entry dated 04/02/1901: ‘Read Maeterlinck’s Princess Maleine’, during which time he was writing Swanwhite. He had also previously recommended Maeterlinck’s works to Bosse. August Strindberg: *Inferno and An Occult Diary* trans. Mary Sandbach (Middlesex: Penguin, 1979), 282

<sup>32</sup> Tawaststjerna, *Sibelius Vol. II*, 88-89

<sup>33</sup> Quoted *ibid.*, 89

Strindberg never even heard the music Sibelius composed.<sup>34</sup> The final incidental score was entirely Sibelius's interpretation of Strindberg's text, rather than being a collaboration.

Despite Strindberg's coolness towards the composer, Sibelius continued to admire the playwright. He conducted a performance of *Svanevit* at the Swedish Theatre for Strindberg's birthday in 1912, and disclosed a few months later that Strindberg's death had 'shaken' him.<sup>35</sup> He was not the only person to feel this way: two days later he received a letter from his friend Georg Boldemann,<sup>36</sup> who wrote to him that alongside Sibelius, Strindberg had been 'the other living genius in the North', and that his death left Sibelius 'alone'.<sup>37</sup> It is unclear whether this was an entirely free association on Boldemann's part or whether Sibelius had previously shared his enthusiasm for the playwright. In either case such commiserations presumably did little to alleviate Sibelius's sense of loss and isolation after Strindberg's passing.

Sibelius conducted *Svanevit*'s run at the Swedish theatre, but he did not work closely with the director, Konni Wetzler, while composing the incidental score. The autograph manuscript, held at the Library of Congress, shows that very few alterations were made during the rehearsal process — particularly when compared to Stenhammar's score for *As You Like It*, which is littered with annotations, insertions, and deletions. As a result *Svanevit* consists primarily of self-contained movements which, although closely related to the text and acting as underscoring in some cases, are more easily transferable between productions than Stenhammar's score which was more closely tailored to the individual actors in question.

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 90

<sup>35</sup> 'Strindbergs död uppskakat mig.' 16/05/1912. Dahlström 139. Strindberg had died on the 14th May.

<sup>36</sup> A German-Danish author and admirer of Sibelius.

<sup>37</sup> 'Meine Gedanken haben sich in diesen Tagen, wo das andere im Norden lebende Genie, August Strindberg, diese Welt verlässt, besonders viel mit Ihnen beschäftigt. Nun sind Sie allein noch da!' Georg Boldemann to Sibelius, 14/05/1912, Dahlström, 398

## SUMMARY

The play tells the story of Swanwhite, a young princess with one swan's foot, who triumphs over evil through her honesty and virtue. She is betrothed to a king she has never met, but falls in love with the handsome prince who is sent to educate and protect her.<sup>38</sup> Swanwhite's evil Stepmother tries to separate them, but the couple are assisted by the ghosts of their mothers, who appear as swans throughout the play. When the Stepmother is on the brink of victory, Swanwhite summons her father, the Duke, with a magic horn he gave her. He returns from battle to announce the Stepmother's defeat. He arrives too late to save the Prince, who dies at sea, but the Prince is resurrected by Swanwhite through prayer in the final scene.

Sibelius wrote fourteen movements for the play, shown in Appendix 2, which predominantly characterise Swanwhite and the Prince, evoking their mental states throughout the play.

These movements stretch from single horn calls that symbolise the souls of the dead mothers when they appear as swans, to extensive pieces several minutes long that accompany entire scenes. The original score is orchestrated for a small string orchestra, horn, flute, clarinet, and timpani. Sibelius was working with the stage orchestra at his disposal, leading him to experiment within the means that he had: where the script calls for a harp, Sibelius used *pizzicato* strings, which were replaced by a harp in the subsequent orchestral suite.<sup>39</sup>

Very few production documents relating to the Finnish premiere survive. To my knowledge, there are no existing photographs or other material pertaining to the creation of the play that are readily available. Having such a scarcity of documentation throws into relief the importance of newspaper reviews for productions during this period. They are frequently so

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<sup>38</sup> In a parallel with *Lohengrin*, the prince's name is a secret, for all who speak it are destined to love him. Swanwhite guesses the prince's name — Greyhead.

<sup>39</sup> He also expanded the orchestration to include a larger number of percussion instruments such as castanets.

numerous and detailed that they provide descriptive information about how the production was staged, as well as the critic's interpretation. This is the case here: a Strindberg premiere was, as critic Hjalmar Lenning put it, 'naturally an event of the kind that attracts the whole of the theatre audience's attention',<sup>40</sup> and the Swedish Theatre's production was documented in both the national and regional presses. Although the information provided by the newspapers is both incomplete and imperfect, it gives some idea of the production's aesthetic, and subsequently how Sibelius's music might have interacted with the visual elements of the show.

Overall, Sibelius's music was extremely well received, marked out as a selling point of the production as well as being one of its most successful attributes. The author for *Östra Finland* commented that 'The audience had turned out in large numbers to see and to hear — not least attracted by the outstanding beauty of the music, which Jean Sibelius composed in connection to the play.'<sup>41</sup> Whether or not this critic was correct in asserting that many of the audience members were primarily concerned with the music, their belief that it may have been a determining factor is an indication of the importance of incidental music as an integral aspect of theatrical productions during this period, not least when written by a composer of national repute.

Wasenius, writing for *Hufvudstadsbladet*, praised the actors, before commenting that 'to the same degree the success belonged to Jean Sibelius. The collaboration between Strindberg and

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<sup>40</sup> 'En strindbergsk urpremiär är naturligtvis alltid ett evenemang af den art som påkalla hela teaterpublikens uppmärksamhet.' Hjalmar Lenning: 'Litteratur och konst, Svenska teatern: Svanevit', *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 09/04/1908 (Hj. L.)

<sup>41</sup> 'Publiken hade mangrant infunnit sig att se och höra — ej minst lockade den enastående vackra music, som af Jean Sibelius komponerats i anslutning till pjäsen.' "s", 'Konst och litteratur'

Sibelius has, in *Svanehvít*, generated a harmonic whole,<sup>42</sup> later comparing the movement nine waltz to 'Valse triste'.<sup>43</sup> He also took particular care to stress the precision with which Sibelius set the text, emphasising the impression of coherence between notes and words: in a previous article he called the production 'Strindberg's and Sibelius's fairy tale of the victory of pure love.'<sup>44</sup> Lenning corroborates Wasenius's claim that Sibelius's music was perceived as complementing rather than contradicting Strindberg's text, writing that 'this music was not merely a loosely fitted ornament for the whole, which sounded so beautiful that one wished for twice as many numbers as there were, but joined itself organically to the fantasy play as a textual supplement, an atmosphere-provoking part of the greatest importance.'<sup>45</sup>

#### **SYMBOLISM, SURROUNDINGS, AND TIME**

The drama plays out within the confines of the Duke's castle, which while not explicitly enchanted appears to have mystical attributes. Swanwhite is able to converse with the peacock and doves that inhabit the castle, and the play's consistent fluctuation between dream and reality makes it difficult to determine which of the supernatural occurrences within the castle are imagined or not. This is identical to Patrick McGuinness's description of Maeterlinck's *mise-en-scène*, saying that 'the dream state dissolves the boundaries between character and setting, so that the décor becomes a reflection of the "atmosphère morale" in which dramatis personae live and breathe.'<sup>46</sup> Very often throughout the play, Sibelius's music

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<sup>42</sup> 'Men i lika hög grad var förtjänsten Jean Sibelius. Sammengåendet mellan Strindberg och Sibelius har i 'Svanehvít' alstrat ett harmoniskt helt. Karl Frederik Wasenius: 'Svanehvít', *Hufoudstadsbladet* no. 100, 10/04/1908 (Bis)

<sup>43</sup> 'som i bedårande samverkan staller stycket nära nog vid sidan av 'Valse triste'. ' *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> 'Det är Strindbergs och Sibelius saga om den rena kärlekens seger'. Wasenius, 'Jean Sibelius' musik till August Strindbergs sagospel "Svanehvít"'

<sup>45</sup> 'Det blev icke blott en löst anbragt prydnad för det hela denna musik, som klingade så vackert att man önskat dubbelt flere nummer till, utan anslöt sig organiskt till sagospelet som en texten supplerande stämningsväckande del af största betydelse.' Lenning, 'Litteratur och konst'

<sup>46</sup> McGuinness, 24

is used to accentuate the idea that the surroundings provide a commentary on or contribution to the on-stage action, adding an aural dimension to the setting.

The scenic decoration was a source of particular interest to reviewers, given Strindberg's stage directions that demand excessive technical mechanics and set design. The set description is Maeterlinck-esque in its extravagance, and there are multiple scenes which require intricate stage machinery and illusion, including a scene where the Stepmother is exorcised.<sup>47</sup> According to the reviews, the Swedish Theatre adhered to Strindberg's stage designs. Various critics commented on the opulence of the set, suggesting that Strindberg's directions were followed as closely as possible.

'Sam', writing for *Hufoudstadsbladet*, reveals that Knudsen's designs contained much of the details requested by Strindberg: 'The decoration was brilliant. Mr Knudsen has recorded a new victory. The high, vaulted hall, the time outside, the flowering rose bushes, the beach and the deep blue sea far away... One cannot imagine a more beautiful scenery,' and the rose trees were made to sway as if blown by the wind.<sup>48</sup> Lenning wrote that 'The theatre had apparently spared no expense to achieve the most greatest possible [effect] as far as the dignified exterior trappings are concerned, and Mr Wetzler can take the credit for the happy outcome. ... The scenery — a chamber in the Duke's palace ... created the right atmosphere: the beautiful decoration with a variety of fine and artistically rendered detail was a new

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<sup>47</sup> The opening scene calls for 'An apartment in a medieval stone castle', with an assortment of props including doves and a peacock. The scene of the Stepmother's exorcism requires her to inflate and appear as though she is on fire, patterned with snakes and branches.

<sup>48</sup> 'Dekoration var glänsande. Herr Knudsen har att anteckna en ny seger. Den höga, hvälfda salen, gången utanför, de blommande rosenbuskarna, stranden och det djupblå hafset längst borta... Man kan inte tänka sig ett vackrare sceneri.' "Sam": 'Från parkett', *Hufoudstadsbladet*, 09/14/1908

masterpiece by Mr Knudsen's deft hand.<sup>49</sup> The critic Julius Hirn, similarly, wrote that 'the stage devices are a credit to the theatre. The outer decoration, painted by Mr Knudsen, is particularly appealing, the costumes beautiful.'<sup>50</sup>

Besides the set, critics commented on the judgement scene, which requires flowers that can open and close on demand. To determine whether Swanwhite and the Prince are guilty of extra-marital sex, the Duke calls for three lilies to be brought forth, representing Swanwhite, the Prince and the King:

TOVA: [*Gazing at the three lilies which behave as her words indicate*] The white one folds its blossom to protect itself against defilement. That is Swanwhite's flower.

ALL: Swanwhite is innocent!

TOVA: And the red one — it is the Prince's — closes its head... but the blue one, which is the King's, flings wide its gorge to drink the lust-filled air.

DUKE: Correctly interpreted! What else do you see?

TOVA: I see the red flower bend its head in reverent love before the white one; but the blue one writhes with envious rage!<sup>51</sup>

It is unclear how precisely this was resolved for the production; reviewers were divided over the efficacy of the folding flowers. Hirn wrote that '[With] smaller details such as the bowing

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<sup>49</sup> 'Teatern hade tydligen icke lämnat någon möda ospard för att åstadkomma en i möjligaste måtto värdig yttre utstyrelse och herr Wetzter tillkommer äran för det lyckliga resultatet... Miljön — ett gemak i hertigens slott — träffade ... den rätta stämningen: den vackra dekorationen med en mängd fina och artistiskt utförda detaljer var ett nytt mästerverk af herr Knudsens skickliga hand.' Lenning, 'Litteratur och konst'

<sup>50</sup> 'de sceniska anordningarna lända teatern till heder. Den yttre dekorationen, målade af hr Knudsen, är särdeles tillalande, kostymerna vackra.' Julius Hirn: 'Svenska teatern: Strindberg "Svanevit" med musik af Jean Sibelius', *Nya Pressen*, 09/04/1908 ('Habitué')

<sup>51</sup> TOFVA: [*betraktar de tre liljorna som bete sig så som hennes ord angifva*] Där sluter sig den hvita liljan, att skydda sig mot orena inflytelser.

ALLA: Svanevit är oskyldig!

TOFVA: Och den röda, det är prinsens, stänger sig... men den blå, det är konungens, öppnar sitt svalg att andas vällust!

HERTIGEN: Rätt tolkad! Hvad ser du så?

TOFVA: Jag ser den röda liljan böja sig i vördnadsfull kärlek för den hvita; men den blå vrider sig i harm och afund!. August Strindberg: *Svanevit* (available online from Dramawebben) [http://www.dramawebben.se/sites/default/files/StrindbergA\\_Svanevit.pdf](http://www.dramawebben.se/sites/default/files/StrindbergA_Svanevit.pdf) (accessed 08/02/2017)

flowers ... one asks oneself if sometimes more fantasy could not have been developed.'<sup>52</sup>

Conversely, Lenning's verdict was that 'all the technical difficulties — the flowers that open and close their chalices, birds with heavy wings flying over the scene, the delicate balanced lighting effects etc. — had been overcome in an excellent manner.'<sup>53</sup> Nonetheless, it appears that the stage design was as faithful to Strindberg's directions as possible, attempting to capture the smaller details that give the play its otherworldly atmosphere.

Given the excessive demands of the set design, the music was often assigned the task of conceptually animating the onstage scenery, as well as blurring the boundary between real and imagined — a recurring requirement for music in dream plays. Because the suspension of disbelief required to invest in symbolist plays such as *Svanevit* was so great, the music needed to accentuate above all the fantasy foundations of the drama. Hirn described Sibelius's music as vital for the play to make a successful transition from page to stage:

I ask the audience only to listen to the notes with which Sibelius has painted, for example, the young lovers' pure love-delight in the second act. A more ethereal innocent and simultaneously jubilant happiness has possibly never been painted in tones. And how does the perspective grow in the end tableau through the triumphant hymn the orchestra intones to the honour of mercy and pure love. Sibelius's considerable part of yesterday's success is evident. His music contributes more than anything else to produce a fairy tale haze over Strindberg's bright fairy tale ... which is needed so that the piece can work on stage.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> 'Smärre detaljer — såsom den bugande blomman o.d. ... man frågar sig, om ej ibland mera fantasi bort utvecklas.' Hirn, 'Svenska teatern'

<sup>53</sup> 'alla de tekniska svårigheterna — blommorna som öppna och sluta sina kalkar, fågeln som med tunga vingslag flyger över scenen, de ömtåligt avvägda belysningseffekterna m. m. — hade övervunnits på ett förträffligt sätt.' Lenning, 'Litteratur och konst'

<sup>54</sup> 'Jag ber publiken endast lyssna till de toner, varmed Sibelius t. ex. målar de unga älskandes rena kärleksfröjd i andra akten. En mera eteriskt oskuldsfull och dock jublande lycka har väl aldrig målats i toner. Och huru växer icke perspektivet i sluttablån genom den triumferande hymn orkestern intonerar till barmhärtighetens, och den rena kärlekens ära. Sibelius betydande andel i gårdagens framgång är uppenbar. Hans musik bidrager mer än något annat att öfver Strindbergs ljusa saga ... som kräfvades för pjäsen skall verka från scenen.' *Ibid.*

Sibelius's music in this review was described as an aspect of the spatial design, the change in perspective suggesting the music's ability to create an almost visual effect — a necessity if the play was to bear staging.

Sibelius's annotations on his score suggest that the final scene was not the only moment where the music was carefully coordinated with the visual design. In the fourth movement, 'Då börjar harpan spela' ('Now the harp begins to play'), Swanwhite's mother visits her room in the form of a swan, and puts a harp on the table which plays as the mother washes Swanwhite's feet and combs her hair. Sibelius evokes the playing of the magic harp through repeated pizzicato crotchets, which outline a semitone neighbour note motif in the violin parts (Ex. 1). There is no key signature and the movement has no clear tonality (it concludes in E major), giving the piece a sense of stasis. As soon as the music begins, the stage directions call for 'the lamps [to] go out one after another, beginning with the one furthest away, and the doors of the chambers are closed one by one, farthest first.'<sup>55</sup> Strindberg's directions give depth to the scenery, expanding the perceived spatial confines of the stage. The music directly interacts with this visual effect, Sibelius writing 'lampa!' ('lamps!') on his manuscript at the head of movement four. Presumably the lamp extinguishing and door closing would have been coordinated with Sibelius's music in some way, with the crotchet beat giving a steady pulse to this choreography, and therefore some temporal marker by which to measure the distance between the lights and doors. The onstage image was an integral aspect of the music's effect, a detail which is lost in concert performance.

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<sup>55</sup> 'lampor släckas en after annan, den bortersta först, och dörrarna till kamrarne stängas en after en, den bortersta först.' Strindberg, *Svanevit*, 142

Example 1: *Svanehvít* mvt. 4, bb. 1-9

**Lento assai**

Violin I  
Violin II  
Viola  
Violoncello  
Double Bass

Con sord.  
pizz.  
pp

Con sord.  
pizz.  
pp

Con sord.  
pizz.  
pp

Con sord.  
pizz.  
pp

Con sord.  
pizz.  
pp

arco  
pizz.  
pp

arco  
pizz.  
pp

arco  
pizz.  
pp

arco  
pizz.  
pp

arco  
pizz.  
pp

Throughout *Svanehvít*, Strindberg suggests that the perception of time passing is tied to mental states. Physical symbols of ageing are made reversible: the Prince's hair turns grey overnight when he is melancholy, and immediately reverts to black when he is reunited with Swanwhite. This is repeatedly foregrounded by being elevated to the subject of discourse; in an episode where Swanwhite rejects him, the Prince says 'my hair...turned to grey within the tower in half a night, when I was mourning for my Swanwhite who is no longer here.'<sup>56</sup>

Later, the Stepmother makes comments about his grey hair when she wakes him,<sup>57</sup> and notes

<sup>56</sup> 'mina hår som grånat i tornet på en half natt, af saknadens sorg efter min Svanehvít som icke är mera'. Strindberg, *Svanehvít*, 152

<sup>57</sup> 'STYFMODREN: Gråa hår bruka följas af godt förstånd ...

PRINSEN: Mina gråa hår?

STYFMODREN: Han vet det icke, han tror det icke! Tärnor! Signe, Elsa, Tofva! Beskratten den unge friaren med hans gråa hår!' *Ibid.*, 154.

when his hair returns to its original colour, at which point the young maids who sought to separate Swanwhite and the Prince also find themselves with white hair.<sup>58</sup> Strindberg borrowed this symbol from *Pelléas et Mélisande*: when Golaud and Mélisande first meet in the forest, she comments on his grey hair, and he remarks that she looks especially young. Where Maeterlinck's doomed lovers remain separated by age, Strindberg's negation of this concrete symbol of ageing encapsulates the play's overall sentiment — that love conquers all, even ageing and death.<sup>59</sup>

The idea that temporal perception is not experienced as universally the same is highlighted by extended discussions of how time relates to the body.<sup>60</sup> In Act I after the Prince and Swanwhite first meet, he feels her pulse, prompting the following discussion:

PRINCE: [*Feels her pulse under his thumb*] What do you have there that ticks... One, two, three, four ...?  
[*Continues to count silently while he looks at his watch*]  
SWANWHITE: Yes, what is it that ticks? Steady, steady! The heart cannot be in the finger, for that is beneath one's breast... Feel so you will know! [*The doves begin to stir and cool*] What is it, my little white ones?  
PRINCE: Sixty! Now I know what it is that ticks... It is the time! Your little finger is the second-hand, which has ticked sixty times while a minute has gone by. And don't you think there is a heart within the watch?  
SWANWHITE: [*Handling the watch*] We cannot reach the inside of the watch! No more than of the heart. Feel my heart!<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>59</sup> There was no doubt a very personal slant to this symbolism: Strindberg wrote in his diary of his concerns about being able to sexually satisfy Bosse, given the age distance between them.

<sup>60</sup> For a more detailed discussion of temporal perception and how it relates to music, see Benedict Taylor: *The Melody of Time: Music and Temporality in the Romantic Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016)

<sup>61</sup> 'PRINSEN: [*Märker hennes puls under tummen*] Hvad har du där som pickar... Ett, två, tre, fyra... [*Fortsätter räkningen tyst, sedan han sett på uret*]  
SVANEHVIT: Ja, hvad är det som pickar? Jämt, jämt! Hjärtat sitter ju inte i fingret, för det sitter ju under ena bröstet... Känn skall du få känna! [*Dufvorna röra på sig och kurra*] Hvad är det mina hvita små?...  
PRINSEN: Sextio! Nu vet jag hvad det är som pickar... Det är tiden!... Ditt lilla finger är sekundvisaren, som har pickat sextio gånger när en minut har gått. Tror du inte det sitter ett hjärta in i uret?  
SVANEHVIT: [*tummar uret*] Vi kommer inte in i uret! Lika litet som i hjärtat. Känn på mitt hjärta!  
Strindberg, *Svanehvít*, 129

Swanwhite's body is presented as a means of measuring time, her pulse and body parts directly analogous to the watch on the Prince's wrist. When the Prince declares her heart to be the time, Strindberg implies that time is only as 'real' as it is experienced, with the sense of time passing tempered by emotions. Swanwhite's reply suggests that temporality is as unfathomable as love itself, the metaphor of the watch-like heart allowing her to declare that to feel her heart is as close as the Prince can come to feeling time passing. This is characteristic of the manner in which spatio-temporal relationships are foregrounded throughout the drama.

Movement six of the incidental score recalls this comparison between Swanwhite's heart and a clock. This movement accompanies both the departure of the Prince's and Swanwhite's mothers, followed by the dreaming Prince and Swanwhite playing with each other. When Swanwhite's mother announces that Swanwhite is dreaming of the Prince, Sibelius's movement begins, underscoring her words with a solo cello line that provides the main melody for the rest of the piece. It is later adopted by the flute and clarinet parts representing Swanwhite and the Prince respectively, entering when the mother says 'They sport and laugh'.<sup>62</sup> When the flute first enters in the introduction, the melody is preceded by four minims (Ex. 2). Only five bars later, these minims are replaced by three strikes on the triangle, where a clock strikes three in the stage directions. Sibelius incorporates the sound of the clock into the instrumental line, such that the change of time becomes part of the dream that the mother narrates and is then enacted on stage. Most significantly, however, given that it is prefigured by Swanwhite's melody, it sounds as though the striking clock comes *from* Swanwhite. "Clock time" becomes part of her music, losing any semblance of objective independence. Furthermore this is the only time that a clock is heard in the entire scene, so

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<sup>62</sup> 'och de leka och le'. *Ibid.*, 145

Example 2: *Svanehoit* mvt. 6, bb. 1-20

Musical score for Example 2, *Svanehoit* mvt. 6, bb. 1-20. The score includes parts for Flute, Clarinet in Bb, Timpani, Triangle, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The key signature is three flats and the time signature is 3/4. Dynamics include *p* and *p <*.

Musical score for Example 2, *Svanehoit* mvt. 6, bb. 1-20. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Timpani (Timp.), Triangle (Tri.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Db.). The key signature is three flats and the time signature is 3/4. Dynamics include *p* and *pp*.

Example 3: *Svanehoit*, mvt. 7, bb. 1-4

The musical score for Example 3, *Svanehoit*, mvt. 7, bb. 1-4, is presented for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The score is in G-sharp minor (three sharps: F#, C#, G#) and 6/4 time. The key signature and time signature are consistent across all staves. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* (piano), *pp* (pianissimo), and *Con sord.* (con sordina). The Double Bass part has a *p sempre* marking. The music features long, sustained notes and a melodic line in the upper strings.

Sibelius's music becomes the only measure of time passing, until the Stepmother wakes the Prince and announces that it is morning.

This is especially noticeable at the transition from movement six to seven, which accompanies a change in mood from the Prince and Swanwhite playing happily to Swanwhite hiding from him. The cyclical form of movement six fails to produce a third repetition of the piece, and instead it falls into silence before launching directly into the next, slower movement. Sibelius indicates the change in atmosphere by a change of key, from E-flat major to G-sharp minor, and by a change of metre. The time signature changes from 3/4 to 6/4, lengthening each bar, and the melody from movement six is presented in an augmented minor version (Ex. 3). Movement seven, then, slows time musically as Swanwhite's mood shifts, portraying her change in feeling by simply altering the key and time signature of the same melody.

## SEX AND GENDER

Despite the many similarities between Maeterlinck's plays and *Svanehoit*, there is nonetheless a significant disparity in how the characters are presented. Strindberg's play comes much closer to fairy-tale than any of Maeterlinck's dramas, with characters such as the Stepmother representing fairy-tale tropes. This impacts on how gender is represented: Maeterlinck's

Mélisande is a lost woman within a world of wandering figures, but the women in *Svanehvít* are defined by their roles as children and mothers, juxtaposed with traditional ‘masculine’ figures represented by the Duke and the Prince. In her interactions with both the Duke and the Prince, Swanwhite is deferent and meek, her opening dialogue with the Duke highlighting his strength and size:

SWANWHITE: [*Throws herself into the arms of the Duke*] Father! — You’re like a royal oak-tree, and I cannot embrace you. But beneath your foliage I may hide from all harsh showers.<sup>63</sup>

Even in her relationship with the Prince, Swanwhite’s appeal relies on her infantile innocence and chastity. The pair are portrayed as being perfectly balanced with one another, devoted and loving, at one with their surroundings and spiritually blessed — but their union is primarily mental rather than physical. In the scene where the Prince and Swanwhite share a bed they place the Prince’s sword between their bodies as proof of their chastity, and their acquittal at the end of the play is dependent on Swanwhite’s virginity. The *raison d’être* of Strindberg’s play is to extol the virtues of Swanwhite’s relationships with the Prince and Duke, which necessitates the expulsion of sexually and emotionally disruptive characters: namely the Stepmother and the King. In the first draft of the play, the King embodies the lustful physicality that is a counter-pole to Swanwhite and the Prince’s relationship. He makes an appearance in the middle of Act III, portrayed as an intoxicated philanderer who cannot see Swanwhite’s beauty. It is only when he sees her with the Prince that he comprehends a pure love, and leaves in shame. Strindberg deals with the King relatively mercifully; in the final draft this scene was removed, leaving the King as an absent presence throughout the play, eliminating this confrontation between corporeal and ethereal forms of love.

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<sup>63</sup> ‘Svanehvít: [*springer i hertigens famn*] Fader!... Som en kungsek är du, och icke kan jag famna dig; men under ditt löfverk må jag gömma mig för de omilda skurar.’ Strindberg, *Svanehvít*, 115

Promoting an idea of redemptive, pure love was quite opposed to the tone of the most famous plays that Strindberg had written previously. The premise of *The Father*, *Miss Julie*, and *Creditors* is a battle between sexes, with the men portrayed as victims. This is the context in which reviewers approached *Svanevit*. In Finland as much as in Sweden, Strindberg was associated with 'The Woman Question', and many critics compared the production to previous Finnish performances of Strindberg's plays. Lenning called the previous premiere of *Kronbruden* ('The Crown Bride', 1901) a 'baptism of fire', and remarked that *Svanevit* came to the Helsinki stage in the wake of this production's reputation.<sup>64</sup> Both Lenning and the critic for *Östra Finland* ('Eastern Finland') compared *Svanevit* to Strindberg's earlier writing. They argued that it was almost impossible to believe that Strindberg was capable of producing a work like *Svanevit*. The *Östra Finland* critic asked 'who would believe, with knowledge of Strindberg's previous creations ... that the author of dramas *The Father*, *Advent*, *The Dance of Death* etc., which in the most sophisticated, ferocious way separate the excruciating struggle between man and woman — is, in this idiosyncratic fairy play, capable of penetrating into the depths of the gentle essence of love more purely and truly than most people, full of a passionate, temple-like mysticism.'<sup>65</sup> Lenning, meanwhile, called Swanwhite 'remarkable in Strindberg's poetry for her innocent loveliness',<sup>66</sup> noting nonetheless that 'as with everything Strindberg has written, the fairy tale *Svanevit* also bears to a marked degree its author's characteristically afflicted signature.'<sup>67</sup> Although Strindberg's depictions of

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<sup>64</sup> 'ett elddop'. Lenning, 'Litteratur och konst'

<sup>65</sup> 'Hvem skulle emellertid med kännedom om Strindbergs tidigare alstring...kunna tro — att författaren till "Fadren", "Advent", "Dödsdansen", m. fl. dramer, vilka på det mest raffinerade, grymma sätt skilda den sönderslitande kampen mellan man och kvinna — i detta egenartade sagospel renare, sannare än de flesta förmår tränga till djupet af den blida kärlekens väsen, fylldt af en passionsfri, tempelsval mystik.' "s", 'Konst och literatur'

<sup>66</sup> 'Svanevits anmärkningsvärd i strindbergsk diktning genom sin oskuldsfulla älsklighet'. Lenning, 'Litteratur och konst'

<sup>67</sup> 'Som allt hvad Strindberg skrivit bär också sagospellet *Svanevit* i utpräglad grad sin författares kännpaka signatur.' *Ibid.*

gender are still problematic in *Svanevit* — he merely swaps persecution for pedestalisation — the critics were far more favourable to this approach than to his previous efforts.

The entirety of Sibelius's score is infused with a gentle, unthreatening eroticism, that revels in the tender moments between Swanwhite and the Prince. From the outset, the ensemble is divided between the woodwind, strings, and brass: the flute represents Swanwhite; the clarinet the Prince; the horns the swan-souls of Swanwhite's and the Prince's mothers, and the strings are assigned the role of orchestrating their surroundings, which both expresses and responds to their emotional states. Movement two is illustrative of this. It is written for strings alone, and primarily concerned with scene-setting rather than narration. Beginning when Swanwhite says 'Quiet doves, my prince comes!',<sup>68</sup> the movement accompanies the Prince's first entrance, possibly underscoring his ensuing monologue.<sup>69</sup> Although Sibelius does not leave verbal cues in the score, the tripartite form of the piece mirrors the structure of the Prince's speech; the modulation to A minor at bar 38 coincides with the Prince's line 'Dark and vaulted as the night sky', before returning to E major at his declaration 'I see a rift of light!'<sup>70</sup> If the Prince spoke through the movement, this would also explain the lack of woodwind in the scoring. In other movements, the flute and clarinet provide musical expression of the Prince and Swanwhite's emotions, but in the second movement this is provided by the on-stage presence of the Prince, recounting his inner thoughts. The Prince's statement that he hears 'a breath that smells of roses'<sup>71</sup> also indicates that this movement might have been underscored. If the Prince delivered this line — a description that would no doubt have appealed to Sibelius's poetic approach to composition — whilst music was

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<sup>68</sup> 'Tyst dufvor, min prins kommer!' Strindberg, *Svanevit*, 120

<sup>69</sup> Appendix 3 shows how this might have been underscored.

<sup>70</sup> 'Mörk och hvälfad som natthimlen ... ser jag en ljusspringa.' Strindberg, *Svanevit*, 120

<sup>71</sup> 'Jag hör en andrägt, som doftar af rosor.' *Ibid.*, 120

playing, then Sibelius's accompanying strings would be the gentle breath that sweeps through the Prince and Swanwhite's first meeting.

The critics commented on the sensuality of Sibelius's score, interpreting many of the movements as contributing to the play's ambience of youthful eroticism. In Wasenius's preview, he wrote that the music of movement ten, which accompanies the Prince and Swanwhite going to bed, had an 'eroticism' about it.<sup>72</sup> Aside from the vocal cue for this movement, Sibelius's note from the stage directions reads 'The gold clouds become rosy red', at the point 'When the Prince lies in the bed'.<sup>73</sup> The movement opens with a rising horn motif, a tone followed by a fifth (Ex. 4a). This appears to have been a motif that Sibelius used to signify sexual desire as well as otherworldly blessing; it appears in altered form in *Scaramouche*, as discussed in the next chapter, implying a doomed or sexually deviant desire (Ex. 4b).<sup>74</sup> Hepokoski describes this kind of horn-call opening as 'a threshold leading...into sacred space',<sup>75</sup> but its use in the context of *Svanehvít* suggests that this threshold leads to a space as sexual as much as it is sacred.<sup>76</sup> The strings in *Svanehvít*'s movement ten occupy the same purpose as in the second movement, but the flute and clarinet act as the characters of Swanwhite and the Prince with a languorous melody that interweaves between the two parts. At bar 15 a solo violin emerges from the strings, the couple's surroundings narrating their emotions so that their parts can fall silent — presumably lost in the throes of dreamed passion. After the violin entry the clarinet and flute are either silent or play in unison, leaving

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<sup>72</sup> 'Det är en erotik i musiken'. Wasenius, 'Jean Sibelius' musik till august Strindbergs sagospel "Svanehvít"'

<sup>73</sup> 'Guldmolnen bli rosenröda'. *Ibid.*, 158. The second observation is not a direct quote from the script, but reads 'När Prinsen lägger sig i sängen.'

<sup>74</sup> Sibelius uses a semitone followed by a rising fifth to signify *Scaramouche*; see *Scaramouche*'s first entry in bar 197.

<sup>75</sup> Hepokoski, *Sibelius*, 62

<sup>76</sup> This horn call also bears striking similarity to the opening of *Lemminkäinen and the Island Maidens*, where its symbolism is also highly erotic.

the strings to provide a sensual postlude to their physically celibate but mentally amorous encounter.

Example 4a: *Svanehvit* mvt. 10, bb. 1-9

Musical score for Example 4a, *Svanevit* mvt. 10, bb. 1-9. The score is for a full orchestra and includes parts for Flute, Clarinet in Bb, Horn in F, Timpani, Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The tempo is **Moderato**. The key signature has one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics "Guldmolnen bli rosenröda... harpan spelar" are written above the Flute part. Dynamics include *mp*, *piu p*, *pp*, and *dim possibile*.

Example 4b: *Scaramouche*, bb. 197-201, viola part

Musical score for Example 4b, *Scaramouche*, bb. 197-201, viola part. The score is for Viola in 3/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It features a steady crotchet pulse with a bowing mark (V) above the first note.

The other movement which Wasenius commented on at length was the fourth. Here, the discourse about gender that surrounded Strindberg made its way into critics' discussions of Sibelius's music in a particularly explicit manner. The movement in question accompanies Swanwhite's mother visiting her as she sleeps. Sibelius establishes a steady crotchet pulse to accompany the lights switching off as Swanwhite falls asleep, as discussed above. Once this pattern has been established, Sibelius changes the harmonic motion to give a sense of acceleration, before inserting bowed chords that suspend the temporal progression of the movement. In the first instance (Ex. 1), bars 8-9, the harmony shifts up a tone from D-flat to E-flat, acting as the enharmonic dominant of G-sharp minor and anticipating a possible IV-V-

I resolution. However the expected resolution is denied, and the suspended chord falls into silence, before moving instead to a G-sharp major chord. Due to its context at this moment in the play, this implied temporal suspension is linked to dream states and the spiritual; these chords open a window into the otherworld that the ghostly swan-mother hails from, beyond the spatio-temporal frame of the Duke's castle. Bars 9 onwards would have accompanied the mother caring for Swanwhite, which is described as follows:

*[The MOTHER rises, takes SWANWHITE in her arms, and places her, still sleeping, in a huge arm-chair. Then she kneels down and pulls off SWANWHITE'S stockings. Having thrown these under the bed, she bends over her daughter's feet as if to moisten them with her tears. After a while she wipes them with a white linen cloth and covers them with kisses. Finally she puts a sandal on each foot which then appears shining white.]*<sup>77</sup>

The importance of this onstage image is made apparent by considering the reviewers' reception of this scene. Wasenius gendered Sibelius's music for this movement, associating it with womanhood and femininity. His description was no less suggestive than Sibelius's music itself: 'The strings of the golden harp shiver momentarily. From its womb begin the sounds of the wonderful music of the second act, where the string orchestra is at times *pizzicato*, at times singing a strange song in desolate tones.'<sup>78</sup> In his review of the premiere, he said the following of the same movement:

The mother ... is portrayed through music in a way that only Sibelius is capable of. With her tears, she washes Swanwhite's feet, and with tender motherly love, she prays for the slumbering daughter. This is all excellently depicted by Sibelius's music. The strings of the golden harp slowly sound in broken chords. There, tones ring like a mother's tears sighing in grief; extended

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<sup>77</sup> 'Modren reser sig; lyfter Svanevit från sängen och sätter henne i stora karmstolen utan att Svanevit vaknar. Därpå faller hon på knä, tar af dotterns strumpor och lägger undan dem under sängen, böjer sig gråtande öfver Svanevits små fötter, såsom om hon fuktade dem med sin tårar; sedan torkar hon dem med ett linkläde, och kysser dem; fäster sandalerna på fötterna som nu synas helt hvita.' Strindberg, *Svanevit*, 143

<sup>78</sup> 'Ur dess sköte ljuder vid andra aktens början en underbar musik, därvid stråkorkestern än pizzikerar, än sjunger en sällsam sång i ensliga toner.' Wasenius, 'Jean Sibelius' musik till August Strindbergs sagospel 'Svanevit''

harmonies, as tender as motherly care, as upstanding as her prayer.<sup>79</sup>

Wasenius's interpretation of Sibelius's music here gives some indication of how the scene would have been staged, and he directly grafts the visual image onto Sibelius's score. In Wasenius's description, Sibelius's music does not accompany but *depicts*; the textual and visual have *become* a part of the score. Sibelius's music itself is sexualised through personification, Wasenius gendering the music of movement four female. For Wasenius, the music grows from the 'womb' of the harp — he essentialised Swanwhite's mother through her body parts most associated with female reproduction, and embraced Strindberg's premise that women's greatest virtues stem from their motherly aspects. The dead mother's suffering is revered, almost fetishised, through its association with Sibelius's music 'sighing in grief.' The semitone neighbour note motif becomes 'tears sighing in grief', while the bowed chords of bars 8-9 are 'extended harmonies, as tender as motherly care'.

It is difficult to hear the piece in Wasenius's gendered terms through twenty-first-century ears without the context of the production. But his reading is particularly intriguing given that the technique that Wasenius refers to in this movement reappears in Sibelius's later String Quartet Op. 56 'Voces intimae' (1909), presenting the possibility that the 'intimate voices' in the quartet are concerned with similar themes to *Svanehvít*. The metrical structure of the first movement of 'Voces intimae' is more complex than in *Svanehvít*, but the appearance of the E major ninth *piano* chord in bar 38 has a similar effect to the incidental score (Ex. 5), and this effect is repeated in the second and third movements, the E minor chords of the third movement being the source of the 'Voces intimae' subtitle. Mäkelä has

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<sup>79</sup> 'Modern som besöker Svanehvít under dennas sömn skildras i musik, så som endast Sibelius kan det. Med sina tårar tvår hon Svanehvít's fötter, i öm moderskärlek ber hon för den slumrande dottern. Hur är icke allt detta skildradt af Sibelius i tonen! Den gyllne harpans strängar ljuda i sakta arpeggierade ackord. Där ljuda toner som moderstårar som suckar i sorg; långdragna harmonier, veka som modersömheten, högburna som hennes bön.' *Ibid.*

written of the string quartet’s innovative complexity, stating that ‘The originality of Sibelius’ work comes in part from elements that ... interrupt the traditional syntax, the “flow”, and produce surprising turns’.<sup>80</sup> Tawaststjerna, meanwhile, highlights the ‘dream-like quality’ of the second movement, and argues that ‘the eloquent, breathless pauses, seem to mirror, as the poet Bertel Gripenberg put it, “a distant murmur from a distant world”’.<sup>81</sup> This ethereal, uncanny effect is developed in the quartet’s predecessor, *Svanehvitt*. Setting the play gave Sibelius an opportunity to orchestrate ‘a distant murmur from a distant world’, in this case the ghost of Swanwhite’s mother; this murmur made its way into his quartet composed only months later. Perhaps, then, the ‘Voces intimae’ of the quartet’s title stems from the tender gesture of a mother to her child, the ‘intimate voices’ whispers between the living and the dead.

Example 5: ‘Voces intimae’, mvt. 1, bb. 37-42

The image shows a musical score for four string instruments: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The score is for the first movement of 'Voces intimae', measures 37-42. The music is written in a key with one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and a common time signature. The score is characterized by its ethereal and complex texture, featuring frequent dynamic markings of 'p' (piano) and 'ten.' (tenuis). The Violin I part has a melodic line with many slurs and ties. The Violin II part has a more rhythmic, eighth-note pattern. The Viola and Violoncello parts provide harmonic support with sustained notes and occasional melodic fragments. The overall effect is one of breathless, intimate whispers.

Although the critics mainly associated the music with femininity and spoke about its relationship to the women in the play, many of the movements are concerned with male characterisation — much of the music in the second act is dedicated to conveying the Prince’s emotions. In this act, Swanwhite temporarily rejects the Prince with no explanation. They have an argument sparked off by a disagreement over the colour of the Gardener’s

<sup>80</sup> Mäkelä, *Sibelius*, 294

<sup>81</sup> Tawaststjerna, *Sibelius Vol. II*, 121

clothing, which culminates in Swanwhite leaving the Prince a letter (delivered by the Stepmother), that spurns him:

STEPMOTHER: You know the hand, hers!...What has the hand written?

PRINCE: That she hates me, and loves another...that she played with me; that she spits out my kisses, and throws my heart to the swine...I want to die! Now I am dead!<sup>82</sup>

Later, Swanwhite neither denies that she sent the letter, nor offers any reason for the extent of her vitriol. Instead, when questioned she merely says 'What does it matter, when you are faithful and I love you?', at which point they are reconciled.<sup>83</sup> The motives for Swanwhite's change of heart are left ambiguous — it is not given any further explanation later in the play, and both Strindberg's text and Sibelius's score adopt the Prince's perspective throughout this episode and the ensuing scene in which the Stepmother attempts to wed the Prince to her own daughter, Magdalena. Sibelius sets their separation to an extensive G minor processional for clarinet and strings (movement eight, 'Prinsen ensam'), built on a repetitive melody and accompaniment, with the clarinet melody signifying the Prince, the flute Swanwhite, and the strings the Prince's surroundings. Initially, the Prince's melody is accompanied by repeated G minor chords in the strings, and interjections from the flute that overlap with the clarinet's phrases. After two repetitions however, the strings begin to assume the more significant role, providing momentum through cyclical patterns that encircle the clarinet, as shown in Ex. 6.

This is a deceptively simple technique that fulfils multiple purposes. The overlapping phrases give the impression of having the ability to recur indefinitely, reflecting the depths of

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<sup>82</sup> 'STYFMODREN: Du känner handen, hennes!...Hvad har handen skrivit?

PRINSEN: Att hon hatar mig, och älskar en annan...att hon lekt med mig, att hon spottar ut mina kyssar, och kasta mitt hjärta i svingården...Nu vill jag dö! Nu är jag död!' Strindberg, *Svanevit*, 154

<sup>83</sup> 'Hvad gör det så, när du är trogen och jag har dig kär?' *Ibid.*, 158

Example 6: *Svanehoit* mvt. 8, bb. 1-12

**Adagio langsam**

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system includes Flute, Clarinet in Bb, Horn in F, and Timpani. The Flute part begins with a 'Solo' marking and a dynamic of *mp*. The Clarinet part starts with a dynamic of *p* and a 'sonore' marking. The Horn part is silent. The Timpani part features two trills, each starting with a dynamic of *pp*. The second system includes Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. All string parts begin with a dynamic of *mp*. The third system includes Flute, Clarinet, Horn, Timpani, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The Flute part continues with a dynamic of *mp*. The Clarinet part features a triplet of eighth notes. The Horn part is silent. The Timpani part features two trills, with the second one marked *dim*. The Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass parts continue with their respective parts.

the Prince's despair, which is supported by the clarinet remaining self-contained — both isolated from and overwhelmed by the music that surrounds it. Sibelius's cyclical layering technique, a more condensed version of that which appears later in *Tapiola* and *Nightride and Sunrise*, and earlier in *En Saga*, gives the impression of a solo voice being subsumed by a swirling, all-encompassing landscape. Speaking of *En saga* and *The Swan of Tuonela*, Grimley

argues that they open 'with the gradual unfolding of a bleak musical backdrop ... The impression is ... of the inward, subjective contemplation of an empty landscape, and the entry of the soloist is precisely the element that attempts to humanise the music.'<sup>84</sup> 'Prinsen ensam', however, follows an opposite process, where the landscape emerges from the soloist. The Prince's clarinet begins the movement leading the melody line, but it then generates the string parts that engulf it. This is an important distinction: here, the Prince remains the epicentre of a process of his own making, suggesting that the landscape is metaphorical, a landscape of the mind. And it is a landscape that the Prince shows no signs of being able to escape from or change. Sibelius's harmony rocks resolutely between I and V, robbing the perfect cadence of any forward momentum or sense of conclusion.<sup>85</sup> This perfectly encapsulates Strindberg's idea that perception of time passing is determined by mental states — without Swanwhite, temporal progression stops for the Prince, trapped inside his own mind.

This movement is succeeded by a waltz, which plays when the Stepmother tries to coerce the Prince into marrying Magdalena. A heavily veiled woman is brought forward to accompanying music, and it is only later revealed that Swanwhite has thwarted the stepmother's plans and the veiled bride is, in fact, Swanwhite rather than Magdalena, which leads to her going to bed with the Prince. Sibelius's waltz is slow, in E-flat minor, conveying the Prince's despair with no hint that Magdalena is not as she appears to be. Consequently, Kurki suggests that 'Sibelius has ... interpreted Magdalena as an actual character in the play, even though - according to Strindberg's text - the bride is in fact "the wrong Magdalena", i.e. Swanwhite.'<sup>86</sup> However, the melancholy tone of the movement alone is not sufficient reason

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<sup>84</sup> Grimley, 'The tone poems', 105

<sup>85</sup> It is also reminiscent of a ground bass, an archaism which is perhaps deliberate on Sibelius's part given the setting of the play.

<sup>86</sup> Kurki, 'Sibelius and the Theater', 90

to assume that Sibelius is contradicting Strindberg's stage directions. In context, it would be dramatically confusing to have motifs or instrumentation associated with Swanwhite appear at this moment, besides which foreshadowing the "reveal" would break the dramatic tension. Instead, both Strindberg and Sibelius narrate the story from the Prince's perspective — the waltz immerses the audience in the Prince's point of view as he mourns the naïve happiness of his romance with Swanwhite, and contemplates a future without her.

## CONCLUSION

At the 1908 premiere, the textual and visual elements of *Svanevit* were seen as being as much part of Sibelius's music as vice versa. Even the movements that consisted of a horn call over a single chord took on amorous connotations in light of their theatrical context; Wasenius described movements one, three, and five as 'the chord sound of pure love, its essence, its belief, its conquering power.'<sup>87</sup> To understand how Sibelius's contemporaries came to these conclusions, we need to consider the production in which they were staged, as well as the historical context surrounding the performance.

This performance was staged during the height of enthusiasm for symbolism in Sweden and Finland. Although there are no photographs of the play, the newspaper reviews give a relatively comprehensive account of the play's aesthetic, confirming that it followed the vogue for highly stylised settings. That such a rich account of the production can be extracted from the reviews is testament to how extensively performances were covered in the press, and is indicative of how much influence critics had over the reception of these plays. They used their reviews as a way of historically situating these composers and playwrights, comparing the work in question to their previous output.

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<sup>87</sup> 'grundackordet om den rena kärleken, dess väsen, dess tro, dess segrande makt.' Wasenius, "Jean Sibelius' musik till August Strindbergs sagospel 'Svanevit'"

Sibelius conceived of *Svanevit* in relationship to Strindberg's text, closely intertwining the two and demonstrating how formative literature could be for his composition. Sibelius found in *Svanevit* a radiant model of sexual intimacy, a sensuality embedded in the pantheistic symbolism that he so revered. *Scaramouche*, however, presented him with complex gender dynamics that moved away from this simplified symbolist view of the feminine: *Scaramouche's* heroine Blondelaine is a multi-faceted woman with a rich emotional range, capable of expressing multiple motivations and desires in a way that Swanwhite is not. It is to this score, and Sibelius's theatrical explorations of expressionism, that we now turn.

## SCARAMOUCHE, SCARAMOUCHE

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On 21 June 1913, Sibelius wrote in his diary ‘Ruined myself by signing the Scaramouche contract. Was so violent today that I broke the telephone.’<sup>1</sup> It appears that when Sibelius had signed the contract in 1912, he was under the impression that he was to write only one or two dances for Poul Knudsen’s drama. When he came to complete the piece he realised that it required a full, through-composed score. At this point he demanded a greater commission to be able to complete the work, as he felt that such a demanding undertaking would impact on his international reputation.<sup>2</sup>

This was not the only period during which Sibelius expressed particular concern about *Scaramouche*. He had earlier, in May, accused the author of plagiarism. He was struck by the similarities between Knudsen’s text and Arthur Schnitzler’s pantomime *Die Verwandlung der Pierrots* (‘The Veil of Pierrette’, 1908), set to music by Ernő Dohnányi, and promptly wrote to his publisher, Wilhelm Hansen, to alert him. Undoubtedly, the similarities between the two dramas are uncanny — both involve a woman who dances herself to death after being seduced by a man who she murders — but it was eventually decided that Knudsen was not guilty of plagiarism, and the commission continued.

*Scaramouche*’s genesis was not just a cause for anxiety, however. These setbacks did not seem to hinder Sibelius for long; only six days after destroying his telephone, he recorded on 27 June that he ‘Worked these days and today on the pantomime. Have the feeling of being a

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Ruinerat mig genom underskrifvandet av Scaramouche kontraktet. — Var så häftig i dag att jag slog sönder telefonen.’ 21/06/1913. Dahlström, 173

<sup>2</sup> Tawaststjerna records that he wrote to his publisher that ‘If I am to be held to the terms of the contract, the music must be good — there can be no alternative for me.’ Tawaststjerna, *Sibelius Vol. II*, 244

genius. Rather so glorious Ego!’<sup>3</sup> On 10 April he declared that ‘Poetry is in the air. — Occupied with *Scaramouche*’,<sup>4</sup> and on 17 April ‘The day is lovely. An outstanding poetry! Walked in the evening. Such days as this make it extremely difficult for me to be separated from my ... life. A suicide on such a day would for me be an impossibility. — Forged the S[caramouche] dance.’<sup>5</sup>

The result of Sibelius’s impassioned mood changes is an intensely sexual score, and one of Sibelius’s longest dramatic works. The story focuses on Blondelaine, a young dancer, and her lover, Leilon. A troupe of musicians appear at a party that they are hosting, and their leader, the hunchbacked viola player Scaramouche, seduces Blondelaine with his music. She dances herself into a fever, and when Leilon banishes Scaramouche, Blondelaine follows him. She later returns to Leilon, but Scaramouche pursues her to their house. In a fit of panic she stabs Scaramouche, hiding his body behind a curtain. She then dances herself to death, and the pantomime ends with Leilon discovering Scaramouche’s body.

*Scaramouche*’s explicit violence offers a contrast to the sensuality of *Svanehvitt*. It followed in the wake of multiple plays and dramas where a woman dances herself to death; Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring* (1913) is the most famous example, but others included *Der Kaiserin von Neufundland* by Frank Wedekind (‘The Empress of Newfoundland’, 1902, music by Richard Weinhöppel), Carl Einstein’s *Nuronihar* (1913), Hofmannsthal’s *Elektra* (1903), Alfred Döblin’s short story *Die Tänzerin und der Leib* (‘The Dancer and the Body’, 1910) and, of course, Arthur Schnitzler’s *Die Verwandlung der Pierrots*.

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Arbetat dessa dagar och i dag på Pantomimen. Har känsla af att vara ett geni. Rätt så härlige Ego!’ Dahlström, 173

<sup>4</sup> ‘Poesi i lufyten. Tager ihop med Scaramouche.’ *Ibid.*, 169

<sup>5</sup> ‘Dagen härlig. En enastående poesi! Promenerade på kvällen. Dylika dagar, som denna, göra mig det ytterst svårt att skiljas från [crossed-out] lifvet. Ett självmord på en dylik dag vore före mig en omöjlighet. — Smidt på S. dansen.’ *Ibid.*, 170

Harold Segel attributes the early twentieth-century's sustained focus on the body to a 'dethroning of language' at the turn of the century,<sup>6</sup> with authors increasingly turning to more gestural forms of expression than words. Sibelius's *Scaramouche* was a contribution to this trend: reviewers approached *Scaramouche* in the context of the increasing popularity of dancers such as Isadora Duncan and Loïe Fuller, and larger projects like Diaghilev's Ballets Russes and Rolf de Maré's Ballets Suédois. This chapter places *Scaramouche* in the wider context of turn-of-the-century preoccupations with physicality, counterbalancing concerns about the veracity of language. As dance became more popular as a 'serious' art form, it provoked discussion about its status — particularly how it related to both music and drama — and how dance was related to expressions of sexuality. *Scaramouche* combines both of these topics, in effect staging both a vision of art as a process of and catalyst for sexual expression, and a comment on the extent to which dance is formed by music, or vice versa.

I first look at its personal meaning for Sibelius, arguing that Sibelius saw something of himself in *Scaramouche* — but also in *Blondelaine*. *Scaramouche* was written at a time when Sibelius was becoming increasingly insecure — both about the position of his work on an international stage, and more intimately about the impact of ageing on his physical and sexual prowess. The commission to write a piece around a fragile masculinity sustained by the mystical power of art was no doubt timely for him, touching on many of the themes that Sibelius held dear.

The chapter then illustrates the discussions about dance and physicality that provided the broader context for this score, before turning to the 1924 production at the Royal Theatre in Stockholm. This staging combined an eclectic and varied group of collaborators with diverging world views: Sibelius was one of many contributors who brought competing

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<sup>6</sup> Harold B. Segel: *Body Ascendant: Modernism and the Physical Imperative* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1998) 2

aesthetics to the final piece. The production was a restaging of the 1922 Copenhagen premiere, directed by Johannes Poulsen, choreographed by Emilie Walbom — whose choreography was highly expressionist and influenced by Fokine and Nijinsky — and with set designs by Kai Nielsen, whose style was distinctly *fin-de-siècle* symbolist.<sup>7</sup> I build on dance scholar Karen Vedel's observation that their staging 'combined several complementary styles, drawing on symbolism ... art nouveau ... and on expressionism,'<sup>8</sup> to explore how Sibelius's music contributed to this artistic milieu. Reviewers were divided over the efficacy of the set, costumes, choreography, dancing, and direction, but they were unanimous in their praise of Sibelius's music. Eleven years after its composition, *Scaramouche* was viewed by critics as one of Sibelius's most distinctive scores: cosmopolitan, dramatic, and decidedly sexual.

I argue that the stylistic plurality of Sibelius's *Scaramouche* allowed it to be read as both symbolist allegory and expressionist drama, and its utilisation of multiple styles was key to its successful reception as a dramatic score. Written at a time when Sibelius was struggling to define his own compositional and personal voice, *Scaramouche* is built from mercurial shifts between styles, cloaking each scene in a particular compositional idiom before shrugging it off and quickly adopting another. Jeffrey Kallberg has explored this stylistic consciousness in relation to Sibelius's songs, observing that 'the shift of a composer into a different style was not likely to connote a masking of identity. Rather it was likely to help constitute that identity.'<sup>9</sup> *Scaramouche* is a score that is centrally concerned with identity, and provided a

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<sup>7</sup> Poulsen had originally performed the part of *Scaramouche* alongside the Norwegian dancer Lillebil Ibsen, but in 1924 the Swedish dancers Sven D'Ailly and Ebon Strandin took the parts of *Scaramouche* and *Blondelaine*. Strandin also danced with the Ballets Suédois, and was associated with the Scandinavian dance avant-garde.

<sup>8</sup> Karen Vedel: 'Dancing across Copenhagen', *A Cultural History of the Avant-Garde in the Nordic Countries 1900-1925* ed. Hubert van der Berg, Irmeli Hautamäki, Benedikt Hjartason, Torben Jelsbak, Rikard Schönström, Per Stounbjerg, Tania Ørum & Dorthe Aagesen (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2012), pp. 511-530, 524

<sup>9</sup> Kallberg, 'Finnish Modern', 135

platform for Sibelius to experiment with different voices and styles to try and better define his own identity, both privately and publicly.

### SIBELIUS IN 1913

On a trip to Paris in October 1911, Sibelius expressed trepidation about his passing youth. In a doleful diary entry on 31 October, he wrote 'Arrived here and revisited the old haunts. But the young drinking and smoking "Jean" is no more! Should it now be that the "zest" for life is over forever?!'<sup>10</sup> Such ruminations led him to the topic of 'The Woman Question', pondering the claims of his contemporaries about the differences between male and female brains:

One could object that the "feminine" has qualities which are incompatible with the workings of a man's brain. But I do not believe it! In the best women I have known, femininity has not been bothersome, damn it. And the conversation has been of the highest quality. Never mind that the undercurrent is passion.<sup>11</sup>

For Sibelius, feelings about his own physical wellbeing and maturity were inextricably interconnected with his thoughts about women and sexuality. Each passing year brought with it new anxieties about the effect of ageing on his sexual desires, whether mentally or physically. In 1915, only two years after *Scaramouche* was composed, he penned a substantial note in his diary dated 13 April, writing about his increasing age and the relative transience or constancy of romance:

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<sup>10</sup> Ankom hit och finner igen gamla platser. Men den unga drickande och rökande "Jean" är icke mera! Skall det nu vara slut med "taget" i lifvet för alltid?! 31/10/1911 Dahlström, 100

<sup>11</sup> 'Man kunde invända att det "kvinliga" har med sig saker, vilka äro oförenliga med en manlig hjärnas arbete. Men det tror jag ej! I de bästa kvinnor jag känt har kvinligheten, "ta mig fan", icke stört. Och konversationen har varit på höjden. Låt så vara att underströmmen varit passion.' 31/10/1911, *Ibid.*, 101

We all live in anticipation of the spring. Eva and Arvi not least. A strange feeling for me to become a grandfather soon. So long, therefore, Jean Sibelius. And you played [the] young man in Gothenburg. One may not come with words of consolation: it is the mind not the body which determines its age. It is not so. Our body is probably a large part of the decision. ... Every age like every season has its own distinctive feature — my God that I am wise and prudent and above all new. You probably know Jean Sibelius, whose ecstasy and phrases never die! The sapling rises sufficiently in you as in other trees of fifty years — and how! The vigorous old man! But the time when one sat on a bench in each other's arms swearing eternal fidelity is probably past. — I say this now in the hope that it is the case. But this "repeated puberty" of geniuses which Goethe talks about flatters me. — When I close my eyes I revel in a fantasy from long ago ... A real friendship!! — Maybe love. This "uncertainty" penetrates into my bones.<sup>12</sup>

His diary entries from 1910 onwards express an increasing preoccupation with ageing, sexuality, and creativity, often interrelating the three. Running parallel to his concerns about his increasing age were his worries about the status of his music on an international platform, comparing himself to younger composers with whom he felt he had to compete. Sibelius's letters and diary entries make increasing reference to composers such as Schoenberg, and the *Scaramouche* commission arrived only a month after a disagreement with Erik Järnefelt in Helsinki, where he had praised Schoenberg at Sibelius's expense. This caused considerable tension, Sibelius concluding that 'I was dejected — did not really defend my little compositional cross. ... I see clearly that my successes — good criticism etc. — have caused jealousy to many. And these are *a priori* my sworn enemies.'<sup>13</sup> He was also comparing

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<sup>12</sup> 'Alla lefva vi i väntan på våren. Eva och Arvi icke minst. En egendomlig känsla hos mig att snart bli morfar. Så långt således Jean Sibelius. Och du spelte ung man i Göteborg. Man må ej komma med tröste ord: det är sinnet icke kroppen som bestämmer åldern. Det är ej så. Vår kropp är nog till stor del den bestämmande. ... Hvarje ålder liksom hvarje årstid har sitt särmärke — herre Gud hvad jag är klok och förståndig och framförallt ny. Du vet nog Jean Sibelius, hvilka extaser och fraser aldrig dö! Safven stiger nog i dig liksom i andra femtioårs träd - och huru! Der rüstige Alte! Men tiden då man satt på en bänk hållande hvarandra i händerna svor evig trohet är nog förbi. — Detta säger jag nu i hopp om att så vore. Då jag sluter till ögona frossar jag sedan länge i en fantasi. ... En verklig vänskap!! - Kanske kärlek. Detta "osäkra" går mig genom mäg och ben.' 13/04/1915, *Ibid.*, 224. Note that the German 'rüstig' can also mean sprightly or vigorous. Eva was Sibelius's daughter, and Arvi her husband.

<sup>13</sup> 'Jag förstämnd — kinde icke egentligen försvara mitt lilla kompositoriska kors ... Jag ser tydligt att mina framgångar — goda kritiker etc — har väckt afvundsjuka hos många. Och dessa äro a priori mina svurna fiender.' 06/11/1912, *ibid.*, 156

himself to Delius the day before the commission came in, worried that his music might be misunderstood by audiences and critics.<sup>14</sup> This concern continued as he worked on the pantomime, writing on 15 February 1913 that 'My star is in descent. Can no longer interest the European public.' Nonetheless, he was convinced that this was not due to the quality of his work. He continued, 'Have perhaps not followed enough. ... One [thing] I know. That all my works are, in their nature, perfected art works.'<sup>15</sup> A few days later, an incident in Vienna where the musicians refused to play his Fourth Symphony returned him to worrying about his age:

The thing with Sinf. IV in Vienna! The orchestra refused to play. Probably the same case in Berlin. — It changes this now! But perhaps time — wonderful time — counsels against even this. — I want to sell everything that I have, but — who is buying. What to do in this instance? — It is important now not to lose heart; as well as — above all — the head. They consider — at least most of the world's orchestral musicians — that I am a dead man. Mais nous verrons! Should this be the end of Jean Sibelius as a composer?<sup>16</sup>

Hepokoski has labelled the years between 1909 and 1914 as a 'crisis' period for Sibelius, during which he began 'to feel eclipsed as a modernist.'<sup>17</sup> Undoubtedly, Sibelius was keenly aware of his 'descending star', and whether his music was perceived as modern or not. But his artistic identity did not exist in isolation; it was amalgamated with his personal identity. The period before 1915 was a crisis for Sibelius because he began to feel eclipsed not just as a

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<sup>14</sup> 16/12/1912, *ibid.*, 159-160

<sup>15</sup> 'Mina stjärna i nedåtgående. Kan icke mera intressera den europeiska publiken. Har måhända ej följt med tillräckligt. ... Ett vet jag. Att alla dessa mina verk äro, i sin art, fulländade konstverk.' 15/02/1913, *ibid.*, 165

<sup>16</sup> 'Saken med Sinf IV i Wien! Orkestern vägrat att spela. Antagligen detsamma fallet i Berlin. — Det svider nu detta! Men kanske tiden — den underbara tiden — råder bot äfven på detta. — Jag ville sälja allt det jag äger, men — hvem köper. Huru nu i detta fall begå? — Det gäller nu att ej förlora modet; samt — framförallt — ej huvudet. De anse — åtminstone världens flesta orkestermusiker — att jag är en död man. Mais nous verrons! Skall nu detta vara slutet på Jean Sibelius som tonsättare?' 20/02/1913, *ibid.*, 166

<sup>17</sup> Hepokoski, *Sibelius*, 11

modernist, but as a man — his concerns about ageing and sexual maturity were just as formative as his ‘prestige-rating in the institution of art music.’<sup>18</sup>

His dramatic music offered a way to approach these more intimate concerns; *Scaramouche*'s thematisation of the relationship between sexual and creative identities is a particularly potent example. *Scaramouche* represents the marginalised musician in a form which might well have appealed to Sibelius, who so often referred to himself as a persecuted artist in his diary, misunderstood by people he refers to as ‘Philistines’. The parallel between the two characters was recognised by a reviewer of the 1922 premiere at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen, who remarked that:

Sibelius's music to Paul Knudsen's *Scaramouche* can almost be read as a fable, equivalent to that given in the pantomime itself. Sibelius has been the demon Scaramouche, who lured poetry far away from the pale, young poet, out into the deep night and breathed into it his own being, the wild song, the mystery of Pan in the dark forest. And when it then returned to its theatre, there was nothing that was the poet's any more, rather everything was Sibelius.<sup>19</sup>

But *Scaramouche* was not the only character with whom Sibelius might have identified. The empathetic relationship between the seemingly juxtaposed personalities of Blondelaine and *Scaramouche* resembles Sibelius's apparently contradictory character traits. Mäkelä has argued that Sibelius was a man of two halves, calling him both the ‘homme naturel’ and the ‘homme civil’. According to Mäkelä, ‘Sibelius was ... not only someone who could establish contact with nature and who saw through the trap of the supposedly unspoilt nature of the mythological but was also an elegant “homme civil”, who moved about big cities like a “fish

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 10

<sup>19</sup> ‘Om Sibelius’ Musik til Poul Knudsens “Scaramouche” kan næsten fortælles en Fabel, Mage till den, som gives i Pantomimen selv. Sibelius har været Dæmonen Scaramouche, der lokkede Poesien langt bort fra den blege, unge Digter ud i den dybe Nat og indiblæste den sit eget Væsen, den vilde Sang, Mystiken af Pan i de mørke Skove. Og da den derpaa vendte tilbage til sit Teater, var der intet, som var Digterens mere, men alt var Sibelius.’ “-r-h”: ‘Sibelius’ Musik til “Scaramouche”, *Nationaltidende*, 13/05/1922

in water”.<sup>20</sup> In this dualism we can see parallels with the passionate Scaramouche and the civilised Blondelaine, two aspects of the same person. And it is art — music and dance — that brings the two together. Without it, they both perish. As Mäkelä states, ‘In his heart of hearts, Sibelius probably indeed believed that a synthesis of nature and civilisation was possible through art’<sup>21</sup> — but was ultimately paralysed by self-criticism. Likewise in *Scaramouche*, the overwhelming climax of the bolero hints at this synthesis, but it is denied and falls into silence. Later on, Scaramouche’s death is, remarkably, marked not by melodramatic chords, but also by silence. *Scaramouche* seems to lay the foundations for the ‘Silence of Järvenpää’, indicating that silence can be the only outcome when creative life is controlled by anxieties about the judgement of others.

### SCARAMOUCHE IN CONTEXT

As a balletic pantomime, *Scaramouche* was a product of the early twentieth-century’s flourishing interest in dance forms, and part of the subsequent discourse around dance’s relationship with music and with sexual expression. The piece itself is a genre hybrid. The action is predominantly mimed or danced, placing it in a similar category to the *Tanzpantomime* (‘dance pantomime’), a turn-of-the-century genre that Segel defines as ‘a rhythmically elevated form of dance-intensive pantomime,’<sup>22</sup> cultivated by authors such as Frank Wedekind and Hugo von Hofmannsthal. However, it also includes relatively continuous dialogue, drawing it closer to melodrama.

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<sup>20</sup> Mäkelä, *Sibelius*, 140

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 145

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 38

The lack of immediate genre categorisation troubled Sibelius, and provided a topic of debate for the work's reviewers in 1924.<sup>23</sup> Ahead of the performance, the composer Moses Pergament ran an article in *Svenska Dagbladet* entitled 'Scaramouche: Pantomime or Melodrama?', in which he outlined a brief history of the melodrama, arguing that the presence of dialogue placed *Scaramouche* in this category as opposed to pantomime. It was because of melodrama and pantomime's mutual reliance on music and physical gesture, he argued, that it was possible for dance to 'occupy such a significant part in *Scaramouche* without therefore transforming the piece from melodrama to pantomime.'<sup>24</sup> His justifications for this decision are illuminating both with regard to his interpretation of *Scaramouche*, but also how dance was perceived in 1920s Sweden. He considered *Scaramouche* as much part of a modern dance tradition as theatrical:

Thanks to dancers such as Fokine, Massine, Nijinsky ... [Isadora] Duncan, [Grete] Wiesenthal, [Lydia] Sokolova, etc., the modern dance has taken a turn towards spiritual deepening. Not least Dalcroze and Diaghilev have contributed to it. Their activities are very much influenced by the latest pantomime literature.<sup>25</sup>

Across the continent, dance was being cultivated as a serious art form. Led by solo dancers, the majority of whom were female, contemporary dance transitioned from having a more narrative and mimetic function to being abstract and self-expressive, seen as the 'spiritual deepening' that Pergament mentioned.

Throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century, Nordic newspapers ran theoretical articles that discussed the future of dance forms, and the relative merits or

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<sup>23</sup> Tawaststjerna, *Sibelius Vol. II*, 244

<sup>24</sup> 'upptaga en så väsentlig del i "Scaramouche" utan att därför förvandla stycket från melodram till pantomim.' Pergament, 'Scaramouche: Pantomim eller melodram?'

<sup>25</sup> 'Tack vare dansörer som Fokin, Mjasin, Neschinsky [sic.]...Duncan, Wiesenthal, Sokolowa [sic.] m. fl., har den moderna dansen tagit en vändning mot själslig fördjupning. Icke minst ha Dalcroze och Djagileff bidragit därtill. Deras verksamhet har i mycket hög grad återverkat på den senaste pantomimlitteraturen.' *Ibid.*

disadvantages of different approaches. One of the main points of contention was whether dance should exist as an independent form, or as a means of interpreting the music that it accompanied. Émile Jacques-Dalcroze's eurhythmics was particularly popular in the Scandinavian countries, his philosophy being that the body was an instrument for musical interpretation, expressing music physically. Dalcroze schools were set up to follow his pedagogical principles, teaching a combination of eurhythmics, solfège, and improvisation. Particularly prominent in Sweden and Finland were the dancers Anna Behle and Maggie Gripenberg respectively,<sup>26</sup> the Nordic countries' answers to Isadora Duncan and Ruth St. Denis.

After studying with both Duncan and Dalcroze, Behle set up the first school of eurhythmics in Stockholm in 1907 and was an outspoken advocate for the Dalcrozean method. She had begun as a music student, studying at the Stockholm Royal College of Music, and remained passionately convinced of dance's primary purpose as a method of musical interpretation. In 1912, she wrote an article for *Dagens Tidning* explaining that Dalcroze's method — and therefore hers as well — 'attaches particular importance to ... the perception of the music. The dance — or rather the gestural preparation — as he allows his students to perform it, should work with as simple means as possible and in an immediate fashion follow and express the music's mood.'<sup>27</sup> Although she praised Duncan's dancing in the same article, she was by now a sufficiently established figure to criticise her former teacher, saying that:

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<sup>26</sup> Gripenberg was particularly noted for her performances of Sibelius; she would later choreograph *Scaramouche* for the Sibeliana celebrations in Finland on 7 March 1946. Eva Hemming: *A Smile to Youth* trans. Evita Wager (Milton Keynes: Authorhouse, 2015)

<sup>27</sup> 'Dalcroze lägger synnerlig vikt vid är uppfattningen af musiken. Dansen — eller snarare den plastiska framställningen — sådan han låter sina elever utföra den, bör verka med så enkla medel som möjligt och på ett omedelbart sätt följa och uttrycka musikens stämning.' Anna Behle: 'Några riktlinjer inom nutidens danskonst', *Dagens Tidning*, 24/03/1912. Republished later in *Björneborgs Tidning*, 23/07/1912.

Isadora Duncan danced without any musical understanding in deeper terms, led by her strong sense for harmonious and beautiful lines. She had not studied music and despite a certain innate sense of rhythm she is, however, let down by her lack of musical understanding of style and phrasing. ... she rarely succeeds in producing every composer's particular mood in a satisfying way, even though movements and poses may be able to fit the form.<sup>28</sup>

Behle was not alone in her belief that dance should be a method of musical interpretation. An anonymous author writing for *Borgäbladet* in the same year similarly argued in favour of Dalcroze's attitude towards dance. 'In order for a dance or other gestural production to be a work of art, whose value is comparable to the music which is produced', they wrote, 'the human body must follow and express the music's overall rhythmic and musical crescendos, decrescendos, and accents.'<sup>29</sup> They extolled the virtues of Dalcroze's techniques, emphasising that eurhythmics has a spiritual dimension as well as being a method of movement, referring to its followers as 'disciples': 'what this school demands of its disciples is above all to listen, first and foremost to the music's modulations in every detail in a simple, natural, and artistic manner. Through both a serious spiritual and physical education, they must learn to create from their bodies a sensitive instrument which vibrates with and gives expression to all the emotional range's shifting nuances.'<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> 'Isadora Duncan dansade utan någon musikalisk förståelse i djupare mening, ledd af sitt starka sinne för harmoniska och sköna linjer. Hon hade ej studerat musik och trots en viss medfödd rytmkänsla försyndade hon sig dock ofja genom sin bristande musikkännedom mot stil och frasering. ... hvarje kompositörs säregna stämning lyckas hon mera sällan få fram på ett tillfredsställande sätt, ehuru rörelser och poser kunna vara formfulländade.' *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> 'För att en dans eller annan plastisk framställning skall bli ett konstverk, hvars värde är jämförligt med den musik som framställes, måste människokroppen följa och uttrycka musikens a'la rytmiska och musikaliska höjningar, sänkningar och accentueningar.' Anonymous: 'Danskonstens renässans', *Borgäbladet*, 28/03/1912

<sup>30</sup> 'hvad denna skola fordrar af sina adepter är att framförallt lyssna, förstå och framställa musikens skiftningar i hvarje detalj på ett enkelt, naturligt och konstnärligt sätt. Det måste genom en allvarlig både andlig och kroppslig uppfostran lära att af sina kroppar skapa känsliga instrument som vibrera med och gifva uttryck för känslskalans alla skiftande nyanser.' *Ibid.*

Praising dance's complete subordination to musical expression was not universal, however. Some practitioners and theorists took a different perspective, viewing dance as an art form born of music, but best understood on its own terms rather than as an act of interpretation. Also in 1912, *Björneborgs Tidning* republished an article by the Austrian dancer Elsa Wiesenthal, originally published in the Viennese newspaper *Neue Freie Presse*.<sup>31</sup> She expressed a desire for a self-referential dance form, understood independently of its relationship to dramatic arts:

What I understand by dance is simply the desire, the tendency to move the body rhythmically. When I dance, I never want to produce an event, or give expression to a thought, a feeling — I want only to dance. And the dance movement itself has for me nothing to do with literature, nothing with the drama, nothing with pantomime, nothing with gesture and painting and nothing to do with an idea which is better realised on paper. Dramatic and dance art can meet — as in the pantomime — but the pure dance art is an art like music, out of whose sound and rhythm it is born.<sup>32</sup>

While she viewed music and dance as the most closely related art forms and acknowledged the importance of music for dance, she argued in favour of compositions that best served dancers. She expressed a hope that Dalcroze's eurhythmics would 'bring ... musicians much closer to the dance', lamenting that 'there are so few modern composers who write for the stage really effective dance music.'<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Sibelius was aware of Wiesenthal's work, writing in his diary on 16/01/1913 that 'Ms Winterthal [*sic.*] has danced to my Valse Triste in Vienna with great success.' 'Fru Winterthal dansar med stor framgång i Wien min Valse triste.' Dahlström, 163

<sup>32</sup> 'Hvad jag förstår med dans är helt enkelt lusten, böjelsen att röra kroppen rytmiskt. När jag dansar, vill jag aldrig framställa en händelse, eller ge uttryck åt en tanke, en känsla — jag vill endast dansa. Och själfva dansrörelsen har för mig ingenting med litteratur att göra, ingenting med dramat, ingenting med pantomime, ingenting med plastik och målarkonst och ingenting med en idé, som bättre förverkligas på papperet. Dramats konst och dansens kunna väl mötas — som i pantomimen — men den rena danskonsten är en konst för sig liksom musiken, ur hvars klang och rytm den födes.' Else Wiesenthal: 'Dansens väsen', *Björneborgs Tidning*, 15/03/1912

<sup>33</sup> 'Den skall bringa...musikerna betydligt närmare dansen. ... finns det så få moderna kompositörer, som skriva för scenen verkligt effektiv dansmusik.' *Ibid.*

On the other side of the spectrum were those who argued in favour of an autonomous dance form, independent from all other art forms. The composer Viking Dahl published an extensive article on dance in *Svenska Dagbladet* in 1919, reprinted in the Finnish Swedish-language newspaper *Dagens Press*. In it, he condemned contemporary dance as regressive in comparison to its sister arts. He reserved particular scorn for dance when combined with other art forms; he believed that dance was not yet at the stage where it could obtain a pure enough form of expression to withstand combination with other art forms. He wrote:

I dare to imagine a dance art self-contained and absolutely independent of other art forms, such as the music. We have "pure" music, "pure" painting, "pure" sculpture ... why can we not also have a "pure" expressive gestural art? Once all closely related artefacts have become sufficiently independent, then perhaps the time may come to combine them into a whole (perhaps it sounds like a paradox), and realise the whole art (*Gesamtkunst*), a kind of colour-musical pantomime, as Noverre, and later Wagner, Scriabin etc. dreamed of?<sup>34</sup>

Within the Nordic countries, the future of dance was as serious a topic of debate as that of the theatre. The relationship between drama, dance, and music had been the subject of nationwide discussion for nearly twenty years before the Stockholm Royal Opera production of *Scaramouche*, forming the backdrop against which Sibelius composed the pantomime in 1913, and for which critics approached the 1924 performance. Pergament made it clear that he interpreted *Scaramouche* as a symbolist allegory about music's power over dance:

the action in *Scaramouche* symbolises precisely the dance's dependence on the music. Not its external dependence, which forces dance steps in accordance with the beat and rhythm, but the internal, inescapable, through which the dance's essence is completely controlled by music's mysterious power. Both the music and the dance are manifestations of the human

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<sup>34</sup> 'jag dock fantisera om en danskonst självetindiggjord och absolut oberoende av andra konstarter, t. o. m. av musiken. Vi ha "ren" musik, "rent" måleri, "ren" skulptur, ... varför kunna vi ej också få en "ren" expressiv plastisk konst? När alla närbesläktade konstarter en gång blivit tillräckligt självständiga, skall då möjligen tiden vara mogen att förena dem till ett helt (det kanske låter som en paradox), och förverkliga den helhetskonst (*Gesamtkunst*), ett slags färgmusikaliska pantomimer, varom redan Noverre, senare även Wagner, Scriabin [*sic.*] m. fl., drömde?' Viking Dahl: 'Danskonst', *Dagens Press* (prev. pub. *Svenska Dagbladet*), 26/02/1919. Ironically, Dahl wrote *Maison de Fous* for the Ballets Suédois only a year later, so clearly his damning critique of dance did not extend to his personal endeavours.

psyche and animalistic emotions. But in contrast to the dance, ... the music is additionally and above all a cosmic power. ... Dance's dependence on the music has always been obvious.<sup>35</sup>

Others were content to highlight this theme in the pantomime in a less extensive fashion. A reviewer for *Aftonbladet* wrote that Blondelaine remains under Scaramouche's power because 'the dance cannot be torn from the music', and that the two characters 'belong together as dance and music.'<sup>36</sup>

On one level, the entire pantomime can be read as an allegorical depiction of dance's dependence on music; Blondelaine personifies dance and Scaramouche music, and when the latter is murdered the former also ceases to exist. On another level, however, there is more to this pantomime than artistic allegory. Agne Beijer took a more sceptical approach than Pergament; he wryly commented that the explicit sexuality of *Scaramouche* detracted from its analysis of music's relationship to dance:

The actual fable around which the whole is built should symbolise music's relationship to the dance ... It is illustrated in the piece namely through the genius of the dance, Blondelaine ... [who] elopes with the gypsy musician Scaramouche, who hypnotises her through his passionate playing. However, it is the case that in the theatre as much as in reality, we are not gripped by some ... profound symbols, we are more childish and see in Leilon and Blondelaine and Scaramouche only three people, who experience the old

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<sup>35</sup> 'i detta fall finns de även en annan viktig omständighet: handlingen i Scaramouche symboliserar nämligen just dansens beroende av musiken. Icke det yttre beroende, som tvingar dansstegen i överensstämmelse med takt och rytm, utan det inre, ofrånkomliga, genom vilket dansens väsen fullständigt behärskas av musikens mystiska makt. Både musiken och dansen äro yttringar av mänskligt själsliv och animaliska affekter. Men i motsats till dansen, ... är musiken dessutom och framför allt en kosmisk makt. ... Dansens beroende av musiken har i alla tider varit uppenbart.' Pergament, 'Scaramouche: Pantomim eller melodram'

<sup>36</sup> 'dansen kan icke slitas från musiken', 'bägge höra samman som dansen och musiken'. "S. S-m", 'Operas ny program'

and eternally new adventure where loyal love and animalistic sensual intoxication play a game against each other.<sup>37</sup>

Beijer's analysis points towards dance's association with expressions of the sexual and erotic. As modern dance continued to gain ground as a credible art form, the body was placed at the centre of attention, a development that proved a great source of apprehension for some. These anxieties are particularly pertinent with regard to *Scaramouche*, which both instantiates and responds to various of these concerns. The next section explores some of the reasons for the late nineteenth-century interest in dance, arguing that it is closely intertwined with philosophical and dramatic attitudes towards the inadequacy of language as a primary means of expression. I will then discuss the various implications of this foregrounding of the (often sexualised) body, before applying these ideas to *Scaramouche*.

#### NIETZSCHE AND A CRISIS OF FAITH

Segel situates the turn of the century's increased interest in gestural expression as part of a post-Nietzschean crisis of faith in language. Nietzsche's 1871 'On Music and Words' proclaimed that language is symbolic, arguing that there is therefore no innate connection between things and words: 'the multiplicity of languages immediately reveals the fact that word and thing do not absolutely and necessarily coincide and that words are symbols.'<sup>38</sup> Nietzsche's philosophy acted as a catalyst and as the century progressed, belief in language's ability to express concrete truths about the world diminished. As Segel puts it, philosophy

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<sup>37</sup> 'Själva fabeln kring vilken det hela är byggt skall symbolisera musiken förhållande till dansen ... Det illustreras nämligen i pjäsen genom att dansens genius, Blondelaine ... [som] rymmer med zigenarmusikanten Scaramouche, som hypnotiserats henne genom sitt lidelsefulla spel. Det är nu emellertid så att vi på teatern lika litet som i verkligheten gripas av några...djupsinniga symboler, vi äro mycket barnsligare och se i Leilon och Blondelaine och Scaramouche blott trenne människor, som uppleva det gamla och evigt nya äventyret, där den trofasta kärleken och det animala sinnesruset driva sitt spel emot varandra.' Agne Beijer: 'Operas premiär program: Scaramouche', *Unknown*, 02/19/1925

<sup>38</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche: 'On Music and Words' trans. Walter Kaufmann in Carl Dahlhaus: *Between Romanticism and Modernism: Four Studies in the Music of the Later Nineteenth Century* (California: University of California Press, 1980) pp. 103-120, 107

was instrumental in the creation of a culture 'distinguished by antirationalism, anti-intellectualism, the primacy of spontaneity and intuition, the repudiation of the epistemological value of language, and the celebration of the physical, which was perceived as direct experience of the phenomenal world.'<sup>39</sup>

Dramatists as well as philosophers expressed an increasing scepticism about the efficacy of language as a means of communication. Strindberg was a particular admirer of Nietzsche's philosophy, lauding him as 'the modern spirit who dares to preach the right of the strong.'<sup>40</sup> He wrote Nietzsche's philosophy of language into his plays, as discussed in Chapter Five on *Till Damaskus*. Strindberg regularly highlighted the communicative constraints of language, turning instead to silence, sound, and gesture for their expressive capabilities. In *Miss Julie*, he incorporated a mime as part of the action, as he felt that a monologue would be inadequate and inappropriate for the emotional intensity of the scenario.<sup>41</sup> But Strindberg was far from the only writer to look for alternative means of communication to language. Later in the century, authors began to pursue pantomime, dance, and mime as serious enterprises, both on and off the stage. As Susan Jones observes, 'in this climate of anxiety about language the figure of the dancer emerged as a provocative and suggestive emblem.'<sup>42</sup> The athleticism and fluidity of the contemporary dance as championed by Nijinsky and Duncan offered a powerful mode of expression as a contrast to the staticism of the written word. While dances appeared frequently in plays in a symbolic capacity (such as Nora's tarantella in Ibsen's *A Doll's House*), other authors such as Yeats, Woolf, and Lawrence turned to dance in a more metaphorical capacity, Jones writing that they 'welcomed a new-found

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<sup>39</sup> Segel, 11

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in Törnqvist & Steene, 76

<sup>41</sup> Strindberg, 'Preface to *Miss Julie*', 64-5

<sup>42</sup> Susan Jones: *Literature, Modernism, and Dance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 3

freedom of bodily expression associated with new dance forms.<sup>43</sup> Dramatists produced increasing numbers of pantomimes which, as Segel notes, 'should not be understood only as a reflection of the interest of "high" culture in "low" culture ... This would be like wearing blinders, occluding the nexus between pantomime, [and] the subversion of speech in drama.'<sup>44</sup>

Hofmannsthal penned a short essay in 1911 entitled 'On Pantomime', in which he enthused about the expressive possibilities of gestures:

No inclination of the head, no raising of a leg, no bending of an arm is like another; here is art ... A pure gesture is like a pure thought from which the momentarily clever, the restrictedly individualistic, the grotesquely characteristic are stripped. ... in pure gestures the true personality comes to light ... Does not the soul reveal itself here in a special manner?<sup>45</sup>

Gesture is presented here as the most direct and truthful form of expression possible. For Hofmannsthal, paradoxically, the continuous within a human personality can only be expressed through gestures; he suggests that a dancer's movements cannot lie thanks to their transience. Hofmannsthal's essay shares the same faith in gesture that Dalcroze's Nordic enthusiasts expressed, the idea that dance is stripped of obfuscation, and therefore able to achieve a more refined form of self-expression than language. For authors such as Hofmannsthal, the dancing body was a powerful and potent force, to be revered and encouraged.

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 8

<sup>44</sup> Segel, 2

<sup>45</sup> Hofmannsthal quoted in Segel, 43

## DELETION OF THE BODY

There were, however, more sinister aspects to worship of the physical and freedom of movement. The first is that the individual body, as in Hofmannsthal's text, was regularly reduced to symbol or gesture. Through a fetishisation of the body as a symbolic means of expression, the body as corporeal form is eliminated. As Segel writes, 'the dancer ceased to be an individual, a distinct entity, and became an emblem, a sign, its meaning to be determined by the spectator's imagination.'<sup>46</sup> The sublimation of the human to the symbolic recurs throughout turn-of-the-century writings on dance. Stéphane Mallarmé's 1886 essay 'Ballets' renders this explicit; such is the strength of Mallarmé's conviction that his dancer ceases to be entirely, evaporating into nothingness beyond the role of symbol: 'the dancer *is not a woman who dances*, because of the following juxtaposed motifs that *she is not a woman*, but a metaphor summarising one of the elementary aspects of our form.'<sup>47</sup> The emphases are Mallarmé's own: he deletes not only the individuality of the dancer, but continues to extract her gender — '*she is not a woman*'. The female body and mind is erased as an extraneous blemish.

This trend manifested itself with increasing violence, resulting in multiple instances of women being depicted as slaves to their own physicality, dependent upon their ability to render themselves symbolic. Alfred Döblin's short story *Die Tänzerin und der Leib* graphically depicts the process of a woman disciplining her body in order to become a dancer, and her subsequently horrific relationship with her body when she is struck by disease and unable to dance. He captures the self-effacement necessary to become a professional dancer, writing

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 115

<sup>47</sup> Stéphane Mallarmé trans. Evlyn Gould: 'Ballets', *Performing Arts Journal*, Vol. 15/1 (Jan. 1993), pp. 106-110, 107. This essay attempted to incorporate something of the ephemerality of dance in language; translator Evlyn Gould has written of the difficulty of translating this particular essay as a preface to her translation of the piece. Evlyn Gould: 'Pencil and Erasing Mallarmé's "Ballets"', *Performing Arts Journal*, Vol. 15/1 (Jan. 1993), pp. 97-105

that 'now she learned how to train her elastic ligaments and her double joints; she insinuated herself, cautiously and patiently, further and further, into her toes, her ankles, her knees, greedily ambushed the slender shoulders and bend of her thin arms, lurked over the play of her disciplined body.' She forcibly extracts her body from itself, her physical being becoming nothing more than a vessel for symbolic expression, such that 'At 18 her figure was a bare trace, as light as silk.'<sup>48</sup>

Döblin catalogues the battle of wills between her mind and her body that ensues when she is left immobile; the source of her agony is not caused by physical pain, but by the fact that the loss of her bodily movement leaves her without her primary means of communication. As the story draws to a close, she expresses her frustration with her loss of expression, her body now explicitly gendered male: 'she wanted to feel her will in action — when her taut body had moved like a flame and her mastery wafted a chill over the voluptuousness of her dancing. She wanted to dance a waltz, a marvellously suave waltz, with the one who had become her master: her body. With a movement of her will she could once more catch him by the hands — this body, this indolent animal, and throw him down, turn him around: he was no longer her master.'<sup>49</sup> Döblin's protagonist previously disciplined her body to suppress her sensuality and 'voluptuousness', and without dance as a means of exerting power she is confronted by her own physicality, horrified and disgusted by it. Unable to reconcile herself with her own corporeality she kills herself, stabbing herself through the heart with a pair of sewing scissors.

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<sup>48</sup> Alfred Döblin trans. Iain Bamforth: 'The Dancer and the Body', *The British Journal of General Practice*, Vol. 59 (569), (Dec. 2009), pp. 959-960, 959

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 959

## SEXUALISATION OF THE BODY

Contrary to the authors who wrote the body out of the dance entirely, for some the corporeality of dance could not be ignored. The dancing body — particularly the female body — was read as a sensuous and sensual symbol, and women expressing their sexuality through dance was a source of anxiety for authors such as Schnitzler and Carl Einstein. The unbound movement of dancers such as Fuller, Gripenberg, and Duncan was, as Segel calls it, a conscious effort to redefine ‘the role of woman in society, of the place of woman in the family, and of traditional attitudes towards female sexuality’.<sup>50</sup> Even in their choice of clothing, these women demanded that their audiences directly address their physicality, their loose-fitting garments and bare feet allowing themselves greater range and freedom of movement. This challenge was not universally appreciated, and from these overt displays of sexuality emerged the trope of the woman who dances herself to death. These women were depicted as sacrifices to their own sexuality — unable to control their bodies, they are overcome by their own sexual desires and symbolically dance themselves into an early grave.

One of the most explicit examples of the parallel between dancing and sexuality is Frank Wedekind’s expressionist pantomime *Der Kaiserin von Neufundland*. The Empress suffers from an unidentified ailment, for which the doctor prescribes marriage — and therefore sex — as the only cure. She entertains multiple suitors — Napoleon, Thomas Edison, and a poet — but the only one who is able to capture her attention is a circus strongman, Eugene Holthoff. She marries him and rewards his strength with her kingdom’s wealth. Worshipping his displays of physicality, she begs him to lift heavier and heavier weights. When he finally reaches his limit and is unable to lift the amount that the Empress demands, she dances

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<sup>50</sup> Segel, 81

herself into a frenzy to try and cure herself of her frustration.<sup>51</sup> Later, after the Empress is imprisoned, Holthoff goes to a dance-hall, where the dancers are similarly drawn to his strength. The unfortunate Empress, meanwhile, is unable to contain her lust and strangles herself with her own hair.<sup>52</sup>

Although undoubtedly in dialogue with expressionist pantomimes such as *Kaiserin*, *Scaramouche* seems to present a slightly different perspective. Blondelaine's death does, ultimately, stem from her sexual desires, but the role of art — music specifically — plays an integral role in her downfall. She may lose control of her body, but the gender identities at play in *Scaramouche* are not as crudely diametrically opposed as they are in *Kaiserin*.

Blondelaine is surrounded by men who are in some way sexually inadequate, and who are in some way 'feminised', quite different to Wedekind's bodybuilder. In 1924, Beijer chastised *Scaramouche* for its lack of a masculine heroic ideal, saying that 'if there is something that you miss in Knudsen's composition, it is precisely heroism and masculinity, Scaramouche is feminine and effeminate even to [the point of] hysteria.'<sup>53</sup> A sustained focus on female expressions of sexuality ultimately impacted on how men perceived themselves and were perceived; Beijer's criticism is symptomatic of early twentieth-century constructions of

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<sup>51</sup> Frank Wedekind trans. Anthony Vivis: 'The Empress of Newfoundland': *Comparative Criticism: Vol. 4, The Language of the Arts* ed. E. S. Shaffer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 260

<sup>52</sup> The idea that women are slaves to their own physicality was a theory expounded by Otto Weininger, in his 1903 treatise *Geschlecht und Charakter* ('Sex and Character'). For Weininger, both 'male' and 'female' were present in everybody, and their relative superiority was directly correlated to how masculine each individual is. He used this premise to view both 'The Woman Question', arguing that 'a woman's need for emancipation, and her capacity for emancipation, derives exclusively from the proportion of M[an] in her.' Weininger's theories gained widespread popularity: Strindberg was particularly enamoured of his views, writing to Weininger in 1903 to thank him for solving 'the woman problem.' Otto Weininger trans. Ladislaus Löb: *Sex and Character* ed. Daniel Steuer & Laura Marcus (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005) 57, and Strindberg to Weininger, 01/07/1903, *Strindberg's Letters Vol. II*, 700

<sup>53</sup> 'om det är något man saknar i Knudsens komposition, så är det just heroism och manlighet, Scaramouche är feminin och veklig ända till hysteri'. Beijer, 'Operas premiär program'

masculinity, fetishising a muscular and physically fit male body that subjugates the female body.

### THE MALE BODY?

Men's bodies were not exempt from scrutiny and idealisation. As Segel observes, 'worship of the body ... lends itself to facile exploitation by racist supremacy theories',<sup>54</sup> and this was no less the case in Sweden and Finland than anywhere else. They embraced anti-intellectualist movements such as vitalism, most apparent in the 'Friluftsvitalism' (Open Air Vitalism) movement established in Sweden in 1904, an artistic group led by painters J. A. G. Acke and Eugène Jansson. Their artworks are characterised by utopian images of a toned male body in harmony with its surroundings, to the extent that the boundary between body and background is sometimes indistinguishable. The vitalist movement found its apex in the Olympic Games, held in Stockholm in 1912, which was portrayed as a celebration of everyday athleticism, presenting Swedish life as wholesome and healthy thanks to a primarily outdoor, physical existence.<sup>55</sup>

The controlled, medically fit body was therefore the peak of desirability, as demonstrated in the new figure of the career bodybuilder, such as the German-born Eugen Sandow, who was the inspiration for Wedekind's *Holthoff*. Physical fitness was deemed so important that for the first time, physical education became an integral part of school curricula, instilling an ideal of bodily fitness from a young age.<sup>56</sup> Conversely, the uncontrollable, deformed, or

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<sup>54</sup> Segel, 7

<sup>55</sup> See the publicity brochure for the Olympic games, available online in English: *Olympic Games: Stockholm 1912* [http://www.stockholmskallan.se/ContentFiles/SSM/Texter/Text\\_0001/SSMB\\_0002449\\_01.pdf](http://www.stockholmskallan.se/ContentFiles/SSM/Texter/Text_0001/SSMB_0002449_01.pdf) (Accessed 05/11/2016). The pamphlet states that 'practical athletics' has 'a fast footing in the every-day life of the Swedish people', and outlines a medal system run by the National Association for the Promotion of Athletics, awarded to anybody who could complete a set of given athletic tasks. 17-19

<sup>56</sup> Segel, 4

otherwise unruly body was a source of anxiety. By the 1920s, vitalism and its attendant ideologies of physical perfection were seen as a rejuvenating post-war force, providing an antidote to pre-war decadence. This was the light in which Beijer saw the men of *Scaramouche*, writing that '*Scaramouche* is not fresh and above all manly, and it feels like a relief to shake off the intoxication with which this music has held you prisoner.'<sup>57</sup>

Leilon and *Scaramouche* are far from the masculine ideal that Beijer subscribed to. Leilon's extravagant dress and waif-like appearance immediately identifies him as a dandy, a figure as recognised in the Nordic regions as in other European countries. Peter Andersson's research has illustrated how the dandy became a popular figure of satire in the popular Swedish periodical *Figaro*. Andersson writes that the author Georg Lundström used the periodical to express 'outrage at the dandy fashion of the 1890s ... fearing that vulgarity was seeping in through the cracks of bourgeois respectability.'<sup>58</sup> In light of the vogue for vitalism, it is unsurprising that dandies came in for particular critique, for as Andersson argues 'The figure of the *fin-de-siècle* flaneur embodied the distanced nature of modern city life',<sup>59</sup> a symbol of metropolitan existence that was the antithesis of the new idol of the bodybuilder. Dandies were artists, poets, and intellectuals — Andersson points to how author Hjalmar Söderberg and painter Ernst Josephson actively performed the persona of the dandy, and in doing so aligned themselves with the literary culture associated with figures such as Oscar Wilde, Herman Bang, and Emile Zola. Within this context, Leilon was therefore a figure of disrepute and emasculation, and undoubtedly sexually inadequate for Blondelaine. As

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<sup>57</sup> 'frisk och framför allt manlig är "*Scaramouche*" icke, och man känner det som en lättnad att få skaka av sig det rus, som denna musik hållit en fången i.' Beijer, 'Operas premiär program'

<sup>58</sup> Andersson, 'Distinction and Vulgarity'

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

Michael Puri puts it, the dandy stereotype was characterised by 'androgyny ... [and] an aristocratic demeanour that shunned ... demonstrations of passion.'<sup>60</sup>

More complicated is Scaramouche, whose bodily alterity can be read in a number of ways. The hunchbacked dwarf was a figure commonly used as a Jewish stereotype, for example Alberich in Wagner's *Ring*. Scaramouche's physical appearance may be read with a view towards examining turn-of-the-century depictions of race, but his primary function does not appear to be as a racial stereotype. Certainly none of the reviewers made this connection in 1924, and there is nothing to suggest that Sibelius conceived of Scaramouche as an anti-Semitic symbol. Physical deformity was also invoked as a broader symbol of societal or individual decline: Sherry Lee identifies the figure of the hunchback as a trend within turn-of-the-century art, noting that it 'is part of a wider cultural interest of the time in the theme of the subject who is marked or stigmatized, by inner trauma as much as by any externally evident physical affliction or impairment,' a paradigmatic example being the dwarf in Zemlinsky's *Der Zwerg* (1919).<sup>61</sup> Unlike Zemlinsky's dwarf, however, Scaramouche is apparently untroubled by 'inner trauma'. Lee's observation that the hunchback became 'a metaphorical representation of inner psychic damage'<sup>62</sup> does not seem to ring true for Scaramouche, who is identified as much as a musician as he is as a hunchback. Unlike Wilde and Zemlinsky's dwarf, he undergoes no episode of personal *anagnorisis*, a moment of self-realisation where he is made painfully aware of his physical alterity.

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<sup>60</sup> He also links the dandy to depictions of homosexuality. Michael Puri: *Ravel the Decadent* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 84

<sup>61</sup> Sherry Lee: 'Modernist Opera's Stigmatized Subjects', *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies* ed. Blake Howe, Stephanie Jensen-Moulton, and Neil William Lerner (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 661-683, 661

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 668

The most fruitful line of enquiry seems to be to read Scaramouche in the context of the vitalist philosophies outlined above. Within the norms of this culture, if Scaramouche was a pinnacle of physical fitness in the same mould as Wedekind's Holthoff, there would be no dilemma for Blondelaine. It would make perfect sense for her to leave Leilon for Scaramouche, which would then leave no place for music. The role of creativity and artistry is central to *Scaramouche* in a way that it is not in *Kaiserin* — it is Scaramouche's identity as a *musician*, making him able to empathise with her artistically, that is the source of their sexual connection. Without this antagonism between the body and mind of Scaramouche, his ability as a violist becomes redundant. Within the constraints of vitalist norms, then, Scaramouche has to be a symbol of masculinity that is in some way 'other' to a perceived ideal, if music is to enter into the process as a seductive force. This also sets *Scaramouche* apart from Schnitzler's *Pierrette* — despite the superficial similarities in plot, *Scaramouche's* emphasis on the role of music and creativity is entirely absent from Schnitzler's text.

The distinction between Scaramouche the man and Scaramouche the musician was of vital importance for the 1924 reviewers. Pergament wrote that 'the entire piece is based on the contradiction between the repulsive hunchback and the power in his violin [*sic.*]. Personally he is abhorrent, and every thought of a touch between him and Blondelaine is out of the question for her.'<sup>63</sup> He continued to state that 'Scaramouche knowingly violates her will' with his music, indicating how violent the effect of Scaramouche's music must be to capture Blondelaine.<sup>64</sup> The physically compelling nature of the music was also highlighted by another reviewer in a particularly evocative passage:

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<sup>63</sup> 'Hela stycket bygger på motsättningen mellan den vidrige puckelryggen och trollmakten i hans violin. Personligen är han avskräckande, och varje tanke på en beröring mellan honom och Blondelaine är utsluten hos henne.' Moses Pergament: 'Scaramouche: Några reflexioner', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 18/01/1925 (M. Pergament)

<sup>64</sup> 'Scaramouche medvetet våldför sig på hennes vilja', *Ibid.*

Blondelaine is the dance itself and her innermost essence belongs to the music, the primordial, orgiastic music, which ... forces its disciples to unconscious muscular expression of the soul's joy. Scaramouche's music takes hold of her real nature, and while he plays, first slowly, then much faster and wildly, and finally with accelerating speed in an uninterrupted, growing crescendo breaking out into the fandango's agitation and the tarantella's insanity, she dances. Initially searching, fumbling, but soon she is under the spell. Her face changes — pallid and joyfully intoxicated she dedicates herself to the demonic music which she interprets ecstatically with her body movements, and whose destructive rhythms she follows until she whirls around half unconsciously. ... but when the musical intoxication is over, she is nauseated and feels her love for Leilon return.<sup>65</sup>

Although it is specifically the music that compels her to dance, the music is nonetheless created by Scaramouche the man; Scaramouche is able to attract Blondelaine through his artistry and creativity. As Beijer put it, 'Leilon and Blondelaine and Scaramouche [are] only three people, who experience the old and eternally new adventure where loyal love and animalistic sensual intoxication play a game against each other.' In theory, it is only the music which seduces Blondelaine, but in practice Sibelius's music is accompanied by staged performance, giving Scaramouche a bodily presence that is as integral to his being as his musical talents.

The alterity of his physical appearance is doubly emphasised by being a deformed figure within a balletic pantomime, an art form that relies on physically disciplined bodies. He is unable to express himself in the same physical fashion as his onstage counterparts: in a world where gestural articulations reign supreme, Scaramouche must rely on alternative means for self-expression, rather than physically supporting Blondelaine in her dance scenes.

This subverts the gender dynamics of traditional dance; Blondelaine is the most physically

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<sup>65</sup> 'Blondelaine är dansen själv och hennes innersta väsen tillhör musiken, den ursprungliga, orgiastiska musik, som...tvång adepterna till sanslös muskelavspegling av själens feststämning. Scaramouches musik griper tag i hennes verkliga natur, och medan han spelar, först långsamt, sedan allt snabbare och vildare, och till sist under ilande hast i oavbrutet växande crescendo löser ut fandangens hets och tantarellans vansinne, dansar hon. Till en början liksom sökande, trevande, men snart är hon under bannet. Hennes ansikte förändras, blek och glädjedruckten hängiver hon sig åt den dämoniska musiken, som hon extatiskt tolkar med sina kroppsrörelser och vars jagande rytmer hon följer till dess hon halvt medvetlös virvlar omkring. ... men då det musikaliska ruset är över, vämjäs hon och känner sin kärlek till Lejlon återvända.' "S. S,-": 'Operans nya program'

articulate and commanding presence on the stage, and Leilon and Scaramouche's authority over her is through intangible, aphysical means. They do not control her according to ballet's norms. As Burt explains:

the traditions and conventions of mainstream theatre dance are formed by and reinforce a normative heterosexual, male point of view, marginalising and suppressing alternative sexualities ... the acceptable male dancer is ... one who, when looked at by the audience, proves that he measures up to supposedly unproblematic male ideals: he looks actively at his female partner or upwards in an uplifting way; he appears powerful, uses large, expansive movements; he controls and displays women dancers in duets.<sup>66</sup>

*Scaramouche* is notably devoid of any such male dancer. Beijer's observation that *Scaramouche* is missing the stereotypical masculine hero was not misplaced; the gender relationships are more complex than in either Schnitzler or Wedekind's pantomimes, leaving Blondelaine choosing between the creatively literate but physically compromised Scaramouche, or the physically articulate but creatively barren Leilon. Both represent the kind of alternative masculinities and sexualities that Burt argues are traditionally marginalised within dance, Leilon through his associations with androgyny and homosexuality, and Scaramouche through his physical deformity. Nonetheless both still express desire, asserting their sexuality in defiance of the marginalisation of voices that lie outside the masculine ideals of their society.

Both in 1913 and 1924, *Scaramouche* was in dialogue with these ideas and texts about dance, the body, and sexuality. Knudsen's text — and subsequently Sibelius's music — thematises the relationship between music and dance, and between art and sexual expression, equating creative and sexual drives. It presents an altogether more complex scenario than the gender binaries in pantomimes such as Wedekind's; *Scaramouche* is a world of 'alternative' masculinities, blurring the distinction between masculine and feminine characteristics and

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<sup>66</sup> Burt, 71

subject positions. Nonetheless, even within a world of 'others' Scaramouche is doubly marginalised; a physically deformed figure within a ballet, and a musician in a world defined by gestures. His alterity is both his greatest strength and weakness — he is a living contradiction, his creative prowess seductive even when his body is ruled as repulsive by the societal norms that surround him. Denied the ability for creative self-expression, both Blondelaine and Scaramouche are unable to live; only the almost asexual Leilon, who shows no tendency towards artistic endeavours, is allowed to survive, untroubled by the intensity and subsequent loss of sexual/ artistic experience shared by Scaramouche and Blondelaine.

### **SIBELIUS IN COLLABORATION: SYMBOLISM AND EXPRESSIONISM**

In Knudsen and Sibelius's *Scaramouche*, then, it is possible to read both a symbolist allegory about the relationship between music and dance, creativity and sexuality, and a critique of the vitalist outlook that extols the virtue of heteronormative masculinities. Conversely, it can be read as a vitalist parable thanks to the demise of Blondelaine and Scaramouche, warning about the danger of alternative masculinities: in the absence of a heteronormative male presence, Blondelaine, like the Empress, is repulsed by Scaramouche, murders him, and dances herself to death in recognition that his artistic abilities alone are not enough to satisfy her. The emphasis depends entirely on the staging.

The Stockholm Opera's 1924 production brought together a wide variety of personalities — so diverse, in fact, that they brought entirely different interpretations of the text to a single performance. Poulsen's *Scaramouche* was defined by stylistic plurality, rather than synthesising the performance's various media under a single aesthetic. Judging by the available production materials and the reviews of the performance, the 1924 *Scaramouche* presented a collection of styles and interpretations, which prompted vehement disagreement among reviewers. Those who sided with a symbolist interpretation were irritated by

Wahlbom's choreography and Poulsen's direction, while others who favoured expressionism

LEILON: Where do you come from?

SCARAMOUCHE: From Vion.

LEILON: You played there?

SCARAMOUCHE: Yes!

found Nielsen's stage and costume designs both old-fashioned and distasteful. Sibelius's music, meanwhile, was used to justify all arguments; it was unanimously agreed to be Sibelius's apex of dramatic achievement and intensely erotic, but beyond this reviewers had wildly diverging opinions on what work Sibelius's music did in the production.

This production highlights the difficulty of distinguishing meaning in collaborative performances, particularly in a historical context where much of the object of study is unavailable to the analyst. As a performance, *Scaramouche* clearly engaged with the contextual debates outlined above on sex, gender, and the body. But due to the multimedia nature of the production, involving multiple personalities with conflicting aesthetic worldviews, it is impossible to say that the performance was entirely aligned with any one particular argument, whether Poulsen (or, indeed, any of the other collaborators) intended this or not. Karen Vedel has argued that Poulsen's *Scaramouche* was intended as an 'experiment' devised by Poulsen and Wahlbom<sup>67</sup> — this idea of experimentation seems to have governed the aesthetic of the production, rather than aiming for synthesis or unification.

The following section uses Sibelius's score and Knudsen's text as a starting point, and works outwards to ascertain how particular moments may (not) have been rendered in the 1924 production, and subsequently how they were interpreted by reviewers. Sibelius was markedly the most famous collaborator, so the production's critics used their reviews to

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<sup>67</sup> Vedel, 524

discuss how to situate Sibelius's score in relation to the work of his compositional contemporaries. Partly, their deliberations revolved around whether *Scaramouche* could be considered a symbolist or an expressionist work — or possibly both. The stylistic plurality of Sibelius's score allowed it to be viewed favourably by those advocating for *Scaramouche* to be interpreted as a symbolist allegory about music's relationship to dance, and by those who primarily saw the pantomime as a psychological exploration of erotic desire. But perhaps more important in this pantomime is what remains unsaid — or unplayed. Scaramouche's death is shrouded in silence, both in Sibelius's score, and in critics' accounts of the production. Not one mentions how this climactic scene was staged, or its dramatic effect. Finally, then, I turn to the silences in and around *Scaramouche*, and how these absences communicate.

#### **SCARAMOUCHE: SITUATING SIBELIUS**

When Scaramouche first appears onstage, he and his trio are brought before Leilon and Blondelaine. Leilon and Scaramouche talk to each other, and Sibelius scores the ensuing discussion for solo flute and viola, the two instruments engaging in dialogue in the same manner as the onstage characters. He scores the dialogue in a descriptive fashion (Ex. 7) rather than providing underscoring as he does in *Svanevit*, where he reserves dialogic writing for passages with no spoken dialogue, where the music can 'speak for' the characters (such as in movement ten). Sibelius seems to have decided to solve the problem of *Scaramouche* having an inconvenient blend of mime and spoken word by ignoring the latter. His score is continuous, and is constructed as though the dialogue did not exist, and music and gesture were the only source of narrative.

Consequently it is unclear how these moments might have been rendered; presumably Leilon would have delivered his lines while the flute played and Scaramouche the same for

the viola, although the musical and textual lines do not correspond precisely and trying to match the two results in an extremely fragmented delivery unless the actors speak especially slowly. Scaramouche's viola overlaps with Leilon's flute, as if he asserts his musical

Example 7: *Scaramouche*, bb. 259-262

The musical score for Example 7 from *Scaramouche*, measures 259-262, is presented in a multi-staff format. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The instruments included are Flute, Timpani, Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The Flute part begins in measure 260 with a dynamic marking of *mp* and features a melodic line with a slur. The Viola part also begins in measure 260 with a dynamic marking of *mp* and includes the instruction "I Alto Solo". The Violin 1 and Violin 2 parts play a steady accompaniment of dotted quarter notes. The Timpani, Violoncello, and Double Bass parts are mostly silent, indicated by rests.

dominance by 'speaking over' the woodwind instrument in bars 261-2 even though mimicking and adopting Leilon's phrases. While extremely effective, this kind of mimesis would be inappropriate in a dramatic work with more extensive dialogue, making this a particularity of this score when compared to the other works addressed in this thesis.

After Leilon and Scaramouche finish talking, Sibelius writes in the musicians' tuning up as part of the score, using the sound effect structurally as a transition from the passage of dialogue to the start of the bolero. This is not the only point at which Sibelius uses a sound

effect in this way: at the opening of the second act, Gigolo tries to comfort Leilon while they wait for the post chaise. The key is G-flat, a key which Sibelius associates with nostalgia and yearning throughout the score — it is the key Sibelius uses when Leilon is later shown contemplating a portrait of Blondelaine and despairing over her disappearance. As Gigolo and Leilon talk, a postal horn call is heard in the distance, entering in C major. The lack of shared tones between the keys makes the horn call jarring, an intrusion of reality into the dream world which Leilon is attempting to inhabit. From the first horn call (Rehearsal number 106),<sup>68</sup> the harmony is affected, the bassline incorporating a chromatic ascent that threatens to modulate away from G-flat. By RN 111, the music modulates to B-flat — bar 1141 establishes the dominant, preparing for resolution into B-flat major in the next bar. The postal call returns, however, and the new tonic of B-flat is reinterpreted as the seventh of C major, interrupting the resolution to B-flat by 10 bars. Sibelius incorporates the sound effect into the musical texture as a way of both indicating the course of the dramatic action and symbolising Leilon's retreat from the outside world, and to delay the B-flat perfect cadence, undermining the establishment of the new key such that G-flat remains the predominant key area, returning only two bars after the eventual resolution to B-flat.

In other moments, Sibelius uses string techniques that exploit the percussive capabilities of the instruments to create non-diegetic acoustic effects. When Scaramouche follows Blondelaine to her home, the double basses play his motif *col legno* (RN 152), creating a guttural sound beneath the violin and viola ostinato. The melody with which his presence is announced is still the same, but without his instrument Scaramouche is threatening and uninviting — there is no seductive allure to the basses' scraping. In his bolero the basses hold the ensemble together, providing the foundations for the music's acceleration. Here, they

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<sup>68</sup> Rehearsal numbers henceforth cited as 'RN'.

contribute to the passage's atmosphere of menace, a destabilising force against the anxiously repetitive upper strings.

Writing for *Aftonbladet*, "S. S-m." felt that the music was dramatically suggestive, and that Sibelius had managed to express musically 'what is taking place in [the characters'] souls.' He wrote that: 'It is dramatic music in the eminent sense ... Sibelius's music has ... a pronounced mimetic character. There is nothing left over of the orchestra-legend's or rhapsodic-epic's way of expressing oneself. Here is the dramatist, who shapes human events and unites them in an unbroken symbolic context.'<sup>69</sup> The author here made a clear distinction between symphonic and dramatic writing, with the latter being identified by descriptive and 'gesturally suggestive' writing. They also drew attention to Sibelius's orchestration and use of sound effects, pointing to how the latter are integrated into the score in such a way that they become a part of both the scenery and the musical narrative. In the same newspaper, another critic under the initials "G-r. J." used similar language to discuss the pantomime, emphasising the affective power of the rhythmic and timbral combinations. Their verdict was that in *Scaramouche*, 'Sibelius's melodic inspiration flows, his imaginative power is undiminished and the pantomimic rhythms and colours coincide admirably.'<sup>70</sup>

These critics were not the only people to draw attention to the mimeticism of Sibelius's scoring, and subsequently state that *Scaramouche* was Sibelius's most successful dramatic enterprise. Pergament described it as one of Sibelius's most important works, dramatic or

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<sup>69</sup> 'Det är dramatisk musik i eminent mening. ... Sibelius' musik har...en utpräglad mimetisk karaktär. Av orkesterlegendens eller den rapsodiska epikens uttryckssätt finnes icke längre något kvar. Här är det dramatikern, som gestaltar mänskliga tilldragelser och sammanknyter den i ett obrutet symboliskt sammanhang. ... den färgskimrande instrumentationens dramatiska ändamålsenlighet är överraskande. Klangverkningarna framkalla bilder. I Sibelius' produktion intar "Scaramouche" en särställning som hans enda verkliga drama.' "S. S-m", 'Operans nya program', *Aftonbladet*

<sup>70</sup> 'Sibelius' melodiska ingivelse, hans fantasikraft är oförminskad och den pantomimiska rytmen och koloriten utmärkt fint träffad.' "G-r. J.": 'Dubbelpremiären på operan', *Stockholms Tidningen*, 30/09/1924

otherwise; he believed that ‘nearly all of Sibelius’s characteristics as a composer are present in the music to *Scaramouche*.’<sup>71</sup> In his above quoted preview, ‘*Scaramouche*: Pantomime or Melodrama?’, he put *Scaramouche* alongside ballets and pantomimes by Richard Strauss (*Josephslegende*, 1912-24), Erich Korngold (*Der Schneemann*, 1908), Felix Mottl (*Pan im Busch*, 1900), Béla Bartók (*Der holzgeschnitzte Prinz*, 1914-16), as well as others by Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Ravel, and Milhaud.<sup>72</sup> For Pergament, *Scaramouche* earned Sibelius a place alongside these composers in the modern dramatic canon, no less than ‘the most inspired [music] Sibelius ever wrote.’<sup>73</sup>

### **SIBELIUS AS SYMBOLIST AND EXPRESSIONIST**

Stylistic plurality is partly responsible for the dramatic success of Sibelius’s score. The harmonic and timbral language is consistent throughout, but like Poulsen’s production, Sibelius’s music draws on a constellation of complementary styles, employing them topically to structure the score. The majority of *Scaramouche*, like the lives of its protagonists, is constructed around different dances, juxtaposed to encapsulate different moods and social attitudes, and to symbolise the personalities of and relationships between the three main characters. The pantomime opens with a minuet, the social dance of the graceful social circles that Blondelaine and Leilon inhabit. Waltzes are heard after *Scaramouche* is banished, and later when Leilon reminisces with Blondelaine. But it is a bolero that Blondelaine dances to, which is altogether more physical and erotic.

When the drama opens, in Leilon and Blondelaine’s house, we hear a stately, bodiless minuet in A major. From the outset, Leilon is unable to engage with Blondelaine on that which is

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<sup>71</sup> ‘nästan alla Sibelius’ egenskaper som kompositör gå igen i musiken till *Scaramouche*.’ Moses Pergament: ‘Untitled review’, *Unknown newspaper*, 30/09/1924

<sup>72</sup> Pergament, ‘*Scaramouche*: Pantomim eller melodram?’

<sup>73</sup> ‘det mest inspirerade Sibelius någonsin skrivit’. Pergament, ‘*Scaramouche*: Några reflexioner’

most important to her. He refuses to dance with her, even when pressed by both his friend, Mezzetin, and Blondelaine. His lack of interaction on this serves as a point of difference from Blondelaine, instigating a point of inadequacy from the start. The distance between the two of them is reflected in Sibelius's setting — the pantomime begins with a luminescent open third in the strings, F-sharp to A-natural, underlaid by an E in the timpani part (Ex. 8a). The lack of the fifth immediately sets up a duality — the third could belong to D major, or to F-sharp minor. The flute melody, however, blithely ensues in A major, seemingly either oblivious to or refusing to acknowledge the tension which began it. The opening chord resolves by step to an A major third by bar 3, but the weakness of the opening sonority defines the character of the first scene. Bar 3's A major is still without its fifth, and the harmony stays static until Blondelaine's entry at RN 10, in A minor. Although neither major nor minor key is asserted authoritatively, indicating the superficiality of their relationship, the key area of A is established as Leilon and Blondelaine's realm. Until RN 10, the bass strings provide perfunctory punctuation at cadences, and the melodic interest is held solely by the flute with the melody played high in the instrument's tessitura. The music of Blondelaine and Leilon's social sphere is mundane and repetitive, and seems to function at a deliberately superficial level. Double-dotted minuet rhythms contribute to the impression that this music lacks a solid anchor, rocking back and forth in a manner that would be completely destabilising in a lower tessitura or at a faster pace, and is only sustainable here thanks to the ethereality of the texture. The orchestration results in a gossamer-thin timbre, providing the musical characterisation for the 'tall, very slender, somewhat decadent' Leilon who inhabits this soundworld.<sup>74</sup>

When Blondelaine enters, we are given a further indication that there is discontent within their relationship. Her music is in A minor, and is closer to a melancholic chaconne than the

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<sup>74</sup> Sibelius, *Scaramouche*, 6

opening minuet (Ex. 8b). The chaconne's repetitive harmonic structure, in conjunction with the key and timbre, results in a tonal overdetermination that indicates a sense of harmonic entrapment, compared to the previous section of Leilon's music, where the reiterated perfect cadences sound obliviously content. Eventually the melody opens out into an augmented variation on Leilon's opening music, returning to A major at bar 100, but even before Scaramouche enters there is both a musical and textual intimation that Leilon is in some way inadequate for Blondelaine's desires. She encourages him to dance with her, saying that 'I would so gladly share that joy with you: there is nothing that binds like joy', to which he replies 'No, Joy of the dance is keenest for one alone, that is the soul of the dance itself.'<sup>75</sup> Clearly, the tune to which Leilon and Blondelaine metaphorically dance is quite different.

When Leilon calls Blondelaine to dance, he asks the musicians to play a bolero (Ex. 8c), a dance with sexual connotations (especially following the social minuet). But Blondelaine dances by herself. She is placed into the feminine subject position of the spectacle as she dances on her own for the entertainment of the guests, and Sibelius's setting is initially lighthearted, effectively tempering the sexual potential of the dance. When Scaramouche plays, however, the music changes entirely (Ex. 8d). His bolero is the antithesis of Leilon's dance music. It is densely chromatic, lusciously orchestrated, and underpinned by a bassline that provides a foundation for the dance's intensification. The atmosphere begins to alter from Scaramouche's first, off-stage appearance at bar 190 — he is *heard* before he is *seen*. His trio of musicians are signalled by the sound of a rising semitone, breaking into the dance played by Leilon's musicians. Bars 197-201 sound the first full presentation of a semitone followed by a rising fifth, the chromaticised version of the motif associated with sex in *Svanehvít* (Ex. 4b). Additionally, it is heard here in canon with the cello and clarinet, extended to include a second leading tone, implying a movement from the A major of Leilon's bolero

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 27, 30

to C-sharp minor, playing on the same ambiguity as the opening chord to transform the keys' common tones of C-sharp and E. From the outset, Scaramouche's music does not comply with the rules of Leilon and Blondelaine's soundworlds. It blends into the bolero texture but immediately begins to alter it. When Scaramouche's trio sound the C-sharp minor chord in bar 203 Leilon's musicians stop entirely, falling into silence instead of completing their expected resolution into A major. Besides this first proper disruption to Leilon and Blondelaine's music being a symbolic moment, this is also a remarkably simple dramatic effect, suggesting that the musicians are stopping to listen to Scaramouche and his companions. From this point on, Scaramouche's trio gains a greater presence within the group and the aristocratic musicians' line is fragmented, repeatedly failing to achieve a resolution back into A major. As Scaramouche's group increases in confidence, they introduce an entirely new theme which signifies desire throughout the pantomime (Ex. 9, henceforth the 'Desire' motif), sequentially moving the harmony down by thirds. They are interrupted before the theme can be completed, however, and the trio are brought before Blondelaine and Leilon.

Example 8a: *Scaramouche*, Leilon's music, bb. 1-5

The musical score for Example 8a consists of seven staves. The top staff is for Flute, featuring a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes in the second measure and a triplet of sixteenth notes in the fifth measure. The second staff is for Timpani, showing a series of rhythmic patterns with a dynamic marking of *p*. The third staff is for Violin 1, the fourth for Violin 2, and the fifth for Viola, all playing sustained notes with a dynamic marking of *fp*. The sixth staff is for Violoncello, and the seventh for Double Bass, both playing pizzicato notes with a dynamic marking of *p*. The score is in 3/4 time and has a key signature of one sharp (F#).

Example 8b, *Scaramouche*, Blondelaine's music, bb. 76-82

*The minuet has ceased. Blondelaine enters on the arm of Mezzetin. First and second Dandy. Ladies and gentlemen follow.*  
 Leilon: Weary, Blondelaine?

Blondelaine: No, no! But that horrible music!  
 Mezzetin: The music might be better. And for *you*, there should be music of...  
 Leilon: A thousand violins!  
 Blondelaine: Yes, a thousand golden violins...and dancing is the best of all.

**Lento assai**

Oboe

Triangle

Bassoon

Horn in F

Horn in F

Timpani

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

Example 8c: *Scaramouche*, first bolero, bb. 164-176

**Tempo di Bolero** *The musicians strike up*  $\oplus$  *Blondelaine begins to dance*

Oboe *mf*

Bassoon *f* *pp*

Horn in F *f*

Horn in F *f*

Violin 1 *f* *p*

Violin 2 *f* *p*

Viola *f* *p*

Violoncello *f* *pizz.*

Double Bass *f* *Tempo di bolero*

Ob. *Gigolo stands beside Leilon*

Bsn.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Example 8d: *Scaramouche*, Scaramouche's bolero, bb. 318-336

He continues, gliding gradually over into the melody first heard. Blondelaine looks at him with startled eyes. He meets her glance, his own growing more intense and passionate. Gigolo looks on doubtfully.

**Lento assai**

(Sempre con sord.)

The musical score is arranged in systems. The first system includes Viola, Violoncello, Flute, Horn in F, and Timpani. The second system includes Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The third system includes Vla., Vc., Fl., Hn., Hn., and Timp. The fourth system includes Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., Vc., and Db. Dynamics include *mf*, *poco p*, *ppp*, *morendo*, *smorz.*, *pp*, and *poco pp*. Performance instructions include *(Sempre con sord.)*, *(tr)*, and *V* (for *Vibrato*).

Example 9: *Scaramouche*, 'Desire' motif, bb. 363-367

Blondelaine's music returns before the very end of the pantomime, when she asks Leilon to play the spinet for her. When he begins, he plays a melody which culminates in a richly orchestrated climax at bar 1764, the violins intoning a romantically sentimental line that seems temporarily to promise the possibility that Leilon and Blondelaine will be able to return to their lives, free from Scaramouche's interruption. This quickly proves a fantasy, however; the key of this moment is G-flat, the same key in which Leilon cocooned himself when Blondelaine left. Blondelaine remarks 'How lovely it is; all as it was before',<sup>76</sup> but the key betrays this as an illusion. When Leilon returns to A, their original key centre, and plays a combination of Blondelaine's music and the first minuet, Scaramouche is not far behind. As soon as Leilon plays the melody from their original minuet, Scaramouche's motif enters in the clarinet part, and the tambourine interjects two bars later. By RN 214, Scaramouche's music has completely overwhelmed Leilon's spinet playing, and Blondelaine begs him for help as she begins to dance, the music moving towards Scaramouche's bolero and the key of D minor. Even here, Leilon is unable to understand Blondelaine and cannot hear the music that compels her to dance. By this stage, Blondelaine has completely absorbed Scaramouche's music; the music of the final scene stems *from* her, is imagined by her, and it is ultimately an internal force that drives her to dance to her own destruction.

<sup>76</sup> Sibelius, *Scaramouche*, 202

Dance scenes occupy the majority of the first act, but the final scene and the whole of the second act are interpolated with music that is not clearly associated with any particular dance form. When Leilon is first shown on his own and when Blondelaine returns to him, Sibelius uses a style closer to the 'orchestra-legend's or rhapsodic-epic's way of expressing oneself', as the *Aftonbladet* critic put it. Much of Act I sc. x is scored in a way that would not be out of place in a symphony; the cello solo under pedal notes held in the strings and winds resembles 'The Swan of Tuonela', and 'The Prince Alone' from *Svanehvit*. The solitary cello solo over a pedal is familiar from the opening of the Fourth Symphony, composed two years before *Scaramouche*. Within a score so defined by the ability to draw on multiple styles for their affective capacities, Sibelius here seems to invoke topically his own orchestral idiom, using it to signify loneliness, abandonment, and isolation.

When Blondelaine finally returns to Leilon, he leaves her temporarily to go and fetch a bottle of wine. As she waits for Leilon to return, Sibelius articulates her nervous apprehension through the string scoring. An ostinato pedal is introduced from RN 141, when Leilon announces he is leaving. From RN 143, the string parts adopt a tremolo figure punctuated by fragments of phrases, accompanying Blondelaine becoming visibly more unsettled as she hears noises in the house and believes that she sees Scaramouche in her reflection. Both Morten Kristensen and Hepokoski highlight the importance of the 'nervous' figure to turn-of-the-century conceptions of modern psychology; hysteria was endemic within *fin-de-siècle* constructions of femininity.<sup>77</sup> The Viennese critic Hermann Bahr defined the people of *die Moderne* as consisting entirely of 'nerves',<sup>78</sup> while Arthur Seidl and Max Nordau placed

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<sup>77</sup> See Kristiansen, and James Hepokoski: 'The Second Cycle of Tone Poems' in Charles Youmans (ed.): *The Cambridge Companion to Richard Strauss* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 78-104. Michael Chanan also discusses the relationship between modernity and *Nervenkunst* in *From Handel to Hendrix: The Composer in the Public Sphere* (London: Verso, 1999), 197-237

<sup>78</sup> Quoted in Kristiansen, 693. For an extensive discussion of Bahr's and Hofmannsthal's preoccupation with *Nervenkunst*, see Kathleen Riley: *The Reception and Performance of Euripides' Herakles: Reasoning Madness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), Chapter 7.

nervousness as the defining personality trait of the modern age, the latter pathologising the term by associating it with degeneracy.<sup>79</sup> Modern art that attempted to express the psychological states of these nervous beings earned the associated term *Nervenkunst* ('neurotic art'). It would be an exaggeration to describe *Scaramouche* as *Nervenkunst* — even with its dense eroticism and passages of overwrought emotional tension, the central tenet of the piece is not solely a detailed psychological examination of the heroine (as it is in Richard Strauss's *Elektra*, for example). But Sibelius's portrayal of Blondelaine's anxiousness can accurately be described as *Nervenkunst*. From here until the close of the pantomime the music lies, as Michael Ewans says of *Elektra*, 'on the almost indefinable borderline between decadence and extreme expressionism',<sup>80</sup> slowly centring in on Blondelaine's psychological processes as she first tries to escape Scaramouche, then comes to terms with murdering him.

*Scaramouche*, then, relies on the adoption of multiple styles and idioms, demonstrating Sibelius's ability to use a number of compositional languages according to expressive demand. This was picked up on by "G-r. J.", who said of the score that:

in the Finnish composer's later works *Scaramouche* occupies a very prominent place: here Sibelius's melodic inspiration flows, his imaginative power is undiminished and the pantomimic rhythms and colours coincide admirably. We recall, for example, the bolero, the little lovers' waltz — which almost seems a little Mahlerian — or the final scenes with their alternately graceful and agitated intonation ... What is surprising, is that in this work Sibelius has so successfully emancipated himself from unilateral national language. The *Scaramouche* music sounds surprisingly cosmopolitan, it shows links with German, French, and Italian styles.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Kristiansen, 693-4

<sup>80</sup> Michael Ewans: 'Elektra: Sophokles, von Hofmannsthal, Strauss', *Ramus*, Vol. 13/2 (Jan. 1984), pp. 135-154, 137

<sup>81</sup> 'Ut i den finske tonsättarens senare produktion intar Scaramouche en mycket framskjuten plats: här flödar Sibelius' melodiska ingivelse, hans fantasikraft är oförminskad och den pantomimiska rytmen och koloriten utmärkt fint träffad. Vi erinna t. ex. om boleron, den lilla älskvärda valsen - som nästan verkar en smula Mahlerartad - eller slutscenerna med sina ömsom graciösa och ömsom dramatiskt upprörda tonfall. ... Vad som överraskar, är att Sibelius i detta arbete så påtagligt lyckats emancipera sig från ensidigt nationellt språk. Scaramouche-musiken klingar oväntat kosmopolitisk, den blottar förbindelseänkar med både tysk, fransk och italiensk stil.' "G-r. J.", 'Dubbelpremiären på operan'

Throughout the entirety of *Scaramouche*, there is a constant dialogue between stylistic plurality and singularity, attempting to make multiple idioms cohere in a single work. It is this that results in the 'cosmopolitanism' that "G-r. J." identified, thematising stylistic coherence itself. As Kallberg has argued, this was a feature common to much early-twentieth century music. He writes that "'style" by the last decade of the nineteenth century had emerged as an attribute that composers felt they might consciously choose, as opposed to a quality that they possessed innately ... a composer's style could become a fraught posture, one capable of being deployed or heard in the service of larger ideologies.'<sup>82</sup> In 1913, Sibelius was renegotiating his position in the world both as an artist and as an individual, struggling to define his personal compositional voice and no doubt feeling keenly a sense of style as a 'fraught posture'. It is telling that when his orchestral style is invoked, it is to symbolise alienation and loneliness. The dramatic scenarios in *Scaramouche* appear to have offered a canvas on which Sibelius could experiment with multiple stylistic possibilities, feeling his way towards the 'style change' that he first proposed in 1909.<sup>83</sup>

Pergament was committed to championing *Scaramouche* as a Symbolist work, stating emphatically that '*Scaramouche* was Symbolism.'<sup>84</sup> Gunnar Hauch took a somewhat more nuanced approach, but eventually favoured an Expressionist reading of the work. At the premiere in 1922, he attempted to situate Sibelius in relation to his contemporaries by discussing the stylistic parameters of *Scaramouche*. He began by contextualising the pantomime as a work contemporaneous with the 'Expressionist' Fourth Symphony, comparing the two and pointing to their aesthetic similarities. Perhaps because of this,

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<sup>82</sup> Kallberg, 'Finnish modern', 135

<sup>83</sup> See diary entry 21/05/1909. Dahlström, 35

<sup>84</sup> 'är "Scaramouche" symbolism.' Pergament, 'Unknown review'

Hauch designated *Scaramouche* Sibelius's 'first real dramatic composition' in a summary of Sibelius's dramatic endeavours to date:

the subjects which have tempted him to musical treatment are those that contain fantasy and mystery. Sibelius stands for the modern direction that is extremely distantly rooted in Naturalism; should one classify his style the nearest characterising word must be Expressionism or Symbolism. As he has now written a whole pantomime (or a mimic drama as it is called on the programme) to a text by the Danish author Poul Knudsen, his incentive has certainly been the expression of this text's Expressionistic mystique.<sup>85</sup>

Hauch indicates both the recognition of multiple, coexisting forms of artistic modernities, and that Sibelius was considered as a contributing figure within these modern movements.

## THE BOLERO

Whether they believed that *Scaramouche* was primarily Symbolist or Expressionist, critics' focal point was Scaramouche's bolero. Critics unanimously highlighted the music's eroticism.<sup>86</sup> As quoted above, Beijer referred to Sibelius's bolero as 'orgiastic', and continued to remark that 'Sibelius's music is irresistibly suggestive ... It is above all Sibelius from "Valse triste" who we meet here — a wild and ecstatic romantic music, brimming with subsuming passion, with painful contrition but foremost and above all bordering on the

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<sup>85</sup> 'sin første egentlige dramatiske Komposition ... Det vil af disse Eksempler paa Sibelius' Teatermusik ses, at de Emner, som har fristet ham til musikalsk Behandling, er saadanne, som rummer Fantasi og Mystik. Sibelius staar den moderne Retning, som bunder i Naturalisme, overordentlig fjernt; skal man rubricere hans Stil maa det karakteriserende Ord nærmest blive Ekspressionisme eller Symbolisme. Naar han nu har skrevet en hel Pantomime (eller et mimisk Drama som det kaldes paa Programmet) till en Tekst af den danske Forfatter Hr. Poul Knudsen, har hans Incitament sikkert været denne Teksts Stemning af ekspressionistisk Mystik.' Hauch, 'Sibelius og Scaramouche'

<sup>86</sup> This was also the case in 1922: "-r-h" wrote that 'In Scaramouche's stanzas, after which Blondelaine dances, there is no really breathtaking melody, but a rhythm and an unharmonious voluptuousness, so more powerfully suggestive. The same applies to the interlude in the forest.' 'I Scaramouches Strofer, hvorefter Blondelaine danser, ligger der ikke nogen egentlig betagende Melodi, men en Rytme og en disharmonisk Vellyst, so mer stærkt suggererende. Det samme gælder Mellemspillet i Skoven.' "-r-h": 'Sibelius' Musik til "Scaramouche"

sweetness of yearning melancholy.<sup>87</sup> Writing under the initials “M-e”, another expressed a similar sentiment, saying that:

By no means transcendent but sensual, in the broadest sense ... is Jean Sibelius's music for *Scaramouche* ... Sibelius has in an ingenious way interpreted these kaleidoscopically shifting moods. ... There is a coherence and a unity over the whole work which one hardly wants to relinquish to recall the diversity of extraordinary, exquisite and beautiful details. Here the red thread runs the whole time as an undertone of struggle and tragedy, but the thread in the fabric shifts as rich and as multifaceted as life itself. Sibelius's orchestra simmers and sings with the hot racing pulse of life, one finds here both the innocent, caressing waltz and the sheer spinet's song as the sensual longing, the animalistic brutality and finally the crime's piercing dissonance in irritating thirds and chromaticisms.<sup>88</sup>

As with Wasenius's review of Sibelius's music for *Soanehvitt*, this critic foregrounded the sensuality of the score, using the same kind of evocative language to describe the effect of the piece. The bolero that Scaramouche plays in the first act is an act of seduction. It is not just music that has to accompany a scene in which Blondelaine is seduced, but it has to provide the very source of her arousal. Sibelius had to compose music that could conceivably drive a woman wild with lust, lose her rational faculties, and leave her lover to follow the source of the music. Whether the bolero is interpreted as signifying music's domination over dance or Blondelaine's physical attraction to Scaramouche, the dance is Sibelius's sonic portrait of the dangerous eroticism offered by Scaramouche, encapsulating both irresistible allure and cataclysmic destruction when Blondelaine begins to dance.

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<sup>87</sup> 'Oemotståndligt suggestiv är...Sibelius' musik ... Det är framför allt Sibelius från Valse triste vi här möta, en vilt och extatiskt romantisk musik, bräddad med sugande lidelse, med malande ruelle men framför allt och över alla gränser med den trånsjuka melankoliens sötma.' Beijer, 'Operas premiär program'

<sup>88</sup> 'Ingalunda översinnlig men, i vidsträckt bemärkelse, sinnlig är ... Jean Sibelius' musik till Scaramouche ... Sibelius har på ett genialt sätt tolkat dessa kaleidoskopiskt skiftande stämningar. ... Det är ett sammanhang och en enhetlighet över hela verket som man knappast vill släppa för att erinra om mångfalden av egendomliga, raffinerade och sköna detaljer. Här löper hela tiden den röda tråden som en underton av strid och tragik, men inslaget i väven skiftar lika rikt och brokigt som livet självt. Sibelius' orkester sjuder och sjunger i kapp med livets heta pulsslåg, man finner här såväl den oskyldiga, smekande valsen och den skira spinettens sång som den sensuella längtans, den djuriska brutalitetens och slutligen brottets skärande dissonans i irriterande tersgångar och kromatik.' "M-e": 'Operasåsongens första nyheter', *Unknown newspaper*, Unknown date

This bolero expresses quite a different kind of sensuality to that evoked in *Svanehvít*. It is both dangerous and threatening; the viola and cello's melody is repeatedly interrupted by tremolo scales in the strings, imparting a nervous tension to the scene as they develop into the accompaniment for the rest of the bolero. Besides their melodramatic tremolo effect, the scales create pungent dissonances with the viola and cello solo, repeatedly creating false relations between the parts (e.g. bar 350, Ex. 10). Scaramouche's music is characterised by expressive dissonances and fragmentary, unpredictable phrasing that provides a counterbalance to Leilon's minuet and later waltz.

Example 10: *Scaramouche*, bb. 346-351

The musical score for Example 10, *Scaramouche*, measures 346-351, is presented in a standard orchestral format. It features eight staves: Viola, Violoncello, two Horns in F, Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The score shows a complex texture with dissonances and tremolo effects in the strings. The Viola and Violoncello parts are particularly prominent, with the Viola playing a melodic line and the Violoncello providing a harmonic accompaniment. The strings play a tremolo pattern, creating a nervous tension. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf* and *f*.

When Scaramouche and his musicians first restart the dance, they strike up in A, appearing to comply with Leilon and Blondelaine's social world. It is not long, however, before they modulate, descending through a chromatic bassline to Scaramouche's key of D minor at RN 40. It is here that his music truly begins — and this is music that is unrepentantly erotic.

Following a visual cue from Scaramouche, the tempo drops to a languorous *Lento assai*, with

a sinuous chromatic line in thirds between the viola and cello lines. They play in the same register, the cello relatively high in its range in order to reach the viola, their proximity creating an intimacy between the two instruments. The flute, previously so light and frivolous in the company of Leilon and Blondelaine, here takes on the same erotic tones as the string parts, drawn into their chromatic sphere of influence from RN 41. Compared to the previous instrumentation, Scaramouche's bolero is more corporeal, using the full forces at Sibelius's disposal by RN 53. Included in this is the piano, which provides intermittent arpeggiation from Scaramouche's entrance in the deepest register of the instrument. The use of the piano's lowest registers creates a gravelly sonority almost identical to the rumbling piano accompaniment in Sibelius's earlier song 'Teodora' (Ex. 11). The similarity between the two suggests that Sibelius perhaps associated this sound with the idea of female arousal, Teodora's text reading 'She draws near with limbs which tremble and quiver from flaming lust's insatiable fire. Teodora, I will kiss your lips.'<sup>89</sup> The protagonist liaises with Teodora, despite the knowledge that, as for Blondelaine, their union leads to death.

Example 11a: *Scaramouche*, bb. 365-368

The musical score for Example 11a, *Scaramouche*, measures 365-368, is presented in a four-staff format. The top two staves are for Viola and Violoncello, both in 3/4 time and B-flat major. They play a sinuous chromatic line in thirds, marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The Piano part is in the lowest register, marked with a fortissimo (ffz) dynamic and an 8va octave sign. The Tambourine part provides a simple rhythmic accompaniment.

<sup>89</sup> 'hon nalkas med lemmar som skälftva och darra af lågande lustars omätliga brand. Teodora, jag vill kyssa dina läppar.' Jean Sibelius: *2 Songs, Op. 35* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1910) 7-8. The lyrics were written by Bertel Gripenberg.

Example 11b: 'Teodora', bb. 1-4

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is for Tenor Solo, and the bottom staff is for Piano. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Moderato'. The piano part includes markings for 'pp' (pianissimo), 'sempre una corda' (piano), and 'Ped.' (pedal) with an asterisk. The lyrics 'Det fra - sar af' are written under the tenor staff.

A symbolist interpretation of this bolero was emphasised by Kai Nielsen's designs, Scaramouche's costume depicting him as a shamanic figure (Fig. 1). Scaramouche's clothes are covered in symbols and geometric designs with talismans hanging from his belt, his appearance reinforcing the sense that, as Pergament put it, the music adds 'a cosmic power.'<sup>90</sup> Additionally, his costume allows for more freedom of movement than Blondelaine's more formal attire. Scaramouche's tattered cloak and esoteric appearance alludes to a greater freedom than that offered by the constraints of Leilon and Blondelaine's world, visually demonstrating his resistance to the societal norms symbolised by Leilon and his friends. The set also encourages a symbolic reading; as shown in Fig. 2, the design of Leilon and Blondelaine's home bears a striking resemblance to the *fin-de-siècle* decadence evoked in *Svanehvít*. The stylised backdrop, familiar from Nielsen's fairy-tale illustrations, is so cavernous that it diminishes the physicality of the figures in the foreground. Blondelaine and Scaramouche are dominated by the opulent decorations that cover the walls, their bodily struggle insignificant against the unforgiving straight lines that segment the stage.

This backdrop encourages an interpretation of the dancers' bodies as symbols, signifying the complete submission of dance to music. The designs and costumes were lauded by "G-r. J.",

<sup>90</sup> 'en kosmisk makt.' Pergament, 'Scaramouche: Pantomim eller melodram?'

who called them 'beautifully stylised',<sup>91</sup> but these were some of the very few words of praise reserved for Nielsen's contribution. The symbolist aesthetic that had been so popular in the 1910s was now distinctly unfashionable — Beijer criticised Nielsen's designs as 'naïve', making the scenery 'taste badly of the *fin-de-siècle*.'<sup>92</sup> His reading that focused on the personal, physical interaction between Blondelaine, Leilon, and Scaramouche was also favoured by the critics "M-e" and "S-Sm", who were both unimpressed by Nielsen's work. Beijer reserved his admiration for the dancers instead. Having been so critical of the scenery's *fin-de-siècle* flavour and damning of the lack of 'masculinity' in the text and score, he lauded both Sven Herdenberg and Sven D'Ailly as Leilon and Scaramouche respectively as 'consistently excellent', commending Herdenberg's performance in particular as 'close to ideal'.<sup>93</sup> He also praised Ebon Strandin, saying that her depiction of Blondelaine was 'a truly admirable achievement ... Her Blondelaine found, above all, poignant expression of the darker sides of this genius of dance, for the passion, the anxiety, for the interplay of devotion and defiance.'<sup>94</sup> In keeping with his interpretation that saw the piece primarily as a psychological depiction of the relationship between the three main characters, particularly focusing on Blondelaine's attraction to Scaramouche, he found the most convincing elements to be those which foregrounded the dramatic and sexual aspects of the pantomime. He continued that 'Amidst all the excessive lyricism, Miss Strandin's secure and well-calculated actions, her gestural precision and self-control seemed liberating.'<sup>95</sup> The angular precision of

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<sup>91</sup> 'vackert stilerade'. "G-r. J.", 'Dubbelpremiären på operan'

<sup>92</sup> 'naiva ... smakar dåligt fin de siècle.' *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> 'genomgående förträffligt ... särskilt var herr Herdenberg som den melankoliske Leilon nära nog idealisk.' Beijer, 'Operas premiär program'

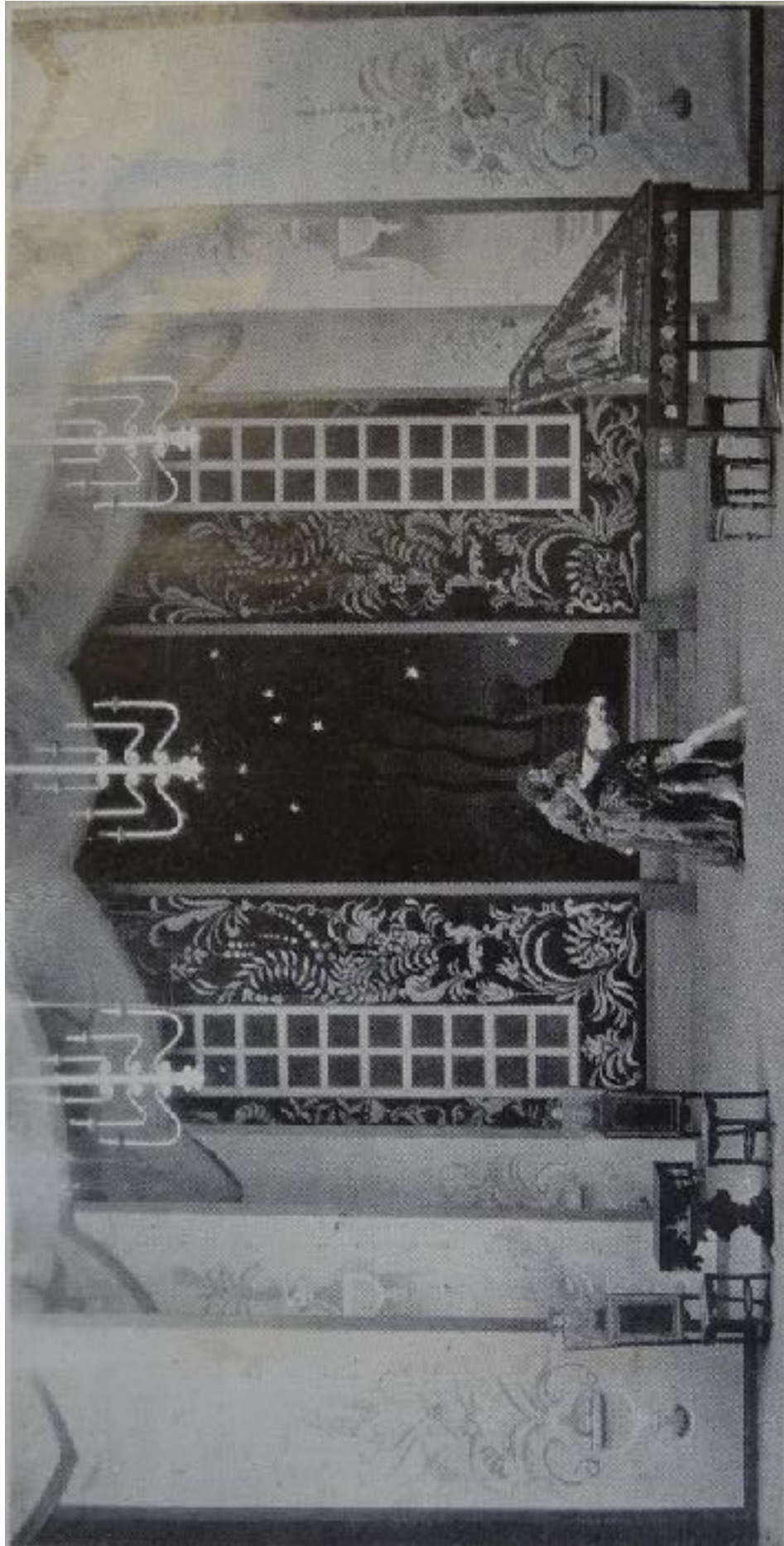
<sup>94</sup> 'en verkligt beundransvärd prestation ... Hennes Blondelaine fann framför allt gripande uttryck för de mörka sidorna hos denna danskonstens genius, för lidelsen, ångesten, för hängivenhetens och trotsets växelspel.' *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> 'Mitt i all den hejdlösa lyrismen verkade fröken Strandins säkra och välberäknade aktion, hennes plastiska precision och självbehärskning befriande.' *Ibid.*

Figure 1: Kai Nielsen's costumes for Scaramouche and Blondelaine



Figure 2: Kai Nielsen's set for *Scaramouche*



the dancers' movements seem to have provided an antidote to what Beijer saw as an otherwise stultifying production, concealing the physicality of the dancers' bodies within a haze of visual symbols and seductive orchestral colours.

The intense physicality of Walbom's choreography provided a counterpoint to Nielsen's ethereal designs, drawing out the more expressionist aspects of the text and score. Pergament offers an especially valuable glimpse into how Walbom choreographed the piece, and the effect of her work. He complained that her choreography did not align precisely with Sibelius's music, lamenting that she 'apparently saw no intimate connection between the musical motives and the dance's movement motives. An absolute parallelism would not only have made the dance so much richer, but would have strengthened the impression that Blondelaine danced after the hunchback's pipe.'<sup>96</sup> Certainly, Sibelius's music in the bolero is gesturally evocative. The rhythms are much stronger and less regular than in both *Leïlon* and Blondelaine's music; the accented offbeats in bars 324-5, for example, are certainly suggestive of particular gestures. If we are to believe Pergament, then, Walbom clearly made a distinct aesthetic choice to move away from a precise synchronisation between music and gesture. Rather than focus on Blondelaine-as-symbol, the 1924 choreography foregrounded Blondelaine-as-woman, dancing for the pleasure that it gives her and because of her sexual connection to what Scaramouche and his music represents. Clearly, Pergament found this immensely distasteful — he denigrated a focus on Blondelaine's sexuality for bestowing upon the piece 'a nauseating odour'.<sup>97</sup> Presumably he preferred his women in the bodiless, Mallarméan mould.

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<sup>96</sup> 'instruktören såg tydligen intet intimare samband mellan de musikaliska motiven och dansens rörelsemotiv. En absolut parallellitet hade icke blott gjort dansen så mycket rikare, utan även förstärkt intrycket av att Blondelaine s. a. s. dansade efter puckelryggens pipa.' Pergament, 'Scaramouche: Några reflexioner'

<sup>97</sup> 'en kväljande doft.' *Ibid.*

Similarly, Pergament protested about Poulsen inserting a tableau at the end of the first act which showed Blondelaine and Scaramouche embracing. At this point in the drama, the text indicates that Blondelaine leaves to find Scaramouche, saying 'That is his violin. Ach, how he sings and calls!'<sup>98</sup> before running offstage. Poulsen, however, made the decision to have the lovers embrace onstage, making their union explicit. Pergament objected to this decision, on the grounds that it detracted from the symbolism of Sibelius's score. Again, the physicality of this moment is what troubled Pergament (he added that the 'nauseating odour' of the piece was not helped by watching 'the panting heroine run into the arms of the hunchback'<sup>99</sup>), and the production granting Blondelaine sexual agency. He expressed especial concern about Poulsen's production portraying Blondelaine as less sexually innocent than he had wanted to believe. Pergament disliked the fact that at her first appearance, 'one wonders if it is to give the spectator a glimpse of her erotic disposition, [that] she unashamedly swings her hips a little bit, as she walks around in this otherwise so aristocratic company.'<sup>100</sup> Additionally, he was irked by the fact that the production showed Blondelaine as being drawn to Scaramouche *before* he began playing. 'The entire piece is based on the contradiction between the repulsive hunchback and the power in his violin [*sic.*]', he argued. 'Personally he is abhorrent, and every thought of a touch between him and Blondelaine is out of the question for her.'<sup>101</sup> To depict their interaction as more carnally based 'distort[s] the piece's symbolic idea — the music as the dance's — and the dancer's — master.'<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Sibelius, *Scaramouche*, 95

<sup>99</sup> 'man i en tablå får se hjältinnan flämtande springa i armarna på puckelryggen.' *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> 'Blondelaines första framträdande, så undrar man om det är för att ge åskådaren en föraning om sin erotiska läggning, hon vaggar litet oblygt med höfterna, då hon vandrar omkring i detta annars så förnåma sällskap.' *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> 'Hela stycket bygger på motsättningen mellan den vidrige puckelryggen och trollmakten i hans violin.' *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> 'förvanskar...styckets symboliska idé: musiken som dansens — och danserskans — behärskare.' *Ibid.*

Rather than choosing to downplay the carnal aspect of Blondelaine's attraction to Scaramouche and his music, Poulsen's staging emphasised this as much as the conceptual relationship of music to dance.<sup>103</sup> Instead of wholeheartedly concurring with any particular opinion amongst the arguments about music's relationship to dance or women's sexuality in dance, the production's amalgamation of contrasting styles allowed for an exploration of various of the contemporaneous ideas about dance, music, and the body, capitalising on the multiplicity of Sibelius's sounds.

## SILENCE

We have so far been occupied with the presences in Sibelius's score, but let us now turn to the absences. Kallberg has labelled Sibelius 'one of the twentieth-century's great composers of silence',<sup>104</sup> and *Scaramouche* is testament to this. Sibelius uses silence to speak eloquently in the most dramatic moments of the score, particularly Scaramouche's death. This can be read as an indication of Sibelius's symbolist sympathies; symbolist playwrights including Ibsen, Chekhov, Maeterlinck, and Andreyev used silence symbolically in their work, to the extent that it is often what is left unsaid that is most critical in their plays. Writers such as these differentiated between different types of silence, making it less of an absolute state and more of an attribute that can be of varying quality and construction. Silence can be something expressive and worthy of cultivation, as opposed to being merely an absence of sound. Adrian Curtin illustrates that for symbolist authors, 'silence ... functioned as an aesthetic ideal ... because it promised reduced engagement with the distractions of the everyday world and a possible entry into a more elevated zone of personal and spiritual contemplation ... they considered it the expressive modality of the soul.'<sup>105</sup> Silence took on such elevated

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<sup>103</sup> Additionally, all the production stills show that Sven D'Ailly was far from the 'dwarf' described in Poulsen's text — he towers over Strandin, as shown in Figure 13.

<sup>104</sup> Kallberg, 'Melodramatic lizard', 79

<sup>105</sup> Curtin, 32

status that in many works it almost became a dramatic character in its own right, given the same communicative authority of words.<sup>106</sup>

Conversely, the expressive use of silence can be claimed as an expressionist trait. Neil H. Donahue, discussing expressionist station dramas, writes that speech and sound are used as a dramatic frame for 'a powerful silence that foregrounds the expressive body of the actor in its looming physicality ... the drama of Expressionism is characterised by enunciatory movements and moving utterances, by physical and verbal gestures, by "exclamation and pantomime".'<sup>107</sup> In many respects, pantomime is the *ne plus ultra* dramatic expressionist form, allowing for an intense focus on the 'pure' form of bodily expression that Hofmannsthal envisaged above. Julia Walker observes that in expressionist dramas, 'silence became a form of signification in and of itself — not only as a meaningful pause between words and phrases but as a moment for highlighting the physicalised meanings of the actor's body.'<sup>108</sup>

Like his sounds, Sibelius's silences can be read as both symbolist and expressionist. But beyond indicating stylistic affiliation, silences play an integral dramatic role in Sibelius's rendering of *Scaramouche*, equally expressive as the notes that punctuate them. By focusing on the absences that frame sonic utterances we can move beyond an understanding of silence as lack of expression, and see it as an enigmatic and deeply eloquent form of communication. David Metzger has commented that musical silences 'have us focus on expression as an act ...

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<sup>106</sup> See, for example, Leonid Andreyev's *Anathema*. In the opening preface, the stage directions instruct that the protagonist, Anathema, 'wraps his speech in silence, which is like the silence of the iron gates, and sometimes in human words.' Andreyev, *Anathema*, 7

<sup>107</sup> Neil H. Donahue: 'Introduction' in Neil H. Donahue (ed.): *A Companion to the Literature of German Expressionism* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2005), pp. 1-35, 22

<sup>108</sup> Julia A. Walker: *Expressionism and Modernism in the American Theatre: Bodies, Voices, Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 22

For us to observe the act, it has to be isolated. Silence can do this. Just as silence, a supposed non-sound, can serve as a backdrop against which sound can be presented and dissected, so too can ... the supposed absence of expressive utterances — throw into relief the act of expression.<sup>109</sup> This is the case in *Scaramouche*: Sibelius uses the interaction between sound and silence — or states close to it — to convey terror, desire, sadness, and violence, such that the score's sounds seem to be shaped and driven by the possibility of becoming silence.

When Blondelaine's dance reaches a climax in the first Act, the orchestra leaps into an abrupt bar of silence at RN 54 (Ex. 12). From the clamorous frenzy that precedes it, this bar of *tacet* appears as an expressive gesture inscribed onto a canvas of sound. At this point, the stage directions reads 'Blondelaine stops dancing, and stands breathing heavily,'<sup>110</sup> suggesting that this orchestral hiatus frames the sound of Blondelaine struggling to catch her breath following her physical exertion. This is far from a silence, then, but the sound of Blondelaine's exhaustion, and by implication Scaramouche's domination over her. Although Scaramouche has stopped playing, his power is not diminished. The break is precipitated by Leilon commanding Scaramouche to stop, shouting 'Stop your devilish music'. Leilon's part in this interaction means that this pause becomes a symbolic expression of his concern for Blondelaine, and his fear of Scaramouche. The guests show 'consternation', adding in their discomfort to the emotions communicated by this silence. Additionally, it expresses Scaramouche's frustrated desire; when Leilon banishes Scaramouche, he does not go immediately but turns to look at Blondelaine, perhaps to seek her consent to his leaving, or to try and convey his passion for her. This, then, is also a silence of promise — Scaramouche still controls Blondelaine, and his physical gesture indicates that he is aware of the hold he has over her, and she over him.

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<sup>109</sup> David Metzger: 'Modern Silence', *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 23/3 (Summer 2006), pp. 331-374, 336

<sup>110</sup> Sibelius, *Scaramouche*, 73

As they stand in silence, the following scene ensues:

Example 12: *Scaramouche*, bb. 453-463

SCARAMOUCHE: I am going.

1ST DANDY: They've earned their pay, at least.

[*Mezzetin flings a gold piece to them, the guests likewise.  
Boy hurries forward to pick up the coins.*]

SCARAMOUCHE: Let it lie!

[*An uncomfortable pause ensues.*]<sup>111</sup>

The musical score for Example 12, *Scaramouche*, bb. 453-463, is presented in a standard orchestral format. The score is in 4/4 time and features a descending chromatic line in the strings. The instrumentation includes Clarinet in Bb, Viola, Violoncello, Piano, Flute, Bassoon, Horn in F, Timpani, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The score is marked 'Grave' and includes dynamics such as *f*, *mf*, *p*, and *ten*. The string parts are marked 'pizz.' and 'senza sord'. The score ends with a 'lunga' marking.

Sibelius sets this to a descending chromatic line culminating in a tremolo, before lapsing into silence broken only by *pizzicato* thirds in the strings. The unease of the situation and the unpredictability of Scaramouche's behaviour is mirrored — and created — in the musical setting. The chromatic descent is punctuated by heavy pauses at the end of every bar, forcing a moment of reflection and anticipation after each semibreve (Ex. 12), as though the sounds

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 74

are only temporary interjections against the backdrop of the preceding, communicatively overwhelming silence. Presumably, the chromatic line would have been accompanied by the gold-flinging, and Scaramouche's subsequent rejection of the payment. Depending on how this moment is staged, this dialogue between sound and silence may have been punctuated by the sound of coins falling on to the stage, raining condescension on Scaramouche and his trio. The tremolo — which likely underscores Scaramouche's order to ignore the money — returns the scene to the silence from whence it came, the 'uncomfortable pause' that the text calls for. Sibelius renders this pause discomfoting by inserting two plucked chords, whose quiet interjection highlights the lack of sound that surrounds them.

Where Leilon and Blondelaine's music in Act I is characterised by continuous sound, their reunion is punctuated by silence. As in the bolero, when Leilon jumps up to greet her, the climactic statement in the strings (RN 120) leads into silence, cutting short his delight at seeing her. This first pause is pregnant with all of Leilon's doubt and Blondelaine's guilt, and from this moment on the orchestral sounds pierce violently through the backdrop of silence. This is reinforced by Leilon and Blondelaine discussing the lack of wind outside, their surroundings condemning her through their silence:

LEILON: [*takes the loosened tresses of her hair in his hands*] You have been running, your hair is falling down. Or you have loosened it yourself, perhaps or ... No, it is the wind, you have been running.  
BLONDELAINÉ: [*with a forced smile*] Yes, it must have been the wind.  
LEILON: [*listening to the stillness of the night without*] The wind? [*He smiles bitterly, then his expression changes to one of deepest resignation.*] Have you been in the woods or in the meadows?  
BLONDELAINÉ: [*feverishly*] No, no. I was tired ... and I lay down under the hedge beside the wood.<sup>112</sup>

It is in this scene that silence truly becomes a state of fear for Blondelaine, as it exposes her as a liar, and forces her to confront her dishonesty and shame at having succumbed to

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<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 160-61

Scaramouche. The *rinforzando* C-sharp minor chords and flourishes express Leilon's anger, punching through the quiet, and are answered by *pianissimo* tremolo lines, articulating Blondelaine's feverishness. The tremolo is so quiet that it can barely be heard at all, sounding somewhere in a hinterland between sound and silence, as though Blondelaine is attempting to cover the silence but does not have the energy to create the full-bodied sound that would dispel her nervousness. In this passage, it is silence, not sound, that is truthful. This perpetuates throughout the ensuing scene, the *Nervenkunst* section where Blondelaine is left on her own in the house. The nervous, feverish strings cover the silence by any means possible. They heighten the tension of the scene not only through their obsessive repetition and unpredictable phrasing, but also because of the possibility that they might stop at any point, and leave Blondelaine facing the silence that terrifies her.

When both Scaramouche and Blondelaine die, they fall in silence. Scaramouche's end is particularly inauspicious: Blondelaine stabs him to the sound of a variant of the 'Dagger' motif (first heard in bar 1088, when Leilon draws his knife to open a wine bottle, Ex. 13), combining a fifth on G-natural with an A-flat minor chord to create a pungent dissonance that remains unresolved, succeeded by a bar of silence marked *Lunga*. In this pause, Scaramouche falls to the floor 'making no cry', as Blondelaine watches.<sup>113</sup> When Blondelaine dies, it is with a repetition of Scaramouche's bolero: silence finally claims her as she dances herself into a void, 'stands a moment, then sways and falls.'<sup>114</sup> Not one of the critics mentions how these moments were staged. Like Scaramouche and Blondelaine, the historical sources fall silent here. Would Leilon have fallen to the floor in despair? Would his knees have hit the stage boards, creating a single knock? Would Blondelaine have crumpled, her folding clothes creating a hushed whisper that spoke in the space the orchestra's sounds once occupied? It is

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<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 177

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 229

impossible to know what sounds and gestures would have occupied these silences. But at these most expressive moments, Sibelius allowed the possibility of silence to speak in the place of sound.

Example 13a: *Scaramouche*, 'Dagger' motif, b. 1088

Example 13b: *Scaramouche*, Scaramouche's death, bb. 1565-1568

By having both his protagonists die in silence, Sibelius seems to suggest that creative artistry is impossible when trying to conform to the expectations and demands of others. The two characters who are sustained by a creativity that is shunned by the society they live in drive each other to death — to silence — in an effort to comply with the artistic and societal norms

that surround them. If we relate this to Sibelius's own silence, this is in keeping with the narrative traced out by scholars such as Arnold Whittall, who sees Sibelius's retreat in his later years as a devastating — almost futile — dying away of a musical voice. He opines that 'Sibelius's long silence after *Tapiola* ... was a tragedy, both for the composer himself and for modern tonal music',<sup>115</sup> as though silence was something that happened to Sibelius that was beyond his control, an agonising act of fate on both a personal and historical level.

But Blondelaine and Scaramouche's silence is not meaningless. Throughout *Scaramouche* silence is employed as a multi-expressive medium, and the moments of the protagonists' deaths are no different. We can read their silence as rest, as retreat, and as victory — Scaramouche and Blondelaine are together in silence in a way that was unsustainable through sound. Their silence is an act of defiance against the aesthetic rules that govern the soundworlds of Leilon and his friends. In *Scaramouche* Sibelius employs silence as a creative act and as an aesthetic choice, exploiting both its polysemous nature and its capability for resistance. The possibility that the Silence of Järvenpää is a gesture of resistance is contemplated by Dawn Goss in her book on Sibelius, temporarily positing that his destruction of the Eighth Symphony was an 'act of defiance'. Ultimately though, she rejects this in favour of painting Sibelius in a sacrificial light, his creative life a hecatomb to the gods of commercialism.<sup>116</sup> As she writes in her introduction, her interpretation is shaped by fear of 'the awful spectre that human creativity is something that can be irretrievably lost.'<sup>117</sup> As a result, her book follows Sibelius fastidiously until 1930, but in a four-hundred and forty-four page book, Sibelius's final twenty-seven years — an entire generation — is over in only

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<sup>115</sup> Arnold Whittall: *Musical Composition in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 64

<sup>116</sup> Dawn Goss, *Sibelius*, 438

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 4

sixteen short pages, a whimper at the end of a life defined only by the sounds it was able to produce.

If read as Sibelius's ruminations on creativity, sexuality, and silence, *Scaramouche* offers a more nuanced perspective on how we might be able to understand his final years. His silence is not just tragic and sacrificial — it is also deliberate, enigmatic, and defiant. In a radio interview of 1948, Sibelius remarked that 'Here at Ainola silence speaks.'<sup>118</sup> Dawn Goss dismisses this entire interview as 'anything but genuine', mainly because Sibelius says very little.<sup>119</sup> But here as in the final thirty years of his life, Sibelius's silence is contemplated and controlled. There may be more in his comment that 'silence speaks' than a mere sound-bite, which is how Dawn Goss portrays it. Maybe silence was Sibelius's answer to being institutionalised as a great artist with little regard for his desires as a human being. Even if we are drawn to Sibelius because of his music, there was more to him than the notes he produced. His life continued for another thirty years after he finished composing *The Tempest*, but musicological texts write out these years as something to be excused, pitied, or ignored. Burning the Eighth Symphony was a choice, not a forced act. Of course there is something tragic about Sibelius's retreat from compositional life, but there is also much to be respected and admired. We may be able to learn a great deal about Sibelius by extending to his silences the same consideration that we afford to his sounds.

## CONCLUSION

Both *Svanehoit* and *Scaramouche* are deeply personal scores. They deal with themes that were of continued importance to Sibelius, providing him with a means of articulating his concerns and desires about his personal, sexual, and artistic identity. Written in years when Sibelius

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<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 439

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

was expressing increasing insecurity about his private and public roles, and attempting to reconfigure his compositional style and creative persona, it is, as Kallberg says of *Ödlan*, 'surely of crucial significance to grasp the role this dramatic music plays in the evolution of Sibelius's stylistic experiments in the "crisis" years'.<sup>120</sup> I argue that the intimate concerns of *Svanevit* and *Scaramouche* force us to see Sibelius not just as a composer but as a man, and to consider the impact that his personal worries had on his work during these years. The two scores are radically different in their approach to style and to sex: *Svanevit* is ethereal and tender, consistent in style and tone. By contrast, *Scaramouche* is a stylistic chimera. Sibelius dons different personas according to the demands of Poulsen's text, the dramatic context allowing him to experiment with multiple means of expression within a single work. *Scaramouche* appears as the more mature counterpart of the earlier work, less naïve and more willing to embrace and exploit music's seductive, carnal possibilities. This is a composer at the peak of his powers, in complete command of multiple styles and idioms and able to manipulate them accordingly.

Sibelius's theatrical works present him as an accomplished dramatic composer, and indicate the influence of literature on his thinking and composition. His admiration for Strindberg continued throughout his later years, his diary entries confirming that he drew inspiration from the playwright's words even after the author had died. But Strindberg was not the only writer of whom Sibelius was fond; in his diary he also noted when figures such as Selma Lagerlöf sent him their work, immersing himself as much in the literary culture of the early-twentieth century as its music and art.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Kallberg, 'Melodramatic Lizard', 74

<sup>121</sup> See diary entry 19/12/1912. Dahlström, 160

Beyond their personal meaning for Sibelius, these scores have a broader cultural significance as part of the early twentieth-century's dialogue on sex and gender. As two of the most famous cultural figures in the Nordic countries, Sibelius and Strindberg's contributions on this topic held considerable import, and both *Scaramouche* and *Soanehvit* were given extensive coverage in the regional and national newspapers. Both works were received in the context of discussions about women's place in society, and their plot lines directly address 'The Woman Question', posing questions about both masculine and feminine capacity for sexual expression. Mäkelä emphasises the prevalence of discussions about sexuality in Sibelius's cultural surroundings,<sup>122</sup> which were no less animated than in central European countries: *Soanehvit* and *Scaramouche* were written and performed in a similar milieu to that which produced Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* (1913), Strauss's *Elektra* (1909) and *Salome* (1905), and Dukas's *Ariane et Barbe-bleu* (1906).

*Soanehvit* and *Scaramouche* associated Sibelius with some of the most prominent progressive figures of his day. Strindberg, Poulsen, Walbom, and Strandin were all considered to be at the forefront of what Mäkelä terms the 'international avant-garde'.<sup>123</sup> The reception of Sibelius's dramatic music suggests that even until the 1920s, practitioners and critics conceptualised Nordic cultural life of the early twentieth-century as consisting of multiple modern movements, all of which represented a different aspect of the experience of modernity. While different -isms were more in fashion than others at different times — Symbolism was in vogue at the start of the century and throughout the first decade of 1900, while Expressionism was more popular throughout the 1910s — none were considered intrinsically superior to any other. Sibelius, however, was consistently considered as one of the progressive composers of his day.

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<sup>122</sup> Mäkelä, *Sibelius*, 88-97

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 107

Sibelius's incidental music offers a new lens through which to see a composer predominantly associated with landscape. While nature metaphors were prevalent in reviews of his orchestral works, his theatrical scores had quite a different reception, as demonstrated by the contemporaneous commentary on both *Svanehoit* and *Scaramouche*. A more extensive understanding of the context of his incidental music can impact on how we read his orchestral works, not least in pieces where there are explicit quotations, such as the recycling of material from *Svanehoit* in the second movement of the Fifth Symphony. Of course, this comes with caveats. Although Sibelius shared themes and material between his incidental and symphonic music, theatrical and concert concerns were relatively distinct for both Sibelius and his audiences, and should not be treated as identical. Besides the obvious dissimilarity that incidental music was composed and considered as part of a larger production, the sometimes fragmentary construction of the theatre music means that questions of timbre and topic come to the fore more explicitly than they do in symphonies, with form being relegated to a position of lesser importance. Even in a through-composed score like *Scaramouche*, the form is literally constructed around the text, rather than in the more abstract and conceptual manner utilised in the symphonic poems. Nonetheless, Sibelius's major preoccupations remained constant, whether writing for the stage or the concert hall — it is no coincidence that *Scaramouche*, with its fluctuation between symbolism and expressionism, was composed shortly after the Fourth Symphony. Without the incidental scores, we are missing a valuable thread in the tapestry of Sibelius's life, environment, and music.

# A MUSIC 'CLEAR, HAPPY, AND NAÏVE': WILHELM STENHAMMAR'S

## *AS YOU LIKE IT*

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In 1909, the Gothenburg newspaper *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* ran a survey about the city's lack of a theatre.<sup>1</sup> They published twenty-three responses to three questions, asking participants whether they felt that Gothenburg's theatrical resources were sufficient for the town's size and cultural ambitions, and if not what should be done about it. Wilhelm Stenhammar provided one of the published responses, commenting at length on Gothenburg's theatrical life — or lack thereof. He presented a vision of a theatre for the whole of Gothenburg, calling for a large institution that could keep its ticket prices low enough to attract a broad audience. In addition, he wanted the theatre to work in tandem with the established Orchestra Association, making the orchestra and theatre the twin pillars supporting Gothenburg's cultural life.

It would take over seven years for these theatrical desires to be realised, but when the Lorensberg Theatre was opened in 1916, it was with a production of Strindberg's *Ett Drömspel* with music by Stenhammar. Two years later, Per Lindberg was appointed director of the Lorensberg, beginning a four-year collaboration between composer and director. Lindberg and Stenhammar shared similar political and aesthetic outlooks, advocating for theatre that was financially accessible and culturally edifying, and Lindberg placed music at the heart of his theatrical practice, both practically and theoretically. Their collaboration was

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<sup>1</sup> 'Göteborgs teaterfråga', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, 21/10/1909 - 01/12/1909. Besides Stenhammar, the other respondents were: Carl Lagerberg (Kammarherre), Frederik Hegardt (häradshöfd), Fredrik Lamm (Lektor), Professor Otto Sylwan, Carl Sprinchorn (Kapten), Olof E. Melin (Grossh.), Ossian Ahrenberg (Skeppsredaren), Peter Lamberg (Rådmannen), Wilhelm Berg (Byråchefen), director Emil Haglund, Carl August Kjellberg (Konsul), director Torsten Hedlund, actress Gerda Lundequist-Dahlström, author Ellen Idström, Ludvig Johansson (Lektor), C. J. Ekman (Grossh.), Martin Levisson (Konsul), director Georg Ström, artist Alex Langlet, Berndt Hedgren (Handlanden), K. A. Westling (Seminarierektor), and composer Tor Aulin.

remarkably fruitful for the composer — during this time Stenhammar composed prolifically, producing incidental scores for Lindberg's productions of *Lodolezzi sjunger* ('Lodolezzi sings', 1919), *As You Like It* (1920), *Hamlet* (1920), *Turandot* (1920), *Chitra* (1921), and *Romeo and Juliet* (1922).

In keeping with Lindberg and Stenhammar's theatrical ideals, *As You Like it* was designed and marketed as an explicitly popular production. It was Stenhammar's most substantial incidental work to date — the scoring is extensive, providing songs, underscoring, entr'actes, and an Intrada. Lindberg selected *As You Like It* at least partly for the amount of music that could be included — Gothenburg had a reputation as a musical city thanks to the Symphony Orchestra flourishing under Stenhammar's direction, which provided the resources for a production with extensive incidental music. It also meant that the music could be used to attract audiences, enhancing the play's spectacle and being marketed as an opportunity to hear a new work by the city's famous composer.

This chapter will argue that Lindberg, Stenhammar, and their designer Knut Ström adopted a naïve aesthetic in *As You Like It*, choosing an anti-academic, anti-naturalist style. This was part of a conscious effort to contrast the Lorensberg with the more traditional theatres in Stockholm and their productions which appealed to a more conservative theatre-going public. Lindberg and Stenhammar's Shakespeare was a popular playwright, with this staging providing a prototype for their conception of modern theatre.

Despite their shared vision with respect to building a popular theatre, however, Stenhammar and Lindberg had quite differing attitudes towards modernism. Coming from different disciplines with different points of reference, for Stenhammar and Lindberg modernism had different figureheads and geographical centres, with the term accruing subtly different

connotations for each as a result. By 1920, 'modernism' was used to refer to stylistic traits in reference to both theatre and music, but was used for a much broader range of styles for the former than the latter. Within theatrical circles, 'modernism' was defined negatively; a production was termed 'modernist' if it was 'not realist'—realism being defined by Lindberg as using 'a historically accurate environment' for the play's aesthetic.<sup>2</sup> Lindberg particularly objected to this style of performance, as embodied by the Meiningen players and later by Konstantin Stanislavsky, terming it an 'ethnographic accuracy [which] is the rich man's amiable weakness.'<sup>3</sup> For musicians, however, 'modernism' became associated primarily with atonality throughout the 1910s, particularly the music of Arnold Schoenberg. Lindberg actively embraced many aspects of theatrical modernism, but Stenhammar adopted a far more indifferent attitude towards musical modernism, distancing himself from Schoenberg and identifying instead with figures like Nielsen and Sibelius who also had equivocal relationships with atonality.

For both Stenhammar and Lindberg, however, 'modernism' was only useful insofar as it helped to build a 'modern' culture. The 1910s and 20s saw a cultural and political shift within Sweden, during which the term 'modern' became attached to culture—of any discipline—that aimed to be popular, accessible, and politically-minded, befitting the increasing popularity of social democracy.<sup>4</sup> Before the First World War, there was no especial emphasis on the creation of popular art. This is particularly demonstrated by the proliferation of small theatres that targeted a bourgeois audience, most influential of which was the Intimate Theatre, established by August Strindberg in 1907.<sup>5</sup> Based on models such

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<sup>2</sup> 'Att spela en pjäs i historiskt riktig miljö'. Lindberg, *Kring Ridån*, 32

<sup>3</sup> 'etnografisk noggrannhet är rikemans älskvärda svaghet.' *Ibid.* 33

<sup>4</sup> In the 1920 general election the Social Democratic Party remained the largest in the Riksdag.

<sup>5</sup> It is fittingly symbolic that during the 1920s the Intimate Theatre closed as a theatrical venue, and began to be used as a meeting place for trade unions.

as André Antoine's Théâtre Libre in Paris and Max Reinhardt's Kammerspiele in Germany, the Intimate Theatre staged chamber productions of Strindberg's smaller dramas such as *Spöksonaten* and *Svanehoit*. After 1918 however, the cultural atmosphere changed. Lindberg's appraisal of the years immediately following the end of the war indicates a far less forgiving attitude to socially exclusive cultural practices across Europe and Sweden:

When the armies returned from the fronts, when the major revolutions and economic crises reshaped societies, when the proletariat became an increasingly dominant power in society ... then began a new era, with a new society and a new mentality. Must not this newness also remodel the theatre? ... A vindictive criticism of the mentality that produced world war sparked a general distrust of the concepts "culture", aesthetic and moral. Art ... the unfortunate art had to pay for bourgeois culture's sins.<sup>6</sup>

In his concern about responding to 'reshaped societies', Lindberg was in accord with the preoccupations of many Swedish critics and practitioners in the 1920s. Sweden was heading into a depression caused by a post-war speculation boom—from the start of the decade global goods prices fell, destabilising Sweden's export income which had been so buoyant during the war, leading to an increase in domestic inflation.<sup>7</sup> Influenced by the Russian Revolution, 1917 saw bread riots across the country including in Gothenburg, and from 1919 inflation acceleration was widely discussed in the newspapers.<sup>8</sup> As the financial crisis worsened, this no doubt contributed to the antibourgeois rhetoric that permeated writing on modern theatre, including Lindberg's own.

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<sup>6</sup> 'När arméerna återvände från fronterna, när de stora revolutionerna och de ekonomiska kriserna omskapade samhällena, när proletariatet blev en alltmera framträdande makt i samhället ... då började en ny tid, med ett nytt samhälle och en ny mentalitet. Måste inte detta nya också omskapa teatern? ... En hämndlysten kritik mot den mentalitet, som framkallet världskriget, drev upp en allmän misstro mot begreppen kultur, estetik och moral. Konst ... den stackars konsten fick betala borgarkulturens synder.' Lindberg, *Kring Ridån*, 163

<sup>7</sup> Mikael Lönnborg, Anders Ögren & Michael Rafferty: 'Banks and Swedish financial crises in the 1920s and 1930s', *Business History*, 53/2 (2011), pp. 230-248 at 234-6

<sup>8</sup> Erik Filip Lundberg, *The Development of Swedish and Keynesian Macroeconomic Theory and its Impact on Economic Policy* (Cambridge, 1996), 15

Stenhammar and Lindberg's differing attitudes towards 'modernism' stem from their mutual commitment to the creation of 'modern' music and theatre. For Lindberg, modernist styles were perfectly compatible with the social goals of modern theatre. He associated realism with the older, more established theatres that aimed at a bourgeois audience, arguing that realist theatre could not be popular or accessible, and that this style kept the theatre the preserve of the middle classes. He claimed that most theatres could not afford the level of detail that realistic stagings required, which made it difficult for small theatres to stage productions. Meanwhile realism kept ticket prices high at the larger theatres to cover the costs of intricate sets and costumes, meaning that only the wealthy could afford to attend. Additionally, realism did away with spectacle, and resulted in an elitist theatre by extracting theatricality and making productions less interesting to watch. Lindberg's solution to this problem was twofold: first, to stage contemporary repertoire, which he felt better allowed the theatre to be 'a mirror of contemporary life';<sup>9</sup> and second, to adopt whichever style attracted a large audience. These styles were very often modernist. Thanks to Lindberg, therefore, modern theatre largely became synonymous with theatrical modernism in Sweden. Whether theatres should maintain realist stagings or not was widely discussed in 1920s Sweden, and was colloquially termed 'the modern theatre problem'. Newspapers in both Stockholm and Gothenburg referred to this issue, and divided Swedish theatres into the old (realist) and new (anti-realist) accordingly. While Stockholm's theatres, particularly the Royal Theatre, were seen as bastions of the old style, Lindberg and his team at the Gothenburg Lorensberg were depicted as the trailblazers among the new, staunchly rejecting any pretence to realism in their productions.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> 'en spegel av samtidens liv.' Per Lindberg: 'Inbjudan', *Folkteatern*, 1932 (Musik och Teaterbiblioteket, Stockholm, Gäddviken archive, Per Lindberg Collection)

<sup>10</sup> See August Brunius: 'Estetiska bordssamtal', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, Våren 1920

Stenhammar took an alternative route. He viewed musical modernism as unnecessarily complex and convoluted, appealing only to a limited audience and therefore antithetical to the social goals of modern music. Therefore he sought a musical idiom that was modern but not modernist; a music that he characterised in 1911 as 'clear, happy, and naïve', as discussed in detail below.<sup>11</sup>

I first discuss Stenhammar's approach to creating a 'new way' for music, placing this in the context of similar endeavours by Nielsen, his friend and colleague, and discussions about the naïve within Sweden. The category of the naïve was frequently invoked to describe artistic enterprises that aimed to be anti-elitist and anti-academic, a goal which both Stenhammar and Lindberg shared for *As You Like It*. I then lay out Lindberg's ideas about the importance of popular theatre and how it should be achieved, before turning to Stenhammar and his views on the topic. I focus on his answer to the *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* questionnaire. I then turn to Stenhammar's music for *As You Like It*, and the roles that it played in the production as a whole. I argue that the primary purpose of Stenhammar's music was to create spectacle, and to cultivate a style that would have mass appeal. The merits of Stenhammar's score in the context of modern theatre were, therefore, its diatonic language, repetitive structure, extensive integration with the play's text, and visual flamboyancy, as the musicians were often placed on the stage and included as part of the visual spectacle of the production.

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<sup>11</sup> 'klar, glad och naiv.' Wilhelm Stenhammar, letter to Bror Beckman, 18 Sept. 1911 (Musik och Teaterbiblioteket, Stockholm, Wilhelm Stenhammar collection)

## STENHAMMAR AND THE NAÏVE

Discussing his relationship to Schoenberg, Stenhammar wrote in revealing terms to his colleague Bror Beckman in 1911. Regarding his own musical style, he said that he was seeking:

a whole new way, a way which I may have to search for for a long time before I find it. It is therefore not a whim or a temporary fancy of mine, not a desperate attempt to deaden the pain and seek oblivion, when I sit in the evenings and study counterpoint. It is simply returning to the starting point and an attempt to find a new and better line from which to try again. It is not ... resignation, it is a secret, trembling hope. ... In this time of Arnold Schoenberg I dream of an art far beyond Arnold Schoenberg: clear, happy, and naïve.<sup>12</sup>

Stenhammar's letter is illuminating for a number of reasons. First, it indicates an antagonistic attitude towards Schoenberg; second, that he believed that the study of counterpoint (which, according to the dates in his notebooks, he embarked upon in 1909 and continued until at least 1918)<sup>13</sup> was the most profitable way of constructing a route past Schoenberg; and third, that this new way could be described as 'clear, happy, and naïve'.

Within Sweden, Schoenberg's music was greeted apathetically by many composers who were in contact with Stenhammar. As we saw earlier, Sibelius's response to Schoenberg was ambivalent at best. Nonetheless, Sibelius and Stenhammar's responses were quite different—Schoenberg prompted in Stenhammar none of Sibelius's later anxiety. Instead, Stenhammar envisaged his counterpoint study as a way to disentangle himself from Schoenberg and the attendant furore surrounding him. He positioned himself less in dialogue with Austrian

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<sup>12</sup> 'en helt ny väg, en väg som jag kanske ännu länge måste söka, innan jag finner den. Det är därför icke en nyck eller en tillfälligt infall af mig, icke ett förtvivast försök att döfva smärtan och söka glömska, än jag om kvällarna sitter och plikar kontrapunkt. Det är helt enkelt är återgående till utgångspunkten och ett försök att finna en ny och bättre linea för att förnyadt försök att nå fram. Det är icke icke [*sic.*] resignation, det är ett hemligt, bäfvande hopp. ... I den Arnold Schönberg tiden drömmer jag om en konst långt bortom Arnold Schönberg, klar, glad och naiv.' Stenhammar letter to Beckman

<sup>13</sup> Bo Wallner: *Wilhelm Stenhammar och hans tid Vol. II*, (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1991), 194-5. The manual he studied from was by Heinrich Bellermand.

developments than Sibelius and turned to his Scandinavian colleagues for inspiration, particularly Carl Nielsen and the Swedish composer Ture Rangström. Stenhammar was in regular correspondence with both, and their attitudes towards Schoenberg and musical modernism remained largely negative, even if they varied in degree. As discussed in the next chapter, Rangström's critical writing about Schoenberg bordered on the vituperative. Nielsen, meanwhile, wrote that Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder* and *Verklärte Nacht* were merely 'melodies of the old kind that are so banal and sentimental they appeal to a half-educated public', later declaring in 1927 that Schoenberg's later music was 'on the way to being out-moded.'<sup>14</sup>

In the same letter castigating Schoenberg's early pieces for being 'banal and sentimental', Nielsen justified his critique by stating that the music lacked a 'firm ground'—namely, a contrapuntal basis.<sup>15</sup> Stenhammar was not alone in his turn to counterpoint during these years. As Daniel Grimley notes, 'In its polemically charged diversity, counterpoint became the primary tool with which to promote or resist the advance (or, indeed, the retreat) of musical modernism.'<sup>16</sup> Nielsen saw polyphony as a rejuvenating source and as a way of rejecting musical modernism, returning instead to music's 'basic principles' to avoid the 'sultry sentimentality or empty, storming passion' that he felt beleaguered the music of many of his contemporaries.<sup>17</sup> This sentiment is reflected in Stenhammar's desire to find 'a new and better line from which to try again.' Throughout their years of correspondence, Nielsen actively encouraged Stenhammar in his counterpoint studies. In 1911, he asked whether

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<sup>14</sup> David Fanning & Michelle Assay (ed., trans.): *Carl Nielsen: Selected Letters and Diaries* (University of Chicago Press: Copenhagen, 2017). Nielsen to Julius Clausen, 19/08/1922, 547, and Nielsen to Moses Pergament, 20/10/1927, 680.

<sup>15</sup> Nielsen to Julius Clausen, 19/08/1922, *ibid.* 547

<sup>16</sup> Grimley, *Carl Nielsen*, 181

<sup>17</sup> Nielsen to Knud Harder, 13/02/1907. Fanning & Assay, *Carl Nielsen*, 253

Stenhammar had 'noticed how many young composers have approached music from the wrong end...they begin by expressing moods, feelings, colours and sensations, instead of voice-leading counterpoint.'<sup>18</sup> Later in 1921, whilst Stenhammar was writing his cantata *Sången* ('The Song'), Nielsen wrote to him that he should begin composing 'with long minims, like dry *cantus firmi*, like wooden beams that lie there giving the basic form of a house ... You are after all a master in counterpoint...so use that.'<sup>19</sup>

For both these composers, there was a political dimension to their counterpoint studies. Their pursuit of music's 'basic principles' formed an integral aspect of their attempts to make their music 'popular'. For Nielsen in Denmark, this manifested in the idea of *folkelig*, which in relation to culture means 'popular' or 'accessible', in way that is implied to be beneficial.<sup>20</sup> The composer Thomas Laub wrote to Nielsen in 1914 to request that he write music to his texts, stating that the intention with these songs would be to address the 'ordinary Danish people', and that to do so they must be 'set simply ... to give people good *words* to sing to good *folkelige* melodies.'<sup>21</sup> Nielsen embraced this concept enthusiastically, writing in 1918 that he believed that the *folkelig* was 'where we should begin; otherwise the whole of our musical life is just floating in mid-air.'<sup>22</sup> This is not to say that Nielsen was interested in altering his musical style to gain popularity: he wrote to Edvin Kallstenius in 1917 that he hoped that 'the music of the future' would move 'away from public effect, which ... is trying to destroy or coarsen our taste and culture'. Instead, by maintaining 'legitimate harmonic and polyphonic technique', music would necessarily be artistically edifying.<sup>23</sup> For Nielsen, then,

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<sup>18</sup> Nielsen to Stenhammar, 27/01/1911, *ibid.* 300

<sup>19</sup> Nielsen to Wilhelm Stenhammar, 17/01/1921, *ibid.* 512

<sup>20</sup> The word literally translates as "folklike", but the connotations are more nuanced.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Laub to Nielsen, 02/12/1914, emphasis original. Fanning & Assay, *Carl Nielsen*, 366

<sup>22</sup> Nielsen to A. C. Meyer, 23/02/1918, *ibid.* 434

<sup>23</sup> Nielsen to Edvin Kallstenius, 30/01/1917, *ibid.* 408

'popular' music had to be of benefit to the public, and this was not achieved simply by being the cause of widespread discussion, like Schoenberg.

Stenhammar, similarly, saw it as a necessity to write music that appealed to as many people as possible. But as discussed in further detail below, he diverged subtly from Nielsen in that he adopted a specific attitude of anti-elitism, a position shared by Per Lindberg. A common goal of trying to create 'popular' music moved in slightly separate directions for Nielsen and Stenhammar, in the different contexts of Denmark and Sweden. Nielsen moved towards the idea of music as 'a vitalist current', as Grimley puts it; an art form that was both physically and intellectually stimulating, rooted in 'vigour and physical health'.<sup>24</sup> Stenhammar's approach was slightly softer-edged; as highlighted by his letter to Beckman, a central facet of his 'new way' was to be the naïve. He continued to refer to the naïve as a state to which he aspired, writing in 1916 that he admired Kandinsky for being 'a soul who is beautiful and deep and naïve', and that Kandinsky's work 'dug into somewhere far down and deep in my soul, so that it vibrates as if with a young, great love's grief and happiness.'<sup>25</sup>

The category of the naïve became increasingly important for Swedish practitioners throughout the 1910s. It eventually developed an associated artistic movement, naïvism. Exhibitions by naïvist artists were widely covered in the press towards the end of the decade, to the extent that by 1919 the poet and art critic Gunnar Mascoll Silfverstolpe called naïvism 'one of today's slogans.'<sup>26</sup> It was widely considered to be one of the most stylistically adventurous contemporary art movements, was referred to as 'modernist', and was

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<sup>24</sup> Grimley, *Nielsen*, 74, 77

<sup>25</sup> 'en själ som är skön och djup och naïv', 'grävt in sig någonstans långt in och djupt i min själ, så att den vibrerar som av en ung och stor förälskelses kval och lycka.' Quoted in Wallner, *Wilhelm Stenhammar Vol. II*, 308

<sup>26</sup> 'ett av Dagens slagord'. "G. M. S-e", 'En tjeckisk målare', *Dagens Nyheter* 11/11/1919

associated with the political left.<sup>27</sup> The figureheads of the movement included Axel Nilsson, Hilding Linnqvist, and Nils von Dardel (who designed for the Ballets Suédois, exporting this style of art to Paris as distinctly 'Swedish'). Naïvism found its precursors and models in symbolism and the art of Paul Gauguin and Henri Rousseau. When reviewing the naïvist works at a 1918 exhibition at Liljevachs Konsthall (Liljevach's Art Hall) in Stockholm, Karl Asplund provided his readers with a short history of the movement, connecting it to Rousseau. He wrote that Swedish artists had adopted Rousseau's characteristic traits including 'a stylisation which can be said to represent a primitive schematic rewriting of reality.'<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless, Swedish naïvism was distinct from the French school in that there was no implication in the Swedish term that the artist was entirely unschooled or lacking a formal art education. Instead, this was a genre that was naïve in appearance only. It was characterized by a tension between an adult's awareness of the world and its presentation behind a veneer of oblivious innocence. The technical language employed was deliberately infantile, using bold colours, asymmetric shapes, and eschewing realistic proportions. This was not due to technical incompetence but was a self-conscious stylistic choice, the heart of naïvism lying in the juxtaposition between its surface simplicity and the often more sinister symbolism presented — often through dense intertextual reference — within a childlike frame.

'Naïve', then, was not a neutral term. Although naïvism as a movement with a particular stylistic language only concerned the visual arts, the term 'naïve' was used much more broadly to refer to practitioners who used deliberately simple languages that were designed to have mass appeal, and it is this use of the term with which Stenhammar identified. The

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<sup>27</sup> See "K. A.", 'En modernist-utställning: Gösta Nyström i Nya konstgalleriet', *Dagens Nyheter*, 30/12/1918

<sup>28</sup> 'en stilisering som kan sägas utgöra en primitiv schematisk omskrivning av verkligheten.' "K. A.", 'Naïvism', *Dagens Nyheter*, 12/12/1919. The exhibition included works by Gideon Börje, Eric Hallström, Hilding Linnqvist, Einar Jolin, Axel Nilsson, and Nils von Dardel.

characteristics and associations of the Swedish naïve were as follows, described by Cecilia

Widenheim:

The naïve can be a disarming strategy against the view of art as technical finesse and brilliance. It can be the expression of vulnerability, playfulness, popular and everyday reality, or sheer artistic coquetry. But also a reaction against academicism, or the tendency to assert the intrinsic value of line, form and color.<sup>29</sup>

This appeal to anti-academicism is precisely the manner in which Stenhammar invoked the concept of naïvety in his letter to Beckman. Additionally, naïve art forms were associated with the provincial, which correlates with Stenhammar's—and Lindberg's—desires to embrace 'outsider' identities within Sweden, building a regional theatre in Gothenburg in direct opposition to Stockholm's institutions.

In a musical culture that was increasingly being defined by atonality, Stenhammar's almost entirely diatonic score for *As You Like It* was an ideological statement. Each movement has a clear key, and relies on repetitive structures and uncomplicated rhythms. Wallner describes Stenhammar's counterpoint study as being 'a strict exercise in the elements of melody and harmony ... the simplest means subordinated to the most inexorable rules: absolute diatonic melody, smallest possible use of leap, only consonant harmony, note against note.'<sup>30</sup> This could be used as a description for the music in *As You Like It*, which moved away from the ethereal chromatic sonorities of his earlier *Ett drömspel*, more encapsulating the 'clear, happy, and naïve' music that Stenhammar described to Beckman. Reviewers applauded Stenhammar's approach, saying that his music contained 'forest life's free gladness and

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<sup>29</sup> Cecilia Widenheim, 'Utopia and Reality', in Cecilia Widenheim (ed.), *Utopia and Reality* (London, 2002), 58. Trans. Bard Graduate Center for Studies in Decorative Arts, Design, and Culture NY.

<sup>30</sup> 'en sträng övning i melodikens och samklangens elementa ... de enklaste medel ställda mot de mest obönhörliga reglar: absolute diatonisk melodik, minsta möjliga användning av språng, endast konsonerande harmonik, not mot not'. Wallner, *Stenhammar Vol. III*, 197

nature's jubilation',<sup>31</sup> and was 'exquisitely simple and unpretentious',<sup>32</sup> 'fresh and confident',<sup>33</sup> and 'strong and genuine'.<sup>34</sup> The overarching consensus was that the strength of Stenhammar's music derived from its simplicity, the author for *Hvar 8 Dag* saying that the production marked a new 'epoch in Swedish theatre history.'<sup>35</sup> 'The whole was wrapped in an atmosphere of music', another author ("C. R. U-s") enthused, 'a musical reverie which lifted the events up a level to a peak of unreality, a reality more real than "reality".'<sup>36</sup>

Although Stenhammar's score might have been conceived in opposition to modernism, the same cannot be said of Lindberg's directing nor of Knut Ström's visual designs, neither of which were realist. They therefore fall into the category of theatrical modernism, by the 1920 definition. Ström had previously studied in Dresden and later went on to direct productions at the Lorensberg and elsewhere in Sweden, and was as enthusiastic as Lindberg about artistic and theatrical modernism. Alongside Stenhammar's music Ström placed enormous sets inspired by Titian, redolent of the grand, neo-baroque style adopted by Max Reinhardt for his production of *Jedermann* ('Everyman') at the Salzburg Festival, also in 1920.<sup>37</sup> Due to

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<sup>31</sup> 'skogslivets fria glädje och naturens jubel'. Ejnar Smith, "'Som ni behagar": En Scenstudie', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 20 Apr. 1920

<sup>32</sup> 'utsökt enkel och okonstlad'. Edvard Alkman "E. A.", "'Som ni behagar": Ett par möjligheter till', *Göteborgs Posten*, Apr. 1920

<sup>33</sup> 'friskt och säkert'. Edvard Alkman "E. A.", "'Som ni behagar", Gårdagens Shakspeare-premiär [sic.], *Göteborgs-Posten*, 10 Apr. 1920

<sup>34</sup> 'stark och äkta'. "T. R-E.", 'Som ni behagar på Lorensbergsteatern', *Göteborgs Morgon-Posten*, 10 Apr. 1920

<sup>35</sup> 'en epok i svensk teaterhistoria'. "RED", 'En märklig premiär på Göteborgs Lorensbergsteatern', *Hvar 8 Dag*, Årg. 22, 1920/1921

<sup>36</sup> 'Den hela var insvept i en atmosfär af musik, blef ett musikaliskt drömmeri som lyfte händelsernas plan upp till en höjd af överklighet—eller rättare öfververklighet, en verklighet verkligare än "verkligheten". "C. R. U-s", 'Som ni behagar, Lorensbergsteaterns premiär på Shakespeares lustspel', *Göteborgs Dagblad*, 10 Apr. 1920

<sup>37</sup> The Salzburg Festival was intended to serve a very similar purpose to Lindberg's Gothenburg Theatre—Lisa Silverman states that Reinhardt hoped for it to 'serve a "quasi-religious" function as a site to which people would be happy to make a pilgrimage and find "redemption in art"'. Lisa Silverman: *Jews and the Making of Modern German Theatre* (Iowa, 2010) 209

modernism's disciplinary boundaries, therefore, it is impossible to categorize *As You Like It* as modernist or not. What is more important is how these collaborators worked in dialogue and across disciplinary boundaries, and how their individual contributions interacted with each other to give an overall impression of a naïve, modern theatre.

## REPLACING REALISM

In place of realism, Lindberg advocated for a stylistic approach based on instinct, specific to each play in question. In his 1927 publication *Regiproblem* ('Directing Problems'), he wrote about how subjective staging a drama should be, stressing the importance of the individual in the interpretative process:

A drama is grown out of a person's mind. There is something in the highest degree 'unreal', a personal spirituality. This mentality must be present above all on stage. The artwork on the stage can never be what Zola felt an artwork to be: a piece of nature, seen through a temperament. The artwork on the stage must at least be: a piece of art (the poem), seen through a temperament.<sup>38</sup>

According to Lindberg, all the theatrical apparatus available should be called upon to bring a drama on to the stage — light, sound, and movement were as important as the text in creating the unique tone of every production. He found his model in the theatre of his mentor, Reinhardt, describing how Reinhardt created the 'surreal personal spirituality' that Lindberg felt should underpin theatrical productions: 'he melted together all the elements of the scenic mixture, actors, poetry, stage design, lighting and music, into one great unity of imagination and rhythm ... he searched for a special way of playing each piece, he sought its

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<sup>38</sup> 'Ett drama är vuxet fram ur en människas hjärna. Det är någonting i högsta grad 'överkligt', en personlig andlighet. Detta mentala måste bevaras vid framförandet på scenen. Konstverket på scenen kan aldrig vara, vad Zola ansåg att ett konstverk var: ett stycke natur, sett genom ett temperament. Konstverket på scenen måste åtminstone bli: ett stycke konst (dikten), sedd genom ett temperament.' Lindberg quoted in Wallner, *Stenhammar Vol. III*, 345

distinctive rhythm and tone, its atmosphere, its music.<sup>39</sup> His description of Reinhardt's interpretation was almost identical to the manner in which Lindberg spoke about his own working methods for a Gothenburg newspaper interview in 1920, which gives some insight into how Lindberg began his directing process:

When I sit and read a piece and am working to penetrate in to an *intuitive* fellow feeling with the poem's soul, every scene is shaped by degrees into a coherent picture of colour and rhythm, which speaks the same as it stands in the book. And the further into the poem I come, *everything melts together* into a specific ground-scale of colours, shapes and thoughts, and it is this sense of image, which is in constant interaction with the idea [that] becomes a controlling and regulatory basis for the staging of the piece ... the entire apparatus follows the play's pace so to *unconsciously* lead the gaze of the spectators on the essential and, *without the audience reflecting upon it*, convey the poem's expression clearly.<sup>40</sup>

Lindberg stressed the intangible nature of his practice, and how he acted almost unconsciously — his was a theatre based on intuitions and impulses, not logic and rationality. Depicting himself in this way was part of the anti-establishment, anti-theory narrative which Lindberg built around himself during his lifetime, shaping his image of the modern theatre in opposition both to the established theatre institutions in Sweden. He distanced himself and his colleagues from theoretical models by depicting these models as unnecessarily restrictive forms of categorisation developed by academics and theoreticians, which were then imposed on practitioners who relied on their impulses and had no need or

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<sup>39</sup> 'han smält om alla scengestaltningens element, skådespelare, dikt, scenbild, ljus och musik, till en enda stor enhet av fantasi och rytm ... han sökte ett speciellt spelsätt för varje pjäs, han sökte dess säregna rytm och ton, dess atmosfär, dess musik.' Lindberg, *Kring Ridån*, 82, 84.

<sup>40</sup> 'När jag sitter och läser ett stycke och arbetar på att tränga in till en intuitiv samkänsla med diktens själ gestaltar sig efter hand hvarje scen till en samlad bild af färg och rytmer, hvilka säga detsamma som det som står i boken. Och ju längre in i dikten jag kommer, smälter allt ihop till en bestämd grundskala af färger, former och tankar, och det är denna bildsyn, som i ständig växelverkan med tanken blir en bestämmande och reglerande grundval för styckets iscensättning. ... hela apparaten skådespelets gång för att omedvetet för åskådarna leda blicken på det väsentliga och, utan att publiken reflekterar öfver det, föra diktens uttryck klarare.' "E. V-ck": 'Den stumma rösten', *Göteborgs Dagblad*, 23/10/1920. Emphases my own. Lindberg uses the same word, *smälta*, to refer to both Reinhardt's and his own methods of making the production's elements cohere.

desire for such labels. Discussing Reinhardt's style, Lindberg expressed disdain for attempts to contain his work with various "isms" associated with mainland European scholarship:

If one reads any German account of Reinhardt's development, one is hampered by a series of isms which he is said to have gone through. Presumably he found it easier to go through them than we did to read of them.<sup>41</sup>

This was reiterated in his comparison of Reinhardt to Gordon Craig, writing that:

He [Reinhardt] has not been any theatrical pioneer, like Gordon Craig. His theorisations are on the whole rare. Although he had around him a group of men, who translated his impulses into slogans which rumbled across Europe. But these slogans are in most cases distilled from the present results.<sup>42</sup>

There is contradiction within Lindberg's conceptions: he repeatedly disavowed theory and "isms" when applied to Reinhardt by other sources, but was content to label Reinhardt's theatre 'scenic impressionism', and referred to the 'modernists' whose plays Reinhardt staged.<sup>43</sup> And having a coherent aesthetic standpoint which rejects categorisation and promotes personal impulse is, in itself, a form of theory. He chose to make a theoretical virtue of the unconscious and ineffable, but he associated himself with these attributes as way of allowing himself the creative freedom to move between styles, rather than being associated with any one particular aesthetic.

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<sup>41</sup> 'Läser man någon tysk redogörelse för Reinhardts utveckling stöter man på en rad begrepp på ism, som han lär ha gått igenom. Förmodligen har han haft lättare att gå igenom dem än vi att läsa om dem.' Lindberg, *Kring Ridån*, 82

<sup>42</sup> 'Han har icke varit någon teoretisk pionjär, som Gordon Craig. Han teoretiserar överhuvudtaget sällan. Han har visserligen haft omkring sig en skara män, som översatt hans impulser i slagord, som mullrat över Europa. Men dessa slagord äro i de flesta fall destillat ur föreliggande resultat.' *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> 'det var scenisk impressionism', and 'spelade Reinhardt modernister och klassiker av all slag', *Ibid.*, 81, 84

## STENHAMMAR ON THEATRE

In his comprehensive biography of Stenhammar, Bo Wallner argues that Stenhammar had ‘a lively interest [in the] theatre’, and that for him, theatre was about ‘more than just relaxation.’<sup>44</sup> Stenhammar’s letters are testament to his love of theatre: when visiting Berlin in 1910, he recorded that he missed a performance of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony conducted by Arthur Nikisch to go and see Molière and Shakespeare, and later in 1913 that he rarely managed a week in Stockholm without a theatre visit.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, he had personal links to the theatre — his sister-in-law, Anna Flygare, was a well-known actress admired by both Strindberg and Lindberg, and would later be involved with Lindberg’s attempt to establish a People’s Theatre in Stockholm.

Stenhammar’s most comprehensive statement on the theatre, however, was his response to the 1909 questionnaire set up by *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, provided in full as Appendix 4. Beyond being an avid audience member, his response demonstrates that he thought extensively about the purpose of theatre, and how his ideal theatre might be constructed.

Stenhammar set his ideal theatre in opposition to Stockholm stages. One of the defining characteristics of Stenhammar’s declaration is its tone of local pride, tapping into Gothenburg’s established rivalry with Stockholm. He cast Gothenburg in such a positive light that his response sometimes reads as something of a propaganda piece. His choice of

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<sup>44</sup> ‘ett levande teaterintresse’, ‘mera än bara avkoppling.’ Wallner, *Stenhammar Vol. III*, 323

<sup>45</sup> ‘Egentligen skulle jag ha gått på Filharmonins generalrepetition idag och hört Nikisch göra Beethovens femte symfoni, men jag orkade inte höra musik. Det är hemskt, men sant. I går afton var jag på Deutsches Theaters Kammerspiele och såg ett utomordentligt tjugigt och stilfullt uppfört Molièrestycke och en något för bråkig och larmande Shakespearekomedi’, 04/12/1910. ‘jag hade annars tänkt slå ett rekord genom att ha varit över en vecka i Stockholm utan att gå på teatern någon gång’, 06/11/1913, quoted *ibid.*, 323

language displays an acute awareness of the newspaper's audience, arguing that the existence of a theatre — and how it would be run — was of utmost importance for local identity. Throughout his piece he called Gothenburg a 'leading city', with the potential to hold 'a leading position in the country's cultural life',<sup>46</sup> and used Stockholm as a point of comparison by which Gothenburg was able to define itself. Stockholm was decadent, corrupt, and elite, whereas Gothenburg was practical, honest, and inclusive. This is best demonstrated by his description of the Royal Theatre in Stockholm, and in comparison how he envisaged a theatre in Gothenburg being built. Having produced a damning critique of Stockholm's opera, he then turned his attention to the theatre:

Finally, Stockholm has the Dramatic Theatre. Shining white and gilded, expensively decorated and adorned, so that a poor wretch feels ashamed of his not-so-newly-pressed informal suit when he steps inside. The house cost nearly seven million, a million was certainly wasted on its adornment with artwork ... Because the auditorium has a relatively limited number of seats, to keep the books balanced the prices have to be kept at a rate that can hardly be called popular ... But we did not dream of our national theatre in this way ... Our theatre will be big, so that there are seats — and cheap seats — for many, the house will be erected simply and without obtrusive finery, so that even the lowly in society dare venture into it.<sup>47</sup>

Stenhammar's attitude towards Stockholm parallels what Lindberg was attempting to achieve. Both practitioners set themselves against more established institutions, portraying themselves — and their city — as the audacious outsiders who represented a more genuine, no-nonsense alternative to the profligate waste of the monied bourgeoisie.

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<sup>46</sup> 'föregångsstad', 'en ledande ställning i landets kulturlif.' Wilhelm Stenhammar: 'Göteborgs teaterfråga: En enquête', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, 01/12/1909

<sup>47</sup> 'Stockholm har slutligen Dramatiska teatern. Skinande hvit och förgylld, dyrbart smyckad och puntad, så att en fattig stackare skäms för sin icke alldeles nypräссade kavajkostym, när han skall stiga där in. Bortåt sju millioner har huset kostat, en million är visst nedlagd endast på dess prydnad med konstverk ... Då åskådarerummet har ett ganska begränsat antal platser, måste man för att få affärerna att gå ihop, hålla biljettpriser, som svårligen kunna kallas populära ... Men ändå. Inte drömde vi oss nationalteatern på det sättet ... Stor skall teatern vara, så att där blir plats, och billig plats för många, enkelt och utan prålände grannlåt skall huset resas, så att äfven de ringa i samhället skola våga sig därin.' *Ibid.*

Geography played an important part in this self-identification. Association with local landscapes and characteristics was an important part of Swedish composers' reception and conception of themselves — as Gabriel Bladh writes, at the end of the nineteenth century 'Because of Sweden's political position ... there was little need for self-assertion toward other nations ... processes of identity-formation were directed to the provinces ... instead of to the national level.'<sup>48</sup> Local loyalties replaced national nationalisms, and given the prominence of the arts and cultural heritage in the creation and preservation of regional identity, the theatre question became a question about local identity.<sup>49</sup> For the shipping city on the country's west coast, pragmatism and healthy vitalism were indispensable attributes of their local identity, opposed to the decadent capital. Stenhammar wrote that Gothenburg should sort its theatre question in a manner that was 'dignified and simple, calm and earnest'<sup>50</sup> to set an example to the rest of the country, encapsulating the city's identification with a sensible and unsentimental approach.

Related to this stance was the idea that the theatre should be accessible to as many members in society as possible. As quoted above, Stenhammar wanted the ticket prices to be kept as affordable as possible. But audiences were not his only concern. Additionally, his was a vision of a community-run theatre. Regarding the theatre's organisation, he wrote that he did not have the expertise to judge whether the municipality should intervene, but in any case he preferred a less directed mode of theatrical management. Stenhammar's plan for the

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<sup>48</sup> Gabriel Bladh: 'Selma Lagerlöf's Värmland: A Swedish *Landskap* in Thought and Practice', *Nordic Landscapes: Region and Belonging on the Northern Edge of Europe* ed. Michael Jones & Kenneth R. Olwig (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), pp. 220-250, 222. Although *province* is not a direct translation of the Swedish *landskap*, Bladh elides the two in this chapter.

<sup>49</sup> Kenneth R. Olwig & Michael Jones: 'Introduction: Thinking Landscape and Regional Belonging on the Northern Edge of Europe', *Nordic Landscapes*, pp. ix-xxix, xi

<sup>50</sup> 'värdigt och enkelt, lugnt och med allvar.' Stenhammar, 'Göteborgs teaterfråga'

Gothenburg theatre was that citizens should 'each contribute according to his ability',<sup>51</sup> favouring a collective method of organisation over municipal leadership.

He did not, however, offer any practical solutions for how this organisational structure might work in practice. Wallner writes that Stenhammar's post was 'more realistic'<sup>52</sup> than responses such as Tor Aulin's, but this is somewhat overstating Stenhammar's case. While he showed an astute awareness of the local conditions, having worked as leader of the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra since 1906, he offered none of the concrete suggestions that Aulin put forward. Aulin had worked at the Royal Theatre in Stockholm and had co-founded the Gothenburg Orchestral Association as well as the Stockholm Concert Association, so had a wealth of experience working in and establishing professional institutions before he moved to Gothenburg in 1909 to lead the Symphony Orchestra alongside Stenhammar.

Subsequently Aulin's response to the questionnaire was considerably more practical than Stenhammar's largely idealistic proposals. Where Stenhammar argued that the theatre should be built cheaply and run by the local populace with little semblance of a plan for how this would be achieved, Aulin wrote that 'The city of Gothenburg should build the house and primarily be in charge of the theatre business through a city-appointed executive committee, which appoints artistic leaders as well as the entire staff paid by the city.'<sup>53</sup> While Aulin agreed that the Gothenburg theatre should reject the models represented by the capital city, he acknowledged that Stockholm would have an important role to play in keeping the theatre's finances afloat. In order to counteract the issue of Gothenburg's population being too small to reliably sustain a full-time theatre, Aulin suggested that the company should

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<sup>51</sup> 'Vi måste ... bidra hvar efter sin förmåga.' *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> 'mera realistiskt'. *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> 'Bör Göteborgs stad bygga huset och i första hand ha ledningen av teaterverksamheten genom en av staden utsedd direktion, som tillsätter konstnärlig ledare, liksom hela personalen avlönad av staden.' Tor Aulin: 'Göteborgs teaterfråga: En enquête', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, 01/12/1909

tour to Stockholm and other cities for eight months of the year, 'during which time the Gothenburg public is given the opportunity to get acquainted with Stockholm, Norwegian and Danish, even German acting.'<sup>54</sup> By contrast, Stenhammar's financial solution was simply to pay actors less, a solution again resting upon his maligning of Stockholm:

We will probably not be able to offer our theatre members fees equivalent to those that they can get in the capital, where the art and its execution are too corrupted and distorted for speculative purposes. But we will make it in such a way that we do not need to outbid Stockholm, we will attract the best and most serious to us by giving them artistic joy and belief in their work.<sup>55</sup>

This idealism and unshakeable belief in the power of artistic conviction characterises Stenhammar's attitude towards theatre in general. Stenhammar's conception of theatre was that it should be a place of edification, 'not a place of amusement, not an institution for temporary time-consuming distraction; but an art institution to pay attention to our language, for the refinement of emotion, for the awakening of thought, for elevation and for liberation from the monotony of everyday life.'<sup>56</sup> Consequently his choice of repertoire was motivated by the wish for the theatre to house 'all the ideal figures of high drama, which the human spirit created to refresh itself',<sup>57</sup> naming Sophocles, Shakespeare, Molière and Holberg among acceptable playwrights, as well as 'all good modern and, naturally, especially Swedish drama.'<sup>58</sup> Stenhammar emphasised that of all art forms, it was drama

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<sup>54</sup> 'under vilken tid Göteborgs allmänhet berredes tillfälle att i stället få göra bekantskap med stockholmsk, norsk och dansk, ja till och med tysk skådespelarkonst.' *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> 'Troligen kunna vi icka bjuda våra sujetter gager motsvarande dem de kunna gå i hufvudstaden, där konsten och dess utöfning alltför mycket snedvridits och korrumperats i spekulationssyfte. Men vi skola ställa det så, att vi icks behöfva öfverbjuda Stockholm, vi skola locka de bästa och allvarsammaste till oss genom att här bereda dem konstnärsglädje och arbetstro.' Stenhammar, 'Göteborgs teaterfråga'

<sup>56</sup> 'icke ett förlusteställe, icke en anstalt för tillfällig tidsfordrivande förströelse, utan en konstanstalt till vårdande af vårt språk, till känslans förädlande, till tankens väckande, till lyftning och till befrielse från hvardagslifvet enahanda.' *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> 'det höga dramats idealgestalter, som människoanden skapat sig själf till vederkvickelse.' *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> 'all god morän och naturligtvis företrädesvis svensk dramatik'. *Ibid.*

which was best able to provide 'healthy community spirit and strengthening nutrition.'<sup>59</sup> This claim for an aesthetic hierarchy needs to be read with the caveat that it appears within an article trying to convince readers of the necessity for building a theatre in Gothenburg, even in a period of economic hardship. Nonetheless, that Stenhammar viewed drama as nourishment for the soul is corroborated elsewhere in his writings, as documented in the 1909 letter quoted at the beginning of this thesis, in which he said that he had received a taste of artistic nourishment during his trips to the Intimate Theatre.

Having extolled the virtues of building a theatre in Gothenburg, Stenhammar finally turned to how the orchestra might fruitfully be able to collaborate with any theatrical enterprise in the city. He was quite clear that he wanted a partnership between the two institutions. Throughout the article he presented the Orchestral Association as an important predecessor for any theatre in Gothenburg, establishing their reputation as an artistic city:

At least in one area, Gothenburg has already managed to pave the way for a higher cultivation. What great significance the activity of our Orchestra Association has had overall should be able to be understood by everyone who sees in art something other than a momentary distraction. Even for the whole of Sweden this activity should be fruitful.<sup>60</sup>

Again, he used Gothenburg's orchestra to berate Stockholm, saying that their recent tour to the capital had provided an 'invaluable service' for Stockholm's musical life.<sup>61</sup> The new theatre, then, should build on the foundations laid down by Stenhammar and the Orchestral Association. Stenhammar argued that the two should work together for the greater good of

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<sup>59</sup> 'samhällssjälens sund och stärkade näring.' *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> 'Åtminstone på ett område däraf har Göteborg redan lyckats bana vägen för en högre odling. Hvilken stor betydelse vår Orkesterförenings värksamhet öfver hufvud har bör kunna inses af en hvar, som i konsten ser något än en ögonblikkets förströelse. Äfven för hela Sveriges land bör denna värksamhet blifva befruktande.' Stenhammar, 'Göteborgs teaterfråga'

<sup>61</sup> 'att gifva Stockholm gjort dess musiklif en ovärderlig tjänst.' *Ibid.*

the city and its people, with this passage coming close to offering practical suggestions for how this might play out in practice:

Gothenburg's theatre can and should be a cultural venue, in a precious atmosphere of beauty fully equal to the Orchestra Association — and in terms of the potential for public education, in my opinion, surpass it. Both sister arts will work hand in hand. The theatre will not play on concert afternoons and above all should not play too often. Four, at most five times a week should be sufficient ... The collaboration between the theatre and the Orchestra Association should be arranged for the benefit and advantage of both partners. The orchestra should be taken into the theatre's service to a large extent.<sup>62</sup>

Not only did Stenhammar view both arts institutions as a means of public education and improvement, but here he stated that the orchestra should learn from the theatre, going on to argue that the orchestra would benefit artistically from the theatre's presence. The role that Stenhammar envisaged the orchestra having in the theatre, however, was extremely specific. He cautioned that the city should 'beware' of setting up a standing opera, as it had too small a population to sustain it.<sup>63</sup> He wanted them to provide incidental music, but only of a particular type:

Personally I hope that we will do away with the obligatory, stylistically repulsive interval music in our theatre. But even without it the orchestra's role is poisoned where incidental music is to a greater or lesser extent prescribed, particularly in the classical literature, for which valuable music

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<sup>62</sup> 'Göteborgs teater kan och skall blifva en kulturanstalt, i ädel skönhetskult fullt jämbördig med Orkesterföreningen och i folkuppfostrande betydelse enligt min mening öfverlägsen denna. Hand i hand skola de båda systerkonsterna arbeta. Teatern skall icke spela på konsertaftnarna och bör öfver hufvud icke spela för ofta. Fyra, högst fem gånger i veckan torde vara fullt tillräckligt ... Samarbetet mellan teatern och Orkesterföreningen skall ordnas till fördel och båtnad för båda parterna. Orkestern bör i ganska stor utsträckning kunna tagas i teaterns tjänst.' *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> 'vi böra akta oss för att tänka på någon stående opera.' *Ibid.*

has been composed: *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Egmont*, *Antigone*, *Master Olof* etc.<sup>64</sup>

This comment gives considerable insight into Stenhammar's aesthetic preferences regarding incidental music. Besides intermission music, Stenhammar was also rejecting the practice of replacing or supplementing canonic incidental scores with pre-existing pieces of music that were not part of the original incidental music. Beyond signalling Stenhammar's appreciation of these staples of the incidental repertoire, this indicates that he believed that incidental music was most effective when composed specifically for the play in question. For Stenhammar, incidental music needed to be a *part* of the play, not separate and detachable from it, which shaped his own approach to incidental composition, discussed in detail below.

In 1909, then, Stenhammar's vision of an ideal theatre was remarkably similar to Lindberg's. He hoped for a theatre that was run by and for the Gothenburg population, a symbol of local pride that could be used as a means of defining themselves against Stockholm. But this theatre was not just for Gothenburg's benefit: Stenhammar hoped that putting Gothenburg on the theatrical map would act as an example to other cities to build their own theatres and concert houses. Diversifying Sweden's cultural map would decentre Stockholm, in the hope that Sweden would eventually have multiple artistic cities. Music and drama would be intertwined in this ideal theatre — the Orchestra Association would work in tandem with the

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<sup>64</sup> 'För min personliga del vill jag hoppas, att vi skola slippa den obligatoriska, stilvidriga mellanaktsmusiken på vår teater, men äfven den förutan är orkesterns medvärkan gifven i de många dramatiska verk, särskilt ur den klassiska litteraturen, till hvilken värdefull musik finnes komponerad, Midsommarnattsdrömmen, Egmont, Antigone, Mäster Olof m. fl., samt där scenmusik i större eller mindre utsträckning är föreskrifven.' This is a particularly convoluted sentence — the literal translation reads 'For my part personally I hope that we will do away with the obligatory, style-repulsive intermission music in our theatre, but even without it is the orchestra's role poisoned in the many dramatic works, particularly in the classical literature, for which valuable music has been composed, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Egmont*, *Antigone*, *Master Olof* etc., also where incidental music to a greater or lesser extent is prescribed.' I have altered the order and punctuation of the sentence to give greater clarity in translation. *Ibid.*

theatre, and perform the incidental music that had been written for the productions in question.

### **'A NORDIC SYMPHONY MOSTLY IN MINOR': MUSIC IN *AS YOU LIKE IT***

Stenhammar's score for *As You Like It* comprises twenty-four movements and an Intrada, and runs throughout the entire play, including songs, underscoring, and entr'actes (shown in Appendix 5). The entirety is scored for a combination of strings, winds, horns and trumpets, with the onstage actors providing the singers for movements seven, eleven, eighteen, and twenty-two. This was by far his most extensive incidental offering to date, significantly surpassing the three movements that he provided for his first collaboration with Lindberg, *Lodolezzi sjunger*.

The defining aspect of Stenhammar's score is how closely it is interwoven with the spoken text. As discussed above, Stenhammar had expressed vehement opposition to the practice of substituting incidental scores for other pieces not originally intended for the play in question. His own approach to composing incidental music explains the strength of his convictions on the topic. The interaction between actors and musicians is so precise that, as Wallner observes, 'If this was a strength for the individual production ... it made the music difficult to use in other productions at other theatres with other directors.'<sup>65</sup> Subsequently he argues that Stenhammar's music for *As You Like It* is a precursor for radio plays, his methods better suited to the exactitude required of music for radio dramas.

In an article published posthumously in 1954, Lindberg recalled Stenhammar's compositional process when writing the music for *Som ni behagar*. He wrote that he was often

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<sup>65</sup> 'Om detta var en styrka för den enskilda uppsättningen, kunde det ... göra musiken svårbrukbar för andra föreställningen på andra teatrar med andra regissörer.' Wallner, *Stenhammar Vol. III*, 364

present at the company's rehearsals, and additionally in the final week Stenhammar came 'with watch in hand'.<sup>66</sup> Given how much of the music was either in dialogue with the actors or playing while they were speaking, Stenhammar timed the actors to ensure that the music would fit exactly with their speeches. Throughout his manuscript there are often annotations which indicate times, and in many movements he wrote music that could be repeated for an indefinite period of time to allow for variations in how the actors performed on the night. Consequently, the manuscript score bears many of the marks of extensive rewriting and rearranging during the rehearsal process, and is difficult to ascertain which movements were used in the final event, even if they have cues written into the score. Movements 2a-c are indicative of this problem. The violin parts (Appendix 6) show that initially, four bars marked 'Presto' were meant to either accompany or come immediately after Duke Frederick's line 'You shall try but one fall' ('Ni skall blott försöka en gång'), 1.2.195.<sup>67</sup> A pause followed until Celia's line 'If I had a thunderbolt in my eye' ('Om jag hade en åskstråle i min blick'), 1.2.205, at which point the wrestle between Orlando and Charles was underscored, as well as the ensuing discussion, with the Duke's line 'Bear him away' ('Bär honom bort'), 1.2.209 interjecting between movements 2b and 2c, the latter marked in the score as 'ad infinitum 8:30', presumably meaning that the tremolo was repeated for eight minutes and thirty seconds. However this would be impossible if, as according to the score, a 'Presto' began with the Duke's line 'thou art a gallant youth' ('Du är likväl en hurtig ungling'), 1.2.218, only eight lines after movement 2c supposedly begins. This problem might have been solved by Stenhammar simply eliminating the Presto, as the violin parts seem to suggest was the case — in fact, although cued and scored, all of this music except movement 2c is crossed out in pencil, suggesting that it was removed during rehearsal and not used in the final performance. Lindberg and Stenhammar's music direction book (Appendix 7) gives

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<sup>66</sup> 'Med klockan i hand'. Per Lindberg: 'Wilhelm Stenhammar och Lorensbergsteatern', *Morgon Tidningen*, 24/01/1954

<sup>67</sup> All the references to *As You Like It* are in the format Act.Scene.Line.

little clarity: it states that in Act I sc. ii and iii, a combination of elements from movements one, two, and three were used, but does not clarify which, or in what order.

Does one, then, include movement two as part of Stenhammar's final score for the production? Or omit it as it is unlikely that it was performed in the final event? The answer depends on one's fidelity to either the score or the production — the Sterling recording of the music simply avoids this problem by eliminating movements two to five altogether (as well as movements nine, twenty, and twenty-one).<sup>68</sup> I have opted for a combination of both — the Appendix showing the layout of movements keeps all the movements that appear in Stenhammar's manuscript, but notes where it is unlikely that the movement was used in the production. Additionally I have acknowledged where it is difficult to determine a cue for a particular movement, and when I have made an assumption about where the music might have been placed. In these cases, Stenhammar's manuscript does not give a cue, and Lindberg and Stenhammar's music direction book is no less illuminating, or adds confusion. Due to the thesis's focus on the performance as event, however, I have limited my analysis of the production to the movements which were definitely performed. I have chosen to concentrate particularly on the songs, as these were marked out as highlights by multiple reviewers. Taking the route of the performance as event throws up another problem, however — the music direction book indicates that snippets of movements were used to punctuate the whole performance. In Act I sc. i, before movement two is cued in Stenhammar's manuscript, they note that the trumpets were required to perform 'variations ad lib [on the] wrestling theme from movement 2'.<sup>69</sup> According to the music direction book, Stenhammar's score does not provide complete information about what music was

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<sup>68</sup> *Wilhelm Stenhammar: Music for the Theatre*, Arvo Volmer / Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra (Sterling, CDS 1045, 2007)

<sup>69</sup> 'trumpetfanfaren varierande ad libitum brottningsfanfaren i n. 2 på scenen under trappan till vänster.' Per Lindberg & Wilhelm Stenhammar: 'Musikregimanus' (Musik- och Teaterbiblioteket, Stockholm, Wilhelm Stenhammar Collection)

performed where. Moments of improvisation and additional musical interjections embellished the performance in a sufficiently undocumented fashion that it is difficult to gain an accurate picture what music was heard when. Nonetheless this indicates the intricacy of Stenhammar's score, and reveals a great deal about the collaborative process behind the production.

The composer's role in *As You Like It* was therefore quite different to Sibelius's position in the productions examined in Chapters 2 and 3.<sup>70</sup> Sibelius was involved with those collaborations at a distance — he never met Strindberg, and was only involved with the final stages of the rehearsals for *Svanevit* because he decided to conduct the run. The 1926 production of *Scaramouche* postdated the composition of the work by thirteen years, and there is no evidence that Sibelius ever even saw the production, let alone being involved with the production process at any stage. Stenhammar, however, was present throughout the rehearsals for *As You Like It*, and could therefore be involved with the development of the stage, costume, and lighting designs. The extensive revisions made during rehearsal demonstrates that this was a far more collaborative process than for Sibelius, whose rehearsal scores have very few deletions and rearrangements, and certainly none as extensive as Stenhammar's. The overall result was a production with a remarkably consistent aesthetic, quite opposed to the concatenation of media in Poulsen's *Scaramouche*.

Even more than in the case of *Scaramouche* and *Svanevit*, therefore, Stenhammar's score loses most of its significance outside of the context of the 1920 production. This is not least because much of the score exists as snippets, rather than self-contained movements. The music was

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<sup>70</sup> In his essay 'Per Lindberg och den skapande musikern', Hilding Rosenberg also testifies to the intensely collaborative way in which Lindberg worked, including the composer in decisions about the aesthetic of the production overall as well as in musical questions. Hilding Rosenberg: 'Per Lindberg och den skapande musikern', *En Bok om Per Lindberg* (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1944), pp. 211-223

tailored for a specific purpose — to be in keeping with a performance designed to be popular, anti-academic, and built on intertextual reference. The text, gestures, and visuals were as central to Stenhammar's score as the notes he composed, constituting an integral aspect of the music's meaning.

### ***AS YOU LIKE IT AS POPULAR SPECTACLE***

Ahead of the first performance of *As You Like It*, Lindberg published an essay on the play in his theatre magazine *Mellanakt* ('Intermission').<sup>71</sup> He had set up the small publication in 1919 to give context and provide information about his performances. In this essay (provided in full as Appendix 8) he laid out a clear manifesto for his Lorensberg Shakespeare: it should be playful, spectacular, and above all accessible. In his bid to create this kind of production, his first concern was the music. The entirety of the essay's first paragraph discusses the music, saying 'We have ... newly composed music by Stenhammar.'<sup>72</sup> The sound of the production was foremost for Lindberg and he clearly expected it to be an attraction for the audience as well, presenting the play as an opportunity to hear a new score by the city's celebrated composer and conductor, mentioning his name from the outset. He continued that 'it is not just small solo numbers, songs, choruses, string pieces, dances, hunting songs, it is also accompanying music ... A whole little pastoral, densely interwoven with the poem.'<sup>73</sup>

Besides their shared principles on the theatre, choosing Stenhammar as the drama's composer was a shrewd (and convenient) publicity move, given his considerable standing

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<sup>71</sup> An abridged form of the essay was republished in *Göteborgs Morgon-Posten* and *Göteborgs Posten* two days before the premiere.

<sup>72</sup> 'Vi har ... nykomponerad musik av Stenhammar.' Per Lindberg: 'Som ni behagar', reprinted in *Lorensbergsteatern 1916-1934* ed. Bertil Nolin, pp. 144-147, 144. Henceforth cited as 'Lindberg, *Som ni behagar*'

<sup>73</sup> 'det är inte bara smärre solonummer, sånger, körer, strängospel, dans, jaktlåtar, det är också beledsagande musik till sonetter, madrigaler och litterärt stiliserade blankverstirader. En hel pastoral, tät inflätad i dikten.' *Ibid.*

within Gothenburg already in his role as conductor and artistic director of the Symphony Orchestra. Like Stenhammar, Lindberg was aware of how extensively the city's identity was connected to its reputation as a musical city. The unusually high number of references to music in *As You Like It* was one of the reasons Lindberg chose the text, stating that he would have liked to stage an opera, but instead opted for 'a musical piece with quite a bit of music.'<sup>74</sup> This was not lost on reviewers — Bäckström observed that 'The selection of *As You Like It* for the Gothenburg public is especially well calculated.'<sup>75</sup>

The primary goal for the music was to contribute to the spectacle of the production. The flamboyancy that Lindberg later stressed as being necessary for modern theatre is clearly evident in his staging of *As You Like It*, with enormous sets and highly stylised costume designs. The extravagance of the staging was mentioned in the essay, pointing out that the sets contained 'city and sea and mountains and woods and barn and ferry', the repeated 'ands' adding emphasis to the somewhat exhaustive list of scenery.<sup>76</sup> Stenhammar's music played a central role in this image of spectacle, both sonically and visually. After stressing the extensive nature of the incidental score, Lindberg drew attention to the spacing of the performers, explaining that 'The orchestra does not sit together in their usual places — they are spread around widely', with the effect that 'their music will sound as though from inside the forests and across the expanses.'<sup>77</sup> During the Intrada they had the trumpeters walk through the auditorium in costume,<sup>78</sup> exploiting the Lorensberg's rich acoustic, which Stenhammar had previously commented on when composing *Ett drömspel*. He wrote in

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<sup>74</sup> Lindberg, 'Som ni behagar', 144

<sup>75</sup> 'Valet av "Som ni behagar" är för Göteborgspublikens del särskilt väl beräknat.' Birger Bäckström: "Som ni behagar" på Lorensbergsteatern', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, 10/04/1920

<sup>76</sup> 'stad och hav och berg och skog och ladugård och feerier'. Lindberg, 'Som ni behagar', 145

<sup>77</sup> 'Orkestern sitter inte samlad på sin vanliga plats — den är spridd vida omkring och dess musik skall liksom tona inifrån skogarna och utöver vidderna.' *Ibid.*, 144

<sup>78</sup> Lindberg & Stenhammar, 'Musikregimanus'

November 1916 that it was 'a room where my music swims around, so I can only sit uncritical, happy, and bask in the wonderful sound.'<sup>79</sup>

This overt spatialising of the musical experience was part of Lindberg's attempt to create the collective audience immersion that he deemed central to the experience of modern theatre. The placement of the musicians was later picked up by the critics, who were in agreement that it was the music which created the sense of an expansive forest and enhanced (or perhaps generated) an atmosphere of jubilant theatrical extravagance. Ejnar Smith spoke of how 'The party was blown in by the green-clad trumpeters from the side of the auditorium; they sang out their last fanfare into the air before the scenery's red velvet draperies', and that the 'expanses' of the first scene 'made this feeling of living: during the hunters' horns sound hunting dogs across the stage.'<sup>80</sup> Another rapturous reviewer wrote that the trumpet fanfares characterised the mood of the entire production, giving it 'a triumphal atmosphere, a proud tone of victory and festival.'<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, this author recorded that the overall impression left by the production was sonic, concluding their review with the observation that 'Even at the time of writing the hunting chorus and horn calls ring in my ears, mocking laughter and languorous sighs, the whole of Shakespearean drama's peerless melody. I believe that they might continue for a long time yet.'<sup>82</sup> For both director and critics, the audience experience

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<sup>79</sup> 'ett rum, där min musik simmar omkring, så jag bara sitter kritiklöst lycklig och lapar i mig den underbara klangen.' Wilhelm Stenhammar quoted in Wallner, *Stenhammar Vol. II*, 245

<sup>80</sup> 'festen blåses in av grönkädda trumpetare från åskådaresalens sidor; de sjunga ut sin sista gälla fanfar framför scenens röda sammetsförlåt ... Redan den första scenvisionen över viddens gör de denns känsla levande: Under jägar hornets klang jaga hundar över scenen.' Ejnar Smith: "'Som ni behagar": En Scenstudie', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 20/04/1920

<sup>81</sup> 'en triumfstämning, en stolt ton af seger och högtid.' "C. R. U-s": 'Som ni behagar, Lorensbergsteaterns premiär på Shakespeares lustspel', *Göteborgs Dagblad*, 10/04/1920

<sup>82</sup> 'Ännu i skrifvandets stund klingar i mina öron jägarkörer och valdthorn, glickande skratt och smäktande suckar, hela det shakespearska dramats oförlikneliga melodi. Jag tror, att de komma att följa länge än.' *Ibid.*

offered by Lindberg's modern theatre was centred around music — and in this case, specifically around sounds associated with hunting.

The critical consensus was that the music contributed significantly to creating a synergy between audience and players. But this was far from the only factor — Lindberg elucidated in his publicity essay the importance of creating a close relationship between cast and spectators by a number of means. He mentioned that the play itself 'demands an entirely special, gracious but undaunted, connection between the actors and the audience!'<sup>83</sup> Through its self-conscious theatricalisation of human existence in moments such as Jaques's seven stages speech, *As You Like It* textually dismantles the fourth wall.<sup>84</sup>

Figure 3: Touchstone and the Pages



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<sup>83</sup> 'krav på en alldeles speciell, graciös men oförfärad, förbindelse mellan spelande och publik!' Lindberg, 'Som ni behagar', 145

<sup>84</sup> According to Juliet Dusinberre, 'The play creates a special relationship with its audience, who become not just watchers but participants.' Juliet Dusinberre: 'Introduction', *As You Like It* (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2006) 61

Lindberg capitalised on this with his staging, placing many of the scenes in front of the curtain, as shown in Fig. 3 in the scene with Touchstone and the pages in Act II sc. iii. Lindberg also stated that the 'wide staircase over the orchestra pit' was to increase the proximity of the audience to actors, such that it felt as though they were engaging in 'a little closer relationship with us.' He cited stagings during Shakespeare's lifetime as a precedent for this, as some scenes would have been performed 'in front of the actual stage area'.<sup>85</sup> Aware that in doing so he could well be accused of the 'ethnographic imitation or novelty hunting' that he criticised in others, he was at pains to stress that he was not adopting this practice for effect but 'to emphasise for each and all the piece's own character of — *theatre!*'<sup>86</sup> In other words, the adoption of this particular aspect of historical practice was for the purpose of expressing the 'distinctive rhythm and tone' of *As You Like It* specifically, not as a general exercise in recreating Elizabethan staging.

Lindberg described the aesthetic of the production as 'simple ... easy and obvious', but the most advanced theatre technologies available were employed to create the impression of straightforwardness. The production sported what is now face lighting, which had never been used before in the Swedish theatre. Bäckström shrewdly pointed to this contradiction between end and means, saying that Lindberg's was a distinctly 'aware naivety', and that 'Lindberg has, if the expression is not too trivial, wanted to make the play in to a society spectacle ... Naturally he comes in to conflict with his own starting point when he simultaneously uses every opportunity given to him by modern technology.' Nonetheless, he had nothing but praise for the production, saying that 'such an inconsequence is of course

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<sup>85</sup> 'en stor bred trappa över hela orkesterplatsen', 'i litet närmare förbindelse med oss', 'framför det egentliga scenområdet'. Lindberg, 'Som ni behagar', 145

<sup>86</sup> 'det skulle kunna understryka för varjom och enom styckets egen karaktär av - teater!' *Ibid.*

inevitable and generally speaking he has used his resources with [a] good sense of style.’<sup>87</sup> Lindberg himself had no qualms about this inconsistency, using the novelty of the lighting design to sell the play as a spectacle. Both director and reviewers acknowledged that the naïve presentation of the play was at odds with the complex technologies used. Lindberg went in to detail about how the light worked, saying that the new design was necessary to build a closer relationship with the audience:

But when we come near to You, we must come to light! And as no stage lighting so far been found out there with You, we have had to build a large new light source inside the salon over Your heads.  
(As all truly good, this chandelier is good for all: the audience gets brighter during the entr’actes, the figures on the steps get light on themselves and additionally — the most important thing (for such egotists are stage’s children) — the actors on the stage can become better illuminated.)  
This new light source represents the first completed trial in Sweden for something that in the jargon would be called the *frontal local light*. We speculate to take the patent!<sup>88</sup>

The effusive rhetorical style of this *Mellanakt* article was part of Lindberg’s systematic cultivation of an image of youthful exuberance. Tomas Forser calls Lindberg’s writing the ‘conviction of that which has not yet experienced any large setbacks.’<sup>89</sup> There is certainly an element of this to it, but the writing style filled with excessive exclamation marks and knowing asides is better explained as a deliberate marketing decision to set the tone for the production’s naïve aesthetic. Lindberg and his supporters presented his form of theatre as

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<sup>87</sup> ‘Naturligtvis kommer han i strid med sin egen utgångspunkt då han samtidigt använder varje chance som den moderna tekniken ger honom ... en sådan inkonsekvens är ju ofrånkomlig och i stort sett har han använt sina resources med god stilkänsla.’ Bäckström, ‘“Som ni behagar” på Lorensbergsteatern’

<sup>88</sup> ‘Men när vi nu träda fram till Eder, måste vi komma i ljus! Och då intet scenljus hittills funnits där ute hos Eder, ha vi måst bygga en stor ny ljuskälla inne i salongen över Edra huvuden. (Som allt verkligt gott, är denna ljuskrona god för alla: publiken får ljusare under entreakterna, figurerna på trappan få ljus över sig och dessutom — det viktigaste (ty sådana egoister äro scenens barn) — skådespelarna inne på scenen kunna bli bättre belysta.) Denna nya ljuskälla betecknar det första genomförda försöket i Sverige till något som på fackspråk skulle kallas *frontalt lokalljus*. Vi spekulera på att ta patent!’ Lindberg, ‘Som ni behagar’, 145

<sup>89</sup> ‘övertygelsen hos den som ännu inte erfarit några motgångar.’ Forser, 124

the revitalising force needed to sweep out the conservatism of the older theatres. The almost breathless enthusiasm that characterises the *Mellanakt* article is entirely in keeping with this image, going beyond the differences in style that one might expect when viewing a piece of writing at a hundred years' distance. Additionally, it contributed to the interpretation of *As You Like It* that Lindberg was promoting, 'a playful story for all lovers.'<sup>90</sup>

Lindberg establishing *As You Like It* as an appeal to younger theatre-goers set a precedent for his later reception. Lindberg invested time in teaching student and amateur theatre companies to the extent that by 1922, when he staged *Romeo and Juliet*, modern theatre was, in some circles, colloquially associated with what is now recognised as theatrical outreach, particularly aiming to reach younger audiences who would not otherwise attend the theatre.<sup>91</sup> Shakespeare performances, beginning with *As You Like It*, were fundamental to Lindberg's student programming, Bäckström's review of *Romeo and Juliet* stating that 'Undeniably the [Lorensberg] Shakespeare evenings stand in a league of their own ... A person who has some contact with the youngest generations of theatre visitors knows ... what these five/six Shakespeare evenings mean for them. They have provided a stimulating contribution in their lives which one absolutely shouldn't undervalue.'<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> 'en lekfull saga för alla älskande.' Lindberg, 'Som ni behagar', 147

<sup>91</sup> The vogue for 'social art' and arts education would result in the establishment of the Riskförbundet för bildande konst (The State Association for Educative Arts) in 1930. Widenheim, 80

<sup>92</sup> 'Onekligen stå också Shakspereställningarna [sic.] i ett rum för sig ... Den som har någon kontakt med den yngsta generationen av teaterbesökare vet ... vad dessa fem, sex Shakspeareaftnar betytt för dem. De ha varit en stimulerande insats i deras liv som man absolut icke bör underskatta.' Birger Bäckström: 'Romeo och Julia på Lorensbergsteatern', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, 08/02/1922

## *AS YOU LIKE IT* AS ANTI-ACADEMICISM

Beyond the effects created within the performance itself, Lindberg's publicity essay elaborated on *As You Like It*'s ability to appeal to contemporary audiences through the simplicity of its text. He foregrounded an image of Shakespeare as the layman's poet, penning the lives of ordinary people. His summary of the play was that it 'does not portray some big events. It is simply a theatre piece, in the pastoral style and written for a wedding party, to the young lovers' delight!'<sup>93</sup> His actual appreciation of the text seems to have been much more multi-faceted, hinting briefly that 'of much more is told. Of culture diseases, of cunning, cruelty, betrayal ... Exultant joy and overarching melancholy go side by side.'<sup>94</sup> But within this essay, Lindberg did not choose to rest on Shakespeare as philosophical extemporiser. Instead, he presented *As You Like It* as the comic result of 'his [Shakespeare's] happiest time', among the comedies which 'generation after generation, have been one of mankind's best sources of joy.'<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, he drew parallels between Shakespeare's audiences and his own, writing that they were 'just like ourselves, only more cheerful, more defiantly happy, more full of life's delightful adventure.'<sup>96</sup> The publicity image of Lindberg's *As You Like It* was a truly restorative Shakespeare, presented as something of a cultural balm for the post-war years.

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<sup>93</sup> 'skildrar icke några stora händelser. Det är rätt och slått ett teaterstycke, i herdestil och skrivet för en bröllofsfest, till de unga älskandes glädje!' Lindberg, 'Som ni behagar', 146

<sup>94</sup> 'om mycket annat berättas det. Om kultursjukdomar, om lömskhet, grymhet, svek ... Jublande glädje och överblickande vemod går sida om sida.' *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> 'Åren kring 1600 är hans lyckligaste tid', 'generation efter generation, varit en av mänsklighetens bästa glädjekällor.' *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> 'Människor — alldeles lika oss själva, bara mera jublande, mera trotsigt glada, mera, fyllda av livets ljuvliga äventyr.' *Ibid.*, 145

This perception of Shakespeare was consistent throughout Lindberg's writings, and in keeping with other practitioners such as Anton Stanislavsky, of whose work Lindberg was aware. In a letter to Lucien Besnard in July 1897, Stanislavsky wrote that:

It was Ben Jonson, not Shakespeare, who loved high-flown emotion, preciousity, pasteboard and pseudo-theatrical effects ... He ridiculed Shakespeare for having a penchant for everyday characters ... Shakespeare is life itself, he is simple and hence understandable by all. But if you pick away at his every word and search out the various sagacious meanings, Shakespeare will lose his brilliance, passion, beauty ... and remain a boring philosopher and raisonneur, of interest only to scholarly specialists.<sup>97</sup>

While the two are far from identical, the influence of the Russian director on Lindberg is evident.<sup>98</sup> Lindberg repeatedly referred to Shakespeare as an example of one of the first practitioners of popular theatre and for both directors, Shakespeare needed rescuing from 'scholarly specialists', who were ruining him with overtly academic productions that had none of the 'impulses' which Lindberg valued.

The visual design choices made for *As You Like It* were motivated by a rejection of historically informed, academic theatre. The set and costumes, designed by Knut Ström, drew on a variety of influences from different time periods, eschewing any sense of concrete periodisation, as in the realist productions that Lindberg so despised. As Isaac Grünewald put it, 'All simple realism was excommunicated'<sup>99</sup> — the visual aspects of the production referred to an eclectic mix of eras, often appearing on stage simultaneously. Although many of the costumes (particularly those of the men of the court) are recognisably Elizabethan, they appear alongside Roman garb and what appears closer to a Regency dress at one point

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<sup>97</sup> Quoted in Senelick, *Stanislavsky*, 79-80

<sup>98</sup> Lindberg's comments on the Free Theatre also bear resemblance to Stanislavsky's remarks on the opening of the Moscow Art Theatre: 'We are trying to create the first rational, moral, publicly accessible theatre, and to this lofty goal we devote our life.' Quoted *ibid.*, 94

<sup>99</sup> 'Alla simpel realism bannlyst.' Isaac Grünewald: 'En mönstergill Shakspereföreställning — i Göteborg!', *Stockholms Tidningen*, 04/1920

sported by Celia (Fig. 4). Meanwhile, they are set against an enormous staircase and balustrade for the court scenes that is redolent of Italian Renaissance architecture (Fig. 5), and a small forest hut in Arden that is more reminiscent of rural Sweden than Medieval or Elizabethan England (Fig. 6). The stage and set offered a potpourri image of Shakespeare's England as seen through multiple sources.

This decision was not prompted by ignorance on the part of the creative team. Lindberg gave a series of lectures on Shakespeare, his notes for which indicate his extensive knowledge of Shakespeare's stage and the realities of theatre life in Jacobethan England.<sup>100</sup> The choice to

Figure 4: Adam, Rosalind, and Celia



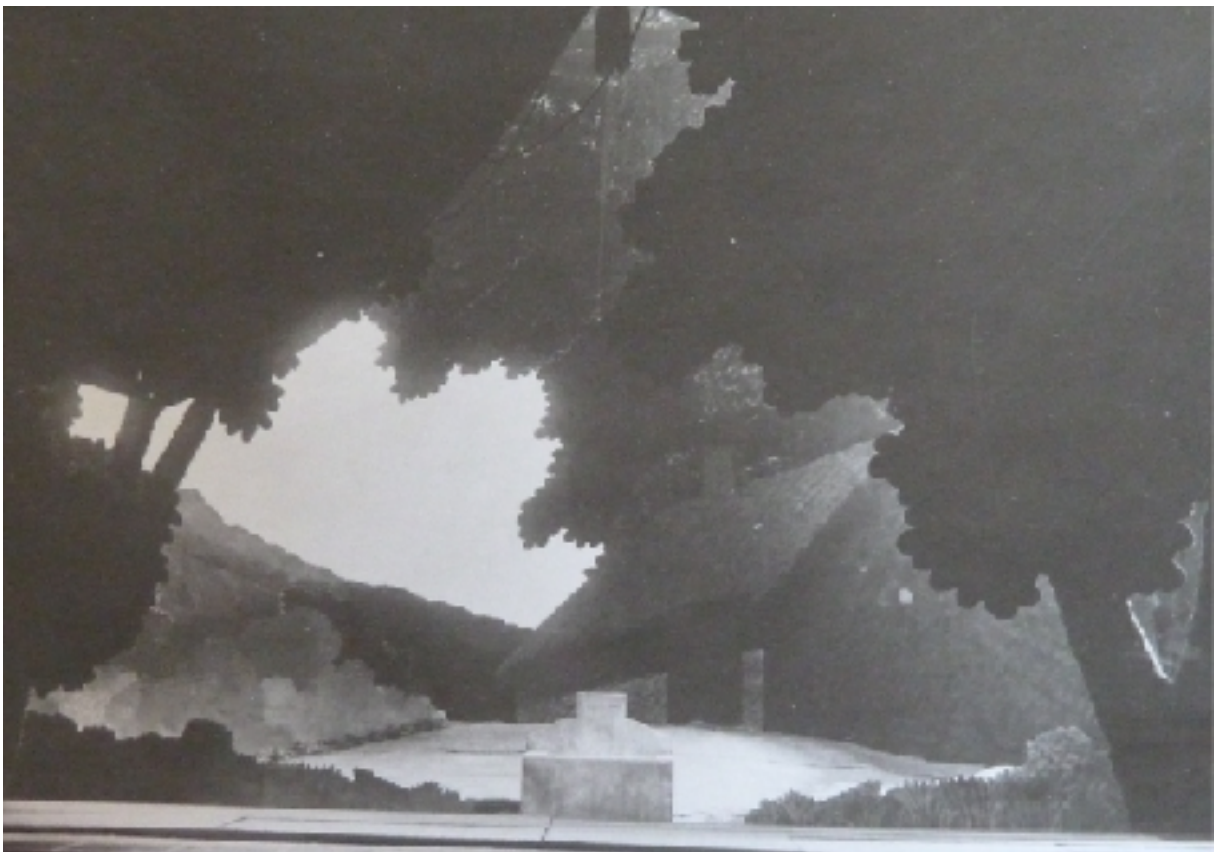
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<sup>100</sup> Per Lindberg: 'Shakespeare anteckningen' (Musik- och Teaterbibliotek, Gäddviken Archive, Per Lindberg Collection)

Figure 5: Duke Frederick's court



Figure 6: The hut in Arden



mix styles was deliberate. Lindberg's friend, Axel Romdahl, elaborated on how Lindberg decided on a stage style for each production, in an essay published in 1944:

First the director came to a decision about the essential content of the respective paragraphs, and mark the time and style in which it should be dressed. The election is by no means obvious. Should Hamlet be set in the Middle Ages or Renaissance ... *As You Like It* played in a Nordic court or in the South ... Per Lindberg worked intensively on this problem and sought different solutions until he came to one which seemed to him the best answer to the idea of the piece.<sup>101</sup>

As part of his process of seeking different solutions, Lindberg would consult with friends to get their input. A meeting with friends is, according to Romdahl, how *As You Like It* got its visual aesthetic:

He had initially thought to let *As You Like It* be played against a tapestry, a so-called forest tapestry from around 1600 — certainly a stylish arrangement, but perhaps even learned and artificial. Someone said "Titian", and pulled down the Titian volume of "Classical Art" from the bookshelf. Per Lindberg borrowed the book ... On that theme he built the scenes ... He was not seeking ... historical reenactment in the Meiningen style. He stood free in relation to cultural-historical substance ... It was the *piece's* style he wanted to evoke, not copy the *time's* style, and a learned specialist would probably have had cause to object to some of his costumes.<sup>102</sup>

Stenhammar adopted a similar approach to historical accuracy. The manuscript contains sketches with transcripts from French Baroque fanfares, which seem to have constituted Stenhammar's research for the Intrada, comprised entirely of trumpet fanfares and horn calls. The French calls provided the very loose basis on which Stenhammar based the

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<sup>101</sup> 'Först valdes efter den uppfattning regissören kommit till om respektive styckes väsentliga innehåll och prägel den tids- och stildräkt i vilken det skulle klädas. Valet är ingalunda självfallet. Skall Hamlet förläggas till medeltid eller renässans ... Som Ni behagar spela vid ett nordiskt hov eller i Södern ... Per Lindberg arbetade intensivt med dessa problem och sökte olika lösningar efter varandra till dess han kom på den som syntes honom bäst svara mot styckets idé.' Axel Romdahl: 'Lorensbergsteatern 1919-1923', *En bok om Per Lindberg*, pp. 37-80, 43

<sup>102</sup> 'Så hade han från början tänkt sig att låta Som Ni behagar spelas mot en dekoration av vävda tapeter, s.k. skogstapeter, från omkring år 1600 — säkert ett stilfullt arrangemang men kanske alltför lärt och konstlat. Någon sade "Tizian", och hämtade ned Tizian-bandet av "Klassiker der Kunst" från bokhyllan. Per Lindberg lånade boken med sig ... På det temat byggde han, när han lät gestalta de scenerier ... det var ej ... historisk skomakarerealism i Meiningarnes anda han eftersträvade. Han stod fri i förhållande till det kulturhistoriska stoffet ... Det var *styckets* stil han ville träffa, icke kopiera *tidens* stil, och en lärd specialist skulle nog haft en del att invanda mot vissa av hans kostymer.' *Ibid.*, 44. Emphases original.

Example 14a: *Som ni behagar*, 'Intrada', bb. 1-11<sup>103</sup>

le 2 a due (in från höger)

Trumpet in E $\flat$

Trumpet in E $\flat$

(3 o. 4 in från vänster)

E $\flat$  Tpt.

E $\flat$  Tpt.

Example 14b: Anton Bruckner, *Symphony No. 4*, mvt. 3, horn parts bb. 2-16<sup>104</sup>

Horn in F

Horn in F

Hn.

Hn.

sections for brass instruments, but in the final event the *Intrada* is closer to a paraphrase of the scherzo from Bruckner's *Symphony No. 4*, a work which would definitely have been familiar to Stenhammar.<sup>105</sup> The *Intrada* was a twentieth-century Swedish imagining of the English Elizabethan, as filtered through both German Romanticism and the French Baroque.

The overall result of this flexible approach to historically informed performance is as stylised as Ström's final designs. Multiple movements that directly follow each other employ

<sup>103</sup> All examples taken from the autograph score. Wilhelm Stenhammar: *Som ni behagar* (Musik- och Teaterbiblioteket, Stockholm, Wilhelm Stenhammar Collection)

<sup>104</sup> Anton Bruckner: *Symphonies No. 4 & 7 in Full Score* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 1990)

<sup>105</sup> Stenhammar particularly admired Bruckner, introducing Sweden to his music in 1900 with a performance of the Seventh Symphony. Given the forest and hunting associations of the Fourth Symphony scherzo, it would be a particularly appropriate point of reference for the incidental score.

contrasting idioms, for example movements eight and nine. The eighth movement (Ex. 15) evokes a Romantic, dream-like atmosphere, a decorative flute melody over a G major pedal in the strings evokes a Romantic, dream-like atmosphere, using a decorative flute melody over a G major pedal in the strings that is remarkably similar to the texture used by Grieg for the opening of his incidental music to *Peer Gynt*. This is the first music heard throughout the play that introduces the idea of the forest as a possible site of erotic encounter, and the opening of the flute melody is developed for movement thirteen, in Orlando's love-poetry scene. The succeeding movement, however, uses a Baroque topic, scored for an oboe melody over a walking bass (Ex. 16). The walking bass is particularly evocative: movement nine was used for sc. iv and vi in Act II, accompanying Rosalind, Celia, Adam, and Orlando's entry into the forest declaring that they are weary and in need of food, the bass line expressing their fatigue and melancholy. As with Ström's visuals, Stenhammar's score does not evoke a particular era, but instead adopts whichever style he felt was most appropriate to the scene in question.

Example 15: *Som ni behagar*, mvt. 8, bb. 12-19

The musical score for Example 15, 'Som ni behagar', measures 12-19, is presented in two systems. The top system includes the Oboe, Viola, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The Oboe part is marked 'dolce espressivo' and features a decorative melody with a trill at the end. The strings are marked 'Con sordino' and 'p pizz.' (piano pizzicato). The bottom system includes the Oboe, Viola, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The Oboe part continues the melody with a trill. The Viola parts are marked 'arco' and play a rhythmic accompaniment. The Violoncello and Double Bass parts play a walking bass line.

Example 16: *Som ni behagar*, mvt. 9, bb. 1-12

The image displays a musical score for Example 16, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system includes staves for Flute, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The second system includes staves for Flute (Fl.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Db.). The score is marked 'Andante' and 'dolce espress'. It features various musical notations including triplets, sextuplets, and dynamic markings such as *p*, *ppp*, *dim*, and *cresc*. The Flute part in the second system includes a trill. The string parts in both systems are primarily sustained notes with some rhythmic patterns.

At a much later point in the score, the song 'It was a lover and his lass' ('Pagernas visa', Act V sc. iii, Ex. 17), Stenhammar has adopted another style again. This time the tone is quite different: in F major with flattened-seventh inflections, a highly repetitive verse structure that mainly fluctuates between chords I and vi, and employing a harp for the only time in the entire score. This setting was perhaps tongue-in-cheek — the close of the play appears to have been delivered with a sense of humour that was largely missed by the reviewers. Both Bäckström and Edvard Alkman took issue with the final scene, particularly the cupids played by small children. They particularly objected to the children carrying torchlights, which they felt both detracted from the couples on stage, and illuminated the puttees ('puttis') that the children were wearing, garments more associated with the military than cupids — puttees are hand-woven bandages wrapped around the legs that were worn by

soldiers in India. Dressing the cupids in faux-army garb was presumably meant to be a humorous slant on the jollity of the final scene, a nod to the various tensions left unresolved when the curtain falls, such as Phoebe's enforced marriage to a man she despises — a situation which is more likely to end in conflict than the matrimonial harmony suggested by the final scene. With this in mind, we need to dig deeper into Shakespeare's text to contextualise Stenhammar's setting of the Page's song. Immediately after they have finished singing, the fool Touchstone immediately criticises them:

TOUCHSTONE: Truly, young gentlemen, though there was no great matter in the ditty, yet the note was very untunable.  
1 PAGE: You are deceived, sir, we kept time, we lost not our time.  
TOUCHSTONE: By my troth, yes. I count it but time lost to hear such a foolish song.<sup>106</sup>

This song is supposed to be deliberately trite, a moment of musical comedy — and Stenhammar lives up to the moment. But there is also a more serious point underpinning this song. A running theme throughout *As You Like It* is the purpose of music itself. In his first scene, Jaques debates with Amiens, who refuses to sing because his 'voice is ragged'. Jaques responds 'I do not desire you to please me; I do desire you to sing',<sup>107</sup> suggesting that he views music not as an entertainment but as an educational or edifying source, similar to Stenhammar's expressed views on the role of art. For Shakespeare, the purpose and status of music was a prominent debate during his lifetime: Thomas Lindley writes that 'despite the privileging of music as an image of cosmic harmony, in its practical manifestations it was embroiled in controversy', and Shakespeare often referred to these debates in other plays as well as *As You Like It*, including *The Merchant of Venice*.<sup>108</sup> Jaques openly defies the idea that

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<sup>106</sup> Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, Touchstone / 1 Page 5.3.40-46. Shakespeare, 330

<sup>107</sup> Amiens / Jaques 2.5.13-14. *Ibid.*, 211

<sup>108</sup> David Lindley: *Shakespeare and Music* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006) 8

Example 17: *Som ni behagar, 'Pagernas visa',* bb. 1-12

The musical score is arranged for Harp, two Alto Solo voices, Violin I, two Violas, Violoncello, and a second Harp. The first system (bb. 1-12) features a Harp introduction with dynamics *f* and *p*. The Alto Solo voices enter with the lyrics: "Med ett hej och ett ho och ett hej lo-li-lo". The instrumental parts include pizzicato for Violin I and Viola, and *f* for the Violoncello. The second system (bb. 13-24) continues the vocal lines with lyrics: "En un - ger - sven med kä - re - stan sin Med ett hej och ett ho och ett hej lo-li-lo Sig Bland gungan - de ax med grön - skan - de led Der sjunger den ung - er - sven och hans vif Der Ett Och därför man nyttje hvar stund\_ med id Ty". The instrumental parts continue with dynamics *f*, *pp*, and *p*. The third system (bb. 25-36) features a second Harp introduction with dynamics *p* and *pp*. The Alto Solo voices enter with the lyrics: "En värq - väll blid i den ljuf - ti - ga gil - je - tid Då fåg - lar - na slå tir - li - gång - ar uti en korn - åk - er in En värq - väll blid i den ljuf - ti - ga gil - je - tid Då fåg - lar - na slå tir - li - lade de un - ga tu - sig ned blomster som viss - nar är - vårt lif kärle - ken är vår blom - nings - tid". The instrumental parts include *dolce* for Violin I, *f* for Viola, and *f* for Violoncello. The score concludes with a pizzicato section for Violin I and Viola.

the primary purpose of music is to be 'pleasing to the ear', instead using it as a tool for critique and satire. Besides setting up a comic moment for Touchstone, then, the page's song contributes to the wider debate on the purpose of music by being deliberately juxtaposed with the more nuanced verses sung by Amiens. Through this setting, Stenhammar ultimately

sides with Jaques — when music is used purely for entertainment and is devoid of further substance it is, as Touchstone laments, of little use at all.

The one aspect that unites all the movements of the incidental score is that they are unashamedly diatonic — each movement has a clear key (shown in Appendix 5), and relies on repetitive structures and uncomplicated rhythms. Wallner describes Stenhammar's counterpoint study as being 'a strict exercise in the elements of melody and harmony ... the simplest means subordinated to the most inexorable rules: absolute diatonic melody, smallest possible use of leap, only consonant harmony, note against note.'<sup>109</sup> This could also be used as a description for the music in *As You Like It*, which moved away from the ethereal chromatic sonorities of *Ett drömspel*, more encapsulating the 'clear, glad, and naïve' music that Stenhammar described to Beckman. Reviewers applauded Stenhammar's approach, saying that his music contained 'forest life's free gladness and nature's jubilation',<sup>110</sup> and was 'exquisitely simple and unpretentious',<sup>111</sup> 'fresh and confident',<sup>112</sup> and 'strong and genuine'.<sup>113</sup> The overarching consensus was that the strength of Stenhammar's music derived from its simplicity, the author for *Hvar 8 Dag* saying that the production marked a new 'epoch in Swedish theatre history.'<sup>114</sup> 'The whole was wrapped in an atmosphere of music', another author ("C. R. U-s") enthused, 'a musical dreamery which lifted the events up a level

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<sup>109</sup> 'en sträng övning i melodikens och samklangens elementa ... de enklaste medel ställda mot de mest obönhörliga regler: absolute diatonisk melodik, minsta möjliga användning av språng, endast konsonerande harmonik, not mot not'. Wallner, *Stenhammar Vol. III*, 197

<sup>110</sup> 'skogslivets fria glädje och naturens jubel'. Smith: 'En Scenstudie'

<sup>111</sup> 'utsökt enkel och okonstlad'. Edvard Alkman: "'Som ni behagar": Ett par möjligheter till', *Göteborgs Posten*, 04/1920 ("E. A.")

<sup>112</sup> 'friskt och säkert'. Edvard Alkman: "'Som ni behagar", Gårdagens Shakspeare-premiär [sic.], *Göteborgs-Posten*, 10/04/1920 ("E. A.")

<sup>113</sup> 'stark och äkta'. "T. R-E.": 'Som ni behagar på Lorensbergsteatern'

<sup>114</sup> 'en epok i svensk teaterhistoria'. "RED": 'En märklig premiär på Göteborgs Lorensbergsteatern', *Hvar 8 Dag*, Årg. 22, 1920/1921

to a peak of unreality, a reality more real than “reality”.<sup>115</sup> For this reviewer, it was Stenhammar’s music which pushed the production into the post-realist territory that Lindberg was hoping to achieve.

*As You Like It*, then, helped set the tone for Lindberg’s future reception, and gave him the opportunity to increase his reputation by tackling a playwright of international renown. The manner in which he publicised the production bears all the markers of naïve art: his vision of *As You Like It* was popular, anti-academic, and his interpretation of the play rested on the interaction between a melancholy interior and playful exterior. The production is illustrative of Lindberg’s methods for trying to create a popular theatre which did not remain separate from the world that it existed in: a theatre that held a symbiotic role in a cultural and economic ecosystem, reaching beyond the walls of the building in which it was contained. Music was vital for conception, execution, and reception. In *As You Like It*, the incidental score had an especially elevated role given the prominence of the music in the text, Stenhammar’s reputation within Gothenburg, and Lindberg’s desire to advertise the play to a city of established concert-goers.

Stenhammar’s music both contributed to the popularity of the production and its perception as modern and anti-academic. As the next section will argue, the score also relied heavily on intertextual reference, the final marker of naïve art, building a dualism between joy and melancholy, simplicity and complexity, which characterises the entirety of the production. The sources that Lindberg, Stenhammar, and Ström referenced revolve around images of the hunt, a central theme in *As You Like It*. The Duke and his men enjoy hunting as a sport, but Jaques continually calls into question the humanity of killing for pleasure, continually

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<sup>115</sup> ‘Den hela var insvept i en atmosfär af musik, blef ett musikaliskt drömmeri som lyfte händelsernas plan upp till en höjd af överklighet — eller rättare öfververklighet, en verklighet verkligare än “verkligheten”. “C. R. U-s”, “Som ni behagar’

sympathising with the hunt's prey. Lindberg's production brings out this conflict, creating the production's dual aspect of being a 'simple' comedy in which 'much more is told'.

### *AS YOU LIKE IT AS NAÏVE THEATRE*

All the critics who reviewed Lindberg's production agreed that *As You Like It* was a play of two humours, displaying a simultaneity of frivolity and lugubriousness. The reviewer for *Göteborgs-Posten* labelled it 'a symphony ... a Nordic symphony mostly in minor, despite all the play's gaiety ... with much pain and anguish at the bottom ... It is the struggle between evil and good, between light and darkness.'<sup>116</sup> Shakespeare creates this doubleness through juxtaposing the court and forest, 'high' and 'low' culture, but primarily through opposing merry and melancholy world views, the latter represented primarily by Jaques. The focal point for the direct conflicts between these two outlooks is the hunt: for Duke Senior and his men the hunt is a source of machismo play, but Jaques condemns the sport as akin to murder. Stenhammar's score — and, more subtly, Ström's designs — drew on sources related to hunting, often where the hunter becomes the hunted, foregrounding Shakespeare's contrast between camaraderie and cruelty.

Our first introduction to Arden is through Duke Senior and his entourage. They immediately arrange a hunt after arriving in the forest, killing the natives of the place they claim to inhabit peacefully: the encroachment of court on country has severe consequences for those foreign to courtly customs. The Duke expresses mild remorse over the deathly outcome of their sport, saying 'it irks me the poor dappled fools, / Being native burghers of this desert city, / Should in their own confines with forked heads / Have their haunches gored.'<sup>117</sup> This is,

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<sup>116</sup> 'Det är en symfoni ... en nordisk symfoni mest i moll, trots all den spelande munterheten ... med mycken smärta och vända på botten ... Det är kamp mellan ont och gott, mellan ljus och mörker.' Alkman, 'Som ni behagar, Gårddagens Shakspeare-premiär [sic.]'

<sup>117</sup> Duke Senior, 2.1.21-24. Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 191

however, the extent of his contrition. Rather than call off the hunt he asks instead to be brought to Jaques, who is more sympathetic to the plight of the deer and is consequently 'full of matter', leading the Duke to comment that 'I love to cope him in these sullen fits.'<sup>118</sup> For the Duke, hunting offers an opportunity for philosophising — a somewhat hollow consolation for the prey.

Jaques, meanwhile, is first introduced to the audience while lamenting the death of a deer, condemning the behaviour of the Duke and his entourage. Amiens reports that 'most invectively he pierceth through / The body of country, city, court, / Yes, and of this our life, swearing that we / Are mere usurpers, tyrants and what's worse, / To fright the animals and to kill them up / In their assigned and native dwelling place.'<sup>119</sup> It is this despair at human behaviour that lies at the heart of Jaques's misanthropy, a world-weariness that he attributes to his extensive travelling, saying that his melancholy his 'the sundry computation of my travels, in which my often rumination wraps me in a most humorous sadness.'<sup>120</sup>

Shakespeare implies that Jaques' voyages have repeatedly lead him to witness displacement and violence, rather than finding a sanctuary from it — his scepticism stems from observing that humans are no more forgiving than the Duke elsewhere in the world.

The Duke's view on hunting stems from its historical association as a male sport designed to prepare soldiers for war and advertise their romantic eligibility. In a post-war context, however, such machismo loses its romanticism. By 1920, idealising an image of chivalrous, Middle-Age hunting culture and its concomitant displays of male bravado appeared dangerous at worst and foolhardy at best. Ignoring the deadly outcome of aggressive acts

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<sup>118</sup> Duke Senior, 2.1.68. *Ibid.*, 195

<sup>119</sup> 1 Lord 2.1.58-63. *Ibid.*, 194

<sup>120</sup> Jaques 4.1.17-28. *Ibid.*, 287

that are motivated by competition and designed to test strength, as the Duke does, leads only to death and destruction — as Lindberg's child-cupids in military wear suggest, arming a new generation for combat.

## SONGS

Of all the movements in Stenhammar's score, the songs seem to have made a particular impression on the reviewers. Almost unanimously, the reviews agreed that the songs most cogently expressing the dualism of a light-heartedness that knowingly conceals an underlying gloom, and that they were so successful because of the simplicity of Stenhammar's musical language. One of the rare ambivalent reviews criticised Stenhammar's score for not being extensive enough, but wished the whole score could have been of the same quality of the songs:

In the exquisitely simple and unpretentious fashion maintained by the songs ... more inspired by Jaques's melancholy than by the Arden forest's coolness, one got an impression of how intimately Stenhammar had penetrated into the drama's spiritual depths.<sup>121</sup>

The first song in the play is Amiens's 'Under the greenwood tree' (Act II sc. v), where he sings of a blissful conjoining of human and nature, the bird singing in harmony with the song's subject. In Shakespeare's text, this is a distinctly jovial, communal moment, with the rest of the Lords joining Amiens for the refrain. Stenhammar's setting, however, changes the mood entirely. The song is in E minor, introduced by an E minor horn call to take on a far more plaintive and melancholic tone (Ex. 18), under which the strings enter with a descending line to rest in E minor. The sudden distance created by the entry of the strings and singer gives the retrospective sense that the horn call is a memory or reminder of a

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<sup>121</sup> 'Av de i utsökt enkel och okonstlad viston hållan sångerna ... mera av Jaques melankoli än av Ardennerviddens kyla inspirerade ... fick man intryck av, hur intimt Stenhammar trängt in i dramats andliga djup.' Alkman, "'Som ni behagar": Ett par möjligheter till'

bygone age — the horn beckons from a different era to that playing out on the stage. Timbre and space are crucial here: the solo horn is isolated, and the way in which the players were dispersed during performance emphasises the regression of the horn into the background, physically and figuratively, giving way to the foregrounded singer and strings. This deceptively simple technique is used repeatedly throughout the score, physically delineating between the instrument groups to generate a sense of geographical and temporal distance. There is an implied distance from the chivalric Romantic ideal of the hunting forest — it is never quite abandoned, but exists in tension with the more critical perspective represented by Jaques, who constantly reminds the audience of humankind’s destructive effect on nature, rather than supporting the idea of synergy between the two.

Example 18: *Som ni behagar*, transition from mvts. 6-7

The musical score for Example 18 shows the transition from movements 6-7. It features five staves: Horn in F, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The Horn part begins with a melodic line in F major, 6/8 time, marked *p*, *dim*, and *ppp*. The string parts (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello) enter with a rhythmic pattern marked *p*.

The Swedish translation used for the second verse of ‘Under the greenwood’ supports this reading, as it differs slightly from Shakespeare’s. They read as follows:

Shakespeare: <sup>122</sup>	Hagberg: <sup>123</sup>	Translation:
Who doth ambition shun	Den som för bygdens frid	He who for the countryside's peace
And loves to live i'th' sun,	Försakar flärdens strid	Forsakes frivolity's battle
Seeking the food he eats	Som skördar sjelf och sår	Who reaps himself and sows
And pleased with what he gets,	Och nöjs med hvad han får,	And is satisfied with what he gets
Come hither, come hither, come hither!	Välkommen, välkommen till linden!	Welcome, welcome to the linden!

Referring to ambition as 'frivolity's battle' militarises the sentiment of the text, imbuing the song with a far more combative tone than previously. Furthermore, there is an emphasis on community coexistence that is absent in Shakespeare's text. Hagberg's translation of this verse changes the conceptual position of the song's subject, subtly altering the attitude, therefore, of the song's imagined speaker. Shakespeare's 'come hither' calls the subject *to* the forest — Hagberg's 'Welcome' implies that the subject is already *in* the forest. The song is transformed from an invitation to all who love simple living, to a conditional welcome to those who abide by the conditions laid out by the speaker. And these are explicitly tailored to a more communal goal — the peace of the countryside — than in Shakespeare's. In Stenhammar's setting, this is a moment where the instruments seem to narrate separately from the singer. Although Amiens is technically the speaker, with he and his group of Lords welcoming the subject to the linden, Stenhammar's setting renders it ambivalent as to whether the group that surrounds Amiens (and, indeed, Amiens himself) submit to the song's criteria. When the hunting horn interjects with an open fifth at the end of both verses, the accompaniment stops — the music falls into silence, and the conjoining of nature and man that Amiens sings of in the first verse is forestalled by the appearance of the hunting motif.<sup>124</sup> The recurrence of the horn serves as a constant reminder that the Duke and his entourage have brought precisely the opposite of local peace to the forest. Additionally, the Swedish for sow, *sår*, holds a double connotation, also meaning 'wound', associating with the

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<sup>122</sup> Amiens 2.5.33-37. Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 212

<sup>123</sup> William Shakespeare: *Som ni behagar* trans. Carl A. Hagberg (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerups, 1861) 226

<sup>124</sup> Practically, the pause between the first and second verses also allows for the dialogue between Amiens and Jaques.

image of the sequestered deer mentioned at the opening of Act II, and harking forward to the victim of the hunting group in Act IV.

Stenhammar's settings for Amiens's songs suggest a disjuncture between man and nature, a relationship built on violence rather than coexistence. The utopian forest lifestyle never truly existed, and it is this realisation that constitutes the 'pain and anguish at the bottom' of this production, the 'spiritual inner depths' of Shakespeare's play. Forest and city do not merge into a utopian vision in Lindberg's production. Instead, the veneer of idyllic accord masks destruction and misanthropy. For 'Blow, blow, thou winter wind', Stenhammar uses the horns in an identical fashion to 'Under the Greenwood', using the same melody to introduce, punctuate, and conclude the verses. Here, the text criticises 'man's ingratitude', comparing it unfavourably to the biting winter wind. Repeated recurrences of the 'Greenwood' horn calls remind of Jaques's condemnation of the Duke, connecting humanity's ingratitude to the attitude of entitlement indicated by hunting traditions.<sup>125</sup> Furthermore, the potpourri of historical influences imbues a lack of temporal specificity, inferring that the self-centred perspective adopted by hunters is not confined within any particular time period; conversely, it is perpetuated by continual nostalgia for a non-existent Golden Age.

## FORESTS

Shakespeare's text sets up the real-court/utopian-pastoral binary as a falsehood: utopia cannot be achieved through location. The very reason that utopia is, by its nature, unobtainable, is because it is not created by idolising industry or nature. *As You Like It* suggests that it is only possible to create utopias through compassion, peace, and kindness — wherever they are found — but these are attributes found wanting in humankind.

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<sup>125</sup> See Jaques 2:1:47-49. Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 193

In this regard, it is particularly apt that the play's setting is a forest, which can symbolise both utopia and dystopia. It is an understatement to say that woods and forests have proliferated in art and literature, and subsequently taken on multiple connotations and meanings across times and places. The forest was and is a polymorphous signifier, providing multiple generations with a powerful site for fear, comfort, and allegory. For Lindberg's *As You Like It*, therefore, in its ability to signal so much it offered a neutral ground — the forest is defined by the conduct of those who inhabit it.

This plurality is evoked by Stenhammar's score through his references to other works. The ninth movement is redolent of the second movement of Sibelius's incidental music for *Pelléas et Mélisande*. This is the prelude to Act I sc. ii, where Mélisande meets Golaud in the forest, opening with Golaud despairing that he will never be able to leave the woodland.

Maeterlinck's forest holds multiple and contradictory meanings: it is threatening and a site of violent sexual awakening as Mélisande recalls those who have harmed her. Conversely, it is also a place of sensuality, as Golaud comforts Mélisande and shows her kindness. By referencing Sibelius's music here, Stenhammar brings this duality to Arden — it is both workplace and retreat, site of compassion and rejection. Additionally, the minor key fanfares discussed previously are remarkably similar to Wagner's horn calls in Act II of *Tristan und Isolde*. As Monelle observes, the minor rendering of the hunting call sounds 'dysphoric',<sup>126</sup> and at this point in the opera the forest is both a place of concealment and of exposure, providing the lovers with the ability to pursue their forbidden love, as well as the opportunity for Melot to betray them. Stenhammar's forest references evoke multiple connotations, cementing the notion that the forest is neither more or less utopian than the court setting.

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<sup>126</sup> Monelle, 80

This is reiterated in Ström's designs for the various trees that are seen throughout the production. One irked reviewer complained that the trees on which Orlando hangs his verses were 'surely grotesque hawthorn trees' — 'Is this Arden's romantic forest, one asks oneself.'<sup>127</sup> For this critic, it was only the 'horns and hunting calls'<sup>128</sup> that signalled that the first scene in Arden was indeed a forest setting, the disjuncture between the musical and visual signifiers preventing Lindberg's Arden from being bucolic. This shifting image of the forest continues throughout the play: a group photo shows conflicting styles in the set design even within the same scene. As the Duke talks to his men, the lower half of the backdrop shows rolling hills and open fields that are remarkably lifelike, but they are framed by template-like trees that more closely resemble a child's drawing of a tree than anything remotely realistic (Fig. 7). In another scene, four drastically out of proportion trees stand in the middle of these fields, skewing the perspective. This time, the trees are distinctly impressionistic. As with the costumes, the constantly juxtaposed design styles draw upon the multiple connotations of the forest across various eras and geographies — in conjunction with Stenhammar's music it highlights the forest's semantic plurality rather than presenting it as a purely utopian setting.



Figure 7: The trees in Arden

## VOICES

As with any form of reconstructive reading, many aspects of this production are unavailable for analysis. The live nature of performance means that it will be subject to subtle variation at every incarnation — by necessity, analysing incidental music requires some generalisations and assumptions. Furthermore, non-textual elements remain beyond reach. Without wishing to fetishise the idea of ‘liveness’, there is a sense in which the ephemerality of the medium simply places some elements beyond analysis. Having accepted this, there is also a wealth of material available from this production that allows for non-textual elements to be included within an analysis. In particular, the reviews themselves are extremely revealing: they provide detailed descriptions of many of the scenes, and elaborate on the qualities of the production’s ephemera.

The most noticeable ‘absent’ element in this case was the sound of the actors’ voices which received particular emphasis from reviewers, highlighting their sonic quality above and beyond their function as bearers of semantic meaning. Styles of declamation had long been a source of debate with regard to modern theatrical practice, regarded as one of the markers between the old and new. One of the reasons that the actor and later director Andre Antoine was rejected from the Paris Conservatoire de musique et de déclamation in 1876 was because he performed with a ‘naturalistic’ voice rather than the heavily stylised vocal techniques preferred in pre-realist theatre. In the 1890s, Strindberg advocated for natural declamation, arguing that smaller theatres necessitated a change in performance styles. The limited size of the stage and auditorium meant that actors could speak in a ‘natural’ voice, unlike in larger theatres where ‘actors must strain their voices so that every intonation becomes false.’<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 128

Strindberg rallied against this, writing that ‘Speaking so that it “sounds like theatre” is something to be avoided.’<sup>130</sup>

Nearly fifty years later, vocal delivery was still a contentious topic. By the 1920s, naturalistic speech had been accepted as the norm, and it was this style that Lindberg wanted to reject. In his 1927 book *Regiproblem*, Lindberg wrote at length about the sound of the actors’ voices and wanting to displace naturalistic speech:

In a great deal of 19th century acting, a heavy emphasis was placed on declamation. Then the *realistic* actress, on the other hand, sought to move away from declamation to observation, reproduction, real accuracy. It became a victory of truth, honesty, differentiation. But there was no victory for beauty, expression, technical knowledge, artistic generosity and elevation. The education of the human instrument’s possibilities was neglected, especially the voice and the gesture.<sup>131</sup>

The emphasis for Lindberg the same as for the visuals and music: actors should be moved by their convictions and sense of artistry, rather than trying to strive for realistic accuracy when they spoke. Instead of naturalistic speech, Lindberg encouraged actors towards a more musical form of intonation.

Beyond Stenhammar’s score, then, there are other elements that contributed to the sonic style of the production. In his publicity essay, Lindberg talked about voices, saying that Shakespeare’s language has a ‘broad musical diction’, and emphasised that one of the main parts of the rehearsal process had been getting to grips with how to speak Shakespeare.<sup>132</sup> This aspect of the production’s sound is far more elusive than Stenhammar’s music — it’s very difficult to get a sense of how the actors’ voices might have sounded. But reviewers left their impressions of what they heard. For them, Lindberg’s abandonment of realistic speech

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<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 130

<sup>131</sup> Per Lindberg quoted in Wallner, *Stenhammar Vol. III*, 344

<sup>132</sup> ‘brett musikaliska diktion’. Lindberg, ‘Som ni behagar’, 144

was integral to the modernity of the production's sound. The art critic Ejnar Smith argued that it resulted in 'the language's romantic gallantry sounding not only of the Elizabethan time's "affected and forced jargon"', but instead Lindberg's more free-flowing approach meant that the language 'had freshness and rhythm.'<sup>133</sup> He also commented extensively on the vocal timbres of the actresses playing Rosalind and Celia:

Renée Björling's voice seems to have been at risk of forcing the sound unmusically hard, but this tendency did not dominate through the chiseled interaction with Celia, Dora Söderberg. Verse and rhythm of both voices matched in tone to one another — one senses an intensive work behind the dialogue's light movement.<sup>134</sup>

The women's voices are referred to as instruments, considered for their sonic qualities above and beyond their function as bearers of semantic meaning. By contrast, Smith was distinctly unimpressed with Olov Sandborg, playing Oliver, and Frans Öberg playing Charles. He said that their voices had too much 'realism' to work in Lindberg's 'arcadian scenery'.<sup>135</sup>

## VISUAL REFERENCES: TITIAN AND TASSO

Conversely, Smith also translated the scenery into vocal form:

One could imagine, that [in] the lagoons and sea in the distance faded around the city, there Tasso's echo through centuries sounded by gondolier's rhythms and fish-wives' monotone melodies from Lido [di Venezia] greeted the returning crafts with song.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> 'språkets romantiska galanteri klingade icke endast av den Elisabetanska tidens "affekterade och forcerade jargong", det fick friskhet och rytm'. Smith: 'Som ni behagar: en scenstudie', *Svenska Dagbladet*

<sup>134</sup> 'Renée Björlings stämman tyckes ha faran att vid forcering ljuda omusikaliskt hård, men denna benägenhet behärskades icke minst genom det mejslade samspelet med Celia, Dora Söderberg. Vers och rytm stämde de båda rösterna i ton till varandra — man anade ett intensivt arbete bakom dialogens lätta språng.' *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> 'verklighetens', 'arkadiska sceneriet'. *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> 'Man kunde inbillat sig, att laguner och hav i fjärran förtonade kring den stad, där Tassos eko genom sekler ljudit ur gondoliärernas rytmer och fiskarhustrurnas monotona melodier från Lido hälsade de återvändande farkosterna med sång.' *Ibid.*

Sound is used here both to exotica and familiarise: Tasso's distant poetry enters the conceptual present through an imagined landscape envisaged in sound, becoming an intensely personal experience for every listener. It is sound — imagined or real — that enlivens Tasso's and Shakespeare's texts.

Smith's reference to Tasso requires further discussion. Critics associated the play with Titian, Tasso, and Tintoretto, calling the production 'a painting by Tintoretto' and 'Titianesque'.<sup>137</sup> Clearly Lindberg's study of Titian's paintings was successful, the set designs managing to capture enough of Titian's style for reviewers to identify it as a source. But it is possible that the reviewers identified the play with these artists for conceptual reasons — Tasso was, after all, a poet not a painter, so Smith associating him with the play moves beyond identifying visual markers and into interpretation. If we are trying to identify what significance this production had in 1920 and how it might have been read, it seems valuable to speculate on what caused reviewers to make these connections, and what interpretative options present themselves as a result.

The one thing that connects the most famous works of Tasso, Titian, and Tintoretto is hunting. Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* (1581) contains extended passages involving hunting deer, and Titian's *Diana and Actaeon* (1556-9) and *The Death of Actaeon* (1559-1575) are based on the story in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in which Actaeon is transformed into a deer and slaughtered. The hunting symbolism in *As You Like It* may well have prompted the reviewers to make the connections that they did, with the observations that they made illuminating how Lindberg might have treated this symbolism. As with Stenhammar's music, the visual

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<sup>137</sup> "T. R-E.", 'Som ni behagar på Lorensbergsteatern', *Göteborgs Morgen-Posten*; "C. R. U-s", 'Som ni behagar, Lorensbergsteaterns premiär på Shakespeares lustspel', *Göteborgs Dagblad*; and Bäckström, "'Som ni behagar" på Lorensbergsteatern', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*

references used for the play point towards a critical stance towards the idealisation of chivalry and hunting culture, often using intertextual reference for satire and pastiche.

Parody is at the heart of Lindberg's *As You Like It*. The production was littered with satirical references, all of which made military heroism their subject. One of the few paintings a critic mentioned by name is Titian's *Portrait of Charles V* (1548), a painting in which Charles is portrayed as a hunting warrior, sitting astride an enormous crimson-clad horse emerging from a forest. Smith argued that John Ekman's portrayal of the Duke's brother, Frederick, appeared to have been modelled on this painting, and from Smith's description it seems that Titian's image of overtly masculine soldier-heroism was parodied throughout. Smith's verdict was that Ekman adopted an 'exaggerated caricature' for his portrayal, while another wrote that 'Ekman's tyrant [was] a very original phenomenon in his bloody absurdity.'<sup>138</sup> Clearly, Lindberg's Titianesque setting was not read as a direct homage. Reviewers identified critical distance between Lindberg's production and its sources, allowing for a satirical approach to the values immortalised in Titian's work.

Titian's *Diana and Actaeon* paintings, which are among his most famous works, are based on Book III of *Metamorphoses*. This tells the story of how the hunter, Actaeon, stumbles across Diana, the goddess of the hunt, while she is naked and bathing. Furious, the goddess transforms him into a stag, whereupon he is torn apart by his own hounds. The scene is set 'on a mountain, stained with the blood of many creatures' from Actaeon's hunt. The terms in which Ovid described both Actaeon's conception of hunting, and his subsequent demise, are particularly graphic: after his own hunt, he tells his friends 'our spears and nets are drenched with the blood of our victims', and vows to continue the hunt the next day. After Actaeon's encounter with Diana and subsequent transformation, Ovid narrates his death as follows:

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<sup>138</sup> 'hr Ekmans tyrann en mycket originell företeelse i sin bloddrypande löjlighet.' Anonymous: "En våldsamt framgång" på Lorensbergsteatern', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 12/04/1920

While they hold their master the whole pack gathers and they sink his teeth in his body until there is no place left to wound him. He groans and makes a noise, not human, but still not one a deer could make, and fills familiar heights with his mournful cries. And on his knees, like a suppliant begging, he turns his wordless head from side to side, as if he were stretching his arms out towards them ... They surround him on every side, sinking their jaws into his flesh, tearing their master to pieces in the deceptive shape of the deer.<sup>139</sup>

It is highly likely that the book on Titian which Lindberg used for his research would have contained these paintings, and the appropriateness of the imagery in these works may well have prompted Lindberg to commit to using Titian as an inspiration for the aesthetic of the production. By evoking this painter, the costume and set design (particularly the Roman togas, which invite a reading drawing on classical references) complement and confirm Jaques's rejection of the chivalric ideal of the hunt. Working alongside Stenhammar's music, these intertextual references bring a decidedly bloody dimension to the critique, insinuating that it is ultimately both victims and perpetrators who suffer from a culture that not only condones but encourages this kind of violence. Combined with the caricature of Titian's warrior-prince in the figure of Frederick, this is a damning repudiation of the 'noble hunt' attitude.

Furthermore, this reproval is not gender-specific. In Titian's painting it is Diana who leads the hunt to kill Actaeon, providing the vibrant focal point of the image. Actaeon's pitiful half-human half-animal figure blends into the forest that surrounds him as he is shredded by his dogs, but Titian allows Diana to land the final blow, an element absent from Ovid's text. By including references to texts that place women in the role of the hunter, it is apparent that the aggressive attributes that Lindberg's production examines are not reserved purely for men.

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<sup>139</sup> Ovid: *Metamorphoses* trans. Anthony S. Kline, available online at <http://ovid.lib.virginia.edu/trans/Metamorph3.htm>. (Accessed 20/08/2016)

This opposes the Medieval chivalric attitude that explicitly associates hunting with men,<sup>140</sup> and instead focuses on performative masculinity. This is especially appropriate in *As You Like It*, for which gender fluidity is at the heart of the play. How men and women should behave is constantly foregrounded throughout the text, and it is values and *behaviour*, not material or physical circumstance, that Shakespeare suggests determines whether a person is noble or gracious. As Dusinger puts it, *As You Like It* 'manifests an awareness of gender as performance.'<sup>141</sup>

Women are also established as warriors who are capable of contributing to chivalric hunting culture in *Jerusalem Delivered* — Tasso's best-known poem and likely the work to which Smith was referring when he compared the production to Tasso. Similar to Titian's *Diana*, Tasso's text also contains a 'martial damsel', named Clorinda. Her status as a warrior is validated by her prowess at hunting:

In war, so hard her heart, so fierce her mind,  
To wond'ring man she seem'd of savage kind;  
But when thro' woods and wilds the huntress ran,  
Their savage inmates fled, and thought her man.

In a tragic sequence, another woman, Erminia, is mistaken for Clorinda and murdered by a young man seeking revenge on Clorinda for the deaths she has caused in battle. Tasso describes this scene as a hunt, from the prospective of the quarry:

As when an hind, o'erspent with thirst and heat,  
To well-known waters guides her weary feet,  
Where from some rock translucent springs distill,  
Or wind through wood-fring'd banks the murm'ring rill;  
There, while she hopes her panting sides to lave  
In the pure freshness of the crystal wave,  
Toast the cool shade, and catch th' inspiring breeze,  
If chance th' advancing hounds she hears or sees,

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<sup>140</sup> See Monelle: 'hunting was connected to courtly love ... The quarry, after capture, might be presented to a lady ... The medieval hunt was aristocratic, warlike, manly.' (67-8)

<sup>141</sup> Dusinger, 9

To instant flight her startled steps she turns.  
Forget the heat that melts, the thirst that burns...  
Soon as the sounds of war surprise her ear,  
The shout, the loud-breath'd threat, the whizzing spear,  
Her fond desires, her airy dreams are gone;  
Dead to herself, alive to fear alone,  
To sudden flight she spurs her springing steed,  
Shakes the loose reins, and urges all his speed.<sup>142</sup>

Hunting is precisely synonymous with war here, and we return to the image of the deer that provoked Jaques' lament. Most poignant is that Erminia is an accidental victim of hunting culture and the wars that accompany it — there are no winners in this scenario, with even those seemingly uninvolved being inadvertently affected.

Due to the actions of both male and female characters, the wooded locale does not guarantee a positive outcome for all its inhabitants, however bombastic the final scene. Lindberg's *As You Like It* closed on a cautionary note, with its cherubs dressed up as future soldiers, in spite of the play's supposedly happy conclusion. As evinced by the hunting scene in Act IV, the courtly chivalry that persists throughout the play shows no sign of being rejected by the end. This is perhaps the reason for Jaques' final exclusion from the festivities of the closing party, choosing a religious lifestyle instead of staying at court. He quits the scene with the derogatory remark 'I am for other than for dancing measures', unable to embrace the jollity that succeeds the hunting party.<sup>143</sup> Even as he encourages the hunters to sing, his announcement that 'the rest shall bear his burden' carries a warning. While he literally refers to the kill being carried by the other members of the group, in light of his scolding attitude towards hunting throughout the play this can also be read metaphorically — like Erminia, not only perpetrators, but the whole of society has to suffer the consequences of a culture that embraces the noble-hunt attitude. In the years immediately following the 'great' First World War, this observation appears especially — and tragically — apt.

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<sup>142</sup> Torquato Tasso: *Jerusalem Delivered* trans. Rvd. J. H. Hunt, available online at [https://archive.org/stream/tassosjerusalem01tass/tassosjerusalem01tass\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/tassosjerusalem01tass/tassosjerusalem01tass_djvu.txt). (Accessed 22/08/2016)

<sup>143</sup> Jaques 5.4.191. *Ibid.*, 345. Note that in the hunting scene, Jaques attaches horns to the hunter's head, both signifying the stag but also a symbol of cuckoldry.

## CONCLUSION

This production can be read as an example of naïve theatre, sharing many of the aesthetic and social goals of the naïvist movement which gained popularity throughout the decade. Underneath the festive surface, the Arden that Lindberg, Stenhammar, and Ström created was far from being a bucolic nature idyll. Through intertextual reference in both the visual and sonic elements, the production can be read as a critique of the Romantic ideal of hunting culture, and its image as a noble sport for the social elite. The realities of the hunt are emphasised, with the reviewers identifying influences that expose the brutalities of this pastime. Through this network of cultural reference, Lindberg managed to sculpt a production that was both astonishingly simple in appearance and strikingly complex in its symbolic depth. Stenhammar's music was vital to maintaining this dual perspective, praised by reviewers as a 'strange, sometimes radical musical work'.<sup>144</sup> This radicalism came not from the tonal language Stenhammar employed, but from how the music interacted with the other aspects of the production. Ultimately, the music is consistently affiliated with the worldview represented by Jaques, aligning with his critique of hunting.

Arden is a place where art — and music specifically — has its own role to play on the world's stage. And Lindberg saw that role as explicitly popular, both reaching and addressing as many as possible. To a twenty-first-century reader, it is difficult to escape the connotations that aesthetic creeds such as these would adopt from 1933 onwards, given their adoption by the mass propaganda stages of the Nazi regime. Enthusiasm for, and conversely rejection of, modernity as social advancement through technological development encompassed both ends of what we would today class as the far left and right wings of the

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<sup>144</sup> 'en sällsam, stundom gripande musikalisk verkan.' "RED", 'En märklig premiär på Göteborgs Lorensbergsteater', *Hvar 8 Dag*

political spectrum, sometimes in disquieting fashions. Sverker Sörlin records that Hjalmar Branting, the founder of the Swedish Social Democratic party which is currently considered a beacon for Western liberalism, backed a proposal in the 1920s to establish an Institute of Racial Hygiene in Sweden.<sup>145</sup> There is no denying Branting's socialist credentials.

Nonetheless, as with many whose names are synonymous with modernity, such as Strindberg, Ibsen, and Schoenberg,<sup>146</sup> he held views that now seem contradictory but were, at the turn of the century, perfectly compatible and indeed consistent. To acknowledge these is not to condone or excuse them, but to gain a more rounded understanding of these figures and their world. As Kirsten Shepherd-Barr says of Ibsen's interest in eugenics, 'we need to accept his temporary embrace of eugenics as part of his response to the intellectual package of evolution as it was then understood, to accept that he was in this respect a man of his age.'<sup>147</sup>

With regard to theatre, at the conclusion of the First World War, enthusiasm for the popular was seen as a healing force after the cultural devastation of the war years, rejecting isolation in favour of communal cohesion and, moreover, reflecting disillusionment with the political governing classes. Although these forms of theatre are, with retrospect, more malleable to propaganda purposes than their smaller counterparts, there was (and is) no inevitability to their appropriation by Fascist regimes. Within Sweden in 1920, naïvism and popular theatre were as associated with what is now the political left as they would later be with the political

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<sup>145</sup> Sverker Sörlin: 'Prophets and Deniers: The Idea of Modernity in Swedish Tradition' in *Utopia and Reality: Modernism in Sweden 1900-1960* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 16-25, 20. Sörlin argues that the enthusiasm for these kinds of racial arguments stemmed from a preoccupation with hygiene, and a faith in modern 'scientific reason ... to conquer an unhealthy popular mentality.' *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> See, for example, Schoenberg's letter to Alma Mahler, dated 1914: The First World War is 'the reckoning. Now we shall send these mediocre purveyors of kitsch back into slavery, and they shall learn to honour the German spirit and to worship the German God.' Quoted in Joseph Auner (ed.): *A Schoenberg Reader: Documents of a Life* (London: Yale University Press, 2003) 126

<sup>147</sup> Shepherd-Barr, 89

right: Cecilia Widenheim has illuminated the association between socialism and popular art dominant at the end of the nineteenth century, promoted in publications such as Ellen Key's *Skönhet för alla* ('Beauty for all'), which 'asserted the role of aesthetics in a wider social context founded on democracy and increased equality.'<sup>148</sup> Furthermore, Widenheim notes that 'The belief that art should develop by means of a greater public presence was held by many radical art experts at the time.'<sup>149</sup> Lindberg's theatre was based in the philosophy of Bergson and Rolland,<sup>150</sup> and formed part of what was, in the early 1920s, a genuine attempt to broaden audiences and artistic communities in Sweden, and widely received as the direction which showed most promise for modern theatre. If anything, his premise and ideal was closer to a communist utopia than fascist totalitarianism.

Subsequently contemporary reviewers and practitioners eagerly embraced this vision of theatre and interpretation of Shakespeare. The municipal production was portrayed as a cleansing force for Swedish theatre, explicitly set against the grander Stockholm stages.

*Svenska Dagbladet* wrote that:

It is really pretty depressing that here in Stockholm a theatre's decadence can be seen up close and constantly in view, with themselves the national leading stage, and at the same time you see what artistic will and energy can be provided, the difficulties which young enthusiasm can overcome, and the

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<sup>148</sup> Cecilia Widenheim: 'Utopia and Reality: Aspects of Modernism in Swedish Visual Art During the First Half of the Twentieth Century', *Utopia and Reality*, pp. 42-85, 78. Sörlin also argues that the new welfare state of the Social Democrats became associated with 'modernity' in the 1920s to 30s. Sörlin, 24

<sup>149</sup> Widenheim, 78. See also Per Hedström: 'Modernism and Public Art' in the same volume, pp. 86-97.

<sup>150</sup> He notes in *Kring Ridån*: 'Bergson's subtle and seductive image of the universe as a half personal being that creates itself — and life as a stream which branches off through all living beings' souls! What was this, seen through theatre binoculars, other than the contemplation of the drama's lifeblood, contemplation of life as a moving complex.' 'Bergsons raffinerade och bestickande bild av universum som ett halvt personligt väsen som skapar sig självt - och livet som en ström som förgrenar sig genom alla levande väsens själar! Vad var detta, sett genom teaterkikaren, annat än åskådandet av dramats livsnerv, åskådandet av tillvaron som ett rörelsekomplex.' Lindberg, *Kring Ridån*, 136

result which, as with much less qualified forces than the lead stage has possession of, can be reached in the new theatre in Gothenburg.<sup>151</sup>

The small theatre was used as measure for the capital city, and their productions that appealed to more traditional and exclusive audiences. The production of *As You Like It* was a source of local pride, one journalist saying that:

Gothenburgers are in no regard less interested in *good* theatre than, for example, Stockholmers — perhaps quite the opposite. But it is only when some great theatre director had thought to serve anything that the audience reacted.<sup>152</sup>

Again and again, Lindberg and his team were applauded for their humour and ‘youthful enthusiasm’, in which Stenhammar’s music played no small part.

The success of this production was the springboard for Lindberg’s self-proclaimed modern theatre. In his view, the future of Swedish theatre lay not in the small, exclusive theatres that had proliferated at the turn of the century, nor in the established playhouses such as the Royal Theatre. Drama can only survive with an audience, and he was intent on harnessing an image of accessibility, choosing to reject the newly emerging narratives of exclusive and difficult modernisms that were beginning to take shape in mainland Europe, particularly objecting to what he deemed superficial changes in appearance. As these narratives gained ground Lindberg actively played off them, championing amateur and student companies throughout his life. He countered personalities such as the critic Erik Thyselius, who was

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<sup>151</sup> ‘Det är verkligen ganska beklämmande att här i Stockholm på nära håll ständigt ha för ögonen en teaterns dekadans, med själva nationalscenen i tätén, och samtidigt se vad konstnärlig vilja och energi kunna åstadkomma, vilka svårigheter som ungdomlig entusiasm kan övervinna, och vilka resultat, som med vida mindre kvalificerad levande kraft, än den huvudstadsscenen förfogar över, kunna nås på den nya teatern i Göteborg.’ Anonymous, ‘“En våldsam framgång” på Lorensbergsteatern’, *Svenska Dagbladet*

<sup>152</sup> ‘göteborgaren i intet avseende är mindre intresserad av *god* teater än t. ex. stockholmare — kanske snarare tvärtom. Men det är egentligen när någon stor teaterdirektör trott sig kunna servera vad som helst som denna publik reagerat.’ “RED”, ‘En märklig premiär på Göteborgs Lorensbergsteater’, *Hvar 8 Dag*. Emphasis original.

associated with the established school of realist interpretation that Lindberg painted as elitist. Both music and Shakespeare were of paramount importance for this popular theatre. The Shakespeare that Lindberg championed was youthful and exuberant, later commissioning new translations to update Carl Hagberg's nineteenth-century text, which was widely used in the theatre. But it was Stenhammar's music that gave Lindberg's *As You Like It* its edge. In the words of Birger Bäckström:

Nothing can be improbable as fable in *As You Like It*; it is disguises, entanglement, confusion, meeting together and shifting which eludes every sensible description ... And in the shifting bubble is reflected everything else, hatred and cruelty and foolishness, the incurable melancholy in standing outside life, without interest in life but only for one's own reflection ... Without the music, the whole would touch reality, and thereby the bubble burst.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> 'Ingenting kan vara osannolikare än fabeln i "Som ni behagar"; det är förklädningar, förvecklingar, förväxlingar, sammanträffanden och omskiftningar som trotsa varje förnuftig beskrivning ... Och i den skimrande bubblan speglas ändå allt, hat och grymhet och narraktighet, ödets obeständighet, den obotliga melankolien i att stå utanför livet, inte intressera sig för livet utan bara för sina egna reflexioner över det ... Utan musiken skulle det hela tangera verkligheten och därmed bubblan brista.' Bäckström, "'Som ni behagar" på Lorensbergsteatern', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*

## 'THEREFORE SPEAK AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE': SOUND & COMMUNICATION IN TURE RANGSTRÖM'S *TILL DAMASKUS* (III)

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By 1926, Lindberg had moved from the Lorensberg Theatre in Gothenburg to take up a contract at the Concert House in Stockholm. Ahead of the first performance, Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra*, the newspapers were filled with columns about 'The great People's Theatre', announcing that the theatrical project at the Concert House could potentially compete with cinema, both in terms of prices and popularity. Lindberg's appointment as the creative director was especially welcomed in light of his previous work at the Lorensberg, the author Bo Bergman acknowledging that Lindberg 'had proved himself as a talented representative for the modern theatre idea'.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter explores Lindberg's second production at the Concert House, Strindberg's *Till Damaskus* (III), with music by Ture Rangström. I argue that Rangström's incidental score was invaluable for the success of the performance for three reasons. First, Lindberg needed to modernise much of Strindberg's text, and Rangström's music assisted in this by transforming many of Strindberg's less palatable ideas for the sensibilities of a 1920s audience through parody and pastiche. Second, on a practical level, the constant presence of Rangström's score helped blur any distinction between the protagonist's internal and external worlds, a necessity if the piece was to work convincingly on stage. Finally, as with *As You Like It*, the music contributed to the sense of spectacle that Lindberg was hoping to cultivate for his People's Theatre. Rangström's involvement was used to publicise the production,

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<sup>1</sup> 'Han har själv visat sig som en talangfull representant för modern teateruppfattning'. Bo Bergman: 'Folkteater och tittskåpsteater', *Dagens Nyheter*, 04/07/1926

particularly highlighting his previous associations with Strindberg, and advertising his use of the Concert House organ as innovative and modern.

*Till Damaskus* continued the work Lindberg began with *As You Like It*, building a theatre that was experimental without being exclusive. Again, Lindberg had chosen his collaborators carefully: Rangström had a similar aesthetic outlook to Stenhammar with regard to 'modern' theatre. Rangström was more forceful than Stenhammar in his rejection of musical modernism, however: he repeatedly castigated Schoenberg in his critical writing, calling his Chamber Symphony 'a monstrosity of sterile and pitiable musical fantasy' in 1929.<sup>2</sup>

Rangström's primary complaint with modernism was what he saw as a lack of individuality. He wrote in 1946 that he hoped for 'the living human profile to resurface',<sup>3</sup> moving away from a standardisation of musical practice through the uniform adoption of atonality. This worldview was corroborated by his friend and colleague Kurt Atterberg, who said in a 1966 talk commemorating Rangström that their decision to eschew atonality was not motivated by ignorance, but due to having a different conception of what modern or progressive music should sound like. Atterberg argued that the environment of the early 1900s was driven by personalities such as 'Brahms, Grieg, Moussorgsky, Debussy, Reger, Sibelius and even in some measure Carl Nielsen',<sup>4</sup> and that it seemed absurd for theorists to 'standardise' musical languages in the context of this plethora of individual perspectives. He continued that, with the perspective of forty years' hindsight, 'We were not strangers to atonalism [in 1912] ... None of us could guess, however, that atonalism would come to mean regimentation and

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<sup>2</sup> 'ett monster av steril och jämmerlig musikalisk fantasi.' *Stockholms Dagblad*, 13/04/1929 quoted in Helmer 300. The term 'jämmerlig' is particularly expressive, also meaning 'wretched' and 'mournful'.

<sup>3</sup> 'den levande mänskliga profilen [att] åter upp'. Quoted *ibid.*, 399

<sup>4</sup> 'Brahms, Grieg, Moussorgsky, Debussy, Reger, Sibelius och även i någon mån Carl Nielsen.' Kurt Atterberg: 'Om Ture Rangström', text for a speech given 05/09/1966 (Musik-och teaterbiblioteket, Stockholm, Rangström collection, Box 20)

religion.’<sup>5</sup> For Rangström, as for many Swedish composers of the 1920s, rejecting atonality and its attendant label of ‘modernism’ was a part of his identity. He presented himself as an intuitive and impulsive musician, championing individuality over a perceived regulation of musical style.

## BUILDING THE PEOPLE’S THEATRE

In an article announcing the opening of the Concert House as a dramatic venue, Lindberg wrote that this new venture would be ‘a home for the large, broad masses’, a stage for theatre that ‘can be considered a modern descendant of the ancient theatre and the Renaissance’s comedy house.’<sup>6</sup> He envisaged the project as a continuation of the trend across America and the continent for theatres capable of seating large audiences, citing performances at Hyde Park in London and Madison Square in New York as his precedents, alongside Reinhardt’s Grosses Schauspielhaus in Berlin. The idea was to build a theatre that would appeal to Stockholm’s working classes — the same demographic who patronised the cinema — by choosing repertoire that was deemed to be attractive to a non-bourgeois audience, and presenting it as a theatrical spectacle, particularly eschewing realism in favour of more fantastic and artistically enterprising stage designs.

Lindberg saw the establishment of this kind of theatre in Sweden as imperative if the country was to keep pace with its neighbours, both socially and artistically. Aesthetics and politics were indivisible in Lindberg’s vision: he considered theatres that both accommodated and appealed to audience numbers in the thousands to be necessary elements in a democratic society. He directly linked political systems and theatrical attitudes, arguing that the post-

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<sup>5</sup> ‘Vi var inte främmande för atonalismen ... Ingen av oss kunde emellertid hyss en aning om att atonalismen skulle komma att betyda likriktning och religion.’ *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> ‘en hem för den stora, breda massan ... kan betraktas en modern ättling till antikens teater och renässansens festspelhus.’ Per Lindberg: ‘Den stora folkteatern’, *Dagens Nyheter*, 03/07/1926

war spread of democracy necessitated a democratic theatre, which he defined as a 'theatre whose size should be able to let it keep popular prices without the theatre needing to curtail operating costs and reduce the expenses.'<sup>7</sup>

This is a considerable distance from the idea of democratic theatre as it is used today, more closely associated with verbatim and devised theatre.<sup>8</sup> Lindberg undoubtedly remained the autocrat of his so-called democratic theatre. He also did not go as far as the Russian Proletkult's attempts (of which he was well aware) to create a popular theatre for the proletariat.<sup>9</sup> The Proletkult had a distinctly bourgeois leadership who, as Gary Thurston notes, defined the proletariat 'very narrowly, as industrial workers with political consciousness.'<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, they rejected a traditional reliance on the playwright, director, and professional actors. Instead, they sought to dramatise poems, and present collectively staged pageants which elucidated the struggle of the working classes.<sup>11</sup> Lindberg, however, actively engaged with student and amateur performances, but retained both authored scripts and the distinction between actors and audience. In a completely different geographical and political context from post-revolutionary Russia, Swedish enthusiasm for a whole-sale reconstitution of the theatrical landscape was more muted. In a country where social democracy was the reigning political system rather than revolutionary Marxism, continuity

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<sup>7</sup> 'teatern vars storlek skulle kunna tillåta den att hålla populära pris, utan att teatern behövde inskränka driftskostnaden och minska anspråken.' *Ibid.* Bo Bergman's take on the democratic theatre was that 'it seeks the collective, the unifying, the human, the mass soul'. 'den söker sig till det kollektiva, det samlande, det grundmänskliga, till massans själ.' Bergman, 'Folkteater och tittskåpsteater'

<sup>8</sup> Verbatim theatre is a documentary form where the script is constructed from real interviews, and devised theatre involves the whole team collaborating — often improvising — to produce the eventual text, rather than relying on a single author.

<sup>9</sup> He mentions Russian 'proletarian theatre' in his 'Den stora folkteatern' article.

<sup>10</sup> Gary Thurston: *The Popular Theatre Movement in Russia, 1862-1919* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998) 278

<sup>11</sup> Robert Russell: *Russian Drama of the Revolutionary Period* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988) 29-30

with tradition was more acceptable than in Russia, hence Lindberg's stress on an established theatrical lineage for his ideas. In Sweden, the term 'democratic' theatre meant something more socialist than Marxist — a theatre mounted and run by a small select group, but catering to a broader demographic than previously. The two institutions that Lindberg reacted against in particular were the Royal Opera and Theatre, and their dominance over Stockholm's theatrical culture. The Swedish 'People's Theatre' that Lindberg and Bo Bergman advocated would not be funded by the crown, but was intended to be self-sustaining thanks to a subscription series, garnering income from its own popularity.

The Concert House, seating nearly 2000, was a far cry from Reinhardt's enormous Grosses Schauspielhaus, which seated 4000. Lindberg fully acknowledged the shortcomings of the somewhat smaller venue, but also accepted that a new theatre could not be built overnight.<sup>12</sup>

The Concert House was the most plausible of the compromise options, as it provided an immediately available, relatively large space that had no previous associations with any particular type of theatre.<sup>13</sup> Certainly, the newspapers considered Lindberg's project to be something entirely new in Stockholm's theatrical life, and the announcement was broadly received with enthusiasm — *Nya Dagens Nyheter* wrote that they received the news with 'great happiness'.<sup>14</sup>

Key to the success of the People's Theatre, as Lindberg saw it, was choice of repertoire.

Alongside venue, acting style, and scenic design, a new theatre needed a new approach to play selection. Writing in 1932, Lindberg argued that the People's Theatre should stage plays

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<sup>12</sup> 'någon ny teaterlokal kunde icke i en hast komma till stånd.' Lindberg, 'Den stora folkteatern'

<sup>13</sup> See also Herbert Grevenius: 'Den stora folkteatern', *En Bok om Per Lindberg*, pp. 105-154, 111

<sup>14</sup> 'stor glädje'. Anonymous: 'Teater och Musik: Stor folkteater i Konserthuset. Dir. Ernst Eklund chef, Per Lindberg regissör', *Nya Dagens Nyheter*, 03/06/1926

that 'correspond to contemporary requirements',<sup>15</sup> and that 'repertoire should be deliberately sought among the modern, currently-set drama' to interest 'people from all layers of society.'<sup>16</sup> The series that he announced in 1926 for the Concert House included a broad range of texts, from Eugene O'Neill to Sophocles, but for his opening double-bill he opted for Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra*, and Strindberg's *Till Damaskus* (III). Both were deliberately ambitious choices: similarly to *As You Like It*, he chose plays that were little-staged in Sweden, ensuring high attendance due to the playwrights' established popularity while simultaneously setting himself apart from the more traditional theatres.

Also following in the mould of *As You Like It*, music was to be an indispensable part of the People's Theatre. The aforementioned *Nya Dagens Nyheter* reviewer stated that 'As the large spectacle is often associated with music and choir, director Eklund has for the cases where none is pre-composed, ... [hired] Wilhelm Stenhammar, Ture Rangström and Einar Rosenberg.'<sup>17</sup> For *Till Damaskus*, Ture Rangström was commissioned to write the music. He was no stranger to Strindberg's work — he had previously composed an opera based on Strindberg's play *Kronbruden*, and his First Symphony was dedicated to Strindberg's memory.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Rangström considered the future of Swedish music to be intertwined with Swedish writing. That literature was indispensable to Rangström's outlook is corroborated by his biographer, Axel Helmer, and in more recent research by Anne

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<sup>15</sup> 'som motsvarar vår tids fordringar'. Lindberg, 'Inbjudan'

<sup>16</sup> 'skall repertoaren medvetet sökas bland den moderna, aktuellt inställda dramatiken', 'personer ur alla samhällslager'. Lindberg, 'P.M. angående "Den fria teatern"'

<sup>17</sup> 'Då det stora skådespelet ofta är förenat med musik och körer har dr Eklund för de fall där dådan ej förut är komponerad, försäkrat sig om medverkan av kapaciteten som Vilhelm Stenhammar, Ture Rangström och Einar Rosenberg.' Anonymous, 'Teater och musik: Stor folkteater'

Macgregor.<sup>18</sup> As a young man, Rangström declared that he and his friend group were 'interested in literature and poetry more than anything else'.<sup>19</sup> And amongst the authors whom Rangström admired, Strindberg stood head and shoulders above the rest. Rangström is recorded as having said of Strindberg's poetry that it is written in the 'language of granite and blended pine needles ... Music for the salon this could never be',<sup>20</sup> his choice of vocabulary (referring to Strindberg's words as 'music') blurring the distinction between poetic language and music. Composer and playwright met on several occasions from November 1909, when Rangström visited Strindberg at his house. Strindberg seems to have approved of Rangström's music for the most part, despite being a little perplexed by his tone poem *Dityramb*, which Rangström played for him.<sup>21</sup>

Within his output associated with Strindberg, *Till Damaskus* seems to have held an especial place in Rangström's affections. In a radio talk from 1942, Rangström discussed his favourite pieces and creative process, adopting a self-effacing attitude towards his work. He opened the talk by saying that he had a particular fondness for his 'unsuccessful' ideas, explaining with habitual mischievousness that 'Just those naughty, shapeless, hunchbacked, octagonal and awkward, which no other man either wants to see or hear, just those I have a silent and modest father's love for, I look at them surreptitiously, I hum them, ach, dear God, I bear the self-blame for their flaws!'<sup>22</sup> He then proceeded to use the rest of his air time to discuss pieces

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<sup>18</sup> Macgregor, 8

<sup>19</sup> 'I minnesanteckningarna skriver Rangström också utförligt om hur han och vännerna "var litteratur- och diktintresserade mer än något annat.'" Helmer, 18

<sup>20</sup> 'Strindberg talade granitspråk och blandade granbarr i sin vers ... Musik för salongen kunde det aldrig bli.' Rangström quoted *ibid.*, 117

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 117

<sup>22</sup> 'Just de där vanartiga, oformliga, puckelryggiga, åttkantiga och tafatta, som ingen annan människa varken vill se åt eller höra, just dem har jag en tyst och blygsam faderskärlek till, jag tittar åt dem i smyg, jag gnolar på dem, ack, herre gud, jag bär ju själv skulden till deras skavanker!' Ture Rangström: 'Min älsklingsbit', 25/05/1942 (Musik- och Teaterbiblioteket, Stockholm, Rangström collection, Box 11)

that he thought went particularly badly. At the close, however, when pushed to name one piece that he was happy with, he chose a movement from *Till Damaskus*. He elaborated as follows:

We have in our days celebrated August Strindberg's memory both with words and tones, and I myself stand in an indelible debt of gratitude to this poetry's champion, who is certainly not for everyone, but which I nonetheless am entitled to confess. We are going to play a couple of small pieces, called Meditations or Tomb Sacrifices for string orchestra — it is extremely simple music from the dramatic trilogy *Till Damaskus*. It is about, as we all know, deep down about humanity's alienation on the earth, both you and I are the "Stranger" and "The Tempter", we judge, offend and confuse ourselves in our own spirit, and when life is at its most hard and sore, there burns in us a marvellous longing after the spirit's light freedom. The music in this small piece can naturally not depict all this bleeding pathos or even a fraction of the drama's tragic emotional life. Can music at all portray some meaningful inner action of humanity other than the shifting between major and minor, the intermediate, shy transitions, the darkness and the birth? It goes too far to say that an answer to the question is given here. For the composer's part it is enough, that he with these Meditations of the gentle, *sordino* string orchestra finally found a piece that he was not ashamed of. It is only a few bars of Pentecostal music, minor and major, in grateful remembrance of Strindberg.<sup>23</sup>

This is testament both to the esteem in which he held Strindberg, and his self-identification with the play's characters. It also points towards the function that he perceived his score having within Lindberg's production of *Till Damaskus*,<sup>24</sup> a play that is inconceivable without music.

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<sup>23</sup> 'Vi ha i dagarna firat August Strindbergs sinne både med ord oh toner, och själv står jag i en outplånlig tacksamhetsskuld till denne diktens mästare, som visserligen icke är allas, men vilken jag ändock har rätt att bekänna. Det skall spelas ett par småstycken, kallade Meditationer eller Gravoffer för stråkorkester, det är ytterst enkel musik, den är hämtad ur den dramatiska trilogien "Till Damaskus". Den handlar, som vi alla veta, innerst inne om människans främlingskap på jorden, både du och jag är den "okände" och "frestaren", vi döma, sära och förvilla oss själva i vår egen ande, och när det är som mest hårt och sargat i livet, brinner det i oss av en förunderlig längtan efter andens ljusa frihet. Musiken i dessa småstycken kan naturligtvis icke skilda allt detta blödande patos eller ens en bråkdel av dramats tragiska känsloliv. Kan musik överhuvud taget skildra någon annan betydelsefull inre handling hos människan än växlingen mellan dur och moll, de förmedlande, skygga övergångarna, mörkret och förlossningen? Att här ge svar på den frågan, skulle föra allt för långt. För komponistens del räcker det, att han med dessa Meditationer av den milda, sordinerade stråkorkestern äntligen hittat ett stycke, som han inte skäms för. Det är bara några takter pingstmusik, moll och dur, Strindberg till tacksamt minne.' *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Helmer isolates the music for *Till Damaskus* as occupying a unique position within Rangström's work for radio and stage (of which he produced thirteen scores for different productions, including five Shakespeare plays). Helmer, 389

### SOUND IN *TILL DAMASKUS* (III)

Parts I and II of *Till Damaskus* were the first plays that Strindberg wrote after his Inferno crisis, with the third part following in 1904. Strindberg's Inferno crisis was a period of intense psychological re-evaluation, during which time he underwent a complete reversal of religious beliefs, transitioning from staunch atheism to devout spiritualism. All three of the *Damaskus* plays address Strindberg's grappling with religion, as well as his thoughts about gender relationships and the limitations of language. The semi-autobiographical, station-drama trilogy follows the Stranger's (Strindberg's) religious journey from spiritual destitution to entrance into the Monastery at the end of Part III. His road to spiritual redemption faces various obstacles, particularly the character of the Tempter in Part III, who represents both the Devil and Strindberg's less virtuous alter-ego. The Tempter and Stranger embody Strindberg's belief that everybody has more than one 'self' — that the ego is fragmented, non-linear, and multiple. The idea of redemption through woman is a central theme throughout the dramas, with the Lady representing a female archetype quite opposed to the strong, individuated female characters that populate his early plays. She is eventually rejected as a means of redemption, the Stranger choosing a single, celibate path by retreating to the Monastery at the conclusion of Part III: absolution is only achievable through death.

Throughout the three parts, Strindberg displays a preoccupation with the way in which language does or does not communicate, often perceived as better equipped to conceal truths rather than reveal them. This is a concern shared by many of Strindberg's later plays — as, for example in *Spöksonaten* ('The Ghost Sonata', 1907), in which the character of the Old Man says 'Silence cannot conceal anything — unlike words. I read somewhere the other day that different languages came about as a way of hiding one tribe's secrets from another; languages are like codes.'<sup>25</sup> Strindberg is — perhaps of necessity — vague about what a

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<sup>25</sup> August Strindberg: 'The Ghost Sonata', *The Chamber Plays*, 152

'trustworthy' form of communication might sound like, or indeed what must be expressed that is impossible with language alone. Nonetheless, he seems to have adopted two complementary approaches in his exploration of linguistic constraint in his post-*Inferno* dramas. The first of his strategies was to construct dialogue with musical principles in mind. In 1908 he wrote to his friend, composer Tor Aulin, that *Spöksonaten* displayed 'the form I am seeking for the new drama; starting with chamber music, condensed, concentrated, with only a few voices.'<sup>26</sup> He also said of his earlier *Master Olof* (1872) that 'I polyphonically composed a symphony in which all the voices were interwoven, major and minor characters were treated equally, and no one accompanied the soloist.'<sup>27</sup> Strindberg's comments about his later plays are infused with musical terminology, attempting to expand the boundaries of linguistic communication by turning to musical form and construction.<sup>28</sup> As Evert Sprinchorn argues, Strindberg believed that 'music could give direct expression to both the spiritual or ideal side of existence and the subconscious or irrational life of the mind,'<sup>29</sup> making it the ideal medium to try and fuse with language for his expressionist and symbolist plays.

The second of his approaches was to turn to an increasingly visceral form of sensory perception in which sound and music played a pivotal role. He used music repeatedly as a means of characterisation, to herald the presence of the supernatural or otherworldly, and sometimes to provide a parallel narrative that directly contradicts the spoken drama. In *Ett*

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<sup>26</sup> August Strindberg, letter to Tor Aulin, July 6th 1908. Quoted in *Strindberg on Drama and Theatre*, 125

<sup>27</sup> August Strindberg, 'The Concept of the Intimate Theatre', July 14th-21st, 1908. Quoted in *Strindberg on Drama and Theatre* 126. The much later date of this comment suggests that Strindberg was keen to retrospectively backdate his interest in 'polyphonic' writing, rather than this being a conscious decision at the time of writing *Master Olof*. However, as early as 1888 in the preface to *Miss Julie*, he said that the dialogue contains 'material that is later reworked, taken up, repeated, expanded, and developed, like the theme in a musical composition.' (Strindberg, 'A Dream Play', 63)

<sup>28</sup> For a comprehensive account of this aspect of Strindberg's writing, see Sprinchorn, Chapt. 13 'Making Music'

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 222

*drömspel*, Edith performs a Bach Adagio to signify her retreat from the physically judgemental world that surrounds her. In the same drama, the goddess Indra is only ever heard, remaining an acousmatic presence throughout the play. And a funeral march is heard repeatedly throughout *Till Damaskus* (I), despite it being a music that only the Stranger seems able to hear. In all these plays, sound is used to generate the impression of multiple planes of (un)reality, deliberately creating ambiguity and confusion in the on-stage scenarios. The disorienting effect of disembodied voices and sound sources in *Ett drömspel* was intended to convey the notion that 'Time and place do not exist',<sup>30</sup> while the conflicting narratives created by *Till Damaskus*'s music supported Strindberg's idea that no truth or perspective is objective.<sup>31</sup> Even within an onstage world that exists only in the protagonist's head, there is no possibility of a single truth; 'the relative nothingness of life' is comprised of 'insane contradictions',<sup>32</sup> and consequently 'The world...is really only a mirage.'<sup>33</sup>

Hans-Göran Ekman, in his formidable study of sensory perception in the Chamber Plays, argues that 'Strindberg's post-Inferno dramas are visually and acoustically richer than his earlier dramas.'<sup>34</sup> Even amongst these, however, *Till Damaskus* is unusually reliant on auditory stimuli. As a written drama, from the funeral march that opens Part I to the processional march that closes Part III, *Till Damaskus* is awash with sound. Sprinchorn argues that music 'becomes as indispensable as the words or the physical action in letting us know

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<sup>30</sup> Strindberg 'Note to *A Dream Play*, 1902'. Quoted in *Strindberg on Drama and Theatre*, 94

<sup>31</sup> See Strindberg, 'Preface to *Miss Julie*', 58: 'motivation of the action is not simple, and ... there is not a single point of view. Every event in life — and this is a fairly new discovery! — is usually the result of a whole series of more or less deep-seated motives, but the spectator usually selects the one that he most easily understands or that best flatters his powers of judgement.'

<sup>32</sup> August Strindberg, extract from *The Occult Diary* quoted in *Strindberg on Drama and Theatre*, 110

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 94

<sup>34</sup> Ekman, 42

what is going on',<sup>35</sup> while Göran-Ekman notes that 'Strindberg had never previously assembled so many original sound effects in one drama. The sounds are instrumental in establishing the uniqueness of *To Damascus* as a drama and constitute an innovation within Strindberg's writing for the theatre'.<sup>36</sup>

Particularly noticeable is the divide between those sounds that are perceptible to the audience and all the on-stage characters, and those that seem to exist only to the protagonist. In Act I sc. iii, the Stranger claims that he hears a funeral march, which is inaudible to the Lady:

STRANGER: Any moment now I'll hear my funeral march — then everything will be complete. (*Listening.*) There!

LADY: I hear nothing.

STRANGER: Am I... Am I...

LADY: Shall we go home?<sup>37</sup>

It seems that the Stranger hears something quite different to the Lady. But whether it is the Lady or the Stranger who is mad, lying, or possibly deaf depends entirely on the staging. Strindberg gives no stage direction at this point — it is left for the director to decide whether music is heard at this point. If the director chooses to include music, this auditory confusion creates a direct, unspoken interaction between the audience and protagonist that bypasses the other characters in the drama. In either case, it raises a question: if the other characters are aspects of the protagonist's self and the stage represents the Stranger's mental world, how is it possible that the Stranger can perceive these sounds differently to the other elements of his ego? This is never answered in the play. Instead, this contradiction is used to accentuate the idea that the drama plays out in multiple dimensions simultaneously — both

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<sup>35</sup> Sprinchorn, 229

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 45

<sup>37</sup> August Strindberg: *The Road to Damascus: A Trilogy* trans. Graham Rawson (London: Jonathan Cape, 1939)

in and outside the protagonist's mind, in reality and an imagined world, somewhere between a dream and a deliberately created fiction.

Sound is continually foregrounded throughout the three parts of the play, elevated to the subject of discourse in the first act of Part III. As the Stranger speaks of his desire to enter the Monastery, a procession floats past on a raft. Strindberg specifically brings attention to the presence of the music, rather than the procession as a whole:

STRANGER: What was it they were singing?

CONFESSOR: It is a pilgrim's song!

STRANGER: Who wrote it?

CONFESSOR: A royal person.

STRANGER: Here? What was his name, and has he written something else?

CONFESSOR: He has written at least fifty songs.<sup>38</sup>

Language as an insufficient means of communication also provides a recurrent topic of conversation between the on-stage characters. The Confessor tells the Stranger 'You're a child who lived in a childish world, where you played with thoughts and words; and you've lived under the delusion that language, something so material, can become a vehicle for something so subtle as thoughts and feelings. We, who discovered that error, we speak as little as possible, because we perceive and see each other's innermost [thoughts].'<sup>39</sup> Earlier, when discussing happiness, the Lady repeatedly tells the Stranger to stop speaking, saying 'See it,

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<sup>38</sup> 'DEN OKÄNDE: Vad var det man sjöng?

CONFESSORN: Det var en vallfärdssång!

DEN OKÄNDE: Vem har skrivit den?

CONFESSORN: En kunglig person ...

DEN OKÄNDE: Här? Vad heter han, och har han skrivit något annat?

CONFESSORN: Han har skrivit minst femtio sånger'

August Strindberg: *Till Damaskus* (III) (Per Lindberg's personal manuscript, Musik- och Teaterbiblioteket, Gäddviken Archive, Per Lindberg Collection) 9. Unless otherwise stated, all translations of *Till Damaskus* are my own. Henceforth cited as Lindberg, *Till Damaskus*

<sup>39</sup> 'Du är ett barn som levat i en barnlig värld, där du lekt med tankar och ord; och du har levat i den villfarelsen att språket, något så materiellt, skulle kunna bli en klädsel åt något så subtilt som känslor och tankar. Vi, som upptäckt villfarelsen, vi tala så litet som möjligt, ty vi förnimma och se varandras innersta. Därför kunna vi icke äga några hemligheter för varandra.' Lindberg, *Till Damaskus*, 76

breathe it; for it may not be grasped',<sup>40</sup> which is succeeded by the Stranger's statement that 'What one says is the most worthless.'<sup>41</sup> Strindberg continually reminds the audience that language is inadequate for the breadth of communication that he demands.

Beyond this, Strindberg proffers alternatives to linguistic communication, rather than merely stating its inadequacy. The Confessor states that the friars in the Monastery can share their thoughts without the medium of language, saying 'We've so developed our perceptive faculties by spiritual exercise that we are linked in a single chain; and can detect a feeling of pleasure and harmony, when there's complete accord.'<sup>42</sup> The Lady offers the visual and tactile as a means of bypassing the linguistic,<sup>43</sup> while the Stranger adds smell to the roster of non-linguistic communicative channels, saying of a particular feeling that 'I can not say it, for it has no words. It has fragrance, it has colour... And if I said it, it would die!'<sup>44</sup>

*Till Damaskus*, then, represents a form of play-writing that is self-consciously aware of linguistic shortcomings. As in life, language is only one of many forms of communication and understanding — Strindberg's script highlights that the text is only one of the elements in the drama. Consequently these plays provide an opportunity for incidental music that is explicitly foregrounded, that takes a self-analytical stance towards the role of music and musical communication within the theatre. Rangström's score for Lindberg's staging capitalises on this form of interaction, providing both extra-scenic music and a constantly interwoven musical commentary that underscores the majority of the script, in some places

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<sup>40</sup> 'Se den, andas den, ty den låter icke ta sig.' *Ibid.*, 58

<sup>41</sup> 'det man säger är mest värdelöst!' *Ibid.*, 60

<sup>42</sup> Strindberg, *The Road to Damascus*, 270 trans. Rawson. Lindberg's script omits this line.

<sup>43</sup> The Tempter also describes a kiss as 'an unborn word, a soundless speech, a silent language of the souls.' Lindberg, *Till Damaskus*, 72

<sup>44</sup> 'jag kan icke säga den, ty den har inga ord! ... den har doft, den har färg ... Och om jag sade den, skulle den dö!' *Ibid.*, 57

crossing the diegetic and non-diegetic boundary now so familiar from film. Lindberg and Rangström used the music to fulfil multiple roles, as it does in Strindberg's script: it provided characterisation, specific points of religious reference, merges the internal and external worlds, and gave a sonic identity to opposing religious and atheist worldviews. Twenty-two years after Strindberg's script was written, however, Rangström also employed music as a source of humour and critique, parodying Strindberg's ideas about the idealisation of women, which were considerably outdated by 1926.<sup>45</sup>

## THE 'MEANINGFUL INNER ACTION OF HUMANITY': RANGSTRÖM'S *TILL*

### *DAMASKUS*

Despite the success of the first two parts of *Till Damaskus*, the third part had not received its premiere until 1922 at the Lorensberg Theatre, directed by Knut Ström and with stage designs by Sandro Malmquist. This is perhaps unsurprising, as textually the third part of *Till Damaskus* is one of Strindberg's more inaccessible dramas. It contains a considerable amount of self-indulgent rambling on the nature of existence, religious experience, and the relationship between men and women — if these were tiresome in 1904, they were quite out of fashion by 1926. Lindberg recognised this problem with the script, and consequently cut significant portions of the text. In the programme, he justified these deletions with the generous explanation that 'deletions have been made to dispose of such purely personal elements that would interest only specialists. If a few things are left out, which a Strindberg connoisseur perhaps would have wished to remain, this may be offset by our desire to make

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<sup>45</sup> Similarly, some of the satire in Lindberg's production is problematic for a twenty-first-century audience, as discussed below.

the piece accessible to a wider public.<sup>46</sup> To 'correspond to [the] contemporary requirements' of the People's Theatre, *Till Damaskus* needed to be modernised by being abridged.

The delay in production was no doubt also partly due to the significant challenge of staging a play in which all the characters are different aspects of the protagonist's self, and the drama is set in a hinterland between the protagonist's imagination and reality. As Strindberg moved further away from naturalist theatre, his search for a more hallucinatory, abstract, and symbolic experience demanded an imaginative and experimental approach, both practically and conceptually.<sup>47</sup> This was a problem that was highlighted by many of Lindberg's reviewers: the practicalities of the production seem to have been at the forefront of consideration for both Lindberg and his audience. Daniel Fallström,<sup>48</sup> writing for *Stockholms Tidningen*, opened his piece with the question: 'When one reads Strindberg's *Till Damaskus* Part III, it makes you feel absolutely the question: is this strange travel-drama suitable for the construction of a concert hall — is it suitable at all for the stage light?'<sup>49</sup> Bo Bergman, meanwhile, pointed out that 'the piece's double nature of vision and reality can always invite

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<sup>46</sup> 'strykningar ha gjorts för att undanskaffa sådana rent personliga element, vilka kunna intressera endast specialisterna. Om därvid ett och annat kommit bort, som en Strindbergskännare måhända skulle önskat kvar, må detta kvittas mot vår önskan att göra stycket tillgängligt för en större allmänhet.' Per Lindberg: Programme for *Till Damaskus*, 1926 (Musik- och Teaterbiblioteket, Gäddviken Archive, Per Lindberg Collection)

<sup>47</sup> Strindberg's stage directions surpassed any of the technologies available in the theatre at the time: *Ett drömspel* contains the direction that 'By lightning, the organ is transformed into Fingal's Cave. The sea surged in under the basalt pillars, producing the combined sound of wind and waves.' This was a considerable challenge for a theatre in 1902. Strindberg, 'A Dream Play', 199

<sup>48</sup> Fallström trained as an actor and worked as the theatre critic for *Stockholms Tidningen* as well as *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*, *Figaro*, and *Aftonbladet* previously. He also wrote poetry, some of which was set by Hugo Alfvén and Wilhelm Peterson-Berger.

<sup>49</sup> 'När man läser Strindbergs *Till Damaskus* III delen, gör man sig ovillkorligen den frågan: lämpar sig detta egendomliga vandringsdrama till uppförande på en scen som konserthusets - lämpar det sig över huvud taget för rampljuset?' Daniel Fallström: "'Klostret" på Konserthusteatern', *Stockholms Tidningen*, 16/10/1926

difficult and enticing directorial problems'.<sup>50</sup> Lindberg discussed these issues in an interview with Märta Lindqvist for *Svenska Dagbladet* ahead of the production:

Strindberg calls it a dream play — the word has begun to shift to a rather worn cliché nowadays. However, it can be characterised as a free fantasy play: figures come and go, merge into each other, talk with each other's voices, as the author's imagination, but at the same time Strindberg has however intended a certain reality therein, which allows the stage design to call for a gravity and elasticity, which is not needed in *Anthony and Cleopatra*.<sup>51</sup>

Lindberg's stage designer, John Jon-And, responded to this demand by setting the entire drama in a Cubist manner, constructing a set comprising almost entirely of overlapping triangles (Fig. 8), which provided a backdrop for the lighting design. The set had a distinctly mixed reception in the press. At the preview, critic Margit Siwertz said that 'in an instant the scenery took life, lights began to sweep across the stage, mysterious underground light-forces threw their light up against the rock formations and developed a strange plastic effect.'<sup>52</sup> Later, Ove Ekelund effused that 'Jon-And's frame is completely new', and that he 'would not be the magician he unquestionably is, if he could not get this debris to live up and flame in the most wonderful lighting effects, expressing exactly ... what must be

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<sup>50</sup> 'styckets dubbla karaktär av vision och verklighet kan alltid bjuda på svåra och lockande regiproblem.' "B. B-n": 'Till Damaskus Part III, Konserthusteaterns Strindberg premiere', *Dagens Nyheter*, 16/10/1926

<sup>51</sup> Strindberg kallar det ett drömspel — ordet har ju börjat övergå till en tämligen nött kliché numer. Det kan emellertid karaktäriseras som ett fritt fantasispiel; figurerna komma och gå, övergå i varandra, tala med varandras stämmor, allt efter författarens fantasi, men på samma gång har dock Strindberg avsett en viss realitet däri, vilket gör att iscensättningen tarvar en tyngd och svikt, som icke behöves i "Antonius och Cleopatra". Märta Lindqvist: 'Ett märkligt skådespel', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 13/10/1926 (Quelqu'une)

<sup>52</sup> 'i ett nu fick scenbilden liv, strålkastarna började svepa över scenen, mystiska underjordiska ljuskrafter kastade sitt sken upp mot klippformationerna och framkallade en underlig plastisk effekt.' Margit Siwertz: 'Teater: På väg till Damaskus!', *Stockholms Dagblad*, 15/10/1926 (Tigram)

Figure 8: Jon-And's set for *Till Damaskus* (III)



expressed. ... none other than Jon-And would have been able to solve the technical problem that the drama offers, so simply, so naturally, and so greatly at the same time.<sup>53</sup>

Other reviewers, however, were not so forgiving. Bo Bergman was distinctly unimpressed by Jon-And's approach:

Triangles, what are you doing? One sat and stared sick to death of them. They were atmosphere-killing in most lighting conditions. They did not suggest; they irritated. And you could not end up with a more sinful thought than that the piece could have been done better — grasped more easily — by a subtle use of an old illusion theatre or by removing whatever backdrops and take it all as a reading on uncluttered set design.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> 'Den Jon-Andska ramen är alldeles ny. ... Jon-And skulle inte vara den trollkarl han obestriddigen är, om han inte kunde få denna bråte att leva upp och flamma i de underbaraste ljuseffekter, uttryckande precis ... vad som skall uttryckas. ... ingen annan än Jon-And skulle kunnat lösa de tekniska problem, som dramat erbjuder, så enkelt, så naturligt och så stort på samma gång.' Ove Ekelund: "'Damaskus III" på Konserthusteatern', *Unknown newspaper*

<sup>54</sup> 'Trianglar, vad gören I? Man satt och stirrade sig utled på dem. De blevo absolute stämningdödande i de allra flesta belysningar. De suggererande inte; de irriterade. Och man kunde till sist inte komma från en syndig tanke att stycket skulle ha gjort sig bättre - ocl. begripits lättare - genom ett diskret användande av den gamla tarvliga illusionsteatern eller genom att slopa allt vad kulisser heter och ta det hela som en uppläsning på obelamrat scenrum.' "B. B-n", 'Till Damaskus Part III, Konserthusteatern's Strindberg premiere'

Writing for *Stockholms Tidningen* under the pseudonym 'Robin Hood', Bengt Idestam-Almquist took a more balanced view, setting Lindberg and his production in a broader context of theatrical practice.<sup>55</sup> He stated that Lindberg had taught Stockholm its 'ABC' of modern theatre, and continued that:

When one saw the futurist-cubist triangles Jon-And put up ... one thought director Lindberg's modernity seemed rather outdated. One could already see *Romeo and Juliet* in Moscow like this for a very long time. ... But the fears proved unfounded. ... Against Jon-And's futuristic triangles were naturalistic room interiors with chairs from the 1800s ... [a] table with flowers and candles and gentlemen in evening dress, vintage 1920s. This mixture of naturalism and futurism is the theatrical art's latest development stage.<sup>56</sup>

Being 'modern' was a concern for reviewers. Having both lived and worked in Russia,<sup>57</sup> Idestam-Almquist was well aware of developments in Russian theatre, holding them up as leaders as far as modern scenography was concerned. In his opinion, however, Lindberg's staging of *Till Damaskus* was competitive with his contemporaries thanks to the eclectic juxtaposition of distinct styles (Fig. 9).

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<sup>55</sup> *Stockholms Tidningen* gave the performance an enormous amount of coverage, sending no fewer than three reviewers to write about the production overall (Daniel Fallström), the music (Kurt Atterberg), and the politics of the production, subtitled 'So called intermission' (Bengt Idestam-Almquist).

<sup>56</sup> 'När man såg de futurist-kubistiska trianglar Jon-And ställt upp ... tycket man dr Lindbergs modernitet verkade litet förlegad. Så där gav man "Romeo och Julia" i Moskva redan för många, många år sedan. ... Men farhågorna visade sig obefogade. ... Mot Jon-And's futuristiska trianglar ställdes små naturalistiska rumsinteriörer med stolar från 1800-talet...bord med blommor och ljusmanschetter och herrar i frack, årgång 1920. Denna blandning av naturalism och futurism är teaterkonstens senaste utvecklingsetapp.' Bengt Idestam-Almquist: 'Strindbergs "Klostret" på Konserthusteatern', *Stockholms Tidningen*, 16/10/1926 (Robin Hood)

<sup>57</sup> Idestam-Almquist (1895-1983) had also worked in China and Siberia, and was schooled in Finland. He studied art history at Uppsala University before working at *Stockholms Tidningen*, predominantly as a film critic. He wrote numerous books on film, including *Den svenska filmens drama* (1939), *Rysk film. En konststart blir till* (1962), *Polsk film och den nya ryska vågen* (1964), and *Svensk film före Gösta Berling* (1974).

Figure 9: Harriet Bosse and Olof Sandborg as The Lady and The Stranger



By avoiding any pretence of realism and therefore geographical or temporal specificity, Lindberg hoped that the stage and lighting design would focus attention on the central idea of a religious, spiritual journey. In the same interview quoted above, he said that ‘We concentrate virtually everything on the actual road’, such as to depict ‘a human soul’s journey from darkness to light.’<sup>58</sup> The first sentence of his programme described *Till Damaskus* as a depiction of ‘Strindberg’s religious crisis around the turn of the century’, and that the entirety of the play ‘is a battle between two worldviews, the ironic and the

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<sup>58</sup> ‘Vi koncentrerar nu så gott som alltsammans på själva vägarna’ ... ‘en människosjäls vandring från mörker till ljus.’ Lindqvist, ‘Ett märkligt skådespel’

religious.<sup>59</sup> The entirety of the production was concentrated, both textually and visually, on exploring the idea of religious wandering, in the context of a setting in which ‘the unnatural [is] on approximately the same plane of reality as the natural. Anything can happen.’<sup>60</sup>

Rangström’s music was given the task of enhancing the religious themes of the script, confusing reality and unreality, and evoking a sense of two worldviews, one of which is deeply sardonic. According to reviewers, it was more successful than Jon-And’s set designs were. Ahead of the premiere, Lindberg had spoken of how ‘The piece’s pathetic religious traits are emphasised in the piece not least through the music composed by Ture Rangström’,<sup>61</sup> and the reviewers almost unanimously expanded on this idea. All were impressed by his use of the Concert House’s organ — the review for *Stockholms Tidningen* read that ‘Almost more than at the Concert Association’s organ concerts, the crowd received a new idea of what can be achieved with a modern organ.’<sup>62</sup> Beyond its role in the production, Rangström was considered here to be writing innovatively for the instrument, using the theatrical setting as a platform for an experimental compositional idiom.<sup>63</sup>

Admittedly, this review was written by Rangström’s friend and colleague, Kurt Atterberg —

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<sup>59</sup> ‘Strindbergs religiösa kris omkring sekelskiftet’, ‘en strid mellan två världsåskådningar, den humoristiska och den religiösa.’ Lindberg, *Till Damaskus* programme. As will be discussed later, the way in which Lindberg portrayed the superstitious-religious worldview is especially problematic in a supposed People’s Theatre. His depiction made Sweden’s Protestant working population a point of ridicule.

<sup>60</sup> ‘de utomnaturliga i ungefär samma verklighetsplan som det naturliga. Allt kan hända.’ *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> ‘Styckets religiöst patetiska drag betonas vid framförandet icke minst genom den av Ture Rangström komponerade musiken.’ Per Lindberg: ‘Inför “Damaskus”-premiären. En introduktion av Per Lindberg’, *Stockholms Tidningen*, 14/10/1926

<sup>62</sup> ‘nästan mer än vid Konsertföreningens orgelkonserter hum om vad som kan åstadkommas med en modern orgel.’ Kurt Atterberg: ‘Strindbergs “Klostret” på Konserthusteatern’, *Stockholms Tidningen*, 16/10/1926 (“K. A-g”)

<sup>63</sup> Lindberg was also keen to stress Rangström’s pioneering attitude, saying in the *Svenska Dagbladet* interview that ‘the concert hall’s great organ gives this opportunity to show some new sides of his immense capabilities — the composer has experimented with it and comes with several new ideas.’ ‘konserthusets stora orgel får här tillfälle att visa en del nya sidor av sin ofantliga kapacitet - kompositören har experimenterat med den och kommer med åtskilliga nyheter.’ Lindqvist, ‘Ett märkligt skådespel’

it could be dismissed as nepotistic praise if it were not also corroborated by *Social Demokraten's* review, which I believe was written by the composer Patrik Vretblad. The music was given considerable column space, showing a detailed appreciation of Rangström's contribution:

The task was twofold: first, with notes of formless, fantastic art which coloured some scenes, and second [music] with more solid form to give expression to religious thought moments. ... The organ has found a use here that can hardly have been imagined when it was erected in a secular venue. It was actually the most effective instrument for the incorporated music. Best seemed its pianissimo effects ... and occasionally fortissimo gestures had a good effect in dramatically charged scenes. The vocal contributions — often vocalised in a similar way to the voices in Alfvén's Fourth Symphony — enhanced the general effect ... The musical element was a valuable plus in the evening's experience, seamlessly aligned with the continuous theatrical drama [and] conducted by the composer himself.<sup>64</sup>

Not only did Vretblad comment on Rangström's organ writing, but he compared his vocal writing to Hugo Alfvén's Fourth Symphony, talking about the two genres with no hierarchical distinction between the two. Fallström also chose to comment on Rangström's use of the organ. His appraisal is especially useful for determining the impact of the music in relation to the rest of the production, because he alluded to the benefit of having the organ in light of the play's practical problems. Having posed the question as to whether *Till Damaskus* (III) was possible to stage, Fallström continued:

Per Lindberg ... has a faith that can move mountains, and a will and an imagination that makes the audience embrace everything with the same devotion. ... But still — despite the great skill and inventiveness he possesses as a director — he cannot help that the production has its shortcomings.

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<sup>64</sup> 'Uppgiften var tvåfaldig: dels att med toner av mera formlös, fantastisk art liksom färglägga vissa scener, dels att i mera fast form ge uttryck åt religiöst tänkta moment. ... Orgeln har här fått en användning, varpå man väl knappast tänkt, då den restes i en profan lokal. Den blev faktiskt det mest verkningfulla instrumentet för den infogade musiken. Bäst verkade dess pianissimo-effekter ... I enstaka fortissimoinsatser ernåddes också god verkan vid dramatiskt laddade scener. Med de vokala inläggen — oftast vokaliserande liksom rösterna i Alfvéns fjärde symfoni — ökades i allmänhet effekten ... Det musikaliska inslaget, som under tonsättarens ledning smidigt anpassades i den fortlöpande sceniska handlingen, var ett värdefullt plus i aftonens upplevelse.' Patrik Vretblad: 'Det tredje Damaskusdramat', *Social Demokraten*, 16/10/1926 (Patrik V)

'The Monastery' is of course a station-drama, ascending ever higher through the various stations. But when the spectator has his gaze pinned to the same spot scene after scene, he must have an exceptional imagination to go on the mountain climb. Gordon Craig has just recently warned in an interview against over-stretching the viewer's brain. And that is what Per Lindberg to a certain degree does and must do when he does not have real scenic resources at his disposal. There it lacks.

But instead he has something that no other theatre in the world possesses: an organ of the powerful effect that one believes that one is transported to a mighty cathedral. And this organ gave yesterday's audience's imagination and devotion wings and lifted it high over the present, it filled what the stage space could not provide and turned the Concert House into a holy place.<sup>65</sup>

For Fallström, it was the music that not only made the play stageable, but made it convincing. In the face of scenic difficulties, it was Rangström's contribution that conveyed the sense of religiosity necessary for Lindberg's production to succeed, and offset the monotony of the staging.<sup>66</sup>

## RELIGION

Rangström's music consists of seventeen movements, including a Prelude, Finale, entr'actes, and considerable quantities of underscoring, scored for choir, string ensemble, percussion, piano, and organ.<sup>67</sup> The opening Prelude (Appendix 9, Track 1) introduces the Alfvén-esque wordless chorus that Patrik Vretblad identified, entering on B-flat with a sinuous chromatic

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<sup>65</sup> 'Per Lindberg ... har en tro som kan försätta berg, och en vilja och en fantasi som gör att publiken anammar allt med samma andakt ... Men ändå — trots den stora skicklighet och uppfinningsförmåga han som regissör besitter — kan han ju icke hjälpa att framförandet har sina brister. 'Klostret' är ju ett vandringsdrama med ett stigande allt högre uppåt mot olika stationer. Men då åskådaren har sin blick scen efter scen fastnaglad på samma fläck måste han ju ha en alldeles otrolig fantasi för att kunna följa med på bergsbestigningen. Gordon Graigh [*sic.*] har just i en intervju i dagarna varnat för att överanstränga åskådarens hjärna. Och det är vad Per Lindberg i viss grad gör och måste göra då han inte har en verklig scens resurser till sitt förfogande. Där brister det. Men i stället har han någonting som ingen annan teater i världen förfogar över: en orgel av den mäktiga verkan att man tror sig förflyttad till en väldig domkyrka. Och denna orgel gav i går publikens fantasi och andakt vingar och lyfte den högt över nuet, den utfyllde vad scenrummet inte kunde ge och förvandlade Konserthuset till ett heligt rum.' Fallström, 'Strindbergs "Klostret" på Konserthusteatern'

<sup>66</sup> Note also that he is clearly abreast of English writing on theatre, mentioning Craig's theories, which were well disseminated in Sweden, as well as in Russia, where he collaborated with Stanislavsky on a production of *Hamlet*.

<sup>67</sup> For a full table of the movements and their cues, see Appendix 10.

line, over a B-flat pedal in the strings and keyboards (acting as the implied dominant of E-flat). The comparison to Alfvén's symphony is illuminating — the religiosity that Rangström evokes here is not that of a devout piety. The similarity between the scoring of Rangström's Prelude and Alfvén's symphony implies that Rangström interpreted Strindberg's search for spiritual wholeness as being dominated by the sexual and physical. From the outset, the choir is not used for religious adulation, but instead emulates the suggestive sensuality of Alfvén's symphony. The choir is divided into male and female parts, first singing in dialogue and then locking together for the resolution to E-flat in bar 14. As evinced by the reviewer's reference, the symphony was well-known in Sweden, and Rangström himself certainly associated the work with eroticism and sexual provocativeness. In an extensive article published posthumously, he described the symphony as 'a naked study in the archipelago, which in its time received extensive attention.' He continued wryly that 'we have the impression that these two human, solo voices in the orchestra, which according to the symphony's programme spend a cultural afternoon in Stockholm's outer archipelago, groan a little too much to be engaged in such a simple act.'<sup>68</sup>

The presence of the organ is the only obvious reference to the church in the opening bars, but this is subsumed within the thin, hollow scoring. The lack of tonal determination lets the music hang over the scene, generating a stasis commensurate with the Stranger's indecisive search for meaning. Furthermore the gnomic vocal phrase folds back in on itself, repeatedly returning to the B-flat, providing a musical referent for the metaphorical 'winding, undulating roads that never come to an end'<sup>69</sup> mentioned in the opening line of the play, as

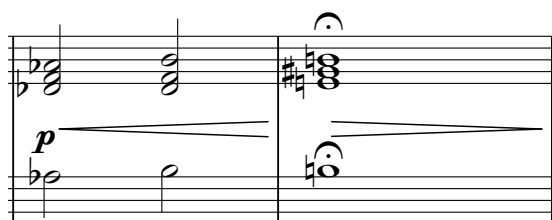
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<sup>68</sup> 'en naken-studie i skärgården, som på sin tid väckte sådant uppseende ... vi ha intrycket av att dessa två människor, soloröster i orkestern, vilka enligt symfoniens program tillbringa en kulturafton i Stockholms yttre skärgård, dock jämra sig en aning för mycket i förhållande till den enkla akten.' Ture Rangström: 'Musiken av Ture Rangström', *Unknown publication* (Musik- och Teaterbiblioteket, Stockholm, Rangström collection, Box 11)

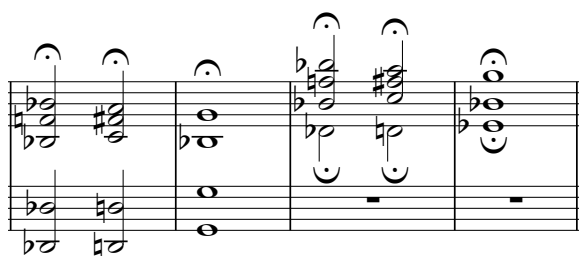
<sup>69</sup> 'dessa krokiga, backiga vägar, som aldrig taga slut.' Lindberg, *Till Damaskus*, 3

well as the serpent who dominates the entire drama. This indecision and conflict between the worlds of the Tempter and Confessor is maintained throughout, particularly in the way that Rangström handles the climax of the Prelude. Seven bars after the resolution to E-flat in bar 14, he shifts to an E major chord in the chorus and organ, while the strings (and piano's bass) maintain the B-flat pedal. This creates a tritone, the *diabolus in musica*, within E major, a key associated with God and heaven. In this single bar he encapsulates the crux of the play, setting temptation quite literally against redemption. This chord divides the 42-bar piece precisely in two, falling away into silence in bar 22 — reconciliation between the two is impossible, and the music is unable to continue. The three-chord progression that leads to E major (which I label the 'Redemption' motif) reappears in inversion later in the play, leading instead to G minor and E-flat major alternately to form a 'Temptation' motif, providing thematic continuity across the discrete pieces (Ex. 19).

Example 19a: *Till Damaskus*, 'Redemption' motif, 'Praeludium' bb. 20-21 organ part



Example 19b: *Till Damaskus*, 'Temptation' motif, mvt. 11 bb. 48-51 organ part



The 'Temptation' motif surfaces first in the Interlude for Act III before being sounded during the court scene of Act II. In this scene, Strindberg lampoons those who are less educated than the Tempter. Strindberg depicts the entire court as being unable to counter the Tempter's

arguments, blindly following his line of reasoning without pausing to think critically about it, or offer any kind of rebuttal. The Tempter acts as the defence counsel for a man accused of attempted murder. His defence rests on the argument that the man should not be charged because he acted under mitigating circumstances — he was in love with his intended victim and only shot at her when he discovered she had been having an affair. The crowd agree with the defence and call for the woman to be brought forward to stand trial. This referral of blame continues until the snake from the Garden of Eden is summoned forth to be tried for tempting Eve, at which point the parochial court flees in terror. The Tempter then jokes about his ability to disperse the court and undermine the justice process, continuing to mock the gullibility of the court.

As the play's centrepiece, the court scene had significant attention lavished on it by both Lindberg and his reviewers. Lindberg set it as an overt parody, explicitly aligning the production with the Tempter's stance. There was a decidedly elitist slant to his satire, which is particularly noticeable within the context of Lindberg claiming the Concert House as a People's Theatre. Guest actor Ingolf Schanche played the Tempter as 'a sceptical gentleman' to the letter, dressed in dark green evening dress and black cape (Fig. 10) — the incarnation of a cosmopolitan, middle-class intellectual. *Svenska Dagbladet* commented that he was 'a little too ballet-master-elegant in my opinion',<sup>70</sup> while Fallström called him 'elegant and superior in the role.'<sup>71</sup> The parochial court, however, was portrayed as Sweden's rural, working classes. *Svenska Dagbladet* labelled the scene as 'something midway between Döderhult and Arosenius.'<sup>72</sup> The latter, Ivar Arosenius (1878-1909), was an artist and illustrator, while the former refers to Axel Petersson Döderhultarn (1868-1925), one of the

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<sup>70</sup> 'litet för balletmästarelegant enligt min mening.' "A. B-r": "'Till Damaskus", en intressant premier', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 16/10/1926

<sup>71</sup> 'Han var elegant och överlägsen i rollen.' Fallström, 'Strindbergs "Klostret" på Konserthusteatern'

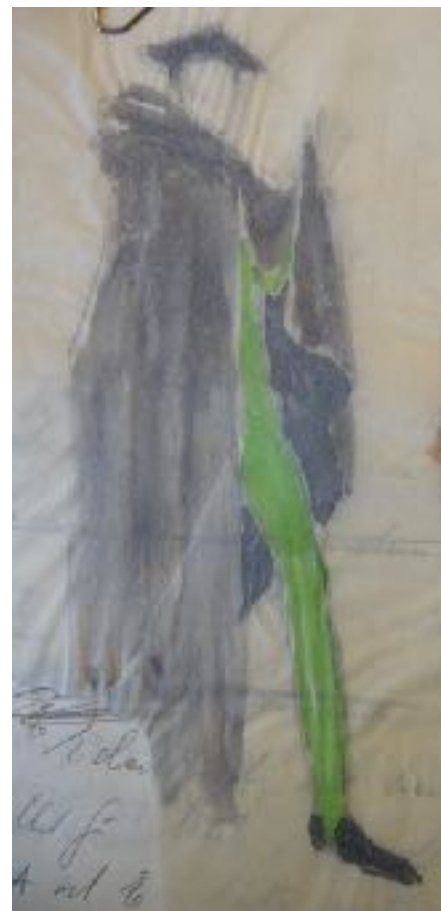
<sup>72</sup> 'någoting mist emellan Döderhult och Arosenius.' "A. B-r", 'Till Damaskus, en intressant premier'

best-known artists in Sweden. He was famous for small wood carvings of country people, usually participating in daily activities (Fig. 11). By 1912 his work had been exhibited across the world, with images of his carvings featured on postcards and in newspapers, becoming emblematic of Sweden's rural population.<sup>73</sup> It is his work that multiple reviewers correctly identified as an influence in the court scene. Lindberg himself explained that he had structured this scene as a Döderhultarn tableau, using the style to convey 'namely some farmers of the old belief and superstition — about the devil, for example — which has been rendered approximately in Döderhultarn style.'<sup>74</sup>

Figure 10a: Ingolf Schanche as The Tempter

Figure 10b: Colour costume sketch for

The Tempter from Lindberg's notebook



<sup>73</sup> Harley Refsal: *Woodcarving in the Scandinavian Style* (New York: Sterling, 1992) 27-28

<sup>74</sup> 'några bönder av gammal tro och uppfattning — om djävulen t.ex. — vilka styrts ut ungefär i döderhultarstil.' Lindqvist, 'Ett märkligt skådespel'

Figure 11: Döderhultarn figures (Image: Boberger for Wikimedia Commons)



Lindberg's choice of style for the court scene adds a classist element to Strindberg's attack on parochial justice. Within the walls of the enormous, neoclassical Concert House, it emphasised that Lindberg's was a selective People's Theatre, still predominantly patronised by the middle-classes. The condescending undertone of this scene was captured in Erik Wettergren's analysis:

For this scene Lindberg has made a grotesque Döderhultarn old man of gnarled wood and funeral hat over his ears, with giggling chubby-cheeked girls and boys who are so awkwardly stupid, their arms hanging at double length — all a hilarious contrast to the Tempter's snake-like elegance.<sup>75</sup>

The targets of Strindberg's humour were the gullible, the superstitious, and the uneducated, which Lindberg associated here with Sweden's lower classes. This, it seems, was well received by the Stockholm press, Olof Rabenius calling the scene 'The highlight of the whole show.'<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> 'Av denna scen har Lindberg gjort en grotesk med Döderhultsgubbar av knöligt virke och med begravningshatten över öronen, med fnissande äppelkindade flickor och pojkar som äro så tafatt dumma, att deras hängande armar fått dubbel längd - alltsammans en dråplig kontrast till Frestarens orm-elegans.' Erik Wettergren: 'Till Damaskus III på Konserthusteatern', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, 18/10/1926

<sup>76</sup> 'Höjdpunkten i hela föreställningen'. "Rbs": 'Till Damaskus: Urpremiär på Konserthusscenen', *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*, 16/10/1926

Example 20: *Till Damaskus*, mvt. 12, bb. 22-25

The musical score for Example 20, measures 22-25, is presented in a standard orchestral layout. The Organ and Piano parts play a rhythmic pattern of sixteenth notes in the lower register, marked with a '6' and a fermata. The Violin I and II parts have a trill (tr) in measure 22 and then play sustained notes in measures 24 and 25. The Timpani part plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in measures 24 and 25. The score is marked with fortissimo (fff) dynamics in measures 24 and 25.

Rangström's accompaniment and Interlude for the scene enhanced this interpretation.

Rangström himself called the court scene 'ironic'.<sup>77</sup> The G minor/E-flat major construction of the 'Temptation' motif crudely opposes 'bad' and 'good' aspects of the same theme, and is introduced in the Interlude preceding the court scene. The same motif is heard again as underscoring during the trial (Track 2), played in the organ part when Eve claims that the serpent tempted her (hence labelling the motif 'Temptation'). In this context, the deliberate juxtaposition of the minor and major cadence parodies the indecision of the court presiding over the trial. Rangström's music is aligned with the Tempter's ironic worldview: the

<sup>77</sup> Helmer, 308

cadential division into two opposing states of bad and good here represents the simplistic worldview held by the crowd, naïvely dividing the world into two simple groups, contradicting the Tempter's calls for nuance. The rest of this movement is intentionally melodramatic, utilising all the stereotypical musical referents for villainy and impending doom: spread diminished chords, chromatic scales, string tremolos, and terraced dynamics all culminate in a thundering #V-I cadence in C minor, marked *fortississimo*, as the Tempter shouts 'Serpent! Answer!'<sup>78</sup> (Ex. 20). As the Tempter ponders Eve's defence, ascending diminished chords are alternated between the piano and organ over tritone tremolos in the strings, pushing the Tempter's invocation of the serpent from the sublime to the ridiculous. In Lindberg and Rangström's hands, Strindberg's court scene became a farce, the effectiveness of which relied on ridiculing well-known visual and musical idioms.<sup>79</sup>

## REALITIES & UNREALITIES

One of the most extraordinary moments in the entire play comes in the middle of the first act, where the Confessor is preparing the Stranger for his journey to the monastery and hands him a final cup of wine. He warns that the Stranger should not lose himself while contemplating the wine, as 'memories lie at the bottom [of the cup].'<sup>80</sup> The Stranger proceeds to do precisely this and loses himself in his memories, prompting what I term one of Strindberg's 'sensory monologues'. In these, the protagonist describes sounds, sights, or smells that are seemingly tangible only to themselves. The other on-stage characters (in this case the Confessor) rarely corroborate or deny the character's sensory claims. Here, the audience is clearly privy to the Stranger's recollections, the memories that the Confessor

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<sup>78</sup> 'Orm! Svara!' Lindberg, *Till Damaskus*, 48

<sup>79</sup> Ironically, Lindberg's approach falls foul of the mindset that he parodies, dividing the world into two discrete and oppositional camps without the possibility of overlap between them.

<sup>80</sup> 'det ligger minnen på botten.' Lindberg, *Till Damaskus*, 20

warns of, but the monologue stands as an isolated moment when the protagonist temporarily detaches himself from the spatio-temporal realm of the play.

This is precisely the kind of moment which Lindberg explained as 'the unnatural [being] on approximately the same plane of reality as the natural.' In the speech, the Stranger says 'I can hear a song, and I see ... I see it ... I saw it for a moment, as when a flag unfurls in a gust of wind, only to lie like a rag at the flagstaff, and one sees nothing more than a rag. I saw the whole of life in a second with its joys and sorrows, beauty and abjection.'<sup>81</sup> It is ambiguous what the 'it' is that the Stranger claims to see here — presumably it is the visual manifestation of the sounds that he claims to hear, or he could be referring to another image which remains unspecified, or indeed the second in which he sees 'the whole of life'. Lindberg's lighting cues show that the lights were changed at this moment, but there is no evidence that any projections were used for this scene.

On the page, this reads as a moment of extreme interiority, in which this sensory hallucination appears as an omen perceptible only to the Stranger himself. On stage, however, Rangström's music radically alters this moment. Not only is the monologue underscored, externalising the previously inaudible sounds, but it is scored for solo violin, contradicting the Stranger's statement that he hears a song. Where, then, does this leave the audience — or, indeed, the Stranger? Are we entering into an interior moment with the Stranger, hearing inside his mind, or is he hearing a sound that is audible to all? In either case, is it the audience's senses or the Stranger's who are deceived in identifying the source of the music? By contradicting the Stranger's assertion, Rangström's instrumentation contributes a lack of specificity to this already symbolic moment, leading the audience to

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<sup>81</sup> 'jag såg den ett ögonblick, som när en flagga blåser ut vid en vindstöt, för att sedan ligga som en trasa vid stängen, och man ser ingenting mer än en trasa. Jag såg hela livet i en sekund med dess fröjder och sorger, skönhet och uselhet.' *Ibid.*

question the reliability of their senses in the same way that Strindberg's characters do. Clearly, this contradiction is an explicit decision on Rangström's part rather than a lack of resources, given that a choir is used in other places in the score. In doing so, Rangström's music blurs the diegetic/non-diegetic boundary that is now so familiar from film. Ross Brown has written that off-stage orchestras created 'a new auditory space ... which somehow bridged the oppositional divide between audience and stage, and which "belonged" to both.'<sup>82</sup> Rangström takes this one step further: the orchestra crosses the divide not only between audience and stage, but between memory and reality, and the personal and collective. The monologue is both preceded and succeeded by the Confessor saying 'Wait a minute, I'll go and order the ferry',<sup>83</sup> suggesting that this recollection suspends the temporal order of the play. Consequently this scene seems to set up a direct exchange between the Stranger and the audience, creating a temporal space beyond the reach of the other characters, and it is primarily through sound that the Stranger communicates with the audience.

This elision between the protagonist and his surrounding music is especially pronounced as Rangström scores the monologue so that the Stranger's voice blends into the instruments, becoming a part of the orchestration.<sup>84</sup> Rangström's score shows that the vocal cues were carefully timed, with some of the vocal entries written into the manuscript (Fig. 12).

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<sup>82</sup> Ross Brown: *Sound: A Reader in Theatre Practice* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) 64

<sup>83</sup> 'Vänta lite, så går jag och beställer om färjan!' Lindberg, *Till Damaskus*, 20

<sup>84</sup> As with *As You Like It*, the vocal timbres of the actors were commented on by reviewers, forming an integral part of their appraisal of the play's sounds. Erik Wettergren commented that as the Tempter, Schanche's voice had a 'surgical precision' ('kirurgiska skärpa'), while Nils Ahrén's Confessor had 'heavy words and sonorous life' ('tung och välljudande liv'). Göran Lindblad, writing for *Svenska Dagbladet*, added to this that Ahrén's voice 'harmonised truly with the Rangströmesque music's ponderous organ noise' ('hans stämma harmonierade verkligen med den rangströmska musikens tunga orgelbrus'). Here he explicitly points to this blending of voice and instruments, Ahrén not only being heard at the same time as the organ, but in harmony with it, creating another line in the ensemble. Göran Lindblad: "'Till Damaskus" på Konserthusteatern', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 18/01/1926. I have included a recording of only the music for this scene as Track 3, and only the monologue as Track 4 to illustrate how combining them impacts on both.

Figure 12: *Till Damaskus* score, mvt. 4, bb. 32-37

Appendix 11 and the attendant recording (Track 5) represent my best approximation of how the voice and music would have coincided.<sup>85</sup> Where the Stranger actually begins speaking is not indicated in the score — Rangström only wrote in the Stranger’s line ‘and oblivion, and songs, and power’<sup>86</sup> as the cue for the movement, and then some significant time later followed it with ‘as when a flag blows’, leaving it undetermined at precisely which point the Stranger begins his monologue. Between these two lines there is very little speech, but Rangström provides a violin solo that is over a minute and a half long. The rest of the Stranger’s monologue is relatively carefully annotated, so I took the pacing of the rest of the speech as a guide for determining the point of entry. After several attempts (including starting the monologue halfway through the violin solo), having the Stranger’s speech begin

<sup>85</sup> The Confessor’s lines are absent on the recording as we did not have access to a second actor, but there is a sufficient gap left to accommodate his lines with this placement. Additionally, the pacing at the end is likely incorrect — there should be a larger pause between the Stranger’s phrases ‘till stjärnorna...ha, nu är jag uppe i stjärnorna’ to correspond more closely to the score provided in the Appendix.

<sup>86</sup> ‘Och glömska, och sånger, och makt’. Lindberg, *Till Damaskus*, 20

when the rest of the instruments enter seemed the most plausible solution. Lindberg wrote 'Paus' in his script after both the Stranger's and Confessor's lines that preceded the monologue,<sup>87</sup> so presumably these were delivered during the violin solo with the Stranger stopping to listen.<sup>88</sup>

If this placement is correct, then the interaction between voice and music adds significant layers of ambiguity to the passage. Placing the Stranger's call for silence at the end of the violin solo makes it unclear whether the song that the Stranger refers to was the violin, or whether he does not hear this and he only hears the music when the other instruments enter. And as can be heard on the recording, coordinating the voice and instruments requires some unexpected changes in syntax — there is a significant gap between 'I saw it for a moment', and 'as when a flag unfurls', creating a further level of obscurity in the passage. The break renders it ambiguous as to whether the unfurling flag refers to the song or to 'the whole of life'.<sup>89</sup> Synchronising voice and instruments in this way deepens the sense of temporal suspension in the monologue, as it is the music that determines the pace and direction of the actor's delivery, not the inflections and patterns of everyday speech. This change in emphasis is precisely what Lindberg meant by 'rhythmic interpretation': at this moment in the script, the atmosphere is dreamlike, ethereal, and clearly at a distance from the conversation scene which immediately precedes it. In performance, then, Lindberg foregrounds the music, building the rest of the scene around the tone and rhythm of Rangström's score. When the

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> It is also unclear from Rangström's score and Lindberg's script how the interaction ended. There are several seconds of music following the end of the Stranger's speech, so unless he spent a lot of time looking for the Lady who may have been concealed, presumably the final seconds of the movement underscored the ensuing dialogue between the two.

<sup>89</sup> Elizabeth Paley also highlights the importance of the performer in determining the meaning of a text in melodrama. She writes of melodrama in Schumann's *Manfred* that 'performers take charge of the inflection and, especially, the placement of their speech against the musical background, which in *Manfred* can radically alter the meaning of the work. We therefore must proceed with caution when making analytical claims based on text layout.' Paley, 17

script requires it, the Stranger's words are subordinated to the sonic forces that surround him — and these are sounds that appear to both support the Stranger (through the shift in key at 'solen'), and to contradict him as he speaks (through the choice of instrumentation) emphasising the idea of multiple (un)realities, all of which overlap simultaneously.

Rangström's choice of a solo violin also layers a complementary musical symbolism into the scene. Instead of hearing the choir, more traditionally associated with the church, the solo violin holds connotations with death and the devil (for example Giuseppe Tartini's G Minor Sonata colloquially termed the 'Devil's Trill Sonata', or Paganini's thirteenth Caprice nicknamed the 'Devil's Laughter'). The Tempter, who represents both the devil and the iniquitous elements of the Stranger's personality, has not been introduced at this stage in the play. By opting for this instrumentation, Rangström not only foreshadows his appearance, but suggests that this is the moment at which these aspects of the Stranger's character begins to surface. In doing so, he reinforces the association of temptation with the feminine. The violin enters after the Confessor warns against the Stranger's memories of women, and it underscores the first appearance of the Lady as the Confessor leaves, implying that the Stranger's preoccupation with redemption through woman is doomed from the outset. If Rangström had chosen to set this moment for voice or organ, the Lady would represent a viable possibility for redemption, rather than the root of all that draws him away from atonement and peace in the monastery. The organ enters shortly before the Lady's entrance, musically implying the protagonist's battle between redemption and temptation, as in the Prelude, but here linking it explicitly to his relationship with the Lady.

## **WOMEN**

What of the pieces that Rangström liked so much, the 'Meditations', or 'Tomb Sacrifices'? These refer to two short movements that he arranged for string orchestra, derived from

movements three and thirteen in the original incidental score.<sup>90</sup> They provide accompaniment for the appearance of the Stranger's daughter, Sylvia, in Act I (movement three), and underscoring for the Lady's Act III monologue (movement thirteen), in which she implores the Stranger to stay with her. Both these passages discuss a love of children and family — a value held dear by both Rangström and Strindberg, who were devoted to their children<sup>91</sup> — and the Stranger's relationship with his ex-wife. Movement thirteen (Appendix 12) is one of the longest stretches of music in the play, underscoring the Tempter and Lady's fight for the Stranger to follow them after the court scene. Starting at the Tempter's line 'Come, I'll show you the world you think you know, but don't',<sup>92</sup> the piece continues through their discussion of illusory reality, God's commandments, and motherhood, only concluding at the Stranger's line 'Reconciliation with mankind, through a woman!'<sup>93</sup>

Strindberg covers an extraordinary amount of material in a short space of time, and Rangström's setting is similarly expansive. He begins with a *fugato* for organ and strings, intermittently recalling motifs from the court scene, before finally moving into a D-flat Adagio for piano and strings (the material which would later become 'Tomb Sacrifices'). This coincides with the Lady's line 'I beg you, by the love that once bound us',<sup>94</sup> which Rangström prepares with material from the third movement (the 'Meditations'), associated with the Stranger's daughter. This Adagio, in the context of the script, removes the Stranger and the

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<sup>90</sup> These are available online in an arrangement for piano. Ture Rangström: *Två Meditationer* (Svensk Musik) [http://www.mic.se/avd/mic/prod/micpdf.nsf/dl/8596f1.pdf/\\$file/8596f1.pdf](http://www.mic.se/avd/mic/prod/micpdf.nsf/dl/8596f1.pdf/$file/8596f1.pdf) (Accessed 15/08/2017)

<sup>91</sup> Strindberg's adoration of his children is well-documented; for Rangström's relationship with his children, see Atterberg, 'Om Ture Rangström'

<sup>92</sup> 'Kom skall jag visa dig världen, som du tror dig känna, men icke känner!' Lindberg, *Till Damaskus*, 49

<sup>93</sup> 'Försoningen med mänskligheten, genom kvinnan' *Ibid.*, 52. Presumably the gesture of reconciliation through a woman is a reference to Goethe's *Faust*.

<sup>94</sup> 'Jag ber, vid denna kärlek, som en gång oss band' *Ibid.*, 51

Lady from their immediate circumstances while they engage in a Freudian episode where the Lady transforms from his wife to his mother, extolling the virtues of motherhood.

While Strindberg constantly expresses a longing for women to act as a kind of channel for redemption, Lindberg's adaptation critiques this attitude. In Strindberg's original, the Tempter leaves after this discussion and there is a scene change — it is unclear how much time passes between the Stranger and Lady's discussion, and her subsequent disappearance. Lindberg, however, omits both the scene change and the Tempter's exit, such that the entire sequence becomes one of the few moments which is explicitly a dream. Instead of leaving, the Tempter stays on stage for the entire episode and then asks 'What have you been dreaming? Tell me!'<sup>95</sup> The Tempter's question informs the audience that he does not hear or see the interaction between the Lady and the Stranger, and Lindberg's lighting cues show a shift for the entirety of the Adagio — this is clearly a period of dreamt unreality.

Rangström's music corroborates this. The D-flat of the Adagio is achieved via an enharmonic shift from C#minor in the preceding bars, the sudden key change such a striking move that it evokes the same atmosphere of parody that characterises the court scene. The setting is a pastiche of a lullaby, with an overtly saccharine melody over a lilting accompaniment that continues with no rhythmic change for the duration of the Adagio. As the Stranger calls out to the Lady, asking her why she is leaving, the strings fall away, the accompaniment fading as the Tempter gives voice to the Stranger's realisation that his idealisation of woman is, ultimately, unsustainable. The Stranger's desire for 'Reconciliation with mankind, through a woman' is, in Lindberg's production, explicitly exposed as a fallacy. In a play where the division between reality and unreality is constantly blurred, this scene and the attitude

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<sup>95</sup> 'Vad drömde du? Tal om!' *Ibid.*, 52

which it represents is the only one which was labelled as a dream — an impossibility even within the world of the impossible.

Example 21: *Till Damaskus*, mvt. 3, bb. 7-10

The image shows a musical score for an organ, labeled 'Organ' on the left. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff, both in 3/4 time. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The music is in D minor. The first staff (treble clef) contains a sequence of chords: a D minor triad (D, F, A), a D minor triad with a sharp (D, F, A#), and a D minor triad. The second staff (bass clef) contains a sequence of notes: a whole note D, a half note F, and a whole note A. A dashed line above the treble staff indicates an octave shift, labeled '8va-', starting from the first measure and ending at the end of the second measure. The music is marked with a repeat sign at the end of the second measure.

By contrast, the third movement is one of the most unassuming pieces of the entire score, a quiet *Andantino* for solo organ, in a D minor that provides respite from the funereal F# minor that closes the preceding Procession. The tone is that of quiet reflection — as the Stranger says that life would regain meaning for him if he were to meet his daughter,<sup>96</sup> the organ sounds a variant of the ‘Redemption’ motif that resolves onto D minor (bars 7-10, 39-42, Ex. 21). Both times it is heard, it is immediately repeated up an octave, the change in register making the motif sound like an echo or a recollection, perhaps calling the Stranger away from the Monastery and back to his family. Beginning at the Confessor’s line ‘Have you seen something impossible?’,<sup>97</sup> Rangström’s underscoring presents another moment where his music renders the reality of the onstage action ambiguous, creating a synchronicity between visions and reality. The combined music and lighting suggest a moment of remembrance (or, as Rangström puts it, meditation), such that it is unclear whether the ensuing interaction with Sylvia is a dream, memory, or vision of the Stranger’s, or whether she appears onstage to be visible to the Confessor. Simultaneously, the music acts as underscoring for the Stranger’s emotions at being confronted by his daughter, the offstage music occupying the

<sup>96</sup> ‘Men jag fruktar att om jag kunde få se henne, skulle livet åter få värde för mig.’ *Ibid.*, 11

<sup>97</sup> ‘Har du sett något omöjligt?’ *Ibid.*, 10

space regularly filled by the Hollywood film score.<sup>98</sup> The modest organ melody also presents a dual characterisation of the young girl: its simplicity captures the uncomplicated memory of Sylvia that the Stranger holds from her childhood, whilst the dissonances and abrupt silences that punctuate the melody suggest a more accurate characterisation: that the Stranger's image of Sylvia is at odds with the woman she has become.<sup>99</sup> The vast range of emotions contained in these short pieces is perhaps why Rangström chose them as his favourite work. In the context of Strindberg's text, they touch on a man's changing relationships with his daughter, mother, and wife; his struggle with atheism and religion, and the impossibility of any single reality; the very things which, as Strindberg put it, give life its value. These movements may be 'only a few bars of Pentecostal music' — but they are bars which contain the 'meaningful inner action of humanity'.

## CONCLUSION

While composing his First Symphony, *August Strindberg in memoriam*, Rangström wrote a note on his sketch for the finale's theme: 'To A. Sg! You were the fire, the wind and the ocean wave. Now you are gone. But your spirit lives on.'<sup>100</sup> Strindberg's 'spirit' certainly continued to inspire Rangström's work, from his 1915 opera *Kronbruden* ('The Crown Bride', based on Strindberg's play of the same name), to *Vårhymn* ('Spring hymn') in 1942, composed for the unveiling of the Strindberg statue in Tegnérlunden. Strindberg even appeared in works seemingly unassociated with him: Rangström's final opera, *Gilgamesj* ('Gilgamesh', 1943-4) contains themes from the First Symphony. In 1921, Rangström explained why the author

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<sup>98</sup> See for example Claudia Gorbman: *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1987)

<sup>99</sup> As this melody returns throughout the play, it reappears in moments when the Stranger persists in falsely idealising the female characters and motherhood.

<sup>100</sup> 'Till A. Sg! Du var elden, vinden och hafsets våg. Nu är du borta. Men din ande förbliver.' Rangström quoted in Helmer, 97

provided such a lasting muse for him — in strikingly similar terms to his 1914 symphony dedication, he wrote that ‘Strindberg caught me first and did not let go, it was the fire, the foreboding, the pliancy and the defiance.’<sup>101</sup> Rangström was captured by the multiplicity of Strindberg’s moods, which provided the composer with a wealth of possible sources of inspiration. Beyond this, Strindberg’s intensely psychological and expressionist outlook was one that Rangström could personally identify with. As Macgregor has pointed out, Rangström fictionalised his own life as much as Strindberg did, and in the older author he found a role model with corresponding interests and a similar capacity for self-dramatisation — Strindberg’s life and literature showed Rangström a way to musically articulate his lived experience.<sup>102</sup>

Rangström’s score for *Till Damaskus* focuses on precisely this articulation of internal turmoil, assigned the tasks of drawing out the play’s central theme of devotion versus temptation, and blurring the boundary between the Stranger’s dreams and reality. In doing so, Rangström’s music helped transform a drama that was largely considered unstageable, not least by parodying Strindberg’s more unpalatable theories about women and motherhood and helping to transform the courtroom scene into a farce. Additionally, his use of the concert organ was a particular asset for the production, inspiring praise from critics and adding to the sense of ‘theatricality’ that Lindberg hoped to restore to Sweden’s stages. This was music designed with the goal of creating art for large audiences in mind — it was written to enhance spectacle, generate publicity, and assist in updating the text for a contemporary audience.

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<sup>101</sup> ‘Strindberg fångade mig först och släpper inte taget, det var elden, aningen, vekheten och trotset.’ Ture Rangström: ‘Dikten och musik än en gång’, *Svenska Dagbladet*, 26/01/1921

<sup>102</sup> Macgregor 10, 64. See also Rangström’s commentary on his First Symphony, written in 1942: Ture Rangström: ‘Kommentar till *Strindbergssymfoni*’, *Röster i Radio*, 13/05/1942

## THE CURTAIN FALLS

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In his memoirs, the French composer Charles Gounod wrote that ‘For a composer, there is ... one road to follow in order to make a name, and that is the theatre.’<sup>1</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century, incidental scores were many composers’ most identifiable public utterances, offering the opportunity to communicate with vast audience numbers. To this day, movements from Sibelius's theatre scores remain some of his best-known works. And although Stenhammar and Rangström’s theatrical offerings may now have fallen into obscurity, in the early twentieth-century their theatrical works earned them considerable recognition. For these composers, the theatre was as valuable a platform for dramatic works as the operatic stage — sometimes more so, as writing for small forces and having to adapt to the demands and constraints of the production allowed composers to experiment with new styles and ideas.

The case studies in this thesis demonstrate how extensive many incidental scores were, and therefore how significant a portion of music history is missing without them. Far from being marginal works that were undertaken only for financial gain, the scores presented here fulfilled multiple functions in these composers’ lives. *Scaramouche* offered an experimental platform in Sibelius’s time of personal crisis; Stenhammar found a way of reconciling his aesthetic and political ideals in *As You Like It*, and in *Svanevit* and *Till Damaskus* both Sibelius and Rangström had the opportunity to work closely with Strindberg’s writing, responding in very different ways to the author who inspired them. For composers like Sibelius, about whom there is already a vast literature in English, the incorporation of these scores offers a richer understanding of his work and the cultural context in which he lived.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Gounod trans. Annette Crocker: *Memoirs of an Artist* (New York: Rand, McNally & Co., 1895) 166

There is so little written on incidental music at all that our understanding of most major composers would be enhanced by increased study of their theatrical endeavours, not least Nielsen, Grieg, Shostakovich, Poulenc, and Debussy. For composers who have less in the way of an established reception, such as Stenhammar and Rangström, there is an opportunity to approach their symphonic works through their incidental music, rather than the other way around. Through the broad interdisciplinary lens needed to study incidental music, it is possible to see these composers not necessarily as conservatives writing regressive music against a progressive European mainstream, but as individuals who thought differently from their European counterparts about what 'progressive' meant in a musical context. Certainly incidental music was central to the outputs of Moses Pergament and Leevi Madetoja (and outside of Scandinavia, English composers like Granville Bantock and Delius, and Russians including Ilya Sats), whose orchestral music might be understood very differently if viewed in the kind of framework set out in this thesis, rather than attention being focused primarily on their endeavours in the concert hall.

The necessarily interdisciplinary nature of incidental music has ramifications both analytically and theoretically. Analytically, incidental music requires a holistic approach that can account for the relationships *between* media as well as *within* media. The case studies presented in this thesis have demonstrated some of the possibilities as well as the significant challenges that are posed by this mode of analysis. Methodologies developed to analyse film music, dance, and opera offer some fruitful starting points, but there are enough substantial dissimilarities that none of these methodologies can be transferred wholesale to incidental music, which is still in need of its own analytical theories. Unlike film music, when analysing historical theatre productions it is almost impossible to point to direct moments of synchronicity as the object of study is unavailable to the analyst: we cannot press pause, rewind, or rewatch to judge how the various media act in tandem or in counterpoint. The

continuous presence of the singing voice in opera presents different issues when compared with the combination of music and spoken word present in melodrama, as does the continuous music but lack of speech in dance productions.

The impossibility of accessing the original production makes reconstructive — or perhaps better termed recreative — performance an exceptionally valuable tool for incidental music analysis. Even when the reconstructive performance is conducted with historical, analytical questions in mind rather than being staged primarily to appeal to a contemporary audience, it necessitates making significant creative decisions on the part of the analyst and the performers in question. This is illustrated by both *As You Like It* and *Till Damaskus*, where even the moments where there appear to be very clear indications of what words would have coincided with which notes pose more questions than they answer. Lindberg's direction book for *As You Like It* often contradicts Stenhammar's score, and Rangström's instructions for the melodramas in *Till Damaskus* frequently result in excessively long pauses in speech in order for the annotations to be adhered to. The quantity and magnitude of the resulting decisions that the analyst is forced to make illustrates how variable and contingent the meaning of incidental music is, and how drastically the music could change if transferred between productions and spaces. It also points to an important difference between incidental music and concert hall music about assumptions concerning textual fidelity and the importance of composers' intentions. The autograph scores for *Svanehvitt*, *As You Like It*, and *Till Damaskus* all indicate that large quantities of material were recomposed, cut, or added during rehearsal. Not only does the score not represent as totemic a status as for "absolute" music regarding the music's ontological status, but the way in which the scores have been rewritten makes explicit the dispersal of authorial power from one individual to a nexus of multiple collaborators. Presumably not all of the decisions made about musical rewritings would have been solely those of the composer in question, and even where they were these

rewritings were prompted by circumstances external to the composer's initial response to the dramatic text. Incidental music does not conform to the expectations of the musical work as laid out by Jean-Jacques Nattiez, that 'the thing that ensues from the composer's creative act is the score; the score is the thing that renders the work performable and recognisable as an entity, and enables the work to pass through the centuries.'<sup>2</sup> For incidental music, the emphasis is moved from creation as individual act to creation as collaborative process, decentering the importance of both the composer and the score within the music's ontological hierarchy.

Performative analysis is instructive at both a macro- and micro-level; even before performance begins, attempting reconstructions illustrates the dynamics of working within different kinds of collaboration, and can indicate how much of the final production might have relied on compromise, been determined by especially forceful personalities, or been dictated by chance, finances, and the availability of particular materials and particular spaces. At a more local level, performing extracts from Rangström's *Till Damaskus* made it apparent how important the performance space was to the sound of the production and illuminated why debates about the sound of actors' voices were so widely discussed at the turn of the century. Synchronising the music and voice at the places indicated in Rangström's score forced the actors to adopt a highly stylised manner of speaking, particularly as they were to make themselves heard over the large instrumental forces. Rangström and Lindberg treated the voice in some respects as an instrument within the theatrical and musical ensemble — it was not possible to have the kind of musical underscoring that Rangström wrote without moving away from naturalistic speech. The 'modern' sound of Lindberg's productions was as much about the voice as the music. Despite the insights that they offered, the performances conducted for this thesis were nonetheless limited by the omission of

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<sup>2</sup> Jean-Jacques Nattiez: *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) 71

visuals. The bodily presence of the actors — to say nothing of the set and costume design — changes the balance between media again, so mounting full stagings of these productions would be an invaluable avenue for future research.

The main focus of this thesis is historical, so primarily demonstrates the theoretical impact of accounting for incidental music in reference to modernism. As shown in Chapter Four, throughout the 1920s modernism accrued different connotations in different disciplines. By focusing primarily on concert-hall music we miss the discussions about modernity and modernism that were happening *between* disciplines. By writing incidental music, even when living within a musical culture that was beginning to be divided into modernist/not modernist, collaborating with some of the most prominent theatrical thinkers of the day helped composers like Stenhammar and Rangström find ways of thinking about composition and artistic progressiveness that were not focused on atonality. Situating these composers within Sweden's broader, cross-disciplinary discussions about modern culture provides an opportunity to conceive of Nordic responses to modernism in a way that avoids the strict binaries of modernist or not modernist, conservative or progressive. While these composers defined themselves in some ways against modernism — in Rangström's case, aggressively so — they also identified positively with the definition of modern culture that was specific to the Nordic countries. So a rejection of atonality was not just a rejection of Schoenberg and Germano-centric musical culture. It was also an adoption of the idea that modern, progressive culture needed to be explicitly political — that practitioners had a social responsibility to make their work accessible, and appeal to as many as possible. The collaborative nature of theatrical productions therefore blurs the boundaries between modernist and not modernist — as illustrated by *As You Like It*, multiple personalities often worked on the same project who had differing attitudes towards modernism according to their discipline, but were united in their pursuit of modern culture. It therefore becomes

extremely difficult to label these theatrical productions as modernist, but the question is supplanted by the more important issue of how these productions sought to be modern.

This perspective also moves away from the image of the Nordic countries as being peripheral to a European musical mainstream. Again, there is a balance needed between binary and more pluralistic conceptions of Nordic interactions with their neighbours. All the case studies for this thesis demonstrate how interconnected both Finland and Sweden were with the rest of Europe and Russia. Practitioners were well-travelled, creating a bi-directional movement of ideas in and out of Scandinavia, and critics published ideas from across the globe in the pages of Nordic newspapers and journals. Consequently many cultural developments in Scandinavia had a lot in common with European ventures, as shown by Lindberg's similarities to Reinhardt. Nonetheless, Stenhammar and Rangström conceived of the Nordic countries as constituting their own cultural bloc, with an identity distinct from central Europe and from Russia. For these composers, the Nordic countries were their own centre — they drew inspiration from their Scandinavian colleagues, as well as from those elsewhere in the world. They were not alone in this: Stenhammar and Nielsen's correspondence indicates that in Denmark, Nielsen looked both south and sideways for his influences, corresponding heavily with Scandinavians as well as with Europeans such as Julius Rabe. The dense interaction between Nordic practitioners during these years offers multiple avenues for further study, tracing the networks of influence across Scandinavia and how they developed as the twentieth century progressed.

When tracking the movement and progression of ideas, critics are an indispensable piece in the puzzle. Critics were the arbiters of musical taste within Scandinavia — not least because many critics were practitioners themselves, and used the newspapers as a platform from which to promote both their own musical priorities and the music of their friends. Nordic

newspapers are an as yet unstudied resource for understanding these countries' musical cultures at the turn of the century, but as this thesis has shown they were the places in which aesthetic debates were played out most publicly. They give significant insight into practitioners' personal views on their craft, and indicate which issues were discussed widely enough to warrant continued attention within the press. As shown in Chapters Three and Four, the relative merits of dance and the 'modern theatre problem' were sources of debate for several years. In particular, sustained discussion of the same topics offers a constant by which to measure shifts in cultural norms, as demonstrated by the 'modern theatre problem'.

That dance was a major topic of conversation throughout the late 1910s is illustrative of how important dance was to cultural life during this period — in Sweden and Finland, at least, it supplanted opera as the foremost contemporary art form. Discussions about Sibelius's dramatic music very often centre around his lack of a full-scale opera rather than on the music that he *did* complete,<sup>3</sup> which points towards important shifts in early twentieth-century cultural dynamics. It was not opera that Sweden exported to central Europe but ballet, via the Ballets Suédois, and with *Scaramouche* Sibelius pre-empted composers like Bartok, Milhaud, and Poulenc, who followed the trend for balletic pantomime with *The Miraculous Mandolin* (1918-24), *La Bœuf sur le toit* (1919), and *Les Biches* (1924) respectively. The history of ballet and dance in the Nordic countries is another history that is waiting to be written, and would further expand understanding of Nordic repertoire by including composers such as Hugo Alfvén and Viking Dahl, whose best-known works in their lifetimes included ballet. What little English-language scholarship currently exists on Alfvén portrays him as a relic of the nineteenth century rather than a composer of the twentieth thanks to his unreservedly tonal idiom, but reframing compositions like the ballet-pantomime *Bergakungen* (The Mountain King, 1923) and ballet *The Prodigal Son* within the context of the Nordic vogue

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<sup>3</sup> See Mäkela, *Jean Sibelius*, 204

for contemporary dance may open up less limiting perspectives on Alfvén's aesthetic orientations.

Per Lindberg's Concert House project did not last long — the final performance was *Agamemnon*, in January 1929.<sup>4</sup> But Lindberg continued to pursue his dream of a People's Theatre at a variety of different venues, such as the Gripsholm festival in 1937 where the castle grounds provided the theatre stage.<sup>5</sup> And the debate about who the theatre was *for* persisted long after his death. In the 1960s, the Swedish theatrical world again witnessed a clash between the avant-garde and the more established theatres, with the former arguing that art should not be for only a limited few. Tomas Forser interprets this as part of Lindberg's legacy, arguing that he threw the debate about theatre accessibility into the public sphere.<sup>6</sup> This was the context in which Stenhammar and Rangström were composing — for them, composing for the modern theatre meant being accessible. It meant creating spectacle, and making their music appealing for mass audiences. This was what made their music modern — by rejecting modernism, they embraced modernity.

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<sup>4</sup> The incidental music was composed by Hilding Rosenberg.

<sup>5</sup> Grevenius, 152

<sup>6</sup> 'Det var med Per Lindberg det började.' Forser, 121. Stylistically, Lindberg's impact on Sweden's drama during his own lifetime was so far-reaching that Beijer shrewdly described Olof Molander's 1927 production of *Phédre* at the Royal Theatre 'Per Lindberg's greatest triumph to date.' Agne Beijer, *Stockholms Dagblad*, 06/10/1927 quoted in Marker & Marker, 244

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