

Characterisation in Contemporary Opera and Music Theatre



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Dedication

To Celia, Orison and Robert.

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Abstract

This doctoral research comprises a practitioner-based reflective enquiry to bridge the gap between theory and practice and enhance my compositional output. In tandem with the composition of my chamber opera, *The Exile*, I have undertaken research into characterisation within the context of opera and musical theatre, with a focus on both the delineation of individual characters and the context in which they appear. Parameters of the work are discussed in comparison with canonic works of both opera and music theatre. Contemporary uses of leitmotif, representation of speech and folk music within operatic works are acknowledged and their influence on the composition is presented along with musical examples. The conventional composer-librettist partnership is discussed, along with suggestions for how respective roles for composer and librettist have evolved in recent times. An insight into the collaborative compositional process is presented in the final chapter, as my work with librettist Gillian Pencavel is discussed. *The Exile* is an original work informed by this research and is a contribution to the repertoire as well as an investigation into many compositional techniques presented in this thesis.

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Introduction

This dissertation presents an exploration of characterisation in contemporary opera and music theatre to inform the composition of my chamber opera *The Exile*. In preparation for writing the work, I explored various parameters of opera composition with a particular focus on character representation and development. Areas explored are the composer-librettist partnership, vocal writing, characterisation of context and folk music influence. In this introduction I will outline why they were chosen as focal points and how they relate to the finished work. The research element culminates in a comparison with Szymanowski's *King Roger*, a work which influenced the composition of *The Exile* in terms of character relationships and development, and a final chapter detailing the working process, in particular discussions with the librettist.

Respective roles of composer and librettist are explored in chapter one, along with a discussion of how conflicting ideas might be resolved in a respectful working partnership. Recent trends in contemporary opera feature the involvement of high-profile literary figures as librettists, which has somewhat altered the perceived creative hierarchy greatly from the 18th century paradigm of the classical composer-librettist. Having decided to compose an opera for my doctoral portfolio, there was the initial consideration of whether a librettist was necessary to complete the work. Works such as Glass' *Einstein on the Beach* and Cage's *Roaratorio*, an aleatoric work informed by existing texts challenge the concept of the necessity of a separate librettist to work in collaboration with a composer.

The composition of recitative-like sections was also a challenge with *The Exile*, as most of the vocal music I had composed before undertaking this research was choral. Contemporary opera features representations of speech as a means of delineating individual characters and representing conversation. This has subsequently evolved in the 20th century to evoke the use of *sprechgesang*, an associated compositional technique apparent in Berg's *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*, two works which inform this research and contribute to the 20th century operatic canon. *Parlando* styles in operatic writing in the 20th and 21st centuries are also explored. Rather than a chronological overview of operatic works composed from the 20th century onwards, it is an investigation of recurring compositional techniques in presenting the voice of the operatic character.

In *The Exile*, the Irish Civil War in alternation with the Parisian bookshop is representative of Joyce's conflicted identity, but the bookshop setting adopts a character of its own. Chapter three investigates works where setting is a foundation which both influences and enhances the representation of the individual as well as adopting character itself through the manipulation of musical parameters. Folk music may also inform and represent the mindset of the characters. Characterisation of the context as discussed therein refers to the backdrop of the piece, whether the physical setting in which the piece is performed, or the imagined setting of the story. In the case of the former, works such as the aforementioned *Roaratorio* and Zimmerman's *Die Soldaten* emphasise the importance of the physical setting and manipulate it accordingly to enhance the effect of the piece on an audience. These works imply a concern for audience perception and, in the case of a later work, Thomas Rasch's *The Duchess of Malfi*, a preoccupation with audience involvement, as the piece is partly aleatoric. Therefore, the opera becomes a piece of immersive theatre.

All four characters in *The Exile* are given a palette of individual musical material which was referenced while composing the music. These ideas were informed by leitmotif and are often used in tandem when characters interact. Chapter four focuses on how opera has continued to incorporate leitmotif as a technique to facilitate characterisation on a number of levels with time, individuals and both physical and emotional context effectively represented through its use. It can be observed that Wagner's concept of leitmotif developed from a parameter of an operatic work which enhanced or reflected the drama into a powerful and essential element of the work that took on its own symphonic meaning. This ethos is reflected in the *Tristan and Isolde*, where the Tristan chord forms the basis of the overall harmonic development of the work.

Szymanowski's *Krol Roger*, composed between 1914 and 1924 and premiered in 1926, presents the archetype of an operatic work employing the convergence of musical parameters to delineate its individual characters. To this end, it appears to present a superlative example of musical characterisation in the context of 20th century opera, whilst encompassing archaic cultural influences with its reference to Byzantine and Greek Orthodox Church music. Szymanowski employs motifs to signify the identity of each individual, and themes to represent moods such as religious ecstasy or regality. The structure of the work integrates a shifting

underlying harmonic foundation which develops in parallel to the motivic transformations, providing insight into the intentions of the characters. This insinuates to the audience, for example, the dubious sincerity of the Shepherd.

Drawing from the presented examples of character representation through the parameters of harmony, melody and the overall musical setting, *The Exile* serves in part as the development of the techniques observed. The culminating chapter outlines in more detail the composer-librettist partnership along with issues and conflicting ideas that arose during the construction of the work. The libretto, composed by Gillian Pencavel, was written following research into Joyce's life and relationship with his publisher, Sylvia Beach. These occurrences were concomitant with the outbreak of the Irish Civil War and a difficult time in Joyce's marriage to Nora Barnacle. Therefore the focal relationships of the work were a point of discussion, along with chapter representation through voice types, scene-setting and the colloquial conversation of the Irish characters. The influence of the outlined research on the resulting work is discussed throughout this dissertation with reference to each parameter, and illustrated with various musical examples.

1 - Composer-librettist collaborations in contemporary opera

Prior to undertaking work on *The Exile*, it was important to consider the nature of composer-librettist partnerships and whether issues might arise from collaboration. Were a librettist involved in the work, our respective roles would have to be agreed and a respectful working relationship established. In Kerman's *Opera as Drama* (1956), the author suggests that the libretto is the initial inspiration, while the composer is the realiser of the ideal.¹ Morra (2010) references a *Newsnight Review* panel following a 2008 performance of Birtwistle's *The Minotaur*, whose assessments of the work conclude that the music is 'deliberately inaccessible, self-consciously elitist and challenging.'² As the panelists are more lenient with their criticism of the libretto, Morra argues that '[w]hile the composer is asked to conform to an established, accepted aesthetic of musical entertainment, the librettist is expected to define the overall contemporary and dramatic 'relevance' of the piece. As a result, the librettist necessarily occupies a more vital, dominant position.' Julie Myerson complains that the singing in *The Minotaur* gets in the way of David Harsent's 'beautiful words'. The perception of whether the libretto or the music is more important remains subjective, but harmonious historical partnerships such as those of Strauss and Hofmannsthal, da Ponte and Mozart, and Boito and Verdi are noted. Conflicts are avoided where the composer is also the librettist, but there is potential for one element to take priority.

It was necessary to decide whether to commission a librettist for my opera or to adapt it from an existing text by Joyce. In the case of literary adaptations however, it could be argued that just one perspective on the adapted text is not as enriching as being presented with two concomitant views. In the case of *Gawain* by Harrison Birtwistle and David Harsent, Blake (2010) observes: 'Morgan le Fay's 'night after night the same dream', and Gawain's 'Cross of Christ' are repeated frequently throughout, but the music doesn't represent or echo this repetition.'³ Further research indicates that the repetitions were the intention of the composer, and Birtwistle's delineation of the sentiment is subtler than that of the text. 'Although Birtwistle employs a similar downward contour in the voice with each repetition, recurring woodwind and brass chords run counter to the text's scheme. It is all the more surprising, therefore, to discover that the composer requested the textual repetitions

¹ Kerman, J (1956). *Opera as Drama*. New York: Random House. 21

² Morra, I. (2010). Outstaring the Sun: Contemporary Opera and the Literary Librettist. *Contemporary Music Review*. 29 (2), 121-135

³ Blake, A. (2010). 'Wort oder Ton'? Reading the Libretto in Contemporary Opera' *Contemporary Music Review*. 29 (2), 187-199

himself.⁴ Were the composer and librettists' intentions not exactly aligned, this is not necessarily detrimental to the work's success. Blake (2010) maintains: 'The contradictions and multiple narrative layers of both libretto and music should be seen in a positive light; in his view the whole is a successful collaboration...'⁵ In Birtwistle's earlier work, *Punch and Judy*, textual refrains are matched by the music, yet there is a disassociation of text and music in the later works *The Mask of Orpheus* and *Gawain*, by which time repetition had long been established as a prominent feature of his work.

The concept of a new hierarchy in the composer-librettist partnership is expressed by Morra (2010), who states that '[f]or centuries, receptions have desecrated the ridiculousness of operatic plots, but exalted the sublime nature of an opera's music.' She continues, '[t]his implicit hierarchy has changed, with an increasing critical insistence upon the contemporary integrity of that opera's plot and libretto.'⁶ The Penguin Companion to Classical Music reads:

The librettist is nearly always the second partner in the creation of an opera, and in modern times maybe even the third, after the director as well as the composer. This hierarchy reveals itself in how operas are written, with the words fixed first, subject to the composer's advice, instruction, criticism and adjustment. Only to a much lesser degree, if at all, do composers return the favour.⁷

A review in *The Guardian* declares that McEwan's libretto for the opera *For You* became a collector's item prior to its launch less than a month after the premiere.⁸ The changing role of the librettist is pioneered by McEwan, who claims, 'These days a libretto has to be intrinsically interesting. It can't just be a coat hanger for fabulous music and sublime emotional moments.'⁹ In *For You*, McEwan appears to dictate the music to the composer through descriptions in the libretto; a sublimation of what the central character imagines to be his own work. Literary adaptations remain commonplace in contemporary opera, though the chronology of the stories in question, along with their setting can be manipulated to generate an original, abstract production. One example of this is Thomas Rasch's *The Duchess of Malfi*. The production exists outside a conventional, real-time

⁴ Beard, D (2012). *Harrison Birtwistle's Operas and Music Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 203

⁵ Blake, A. (2010). 'Wort oder Ton'? Reading the Libretto in Contemporary Opera'. *Contemporary Music Review*. 29 (2), 187-199

⁶ Morra, I. (2010). Outstaring the Sun: Contemporary Opera and the Literary Librettist. *Contemporary Music Review*. 29 (2), 121-135

⁷ Griffiths, P (2004). *The Penguin Companion to Classical Music*. London: Penguin UK

⁸ Wroe, N. (2008). *A complicated beast*. Available:

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/oct/18/ianmcewan-michaelberkeley>. Last accessed 25th June 2015

⁹ Hewett, I. (2008). *Ian McEwan: Opera? Great music, terrible plots*. Available:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/3673683/Ian-McEwan-Opera-Great-music-terrible-plots.html>. Last accessed 25th June 2015

succession of events. The audiences perceive nine individual scenes in an arbitrary order and construct meaning from the work for themselves through close-up interaction.

Language itself is often manipulated to conform to colloquial norms; not only to lend credibility to the dialogue, but also as a form of expression on the part of the librettist, or poet. An example of this is Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, which, in an adaptation by Thomas Adés and Meredith Oakes, features a re-writing of the original dialogue. Blake (2010) describes this version of the text as 'parody', referring to a form of sacred medieval and renaissance composition where a motivic fragment of an existing work forms part of the melodic material. Blake hastens to add that this is a descriptor rather than a derogatory criticism¹⁰. The most noted example of this is Ariel's aria 'Full Fathom Five' (Ex.1) which Oakes changes to 'Five Fathoms Deep'.

Ex.1

Original Shakespeare

Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade

Oakes' adaptation

Five fathoms deep
Your father lies
Those are pearls
That were his eyes
Nothing of him
That was mortal
Is the same

This aria is performed by a coloratura soprano. The vowels are necessarily transformed to accommodate the singer's effective technique in dealing with the high tessitura and, as a result, the text is not distinctly audible; this does not seem to be a primary concern for operatic audiences. In the 18th century, audiences had copies of the libretto on hand during performances by candlelight, and modern performances, even in English, are frequently surtitled. In keeping with the classical archetype of the composer as the 'first partner' in the construction of an opera, the music appears to remain the primary factor that must retain the composer's intentions.

Mark-Anthony Turnage and Jonathan Moore's *Greek* incorporates colloquialisms reminiscent of East End, cockney caricatures in the libretto. Though more faithful to the dialogue in the original play than is the case with Oakes' adaptation of *The Tempest*, *Greek* is

¹⁰ Blake, A. (2010). 'Wort oder Ton'? Reading the Libretto in Contemporary Opera'. *Contemporary Music Review*. 29 (2), 187-199

flexible in its use of repetition, a common operatic device instigated by the composer. Here, the notated lines of cockney dialogue are indicated in the score to comic effect. The marriage of the musical rhythm and the dialogue is calculated, suggesting an affinity between librettist and composer. There is no indication of hierarchy, unless the audience assumes that the historic supremacy of the composer still holds true. According to Pettit (1988):

It is an anti-establishment piece. It observes and indicts through caricaturing social behaviour, be it the opening crowd scene in the pub ('nah...nah...nah...Leave orff...Arsenal...Lorst his bottle' etc.) or that which depicts the family at breakfast (a hilarious ritual trio consisting of a reiterated, bored exchange between Eddy and his parents: 'Bung us the toast' / 'Where's the jam?' / 'Pig!' / 'More tea love?' set to deliberately ordinary music). It criticizes the force of the state and the pervasive, restricting voice of the great moral majority through the allegory of the Plague and the less subtle allusions of the police riot.¹¹

Perhaps a less successful partnership of composer and librettist is apparent in *Anna Nicole*, a collaboration between Mark-Anthony Turnage and librettist Richard Thomas, the composer of *Jerry Springer the Opera*. Although the overture and opening number in *Jerry Springer* amalgamate into one piece, the score for *Anna Nicole* begins with a four-bar introduction, titled 'Scene 0: Bodybags Descending', above which is printed in small typeface 'In memory of Anna Nicole Smith'. It is not clear whether this small homage is tongue-in-cheek, or a genuine salute to its inspiration, as the opera transforms from a satire into a morbid tragedy, eventually evoking sympathy for its protagonist.

There was also the question of whether a libretto was even necessary for *The Exile*, having reviewed works such as Glass' *Einstein on the Beach*, which is described as 'non-narrative' in form, and is devised from Glass' music in tandem with visual concepts suggested by Glass' collaborator, Robert Wilson¹². The unconventional libretto, commissioned by Wilson from autistic teenager Christopher Knowles, does not inform any character dialogue¹³. Similarly, Kagel's anti-opera, *Staatstheater* deliberately dismissed operatic conventions and is not libretto-driven but is an assembly of different, notated actions. Cage's *Europas* adopt a similarly defiant motivation to Kagel, whereby the indeterminate choice of arias defies opera's narrative convention¹⁴. Although Cage's *Roaratorio* can be adapted from a work of literature through directions in the score applicable to any text, the original text itself is sufficient to complement the music.

¹¹ Pettitt, S. (1988) 'Mark Anthony Turnage and Greek' *The Musical Times*, 129 (1746). pp. 397-400

¹² Wilson, R. (2012). *Einstein on the Beach*. Available: <http://www.robertwilson.com/einstein-on-the-beach/>. Last accessed 5th Aug 2015

¹³ Boyden, M. Kimberley, N (2002). *The Rough Guide to Opera*. 3rd ed. London: Rough Guides. 639.

¹⁴ Kostka, S (2012). *My library My History Books on Google Play e-Study Guide for: Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-Century Music*. Berlin: Cram101

Where a libretto is employed, often problems arise within the parameter of rhythm, particularly in the vocal lines and with reference to rhyming. In contrast to Thomas' earlier composition *Jerry Springer*, the libretto for *Anna Nicole* is prose-like, but retains a similar parodic nature. Following the opening scene, Thomas seems to settle into the oeuvre of the conventional operatic libretto, and the words aptly complement the music; whereas, in the opening number, the rhyming patterns seem squandered and unnoticed. As contemporary operatic scores are often through-composed, whereas works of musical theatre can be strophic in verse structure, the rhyming patterns characteristic of Thomas' writing may often be better suited to the latter, as with the case of *Jerry Springer*, not a formal operatic work.

In the case of Robin Holloway's 1976 adaptation of Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* where the composer wrote both music and libretto, he was criticised for focusing on Clarissa's psychosexual development, rather than on the class and political system under scrutiny in the novel.¹⁵ Gallagher (1990) stated: 'I was pretty appalled by Holloway's stated post-Freudian 'insight' that Clarissa 'unconsciously desired' to be raped, was fulfilled by it and, even, enjoyed it. Thankfully, the music seemingly transcends this.'¹⁶ In the same review, Gallagher praised the composer for his 'superbly-constructed libretto' and 'range of musical perspectives'. The lack of a collaborator afforded the composer free rein to experiment with ideas within the work, including 'an entirely spoken scene introducing Clarissa's dismissal and forgiveness of Lovelace.'¹⁷

Perhaps less successfully, Tippett also undertook the task of producing libretti for his operatic works. Haskins (2009) states: 'As his own librettist, Tippett wrote texts that sometimes lacked the felicity of his music; his representations of Jungian psychology in *The Midsummer Marriage* often seem heavy-handed, and the psychedelic surface of *The Knot Garden* has not aged very gracefully.'¹⁸ During the 1950s, this was the consensus on Tippett's operatic output, but this view has since been generally dismissed, the music being deemed powerful enough that the work as a whole is accepted as a kind of

¹⁵ Blake, A. (2010). 'Wort oder Ton'? Reading the Libretto in Contemporary Opera' . *Contemporary Music Review*. 29 (2), 187-199

¹⁶ Gallagher, D. (1990). 'Clarissa' at the Coliseum. *Tempo*. 174, 21-22

¹⁷ Gallagher, D. (1990). 'Clarissa' at the Coliseum. *Tempo*. 174, 21-22

¹⁸ Haskins, R. (2009). *King Priam (Review)*. Available:

<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/not/summary/v065/65.3.haskins.html>. Last accessed 5th Aug 2015

‘Gesamtkunstwerk’¹⁹. It is important to note that Tippett’s aesthetic also ran counter to the zeitgeist of much of the music, art and literature of the period.²⁰

Disciplinary proficiency and an understanding of the plot are conducive to avoiding creative conflicts between composer and librettist. As a composer, had I chosen to write the libretto I would be inhibited by a lack of experience, but it was necessary to explore the possibility of producing the work without the need for a collaborator. Having explored the complexities of differing composer-librettist partnerships and the potential pitfalls associated with each method of working, I undertook a project mentored by Music Theatre Wales where I collaborated with a poet on a new work. I considered this a preparatory study prior to commencing work on *The Exile*. The piece, *Strapped, Smeared and Moulded* (Ex.4) was composed for solo soprano and inspired by the experience of my collaborator, Afza Awad, as a Muslim in woman in Britain, with particular emphasis on the clothing conventions imposed upon her by her culture. It was a different perspective on feminism where Awad considered it a woman’s decision to wear a burqa, and suggested that women could be empowered by this decision as they encouraged the perception of an individual, rather than a female whose objectification is facilitated by western ideals of beauty. Although I don’t share Awad’s religious views or understanding of feminism, a point we could agree on was the freedom of an individual to present themselves as they wished and the right not to be objectified or abused as a result of their perceived role in society. I was reassured of the potential of working harmoniously with a librettist on an operatic work and was able to explore the characterisation of an individual on a small scale. The piece becomes an escalating drama as the woman addresses the audience as though they represent the male who has wronged her.

Having undertaken this research, I decided I would work with writer Gillian Pencavel. James Joyce became an attractive subject for an opera, both in terms of his personal history and literary output and given his perceived exile from Ireland. Our initial plan was to adapt a story from Joyce’s *Dubliners*, a commentary on society and religion, but we struggled to find a suitable subject that would suit an operatic setting. It was decided that the work should provide a biographical account of Joyce’s life in some way. Having undertaken research independently, we concluded that the opera should be set in Paris, just prior to the publication of *Ulysses* by Joyce’s friend and colleague, Sylvia Beach, and would explore their developing

¹⁹ Shaffer, E S (1982). *Comparative Criticism: Volume 4, The Language of the Arts: 004*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. xxi.

²⁰ Clarke, D (2008). *Music & Thought of Michael Tippett: Modern Times and Metaphysics (Music in the Twentieth Century)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 247.

relationship along with Joyce's troubled marriage to Nora Barnacle during the period of the Irish civil war. The characters decided upon were Joyce, his wife Nora, Sylvia Beach and his spectre-like alter-ego, Stephen Daedalus, a character from the novels *Ulysses* and *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

My experience with the Make an Aria project informed the composition of the trio, *Dear James*, from Scene 4 of *The Exile*, sung by James, Nora and Stephen. There is a similar sense of dramatic pacing and escalating tension throughout, reflected similarly through increasingly obscured harmony and escalating tessitura. Nora sings four verses, with conversational interjections after each verse. Nora's verses, taken in isolation, reflect escalating panic and tension. As she becomes more agitated, the harmonic movement accelerates, and her vocal line becomes higher with faster articulations of the words by the final verse. This is not an allusion to Irish traditional music like Stephen's vocal line (as discussed in chapter three of this dissertation), but instead represents a panic in her voice and a quickening of speech as she grows anxious. Two examples below reflect the first and final verse of her part in the trio.

Ex.2 *Dear James*, verse 1 (Nora). Bar 312



Ex.3 *Dear James*, verse 4 (Nora). Bar 363



Following the composition of *Strapped*, *Smeared* and *Moulded*, I concluded that it would be necessary to explore vocal writing in more detail, beginning with research into how speech is represented in contemporary opera.

Ex.4 Strapped, Smeared and Moulded. Bars 17-22.

Impassioned, aggressive

17

heels stra - pp'd a - round my fee - - t

Aggressive *sempre f*

Cluster

20

ff *subp* *ff*

This paint smeared a-cross my fa - ce

subp *f*

2 – Representation of Speech in Contemporary Opera

To inform the composition of *The Exile*, I set out to investigate *parlando* styles in 20th and 21st century opera, evaluating their respective success in defining character. It should be clarified that *parlando*, in the context of this discussion, refers to vocal writing which, unlike *Sprechgesang*, is notated conventionally, but subtly mimics the intonation, patterns and inflections of natural speech through the parameters of pitch and rhythm. An example from Debussy's *Pelléas et Melisande* is below (Ex.1), which features repeated notes and short utterances demonstrative of speech.

Ex.1 *Pelléas et Melisande*, Act II scene one.

The musical score is for Act II, scene one of Debussy's *Pelléas et Melisande*. It consists of two staves. The top staff is for PELLÉAS and the bottom staff is for MÉLISANDE. The tempo is marked 'Même mouvement'. The time signature is 3/4. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The lyrics are in French. PELLÉAS: 'C'est au bord d'une fon-taine aussi, qu'il vous a trou-'. MÉLISANDE: 'Oui... Rien, je ne me rap-pel-le -vés? Que vous a-t'il dit?'.

Janacek's speech-melody theory, established around 1897, contributes to the discourse on subsequent 20th century vocal writing¹. Despite the composer's meticulous collecting of folk melodies and translations of speech into melodic and rhythmic phrases, he maintained that there should be a broad generalised musical catalogue for every phrase in the Czech language. Rather than presenting characters individually, a nation of speakers would be represented by a dictionary of phrases, each adopting a specific intonation compliant with the syllabic emphasis common to the language. This undercurrent was intended to transcend translations into German and other languages. According to Paul Christiansen:

Janacek is convinced not only that the dialogue of Czech actors must be purged of foreign influences, but also that stage speech should be standardized: That is, no individual linguistic idiosyncrasies should be heard in the theatre, that most sacred shrine of nationalist pride.²

Wingfield observes that the Czech language features predominant first syllable accentuation

¹Katz states that musicologists Milena Cernohorska and John Tyrrell established this date as the year in which speech-melody theory was conceived. Katz, D (2009). *Janacek Beyond the Borders*. New York: University of Rochester Press. 14.

²Christiansen, P. (2010). The Meaning of Speech Melody for Leos Janacek. *Journal of Musicological Research*. 23 (3-4), 241-263.

and the long and short vowels are not consistently stressed.³ The fact that there is not much evidence of Janacek's speech-melody theory in practice in his own works is a subject of much discussion among musicologists. There is some evidence to support the claim; his opera *Sarka*, originally composed in 1887, underwent a rewrite in 1918, after Janacek had established his ideas on speech-melody theory. He may even have endeavoured to bring the opera up to date in line with this musical doctrine. The orchestral part remained unchanged, but the voice parts were altered significantly to better echo the natural inflections of speech. John Tyrrell writes, "Whereas the voice parts had previously been linked melodically and rhythmically to the orchestra tunes, in 1918 they became more irregular and asymmetrical, moving over a wide melodic range. In other words, they started out instrumentally and in revision were brought closer to the irregular contours of speech".⁴

Similar evidence comes to light in the second and third acts of *Jenufa*, the composition of which is concomitant with the development of the speech-melody theory. The example below from the end of Act III, Scene 8 is an exchange between Starenka, Jenufa's grandmother, and Kostelnicka, her mother. The exchange occurs immediately after the discovery of Jenufa's dead baby who was drowned by Kostelnicka. Kostelnicka is anxious, faced with the atrocity of her crime and the fear that she will be discovered. Her panicked exclamation of, 'Hold me, save me,' reflects a spoken outburst, particularly when uttered in the volume and context applicable. In the third and fourth bars, the same utterance is repeated a minor third higher with the intervallic properties preserved, in line with Janacek's suggestion that each utterance should have its own defined melodic identity. Her mother's cry of 'Daughter, are you dreaming?' can be perceived as one speech-melody with the second descending motif repeated on both words 'daughter' and 'dreaming'. Similarly to Kostelnicka, Starenka's line is transposed upwards for her second cry of, 'Daughter' in the penultimate bar.

David Paul Wagner states, "The emphasis of speech patterns led the use of prose (rather than poetry) in the libretto. In fact, *Jenufa* was the first Czech opera whose libretto was written in prose, rather than poetry or verse."⁵ Janacek is said to have referred to the opera as a prose opera and claimed to be the first to have done so.⁶ Rhythm also features in *Jenufa* as an element of the construction of the vocal line, as suggested by Tyrrell:

³Wingfield, P. (1992). Janacek's Speech-Melody Theory in Concept and Practice. *Cambridge Opera Journal*. 4 (3), 281-301.

⁴Tyrrell, J.. (1970). Janacek and the Speech-Melody Myth. *The Musical Times*. 111, 793-796.

⁵Wagner, D P. (2005). *Jenufa (by Leos Janacek)*. Available: <http://www.musicwithease.com/janacek-jenufa.html>. Last accessed 5th March 2015

⁶Katz, D (2009). *Janacek Beyond the Borders*. New York: University of Rochester Press. 21

Although the play on which it is based is prose, the prose was turned into a sort of quasi-verse by the time Janacek finished setting it. This was done by means of 'rhyming repetitions', words arranged metrically into lines, which were generally repeated, providing verbal material to go with the symmetrically structured music.⁷

Despite the implications of speech-melody theory in both *Jenufa* and *Sarka*, Janacek was adamant that he did not use his collected speech-melodies in his own works.⁸ One could suggest that, despite this, a subtle influence of the melodic phrasing of speech can be found.

Ex.2 *Jenufa*, Act III, Scene 8

The musical score for Ex.2 from *Jenufa*, Act III, Scene 8, is presented in three systems. The first system shows the K. (Klarinet) and A. Sf. (Alto) staves with lyrics in Czech and German. The piano accompaniment features triplets and a crescendo leading to an acceleration. The second system continues the vocal lines and piano accompaniment, with the piano part marked *sf cresc. ed accel.*

System 1:

K. hal - tet mich, ret - tet mich.
drž - te mne, braň - te mne.

A. Sf. Toch - ter!
mo - je!

System 2:

K. hal - tet mich, ret - tet mich.
drž - te mne, braň - te mne.

A. Sf. sprichst du, Toch - ter!
dce - ro mo - je!

Toch - ter, ach du
Dce - ro, za - se

System 3:

sf cresc. ed accel.

Berg's *Lulu* and *Wozzeck* place Schoenberg's *Sprechgesang* alongside more conventional styles of singing. Compared to 19th century opera models, Berg's broad leaps and challenging tessitura make his vocal lines far more technically demanding. Structurally, in *Wozzeck* Berg draws on ideas of various compositional forms in instrumental music. He demands of the singers four separate vocal techniques. These comprise *Sprechgesang*, speech, half-singing and full

⁷Tyrell, J.. (1970). Janacek and the Speech-Melody Myth. *The Musical Times*. 111, 793-796.

⁸Lang, P (2009). *Aspects of music, arts and religion during the period of Czech modernism*. Germany: Peter Lang. 261

singing.⁹ The element of *Sprechgesang* has invited very free interpretations of the pieces, with singers injecting varying levels of pitch definition to the vocal line.¹⁰ *Sprechgesang* was created by Schoenberg for *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912) as its performer Albertine Zehm was an actress and cabaret artist rather than a singer. Its inception was therefore practical as well as dramatically effective.¹¹

One could infer in some instances that Berg associates speech and *Sprechgesang* with narrative and insincere formality, whereas *cantabile* and lyrical melody is often associated with love and sincerity. This is implied most strongly in *Lulu*, in Act II, Scene 2 during a dialogue between Lulu and her lover, Alwa. Alwa moves through different stages of vocal styles: speaking, half-singing, *Sprechstimme* and *parlando* before arriving at a declaration of love for Lulu which is sung *cantabile* (see Ex. 3-5, below).

Ex.3 *Lulu*, Act II, Scene 2. Alwa's first appearance in the scene, speaking.

Alwa

Die Matinee wird, wie ich
mir denke, bei elektrischem Licht stattfinden. Ich habe... bemerkend
Schigolch

Schigolch - - - - - bleibt stehen - - - schleppt sich ein paar Schritte weiter - - und bleibt wieder stehen

Was ist denn das?

Mir völlig unbekannt.

Athlet (hinter dem Vorhang, unsichtbar)

U.E. 10745

Ex. 4 *Lulu*, Act II, Scene 2. Later utterance, *Sprechgesang*

für mich ein-ge-tre-ten.

Alwa

Es ist nun einmal mein Los, bei den leichtsin-nig-sten Ge-dan-ken im-mer das

ang

1.

Ex. 5 *Lulu*, Act II, Scene 2. Final declaration, *cantabile*.

Calando

L: Ich weiß es nicht.

A: Mig-non? Mig-non ich lie-be Dich...

L: beide Hände in seinen Haaren.

A: birgt seinen Kopf in ihren Schoß.

L: Ich ha-be Dei-ne Mut-ter ver-gif-tet.

335 espr

pp

U. E. 10745

As Dos Santos states:

While the spoken language characterizes the initial formality of Alwa's visit to Lulu (... it) gradually gives way to intimacy during their dialogue, characterized by a motion towards *cantabile*. Only at the end of this process, after five interruptions, is Alwa able to declare his love.¹⁴

Wozzeck is a tour-de-force of vocal characterisation. The main character is taunted by the Captain, the vocal line for whom hints at a speech-melody influence with its brief, fragmented phrases and leaping intervals, though the notated pitches are specific, rather than having an 'x' on their stems. This indicates a conversational style to contrast the sustained, more lyrical properties of *Wozzeck*'s sporadic interjections. Solomon writes, "Wozzeck responds like a robot: 'Jawohl, Herr Hauptmann!' When Wozzeck can no longer stand to nod to the Captain's harangue, he breaks into an impassioned outpouring of the "We Poor Folk" motive and "Ach, Marie – Marie!"¹⁵ An 'x' is indicated on the stems of notes when the captain laughs at Wozzeck, producing a grotesque, semi-pitched, mocking outburst, further highlighting the unsympathetic nature of his character. Solomon has also stated

¹⁴Dos Santos, S J (2014). *Narratives of Identity in Alban Berg's "Lulu"*. New York: University of Rochester Press. 56.

¹⁵Solomon, L J. (2004). *Wozzeck*. Available: <http://solomonsmusic.net/wozzeck.htm>. Last accessed 5th March 2015.

that the authority figures of the Captain and the Doctor are deliberately made 'musically abnormal, obsessed and evil.'¹⁶ The lack of empathy of these characters is aptly expressed in the absence of lyricism in their vocal lines and dismissive obscuring of musical phrases to form short, spiked utterances, as in Büchner's play.

In *Lulu*, a lack of empathy in the vocal writing is heightened to suggest a form of Brechtian alienation. In the Prologue the menagerie of circus characters is introduced by a ringmaster who alternates between speaking, *Sprechgesang* and singing, though *parlando* is indicated above the pitches for the sections that are intended to be sung. In this case it is not a move towards a lyricism indicative of romantic love or sincerity, but potentially a subtler rendering of the text to counteract the flamboyance attributed to the initial *Sprechgesang* exclamations as the scene proceeds. This makes way for the reality of the setting where Lulu first appears as a painter's model. The *Sprechgesang* presents a theatrical, cabaret-like eeriness which inhabits a world external to conventional dialogue or speaking; rather an in-between atmosphere which precedes the realism of the subsequent scene. During the love scene in *Lulu*, the spoken element moves gradually towards an outpouring of emotion with *cantabile*, whereas the speaking and *Sprechgesang* in the opening scene evokes an ethereal, narrative quality.

Following Berg's example, Ligeti utilises a similar mixture of styles in his only opera, *Le Grand Macabre*. Ligeti reportedly referred to *Le Grand Macabre* as a 'half play, half opera.'¹⁷ Similarly to Berg in *Wozzeck*, the composer employs a non-conventional operatic structure, in this case four separate scenes with a defined surrealist undertone, particularly in the second scene, featuring an astronomer Astradamors and his wife Mescalina, which is not essential to the plot of the opera. The libretto, based on Michel De Ghelderode's 1934 play, *La balade du grand macabre* was, in its original incarnation, extensive, and the later revision of the work in 1996 reduced the amount of text. There were also attempts to shorten the opera, such as the removal of an interval and small sections of the music. Perhaps the most significant change in the revised version of the opera was the transformation of the characters of the Black and White Ministers from speaking to largely singing roles. Searby states:

By making the Black and White Ministers singing parts in the revised score, a considerable amount of new music had to be composed (...) where the two Ministers are trading alphabetical insults with each other, Ligeti keeps the original spoken rhythm, and sets it very simply, using a descending chromatic line, with

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ Steinitz, R. (2013). *Something Cruel and Frightening*. Available: <http://operaen.no/en/Performances/Arkiv/Le-Grand-Macabre/>. Last accessed 9th Mar 2015.

sustained woodwind lightly doubling the voices and adding dissonance.¹⁸

Both versions of the opera still feature a great deal of spoken material, and Ligeti appears to use the different vocal styles in a representational way that is reminiscent of Berg. For example, in the opening scene, the two lovers, Amando and Amanda, sing in an extremely ornamented style that the composer refers to as ‘pretentiously lyrical,’¹⁹ with flowing melodic lines interspersed with their happy lovemaking sighs, illustrated with mirrored upwards gestures on repeated utterances of the word ‘Bliss’. Contrastingly, Piet, the drunk, interrupts the lovers and imitates them mockingly, proceeding to speak, sing and sob with an extremely virtuosic part that is also informed by detailed performance directions in the score. One such direction, where Piet tells Nekrotzar about his disturbing hallucinations, instructs the performer, ‘half spoken, very accentuated, with plenty of breath.’ The preceding outburst from Piet on the word, ‘Hallucinations,’ is described by Ligeti as ‘rabid and fantastic’.

On the other hand, there are many late twentieth-century operatic works in which *Sprechgesang* does not feature prominently. Glass’ *Akhenaten* places particular emphasis on voice types and tessitura, creating deliberately elusive aural textures to represent the complex relationships between Tiye, Akhenaten and Nefertiti. Voice crossings are a particular feature of the work, obscuring each vocal line beyond clarity²⁰. These are facilitated by voices in similar registers; Akhenaten is a counter-tenor, Nefertiti a mezzo-soprano and Tiye a soprano. Glass states: ‘When they are heard together for the first time, in the final scene of Act I, the voice crossings produce a purposely confusing effect, making it sometimes difficult for the listener to follow the separate parts.’²¹ This musical stylisation is a prominent feature of Glass’ work which contrasts representations of speech by his contemporaries.

It could be suggested that a return to more conventional *parlando* writing is a component of several recent operatic works, notably those of Thomas Adès, in particular *The Tempest* and *Powder Her Face*. Characters are clearly delineated in both works, with echoes and exaggerations of speech patterns apparent. The maid’s giggles in the opening scene of *Powder Her Face* are reminiscent of the captain’s mocking laughter in the opening scene of *Wozzeck*. Neither of the two characters are particularly sympathetic and they poke fun at the protagonists of their respective operas. An aria from *Powder Her Face* which aptly describes the vocal inflections of speech without departing from notated pitches is ‘Fancy,’ sung by the waitress in scene three.

¹⁸ Searby, M D (2009). *Ligeti's Stylistic Crisis: Transformation in His Musical Style, 1974-1985*. Maryland: Scarecrow Press. 57.

¹⁹ Lobanova, M (2002). *Gyorgy Ligeti: Style, Ideas, Poetics*. Germany: E. Kuhn. 235.

²⁰ Montserrat, D (2014). *Akhenaten: History, Fantasy and Ancient Egypt*. New York: Routledge. 181

²¹ Richardson, J (1999). *Singing Archaeology: Philip Glass's Akhnaten*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press. 154

Ex.6 *Powder Her Face*, Act I, Scene 3.

Scene 3 - Nineteen thirty six

Musical score for the scene "Lights up on MAID as Waitress". The tempo is marked as $\text{♩} = 56$. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of three systems. The first system includes a vocal line (soprano) and a piano accompaniment (clari-nets/strings and piano). The piano part features triplets and a *dolce* marking. The second system continues the piano part with a *sim.* marking. The third system includes a vocal line (soprano) and a piano accompaniment (clari-nets/strings and piano). The piano part features triplets and a *sim.* marking. The vocal line includes the lyrics "Fan - cy,".

Maid as W'tress

Fan-cy be-ing rich. Fan-cy be-ing love-ly. Fan - cy hav-ing mo-ney to waste.

sim.

19

and disregard for the Duchess' comment.

Ex.7 Powder Her Face, Act I, Scene 1.

21

(accel. poco a poco)

274 *f* *mf* *f* *più f*

Duch. There is no milk. It is - n't

Maid helped. It's on the tray.

al $\text{♩} = 112$, $\text{♩} = 36 \text{ sub.}$ They face each other
pp molto espr. ma marcatiss.

277 *ff*

Duch. there. How you

Maid It's in the pots.

279 *pp* marcatiss., quasi innocente, libero (rit.)

Duch. speak to me.

Maid Are you check-ing out to-day, ma-dam?

Elec. stifles a guilty gasp / laugh (!)

Such repetition of text for characterisation is also a feature of the work of Stephen Sondheim²². The repetition of words and phrases serve to suggest an emphasis and present a more natural, speech-like expression. One such example is *Sooner or Later* from *Dick Tracy*, where the singer's

²² Gurewitsch, M. (2009). *Sondheim's World*. Available: <http://www.beyondcriticism.com/6284/sondheims-world>. Last accessed 6th August 2015

determination and arrogance is emphasised by the repetition of the title line.²³ Text repetition is also a consistent feature of Sondheim's *Pacific Overtures*²⁴.

With the influence of speech in contemporary opera, there are also co-existing extremes which contrast strongly with works such as *Powder Her Face* and *Le Grand Macabre*. Although John Adams' music for *The Death of Klinghoffer* features elements of *parlando*, it could be suggested that the vocal lines all largely display a common lyricism; they do not indicate as clear an outline of each character's vocal singularity as do the aforementioned works of Adès and Ligeti. As an example, in scene two, Marilyn Klinghoffer sings her aria 'My one consolation', in which the words are conversational and natural rather than poetic or prose-like, but the melodic line retains a quality not indicative of the rhythmic or melodic inflections of speech. A review of a recent performance of *Klinghoffer* in October 2014 described the opera as having, 'plenty of vague, meandering vocal lines.'²⁵ Similarly, a review of Davis' *Life and Times of Malcolm X* suggests that the 'inexpressive vocal lines sound almost improvised.'²⁶ In these works, perhaps it is the libretto, more so than the vocal line which indicates the difference between each character's manner of expression. This may also be said of Thomas' *Jerry Springer the Opera*, for which the vocal lines for each character are generally more melodic than conversational.

To suggest another extreme, Gerald Barry's score for *The Importance of Being Earnest*, indicates an observation of speech, though exaggerated to reflect the whimsical nature of Wilde's play. Similarly to Adès, despite the suggestion of the spoken voice, the vocal line features notated pitches with *parlando* rather than *Sprechgesang*, and similarly to Ligeti features performance directions such as 'rough and raucous like a folk singer'. Harmonics are frequently indicated in the score as below, where male singers are tasked with switching rapidly between *falsestto* and natural voice, further contributing to the suggestion of exaggerated speech.

Ex.8 *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Act I, Scene 1.

(takes plate)
 Alg. *mf*

Have some bread and but - ter. The bread and but - ter is for Gwen-do - len. Gwen-do - len is de -

The musical notation is for a vocal line in bass clef, 2/4 time. It begins with a 'b' (flat) and a 'mf' (mezzo-forte) dynamic. The melody is characterized by rapid changes in pitch, often indicated by ledger lines above and below the staff, suggesting a 'parlando' style. The lyrics are: 'Have some bread and but - ter. The bread and but - ter is for Gwen-do - len. Gwen-do - len is de -'.

²³ Gordon, R (2014). *The Oxford Handbook of Sondheim Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 284

²⁴ Kerr, W. (1976). 'Pacific Overtures' Is Neither East Nor West. Available: <https://www.nytimes.com/books/98/07/19/specials/sondheim-overtures.html>. Last accessed 6th August 2015

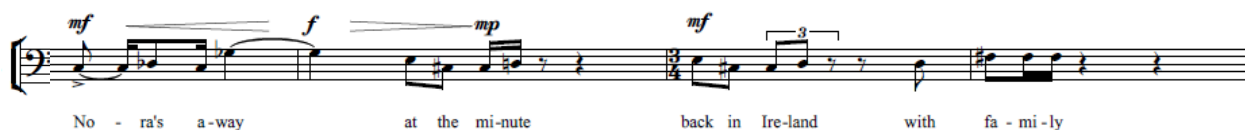
²⁵ Lentjes, R. (2014). *Stunning new production of The Death of Klinghoffer at the Met*. Available: <http://bachtrack.com/review-klinghoffer-szot-robertson-met-opera-october-2014>. Last accessed 9th Mar 2015

²⁶ Davis, Antony. (1992). *The Sound Bites of Music*. New York. 24 (49), 96.

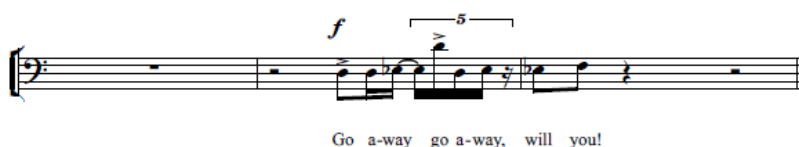
One could suggest that due to the extremes of exaggeration and flamboyance in each of the vocal lines, the idiosyncrasies of the characters become obscured. They run the risk of losing their musical individuality. Yet, as in Adams' opera, the libretto, adapted from Wilde, is arguably sufficient to differentiate between the characters.

When composing *The Exile*, I felt it important to distinguish between each character's means of self-expression. At the outset of the work, the character of James is surly and taciturn. His utterances comprise short, fragmented phrases, while, in contrast, Stephen's phrases are elongated and decorated, to represent his uninhibitedness and flamboyance. As the work develops and Stephen fades into the background, James becomes more expressive as he approaches self-realisation. By the final scene of the opera, James is no longer emotionally stunted, and has developed a more impassioned sense of self-expression, represented in broader intervals and sustained melodic phrases:

Ex.9 *The Exile*, James, scene one (bar 48):



Ex.10 James, scene one (bar 86):



Ex.11 James, final scene (bar 675):

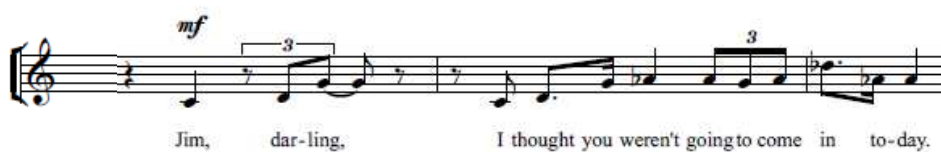


Ex.12 Stephen scene 3 (bar 287):



For most of the story, Sylvia's character is conversational and cheery. Her sung phrases are concise, but more frequent than James' short phrases at the beginning. At the end of the opera, Sylvia sings a fragment of James' poem *Strings in the Earth and Air* lyrically to represent her renewed understanding of his work. Most of her vocal line, apart from the spoken prologue and epilogue and the verse of James' poem in the final scene, features a *parlando* representation of speech.

Ex.13 Sylvia, scene one (bar 43):



Nora's character undergoes a moment-to-moment development every time she appears. For example, during her aria 'His eyes caught mine', in scene two, as the drama gradually escalates, the vocal range becomes higher. The rhythm of her words accelerates, as she becomes more tense and panicked. There is similar treatment during the trio in scene four, *Dear James*, as discussed in the previous chapter. Nora's vocal line doesn't feature *parlando*, aside from one short section representative of speech at the beginning of scene two, where she buys a train ticket from an attendant in Paris. Her character is elusive and ethereal, never with James until the very end of the piece, so she is represented vocally with a sweeping and melodic line, with sustained notes and broad intervals throughout. Along with characterisation of the individual through distinct voice types, singing styles and speech quality, it is also useful to consider the characterisation of context through the manipulation of both the performance space and the imaginary setting of the work.

Ex.14 Nora, scene two (bar 211):



3 - Context as Character and Folk Music influence

The decision as to whether the performance setting for *The Exile* would reflect the imagined setting was discussed in detail with Pencavel. This was of particular importance given the alternating setting of Joyce's Parisian bookshop and Nora's train journey in the crossfire of the Irish Civil War. The setting of the work was crucial. My librettist suggested that to connect the two contrasting scene-settings in the work a permeating factor might come in the form of a folk music element. This would serve to represent an Irish culture and heritage adopted by Joyce and carried with him whatever his physical location. This element would help characterize the vast gulf between Ireland and Paris. A model for this for us was works such as Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, Adam's *Nixon in China* and Sondheim's *Pacific Overtures*, all of which expressed an incongruity between East and West, an incongruity that would either require a resolution or serve as a catalyst for developments in the narrative.

We also discussed the idea of attributing a character or personality to the context or setting of the work. To further engage with the audience, the idea of incorporating an aleatoric element was also a possibility, as was the option for audience participation and involvement. Audience participation is not a new idea in contemporary theatre. In Ayn Rand's *Night of January 16th*, the audience becomes the jury for a courtroom murder and decides on the verdict.¹ Similarly, though more light-heartedly, in *Drood*, Rupert Holmes' comedic musical play based on Dickens' unfinished murder mystery novel, the audience decides who the murderer is during the interval and the second act is altered accordingly.²

London Road is a work constructed from recordings by journalist Alecky Blythe of interview with locals following the Ipswich murders in 2006. It is a prominent example of a work where the context itself functions as a character, particularly since the human characters presented are not named and together represent the general, gentle ethos of the typical English suburb.³ The recordings are reconstructed in *Sprechstimme* melodic realisations with especially composed tonal accompaniment. Melodies are adjusted to comply with the tonal accompaniment, but the natural intonation of the spoken words and sense of natural, colloquial speech are retained. The words are quoted verbatim, including any 'ums' or 'ahs'

¹ Serafin, S. R. Bendixen, A (2006). *Continuum Encyclopedia of American Literature*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd. 930

² Holmes, R (1986). *The Mystery of Edwin Drood: A New Musical*. New York: Nelson Doubleday

³ Calkin, J. (2015). *London Road: how the Ipswich murders inspired an acclaimed musical*. Available: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/11635588/London-Road-how-the-Ipswich-murders-inspired-an-acclaimed-musical.html>. Last accessed 6th Aug 2015

apparent in the original interviews. *London Road* is presented in individual scenes in a non-narrative order to create a window into suburban life. This completely integrated work may present the most all-encompassing version of characterisation of context within a work, as both characters and backdrop are of equal importance and support one another. The context, underscored by the work's title, is no more or less prominent a character itself than the individuals represented. Taylor (2013) states: "The main focus of the play is not the victims and their families, but the exposure of a warm, but sometimes troubled and prejudiced, community to the press during this period."⁴

London Road's positive reviews and film adaptation signify its successful reception at the National Theatre. Despite the absence of conventional narrative, the characterisation of the town's inhabitants and of the setting itself proved appealing to audiences. One of the main focal points is the local community's determination to transform London Road with their "London Road in Bloom" gardening competition, further highlighting the setting as distinctly important. This is in contention with the community unease in the wake of the recent murders, as they proclaim their unwavering perception of the town as a picturesque, safe suburb. Costa (2011) says of Alecky Blythe:

The people she and Cork felt most drawn to were the inhabitants of London Road, once part of Ipswich's red light district and, crucially, the street where the murderer, Steve Wright, had lived. In particular, Blythe and Cork decided to focus on the street's subsequent transformation, not least by the "London Road in Bloom" competition – part of the community's attempt to rejuvenate the area.⁵

While this example of characterisation of context does not involve audience participation, at times the characters appear to address the audience directly, given that their speech is constructed from one-to-one interviews. As the piece begins and ends with the town council and inhabitants meeting, initially in the town hall and, finally, during the celebrations of London Road in bloom, it is as though the audience are invited to experience and explore the town, encouraged by the friendly chatter of the local characters. This shares a commonality with Britten's *Peter Grimes*, which begins with an inquest in Aldeburgh's Moot Hall, twenty miles from Ipswich.

In Jason Robert Brown's musical *Parade*, the backdrop of Marietta, Georgia is also presented as a character, but unlike *London Road*, it is not a principal part. Instead, it

⁴ Lib Taylor (2013) Voice, Body and the Transmission of the Real in Documentary Theatre, *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 23:3, 368-379

⁵ Costa, M. (2011). *London Road: Murder, they sang*. Available: <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2011/apr/10/london-road-alecky-blythe-interview>. Last accessed 25th May 2015.

cultivates a melancholy atmosphere which appears to poison its inhabitants who continue to embody the negative attributes of the bygone confederate era. Their contemplation of their defeat in the American civil war is manipulated into a sense of pride; that, 'The men of Georgia, and the women of Georgia will never be defeated.' Musically, the contention between their pride and the actual demise of confederacy is presented by a bitonal juxtaposition of civil war era song pastiche, 'The Dream of Atlanta', and a more unsettling harmonic foundation which represents Frank's discomfort at arriving at, and endeavouring to settle into this region as a Jewish 'Yankee'.

A recurring bitonal element permeates the score. When Frank is found guilty at trial, the cheers of the mob are supported by an echo of 'The Dream of Atlanta', against a more doleful musical accompaniment and the courtroom erupts into a chaotic frenzy. Later, the bitonal element is enhanced further by a perverse expression of patriotism, manifested in 'Where will you stand when the flood comes'. This is an impassioned expression of pseudo-religious motivated hatred prior to Frank's lynching, which again presents bitonality along with a Copland-esque pastiche. This perversion of American patriotism seems both coarse and unsettling (Ex.1).

The locals' patriotism evolves into a perverse Georgian supremacy and xenophobia. Frank is lynched, despite being found innocent of murder. At the climactic ending of the piece, there is a realisation that despite a lack of evidence for Frank's involvement in the murder of Mary Phagan, given his difference to the locals, he proves a fitting scapegoat. This is a metaphor for the fact that this long-suffering state, rather than accepting its own folly in contributing to its downfall, decides to lay blame on that which it finds alien or unfamiliar. The bitonality apparent in the music represents hypocrisy and inflated national pride, and the harmonic context of the setting represents the poisoned minds of the locals and their imminent rejection of Frank as a member of their community. This is an example of a work in which a skewed folk music influence is amalgamated with the setting of Marietta, to characterise the physical context as jingoistic and hateful.

Ex.1, *Parade*, Act II, Scene 8.

See them laugh when an an - gel dies! See them spout all their
Jew lo - vin' lies! But they'll run on the judge - ment day!

Contrastingly, it was beneficial to study concepts of immersive theatre, such as *Punchdrunk*, where the actual setting where the work is performed is integral to its interpretation. Promenade opera, advocated by such theatre companies, allows audiences to move around a performance space and experience a piece, either guided by the real time narrative, or in the order in which it pleases them to experience particular vignettes or scenes.⁶ Were the aesthetic of *The Exile* to reflect Joyce's literary style, an unconventional setting would have been well-suited to the work, but even the overall style of the piece was yet to be determined. Pencavel and I were concerned as to whether an aleatoric, or immersive performance of *The Exile* would detract from the importance of the relationships explored within the work. White (2012) gives Shunt and Punchdrunk as 'examples of immersive theatre which use architectural interiors: extensive environments which audiences explore in order to find the performance, and sometimes to give performances themselves.'⁷ The motivation behind the invention of immersive theatre may lie in the fact that conservative audience settings can be perceived as stuffy and oppressive, whereas an

⁶ Punchdrunk. (2000). *Punchdrunk: Company*. Available: <http://punchdrunk.com/company>. Last accessed 6th Aug 2015

⁷ White, G. (2012). On Immersive Theatre. *Theatre Research International*. 37 (3), 221-235

audience that engages directly with the work is both liberated and encouraged to immerse themselves fully. This viewpoint was famously expressed by Brazilian theatre practitioner Augusto Boal in a term he coined, 'The Theatre of the Oppressed', during a period of research and discussion on the subject of audiences in the 1950s. Boal was influenced by Marxist educationalist Paulo Freire's 'Pedagogy of the oppressed', an argument that the student should be treated as a co-creator of knowledge.⁸ Bennett (2013) explains the premise of Boal's doctrine. 'Aristotelian theatre, according to Boal, imposed a fixed and knowable world upon the audience. The audience is held passive, delegating power to the characters to act and think in their place.'⁹ To quote Boal directly on his philosophy:

The poetics of the oppressed is essentially the poetics of liberation: the spectator no longer delegates power to the characters either to think or to act in his place. The spectator frees himself; he thinks and acts for himself! Theatre is action! Perhaps the theatre is not revolutionary in itself, but have doubts, it is a rehearsal of revolution!¹⁰

It is perhaps for this reason that emergent immersive theatre concerned itself with politically-motivated subject matter, but Bennett suggests that immersive theatre in its present incarnation is 'this time shorn of political imperatives or allegiances.' The profile of promenade opera was raised by Punchdrunk, and key works such as Thomas Rasch's *The Duchess of Malfi* and John Cage's *Roaratorio* present good examples of works that invite subtle participation but do not impose political agendas on their audience.

Roaratorio, an Irish Circus on Finnegans Wake was devised through an interpretation of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* using Cage's work _____, _____ circus on _____, which comprises directions on how to transform any literary work into a piece suited for performance. A recent performance in Oxford in 2014 directed by Loré Lixenberg involved a pre-performance tableau setting where performers lay on the floor. Audience members were invited to stroll around the space, accompanied by an audio soundtrack consisting of examples pre-recorded by cast members and musicians. This was similar to experiencing a museum exhibition. Only once the audience had sufficiently experienced the space and seated themselves did the formal performance of the work begin. During the performance, the actors moved around and amongst the audience, immersing them in the surrounding action. This immersive experience calls to mind works such as Britten's *Noye's*

⁸ Freire, P (1996). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. London: Penguin Books. 62

⁹ Bennett, S (2013). *Theatre Audiences*. London: Routledge. 209

¹⁰ Dwyer, P. (2008). *Still Rehearsing the Revolution? 'Theatre of the Oppressed', State Subsidy and Drug War Politics*. Available: <https://www.questia.com/read/1P3-1285304741/still-rehearsing-the-revolution-theatre-of-the-oppressed>. Last accessed 24th June 2015

Fludde, Henze's *We Come to the River* and Stockhausen's *Momente*. This interpretation of the work is also reminiscent of Zimmerman's original concept for *Die Soldaten*, where the action of the work would take place on twelve stages in and around the audience, who would move their swivelling chairs to face the stage on which the subsequent scenes would take place. Despite not contributing to the work in terms of dialogue or action, the audience experiences the work as close-up as possible; part of the environment themselves. The audience, as part of the setting, itself becomes a breathing, organic context for the action.

This is taken a step further in Rasch's *The Duchess of Malfi*, where the audience roam the performance space in search of the nine individual scenes recounting the life of the Duchess Giovanna d'Aragona. The audience members go in search of the scenes, building upon the action and literally constructing the story for themselves. For Punchdrunk's interpretation of the work in 2010, the audience were given white masks to wear so that they physically became characters and felt more absorbed in the atmosphere of the piece. One potential problem with the dissection of the piece means that, having to construct the story for themselves, the audience may be confused about the plot. Michael Billington of *The Guardian* states:

The essence of the experience is randomness: it's rather like the William Burroughs technique of arbitrarily re-arranging sentences to defamiliarise them. But the problem with applying this to Webster's play is that it assumes you know the story in the first place: if you don't, you'll be hopelessly lost. The approach also works against the cumulative impact of any piece of music-theatre: it becomes difficult to judge Rasch's score since you only hear it in disjointed fragments, from small woodwind or string-and-brass ensembles, until the final scene. It essentially becomes background music to a series of Websterian verbal highlights.¹¹

However, it may be the intention that the audience member perceives multiple perspectives at once. The perception of the piece is anachronistic, as the chronology of the work is secondary to the experience of the environment itself. This ethos rings true for *Die Soldaten*. Although it presents the information to the audience in chronological order, the composer pointed out that the storytelling element of the work was not the biggest priority. '...My opera does not tell a story, but portrays a situation, to be precise: the account of a situation that from

¹¹ Billington, M. (2010). *The Duchess of Malfi*. Available: <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2010/jul/14/duchess-of-malfi-review>. Last accessed 24th June 2015

the future threatens the past.’¹² This statement resonates strongly with the philosophy of Berio, Maderna and Kagel, among others.

A significant impediment to the success of immersive theatre is the audience’s past experience, which informs their expectations for a work in performance. Tim Rutherford-Johnson (2010) suggests, ‘The music worked against the immersive experience: as soon as a group of musicians gathered at one of those collections of music stands, they drew an audience who stopped promenading and exploring, and stood, waiting to listen. Some even found themselves seats – like parkgoers around the bandstand – long before any music had begun.’¹³

The contextual setting of *London Road* is a benevolent character that retains its goodness despite the aura of anxiety that the sudden media attention brings to the town. In *Parade*, the setting itself is a more sinister character, perpetuating bigoted views and encouraging the people of Marietta to ostracise and persecute its Jewish residents. Physically, the audience remains in their conventional setting as passive observers, but the plot is enhanced by the fact that the context is made all the more important to the story. In the case of *The Duchess of Malfi*, as an example of promenade opera, the audience is invited to explore the work from all angles and actively construct meaning themselves. The physical setting of the performance is used to great capacity and is absolutely integral to the success of the author’s intended presentation of the work. Context as character in this sense is somewhat different in that the setting does not express itself through any indirect means, yet without its specific arrangement, the performance could not take place in the way in which the author and director have intended. In a subliminal sense, the setting is attributed a personality by the author and is equally important to its named characters. The audience function within the actual setting of the work.

The advantages and disadvantages of setting *The Exile* immersively were seriously considered, along with the characterisation of the context as an individual. However, the presented context of an operatic work can still evoke an immersive experience for the audience without an aleatoric or participatory element on the part of the audience. In the beginning stages of composition on *The Exile*, the context was presented as an important

¹² Zimmerman, B.A, Fitzgibbon, E.R, Richmond Pollock, E. (2014). On Die Soldaten. *The Opera Quarterly*. 30 (1), 142-144

¹³ Rutherford-Johnson, T. (2010). *The Duchess of Malfi*. Available: <http://www.musicalcriticism.com/opera/eno-malfi-0710.shtml>. Last accessed 24th June 2015

representative feature in a similar, conventional vein to Britten *Peter Grimes*. Pencavel and my connection to the setting of *The Exile* mirrored that of Britten's connection to Aldeburgh, and the sounds evocative of the sea in *Grimes* fashioned the imagined setting for the work¹⁴. Pencavel's stage direction for the opening scene of *The Exile* reads as follows:

'Shakespeare and Company, Sylvia's bookshop, Paris 1922. There are a few chairs amongst the bookshelves, and a couple of small coffee tables neatly piled with papers. STEPHEN DAEDALUS appears from behind a chair and pokes around, looking at the books and eventually finding the pile of JAMES JOYCE's papers and riffling through them'.¹⁵

The scene settings for the opera alternate between the Parisian bookshop and Galway, Ireland, during the civil war. Where the action is taking place in Paris, the only setting visible to the audience is the bookshop, whereas, in Ireland, Nora first appears on a train platform, then a train, then in her home in Galway reminiscing about James. Although the theatrical setting representative of Paris is simple, the atmosphere of the bookshop is important as a representation of James' psyche, which is consistent whatever the physical setting.

Pencavel and I concluded that the opera could be performed in a bookshop; perhaps even Shakespeare and Company in Paris, where the opera is set. As the piece requires only four singers and a small ensemble, we felt that it could work in such a small space. Although the work would not be immersive, nor would it involve audience participation or interaction, the space in which it would be performed would add realism to its interpretation. Whenever James appears in *The Exile*, he is in the bookshop, whereas Nora moves to Ireland and back to Paris. Although James' character develops and he is redeemed by his love for Nora, physically, he remains in the same setting. This also aptly represents James' consistent emotional connection with his homeland, despite having moved, during his life, from Ireland to Italy, then Switzerland and Paris. It was also clear to Pencavel and me from the outset that *The Exile* should be sung in a *bel canto* style. Joyce himself was an operatic tenor, and the structure and intimacy of the piece seemed suited to a chamber opera.

The musical interlude adjoining the second and third scenes of *The Exile* is based on an Irish folk tune *Rose Dillon*, adapted from The Bunting Collections.¹⁶ The use of this piece is discussed in further detail in chapter six of this dissertation. A subtle folk music influence is also present in the vocal line of the character Stephen Daedalus, which is decorated with

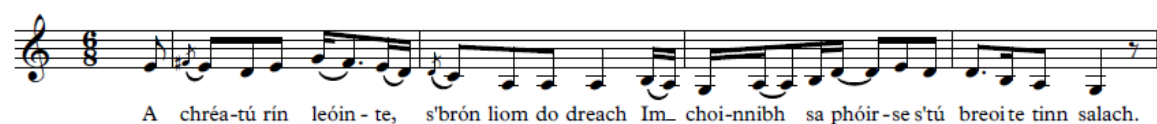
¹⁴ Steen, M (2012). *Britten's Peter Grimes: A Short Guide to a Great Opera*. London: Icon Books

¹⁵ Pencavel, G. *The Exile: Libretto* (2015).

¹⁶ Bunting, E (2002). *The Ancient Music of Ireland: The Bunting Collections*. Dublin: Waltons Publishing

occasional grace notes, repeated notes and ornamentation. This is influenced partly by the traditional Irish ‘sean-nós’ singing style, where lines are ornamented in a high tessitura and one syllable is sung to several notes¹⁷. As per folk music tradition, sean-nós songs are not notated musically but are passed on aurally. A transcription of Nell Ní Chróinín’s *An Lacha Bhacach* is presented below, along with examples from Daedalus’ vocal line in scene one of *The Exile*. Although Daedalus’ line is not very heavily ornamented, there is a slight allusion to this style of singing which, contrastingly, does not appear in the vocal lines of the characters of Sylvia, Nora and James. As James’ alter-ego, Stephen Daedalus represents the same consistent Irish influence as James’ character, whatever the physical setting, but expresses it more clearly through his vocal line.

Ex.2, *An Lacha Bhacach* (transcription, S Carlile 2016).



Ex.3, *The Exile*, Scene 1.



Ex.4, *The Exile*, Scene 1.



In doing this I was consciously emulating a number of opera and music theatre works that evoked popular and folk music models, particularly Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess* and Richard

¹⁷ Ling, J (1997). *A History of European Folk Music*. BOYE6: New York. 90.

Thomas' *Jerry Springer: The Opera*. In the case of *Porgy and Bess*, the location of the setting is of specific importance and is alluded to by the characters and also by the folk music element apparent in the music. The score is an amalgamation of emergent American contemporary jazz and folk music, arguably progressive both musically and in terms of its subject matter at the time of its completion in 1935. When discussing the novel, *Porgy* (1925) on which the opera was based, Fisher (2004) says: 'Heyward's *Porgy* was provocative, and some naturally considered it an evocation, or an invocation, of racial fears and fantasies, perceiving its caricatures and stereotypes offensive and affronting'.¹⁸ It is important to note that Gershwin was himself the son of immigrant Russian Jews and empathised objectively with his chosen subject. In order to represent African American culture realistically, Gershwin conducted research by attending Carolina churches and nightclubs to observe and absorb elements of the cultural milieu.¹⁹

Adam Guettel's *Floyd Collins* is predominantly a fusion of American folk and bluegrass. The work alludes to operatic convention in that many of the songs are prefaced with a recitative-like introduction and large sections of the work are through-composed. Guettel cites Stravinsky as a major influence on his work, along with Britten and Ravel.²⁰ As with Gershwin's immersion in African-American culture to research for his adaptation of *Porgy*, Guettel listened to old recordings of Civil War Era songs for inspiration:

In preparing *Floyd Collins*, some of the greatest material I listened to were Folkways recordings of toothless old ladies from the Civil War. You know, [sings] "Came to this country in 1864...." It's like you can tell they have exactly one tooth. And in that one line is this beautiful melody—such a world. Just to go to the fourth degree, by harmonic implication, is to have a sea-change emotionally. And all that is encoded in the single line.²¹

Much of the story takes place in the cave where Floyd is trapped, as he reminisces on his youth, laments his folly and fantasises about his rescue. Similarly to the character of James Joyce in *The Exile*, Floyd remains in the same imagined setting throughout. The action alternates between his anguish in the cave, his family at their home, and his hallucinations. This allows for contrasting stage settings, but the acoustic properties of the cave are of specific importance and are explored musically by the composer. A synthetic cave-acoustic

¹⁸ Fisher, B D (2004). *Gershwin's Porgy and Bess*. Florida: Opera Journeys Publishing. 18

¹⁹ Moos Pick, M. Cullum, J. (2012). *Porgy and Bess: A Jazz Transcription, Part One*. Available: <http://riverwalkjazz.stanford.edu/program/porgy-and-bess-jazz-transcription-part-one>. Last accessed 29th June 2015

²⁰ Darvell, M. (2012). *Adam Guettel's Floyd Collins at Southwark Playhouse*. Available: http://www.classicalsource.com/db_control/db_concert_review.php?id=10003. Last accessed 30th June 2015

²¹ Savran, D. (2004). *Adam Guettel Faces the Music*. Available: <http://www.tcg.org/publications/at/Jan04/guettel.cfm>. Last accessed 30th June 2015

is generated through the use of electronic amplification and echo, and Floyd is accompanied by his own voice in pre-recorded and looped harmonies upon first entering the cave in his aspirational and joyful *The Call*.

My research into *Jerry Springer: The Opera* revealed its close connection to ballad opera and *Singspiele*. Ballad opera, which was ubiquitous in the mid-eighteenth century, has been described as an early indication of the development of our current popular music industry, and often incorporated folk music and societal influences.²² One could argue that its advent initiated a divergence that anticipated the development of light opera, or operetta, and thereafter present-day musical theatre. As ballad operas were generally satirical, they made use of pastiche writing styles, imitating the musical styles of classical composers such as Purcell and Handel. The favourable reception of ballad opera among less affluent audiences suggested that the replacing of recitative with spoken dialogue, and the presentation of the characters as poor members of society rather than the noblemen evoked more empathy among ordinary people, as a contrast to the audiences of *opera seria* who were typically wealthy. *Opera seria* was presented through the mirror of ballad opera as supercilious and intellectually elitist, and many works were banned, including John Gay's sequel to *The Beggar's Opera*, *Polly*, composed in 1777. One could suggest that *Jerry Springer: The Opera* is a modern day incarnation of ballad opera. *Singspiele*, meaning 'song play', a form of German music drama, often translated from English ballad opera, was also a popular form of entertainment, particularly in the 19th century. One such work was Carl Maria von Weber's *Der Freischütz*, also titled *The Marksman with Magic Bullets*. Paxman (2014) states: 'Much of Weber's score is Classical, though with a colourful infusion of folk music in the choruses of the huntsmen and bridesmaids'.²³

A broader definition of ballad opera assumes that it is 'any British stage production from 1728 to 1760 that combines a comic or sentimental play with musical numbers that re-used 'common Tunes', i.e. airs whose broad circulation allowed them to be recalled by title only.'²⁴ There is a folk music influence in ballad opera in the presentation of respective characters and the accessibility of the score. In this context, nuances of ballad opera, such as

²² Joncus, B. Burden, M. Rogers, V.L. (2011). *Ballad Operas Online*. Available: <http://www.odl.ox.ac.uk/balladoperas/>. Last accessed 30th June 2015

²³ Paxman, J (2014). *A Chronology Of Western Classical Music 1600-2000*. London: Omnibus Press. 345.

²⁴ Joncus, B. Burden, M. Rogers, V.L. (2011). *Ballad Operas Online*. Available: <http://www.odl.ox.ac.uk/balladoperas/>. Last accessed 30th June 2015

ballad-farce or comic opera are all organised into the same category, particularly with reference to the evolution of the musical theatre genre. Tommasini (2011) states:

...the best achievements in each genre, and the occasional standout hybrid work (I'm thinking of Bernstein's "Candide" and Adam Guettel's "The Light in the Piazza") have been from composers and writers who grounded themselves in a tradition, even while reaching across the divide.²⁵

Pencavel and I had decided that *The Exile* would reference Irish folk music in some respect, and one or more of the characters would adopt subtle references to ornamentation apparent in the Irish folk music tradition to represent Joyce's national identity. It seemed that Stephen, as James' alter ego and a manifestation of James' nature, was the best character through which to represent the Irish folk music tradition in his vocal lines. Along with this, *Rose Dillon* is presented as an interlude, connecting two halves of the opera and creating a sense of shift in time, as is often presented with an interval, for a work of two or more acts. James is alone, without Nora or Stephen to inspire him, and the prolonged period of waiting and uncertainty helps him to realise his lack of fulfilment. The use of this folk song represents the same underlying Irish identity as the allusions made in Stephen's vocal line. Despite the work not being a piece of immersive theatre, the physical context for the performance was important, and ideally the work would be performed in a bookshop or intimate theatrical setting. These ideas were subsequently developed further and are outlined in more detail in the culminating chapter of this dissertation.

²⁵ Eddy, J. M. (2011). *Opera? Musical? Please Respect the Difference*. Available: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/10/theater/musical-or-opera-the-fine-line-that-divides-them.html?_r=0. Last accessed 30th June 2015

4 - Leitmotif in Contemporary Opera

During my composition of *The Exile*, I undertook practical engagement with the subject of leitmotif through my analysis of Szymanowski's *Krol Roger*, which is discussed in more detail in chapter five of this dissertation. Beginning with an overview of Wagner's use and development of leitmotif, this particular chapter focuses on how opera has continued to incorporate leitmotif as a technique to facilitate characterisation on a number of levels with time, individuals and both physical and emotional context effectively represented through its use. Although this dissertation is concerned with contemporary opera, it is important to reflect upon Wagner's seminal innovation of leitmotif that has presented such a prevailing influence in opera since *The Ring*. It is also acknowledged that even prior to Wagner, composers employed themes to represent different characters or emotions; Beethoven's motto themes and Berlioz' *idée fixe* to name just two examples. It can be observed that Wagner's concept of leitmotif developed from a parameter of an operatic work which enhanced or reflected the drama into a powerful and essential element of the work that took on its own meaning. This ethos is reflected in *Tristan and Isolde*, where the *Tristan* chord forms the basis of the overall harmonic development of the work. Wagner, in his operatic works, displayed both drama-led and symphonic uses of leitmotif¹. *The Ring* begins with the first and appears to develop into the latter. Composers since Wagner have used leitmotif in differing ways, but the 'drama-led versus symphonic' approach is an integral element of this research.

Unlike *Tristan and Isolde*, Strauss' *Salome* and other works discussed in this chapter, motifs representative of characters in *The Exile* are not linked with particular keys. The accompanying harmony is constructed from the pitches attributed to each character, discussed and outlined in chapter five. There are however recurring motifs which represent James' state of mind. In scene one, following an altercation with Stephen, James sings a repeated line, 'I have my words,' whilst in a state of confusion, as he has been abandoned (Ex.1). He attempts to reassure himself that all he needs are his books. This motif is sung *falsetto*, the light timbre of which represents his lack of conviction and dazedness. The piano accompaniment is simple and is based on the second trichord of his set, as presented in the following chapter.

¹ Discussed in Dahlhaus, C (1989). *Between Romanticism and Modernism: Four Studies in the Music of the Later Nineteenth Century* (California Studies in 19th Century Music). California: University of California Press.

Ex.1 James ‘Confusion’ motif, *The Exile*, scene one (bar 140).

p *p* (*Falsetto*)
I've got my words I have my words

A variation on this motif returns at the end of scene three (Ex.2). Though the pitches are different, the same intervallic relationships are present in the F, A and B. The G occurs in the end of the phrase but there is more emphasis on the following pitch, F. In this instance, again, James is left alone. He is confused, but contemplative and questioning rather than in a trance. He asks, ‘If I had need for nothing more, would I be content?’ Throughout the work, James comes to the realisation that his personal relationships are as important to his well-being as his writing. This motif occurs at the halfway point of the work. The accompaniment is simpler; a pronounced octave as might precede a section of recitative.

Ex.2 James’ motif, *The Exile*, scene three (bar 293).

mf *mf*
If I had need for no - thing more

rall. Slower still ♩ = 60 *p*
arco

There is a moment of clarity at the end of the scene, where the same four-note motif recurs after James' aria, this time set to different words, 'There's no one there,' as James realises his lack of fulfilment in the absence of Stephen Daedalus and Nora (Ex.3).

Ex.3 James' motif, *The Exile*, scene four (bar 426).

The musical score for Ex.3 consists of two systems. The top system shows a vocal line with lyrics: "but lo There's no - one there to catch me_ There's no one there and no thing_". The piano accompaniment is shown below the vocal line. The bottom system continues the piano accompaniment, featuring a four-note motif in the right hand and a more decorated line in the left hand. The motif is a four-note sequence in the right hand, and the piano accompaniment is more decorated in this instance.

The piano accompaniment is more decorated in this instance. James is no longer lost and confused, but is enlightened. The motif has a recurrence at the end of the scene, with the same line of text as in Ex. 2 repeated once again, with the same octave accompaniment transposed down a semitone while the motif is transposed up a tone in the voice (Ex.4). This repetition of text is similar to Wozzeck's utterance of, 'We poor folk,' as discussed in chapter two.

Ex.4 James' motif, *The Exile*, scene four (bar 444).

The musical score for Ex.4 consists of two systems. The top system shows a vocal line with lyrics: "If I had need_ for no - thing more_". The piano accompaniment is shown below the vocal line. The bottom system continues the piano accompaniment, featuring a four-note motif in the right hand and a more decorated line in the left hand. The motif is a four-note sequence in the right hand, and the piano accompaniment is more decorated in this instance.

The Exile does not outline key relationships as a means of representing its characters in the way that Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* does, for example, through its use of the half-diminished 7th chord. This is used to great effect as a pivot chord for moving to remote keys. The prelude creates a sense of tonal ambiguity and perpetuated anticipation, and Wagner's use of chromaticism facilitates shifts from dominant to dominant. The 'unresolvable' nature

of the *Tristan* chord harmony, in tandem with its two comprising motifs, longing and desire, reflects the lovers' intense passion that can only be redeemed through death. Keys are still alluded to in *Tristan*, suggesting what is almost within reach but never attained.

Ex.5 'Longing' and 'desire' motifs, *Tristan and Isolde*.

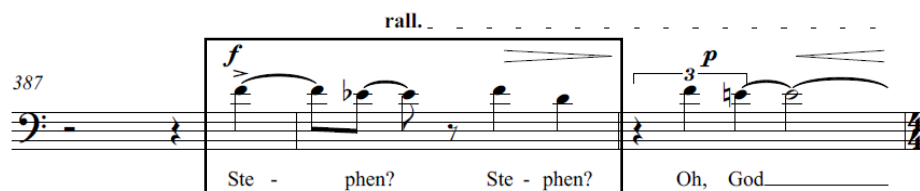


In his programme notes, Wagner wrote:

“There is henceforth no end to the yearning, longing, rapture and misery of love: world, power, fame, honour, chivalry, loyalty, and friendship, scattered like an insubstantial dream; one thing alone left living: longing, longing unquenchable, desire forever renewing itself, craving and languishing; one sole redemption: death, surcease of being, the sleep that knows no waking!”

A ‘longing’ motif also features in *The Exile*, as a means of representing Joyce’s longing for both Nora and Stephen, his two greatest literary creations. However, this is purely melodic, occurring in bar 388, prior to the aria ‘When I hear your voice’. Joyce is lost without either of his companions and he pines for them in his contemplation of the setting for his novel, *Ulysses*.

Ex.6 *The Exile*, Scene 4.



This feature is echoed in bar 401-402 in the accompaniment (Ex.7) and again in bar 467 (Ex.8), at the climactic point of Joyce’s aria. This ‘longing’ motif is also expressed much later, in bar 679, to Joyce’s utterance of ‘Stephen, Stephen’.

Ex.7 *The Exile*, Scene 4.



Ex.8 *The Exile*, Scene 4.

In *Tristan*, keys form broader associations with profound meaning. C major has associations with day, as it highlights the end of Act I and the love scene at the beginning of Act II. Chafe (2008) states,

“In Act III, Wagner presents it entirely above a prolonged dominant (G) pedal - an enormous extension of Schopenhauer’s chord of the seventh - creating an analog of Tristan’s awaiting Isolde’s arrival to heal him from life.”²

Key relationships are outlined particularly in the love scenes of the opera; the end of Act I, the second scene of Act II and the final scene of Act III. According to Weinstock and Heisterman (2007):

In the Act I love scene, the music progresses from B (night/death) to C (day/life). The direction of the key change switches in Acts II and III: B (night/death) gains victory over C (day/life) because between Acts I and II, Tristan and Isolde’s viewpoint of death changes very significantly.”³

²Chafe, E. (2008). *Tragedy and Dramatic Structure*. Available: <http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195343007.001.0001/acprof-9780195343007-chapter-8>. Last accessed 25th May 2015.

³ Weinstock, J. Heisterman, M.. (2007). *Tristan and Isolde Dramatic Structure*. Available: <https://www.utexas.edu/courses/tristan/dramstruct.php>. Last accessed 25th May 2015.

Emphasis is given to the half diminished 7th chord also in *The Ring*, particularly where it provides the harmonic foundation for the motif which occurs when Alberich curses the ring in *Das Rheingold*. Another example of keys as representative in Wagner occurs in the second scene of *Das Rheingold*, where the Valhalla motif is heard in the key of Db major. This heralds the first appearance of the Gods (Ex.9) and returns, significantly altered harmonically, in Act II of *Die Walkure* (Ex.10).

Having developed both these motifs in close correspondence with the mounting passions of the action, I was now able to link them – with the aid of a strangely distant harmonization – to paint a far clearer picture of Wotan’s sombre and desperate suffering than his own words ever could.⁴

Ex.9 *Das Rheingold*, ‘Valhalla’ motif.



Ex.10 Reprise of ‘Valhalla’ motif.



Key relationships within Wagner illustrate Dahlhaus’ suggestion that there was a gradual shift from a drama-led to a more symphonic use of leitmotif in Wagner’s operatic works. Dahlhaus (1989) states:

...leitmotivic technique plays a formal, structural role in Wagner equivalent to that of regular periodic structure in other music: the leitmotifs create the framework of the form instead of being interpolated, for dramaturgical reasons, into a structure that rests on other foundations. This replacement of one formal principle by the other marks the transition from “romantic opera” to “music drama”.⁵

Strauss is famously quoted as saying, ‘Richard Wagner’s scores are the alpha and omega of my additions to this work; they embody the only important progress in the art of

⁴ Whittall, A. (2006). Leitmotif. In: Barry Millington *The New Grove Guide to Wagner and His Operas*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁵ Dahlhaus, C (1989). *Between Romanticism and Modernism: Four Studies in the Music of the Later Nineteenth Century* (California Studies in 19th Century Music). California: University of California Press. 60

instrumentation since Berlioz.⁶ Strauss was editing Berlioz' *Treaty of Orchestration* while composing *Salome* and thus possibly drew influence from Berlioz' concept of *idée fixe*, a precursor to leitmotif, along with Berlioz' principles of orchestration⁷. The concept of representing characters with individual keys is apparent in Strauss' *Salome*. Salome's motif is indicated below (Ex.11) and returns throughout the opera, suggesting a tonality of C# minor, a particular musical characteristic which distinguishes her individually. We notice C# minor return in Salome's 'Allure' motif (Ex.12). A major tonality is attributed to the character of Jochanaan in *Salome* when he first appears in the opera. Jochannan's motif (Ex.13) does not suggest any harmonic ambiguity and is distinctly functionally tonal. This tonal disparity between the two characters reflects Jochanaan's stoicism in contrast to Salome's manipulative nature, which is reflected in the composer's concomitant manipulation of harmonies.

Ex.11 'Salome' motif.



Ex.12 'Allure' motif.



Ex.13 Jochannan's motif



Strauss alludes to Wagner also in his creation of the *Elektra* chord (Ex.14), a juxtaposition of chords E and C# major. This is used in his opera *Elektra* to represent the title character, and

⁶ Berlioz, H. Strauss, R. (1985). *Treatise on Instrumentation (Kalmus Edition)*. California: Alfred Music Publishing. 1.

⁷ Copland, A (1974). *Music and Imagination (C.E.Norton Lectures)*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

is reminiscent of the C# major/minor juxtaposition from *Salome*. Hence Strauss seems to be developing his own repertoire for leitmotivic characterization, all building from Wagner's musical symbolism. This characterization is therefore partly 'intertextual', whereas the leitmotifs in *The Exile* derive their meaning almost exclusively from the internal relations of the piece, as mediated through sequences of trichords, discussed in chapters five and six.

Ex.14 *Elektra* chord



Berg's treatment of leitmotif in *Wozzeck* could be described as drama-led, rather than symphonic, rather as Wagner set out to utilise it at the beginning of *The Ring*. Here it exists somewhat externally as an enhancement to the drama and accompaniment for visual association. One motivic idea apparent in Berg's *Wozzeck* has been described by DeVoto as 'the death leitmotif', which represents both Marie and Wozzeck as they approach their downfall.⁸ Rather than a melodic phrase, the death motif is manifested by means of consecutive use of fifths, first appearing in the third scene of Act I, where we first encounter Marie and her child. Though only briefly touched upon in this scene, the motivic idea develops throughout and reappears very apparently in scene three of Act II prior to an altercation between Wozzeck and Marie, and again most explicitly at the moment of her death in Act III. The subsequent decay of the leitmotivic idea occurs in concomitance with Marie's death. Reich (1931) refers to this as the 'waiting' motif, as he interprets it to signify Marie's apprehension and constant waiting, which he states, 'is only terminated by her death.'⁹ There is a symbolic link here with Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, and, motivically, an apparent allusion to the aforementioned 'longing' motif. Despite these similarities, through the use of consecutive fifths, Berg makes this particular leitmotivic idea textural rather than melodic.

⁸ Mark DeVoto. (1998). The Death Leitmotif in *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*. In: Siglind Bruhn *Encrypted Messages in Alban Berg's Music*. New York: Routledge. 243-248

⁹ Willi Reich (1931). *A Guide to Alban Berg's Opera, Wozzeck*. New York: League of Composers. 10.

Ex.15 *Wozzeck*, ‘Waiting’ motif.



Death as a theme represented through leitmotif is a consistent preoccupation of Berg, particularly in *Wozzeck*. It could be argued that Berg endeavours to challenge the romantic representation of death in art and literature. This observation is of particular significance since the composition of *Wozzeck* was concurrent with the advent of the First World War. As Parker (2013) describes:

The titular protagonist of Alban Berg's opera, *Wozzeck*, experiences death in a way that starkly contrasts Romantic ideals. *Wozzeck* does not die the honourable, 'masculine' death that might be expected from a tragic hero; rather, he capitulates to madness, misery and poverty.¹⁰

Parker refers to the 'fate dyad', with the notes F-B, also two components of Wagner's *Tristan* chord, played either together, in immediate succession or punctuated within a musical texture, as common to both Marie and *Wozzeck*, and apparent throughout the opera to herald impending death. There is also a sense of verbal leitmotif, with the captain at the outset declaring, 'One thing after another,' which returns throughout the opera as an ironic iteration of a casual colloquialism which has come to mean something devastating and morbid. Berg also makes use of a twelve note row in *Wozzeck* as a manner of leitmotif in that it represents the title character's dialogue with the Doctor in Act I scene four. This interaction is presented as a series of passacaglia variations, the theme of which first occurs in bar 488. The row is presented in the following order by letter names:

(Eb B) G C# C F# E Bb A (F Ab) D

One can also observe that the pitches on either side produce a *Tristan* chord. The first utterance of the row (Ex.16) is presented through a pedal Eb in the bass, with the Doctor incorporating the subsequent notes of the row into his vocal line. Rather than attributing equal importance to each pitch in the row, characteristics of the entire row suggest that the notes complement one another, as addressed by Perle (1992), who observes, '...the

¹⁰ Meaghan Parker. (2013). "Wir Arme Leut": Undignified Death and Madness in Berg's *Wozzeck*. *Nota Bene: Canadian Undergraduate Journal of Musicology*. 6 (1), 89-120.

augmented triad formed by the first three elements, the diminished triad formed by the last three, and the four tritone adjacencies.’¹¹ There are 21 variations on the note row. With regard to dramatic representation, Berg himself states, ‘Needless to say, the working out of the variations of this theme is not mechanical or even done in terms of pure, absolute music, but has the strongest possible connection to the dramatic action.’¹²

Engl.

Kfg.

I. Hr. in F
= D.

Ps.

Vorhang rasch auf.
Curtain rises quickly

4. Szene / 4th Scene
Studierstube des Doktors (sonniger Nachmittag)
The Doctor's study (a sunny afternoon)

Wozzeck tritt ein
enters

Der Doktor eilt hastig dem
eintretenden Wozzeck entgegen
Doctor rushes to meet Wozzeck
as he comes into the room

Was denn,
What sir?

parlando

Was er-leb' ich, Wozzeck?
What is this now, Woz-zek!

Ein Mann ein Wort!
Where is your word?

Ei, ei, ei!
Er, Eh, Eh!

Sehr langsam ($\bullet = 36-40$)

tutti Recitativo mit viel Freiheit im Tempo

p Passacaglia-Thema

Vlc.

Here, Berg's admission that the music is deliberately connected to the drama despite the intricacy and seeming abstractness of its construction is reminiscent of Wagner's Gesamtkunstwerk ideal and cements the implication of Wagner's influence. Nevertheless, the use of a priori formal units was not a feature of Wagner's work. Wagner's dichotomy of drama-led versus symphonic use of leitmotif can also be referenced when exploring Berg's *Lulu*, which features a more symphonic integration of its respective leitmotifs than *Wozzeck*. This is to say that the leitmotifs are not merely additional to the opera in order to enhance the drama but, as with the case of *Tristan and Isolde*, take on their own deeper musical meaning which transcends that of musical cues to accompany the visual aspect of the drama. In these

¹² Berg, A. (2013). *Wozzeck Lecture by Alban Berg (1929)*. Available: <http://solomonsmusic.net/WozzeckLecture.htm>. Last accessed 16th Apr 2015.

cases, the leitmotif becomes less distinct as a foreground element and more integral to the structure of the work itself on a prolonged basis. With *The Ring*, the motifs begin as a catalogue of ideas, characters, situations and emotions that are recognisable as such, and as the operas progress, become entwined, elongated and developed as part of a more ‘symphonic’ conception. Although there are still independent motifs that can be heard and recognised in *Lulu*, the overriding symphonic element is perhaps a result of the unique and deeply integrated twelve-tone system used in the harmonic and melodic construction of the work.

Berg’s utilisation of note rows in *Lulu* is representative of specific characters. These function as extended leitmotifs, in a similar manner to the way in which Wagner might associate a particular motif to an individual. Berg’s material for the sets are derived from a particular source row, from which he produces others, choosing, for example, in the case of the character of Rodrigo, alternate pitches from the row to create a new row entitled B2. Every fourth note in the row in cyclic permutation generates row B3, which represents Hugenberg. More complex processes are employed to generate material for other characters, such as Countess Geschwitz, for whom each fifth and seventh note of the row creates what Berg called a new, ‘correct row’ of material¹³, and Dr Schon, whose algorithm changes with each alternation, as he skips one note, then two, then three, and then proceeds with the pattern in retrograde.

There are features common to both *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*, such as the death motif idea, similarly in *Lulu*, where the same notes, the symbolic tritone, can be heard in alternation in the bass during the death of Countess Geschwitz along with a similar sequence of consecutive fifths, similar to that which represents Marie in *Wozzeck*. A thematically-associated motif is also evident in the theme of the *Canzonetta*, which is heard during the deaths of the Medical Specialist in Act I, Dr Schon in Act II and Alwa in Act III. Similarly to Wagner and without the innovation evident in the use of note rows, there occur links between themes as the plot develops, such as the echo of the Introduction of the *Canon* between Lulu and the Painter when Countess Geschwitz enquires about the artist in Act II.¹⁴

Parallels can also be drawn with Strauss’ *Salome*, although the representative parameter manipulated therein is texture, rather than harmony. For example, Rodrigo is

¹³ Hall, P (1997). *A View of Berg's Lulu through the Autograph Sources*. California: University of California Press. 117.

¹⁴ Detailed analysis in Jarman, D (1991). *Alban Berg: Lulu*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 66.

represented by pentatonic scales and piano clusters, to reflect his bravado and coarse attitude.¹⁵

Benjamin Britten's operas also display leitmotifs, but more as reminiscences than deeply-integrated structural elements or drama-led, distinct representative melodies. Matthews (2003) states that, in the case of *Peter Grimes*, 'While rejecting an all-embracing Wagnerian leitmotif system, Britten developed motifs meaningfully over long sections of the score.'¹⁶ Alenier (2009) states: 'Unlike Wagner's leitmotifs, Britten's recurring musical themes do not seem to represent one character, place or idea.'¹⁷ She seems to suggest that Britten's leitmotifs are used to create a particular atmosphere or mood rather than a fixed association, yet perhaps the most prominent leitmotif in *Peter Grimes* seems to depict the title character. This theme occurs in Act I, scene one; a rising interval of a ninth which implies a yearning, melancholy feeling. This is heard when Grimes sings, 'What harbour shelters peace?' and serves to convey the haunted, hopeful atmosphere surrounding the character. This can be compared to rising minor sixths in *Tristan* which represent longing, but the rising ninth in *Peter Grimes* is, arguably, not an oft-repeated gesture which is recognisable to an audience. The leitmotif appears again at the end of the opera, once Grimes' has fallen into despair and attempts to recount happier times. Matthews argues that there is an influence of *Wozzeck* in *Peter Grimes*, due to the onstage dance music, the expressionistic element and the fact that the protagonist in each dies by drowning. *Peter Grimes*, like *Wozzeck*, also features orchestral interludes and a Passacaglia. It can be argued that an influence of the leitmotif system in *Wozzeck* also plays a part in *Peter Grimes*, and subsequent operatic works by Britten such as *The Rape of Lucretia* and *Albert Herring*. Britten was present at the British premiere of *Wozzeck* and had hoped to study with Berg.¹⁸

There is also a Straussian manipulation of tonality to reflect various characters and dramatic plot points in *Peter Grimes*. As Williams observes, the opera begins in the key of Bb, and during the dramatic church scene, where a pedal F is sustained as a foundation, the harmony eventually resolves to Bb, an echo of the beginning, and a key unrelated to E major, which Williams suggests represents Grimes' 'most idealistic moment'. There is also the fact that Ellen and Peter seem to harmonically evade one another in their *a cappella* duet, in Act I.

¹⁵ Palmer, J. (2015). *Lulu, Opera*. Available: <http://www.allmusic.com/composition/mc0002382057>. Last accessed 20th April 2015

¹⁶ Matthews, D (2003). *Britten (Life & Times)*. 2nd ed. London: Haus Publishing. 78.

¹⁷ Alenier, Karen. (2009). *Peter Grimes at the WNO*. Available: <http://www.archives.scene4.com/may-2009/html/karrenalenier0509.html>. Last accessed 24th Apr 2015.

¹⁸ Rupprecht, P (2013). *Rethinking Britten*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 27

Rather than each character being represented by a particular key or tonality, the actual interaction and disparity between the characters is reflected by the conflicting, implied keys in which they are singing.

A much more recent operatic work, Maazel's *1984*, refers to a more conventional, Wagnerian model of leitmotif, perhaps closer to Berg's *Wozzeck* than *Lulu*, and also akin to Wagner's *Das Rheingold* in its use of distinct leitmotifs in their original, undeveloped forms. A review of *1984* declares, 'Maazel's score is a mixture of the atonal and neo-romantic based on Wagner's *leitmotif* style; a perfect musical package for the unfolding of this terrifying nightmare of a story which still goes on and on.'¹⁹ Also in *1984*, a motif presented in Act I, Scene One, appears to depict both love and hate, illustrating the dichotomy of ideals presented by the officious regime. A transcription of the five pitches of the motif are illustrated in Ex.17. As the chorus chant, 'Hate,' repeatedly, the orchestra plays the sweeping motif underneath. The motif is repeated as the foundation for a transitional sequence in the scene where the chorus are momentarily silent before professing their love for Big Brother. The female chorus lyrically sing, 'We love Big Brother,' to the melody of the same motif, which appears to have altered its meaning. This is an observation of the hypocrisy and insincerity of the oppressed society, rather than an example of the kind of long-term development where motifs are transformed gradually in *The Ring*, but does reference the 'drama-led' idea of leitmotif in works such as *Wozzeck* and *Das Rheingold*.

Ex.17 *1984*, recurring motif.



It is worth contemplating what exactly defines a leitmotif, and how flexible composers can be in interpreting such ideas.

Within *The Exile*, my interpretation of leitmotif was to transpose the ideas into a harmonic setting, outlined in chapters five and six. When considering the division of the leitmotivic concept into 'drama-led versus symphonic' utilisation, I would argue that *The Exile* uses harmonic leitmotifs to a degree in both senses. The chord rows are used only to express the four individuals, rather than objects, locations or specific emotions, but they are

¹⁹ French, G. (2008). *1984*. Available: <http://www.classical.net/~music/recs/reviews/l/lon743289dvda.php>. Last accessed 27th Apr 2015.

used to herald the characters' arrivals and in their reminiscence of one another in a drama-led capacity. Along with this, various recurring melodic motifs represent James' changing outlook, such as those discussed in this chapter and again in chapter six. Also, in a symphonic sense, the integral harmonic structure of the work is based around these chord rows; their quasi-serial use in vocal and melodic lines as well as their use to inform vertical harmonies that occur simultaneously.

5 - Characterisation in Szymanowski's *Krol Roger* and its development in my opera *The Exile*

Szymanowski's *Krol Roger*, premiered in 1926, had an influence on the composition of *The Exile*, presenting a structural model and how to generate connecting musical material between characters. It is, for me, the archetype of an operatic work employing the convergence of musical parameters to delineate its individual characters. Szymanowski's characterisation in this context employs motifs to signify the identity of each individual, and themes to represent moods such as religious ecstasy or states such as the regality of Roger and Roxanna. Along with a sense of leitmotif, the structure of the work integrates a shifting underlying harmonic foundation which develops in parallel to the motivic transformations, providing insight into the true intentions of the characters. This insinuates to the audience, for example, the dubious sincerity of the Shepherd, which increasingly becomes apparent in his gradual transformation from a mysterious religious figure to the eminent Dionysus, or the absence of lucidity displayed by Roxanna during the frenzied Bacchanal that occurs in Act III.

Learning from the examples of character representation through the parameters of harmony, melody and the overall musical setting, *The Exile* serves in part as the development of the techniques observed within *Krol Roger*, and corresponding elements are discussed and referenced in this chapter. It should be clarified that, although characterisation in this context is focused, at a macro level, on presenting each individual, it is also relevant to consider era, context and general mood as characterised musically on a more general scale. Szymanowski achieves characterisation of context through the incongruity of traditional church music juxtaposed with the fluid modality of his distinct idiom, creating an anachronistic context reflective of the conflicting ideas of the Shepherd and the king, the opera's central characters.

Modern stagings of the opera take into account suggestions which Kennicott (2012) points out were initially made by the work's librettist, Szymanowski's cousin Jaroslaw Iwaszkiewicz¹, that King Roger's fascination with, initial rejection of, and final succumbing to the persuasion of the Shepherd serve as a symbol for the composer's own struggle with homosexuality. These psychological metaphors are reflected within the music, where parallels are drawn between the themes representative of the Shepherd and the king respectively. In the final scene of the opera, King Roger, convoyed by his sage, Edrisi,

¹ Kennicott, P 2012, 'King Roger and Karol Szymanowski get a new, accepting production in Santa Fe', *The Washington Post*, 23 August.

appears to come to terms with what he perceives as the darker component of his psyche and emerges, articulated by Anetta (2011) as the Nietzschean *Übermensch*, in acceptance and recognition of his own shadow. Anetta suggests, “This duality and the need for balance is represented by Szymanowski as a fundamental human truth”.²

. The Shepherd presents a potential alter-ego for Roger; his relationship with the king arguably reflects the composer’s resistance to accept his own identity. The four central characters, Roger, his wife Roxanna, Edrisi and The Shepherd or Dionysus, could therefore be regarded as different facets of the central character of the king. As will be discussed in detail in this chapter, the musical material outlining the character of Roxanna appears as an inversion or echo of that of the shepherd, to signify her fascination and subsequent emulation of his character. Edrisi, Roger’s sage and advisor stands for reason, and advocates and counsels him throughout, whereas Roxanna, a fervent follower of the shepherd who importunes the king not to execute him when he appears at the outset, could represent the king’s leaning to follow him. She is representative of the compassionate and inquisitive, rather than the choleric and belligerent, nature of the king. The Shepherd himself, a celestial and beautiful being, represents a desire and inclination which King Roger is reluctant to pursue for fear of the outcome.

The fundamental character of King Roger is derived from a figure that is both literary and historical. As an historical figure, King Roger II of Sicily (1095-1154) was renowned for his uniting of Southern Italy and Sicily³. The opera was composed in the wake of several trips to Italy and Sicily by Szymanowski between 1908 and 1914, which inspired a keen interest in antiquity and Mediterranean culture⁴. Roger II was a supporter of the papal candidate Anacletus during the papal schism of 1130, and in return for Roger’s support Anacletus crowned him the first Norman king of Sicily⁵. The first of three scene-settings in the opera is Palermo Cathedral where Roger was crowned in 1130. The partnership between Roger and Anacletus advocated the uniting of Norman conquests in Italy, an objective which was achieved by Roger’s death aged 58 and established the king as a pivotal figure in European medieval history. The Greco-Byzantine setting of *Krol Roger* afforded Szymanowski the opportunity to explore both Greek Orthodox Church music and Byzantine-

² Anetta, F. 2012. *Evolution and Revelation: Thematic Characterization in Karol Szymanowski’s King Roger*. PhD, Paris-Sorbonne.

³ Houben, H. 2002. *Roger II of Sicily: A Ruler Between East and West*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁴ Culture.Pl. 2008. *King Roger Op. 46 – Karol Szymanowski*. [Online]. [Accessed 29 September 2014]. Available from: <http://culture.pl/en/work/king-roger-op-46-karol-szymanowski>

⁵ Marshall, H.E. 2012. *The Story of Europe*. New York: Start Publishing, LLC.

inspired modality, characterising the physical context of the opera as a musically dichotomous atmosphere to reflect the requisite for reconciliation between Roger's conflicting identities represented by himself, Edrisi, Roxanna and the shepherd.

Poetic licence and the literary element also come into play as Helman (2008) suggests, "In passing, one might remark that the authors of the libretto did not give much thought to exactly what ritual must have been observed in the royal chapel, since the historical Roger was a Roman Catholic, and not an Orthodox Christian."⁶ A footnote from the same article by Helman also states that, although Roger was married three times, none of his wives was called Roxanna⁷. The writers may intentionally have attributed to her the same name as the wife of Alexander the Great⁸.

In contrast to this historical inaccuracy, evidence suggests that Edrisi is based on the 12th century Muslim cartographer, Muhammad al-Idrisi, who, in 1138, was commissioned by King Roger to create a world map, *Tabula Rogeriana* (The Book of Roger), based on the King's intention to expand Norman control in Europe and North Africa. The map has since come to be regarded as the most complete and largest produced by Muslim scholars⁹. Al-Idrisi emigrated from Morocco to the court of King Roger in Sicily to undertake the task. The project took fifteen years, during which time al-Idrisi was permanently resident in Sicily. A supplementary book, *Rujari*, was also produced by al-Idrisi thereafter, and the map was subsequently engraved on a large golden plate. These extravagant commissions and the long-standing partnership between Roger and al-Idrisi hint at a strong professional relationship and as both were important historical figures, al-Idrisi in cartography and Roger in politics as a revolutionary Norman ruler, their partnership was political expedient. Although in *Krol Roger* Edrisi is more of a sage and advisor, al-Idrisi's capacity to further Roger's standing as a Norman ruler with his advanced knowledge of cartography is echoed by Edrisi's counsel to facilitate Roger's eventual self-acceptance.

Queen Roxanna is absent from historical accounts and was created entirely by Szymanowski and Iwaszkiewicz. Though secondary to the character of Roger, she represents

⁶ Helman, Z. 2008. Leitmotifs in Szymanowski's King Roger. *Musicology Today*. 2008 pp.79-93.

⁷ Helman mentions in footnote 15 of her paper that she discovered this generally through Hubert Houden's book *Roger II. von Sizilien*, Darmstadt 1997 and K. P. Todt, *Roger II*, in: *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, Herzberg 1995, vol. VIII, cols. 543-547

⁸ Kennicott, P. 2008. 'King Roger, a Confounding Object of Desire'. *The Washington Post*, 29 July

⁹ Mohd Talib, N. 2012. Innovation of Map Invention in the Islamic Civilization. *Journal of Applied Sciences Research*. 8(1) pp.321-325

for him another half, a less inhibited and belligerent side of himself that follows her proclivity for the shepherd's preaching. Her intemperance and abandonment of Roger for the provocative call of the shepherd also represents the king's own inclination to abandon his cultivated persona as a serious and moral leader to pursue his true feelings, again perhaps reflecting Szymanowski's internal struggle with his personal identity.

In Act II, the shepherd is dismissed from the Palermo Cathedral but invited to return to the palace that evening to explain himself and his objective. On his return, Roxanna sings a seductive aria, imploring the king to have mercy on the shepherd, 'Have mercy, O King, upon the shepherd, and like a tired panther filled with blood let your wrath pass!'¹⁰ Rather than placating Roger, this aria serves to agitate and unnerve him, and he declares, 'Edrisi! Why is there fear in my heart?' and later, upon hearing the Shepherd's voice, 'Be silent! My royal heart is cast in the bronze of my wrath!'

The shepherd is informed by the character of Dionysus in Greek mythology¹¹, the god of wine and fertility and, in this opera, a Messiah-like figure that traverses the world in search of followers. He is an enigmatic character who neither clearly displays benevolence nor immorality. At the outset he is gentle and beautiful but, as he leads his dearth of followers into a bacchanal in Act III and reveals his true form as Dionysus, he becomes somewhat sinister. His dual nature is also reflected in the music:

'At the climactic revelation of the Shepherd's Dionysian identity in the final act – there is a stylistic allusion of great symbolic significance. For the first time in the opera, Szymanowski introduces a Tatra folk-melodic character. This theme of Dionysus is, furthermore, a transformation both of the Shepherd's earlier song of narcissistic love and of an Orthodox chant heard at the ceremonial opening of the opera.'¹²

It is worth mentioning that Iwaszkiewicz's original title for the opera, *The Shepherd*, was changed by the composer to *Krol Roger*, implying the enhanced importance of the king as central figure. Boniecki (2008) aptly begs the question, 'What exactly is the role of the

¹⁰ Libretto for *Krol Roger*, English translation. Andrzej Duszenko's Website. 2000. *King Roger, Opera in Three Acts* [Online]. [Accessed 02 October 2014]. Available from: <http://duszenko.northern.edu/szymanowski/index.html>

¹¹ Daniélou, A. 1992. *Gods of Love and Ecstasy*. Vermont: Bear & Co.

¹² Downes, S. 2010. *Music and Decadence in European Modernism: The Case of Central and Eastern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

hero of the opera's title on the theatrical plane: Roger II, King of Sicily, precisely who is he?'¹³ That exactly is the central question which is explored in the opera.

Soon after the work's premiere, an essay by Gliński (1927) listed the separate motifs for the three main characters which represent Roger¹⁴, presented below in Ex.1. Roxanna and the Shepherd each adopt two, while Roger has but one. There are distinct similarities between the musical material of the Shepherd and that of Roxanna. As outlined, during Roxanna's aria at the beginning of Act II, the wordless melodic pattern which begins a-cappella echoes both of the Shepherd's motifs. There are further, minute allusions however, in Roxanna's aria, to the opening line of the Shepherd's aria from Act I, 'My God is young and beautiful'. The melody employs a similar scope and bar 284 of Act I, the beginning of the Shepherd's aria coincides directly with the second word 'krwa-we' ('edge') of Roxanna's aria (Bar 243 of Act II), employing the exact same pitches and a similar rhythmic pattern. It would seem that Roxanna's material is a manipulation of that of the Shepherd and always comes thereafter to suggest his character's influence on her own.

Ex.1-5

Shepherd: Motif 1
Act I (b.283-287)

Shepherd: Motif 2
Act I (b.529-532 strings)

Roxanna: Motif 1
Act II (b.243-244)

¹³ Boniecki, E. 2008. Password 'Roger', The Hero of Szymanowski's Opera 'King Roger' in Tadeusz Micinski's Theatre of the Soul. *Musicology Today*. 2008 pp.57-78

¹⁴ Gliński, M. 1927 'Krol Roger Karola Szymanowskiego' ['King Roger by Karol Szymanowski'], *Muzyka* 1927 pp.18-113

Roxanna: Motif 2
Act II (b.251-252)



Roger: Motif
Act I (b.513-514)



Roxanna and the shepherd are also connected by a musical theme which alludes to Roger's feelings of attraction for them both, as pointed out by Downes (1995), 'Queen and beautiful boy exude the same disturbing eroticism.' Downes provides further detail by identifying the specific musical connection:

'..The F#-F $\natural$ major-minor thirds which infiltrate the Shepherd's theme of enchantment (in characteristic semiquaver-crotchet rhythm) tell of his unease. With his smile, this beautiful youth has aroused in Roger the same erotic attraction as he senses for his wife, Roxanna. When she responds to the Shepherd's call, 'Roger, from the depths of his suffering' intones Roxanna's name to the same F#-F $\natural$ dyad. This is a crucial motivic identity.'¹⁵

The examples outlined by Downes are illustrated below in Ex.6 and Ex.7. The first is taken from Act II of the score¹⁶ and represents the semiquaver-crotchet rhythm to signify the Shepherd's unease. In the second, (Ex.7) the King sings Roxanna's name above the same motif.

¹⁵ Downes, S. 1995. Themes of Duality and Transformation in Szymanowski's 'King Roger'. *Music Analysis*. 14(2/3) pp.257-291

¹⁶ Examples 5 and 6 taken from illustrations from Downes' (1995) as per the previous citation.

Ex. 6

(Roger schweigt)
(♩ = ♩) *rallent.*

166 **Andante dolcissimo.**

Hi
Pas.
nach?
w dal?

Ex. 7

König Roger (voll Schmerz)
Król Roger

178

Ro - xa - ne!
Ro - ksa - na!

During the previously-referenced Shepherd's aria in Act I, 'My God is young and beautiful', the harmony of the accompaniment remains static for the first ten bars of the aria, implying a C# minor chord affected by a sostenuto pedal type effect in a consistent triplet rhythm outlining the harmony with muted strings and a sustained C# pedal in the bass (Ex.8)¹⁷. Following this, the Shepherd reaches the line 'On roads, on stones, on mountain paths he

¹⁷ Graphic illustrating the opening taken from Downes, S. 1995. Themes of Duality and Transformation in Szymanowski's 'King Roger'. *Music Analysis*. 14(2/3) pp.278

wanders'¹⁸ at which point the harmony begins to modulate more rapidly to fulfil the implications of the text, moving to an E major chord for two bars, followed immediately by three bars of Bb, arriving at a C# diminished chord with a sustained 'G' in the flute, accommodated by a resolution to a C major chord, which is again sustained in a similar manner to the opening. This example displays a use of word painting through the parameter of harmony in its accelerated motion and along with the example from the opening scene indicates that harmony also plays a part in Szymanowski's characterisation, albeit arguably less so than the use of motif.

Ex.8

Hirt (nachdenklich lächelnd)
Pasterz
Andante tranquillissimo e dolce.

Mein
Mòj

allarg.

pp possibile

sempre con Ped.

Gott ——— ist ju — — — — gend —
Bóg ——— jest piek — — — — ny,

¹⁸ This translation also taken from previously cited translation of the libretto by Andrzej Duszenko, 2000.

Aside from the vocal lines of each of the individuals in *Krol Roger*, the musical setting characterises both ancient Sicily and the duality of its title character, particularly in its opening scene at Palermo Cathedral. The choir sings the Greek Orthodox chant, *Agios Kyrios Sabaoth* (Holy Lord of Hosts), modal harmonies interspersed with a Gregorian-type parallel movement. The Greek Orthodox music contrasts with the Byzantine setting as specified by Szymanowski in his detailed stage directions, but the fluid modality of Szymanowski's distinctive idiom complements it. The composer's specifications for the staging of the three acts complemented the duality that permeated the music and libretto for the opera, as Helman (2008) reminds us:

‘In his stage directions the composer described in detail the stage sets for particular acts, emphasising the contrasts between places of action, times of day and night, the colouring of the interiors and the play of lights and shadows.’¹⁹

Act I in *Krol Roger* is known as the Byzantine act, Act II the Oriental act to represent India and the Middle East and Act III the Greco-Roman Act²⁰. The setting and Edrisi's employment as one of the four characters represents King Roger's fascination with geography and acknowledges his ambition to conquer the world. An overview of the opera by Jellinek (1993) summarises the metaphor for reconciliation in King Roger.

‘The opera's message is that King Roger, a man of reason, must balance the principles of both Dionysus and Apollo to arrive at a happy harmony in life. With its rich textures and oriental hues, influenced equally by Richard Strauss and Claude Debussy, the music captures a rare medieval world where Christian and pagan elements and diverse cultures could – however briefly – live in harmony.’²¹

The Exile employs a similar structure in that Joyce is the central figure, Sylvia being his conscience and Daedalus his alter-ego. Themes of duality and alter-ego are explored similarly in the work, where Stephen Daedalus, like the character of the Edrisi in King Roger, stands for reason and conscience, though, in contrast to the apparent stoicism of Edrisi, Daedalus is a playful, goading figure who also displays the persuasive and seductive attributes of the shepherd. These three characters share a similar musical foundation that is manipulated to represent their defined idiosyncrasies.

The conflicted character of James Joyce accords with that of King Roger. Sylvia Beach, James' confidante and publisher is akin also to Edrisi in that she serves as a motif of

¹⁹ Helman, Z. 2008. Leitmotifs in Szymanowski's King Roger. *Musicology Today*. 2008 pp.79-93.

²⁰ BalletAndOpera.com. 2014. [Online]. [Accessed 06 October 2014]. Available from: <http://www.balletandopera.com/?performance=2611&page=catalog>

²¹ Jellinek, G. 1993. *History Through the Opera Glass*. Connecticut: Bold Strummer Ltd.

stability in the midst of the chaotic relationship between Nora and James. Nora is an elusive figure who has been attributed her own melodic and harmonic material separate from the other three characters who supplement Joyce's personality. In contrast to *Krol Roger*, the more musically contrapuntal context within *The Exile* comprises an amalgamation of the individual melodic and harmonic material attributed to each character to reflect an overall mood incorporating the contrasting emotions of characters present in each scene. Such observations made during analysis of *Krol Roger* are explored musically in *The Exile*, and the construction of their representative musical material will be analysed in detail with the aid of musical examples.

My composition process for *The Exile* involved cataloguing pitch material for each character. Both the harmonic and melodic material is derived from a set of tri-chords applicable to each character. The construction of these chords is derived from Messiaen's chord progressions using pitch rotation²². However, rather than manipulating pitches above a common bass note, the tri-chords used involve the stasis of one particular note for two successive tri-chords (this note being the following in an imagined row)²³. The latter is not acknowledged so much as the chords generated, which, in their turn, comprise a row of tri-chords. This allows a composer freedom to skip pitches from this row if the generated harmonies are not satisfactory. This use of unordered sets is common also particularly in the late serial works of Schoenberg. In a similar way to *Krol Roger*, characters with attributes in common echo one another's material. For example, Roxanna's allusion to the Shepherd is akin to the relationship between Stephen and Daedalus' musically in *The Exile*.

As an imagined alter-ego for Joyce, Stephen Daedalus acquires his pitch material from alternate tri-chords in Joyce's catalogue, which comprises a set of ten. Therefore, Stephen has five tri-chords, made more distinct by their transposition up a major third to a new registral area, accommodating his tenor range in contrast to Joyce's baritone and allowing for timbral contrast. This being said, the musical material is transposed at points throughout the opera and does not consistently appear in its original register, but Daedalus' pitches are always placed higher proportionately to those of Joyce. Their respective material is represented in Ex.9. The allocation of a baritone voice to James in the imagined context of this fictional opera contrasts starkly with Joyce's real-life reputation as a talented lyric

²² Messiaen, O. 1956. *The Technique of my Musical Language*. Bibliotheque-Leduc.

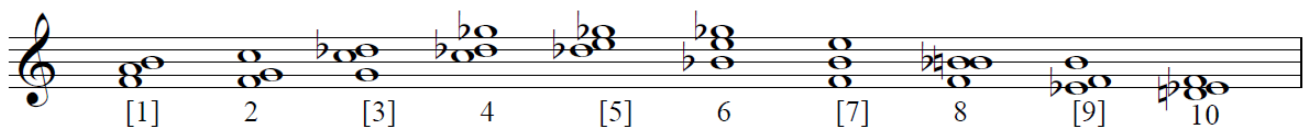
²³ Imagining the chords to be drawn from a row with pitches identified numerically in successive order would be 123,234,345,456,567,678 (one number from each triad appears twice consecutively).

tenor²⁴. This was a creative choice in defiance of historical accounts, a device to complement the fantastical world of the opera which is intended to evoke a more surrealistic atmosphere than the imagined reality of the opera's setting of Paris in the 1920s.

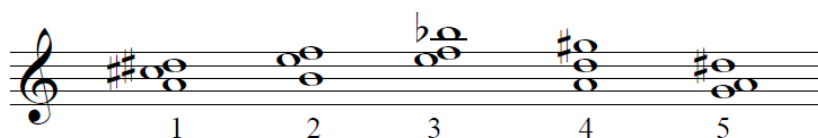
The assigned tri-chords for the opera inform the contribution of every performer, from the singers to the orchestra, a five-piece *Pierrot* ensemble. When a character sings, his or her harmonic material is highlighted both in what he or she sings and in what the musical accompaniment suggests. Therefore, an amalgamation of harmonic material occurs when the dialogue of two or more characters overlaps. This premise is exercised during the quartet in scene three which encompasses a montage of previously-heard melodic material from each of the characters. James is admonished by Stephen for neglecting Nora, who sings her letter to James from civil war-torn Ireland, while Sylvia, oblivious to the melodrama of James' personal life, expresses her excitement at having encountered one of the greatest figures in Irish literary history. An example from this scene is shown in Ex.10 where three vocal lines overlap and the harmonic movement of the accompaniment both accelerates to accommodate each line at once and incorporates a blend of harmonies to support them effectively.

Ex.9

James tri-chords



Stephen tri-chords



²⁴ Music in the Works of James Joyce. 2014. [Online]. [Accessed 04 October 2014]. Available from: <http://www.james-joyce-music.com>

Ex.10

284

S. the gree - nest fields. some - thing waits.

S. James Joyce Our names for - e - ver in one breath. Sha - ring

T. What are you drin - king these days? Whis - key cha - sers have tu

Pno.

Vln.

Vc.

Ex.11

379

Fl.

B. Cl. *mf*

T. You're just blind aren't you, James? Can't you see that your wo-man needs,

Bar. *f* *Assured, firm* She'll soon come ru - nning back from that Pro - vin - cial town, and it's war!

Pno. *f* *mf*

Vln. *mf* *arco*

Vc. *mf*

Ex.11 shows a dialogue between Joyce and Daedalus. The notes of bar 374 in James' (baritone) part consist of intuitively-chosen combinations of pitches from tri-chords one and two transposed down a minor 6th, an octave below the original placement of the tri-chords which represent Daedalus, his shadow. Daedalus begins to echo these tri-chords in bar 376, but in the precise order of pitch that they are originally prescribed, this time a ninth above James' utterance. At this point the characters are at odds, and though their likenesses are indicated by their shared pitch materials, their characteristic differences of opinion are thus musically portrayed.

Edrisi in *Krol Roger* shares a commonality with Sylvia Beach in *The Exile*. Each provides counsel and support to the central character of their respective operas, but they do not present representations of the central character's psyche. Edrisi is not attributed a particular *idée fixe* or leitmotif and much of his vocal line is conversational and somewhat obscured when compared with the sweeping melodic lines of Roxanna and the Shepherd. Sylvia, like Stephen Daedalus and James Joyce is given a set of tri-chords. As the opera progresses and she devotes her time, energy and livelihood to support Joyce, her row of tri-chords diminish and is gradually adopted one-by-one by James throughout to add to his complement of material, rather, as in *Lulu*, where all the pitch material emanates from Lulu's set, or can be traced back to it as a source. In the final scene before the epilogue, Sylvia is left with just three tri-chords from which to draw her vocal line and harmony.

Ex.12 illustrates the principle of subtraction. In the first scene, Sylvia has all ten tri-chords at her disposal. By scene five, she has six left and by scene eight, the penultimate scene, she has only three. Chords one to seven of Sylvia's tri-chord row are transpositions down a perfect fourth of James' tri-chords two to eight. Therefore the final three triads of Sylvia's tri-chord row are unique to her character but the other pitches are arranged in the same way as James'. These pitches both imply an echo of James' material to signify her admiration and present her depletion as a result of his exploitative and ungrateful nature. James does not so much gain these pitches as they are already present and utilised by his character from the outset, but as they appear successively in his row of tri-chords, it is as though that he has collected them from Sylvia, or that she has sacrificed her interests for his. Both prologue and epilogue performed by Sylvia are connected in an extratemporal context, and the character draws her material for these isolated musical soliloquys from the entire row.

Ex.12 Sylvia tri-chords.

Scene 1 (all chords) Scene 5 (six remaining chords) Scene 8 (three remaining chords)

* 'J' refers to the chords from James' list, and '-4' refers to the transposition down of a perfect fourth

The structural musical relationship between Sylvia and James echoes the previously discussed elements of imitation between Roxanna and the Shepherd.

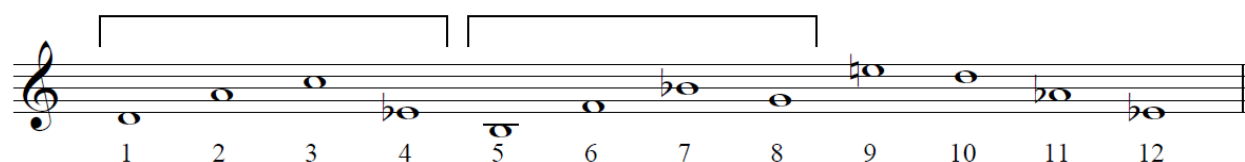
The character of Nora in *The Exile* bears comparison to both King Roger and Roxanna. Unlike Roxanna, Nora does not manifest an aspect of her spouse's identity. She merely influences his actions, but like Roxanna she does evoke a change in his outlook by leaving him. The pitches that make up her vocal lines and harmony are not derived from that of another character. As with Roger's leitmotif, Nora has one independent set of tri-chords unconnected with those of any other character, illustrated in Ex.13.

Ex.13 Nora tri-chords.

These tri-chords inform the work in a quasi-serial way and, to form melodic lines, are either divided up into a ten-note serial row via individual pitches intuitively selected from each triad in succession, or reference is made to the initial row of pitches from where these triads were generated. An example of the latter, to match Nora's tri-chords above, is shown in Ex.14. This original row, which contains the pitches to be manipulated into tri-chords, comprises twelve ordered pitches, but with the absence of pitches Gb and Db, and instead a repetition of D and Eb. Nora is also independent from the other characters musically in that

the first eight pitches of the essential row which generates her tri-chords consists of two similarly-shaped cells.

Ex.14 Nora, original set.



Aside from links between the material that represents each character, word painting devices are common to *Krol Roger* and *The Exile* as a means of conveying the subjective feeling of the individual through the underlying atmosphere of the accompaniment.

This treatment of Iwaszkiewicz's libretto informed our approach to Sylvia's aria in the final scene of *The Exile*. This is the second of two settings of Joyce's poem, *Strings in the Earth and Air*, the first being Sylvia's words in Act I, Scene I. In the final scene they are decorated by a more detailed accompaniment than previously, a signification of her development.

The first time she sings these words on discovering a manuscript by Joyce containing his sketches for the poem, and nonchalantly describes the words as 'pretty'. The music to accompany the vocal melody at the beginning is fragmented and brittle, and concomitant with the *parlando* vocal line suggests a lack of comprehension. The music grows more static, utilising four simple piano chords taken from Sylvia's row of triadic harmonies; numbers seven to ten followed by number one (Ex.15).

In the finale of the opera, Sylvia's now developed character adopts a better appreciation of the words as she repeats them once more with renewed sincerity. The first two lines are sung unaccompanied and precede the entrance of a busy piano accompaniment in a stark contrast to her earlier, casual iteration of the poem (Ex.16).

Ex.15

The image shows a musical score for a scene from 'The Marriage of Figaro'. It features two staves: a vocal line for Sylvia and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Poco piu mosso' with a metronome marking of 88. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line begins at measure 31 with the lyrics 'Strings by the ri-ver where the wil-lows meet. Pre-tty.' The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings of *mf* and *p*, and features triplet figures in the right hand and eighth-note patterns in the left hand.

31 *Poco piu mosso* = 88

Sylvia

Strings by the ri-ver where the wil-lows meet. Pre-tty.

mf *p* *p*

Poco piu mosso = 88

Ex.16

834 *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* 113

S. Strings in the earth and air make music sweet. Strings by the river where the waters meet. There's

Fl.

Glock.

Pno.

Vln.

As previously mentioned, the musical setting for *The Exile* is largely informed by its title. Joyce considered himself *persona non grata*, an exile from Ireland throughout his life²⁵. The other reason for the title is a reference to Joyce's only play, *Exiles*, composed in 1918 which also presented an insight into married life with Nora.²⁶ Although Nora is in Ireland, her consistent state of travelling and James' residence at his patron's bookshop evades a sense of home. The music is in compliance with this sentiment, and, inspired by the ambiguous nature of Szymanowski's setting it draws its character from the individuals in each scene,

²⁵ Claassen, J. 2008. *Ovid Revisited: The Poet in Exile*. Bloomsbury: AC & Black.

²⁶ O'Brien, E. 2006. 'The Ogre of Betrayal' *The Guardian*, 29 July.

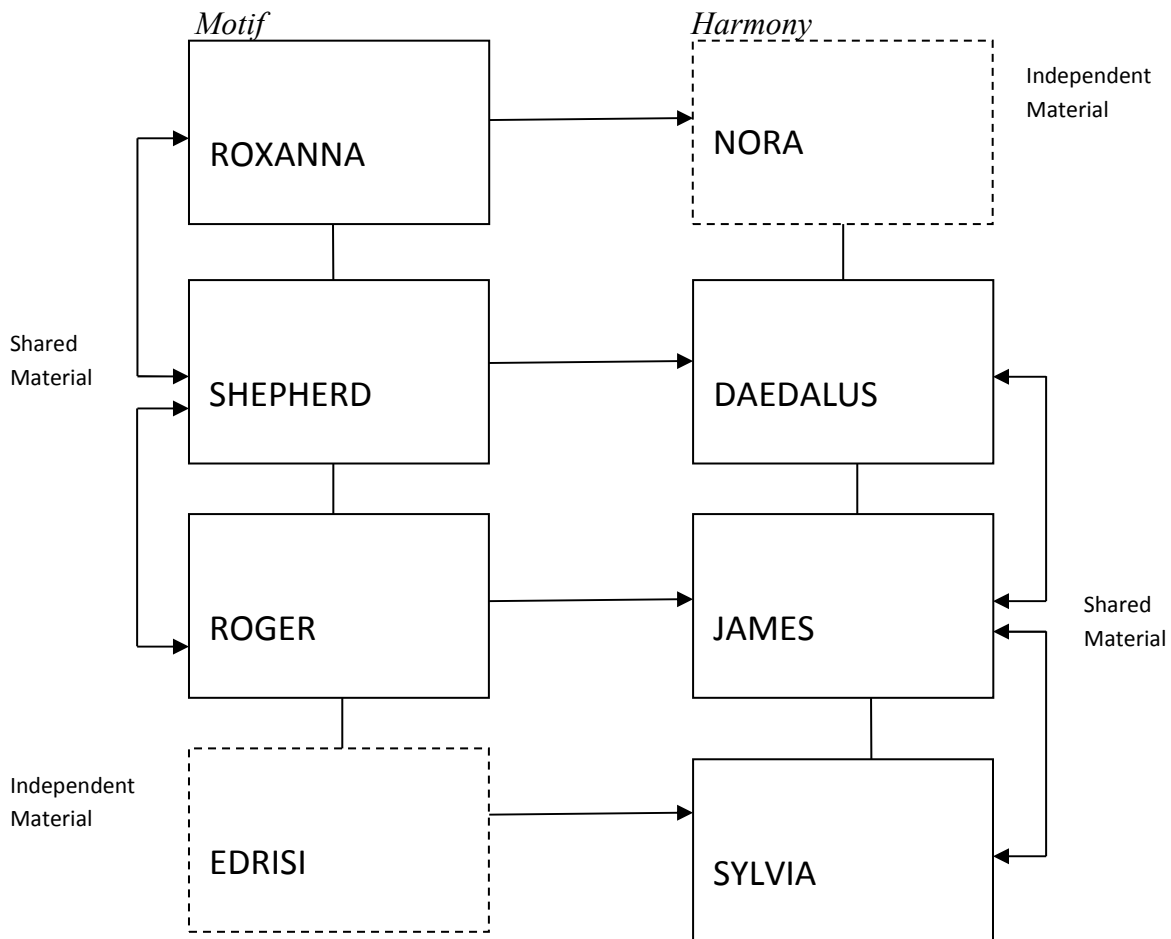
amalgamating their pitch material to create an ambiguous modal harmony, strongly suggestive of the idea that it might be the individual rather than the place that creates an atmosphere in any given setting, and in the case of the finale, a sense of home and belonging.

Despite the influence of characteristics present in *Krol Roger* in terms of individual character representation and setting, *The Exile* is set apart as an original work that is subtly informed by an analysis of *Krol Roger*. The diagram below (Ex.17) illustrates the connections between the characters' respective material and parallels between both works. In *The Exile*, tri-chords are presented in lieu of melodic motifs in a similar connected way to that of Szymanowski, outlining the characters' common attributes and influences on one another, though harmonically more so than melodically. With regard to the melodic lines, characteristic idiosyncrasies and changes are expressed, as illustrated in chapter two of this dissertation. Aside from this, there are recurring motifs suggestive of James' state of mind, such as his 'longing' motif, as discussed in the following chapter and the changing 'confusion' motif, as shown in chapter four. The following, culminating chapter summarises the influence of my research into contemporary opera and each of its parameters, with demonstrative examples of practical application in *The Exile*.

Ex.17

Krol Roger

The Exile



6 - The Exile

In retrospect, I can see that *The Exile* came out of subtle differences of emphasis between librettist and composer, and was enhanced by input from a theatre director during workshops of the piece in November 2015. In developing the libretto, Pencavel's primary interest was in the romantic relationship between Joyce and his wife, Nora Barnacle. Given that this is a consistent focus in film and TV adaptations of Joyce's life, I took a keener interest in Joyce's relationship with the American Sylvia Beach, owner of the bookshop 'Shakespeare & Company', who offered to publish Joyce's *Ulysses* independently after it was eventually rejected by an American journal which had been publishing it in instalments. Beach compromised her livelihood in order to support Joyce both financially and emotionally, without the premise of romantic love but instead motivated by adulation for his genius and the determination that his work be distributed. To quote McCourt (2009), 'Joyce's main mistake, as Commerce went, was to take Sylvia Beach's cash register for his own bank ('the Left Bank' as she would quip), mistaking Odeonia for *sa Bourse*.'¹ Historical accounts often present Joyce as selfish and egotistic. To cite one example, when Yeats offered advice to the young Joyce to further his literary development, Joyce declared, 'Your opinion isn't worth more than another's. ...Your work will all be forgotten in time.'² I discussed the nature of Joyce's personality with Pencavel prior to the completion of her libretto. Pencavel argued that, since Joyce is largely unsympathetic, his relationship with Nora is redemptive. Through his love for Nora he becomes sympathetic. Therefore the love story between them becomes equal in importance to that of his professional relationship with Sylvia, and we could explore both sides of each relationship within the work. I agreed to this, and Pencavel completed the libretto prior to beginning work on the music.

What interested both Pencavel and me was the concomitance of the Irish civil war with the time in which the opera would be set. Nora was visiting family in Ireland while Joyce remained in Paris, and the train in which she was travelling was caught in the crossfire of a civil attack. This served to express the frustrations of the political upheaval in which Joyce could not physically participate due to his self-imposed exile from Ireland. Joyce

¹ McCourt, J (2009). *James Joyce in Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 222

² Wollaeger, M. A (2003). *James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: A Casebook*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 347

maintained that, 'At a very early stage, I came to the conclusion that to stay in Ireland would be to rot, and I never had any intention of rotting.'³

The setting of Paris for the work is particularly apt given a quotation from Joyce:

'Sometimes thinking of Ireland it seems to me that I have been unnecessarily harsh. I have reproduced (in *Dubliners* at least) none of the attractions of the city for I have never felt at my ease in any city since I left it except in Paris.'⁴

A point of some consideration with Pencavel and me was that of whether the prologue and epilogue should be spoken or sung. Having included music representative of conversation in the vocal writing of the score, I was prepared to explore a similar technique for the opening and close of the work, but the emulation of speech seemed frivolous given the importance of both sections. However, in the libretto, Sylvia is reading aloud a letter she has written for Hemingway. We concluded that speech was the most effective means of expressing the words in this case. Spoken sections are no longer incongruous in opera given modern-day interpretations, as it is no longer a prerequisite for an opera's classification for the work to be completely sung. Maazel's *1984* is one example of a recent work which has some speaking, along with sections of Berg's *Lulu* as discussed previously in this dissertation.

Despite this, I was concerned about the absence of music entirely from Sylvia's opening monologue, as the beginning of the instrumental section which followed it seemed abrupt. In the original draft of the work, there followed a 'cello solo, constructed from the pitches within James' set of trichords. Pencavel and I reached a compromise, where the 'cello solo would occur halfway through Sylvia's monologue, to transition more gently into the opening scene. Similarly, at the end of the opera, there is a two bar section which is repeated underneath Sylvia's closing monologue, and the piece ends with a sustained, pianississimo note in violin, piano and flute. The intention is that the music accompanies a gentle insight into Joyce's world, with the spectator leaving as quietly as having arrived (Ex.1).

³ Ress, L. J (2002). *Tender Consciousness: Sentimental Sensibility in the Emerging Artist - Sterne, Yeats, Joyce, and Proust*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang International Academic Publishers. 163

⁴ Parrinder, P (1984). *James Joyce*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 49

Ex.1 *The Exile*, Epilogue.

113

SYLVIA: So Ernest, that's that. The beginning of the end of my affairs with James Joyce. He was a big fish in a little bookshop, and he had to leave us behind.

Don't think that I'm sorry. No, I am glad and so proud to have known him at all. It was my privilege to be party to the highs and lows of such genius. It was entirely my pleasure. I lived for him, and you, and that little lending library. My Shakespeare and Company.

ying u-pon an in - stru - ment

Repeat to end of narration

p *ppp*

Repeat to end of narration

p *ppp*

Blake (2010) maintains that ‘condensing’ is an important feature of an opera’s construction.⁵ Pencavel was lenient with my treatment of her libretto, in particular my removing or adding repetitions of words along with the elimination of colloquial inconsistencies. As an Irish native, my understanding of typical Irish expressions is greater than that of Pencavel’s, and I was free to alter or amend sections of Nora’s dialogue in particular, a Galway woman who would have expressed herself with a different parlance from that of Joyce or Stephen. Two such examples of my markings on the original libretto are presented below. As Pencavel also had no experience in writing opera, she wrote repetitions in the libretto which were not necessary. Even if words were eventually to be repeated, it was not necessary to notate repeated lines within the script. In the first example from scene 1, I have condensed Pencavel’s verses, confident that I could express the sentiment with fewer words and repetitions dependent on how the music developed intuitively. The second,

⁵ Blake, A. (2010). 'Wort oder Ton'? Reading the Libretto in Contemporary Opera'. *Contemporary Music Review*. 29 (2), 187-199

from scene 2, is an example of a deleted colloquialism that did not seem accurate for an Irish person at the time.

Ex. 2 *The Exile*, Scene 1 (Lib).

JAMES JOYCE *yes that's right*
~~That's not true!~~
I have everything I
need
I have words
I have words
I need my words
You are my words

JAMES JOYCE
~~I've got my words~~
I have my words, *my words*
You are my words

Ex.3 *The Exile*, Scene 2 (Lib).

NORA (cont'd) *My*
~~Ah Jeez. Ah~~ James. Good-fer-nothing. Sure,
better off away. That God-forsaken book.

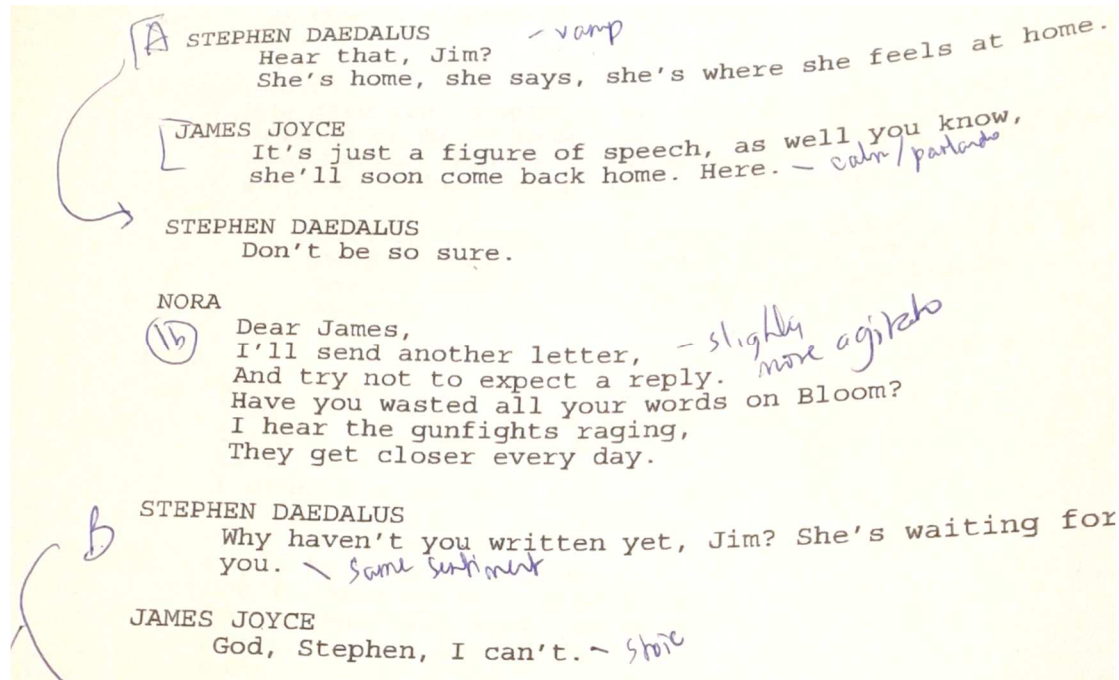
His eyes caught mine as we said goodbye
Goodbye James, adieu.
His eyes were cold, glazed and dull grey
So different from the man I knew.

The *parlando* aspect of the vocal writing was an important feature of the development of the work. It became apparent that the first musical setting of the text was predominantly lyrical and not indicative of the conversational flavour suggested by the libretto. Pencavel pointed out that some sections of the libretto were conversational and some evoked an aria-like setting. Where the words were printed as separate stanzas, they were to be interpreted as arias or songs, aside from Sylvia's recitation of a verse from *Strings in the Earth and Air*, a poem from Joyce's *Chamber Music*⁶. An example of a section of the work where the relative importance of each line is clear from the layout. Nora sings a lyrical aria which is punctuated

⁶ Joyce, J (2012). *Chamber Music*. Eastford: Martino Fine Books

by agitated conversational interjections from Joyce and Daedalus. Notes regarding structure and associated emotions are written onto the draft.

Ex.4 The Exile, Scene 4 (Lib).



An impediment to a fluid expression of the libretto was the inherent, inflexible rhythmic nature. Even if the vocal line retained a conversational simplicity, it was agreed that the rhythm was too strict and mechanical. I took to changing large sections of the work with a structural separation of aria from recitative in order to better define the conversational aspects of the work. I was still free to use my devised pitch sets, as laid out in the penultimate chapter, but with an emphasis on the arc of a melody as it would occur in natural conversation. As with Cork's previously discussed work *London Road*, I was at liberty to fashion the sets into the mould of the vocal arch of speech, though in my case not necessarily to fit within a prescribed tonal context, but a more fluid, modal harmonic environment.

As mentioned briefly in chapter three, the Irish folk music element apparent in the work is evidenced within an interlude based on O'Carolan's *Rose Dillon*, recorded in the first volume of the Bunting Collections.⁷ This was another point of discussion between Pencavel and me, as we had decided that, rather than quoting Irish traditional music overtly, it would appear as a subtle reference to Joyce's heritage. The melody of the original folk tune is obscured and embedded in the texture. In the example below from *The Exile*, (bars 494-497)

⁷ Bunting, E (2002). *The Ancient Music of Ireland: The Bunting Collections*. Dublin: Waltons Publishing

the pitches of *Rose Dillon* occur in the violin and piano parts in unison and are alternated with contrasting, rhythmic flourishes occurring at the higher end of the pitch spectrum. The consistency of register attributed to the violin is intended to highlight and anchor the melody against the contrasting melodic and rhythmic erraticism of the other parts. For comparison, the original folk melody from the Bunting volumes is presented at Ex.6. Essentially, the piece was created by obscuring the pitches and rhythms of the melody, but utilising them as points of unison punctuation within fuller-textured, rhythmically displaced passages of music.

Ex.5 *The Exile*, Interlude.

Ex.6 *Rose Dillon*, Irish folk tune.

Bar 5 of Ex.6 bears relation to bars 503-504 of the below excerpt from *The Exile*. The instrumental roles are altered, with the melody no longer apparent in the violin but initially in the flute and then the clarinet, where the successive interjections become more frequent and narrowly spaced such that the pitches of the original melody are less pronounced and further disguised by the texture.

The lively rhythms of the piece are intended to evoke a jaunty folk tune. As the original setting of the beginning of O'Carolan's *Rose Dillon* is prescribed at a 'Largo' tempo, and the interlude from *The Exile* is 'Vivace', the connection between the folk tune and this interlude is rendered more elusive. Part of the decision in choosing this particular folk tune was its flexibility and adaptability to both tempi.

Ex.7 *The Exile*, Interlude.

The musical score for Ex.7, *The Exile*, Interlude, is presented for five instruments: Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Piano (Pno.), Violin (Vln.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The music is in 2/4 time and consists of four measures. The Flute part begins with a melodic line in the first measure, which is then taken up by the Clarinet in the second measure. The Piano part provides a rhythmic accompaniment throughout. The Violoncello part has a 'pizz' (pizzicato) marking in the fourth measure. The score is numbered 500 at the beginning.

In November 2015, excerpts from *The Exile* were workshopped and performed in London by The Helios Collective, a small opera company which promotes new operatic writing. From a dramaturgical perspective, there was much to be learned from the interpretation of our director, Lewis Reynolds. The biggest challenge arose in representing James' estrangement from Nora, where they frequently sang together onstage. During scene three in particular, Nora, Stephen and Sylvia sing a trio, each with their own separate motivations, while James listens, overwhelmed. Sylvia excitedly sings about the forthcoming publication of *Ulysses*, while Stephen admonishes James for his negligence. Meanwhile, Nora is in Ireland, wistfully reminiscing about her life with James.

In the original libretto, Nora's section was brief, in contrast to Sylvia and Stephen each having two verses to sing. It was important to me that each character had an equal prominence in the scene, despite Nora's physical absence from the bookshop. I discussed this with Pencavel, and an extra line was added to the libretto for Nora, 'In the greenest fields, something waits'. This became an elongated phrase, balanced with the accelerated rhythm of Stephen's vocal line, and Sylvia's obviously joyful and conversational phrases. In the libretto, the verses were presented as though they should be sung consecutively, but I deemed it more appropriate to overlap them in such a way that each individual sentiment could be acknowledged, and a frenzied musical texture would be achieved. Pencavel was pleased with my treatment of her libretto and it was changed accordingly. For reference, an extract from the final score is below, and for comparison, the original libretto.

Ex.8 *The Exile*, scene 3 (bar 287).

The musical score extract shows three vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, and Tenor) and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: 'Shu - ring part of his glo - ry. His glo - ry. It waits. - key cha - sers have turned in - to cham-pagne cock - tails. Do you like who you've be-come James?'. The score is in 3/4 time and features various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'pizz'.

Ex.9 *The Exile*, libretto, scene three.

SYLVIA BEACH
Just think!
James Joyce in my shop! James Joyce
His words cluttering the table
As he sits cross-legged in the gloom

NORA

At the dinner table
Something's there
Leeching through the cutlery and plates

It's there, it's there

STEPHEN DAEDALUS
Take a look at yourself, man,
Have you seen what you've become?
Look around yourself
You've pulled yourself up by your boots,
And tied your bootstraps up your arse!

SYLVIA BEACH
Just think!
I'm publishing James Joyce! James Joyce
Our names forever in one breath
Sharing part of his glory

STEPHEN DAEDALUS
What are you drinking these days?
Whiskey chasers have turned into champagne cocktails
Do you like who you've become, James?
James, who have you become?

The main problem in setting this dramatically was in the depiction of Nora in a different physical setting. Reynolds had undertaken extensive research into Joyce's home life, and had incorporated James' consistent and painful ocular disorder as a catalyst for his anxiety. Nora's loyalty and importance to James was shown by her occasionally assisting him with his eye treatment. During scene three, Nora would enter stage right, while the rest of the characters were planted stage left. This made her absence clearer to the audience, but as the characters continued to sing, James would try to distract himself from Stephen's admonishment by administering his own eye treatment, and was clumsy with the apparatus. Nora would then acknowledge his struggle and help him, implying her physical presence in the bookshop.

I was pleased with the metaphorical representation of Nora as James' salvation, but Pencavel suggested that, despite lighting effects to present her as ghostly and absent, the audience might be confused as to her whereabouts. Reynolds also noted that Nora came back to Paris briefly in between her trips to Ireland, and that this could have taken place when she was back in Paris. Nevertheless, it seemed appropriate to reach a compromise so that the audience could be sure of the plot. The simpler solution would have been to remove that

particular instance of James' interacting with Nora, but it seemed an important and poignant tableau that should not be omitted from the drama. Therefore, following discussions with Pencavel, we decided that this could occur following James' reconciliation and reunion with Nora at the end of the work. It would take place in the background while Sylvia spoke her final monologue at the end, with the musical accompaniment shown previously.

Another issue concerned the dramatic characterisation of Stephen Daedalus. Though presented as an alter-ego for James, the libretto presented him as a goading, mischievous character, constantly scolding or ridiculing James. It was important to strike a balance between this inherent personality and his wisdom, and to make him sympathetic despite his sarcastic nature. Dramatically, he is the sublimation of James' self-doubt, and he becomes more understanding and sympathetic as the work progresses, and as James realises his folly. When Stephen returns to James at the end of the work, his tone is gentle and reassuring. He advocates James' reconciliation with, and appreciation for Nora, and is kinder when James takes favourable actions.

Ex.10 *The Exile*, scene 6 (bar 729).



Along with the issue of making Stephen more sympathetic, some careful direction was necessary to ensure that he was represented as an imaginary character rather than a physical being. The libretto was conducive to the explanation, as, following Stephen's first appearance, there is merely a short section of recitative before James exclaims, 'Would you go back in your book?' Reynolds choreographed Stephen's movements carefully, and was insistent that they were abrupt and pronounced in contrast to James' stasis, and Sylvia and Nora's natural movements, to make him appear more ethereal and fantastical.

The performance of excerpts from the work took place at The Arts Theatre, London, a small, intimate theatre which suited the introspective and subtle subject matter of *The Exile*. The set was simple, consisting of a writing desk and stacks of books to represent James' working space in Shakespeare and Company, all set up on stage left. Stage right was an empty space conserved for Nora, who would enter and exit exclusively from that side. Even with the intimate setting, there was plenty of space onstage for the actors, indicating the

possibility for the work to be performed in an even smaller space, such as a bookshop, as suggested in chapter three.

My initial sketches for *The Exile* did not display effectively developed expressions of *parlando*-style writing to separate the lyrical aria-like sections from the more conversational, recitative-like sections. These were usually conversations between Stephen and James, his alter-ego. Further investigation of *Sprechstimme* in music theatre, the use of dialogue in conventional opera and successful compromises to reflect conversation in works such as Thomas Adès' *Powder Her Face* informed early revisions of my score. My ideas were presented to Reynolds, who incorporated them into his dramatic representation of the score, separating, with lighting and movement, for example, the wistful, aria-like sections sung by Nora with the conversational nonchalance of Sylvia. Each character was shown as distinctly different, but linked by circumstance, motivation, and aligned development.

As expressed in chapter four of this dissertation, the influence I drew from my study of leitmotif was presented in harmonic chord rows, from which melodic fragments could be constructed by utilising the individual pitches within, in a serially-influenced manner. Along with elements of *parlando* and leitmoif, I have presented the outcome of my initiative to focus on opera, with a view to incorporating a subtle folk music influence, my preoccupation with the atmosphere cultivated by the imagined setting of a work and the use of site-specific and interactive music theatre and opera. I believe Pencavel and I managed to achieve what we set out to do, and *The Exile* is now the central focus of both my composition portfolio and of this dissertation.

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