Dramaturgical analysis of opera performance: four recent productions of Dido and Aeneas

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Dramaturgical Analysis of Opera Performance: Four recent productions of *Dido and Aeneas*

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Abstract

The scholarly analysis of the modern performance of opera is a rapidly expanding interdisciplinary field, yet so far this body of literature has consisted almost entirely of short-form articles and chapters. This thesis posits and demonstrates a new large-scale methodology for the analysis of the modern performance of opera, drawing from theatre studies, performance studies, musicology, cultural history, and other fields, but primarily from dramaturgy. It focuses on analysing the construction of meaning and signification through modern musical and theatrical performance of opera, elucidating this through analysis of four recent productions of Henry Purcell and Nahum Tate's c.1683–88 opera *Dido and Aeneas*; those of Sasha Waltz and Guests (2005), Les Arts Florissants (2008), The Royal Opera / The Royal Ballet (2009) and Opera Australia (2009). This thesis analyses and discusses the opera and the four productions through DVD recordings and live performance, while also integrating a range of primary and secondary sources. Comparing productions enables insights to be made into the interpretative possibilities offered by the operatic text.

The thesis argues that these four productions of *Dido and Aeneas* explore a number of themes that are investigated chapter by chapter: themes of duality and dilemma; power, freedom and oppression; gender, sex and sexuality; the supernatural; and death and suicide. These arise partly from the opera's narrative and its intertextual relationship with Virgil's *The Aeneid*, and partly from the layers of cultural and artistic history that have accrued around the opera. The thesis shows how the four productions balance the historical and the contemporary, the stylistic and the thematic, the material and the meaningful; and how each production explores the interpretative possibilities offered by the operatic text in different ways. This thesis is unique as a large-scale dramaturgical and comparative analysis of multiple modern productions of a single opera, and as such it makes a significant contribution to a relatively new but exciting and rapidly developing scholarly field.

Originality Statement

'I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and to the best of my knowledge it contains no materials previously published or written by another person, or substantial proportions of material which have been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at UNSW or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis. Any contribution made to the research by others, with whom I have worked at UNSW or elsewhere, is explicitly acknowledged in the thesis. I also declare that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work, except to the extent that assistance from others in the project's design and conception or in style, presentation and linguistic expression is acknowledged.'

Signed

Date 20/09/2016

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I thank the staff and artists at Opera Australia and the other companies involved in the productions studied in this thesis: they were all extremely generous in granting access to their archives, rehearsal rooms and professional insights to a student who could give little in return.

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The accompanying DVD of audiovisual excerpts that was submitted with this thesis for examination has been withheld due to copyright restrictions. Audiovisual excerpts are numbered with respect to chapters in the thesis (e.g. excerpt 3.2 relates to thesis Chapter 3, while 5.2 relates to Chapter 5).

Audiovisual Excerpt No.	Production	Section of the opera from which the excerpt is taken
3.1	Waltz	The first half of the Prologue
3.2	Waltz	The first half of the Prologue
3.3	LAF	The end of the Prologue / the first half of the Overture
4.1	Waltz	From: Act I Scene 1
4.2	Waltz	Act I Scene 1
4.3	Waltz	Act I Scene 1
4.4	Waltz	Act I Scene 2
4.5	LAF	Act I Scene 1
4.6	LAF	Act I Scene 2
4.7	ROH	The second half of the Overture
4.8	LAF	The second half of the Overture
4.9	ROH	Act I Scene 1

4.10	OA	Act I Scene 1
4.11	OA	Act I Scene 2
5.1	Waltz	Act II Scene 1
5.2	LAF	Act II Scene 1
5.3	ROH	Act II Scene 1
5.4	OA	Act II Scene 1
5.5	OA	Act III Scene 1
6.1	LAF	Act II Scene 2
6.2	LAF	Act III Scene 1
6.3	LAF	Act II Scene 2
6.4	ROH	Act II Scene 2
7.1	Waltz	Act II Scene 2
7.2	LAF	Act II Scene 2
7.3	ROH	Act II Scene 2
7.4	OA	Act II Scene 2
8.1	Waltz	Act III Scene 2
8.2	LAF	Act III Scene 2
8.3	ROH	Act III Scene 2

List of Abbreviations

AMPO	(the) analysis of (the) modern performance of opera
EMM	Early Music Movement
FD	fidelity dichotomy
HIP	historically informed performance
LAF	Les Arts Florissants
OA	Opera Australia
PDT	postdramatic theatre
ROH	Royal Opera House
WAM	Western Art Music

"Musick and Poetry have ever been acknowledg'd Sisters, which walking hand in hand, support each other; As Poetry is the harmony of the Words, so Musick is that of Notes: and as Poetry is a Rise above Prose and Oratory, so is Musick the exaltation of Poetry. Both of them may excel apart, but sure they are most excellent when they are joyn'd, because nothing is then wanting to either of their Perfections: for thus they appear like Wit and Beauty in the same Person."

~ Henry Purcell

Epistle Dedicatory to *The Vocal and Instrumental Musick of the Prophetess or The History of Dioclesian*, London, 1691

A. Introduction

This study is a dramaturgical analysis of four recent productions of Henry Purcell and Nahum Tate's opera *Dido and Aeneas* (c.1684). As such it contributes to the emerging field within opera studies that focuses on performance. By comparing four different productions of the same opera, this study provides a useful structural basis for investigating the potential ways that the operatic text[1] (the score/libretto) can be realised in performances. By synthesising approaches from theatre studies, performance studies and musicology among many other disciplines, and thereby creating a cohesive single-author methodology, this study offers an effective and genre-appropriate way of discussing and analysing opera productions.

Until recently, written analysis of contemporary opera performance has been almost solely the preserve of the critical review. Until around 2003–2004,[2] scholarly analysis of opera performance had focused almost exclusively on *historical* performances that had been analysed through documentary evidence, instead of on *contemporary* performances that had been experienced in live or recorded form. Meanwhile, the rise of interdisciplinary performance studies and its influence on musicology and theatre studies has only recently begun to seriously influence opera studies. While performance studies has not traditionally engaged with opera (or any text-based performance, essentially), opera studies has not traditionally engaged with contemporary performance. The emerging sub-discipline that does address contemporary opera performance has not yet been given a name. I call this scholarship "(the) analysis of (the) modern[3] performance of opera" (AMPO).

This thesis follows a method that blends knowledge and approaches from a variety of different fields, including theatre studies, performance studies and musicology. Scholarly

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[1] For an explanation of my use of the term "operatic text", see the Glossary.

[2] As I show in the Literature Review below, the articles "Sinn und Sinnlichkeit in der Oper" by Clemens Risi in 2003, and in 2004 Carolyn Abbate's more musicology-focused "Music—Drastic or Gnostic?", as well as the publication the same year of philosopher Hans-Ulrich Gumbrecht's *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* are three of the key texts that marked this paradigm shift for opera studies. Risi and other German opera studies scholars have also produced a proliferation of publications on AMPO since that time, building on many of the ideas present in these texts.

[3] I use the term "modern" in this thesis to mean "contemporary" and "recent", unless I am discussing "Early Modern", in which case the term is capitalised and refers to a widely understood specific era in history.

literature within the emerging field of AMPO has so far usually taken the form of journal articles and chapters in edited books: essays that feature juxtaposed methodologies representing the different approaches of various authors from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds. Yet despite the fact that it relies on the collaboration of many creative artists, opera performance is usually characterised by an organically blended and synthesised interdisciplinary approach. I contend that this can most appropriately be reflected in its analysis by a single-author study. More importantly, opera as it is experienced today is also fundamentally a text-based genre that relies on a canon of standard repertoire: operatic score/libretto texts that are continually reinterpreted in different productions. The most appropriate way to investigate such a genre would thus seem to be by investigating a range of interpretations in performance.[4] Currently there are only two existing monographs featuring sections that analyse different productions of the same opera,[5] and one that analyses multiple different modern performances of the same opera production.[6] (See Glossary for the difference between my uses of the terms "performance" and "production".) This thesis constitutes the first large-scale AMPO work that has as its primary aim, the analysis of multiple different modern productions of the same opera.

Existing AMPO literature tends to adopt performance studies methodologies and focus on the embodied experience. More traditional dramaturgical approaches—such as analysing the relationship between the text's potential and the production's interpretation—are rarely employed. Performance-orientated musicologist Nicholas Cook argues for the value of these approaches succinctly when he writes:

> While... texts do not *determine* performances or the meanings they embody, they create a potential for the generation of certain meanings or kinds of meaning. These meanings

[4] For the relationship between the terms "performance" and "production" as used in this thesis, see the Glossary.

[5] David J. Levin, *Unsettling Opera: Staging Mozart, Verdi, Wagner and Zemlinsky* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Stephanie Großmann, *Inszenierungsanalyse von Opern: Eine interdisziplinäre Methodik* (Königshausen & Neumann, 2013).

[6] Daniele Daude, *Oper als Aufführung: Neue Perspektiven auf Opernanalyse*, Theater (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2014).

> emerge in the act of performance, and crucially, it is through performance that we come to know what meanings a given dramatic text or musical score may afford.[7]

It is therefore still important to consider such "page-to-stage" perspectives, particularly in the analysis of so text-orientated an art-form as opera. This thesis thus addresses a large gap in this emerging field and aims to rectify the balance in approaches.

My dramaturgical analysis centres on meaning-making in the modern performance of opera. It focuses on meaning in terms of interpretation, narrative and signification. It also discusses issues of style, materiality and the creation of the aesthetic experience, as they contribute to meaning-making. In line with more traditional opera studies literature my methodology for AMPO incorporates textual and narrative analysis, literature review and score analysis, musicology, theatre studies, and cultural history. It also includes approaches and knowledge from performance studies. Reflecting this diverse blend of methods and disciplines, this thesis presents concrete examples to support its arguments in several different media forms. These include libretto verse, score extracts, stills and photographs, as well as audiovisual samples on the accompanying DVD.[8]

With such a plethora of scholarly and artistic disciplines that influence AMPO, it is difficult to navigate a clear, structured path. Assuming the persona of the "informed audience member" and adopting a form of "learned intuition"[9] shall assist in this task. These are related concepts. By the "informed audience member" I mean an audience member who acknowledges their bounded subjectivity but who also utilises a great deal of prior background learning to inform their affective, intuitive and analytical responses to the productions. Similarly, by "learned intuition" I mean intuition that operates from a foundation of a great deal of learned knowledge regarding the object(s) of study. I discuss my definitions of these terms in more detail in the "Methodology" section of this Introduction. In conducting

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[7] Nicholas Cook, "Between Art and Science: Music as Performance," *Journal of the British Academy* 2, (2014): 1-25.

[8] Regrettably, many of these examples have to be removed for the final publicly available copy of this thesis, due to copyright regulations. However, I attempt to ensure that the argument remains cogent.

[9] This term is inspired loosely by the arguments of Eli Rozik in the Introduction to his book *Generating Theatre Meaning*. See: Eli Rozik, *Generating Theatre Meaning: A Theory and Methodology of Performance Analysis* (Brighton, Portland, Toronto: Sussex Academic Press, 2008), 2.

and writing my analysis, it has always been my aim to reflect the complexity and subtlety of the productions, but to balance this through abiding by the "Ockham's razor" principle[10] of avoiding becoming more complex than the object of the study itself; a difficult task, when opera is fundamentally so complex and interdisciplinary.

The structure of my performance analysis is influenced by the formal structure and narrative chronology of the operatic text, and by the main themes raised by the opera and by the performances. These themes address "timeless" human concerns such as dilemma and decision-making, desire, power and envy, gender and sexuality, the supernatural, and suicide and death. Above all, however, the operatic text and the productions of it address the theme of ambiguity. The productions in particular also often embody it: their explorations of the above themes are often complex meditations, rather than straightforward didactic messages. However, while my analysis addresses ambiguity, it does not embody it: ultimately I adopt the position of the analyst aiming to clarify and explain, rather than describe or demonstrate an experience.

A.1 Some Key Terms

To facilitate clarity I supply a List of Abbreviations in the Front Matter of this thesis, as well as a Glossary in the Appendices. The Glossary includes key terms that have a particular meaning in the context of this study, or specialist terms drawn from certain disciplines. In addition, new terms have been devised for explaining specific issues arising from this study. As well as introducing a new name and acronym for my sub-discipline within opera studies (AMPO), I have also coined a few neologisms, including "fidelity dichotomy".

[10] Ibid., 6.

"Fidelity dichotomy" (FD) describes what I perceive to be the dominant paradigm in the mainstream western[11] performance of opera today. It has been in the ascendant since the late 1970s, and has become "mainstream" since approximately the early 1990s.[12] The FD describes a situation in which the musical and theatrical worlds that together constitute opera appear to hold different attitudes towards the notion of fidelity in performance. FD usually applies only in cases where (such as in the vast majority of operas that have received recent performance) the operatic text was written a considerable time ago, and the composer and librettist are deceased. In the broadest sense, one could argue that the Western Art Music (WAM) aspects of modern operatic performance culture for the most part have a preoccupation with fidelity, while the theatrical aspects of operatic performance culture generally do not. However, looked at from a different perspective, the theatrical aspects *are* concerned with it: they focus on fidelity to the broader contemporary artistic and cultural world. In other words, fidelity in the musical elements of modern opera performances is enacted towards the past and "the original", while fidelity in the theatrical elements is enacted towards the present and "the new".

FD is an umbrella term that has two slightly different permutations: one for "early" opera (*c.*1600–1780) and one for what I call "standard-era" opera (*c.*1780 –1930).[13] I will address each of these in turn. For early opera, the FD permutation features the influence of historically informed performance (HIP) on the musical elements (see Glossary), and the influence of postdramatic theatre[14] (PDT) and/or of *Regietheater* on the theatrical elements

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[11] I define "western" and "the western world" as being composed of developed countries that are heavily influenced by western European and British culture, including post-colonial nations such as the US, Australia and New Zealand.

[12] See the Glossary for more information on the rise and development of the FD, particularly as it relates to *Regietheater* and PDT.

[13] Opera originated around the turn of the seventeenth century, so I give *c.*1600 as the starting date. The dividing date of *c.*1780 is represented by what are generally thought to be the "mature" operas of W. A. Mozart, which date from the 1780s onwards. The period between 1780 and 1800 is transitional, as scores became more specific and detailed and the "work-concept" developed from *c.*1800. (See: Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).) While the most appropriate cut-off date for "early opera" would be 1780, that for "early music" in terms of WAM as a whole would most likely be 1800, due to the work-concept's development. Recent performances of operas written after *c.*1930 do not usually feature a significant degree of fidelity dichotomy.

[14] "Postdramatic theatre" is a term coined by Hans-Thies Lehmann to describe much of the theatre practices of the western world since the late 1960s. See: Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans., Karen Juers-Munby (London, New York: Routledge, 2006). For further discussion of PDT and its relationship to opera performance, see the Glossary.

(see Glossary re: PDT and *Regietheater*). As distinct from standard-era opera performance, current early opera performance has been influenced by HIP's original and long-standing association with pre-1800 WAM or "early music" (see Glossary). HIP is a large and complex field that has been investigated in detail by a number of scholars, including Richard Taruskin,[15] Harry Haskell,[16] Peter Kivy,[17] John Butt,[18] Dorottya Fabian,[19] Bruce Haynes,[20] Nick Wilson[21] and Nicholas Cook.[22] As such I will not discuss HIP in detail here, but it is important to note that in general it aims for *fidelity to musical performance styles associated with the time and place in which the score originated*, as far as these can be determined. I refer to this as "fidelity to the period".

HIP is also related to the somewhat older and more contested concept of *Werktreue* ("fidelity to the work") though the relationship is complex. *Werktreue*, in turn, is bound up with that traditional[23] style of WAM performance that, following Bruce Haynes, I call "Canonic"

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[15] Richard Taruskin, "The Authenticity Movement can Become a Positivistic Purgatory, Literalistic and Dehumanizing," *Early Music* 12, no. 1 (1984): 3-12; Richard Taruskin, "The Pastness of the Present and the Presence of the Past," in *Authenticity and Early Music: A Symposium*, ed. Nicholas Kenyon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 137-207; Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act : Essays on Music and Performance* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Richard Taruskin, *The Danger of Music and Other Essays* (Berkeley, New York, London: University of California Press, 2009).

[16] Harry Haskell, *The Early Music Revival: A History* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1988; reprint, Dover Publications, 1996).

[17] Peter Kivy, *Authenticities: Philosophical Reflections on Musical Performance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

[18] John Butt, "Bach Recordings Since 1980: A Mirror of Historical Performance," in *The Music of J.S. Bach: Analysis and Interpretation*, ed. David Schulenberg, Bach Perspectives (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 181-198; John Butt, *Playing With History: The Historical Approach to Musical Performance*, Musical Performance and Reception (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[19] Dorottya Fabian, "The Meaning of Authenticity and the Early Music Movement: A Historical Review," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 32, no. 2 (2001): 153-167; Dorottya Fabian, *Bach Performance Practice, 1945 - 1975: A comprehensive review of sound recordings and literature* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2003).

[20] Bruce Haynes, *The End of Early Music: A Period Performer's History of Music for the Twenty-first Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[21] Nick Wilson, *The Art of Re-enchantment: Making Early Music in the Modern Age* (New York: OUP USA, 2013).

[22] Nicholas Cook, "Between Process and Product: Music and/ as Performance," *Music Theory Online (MTO)* 7, no. 2 (2001). http://www.societymusictheory.org/mto/issues/mto.01.7.2/mto.01.7.2.cook.html#FN8 (accessed 3 April 2012); Nicholas Cook, *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[23] See Glossary for details on my use of the term "traditional".

performance (see Glossary).[24] Canonic performance is based on the creation and ongoing maintenance of a canon of old and familiar musical "great works" by "great composers" that are performed repeatedly. HIP developed partly from a reaction against the prevailing Canonic style, practice and ideology, as well as an interest in rediscovering "forgotten" repertoire, and is often contrasted with Canonic performance.[25] Broadly, HIP currently features an emphasis on using "period" instruments, as well as on small-scale, varied and speech-like phrasing, dynamics, rubato, timbre and articulation. Canonic style typically uses "modern" instruments, and emphasises long melodic lines, relatively continuous vibrato, a good deal of power and projection, consistency of timbre and longer-scale phrasing with graduated dynamics.[26] However, HIP has retained a significant amount of Canonism's preoccupation with fidelity. Bruce Haynes argues that "modern HIP musicians are under the Canonic spell too… they sometimes find themselves confusing fidelity to a style with fidelity to particular hero-composers."[27] (I would add: and to those composers' intentions, as far as these can be ascertained). Cook makes a similar point,[28] but he draws a distinction between "fidelity to the composer" and *Werktreue*.[29] Cook also points out that "fidelity to the work" has long been popularly conflated with "fidelity to the score".[30] Though he questions this

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[24] See Glossary for an overview of the main features of Canonic performance style and ideology, and for my use of Bruce Haynes' term. Many writers on musical performance have called this style "mainstream performance", but I consider this to be somewhat of a misnomer at this point, because HIP has essentially become the mainstream paradigm for performance of WAM composed prior to 1800, and especially for music composed before 1750.

[25] Music performance scholars such as Haynes and Fabian have investigated the stylistic and ideological differences between Canonic/MSP and HIP style in detail. See: Haynes, *The End of Early Music*; Dorottya Fabian, *A Musicology of Performance: Theory and Method Based on Bach's Solos for Violin* (UK, US: Open Book Publishers, 2015).Fabian's most recent research suggests that HIP and Canonic style are now becoming less differentiated, with the trend largely for current HIP to influence Canonic style, rather than *vice versa*. See: ibid., 20,122.

[26] This summary is based on the consensus of HIP scholars as well as my own observations from listening. For further details see the Glossary at the end of this thesis. The most accessible discussion of the practical features of current (or very recent) HIP and Canonic style as they can be compared to each other is to be found in Bruce Haynes, *The End of Early Music*.

[27] Haynes, *The End of Early Music*, 6.

[28] Cook, *Beyond the Score*, 12-14."Fidelity to the work", "fidelity to the score/text", and "fidelity to the composer" are related, but not the same: scholars such as Nick Wilson and Cook have explored their differences. (See, for example: ibid., Wilson, *The Art of Re-enchantment: Making Early Music in the Modern Age*, 42.) However, because many scholars and performers continue to conflate the three, and because such a complex topic threatens to derail the direction of my Introduction I will not enter this debate here and will simply treat them as the same thing.

[29] I quote Cook's passage on p.104 of this thesis. See: Cook, *Beyond the Score*, 26.

[30] "Fidelity to the score" has also been called "*Notentexttreue*" in Germanic literature, but I will refrain from using this term as I do not wish to overload an English-language thesis with too many German terms.

conflation[31] he acknowledges that "in practice there is slippage between these," and much room for individual interpretation.[32] In this thesis, I use "*Werktreue*" as a catch-all term, to refer to three of the four main types of fidelities within WAM (to the work, to the composer and to the score/text), while I discuss fidelity to the period as a largely separate matter, that is essentially only a concern within HIP. This use of the term *Werktreue* is appropriate because the three former fidelities are intimately related and are all often combined under this term in the current scholarship and discourse around WAM performance. Fidelity to the period is indeed the most characteristic aspect of HIP today. Yet, despite decades of debate over *Werktreue* as it relates to HIP, fidelity to the composer—and to a lesser extent to the work and the text—still lingers somewhat as an ideal within the HIP sphere.

This brings us to the fidelity dichotomy permutation for the modern performance of standard-era opera (i.e. opera composed *c.*1780–1930), which features the dual presence of *Werktreue* in the musical aspects and PDT and/or *Regietheater* in the theatrical aspects.[33] *Werktreue* is arguably even stronger in the case of WAM composed from around 1800 onwards. The reasons for this are too complex to discuss properly here, but seem to be generally related to the more detailed and specific nature of later styles of notation, and the rise of the "work-concept" around the year 1800.[34] Thus, in the musical aspects of standard-era opera as it appears in modern FD performance, the HIP-related "fidelity to the period" ethos is less important than it is in early opera. For standard-era opera, the *Werktreue* ethos is correspondingly more important.

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[31] Cook, *Beyond the Score*, 10-13.

[32] Ibid., 13.

[33] As my literature review will show, the German language and German culture and thought are highly influential in opera performance, as well as in opera studies and particularly in AMPO, so it is not surprising that some of these key terms are in that language. Even "postdramatic theatre" was originally "*postdramatisches Theater*", however it has been successfully translated into English.

[34] For further reading see: Colin James Lawson and Robin Stowell, *The Historical Performance of Music: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 5; Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*; Barthold Kuijken, *The Notation is Not the Music: Reflections on Early Music Practice and Performance* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2013); Christopher Balme, "Werktreue: Aufstieg und Niedergang eines fundamentalischen Begriffs," in *Regietheater! Wie sich über Inszenierungen streiten lässt*, ed. Ortrud Gutjahr, Theater und Universität im Gespräch (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2008), 53-60; William Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England: A Study in Canon, Ritual, and Ideology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

The relationship between *Regietheater* and PDT is similarly nuanced, featuring in the theatrical aspects of all modern opera performance that displays the FD (i.e., in both early and standard-era opera). Within spoken theatre, PDT is usually created *without* a pre-existing/traditional text (play script), and is actually in many ways oppositional to the very idea of play scripts, which PDT's key theorist Hans-Thies Lehmann identifies as narrative-based "drama". Crucially, PDT seeks to disrupt traditional notions of narrative chronology. PDT approaches to opera, therefore, usually feature an ambivalent attitude towards the operatic text and seek to enact a slipping through, or away from, the apparent confines of its meanings and narrative. *Regietheater* on the other hand is usually theatre (or the theatrical elements of opera) that is based—sometimes loosely—on "classic" theatrical texts (or in opera, on the theatrical aspects of operatic texts). In *Regietheater* the director's *auteur*-like artistic interpretation/expression is stamped on the production, and takes precedence over any meanings that may have been intended or imagined by the original playwright. Thus, while postdramatic theatre seeks to resist the pre-existing text, *Regietheater* seeks to impose the director's chosen meanings on it. In many ways, both PDT and *Regietheater* therefore stand in opposition to the principles and practices of *Werktreue*. In many ways they also stand in opposition to HIP, as they tend to focus on the contemporary world and its (postmodern or post-postmodern) culture.[35]

The presence of *Werktreue* and/or HIP in the musical aspects of modern opera performance, and of *Regietheater* and PDT in the theatrical aspects, thus creates the fidelity dichotomy. While it is a complex phenomenon and one that is not universally detectable in all recent opera performance, in the performance of early and standard-era opera the FD is nevertheless currently a strikingly dominant feature.

The identification and investigation of the fidelity dichotomy is not, however, the focus of this thesis. While—as I show— the degree of FD displayed varies between each of the selected productions, as an overall paradigm it is a feature of all four and its presence is

[35] There is a line of argument, explored most thoroughly by John Butt, that HIP is very much a product of the postmodernist era, largely in terms of its essential nostalgia. Butt also explores the notion, spearheaded by Taruskin, that HIP is also in many ways a modernist phenomenon. As complex as HIP is, it cannot be denied that it is concerned with the past, and this is the point I wish to make here. See: Butt, *Playing With History*; Taruskin, *Text and Act : Essays on Music and Performance*.

assumed throughout this analysis. As this paradigm is now so widespread within the current western operatic performance tradition, such an assumption is methodologically appropriate. Instead of focusing on investigating the FD, this thesis focuses on the ways in which meaning is created by each of the four productions in their interpretations of the same operatic text. I do this by analysing and directly comparing them in a chronological manner. Such an approach is both useful and innovative within the context of the emerging sub-discipline of AMPO, as I will now demonstrate in my review of the relevant literature.

A.2 Literature Review

In this review of the relevant literature I pay particular attention to work within the AMPO sub-discipline and work that concerns *Dido and Aeneas* (henceforth often referred to simply as *Dido*). Firstly, I show how this thesis falls within the broader discipline of opera studies: this discipline has historically focused on score and libretto analysis, whereas I concentrate on performance. Secondly, I move on to discuss prominent work in AMPO, with particular reference to articles concerned with early opera and with *Dido* in particular. I show how, until now, this type of scholarship has not been adapted to a large-scale, single-author (monograph) study of multiple productions of the same opera. Thirdly, I investigate the only three existing large-scale single-author AMPO scholarly works that *do* so far exist: those of David J. Levin, Stephanie Großmann and Daniele Daude. I show in detail how these works have influenced the development of my research. Through comparing their work and mine, I also show how my work makes an original contribution.

A.2.1 Musicological traditions

While writing on opera has often been undertaken by scholars with broad training in the humanities, the majority of scholarship has traditionally approached opera from the background and perspective of musicology. Opera studies essentially developed as a "troublesome step-child" of theatre studies and musicology, as Nicholas Till explains.[36]

[36] Nicholas Till, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Opera Studies*, Cambridge Companions to Music (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 3, 7.

Opera studies only gained general acknowledgement as a discipline since approximately the late 1980s. Before this time, scholarship on opera had typically approached the subject in terms of the operatic text (the score and libretto), its composer, and its genesis and historical context. This is predominantly due to a long western tradition of text- and biography-based research, analysis and criticism in the humanities. Of the two main "step-parent" disciplines of opera studies—theatre studies and musicology—text-based study has traditionally been more entrenched in the latter.[37] Scholarship on opera written prior to the 1980s (or by scholars whose training was before this time) thus usually falls into the musicological, composer-, score-, and libretto-orientated category.

Today, opera studies remains rooted in textual musicology and history, even when it focuses on performance: the majority of scholarly literature on opera performance focuses not on modern performances or productions, but rather on actual *historical* performances. These historical events are usually ones that occurred in the time and place in which the opera was first written. Because the bulk of the most frequently performed operas were written before the advent of audiovisual recording, this type of research generally relies on written, notated, and painted/drawn or sometimes photographed visual documentation. Given that this aligns it with the traditional methods and materials of historical musicology, it is not surprising that this type of scholarship is not generally written by opera scholars, but rather by historical musicologists.

A.2.1.1 The Scholarly Influence of HIP

The rise of HIP has done much to lead to this considerable scholarly focus on specific historical performances of early opera. There is now a decades-long and closely entwined relationship between "early music", "early opera", modern-day HIP and musicological scholarship, and scholarly focus on these fields has influenced the direction of opera studies. Nicholas Cook points out that, while the "performative turn" was sweeping the humanities and social sciences in the late 1980s and early 1990s "the relationship between academic research and performance practice in HIP was about as far removed as could be from the

[37] Regarding musicology's philological groundings, see: Nicholas Cook, "Changing the Musical Object: Approaches to Performance Analysis," in *Music's Intellectual History*, ed. Zdravko Blažeković (New York: RILM, 2009), 775-790,777.

basic approach of interdisciplinary performance studies."[38] Cook refers to "the difference in intellectual climate between musicology and other disciplines" which, he argues, reflected the established musicological discourses' failure to engage with the concept of performance.[39] Today, however, musicology engages much more closely with musical performance, thanks partly to Cook's own extensive work.[40] There is also more engagement now between musicology and other disciplines, including those of interdisciplinary performance studies (again, Cook's recent work is championing this[41]) and theatre studies, as well as the newer discipline of opera studies. In turn, opera studies is becoming more influenced by performance studies than it has been in the past. However, this newer type of scholarship on opera has not yet overtaken the musicological/historical/textual type, in terms of its proportion of overall work in opera studies. This thesis is a contribution to the newer type of opera studies scholarship.

A.2.1.2 Not the fidelity dichotomy: HIP in the Theatre

As a result of HIP in music, since the 1970s there has also been some general interest within the world of the performing arts—albeit far more limited—in modern HIP *theatrical* productions of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century operatic texts. However, there is still very

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[38] Cook, *Beyond the Score*, 26.

[39] Ibid.

[40] See, for example: Nicholas Cook, "Words About Music, or, Analysis Versus Performance," in *Theory into Practice: Composition, Performance, and the Listening Experience*, ed. Nicholas Cook, Peter Johnson, and Hans Zender (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), 9-52; Nicholas Cook, "Analysing Performance and Performing Analysis," in *Rethinking Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 239-261; Cook, "Between Process and Product: Music and/ as Performance"; Nicholas Cook, "Performance Analysis and Chopin's Mazurkas," *Musicæ Scientiæ* 11, no. 2 (2007): 183-207; Nicholas Cook, "Squaring the Circle: Phrase Arching in Recordings of Chopin's Mazurkas," *Musica Humana* 1, (2009): 5-28; Cook, "Changing the Musical Object; Nicholas Cook, "Methods for Analysing Recordings," in *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 221-245; Nicholas Cook, "The Ghost in the Machine: Towards a Musicology of Recordings," *Musicæ Scientiæ* 14, no. 2 (2010): 3-21; Nicholas Cook, "Off the Record: Performance, History, and Musical Logic," in *Music and the Mind: Essays in Honour of John Sloboda*, ed. Irène Deliege and Jane Davidson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 291-310; Nicholas Cook, "A Bridge Too Far? Musical Performance Between the Disciplines," in *Gemessene Interpretation: Computergestützte Aufführungsanalyse im Kreuzverhör der Diszipline*, ed. Heinz von Loesch and Stefan Weinzierl (Mainz: Schott, 2011), 1-14; Nicholas Cook and Richard Pettengill, eds., *Taking it to the Bridge: Music as Performance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013); Nicholas Cook, "Performance and Interdisciplinary Musicology," in *Kreativität – Struktur und Emotion*, ed. Andreas Lehmann, Ariane Jeßulat, and Christoph Wünsch (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2013), 23-29; Nicholas Cook, "Bridging the Unbridgeable? Empirical Musicology and Interdisciplinary Performance Studies," in *Taking it To the Bridge: Music as Performance*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Richard Pettengill (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 2013), 70-85; Cook, "Between Art and Science."

[41] See: Cook, "Bridging the Unbridgeable?."

little scholarly analysis of it,[42] at least partly because of the lack of DVD recordings of this type of production.[43] To my knowledge no "reverse FD" production has yet been created; by this I mean a modern production of opera in which the theatrical elements display HIP and the musical ones are re-worked in an innovatively deconstructive manner. However, there are a small number of "post-operatic" musical *and* theatrical re-workings of standard-repertoire operas. Similarly there are a small number of "fully-HIP" productions, in which the theatrical and musical elements both display HIP. There was no available DVD or other audiovisual recording of such a "fully-HIP" recent production of *Dido and Aeneas* (such as the Boston Early Music Festival's 2010 production[44]). In addition, no such live production was accessible to me. This inaccessibility reflects the relative lack of this type of modern performance of early opera in the context of international performance, and in view of these factors, this field is essentially outside the bounds of this thesis.

A.2.1.3 Purcell and *Dido and Aeneas*

Analyses of modern performances of operas by Wagner, Verdi and Handel constitute the overwhelming majority of AMPO literature currently in existence. Therefore, in addition to this study's primary differentiation from "mainstream" AMPO literature (i.e. being a rarity as a monograph, and uniquely featuring comparative analysis of several different productions of

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[42] Rare exceptions include some of the work of Jed Wentz and Andrew V. Jones. The issue has been addressed briefly and hypothetically by Clemens Risi. See: Jed Wentz, "The Passions Dissected, *or* On the Dangers of Boiling Down Alexander the Great," *Early Music* 37, no. 1 (2009): 101-110; Andrew V. Jones, "Staging a Handel Opera," *Early Music* 34, no. 2 (2006): 277-287; Clemens Risi, "Die Gesten des *Holländers* Gestern und Heute," in *Macht Ohnmacht Zufall: Aufführungspraxis, Interpretation und Rezeption im Musiktheater*, ed. Christa Brüstle, Clemens Risi, and Stephanie Schwartz (Berlin: Theater der Zeit, 2011), 25-39.

[43] A notable exception to the trend of not commercially releasing recordings of fully-HIP early opera productions is the work of director Benjamin Lazar and conductor Vincent Dumestre. Their 2004 production of Molière and Jean-Baptiste Lully's 1670 semi-opera *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*, and their 2008 production of Lully and Phillippe Quinault's 1673 opera *Cadmus et Hermione* have both been released to acclaim on DVD. Some of the cast and crew involved in one or another of these two productions have recently also produced a DVD of their production of Blow's *Venus and Adonis*, an opera that is stylistically and historically very similar to *Dido and Aeneas* (see Chapter 1).

See: Benjamin Lazar, Vincent Dumestre, and Martin Fraudreau, Le bourgeois gentilhomme: comédie-ballet de Molière et Lully, (Théâtre Le Trianon, Paris: Alpha-Amiral LDA, Arte France, 2005); Rose Pruiksma, "Moliere and Jean-Baptiste Lully, *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*, Theatre du Trianon, Paris, November 2004 [Review]," *The Opera Quarterly* 24, no. 3-4 (2009): 307-312; Benjamin Lazar, Vincent Dumestre, and Martin Fraudreau, Cadmus et Hermione: tragédie lyrique de Lully et Quinault, (France: Alpha-Amiral LDA, Arte France, 2008); François-René Martin, Louise Moaty, and Bertrand Cuiller, John Blow. Venus & Adonis, (Normandy: Alpha, 2013).

[44] See: David Weininger, "Creative Reconstructions of 'Dido': Festival re-creates opera as it may have originated," *The Boston Globe*, 26 November 2010.

the same opera), this study also differentiates itself along a secondary line from most AMPO scholarship, by focusing on performance of Henry Purcell and Nahum Tate's *Dido and Aeneas.*

Dido receives regular performance worldwide. However, as it is the only sung-through extant opera by Purcell, Purcell's overall "presence" on the modern operatic stage is very much overshadowed by those of his near-contemporaries, the prolific opera composers Handel and Monteverdi (particularly Handel, whose operas did much to spearhead the Early Opera Revival of the early-to-mid twentieth century). However, Purcell has long been seen as the most prominent English composer of early opera. *Dido* is also the most often-performed English-language opera, after the operas of Benjamin Britten (which lie outside the "standard operatic era" of c. 1780–1930).[45] Much of the literature on the historical performance of seventeenth-century English music-theatre in general is about Purcell's work. Most of this scholarship focuses on historical musicology, cultural history, composer biography and score and libretto analysis of *Dido* and to a lesser extent, Purcell's "dramatick"[46] operas.

Leading scholars of Purcell's operas, to whom I often refer in this thesis, include: the older generation of Winton Dean, Margaret Laurie, and Michael Tilmouth; the middle generation of Peter Holman, Bruce Wood, Curtis Alexander Price, Roger Savage, Martin Adams and Ellen T. Harris; and the younger generation of Andrew Walkling, Michael Burden, Bryan White, Rebecca Herissone, Stephen Rose, Elizabeth Holland, Anthony Welch and Amanda Eubanks Winkler. Harris's 1987 score edition[47] and accompanying book *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas*[48] made essential reading in the research for this thesis, due to their detailed information on the early performances, scores and libretti and on the later performance history of the work. Anthony Welch's 2009 article "The Cultural Politics of *Dido and*

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[45] Mike Gibb, "Operabase: Statistics", Operabase http://www.operabase.com/visual.cgi?lang=en&splash=t (accessed 28 April 2015).

[46] "Dramatick" is the deliberately archaic, correct spelling of the preferred scholarly term for the type of Purcellian-Bettertonian musical-theatrical entertainments that until quite recently were known as "semi-operas".

[47] Henry Purcell, Nahum Tate, and Ellen T. Harris, Henry Purcell: *Dido and Aeneas*, Opera, ed. Ellen.T. Harris (London: Eulenberg, Oxford University Press, 1987).

[48] Ellen T. Harris, *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

Aeneas"[49] is highly pertinent to this thesis's focus, due to its examination of the dramatic aspects of the opera in relation to their cultural context. Elizabeth Holland is also frequently referred to in this thesis because of the original and relevant insights of her article "Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas: A Strategy for Historically-informed Role Allocation"[50] and her thesis *Purcell and the Seventeenth-Century Voice*,[51] both published in 2002. Amanda Eubanks Winkler's writings on English theatre music and opera situate score and libretto analysis in a broad interdisciplinary social and historical context, and show the impact of New Musicology on Purcell studies.[52] Winkler's book *O Let Us Howle Some Heavy Note: Music for witches, the melancholic, and the mad on the seventeenth-century English stage* (2006)[53] is the only in-depth examination of the particular combination of issues that are most relevant to the four productions studied, and that therefore are most relevant to this thesis (i.e. gender, sexuality, religion, and madness in theatre and music-theatre in this period of English history). While it does not address modern performance of *Dido and Aeneas*, it does much to inform my approach and content in my own investigation of the "threads" of influence in various social, political and historical contexts that affected aspects of the opera's genesis. Such interdisciplinary research is part of a broader academic cultural shift away from the strict disciplinary approach: appropriately, given the innately interdisciplinary nature of opera, as a paradigm shift this has significantly affected the way opera studies have developed in the last few decades.

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[49] Anthony Welch, "The Cultural Politics of Dido and Aeneas," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 21, no. 1 (2009): 1-26.

[50] Elizabeth Holland, "Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas: A Strategy for Historically-Informed Role-Allocation in the Twenty-First Century," *British Postgraduate Musciology* 5(2002). http://www.bpmonline.org.uk/bpm5-strategy.html (accessed 22 June 2012).

[51] Elizabeth Jane Violet Holland, “Purcell and the Seventeenth-century Voice: An Investigation of Singers and Voice Types in Henry Purcell's Vocal Music” (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Sheffield, 2002).

[52] Amanda Eubanks Winkler, “Gender and Genre: Musical Conventions on the English Stage, 1660 - 1705” (Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2000).

Amanda Eubanks Winkler, *O let us howle some heavy note : music for witches, the melancholic, and the mad on the seventeenth-century English stage* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

Amanda Eubanks Winkler, "Sexless Spirits?: Gender Ideology and Dryden's Musical Magic," *The Musical Quarterly* 93, no. 10 (2010): 297-328.

[53] Winkler, *O Let Us Howle Some Heavy Note*.

A.2.2 Opera studies towards the end of the millennium

In the 1980s, literature on opera began to transform to include methodologies that reflected the "hermeneutic turn" of "New Musicology." [54] Both the pre-and post-"turn" paradigms in opera studies are encompassed by the writings of the late American scholar and critic Joseph Kerman. Kerman's 1956 book *Opera as Drama*[55] is considered a foundational classic in opera studies, and was one of the first to argue for and partially devise a dramaturgy for opera. Famously, he argues in this book that it is specifically through the *music* that opera's dramatic qualities are expressed. Along with some of the work of his younger colleague Susan McClary,[56] it is largely Kerman's writings which are thought of as the seminal works in English that called for the precepts of interdisciplinary theory and criticism to influence musicology, [57] and opened up the conceptual space for the development of New Musicology.[58] As McClary has argued, the more broad-based, critically engaged, hermeneutically-orientated "New Musicology" paradigm profoundly contributed to the expansion of opera studies.[59]

The following period from 1989–2003 saw an increase in the amount of scholarly writing on opera, and in opera studies' status as a discipline. Nicholas Till points to 1989 as a symbolic watershed in opera studies, with the publication of Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker's edited collection *Analyzing Opera*, and the launch by Parker and Arthur Groos of the *Cambridge*

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[54]It has become standard to include the caveat "it is no longer new" and/or to insert scare-quotes when discussing New Musicology. It is unfortunate that McClary's own, less time-bound preferred term "critical musicology" never attained widespread traction.

See: Susan McClary, "*Cambridge Opera Journal* at Twenty," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 21, no. 2 (2009): 105-109.

[55] Joseph Kerman, *Opera as Drama (New and Rev. Ed.)*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

[56] See, for example:

Susan McClary, "Paradigm Dissonances: Music Theory, Cultural Studies, Feminist Criticism," *Perspectives of New Music* 32, no. 1 (1994): 68-85.

[57] Joseph Kerman, "How We Got Into Analysis, and How to Get Out," *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 2 (1980): 311-331. Joseph Kerman, *Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985).

[58] Leslie Kinton, "How We Got Out of Analysis and How to Get Back In: A Polemical Re-Appraisal of Joseph Kerman," *Discourses in Music* 15, no. 1 (2004). http://library.music.utoronto.ca/discourses-in-music/v5n1a2.html (accessed 9 June 2013).

[59] McClary, "*Cambridge Opera Journal* at Twenty."

Opera Journal.[60] The US scholar Abbate consolidated her status in this period as one of the leading scholarly writers in opera studies with two sole-authored books on the subject, which focused on the standard repertoire.[61] Of particular relevance for this thesis is the earlier of these books, *Unsung Voices* (1991), which postulated her key terms "noumenal" and "phenomenal" in reference to operatic conventions. Adapting the terms from Nietzsche and from Kant, Abbate uses "noumenal" in conjunction with music that is not "heard" as music by the characters within the diegetic or fictional world of the opera; conversely, "phenomenal music" is "heard" as music, for example Carmen's "Seguedilla" or Lakmé's "Bell Song".[62] Abbate's work has typically been more theoretically ground-breaking than other similar opera studies scholars of the same era (for example Ellen Rosand, who focused instead on early opera, especially Handel and Italian opera[63]) and Abbate's work has made more impact on the development of methodology in opera studies.

There were some stirrings in the late twentieth century of what I call AMPO, mainly inspired by the critical and audience-based controversy surrounding debates over *Regietheater* and *Werktreue*. David J. Levin writes that "to a significant extent, the battle over opera's disposition onstage in the late twentieth century—whether it would be deeply settled and familiar or markedly unsettled and unfamiliar—was waged over and through Wagner productions."[64] Levin had leapt into the critical theory / opera studies fray in 1993 with his introductions and translations of others' work in *Opera Through Other Eyes*, and in 1997 he began to more seriously attract attention for his own scholarship in AMPO with the article "Reading a Staging / Staging a Reading".[65] A back-and-forth discussion with James Treadwell on the methodology and aims of AMPO (though it was not referred to as such) ensued, published in the *Cambridge Opera Journal*. In these articles, the focus as usual is on

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[60] Nicholas Till, "Introduction: Opera Studies Today," in *The Cambridge Companion to Opera Studies*, ed. Nicholas Till (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1-24,4.

[61] Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Carolyn Abbate, *In Search of Opera* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001).

[62] Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, 5, 49, 119-123.

[63] Ellen Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice: The Creation of a Genre* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1991). Ellen Rosand, "Criticism and the Undoing of Opera," *19th-Century Music* 14, no. 1 (1990): 75-83.

[64] Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 17.

[65] David J. Levin, "Reading a Staging/ Staging a Reading," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 9, (1997): 47-71.

the music-dramas of Wagner, and there is a distinct emphasis on the evaluation of productions' artistic effectiveness and of their relationship to the operatic text. "Reading a Staging" featured the most salient discussion of AMPO methodology in general in this period. Until the early millennium there was little other Anglophone AMPO beyond critical reviews, letters to the editor and other such "light" literature.

In general, from 1989 to the turn of the millennium, opera studies was heavily influenced by literary criticism, sociology and cultural studies, among other fields, and while the composer-centred paradigm had less influence than previously, the field was still dominated by the historical musicology and score-analysis-based paradigms. Philosophy also had a profound influence on opera studies from the 1980s onwards. Reflecting the growing influence of interdisciplinary "Theory" in the field of opera studies, Levin published the collection *Opera Through Other Eyes* in 1993, which included approaches from Adorno and the Frankfurt School of literary criticism, through post-structuralism and discourse analysis to those of psychoanalysis.[66]

Though Robert Donington's work on Wagner had introduced psychoanalysis to the nascent field of opera studies from the 1960s onwards,[67] from the 1990s—by which point opera studies was more formalised— the influence of Continental philosophy and interdisciplinary theory meant that opera studies more seriously began to adopt a psychoanalytic bent. Donington was a musicologist himself and also one of the key early scholars in the Early Music Movement,[68] but since the 1990s, writings on psychoanalysis in opera studies have tended to come from perspectives other than those of musicologists. They also tend to investigate the issues which are often the most human and compelling about opera: its obsessions with sexuality, love and desire, with excess, extravagance and madness, with suffering and death. Two of the most influential publications in this field were originally French: the English translation of Catherine Clément's 1979 book *Opera, or the Undoing of*

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[66] David J. Levin, *Opera Through Other Eyes* (California: Stanford University Press, 1993).

[67] Robert Donington, *Opera and its Symbols: The Unity of Words, Music, and Staging* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1992 (first publ. 1963)); Robert Donington, *Wagner's 'Ring' and its Symbols: The Music and the Myth* (London: Faber & Faber, 1984 (first publ. 1963)).

[68] See, for example: Robert Donington, *The Interpretation of Early Music* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963); Robert Donington, *A Performer's Guide to Baroque Music* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973).

Women, was published in 1988 with a foreword by Susan McClary;[69] and that of Michel Poizat's 1986 book *The Angel's Cry: Beyond the Pleasure Principle* in 1992.[70] This was followed by Linda and Michael Hutcheon's two English-language books *Opera: Desire, Disease, Death* in 1996, and *Opera: The Art of Dying* in 2004,[71] which are somewhat less influenced by psychoanalysis but are strongly theoretical and are concerned with similar fundamental human themes in opera; and by Slavoj Žižek and Mladen Dolar's Lacanian 2001 book *Opera's Second Death*.[72] The influence of psychoanalysis is still often observable in some recent literature.[73] However, psychoanalytical theory is outside the bounds of the present study. While I do indeed address similar issues of compelling human concerns expressed in opera, unlike the above works I instead focus on narrative and textual analysis and the interpretation of signs and meaning, as well as blending in some more recent methodologies from AMPO, including what I describe as the "presence paradigm", which I discuss below.

A.2.3 New-millennium Opera Studies: Drastic or Gnostic?

A fresh alternative to "psychologising" opera was offered by Abbate in 2004 with the publication of her much-cited article "Music – Drastic or Gnostic?"[74] This article emphasised the importance of considering opera as performed, thereby joining the increasingly widespread "performative turn" in music and in other humanities fields. It also brought French philosophical thought into musicology in a way that had not previously been seriously attempted. The philosophical paradigm that Abbate advocates here draws on phenomenology to counter New Musicology's emphasis on interpretative "reading" and the socio-cultural

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[69] Catherine Clément and Susan McClary, *Opera, Or, The Undoing of Women*, trans., Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988). Originally titled: *L'Opéra ou la Défaite des femme.*

[70] Michel Poizat, *The Angel's Cry: Beyond the Pleasure Principle in Opera*, trans., Arthur Denner (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992). Originally titled: *L'Opéra, ou Le Cri de l'ange: Essai sur la jouissance de l'amateur d'opéra*.

[71] Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, *Opera: Desire, Disease, Death*, Texts and Contexts (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1996).

[72] Slavoj Žižek and Mladen Dolar, *Opera's Second Death* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

[73] See: Carlo Zuccarini, "The (Lost) Vocal Object in Opera: the Voice, the Listener and *Jouissance*," *PSYART: A Hyperlink Journal for the Psychological Study of the Arts* (2008). http://www.psyartjournal.com/article/show/zuccarini-the_lost_vocal_object_in_opera_the_voice (accessed December 5, 2013); Carlo Zuccarini, "Hearing Voices: Neuropsychoanalysis and Opera," *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* 35, no. 2 (2010): 154-165.

[74] Carolyn Abbate, "Music--Drastic or Gnostic?," *Critical Inquiry* 30, no. 3 (2004): 505-536.

contextualisation of music. Abbate's article promotes the application of the theories of the philosopher Vladimir Jankélévitch, whose 1961 book *Music and the Ineffable* had been translated by Abbate from French into English in 2003.[75] Abbate's main thesis in the article is that musicology's emphasis on interpretative, analytical, intellectual, "gnostic" approaches to the study of music, needed to be replaced or at least supplemented with an appreciation of the material, the experiential, the emotional, the ephemeral, and the "drastic" in music. However, although Abbate's challenge to the gnostic paradigm is compelling, she does not fully offer the necessary tools with which to discuss the "drastic" in an insightful and scholarly manner, instead largely leaving this task open for other scholars.

Although it comes from outside the field of opera studies, German philosopher Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's book *Presence: That Which Meaning Cannot Convey* (2004) has been highly influential in the development of approaches to the "drastic" in opera studies. Gumbrecht writes from the perspective of a philosopher considering overarching trends, thought patterns and cultural values in the humanities and arts, and thus provides a broad-based theoretical grounding, as opposed to Jankélévitch who is specifically concerned with music. With the publication of these two provocative works on material and experiential issues, the year of 2004 represented a watershed in the growth of opera studies as a discipline. It marked the beginning of what I will term the "presence paradigm" in the field, as many scholars in opera studies have favoured Gumbrecht's terminology over Abbate's / Jankélévitch's, due presumably to its broader appeal across fields. 2004 also marked the approximate beginning of the AMPO sub-discipline within opera studies, so, as I will show below, from the outset AMPO has been associated with issues of "presence".

A.2.4 The Presence Paradigm

"Presence" in the context of opera performance refers to the "aura" often created when the material qualities of the art(s) in question are experienced by spectator and performer.[76] It is

[75] Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Music and the Ineffable*, trans., Carolyn Abbate (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

[76] As yet there is little focus on *performer* experience in AMPO scholarship, as it relates to production of "presence". The emphasis is almost entirely on the audience member's experience. However, the growing

associated strongly with the term "co-presence", which in the context of opera studies refers to the actual and simultaneous bodily presence of performer(s) and audience. "Presence" however does not necessarily require the actual bodily presence of the performer (as encountered in live performance), though it is certainly associated with this; however, more to the point it refers to a sense of "being there".[77] In its consideration of the experiential, discussion of presence is partly informed by phenomenology. It investigates those elements of artistic materiality (or the qualitative and non-signifying aspects of performance) that give performed art its innate appeal to, and effect on, the emotions and mind of both the performer and the audience. These interactions elicit sensations or experiences, which have been noted by scholars who have recently argued for more focus on presence in opera performance analysis. Clemens Risi wrote in *Theater der Zeit* in 2003 (interestingly, just before Abbate's "Drastic" article appeared):

> …we find moments [in performance] that are formulated and experienced as something that cannot be described as the presentation of anything concrete (representation). Rather, they elicit first and foremost intensive responses and corporeal reactions to what has been experienced. (…) They lead to a feeling of bodily participation (presence).[78]

In this thesis I thus generally refer to the experiences Risi describes here, and the artistic moments that give rise to them, as "presence-effects". It is worthwhile here to stress that this thesis does not aim at a phenomenological analysis of the production. I am not primarily concerned with the productions' effect(s) on the audience. However, as I analyse meaning-making, commenting on potential affective response is at times unavoidable.

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methodology of practice-led research may provide more personal scholarly accounts of the operatic performer's experiences in the years to come.

[77] Chandler, Daniel, and Rod Munday,"Presence," in *A Dictionary of Media and Communication*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199568758.001.0001/acref-9780199568758-e-2119

[78] "[Andererseits] werden Momente erlebt und gestaltet, die sich nicht als Darstellung von etwas beschreiben lassen (Repräsentation), sondern in erster Linie intensive Erfahrungen und körperliche Reaktionen auf das Erlebte auslösen. Diese Momente zeichnen sich häufig durch Irritation, Aussetzen des Verstehens, Intensität, Bewusstwerdung der Wahrnehmung oder Zeit aus. Sie führen zu einem Gefühl leibhaftiger Teilnahme (Präsenz)."

Clemens Risi, "Sinn und Sinnlichkeit in der Oper: zu Hans Neuenfels' Idomeneo an der Deutschen Oper Berlin," *Theater der Zeit* 58, no. 6 (2003): 38-39. English translation quoted in: Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 10.

A.2.5 Live *vs.* Recorded Performance

The "performative turn" and the rise of the presence paradigm have both contributed in the past decade or so to an increasing interest in opera studies in the *ephemeral* nature of performance. This has been linked to an increased interest in live performance, but this has not been extended to recordings of opera performances to an equivalent degree.

The last few decades' increased focus on live performance has involved a good deal of theoretical investigation and clarification of the nature of the object of study. Leaders of this debate have included the performance studies scholars Peggy Phelan and Philip Auslander. Phelan's side of the argument, that live performance is ontologically different from its mediated equivalent,[79] is refuted by Auslander, who has argued that there is no essential ontological difference between the two, and that they in fact rely on each other: "the historical relationship of liveness and mediatization must be seen as a relation of dependence and imbrication rather than opposition."[80] Auslander argues that there are some phenomenological and experiential, as well as cultural and economic differences between live and mediatized performance, but that their differences are mutable and dependent on historical factors.[81] Such interest in the ontology and phenomenology of live performance has also been hotly debated in musicology,[82] in which there has been generally more use of recordings as a basis for performance research than there has in performance studies, theatre studies or indeed opera studies. In one of the many recent discussions in *Opera Quarterly* of the issue as it relates to opera, for example, Christopher Morris notes that theatre scholars "time and again…reinforce a hierarchy that relegates the recording of theater [*sic*] to a

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[79] Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993).

[80] Auslander points out that the OED's earliest examples of the word "live"—used in this sense—date from after the development of audio-visual recording and broadcasting, thus arguing that the notion of the "live" performance only came about after the possibility of recording altered the way the western world perceived performance. Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*, 2nd ed. (Hoboken: Taylor & Francis, 2008), 56.

[81] Ibid.

[82] See, for example: Christy Mag Uidhir, "Recordings as Performances," *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 47, no. 3 (2007): 298-314; Andrew Kania, "Musical Recordings," *Philosophy Compass* 4, no. 1 (2009): 22-38; Dorottya Fabian, "Classical Sound Recordings and Live Performances : Artistic and Analytical Perspectives," in *Recorded Music: Philosophical and Critical Reflections*, ed. Mine Doğantan-Dack (UK: Middlesex University Press, 2008); Roger Heaton, "Reminder: A Recording is Not a Performance," in *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 217-220.

derivative and debased status in relation to the unique and inimitable condition of a live performance."[83] Such a perspective has profoundly influenced AMPO's focus and approach as it has begun to blossom as a sub-discipline of opera studies since 2004. A kind of "presence-ephemerality-liveness nexus" has thus developed as a significant force within this field. I will address this again later below when I discuss this thesis's methodology, which largely side-steps this "nexus" and offers an alternative to it and to most of the AMPO field.

A.2.6 Germanic scholarship

The locus for scholarly AMPO in general— and for its preoccupation with presence and with live performance in particular—has long been Germany. Scholars at the forefront of this field who are or have been based in Germany include Clemens Risi, Gundula Kreuzer, Christopher Balme[84] and Jürgen Schläder,[85] among others; and more recently Stephanie Großmann and Daniele Daude. Of particular note with regards to this thesis is Kreuzer's 2011 article "Wagner-Dampf: Steam in *Der Ring des Nibelungen* and Operatic Production".[86] Although she addresses historical productions more than AMPO, in this article Kreuzer advocates and demonstrates a thematic approach to analysis that is very similar to my own.[87] However, certain characteristics of this article differentiate it from my work: Kreuzer focuses on the standard repertoire (particularly the work of Wagner and Verdi) instead of early opera and Purcell; and while she pays some attention to comparing productions of Wagner's various operas, a thoroughgoing comparative analysis such as I attempt here is not the aim of Kreuzer's article.

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[83] Christopher Morris, "Digital Diva: Opera on Video," *The Opera Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2010): 96-119.

[84] Balme primarily writes on theatre, but sometimes makes forays into opera. Christopher Balme, "Libretto – Partitur – Bild: Die Münchner Händel-Inszenierungen zwischen Konzept- und Bildertheater," in *OperMachtTheaterBilder*, ed. Jürgen Schläder (Berlin: Henschel, 2006), 51-72.

[85] Jürgen Schläder, ed. *OperMachtTheaterBilder: Neue Wirklichkeiten des Regietheaters* (Berlin: Henschel, 2006); Jürgen Schläder, "Strategien der Opern-Bilder. Überlegungen zur Typologie der Klassikerinszenierungen im musikalischen Theater," in *Äesthetik der Inszenierung: Dimensionen eines künstlerischen, kulturellen und gesellschaftlichen Phänomens*, ed. Josef Früchtl, and Jörg Zimmermann, Edition Suhrkamp Aesthetica (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001).

[86] Gundula Kreuzer, "*Wagner-Dampf:* Steam in *Der Ring des Nibelungen* and Operatic Production," *The Opera Quarterly* 27, no. 2-3 (2011): 179-218.

[87] Ibid., 206-208.

There are some exceptions to the overwhelming focus on the standard repertoire, including a significant amount of scholarly work on the Sasha Waltz and Guests production of *Dido* (one of the four central productions in this thesis). The Freie Universität Berlin (FUB)'s 2011 collection *Macht Ohnmacht Zufall: Aufführungspraxis, Interpretation und Rezeption im Musiktheater*,[88] includes a chapter by Stephanie Bender on the Waltz production.[89] Bender focuses on the choreographic elements of the performance, and on the oscillation between the perception of the dancer as signifier and the body as presence-effect.[90] The FUB has also published an online collection of essays on the Waltz production, titled *Grenzgänge der Kunst(wissenschaften): Sasha Waltz' Choreographie Dido & Aeneas* ("Boundaries of Art (Studies): Sasha Waltz's Choreography *Dido and Aeneas*").[91] In contrast to my own work, the *Grenzgänge* articles show relatively little influence from traditional theatre studies or musicology. Most strikingly, they do not include any score excerpts, photographs or other visual aids (the inclusion and in-depth analysis of these being traditional elements of the above disciplines' application-focused methodologies). Instead, these articles discuss various thematic, theoretical and performance issues that emerge from the production and its relationship to Virgil's original poem, and show the heavy influence of philosophy, literary criticism and the more theoretical aspects of performance studies.

Theatre-music scholar David Roesner's 2007 article "Singing Actors and Dancing Singers: Oscillations of genre, physical and vocal codes in two contemporary adaptations of Purcell's

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[88] Christa Brüstle, Clemens Risi, and Stephanie Schwarz, eds., *Macht Ohnmacht Zufall: Aufführungspraxis, Interpretation und Rezeption im Musiktheater* Recherchen 87 (Berlin: Theater der Zeit, 2011).

[89] Stephanie Bender, "Die Bewegung der Stimme oder der Klang der Bewegung," in *Macht Ohnmacht Zufall: Aufführungspraxis, Interpretation und Rezeption im Musiktheater* ed. Christa Brüstle, Clemens Risi, and Stephanie Schwarz, Recherchen 87 (Berlin: Theater der Zeit, 2011), 183-196.

[90] Ibid., 188-189.

[91] Clemens Risi, "Performing Wagner for the 21st Century [Conference Presentation]", Forschungsinstitut für Musiktheater (FIMT), Universität Bayreuth http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dbbJPuflFoo.

Given that Risi has said publicly that he is friends with Robert Sollich, one of the authors of *Grenzgänge der Kunst(wissenschaften)* and also given that Risi has recently published the article "Performing Affect in Seventeenth-Century Opera" which is largely an analysis and discussion of the Waltz production, it is surprising that he did not author any of the articles in the *Grenzgänge* collection.

Clemens Risi, "Performing Affect in Seventeenth-century Opera: Process, Reception, Transgression," in *The Legacy of Opera: Reading Music Theatre as Experience and Performance*, ed. Dominic Symonds and Pamela Karantonis, Themes in Theatre: Collective Approaches to Theatre and Performance (Amsterdam: Rodopi Press, 2013), 79-102.

Dido and Aeneas," has been notably influential in developing this thesis.[92] Unlike most AMPO work, Roesner directly compares two productions of the same operatic text: the Waltz production and Sebastian Nübling's 2006 Basel production. He makes the important point that the Waltz production explores the four classical elements of water, air, earth and fire.[93] Roesner's approach is somewhat similar to mine, though his analysis is a little more fluidly structured and theoretical. Unlike this thesis, Roesner does not go into detail about the score-libretto text or the social context that surrounded its genesis.

As stated above, German scholar Clemens Risi is currently one of the two main international leaders of the scholarly AMPO sub-discipline today, along with Levin. Like most AMPO scholars, Risi has worked extensively on the performance of Wagner's works[94] though unusually, he has also published articles on early opera.[95] Recently he has been working on issues of methodology in AMPO, focusing on the study of live performance and the audience member's temporally-bound experience of it.[96] Risi usefully bridges the English/German language divide in AMPO, publishing in both languages.

In 2013 Risi published the English-language article "Performing Affect in Seventeenth-Century Opera: Process, Reception, Transmission" in the collection *The Legacy of Opera: Reading Music Theatre as Experience and Performance*.[97] Risi's focus here is on the

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[92] David Roesner, "Singing Actors and Dancing Singers: Oscillations of Genre, Physical and Vocal Codes in Two Contemporary Adaptations of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*," *Studies in Musical Theatre* 1, no. 2 (2007): 123-137.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Clemens Risi, ""Keinen Wagner-Kult mehr. Sondern Theater, Theater, Theater" – Der Ring des Nibelungen und das Regietheater," in *Von der Zukunft einer unmöglichen Kunst: 21 Perspektiven zum Musiktheater*, ed. Bettina Knauer and Peter Krause (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2006), 139-148; Risi, "Performing Wagner for the 21st Century [Conference Presentation]"; Clemens Risi, "Performing Wagner for the Twenty-First Century," *New Theatre Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (2013): 349-359.

[95] Clemens Risi, "Die Opernbühne als Experimentalraum der Affekte. Überlegungen zum Affektbegriff bei Athanasius Kircher und Claudio Monteverdi," in *Kunstkammer, Laboratorium, Bühne - Schauplätze des Wissens im 17. Jahrhundert*, ed. Helmar Schram, Ludger Schwarte, and Jan Lazardzig (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2003), 147-160; Clemens Risi, "Erfahrung des Heiligen in der Oper? Zur religiösen Dimension der Affektdarstellung und übertragung im Musiktheater des frühen 17. Jahrhunderts," in *Transformationen des Religiösen. Performativität und Textualität im geistlichen Spiel*, ed. Ingrid Kasten and Erika Fischer-Lichte (Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 2007), 249-263.

[96] Clemens Risi, "Opera in Performance – In Search of New Analytical Approaches," *The Opera Quarterly* 27, no. 2/3 (2011): 283-295.

[97] Risi, "Performing Affect in Seventeenth-century Opera: Process, Reception, Transgression."

production and transfer of affect, and on issues related to presence-effects in performance. In other respects, the "Performing Affect" article bears considerable similarity to my thesis, but enacts its methodology on a smaller scale. Though I place less emphasis on affect, I build on Risi's blend of cultural history, narrative analysis, musicology, theatre studies, theory and application. Risi first discusses seventeenth-century notions of affect and then closely examines selected duets and arias from two recent productions of early operas. These are commercially available as DVD recordings: the 1999 Festival d'Aix-en-Provence production of Claudio Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppaea*; and the 2005 Sasha Waltz and Guests production of *Dido and Aeneas*—the same one that I study in this thesis. Unlike my thesis, however, which examines four modern productions, Risi only examines two, and he analyses the performance of two *operas*, as opposed to my one.

As in this thesis, Risi moves through his material chronologically. Unlike this study however, Risi does not go into detail regarding the geneses, or the historical and/or fictional narrative bases, of the operas whose performances he discusses. He analyses relationships between different types of aural and visual, textual and performance modes in the modern performance of early opera. I build on his thematic approach to analysis: while Risi discusses historical and modern approaches to the theme of "affect" in his article, I focus on a different theme (for example, "dilemma" and "power") in each chapter.

A.2.7 Anglophone Scholarship

In the English-speaking world, AMPO is underdeveloped compared with German scholarship, and Anglophone AMPO's focus tends to be on the performance of *recently composed* operas, or on the recent radical musical and theatrical re-working of the standard repertoire known as "post-operatic" music-theatre. UK-based Australian scholar Pamela Karantonis writes on operatic vocal performance;[98] Nicholas Till, the editor of the most

[98] Pamela Karantonis, "Old Enough to Sing *Tosca*: The Paradox of Age and Femininity and the Opera Diva," in *Aging Femininities: Troubling Representations*, ed. Josie Dolan and Estella Tincknell (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2012), 171-182; Pamela Karantonis, "The Tenor in Decline? Narratives of Nostalgia and the Performativity of the Operatic Tenor," in *The Legacy of Opera: Reading Music Theatre as Experience and Performance*, ed. Dominic Symonds and Pamela Karantonis (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013), 119-130.

comprehensive recent survey collection in opera studies ,[99] and the director of Sussex University's Centre for Research in Opera and Music Theatre, principally writes on post-operatic music-theatre,[100] operatic cultural history and the operas of Mozart.[101] The British scholar Roger Parker is one of the leading names in opera studies, but has published relatively little on AMPO.[102] Under Levin's editorial leadership since 2005, *The Opera Quarterly* is the current leader in Anglophone AMPO. It has published over 25 pieces on the topic since 2006 alone, from well-known scholars such as Barry Millington, Parker, Risi and Kreuzer, and many other less renowned scholars. However, most of these are presented as reviews, (sometimes much-needed English reviews of German-language AMPO books,[103] or reviews of live opera performances[104] or recorded ones[105]) rather than full-blown autonomous articles. Compared with the recent proliferation of German-language AMPO literature, the English-language equivalent is sparser. In both German and English however, AMPO literature is growing at a fast rate.

A.2.8.1 Levin's *Unsettling Opera*

In the English-speaking world, the most detailed and lengthy single-author scholarly work in AMPO has so far been David J. Levin's *Unsettling Opera: Staging Mozart, Verdi, Wagner and Zemlinsky* (2007). Levin was one of the earliest scholars to write on and in the AMPO

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[99] Till, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Opera Studies*.

[100] Nicholas Till, "Centre For Research in Opera and Music Theatre / Prof. Nicholas Till", The University of Sussex http://www.sussex.ac.uk/cromt/people/person/168223 (accessed 19 May 2014).

[101] Nicholas Till, *Mozart and the Enlightenment: Truth, Virtue and Beauty in Mozart's operas* (New York City: W. W. Norton, 1995).

[102] Parker has however made some mention of modern performance of opera in his 2006 book *Remaking the Song: Operatic Visions and Revisions from Handel to Berio*, and in his 2012 overview with Abbate, and a recent article for *The Opera Quarterly*. See: Roger Parker, *Remaking The Song: Operatic Visions and Revisions from Handel to Berio (Ernest Bloch Lectures)* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006); Roger Parker, "Giuseppe Verdi's *Don Carlo(s)*: "Live" on DVD," *The Opera Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (2010): 603-614; Roger Parker and Carolyn Abbate, *A History of Opera: The Last Four Hundred Years* (Penguin Books Limited, 2012).

[103] Christopher Balme, "Von der Zukunft einer unmöglichen Kunst: 21 Perspektiven zum Musiktheater, and: Regietheater in der Oper: Eine musiksoziologische Untersuchung am Beispiel der Stuttgarter Inszenierung von Wagners "Ring des Nibelungen" [Review]," *The Opera Quarterly* 25, no. 3-4 (2009): 312-316.

[104] For example: Majel Connery, "*Tempest* Ex Machina: A Review of the Opera Onstage," *Opera Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (2014): 161-165.

[105] For example: Mike Ashman, "The Stuttgart *Ring*. The Stuttgart *Ring* on DVD: A Review Portfolio," *The Opera Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2010): 149-151; Roger Parker and Flora Willson, "*Bohème*-scapes, Then and Now. Stefan Herheim's *La bohème* on DVD: A Review Portfolio," *The Opera Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (2013): 156-161.

sub-discipline (see above). *Unsettling Opera* has been particularly influential in AMPO scholarship, and instrumental in developing this thesis, especially given Levin's unusual level of reliance on DVD recordings. However, Levin does not devote the entire book to the consideration of one operatic text as I do, although he does compare three different productions of the same work—Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*—in Chapter 2 (which was based partly on his 1997 article[106]). Levin does not address early opera: Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782) is the earliest-composed opera that he considers.[107] In addition, the selected productions are from a fairly wide period in time, (the Sellars production, for example, was already almost twenty years old by the time Levin published his book). In contrast, the productions I have selected were all performed within a four-year period during the last decade. Finally, *Unsettling Opera* aims to "introduce the reader to a cross-section of modes of stage production" and to "sketch a variety of analytic modes" and "examine a variety of analytic objects".[108] Instead of adopting this chapter-against-chapter, juxtaposed approach, in this thesis I aim for a more methodologically consistent and synthesised large-scale analysis.

A.2.8.2 Großmann and Daude: Large-scale German AMPO

To the best of my knowledge, apart from *Unsettling Opera*, there are only two other major single-author scholarly works in the AMPO sub-discipline that have been published to date. These are both in German and were published only two years ago, towards the end of my own research: the 2013 monograph by Stephanie Großmann, *Inszenierungsanalyse von Opern: eine interdisziplinäre Methodik* ("Production Analysis of Operas: An Interdisciplinary Method") and the 2014 monograph *Oper als Aufführung: Neue Perspektiven auf Opernanalyse* by Daniele Daude. I will discuss each of these and compare them to my approach in turn.

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[106] Levin, "Reading a Staging/ Staging a Reading."

[107] Levin analyses the 1998 production staged by Hans Neuenfels for the Stuttgart Opera in detail in Chapter 4, and August Everding and Karl Böhm's 1980 production for the Bavarian State Opera, and Calixto Bieito's 2004 production for the Komische Oper Berlin, in somewhat less detail in Chapter 4 and the Preface respectively.

[108] Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 7.

Großmann's study differs from my own study considerably in that it does not compare productions of a single opera, but rather analyses a broad range of operas from different eras. It also stresses a highly detailed approach that is informed by traditional semiotics, which makes the book impressively scientifically-minded, with a proliferation of divisions, lists and tabulations of data from libretti, scores, and productions. However, the cost of this approach is that the book can often seem rather dry in style and intimidatingly complex. In this regard it is similar to so many of the past few decades' works of semiotic theory in theatre studies and music, which have often developed into "highly complicated and voluminous tractates," as theatre studies scholar Eli Rozik colourfully complains.[109]

Großmann's book is divided into four major parts. Part I posits and demonstrates methodologies for analysing librettos, scores and stagings separately, while Part II does the same for analysing these elements in pairs (i.e. libretto + score, score + staging, libretto + staging). In the largest section towards the end of the book—Part III—Großmann analyses and compares three different productions of the same operatic text. Part III, titled "*Die plurimediale Dimension*" ("the pluri-medial dimension"), is the most similar to my thesis, as it analyses the complex interaction of most of the elements that constitute the operatic production. Großmann includes a final, shorter Part IV that examines the inter-textual elements of opera analysis, including how operas and opera productions are often based on other texts, even other opera productions. I find Großmann's notion of intertextuality between opera productions intriguing, and the similarities between the four productions I study here are striking, but unlike Großmann's, my chosen productions are not related to each other—at least not overtly.

Großmann's methodology works well for analysing a range of different operas, but it cannot easily be applied to the study of a production or multiple productions of only *one* operatic text. Many opera productions include different expressions of issues or themes throughout, which may refer to each other across elements of libretto/score/production (the three primary constitutive elements that Großmann identifies) and across the opera's narrative chronology. This would invite repetition if the analysis were to be divided according to constitutive

[109] Rozik, *Generating Theater Meaning*, 6.

elements, as Großmann does. To go some way towards avoiding this problem, in the case of analysing only one operatic text I instead advocate the division of the analysis by theme (see Structure and Methodology).

Daniele Daude's *Oper als Aufführung* is an updated and expanded version of her 2009 doctoral thesis. In contrast to Levin and Großmann's books, Daude's book uniquely attempts to provide full dramaturgical performance analyses. Thus, Daude's book is the most similar to my thesis of any published work, in terms of approach. The two productions Daude studies were of the operatic texts *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* by Rossini and Sterbini and of *Pelléas et Melisande* by Debussy (after Maeterlinck). Daude attended several performances (differentiated revivals) of each over the space of several different years. Daude thus can be more accurately said to have studied *seven performances*; in contrast, I study four *productions*.

Like my thesis, Daude's book features an extended introductory section in which she gives a literature review that surveys the history of the field and discusses the current trends and debates; she then provides a research rationale and a reflection on her own structure and methodology. As in my thesis, Daude then moves on to the actual analysis, providing some description and then integrating this with dramaturgical analysis that focuses on signification. Daude analyses the seven performances (four of *Barbiere* and three of *Pelléas*) one by one, generally moving chronologically through each opera and through the different performance dates. In this way, she analyses for example one scene of one performance of *Barbiere;* and then in the next chapter she analyses the following scene in the same opera, within the next performance she attended; she thereby avoids much repetition while managing to make interesting comparisons between the different performances. However, this method prevents direct comparisons between scenes from performance to performance.

The main point of difference between my thesis and Daude's book is that Daude's method cannot make direct comparisons between the different productions, because they are of different operatic texts. My thesis on the other hand involves comparative analysis of multiple different productions of the same opera, which is related to my interest in the

relationship between text and performance; in this case, particularly in exploring potential different interpretations of an operatic text.

A.2.9 Summary of Literature Review

This thesis aims to fill several areas of relative neglect in the scholarly literature within AMPO as it fits within opera studies.

- Meaning-orientated analysis: when AMPO began to emerge as a serious field of study in the early 2000s, the presence paradigm began to assume prominence. The result is that much of the last decade's AMPO scholarship has focused on issues associated with the presence paradigm and/or with negotiating a methodological and theoretical territory *between* presence and meaning-orientated approaches. Therefore, there is a lack of consciously meaning-orientated analysis of opera performance.
- Anglophone scholarship: AMPO in general is relatively under-developed in English-language scholarship; not much of the growing wealth of German scholars' work in this sub-discipline seems to be filtering through to Anglophone opera studies.
- Large-scale written works: there is a relative dearth of large-scale, single-author AMPO works, especially those in which a blended, non-juxtaposed, overarching methodology is applied to all productions studied and across all chapters of the work.
- Multiple productions: there is a general lack of AMPO scholarship that analyses multiple productions of the same opera. Analysing multiple productions allows for comparison between them, and can yield more complex insights into the various options available in the performed interpretation of operatic texts.

The present thesis therefore goes some way towards addressing these gaps in the literature, while building on the growing body of existing scholarship, in creating a blended interdisciplinary approach to dramaturgical AMPO that caters to the multivalent nature of opera performance.

A.3 Main Research Aims

This thesis is composed of the following interrelated research aims:

- To show how different productions of the same operatic text can explore and embody various alternatives for that text's potential interpretations, thereby revealing insights into the nature(s) of both the operatic productions and the operatic text.
- To demonstrate how the above can be achieved, through the dramaturgical analysis of four recent productions of *Dido and Aeneas*.

A.4 Rationale

The study of opera performance is a study of the most profoundly interdisciplinary art form that exists in the western world. Consequently, it is a field of scholarship that, while it is rooted in the study of music and theatre, encompasses or intersects with almost the whole breadth of the arts and humanities disciplines. Therefore, this thesis serves scholars who study theatre, performance, and musicology. It serves scholars who are interested in HIP; in cultural history; in interdisciplinary arts scholarship; and in the interaction of the written, visual and performing arts. Most of all, of course, it serves opera scholars and those who are interested in analysing the modern performance of opera.

A.5 Methodology

In my analysis of the four selected productions of *Dido and Aeneas* I aim for a blend of approaches, with influences from different disciplines, but primarily from dramaturgy (or music-dramaturgy). These include those of narrative analysis, textual analysis, score and libretto analysis, and musical and theatrical performance analysis. Some specialist terms are unavoidable, and the more complex key terms are included in the Glossary (see Appendix).

As discussed in my review of the relevant literature, most scholarly analyses of modern opera performance focus on analysing one production in depth, or on juxtaposing different productions of different operatic texts, often with little attention paid to comparing them. In this thesis, I have chosen to directly compare four different interpretations of the *same* opera, and to do this in a long-format, in-depth manner. By comparing productions of the same work I am able to delve much more deeply into the complex issues raised by the interaction of all the elements that are associated with the performance. These include: the score and libretto in terms of their various textual sources and modern editions; the different and yet interacting contexts of the various "texts" (including those of the "performance-texts" themselves[110]); the elements of performance such as instrumental music, voice, gesture, blocking, lighting, set, costume, and so on; the meaning-making functions of those elements; and the intellectual and emotional responses of the audience, as represented by my own subjective but informed perspective. Through comparing different approaches, one can gain deeper insights into the interpretative potentialities offered by the operatic text.

In this thesis I discuss what the "operatic text" actually is, in the case of *Dido and Aeneas*. To determine this, and to determine what the elusive "original performance(s)" of *Dido* might have been, it is necessary to delve quite deeply into the genesis of the opera. I show in Chapter 2 that it is impossible to determine what constitutes the original text(s) or performance(s) precisely, due to a lack of surviving evidence. We cannot know, for example, what the experiences of the earliest audiences or performers were like; nor can we know exactly who was cast in which roles, or what the relationships between Purcell, Tate and their performers were like, or exactly how the singers ornamented the vocal parts or what choreography the dancers performed. We do know some things, however; for example, we know that certain singer-actors and architectural elements were present at Charles II's court in 1684. We can infer or make informed guesses about others; for example, that particular characteristics of Josias Priest's school, its location, its staff and its students would have made some performance features more likely than others. I investigate these matters in Chapter 2. To gain insight into these matters, I discuss the earliest three or four performances (or

[110] The term "performance-text" is taken from Levin. I use it only when discussing the interrelationship between the various artistic products associated with *Dido* across the centuries; when I specifically analyse the productions I do not use this term. See: Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 11.

productions— with the paucity of data it is often difficult to differentiate between the two categories), before moving to my discussion of the four modern productions.

In making the large leap in historical time between investigating the earliest performances of *Dido* and then analysing the four modern productions, I am consciously avoiding discussion of an enormous performance history of *Dido* between the years 1704 and 2005. Such an analysis is necessarily outside the scope of this thesis, not only because of its enormity but more importantly because a detailed exploration of this body of performances is largely irrelevant for the reader and distracts from the main purpose of the thesis. This purpose is to analyse (and demonstrate how one can analyse) multiple *modern* productions of *Dido*, rather than productions from the nineteenth or twentieth centuries, for example. I conducted a good deal of research into the intervening centuries' productions of *Dido* before undertaking my analysis of the four selected recent productions, in order to align with my aim of first becoming highly informed about *Dido and Aeneas* and its performance. Where they are of particular relevance in having established traditions of style or signification that are continued in the four modern productions, I occasionally mention some of the productions that took place in the intervening centuries. By and large, however, it is unnecessary to discuss them within this thesis.

A.5.1 Selected Productions

The four recent productions of *Dido and Aeneas* that form the focus for the demonstration of my methodology of opera performance analysis are listed in detail in the table below, in chronological order of their date of performance. "Abbreviations" refers to the shorthand titles of convenience that I commonly employ for each production.

Figure 0-1: The Four Modern Productions

Main Company(s):	Sasha Waltz and Guests
Year of recording:	2005
Performance Location:	Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Berlin
Original production:	Grand Theatre de Luxembourg, Luxembourg, 2005
Orchestra:	Akademie für alte Musik Berlin
Chorus:	Vocalconsort Berlin
(Stage) Director:	Sasha Waltz *(also choreography and some dialogue)*
Conductor:	Attilio Cremonesi *(also musical reconstruction)*
DVD Director:	Peter Schönhofer
Set Designer:	Sasha Waltz and Thomas Schenk
Costume Designer:	Christine Birkle
Lighting Designer:	Thilo Reuther
Co-companies:	Opéra National de Montpellier, De Nederlandse Opera
Publisher / Number:	Arthaus Musik / 101311
Abbreviations:	Waltz production/ the Waltz
Main Company(s):	Les Arts Florissants, Opéra Comique
Year of recording:	2008
Performance Location:	Opéra Comique, Paris
Original production:	Wiener Festwochen, Vienna, 2006
Orchestra:	Les Arts Florissants
Chorus:	Choeur des Arts Florissants
(Stage) Director:	Deborah Warner *(also selection of poetry for Prologue)*
Conductor:	William Christie *(also musical reconstruction)*
DVD Director:	François Roussillon
Set Designer:	Chloe Obolensky
Costume Designer:	Chloe Obolensky
Lighting Designer:	Jean Kalman
Co-companies:	De Nederlandse Opera, François Roussillon et Associés (fRA), ARTE France
Publisher / Number:	fRA Musica / fRA501
Abbreviations:	Les Arts Florissants production / LAF production / the LAF
Main Company(s):	The Royal Opera, The Royal Ballet
Year of recording:	2009
Performance Location:	Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London
Original production:	La Scala, Milan, 2006
Orchestra:	Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment
Chorus:	The Royal Opera Extra Chorus
(Stage) Director:	Wayne McGregor *(also choreography)*
Conductor:	Christopher Hogwood
DVD Director:	James Whitbourn
Set Designer:	Hildegard Bechtler
Costume Designer:	Fotini Dimou
Lighting Designer:	Lucy Carter
Co-companies:	N/A
Publisher / Number:	Opus Arte / OA1018D
Abbreviations:	Royal Opera House production / ROH production / the ROH

Main Company(s):	Opera Australia
Year of recording:	2009
Performance Location:	Sydney Opera House, Sydney
Original production:	The Arts Centre, Melbourne, 2004
Orchestra:	Orchestra of the Antipodes
Chorus:	Opera Australia Chorus, Cantillation
(Stage) Director:	Patrick Nolan
Conductor:	Antony Walker
DVD Director:	N/A (Opera Australia archive DVD)
Set Designer:	Gabriela Tylesova
Costume Designer:	Gabriela Tylesova
Lighting Designer:	Nigel Levings
Choreographer:	Lucy Guerin, Anton
Co-companies:	N/A
Publisher / Number:	N/A (Opera Australia archive DVD)
Abbreviations:	Opera Australia production / OA production / the OA

This selection of productions as my focus in this study balances the competing needs for breadth and depth, and for differences and similarities among the productions. For example, all four were performed and recorded within the last decade, and are all from western cultures, yet they reflect a variety of nations within the western world. They have many other similarities and differences that are discernible upon closer analysis. However, the principal reasons for their selection for the enactment of my methodology (apart from the obvious fact that they all self-identify as performances of Purcell and Tate's *Dido and Aeneas*) were these productions' recent creation and performance, and their accessibility via DVD recording and/or live performance. I believe these are the most important factors to be considered when embarking upon a large-scale, in-depth, multi-production analysis of the modern performance of opera. Accessibility of research materials is an obvious necessity, and this is aided by the recentness of creation and performance, largely due to the huge increase in the quantity of online information in the past decade. The closeness in dates of creation and performance between the productions allows for a narrowing of the field of study and for more straightforward comparisons to be made between the productions. This is useful given the very complex and wide-ranging nature of this study, which is an unavoidable characteristic of opera studies, and especially of AMPO.

A.5.2 Approach to analysis

This thesis primarily analyses the ways in which these four modern productions explore and construct meaning. These meanings largely (though not entirely) relate to cultural and psychological themes that emerge from the narrative of *Dido and Aeneas*. That narrative is variously expressed by the different "texts" that are involved. In this case, these different texts include Virgil's original poem *The Aeneid*, the score and libretto of *Dido and Aeneas*, and the four modern productions of the opera—in this sense, the productions are viewed as "performance-texts", though I rarely refer to them as such in this thesis, and generally use the term "text" to refer only to the operatic score and libretto. All of these "texts" have different systems of meaning-making, and these are analysed with an approach that draws mainly on narrative and textual analysis, and analysis of signification. Of secondary importance in my methodology are the stylistic and artistic practices and forms, and the "presence-effects" that are embedded within and associated with these productions.

A.5.2.1 Recordings and signification / liveness and presence

As I have mentioned above in the Literature Review, AMPO has been characterised in recent years by a focus on what I call a "presence-ephemerality-liveness nexus". An example of this is to be found in Clemens Risi's 2011 article "Opera in Performance – In Search of New Analytical Approaches":

> Based on the premise that the performative dimension of opera is to be understood as the transitional, ephemeral, and reciprocal process between performing actors/singers and recipients, this article asks how this process can be theorized and analysed.[111]

In such ways as this, ephemerality, presence and liveness have been prominently and commonly linked to notions of the "performative dimension of opera" within AMPO. This thesis offers an alternative to such approaches. I do not engage with the notion of the "performative" in this thesis, because this is a notoriously slippery term that has been used in many different ways by different scholars in various fields more or less associated with opera studies, and it is particularly employed in philosophy-influenced theoretical

[111] Risi, "Opera in Performance – In Search of New Analytical Approaches," 283.

discussions. To focus this thesis on applied analysis rather than theory, I instead prefer to limit discussion here to "performance."

While this "presence-ephemerality-liveness nexus" in opera studies scholarship has done much to invigorate the field of AMPO, I agree with Levin when he argues that this persistent disciplinary focus on—and linking of—these related concepts is problematic, and practically and conceptually limiting.[112] It is practically limiting because it effectively prohibits the researcher from engaging with productions that he or she is unable to see in live performance, and it is conceptually limiting because it both stymies the intellectual and denies the emotional engagement with audio and audiovisual recordings of opera. Christopher Morris supports this view when he claims that opera on video is now so prevalent as to be unable to be dismissed:

> Opera on video now proliferates in so many forms that belittling it as a second-hand imitation, supplement, or record of something that happened elsewhere begins to seem hopelessly inadequate: its here and now is increasingly found in its remediated form.[113]

Of course, the experience of mediatized opera on screen is not the same as that of live performance. The more obvious differences include the effects of various filmic techniques, such as a variety of camera angles and the prevalence of limiting but also detail-friendly close-up shots, audio balance and other audio effects, editing, and so on. However, modern western audiences' high level of experience with filmic techniques can enable a presence-effect, as Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday suggest in *A Dictionary of Media and Communication* when they define the meaning and use of the term "presence" outside of the context of live performance:

> In mediated communication or other mediated experiences such as virtual worlds, a phenomenal experience of "being there" in which, for a user who is highly involved, the medium or technology retreats to transparency and the experience feels (on some

[112] Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 8-9.

[113] Morris, "Digital Diva: Opera on Video," 99.

> level) unmediated, akin to face-to-face interaction. It tends to be associated with relatively experienced users of the medium.[114]

The phenomenon described as "presence" (also see Glossary) thus does not necessarily imply the actual physical co-presence of performer and audience member; however, in referring to a performer's "aura" it usually implies at least the *sensation* of co-presence, even if the performance is experienced via DVD.[115] Audiovisual mediatisation of opera—whether through DVD or live broadcast— offers uniquely profound potential for "close study" and, in the case of DVDs at least, for repeated viewings. It also offers the possibility for scholars to study a much wider range of productions than they otherwise could, and to study opera performance from anywhere in the world. The reader of the scholarly analysis can also become familiar with the object of study because the DVD is accessible. Most crucially, recorded opera is experienced as performance, and here I study it as such.[116]

My treatment of the related issue of "presence" also draws on Levin. Levin[117] and Gundula Kreuzer[118] have warned that emphasis on presence and materiality (see Glossary) in performance scholarship can lead to an unnecessary "either/or-ification" that favours these to the point where signification is discarded or inadequately explored. Instead, they advocate blending the two paradigms. I agree with Levin when he writes (referring to Abbate's "Drastic or Gnostic?" article):

> I would amend Abbate's proposal, suggesting that we allow for live performance *and recordings* to serve as the objects of *all manner of* absorption, critical and experiential.

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[114] Chandler, Daniel, and Rod Munday,"Presence," in *A Dictionary of Media and Communication*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199568758.001.0001/acref-9780199568758-e-2119

[115] This sensation of co-presence is usually discussed as if from the audience-member's perspective. Perhaps for the obvious reason that most AMPO scholars are not professional opera performers, most discussion of presence in the AMPO literature has been limited to the audience-member's experience.

[116] Here I am paraphrasing Fabian: she writes, in relation to sound recordings of musical performances, that "recordings are experienced by listeners as performances, in my experience they may even sound different each time one listens to them, and so I make no apologies for studying them as such." Fabian, *A Musicology of Performance*, 74.

[117] Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 9.

[118] Kreuzer, "*Wagner-Dampf:* Steam in *Der Ring des Nibelungen* and Operatic Production," 207.

> I want to have it both ways: I want to be transported and to think about where we are going.[119]

Focusing opera performance analysis on theoretical issues of materiality and presence is a project that is already being undertaken by other AMPO scholars (mostly in the German language), so I do not do this here. Although I make some mention of presence and materiality, I tend to discuss these less often than I discuss issues of signification, meaning and interpretation. I situate discussions of "presence-effects" largely in terms of how they *contribute* to the construction of meaning.

Due to practical limitations, I was unable to personally attend live performances of all the modern productions of *Dido and Aeneas* analysed in this thesis. However, my attendance at live performances of the Opera Australia production, as well as my use of the archive DVD recording of this production, and my consultation of reviews of individual performances of the other three productions, all significantly mitigate the ontological and phenomenological differences between live performance and recorded performance. In researching and writing this thesis I have drawn on a large variety of different types of materials. I utilise, analyse and provide stills and audiovisual examples from the DVD recordings and live performance. I do not heavily engage with score analysis, partly because this has already been accomplished in detail by other scholars in the case of *Dido and Aeneas*—given the history of opera studies, this is often true for many early operatic texts that are performed in the modern world; and partly because the level of material detail that this more traditional musicological analysis entails can often lead away from a focus on the construction of meaning. When I do discuss musical material, however, I use a mixture of primary and historical sources and modern score and libretto editions, as well as drawing on existing scholarship. (I use standard Helmholtz notation (e.g. middle C = c') when integrating score analysis into my written text.) I also draw on a limited number of critical reviews. In addition, I utilise a great deal of scholarship from a wide variety of disciplines in order to construct and support my arguments about the construction of meaning and signification.

[119] Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 10.

In this thesis, I avoid semiotic analysis in the traditional and formal sense. Instead, I analyse and interpret signification and meaning in modern opera performance in a flexible manner, based on analysis of the dramaturgical situation implied/provided by the text. Apart from critically evaluating the evidence of the various interacting and meaning-creating elements (such as staging, action, libretto, music, lighting, costumes, etc. as appropriate) I also rely on intuition. This has played a crucial role in identifying moments of significance which, in turn provided reasons for the structure of my analysis. Theatre performance scholars Patrice Pavis[120] and Eli Rozik[121] have both acknowledged the validity of intuition as a scholarly tool in the analysis of spoken theatre performance, due to the extreme complexity of the object studied. Rozik has called for a type of theatre performance analysis that combines heuristics with a more empirical and knowledgeable approach: a kind of "learned intuition."[122] I contend that this can only be more appropriate in the case of opera, because of the added complexity of through-composed and highly integrated music. However, I have not based my methodology on Rozik's, which mainly focuses on more formal semiotics. Instead I aim for an approach that focuses on signification as contextualised within the historical and cultural backgrounds of the various issues raised by the operatic text and by the productions. This approach thus acknowledges the role that historical and cultural forces have played (and continue to play) in these operatic productions.

A.5.2.2 "Learned Intuition" and the "Informed Audience Member"

As mentioned in the earliest paragraphs of this thesis, as well as being informed by approaches and knowledge from many different related disciplines, my analytical approach is shaped by the assumption of the persona of the "informed audience member" and the related notion of "learned intuition". These novel concepts require some explanation.

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[120] Patrice Pavis, Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis, ed. Christine Schantz (translator) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 258.

[121] Rozik, *Generating Theater Meaning*, 2,5.

[122] Ibid., 2.

In line with much psychology scholarship, I define intuition as automatic, fast, effortless, unconscious, and based on vast amounts of prior experience.[123] According to recent research by Robin Hogarth, it appears that "intuitions represent learned behaviour";[124] that is, intuition can be shaped by the long-term acquisition of expertise (including tacit learning) in a given area. This expertise can enable experts to make more accurate intuitive decisions in their field than novices can,[125] and the expertise creates a "scaffold" for new information.[126] In a recent study by Mamede and colleagues[127] involving medical students and doctors, it was found that "experts benefit from consciously thinking about complex problems; for novices thinking does not help in those cases." In other words (if it is possible to extrapolate this study to other fields of decision making, as seems likely) the expert's integration and comparison of conscious analysis with intuitive responses can enable them to achieve greater accuracy. Hogarth has likewise argued that "effective decision making requires intuition *and* analysis".[128] These insights from psychological research on decision making are reflected in my methodological aim: my intuitive responses to the four productions are based on expertise; they have then been tested against my conscious analysis.

My adoption of the persona of the "informed audience member" operates in a similar way. This involves the scholar becoming highly informed about the production and the text on which it is based, and then using this extensive background knowledge, together with critical thinking, to shape the approach to the analysis. While I do not focus on phenomenological analysis, adoption of this persona involves an acknowledgement that any audience member— no matter how informed— has a subjective perspective that is not only influenced by background knowledge but also by their personal affective engagement. Throughout this

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[123] Benjamin E. Hilbig, Sabine G. Scholl, and Rüdiger Pohl, "Think or Blink---Is the recognition heuristic an "intuitive" strategy?," *Judgment and Decision Making* 5, no. 4 (2010): 300-309., 300.

[124] Robin M. Hogarth, "Intuition: A Challenge for Psychological Research on Decision Making," *Psychological Inquiry* 21, no. 4, Special Issue on Intuition (2010): 338-353.

[125] Silvia Mamede and others, " Conscious thought beats deliberation without attention in diagnostic decision-making: at least when you are an expert," *Psychological Research* 74, no. 6 (2010): 586-592.

[126] Ibid., 587.

[127] This study examined the differences in accuracy of decision-making (clinical diagnoses) between novices and experts in medicine, and the differences between their employing purely intuitive processes or a combination of conscious analysis with intuition. It seems likely that this effect would be similar in fields other than medicine—such as decision making in the analysis of opera performance—and this be a fruitful avenue for future empirical research.

[128] Hogarth, "Intuition: A Challenge for Psychological Research on Decision Making," 339.

thesis, therefore, I use the insights from background research to guide the focus of my performance analysis, but I also allow for affective responses to question their significance or relevance and to look for alternative explanations. My reflections are thus continually grounded in evidence, both from the productions themselves as experienced, and from scholarly and other sources.

I argue that the structure of the analysis should be broadly informed by the structure of the opera, for the sake of ease of communication and understanding. This approach calls for an iterative and self-reflexive process of critical thinking about the objects of study and ways of investigating them and writing about them. Such a process involves iteration of the cycle of data analysis, formation of theory/theories based on the data, re-analysis of the data, refining of the theory/theories, and so forth. This is most salient in the case of the identified overarching dramatic themes that inform the structure and approach of this thesis to analysing the productions: these were defined following a preliminary period of intense research into the operatic text and productions, but before the process of writing the thesis was fully underway.

I assume this "informed audience member" persona in full acknowledgment that this may not represent the majority of audiences. I also acknowledge that this is well-known by the productions' creative teams; it is unlikely that they create the production with this type of audience member in mind. However, my methodology of performance analysis largely disregards the intentions of the artistic creators (including the composer and librettist, the directors, conductors and performers), focusing instead on the artistic product. To use the language and conceptualisation of Jean-Jacques Nattiez, following that of Jean Molino, I am focusing on the *trace* (the product) and the *esthesic* level (between product and responder) rather than the poietic level (between creator and product).[129] There are some small deviations from this rule: for instance, I have occasionally noted the practical issues behind certain artistic decisions, where these are known to me. However, fundamentally my focus is on analysis of the artistic product rather than the reasons behind its features. Also, it must be

[129] Jean - Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*, trans., Carolyn Abbate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

Also see: Jean Molino, J. A. Underwood, and Craig Ayrey, "Musical Fact and the Semiology of Music," *Music Analysis* 9, no. 2 (1990): 105-111+113-156.

noted that I generally do not consider the programme notes or other information that may accompany the performances, but rather primarily analyse the performances themselves. For the sake of brevity and convenience, I discuss the productions as if they "do" certain things—in particular, as if they themselves construct meaning and explore themes.

A.5.2.3 Necessary Generalisations

In drawing on many of the cultural-studies/anthropological/historical sources I make a number of necessary generalisations about "the modern (international) western world" and its culture. I recognise that there will always be exceptions to any and all cultural generalisations. However, having lived in and been educated in international western culture all my life, I feel qualified to make some observations about it; I have also endeavoured to ensure that such generalisations are supported by qualitative and/or quantitative evidence, and are qualified when and where there are shifts or notable exceptions to stated cultural trends. Without such generalisations it would be almost impossible to make inroads into the kind of contextually informed dramaturgical analysis that I propose here. Such an analysis can yield useful insights into the way opera performance functions, therefore I believe that carefully made cultural generalisations can be acceptable and useful as well as justified.

A.5.3 Structure: Ambiguities and Themes

To begin to show how this posited methodology for the dramaturgical AMPO can work in practice, it is necessary to discuss the major themes that provide much of the structure for the analysis. However, in this particular case, before examining these themes I must first introduce the main ambiguities in *Dido and Aeneas*'s narrative that largely suggest and inspire them. I go into this material in more detail in Chapter 1, which focuses on applying my methodology for AMPO to these specific productions of *Dido*. However, here I provide a general introduction to this process and the structure of my thesis overall.

Ambiguity constitutes one of the most important themes that permeates and informs the four productions. As Abbate and Parker wrote in 1989:

> Analysis of opera often reveals the imperfect, the ambiguous, the illogical. If it shows us how to recognize such qualities, perhaps it can also teach us to face them without uneasiness or fear.[130]

David J. Levin refers to this earlier idea when he argues in *Unsettling Opera* that "it is one of the characteristics of a successful production that it does not simply alert us to but indeed clarifies an opera's specific incongruities, the precise terms of its contradictions."[131] Building on this premise, I have structured my analysis along lines that are inspired by these points of contradiction and the ways in which the productions explore and clarify them.

Andrew Walkling has noted with regards to *Dido and Aeneas* that "virtually no aspect of this extraordinary composition has been left untouched by ambiguity."[132] There are ambiguities associated with the operatic text, including those relating to its structure, its genre, its length and composition, its date of completion, its date of first performance, its cultural context and its political implications, if any existed. There are ambiguities associated with the formal structure of the opera, and there are those associated with the opera's relationship to *The Aeneid*. Most importantly for the purposes of a thematic analysis, there are ambiguities in the opera's narrative. To understand these ambiguities a brief synopsis of the narrative of *Dido and Aeneas* needs to be provided.

Synopsis of *Dido and Aeneas*

The setting is Ancient Carthage: Queen Dido is at her court, feeling distressed. Her lady-in-waiting, Belinda, guesses that Dido is in love with Prince Aeneas of Troy, who is a guest at Carthage. Aeneas appears and courts Dido, and she eventually accepts him. The scene shifts to a cave, in which a Sorceress plots to destroy Dido with the aid of witches, an elf, and magic. The scene shifts again to a hunting party outside of Carthage, in which the royal lovers are entertained by courtiers. A storm gathers and all but Aeneas hurry back to court.

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[130] Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker, "Introduction: On Analyzing Opera," in *Analyzing Opera: Verdi and Wagner*, ed. Carolyn Abbate, and Roger Parker (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 1-24.

[131] Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, xi-xii.

[132] Andrew R. Walkling, "The Masque of Actaeon and the Antimasque of Mercury: Dance, dramatic structure, and tragic exposition in Dido and Aeneas," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 63, no. 2 (2010): 191-242.

Aeneas is confronted by a false Spirit of Mercury, sent by the Sorceress. The Spirit tells Aeneas that Jove (the king of the gods) commands him to leave Carthage to fulfil his destiny in Italy. Aeneas vows to do so, and the scene shifts to the shipyards, where Aeneas's sailors are making ready to depart. Dido enters in anguish, knowing of Aeneas's plans. He reluctantly confronts her and after a brief quarrel, she orders him to depart. After predicting her own death to Belinda, Dido dies, and the Chorus[133] mourn their dead Queen.

Narrative-based Ambiguities

The libretto is very brief and contains many issues that are not fully explained. Curtis Price succinctly described and listed the four major "gaping ambiguities of the libretto" as he perceived them in 1984:

A. The reason for Dido's grief in Act I
B. The uncertain consummation of the couple's love in Act II
C. The enchantresses' unmotivated hatred of the Queen
D. The manner of Dido's death.[134]

These ambiguities leave much potential for different interpretations in performance through each production's unique sign-systems. There is an intertwined relationship between these textual ambiguities and the themes that emerge in performance from the four modern productions. Thus, these four ambiguities figure prominently in my observations and arguments, mainly in chapters 4 to 8, and are frequently referred to as "Price's [gaping] ambiguities". Chapter 4 ("Dido's Dilemma") incorporates ambiguity A, Chapter 5 ("Power") deals with ambiguity C, Chapter 6 ("Gender, Sex, and Sexuality") with B, and Chapter 8 ("Dido's Death") with D. While the themes of gender, magic, religion and fate do not directly intersect with Price's points of ambiguity, they are nonetheless important, if more diffusely situated, narrative elements in the operatic text and in all four modern productions. These themes are covered in Chapter 6 ("Gender, Sex, and Sexuality") and Chapter 7 ("The Supernatural").

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[133] In this thesis, the uppercase "C" for "Chorus" refers to the group of singers, while the lowercase "c" for "chorus" refers to the musical form.

[134] Curtis Alexander Price, *Henry Purcell and the London Stage* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 230.

Some discussion of the framework for my examination of such prominent themes and discourses seems relevant here. Of the performance analysis chapters, Chapters 5, 6 and 7 in particular draw from a broader range of sources with which to inform its discussion of their themes. These sources add to my usual toolkit of approaches and knowledge gleaned from musicology, theatre studies and performance studies; and they include cultural history and anthropology, religious studies including comparative religion and studies of mythology, and psychology.

My investigation of power relations in *Dido and Aeneas* and their varied expression in the modern productions intersects with many of the other issues discussed in various chapters of this thesis. This is perhaps not surprising, as considerations of power affect many, if not all, aspects of human life. However, I address power primarily in a dedicated chapter (Chapter 5). This chapter is concerned with the analysis of types of power as signified in the four productions: class, psychological and interpersonal power, heteronormativity and patriarchy or the subversions thereof, supernatural power and economic and political power. These structures of class and power are differently inflected by the three main historical periods that influence these four productions: the ancient Graeco-Roman classical world in which the opera's narrative is set; the English upper-middle and upper-class society of the Restoration, which profoundly influenced Purcell and Tate's creation of the opera; and today's post-industrial, globalised and international western culture, within which all four productions were created and performed. The layering of these three cultures, and the three levels or types of "texts" that respectively correspond to them (*The Aeneid*, *Dido and Aeneas* and the four modern productions) offers a fascinating interplay between different culturally-inflected structures of power. My analysis excavates these different layers and structures as they are filtered through the modern productions, which are the primary objects of study.

My discussion of gender, sex and sexuality in Chapter 6 takes as a basic starting-point Judith Butler's well-known *Gender Trouble* argument that the heteronormative correlation between sex, gender and sexuality is not a fixed given but rather a continually reiterated "performance" of sorts, that reasserts and normalises particular correlations.[135] Although Butler was somewhat equivocal (at least in *Gender Trouble*) about whether or not this

[135] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

performativity was *theatrical* in nature, this argument and those that followed it have opened up the understanding of gender since the early 1990s in terms of western society and everyday life, and have been particularly fruitful in terms of theatre theory and performance. The validity of Butler's overall argument becomes particularly clear when traditional heteronormative practices of signification (in today's everyday life, as well as in theatrical/ operatic performance) are contrasted with the actual historical performance practices and conventions of early opera. Prior to the late eighteenth century, western opera tended to feature a performance culture in which vocal range and timbre, as well as costuming and casting were all highly flexible in terms of gender expression and signification. The post-Butlerian conception of fluidity in enactment and signification of gender and sexuality in the more socially/politically progressive elements of today's western society and operatic performance therefore encounters points of intersection and agreement with the aims of operatic HIP. The four modern productions of *Dido* bear this out in interesting ways, as I will show.

My discussion of the supernatural in Chapter 7 particularly focuses on how notions of fate can be signified in opera performance through the reiteration of musical and theatrical motifs, and the fulfilment of expectations that have been established earlier in the performance. I also look at other motifs in the modern productions that link to issues associated with the hegemonic politics of Restoration England and its perspectives on Catholicism and its supposed link with witchcraft/magic. I examine such issues in terms of how magic and the supernatural can be signified in opera performance using techniques that play with convention (the expected) and device (the unexpected), creating meaning and affective experiences for the audience.

The final performance analysis chapter, dealing with Dido's death, involves discussion of issues associated with different types of self-directed death—including direct and indirect suicide—and their cultural treatment in the different historical settings associated with *Dido and Aeneas* and these four productions. I link this discussion with analysis of the different ways in which Dido's death is signified in these productions; in particular relating back to their solutions to Price's ambiguity, or lingering question, about the *cause* of Dido's death as it is depicted in the operatic text.

Non-narrative-based Ambiguities

The above themes are mostly grounded in the operatic text's narrative. However, the four modern productions also explore other issues that are not narrative-based. Non-narrative themes are primarily concerned with self-reflexive artistic issues, such as performance style, structure, and content. Most importantly in the case of *Dido*, they focus on the relationship between historical and modern performance practices, and the ideologies and styles of performance behind the multiple influencing factors of *Werktreue*, HIP and PDT. Because the music for the Prologue does not exist today but is assumed to have existed in Purcell's time, the Prologue is associated strongly with the early history of the opera. While the opera's early history is examined in Chapter 2, the modern productions' Prologues and their relationships to the opera's early history are analysed in Chapter 3.

Many of the themes addressed in this thesis, both narrative- and non-narrative-based, are highly relevant to modern western society. However, at the same time, many points of their meaning(s) and/or style(s) also intersect with *Dido*'s early history. I show how in these modern productions, while the past is always seen from the perspective of the present, the cultural and artistic past and present coalesce in intriguing ways.

In-depth investigation of the genesis and early history of *Dido and Aeneas* is necessary in this thesis for two main reasons. Firstly, it is necessary because many of the themes and styles explored in the modern productions are associated with this early history. In the case of *Dido and Aeneas* in particular, its early history has become part of its fascination for the modern world. In the case of early opera more generally, the almost ubiquitous presence of HIP in the musical elements of modern performance means that the AMPO scholar's understanding of the work's early history is necessary for a thorough analysis of the performance. Secondly, early operas were often repeatedly revised and reworked by their creators according to the needs of different productions, and the "original" autograph scores and manuscripts have often been lost; this is particularly true in the case of *Dido and Aeneas*. Thus, the traditional or Canonic (see Glossary) concept of "the work", as Lydia Goehr has explained, is all but invalid in the case of music composed before around 1800.[136] The lingering influence of the Canonic traditions and those of HIP in the modern performance of early opera mean that the

[136] Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*.

operatic text and its historical genesis need to be addressed, in order for scholarly AMPO to be methodologically thorough.

The chapter structure of this thesis broadly follows a chronological progression with two levels. The first level is concerned with real historical time. Chapter 2 is primarily focused on the late seventeenth century, and discusses the three or four earliest performances of *Dido and Aeneas*, in chronological order. Chapters 3 to 8, which I call the "performance analysis chapters", leap in time to today's western world, and demonstrate my analysis of the four modern productions. These are analysed in order of their date of performance: I consistently analyse the relevant sections of the Waltz (2005), then the LAF (2008), then the ROH (early 2009), then the OA (mid-2009). Each performance analysis chapter features a "microcosm" of chronological progression: in each, I discuss the relevant section and theme of the operatic text, then the historical and cultural context influencing that section/theme, and then integrate this information into my analysis of that relevant section/theme as it pertains to each of the four modern productions. In this way, I am able to directly compare the productions' different approaches to the same material.

The second chronological level in this thesis is a progression through the operatic text and its temporal linearity in performance. This level is to be found in the performance analysis chapters. Chapter 3 is concerned with the Prologue (which is only performed in two of the four modern productions, so this chapter is relatively short). Chapter 4 then corresponds to Act I of the opera, and Chapters 5 and 6 correspond mainly to Act II; while Chapter 7 is largely concerned with Act III Scene 1 and Chapter 8 with Act III Scene 2. These delineations are not clear-cut; rather, the chapters feature much cross-referencing. This is necessary due to the interlinked nature of the themes and their artistic expression. However, overall this thesis features a clear linear progression through *Dido and Aeneas*, both as an operatic text and in performance.

The General Conclusions then draw together many of my arguments and observations about the modern productions and their explored themes, and about the nature of analysing early opera performance, and the state and probable future of this discipline. The kind of methodology for AMPO that I demonstrate in this thesis can enable scholars to perceive some of the general directions in which modern performances of opera are heading. Through

directly comparing different performed interpretations, this methodology allows us to gain deeper insights into the ways in which performance can emphasise certain elements of a operatic text and de-emphasise and even reinvent others, creating particular interpretations that have significance for the modern western world.

A.6 Conclusions

This thesis therefore aims to make a significant scholarly contribution to the emerging field of AMPO. It both posits and embodies a dramaturgical methodology for single-author, large-scale, interdisciplinary, integrated and comparative analysis of multiple modern productions of a single opera, focusing on their different constructions of meaning as they relate to the operatic text. This thesis argues for the existence of specific dramatic themes that arise from the selected four productions: themes that encompass the "timeless" and the historically contingent; the artistic and cultural; the philosophical and ideological; the musical, theatrical, material and meaningful. It also argues for the specific way in which I analyse those themes.

In the next chapter, I analyse *Dido and Aeneas*, its source material, and these four modern productions in greater detail. I begin to discuss how they construct signification, how they interrelate, and how they create different meanings and interpretation. I begin to show how the performances elucidate and embody ambiguity in their exploration of "timeless" themes, and yet how my posited methodology of analysis can address this in ways that are not ambiguous; ways that are complex, but clear.

1 Applying the Methodology to *Dido and Aeneas*

In this chapter I show how my methodology for analysis of the modern performance of early opera may unfold, by introducing in greater detail the material resources (textual objects of study) and the structure of the analysis. I sketch *Dido and Aeneas*'s major structural, musical, and narrative features and begin to examine how it relates to its basis, Book IV of Virgil's *The Aeneid*, and how they each relate to the historical and political contexts of the times and places of their creation. I discuss in more detail the particular intertextual and "intercontextual" relationship between *The Aeneid*, *Dido and Aeneas* and the four modern productions, and my methodology for AMPO as it relates to these.

1.1 Why select this opera and these productions?

Dido and Aeneas is a convenient opera as a focus for a large-scale, in-depth analysis of the modern performance of opera such as this, for several reasons. Unlike many operas, it is:

- In English, which minimizes challenges associated with translation in an English-language study such as this;
- Short in length, often taking only around 1 hour to perform, which minimizes the challenges associated with a lengthy score and performance time;
- Popular and well-known among scholarly communities and the public, thereby making a discussion of it accessible for a broad readership;
- Regularly performed by opera companies all over the world, which means that there is little difficulty in selecting and accessing recent productions of it.

Research for this thesis commenced in the year 2009, which was the 350th anniversary of Purcell's birth, so that year saw many productions of *Dido and Aeneas* and much scholarly and critical activity surrounding Purcell's work in general. This created a wealth of up-to-date material with which to conduct the research.

The four modern productions (Waltz, LAF, ROH and OA) were chosen for a number of reasons:

- all four were easily accessible (via commercially released DVD recording or live performance);
- all four were created during or after 2004, and were performed and recorded since then;
- all four were performed and recorded in or before the year in which the research commenced (2009);
- all are by companies based in "western" countries: Germany, France, the UK and Australia;
- these countries represent a diverse range of individual cultures within "western" culture.

There are many different points of similarity and difference between the four modern productions of *Dido and Aeneas*, which become clear as my analysis progresses. Overall, the similarities are more pronounced and numerous than the differences, which is to be expected, given that they are all interpretations of the same operatic text and were created and performed within a relatively short space of time by internationally renowned western companies and in major metropolitan locations. Some similarities are so striking as to suggest certain emerging trends in terms of visual, theatrical and musical tropes in the performance of *Dido*. The similarities and differences allow for interesting comparisons to be made that illuminate the creative possibilities offered by the operatic text.

As well as sometimes appearing to refer to each other, the four modern productions make reference to *The Aeneid* and *Dido and Aeneas* (the operatic text), and to the historical contexts surrounding the geneses of these older texts. The "timeless" themes that are explored in these productions—and which I examine in this thesis—are therefore signified through a complex intertextual web of meaning-making. One of my main aims in this thesis is to tease this web apart and to show how it functions. To begin to do this, and to begin to understand this intertextual web, it is first necessary to examine the "texts" involved. A note of clarification: I do consider the four modern productions to be "texts" in the sense that they are "performance-texts", and I refer to them as such in the following section, but I typically do not describe them as such in this thesis, instead usually using this term to refer to score and

libretto only, to avoid confusion. Before discussing the productions however, I here examine *The Aeneid* and more importantly the operatic text *Dido and Aeneas*. I investigate all of these various types of "texts" in chronological order of their creation, because each text can only refer to the others that are already in existence.

1.2 The Aeneid

Aeneidos (its original title) was written in Latin by Publius Vergilius Maro (born 70 BC), commonly known as Virgil, between 29 BC and his death in 19 BC. It was written as an epic heroic poem in twelve books, in the tradition of Homer's much-admired *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, but adapted to the culture and language of Ancient Rome rather than of Greece. In this thesis I use the 1999 Harvard edition by H. Rushton Fairclough, for its presentation of both the original Latin and the modern English prose translation,[1] and the acclaimed verse translation by Allen Mandelbaum.[2] *The Aeneid* is set a few years after the fall of Troy (an event that was traditionally thought to occur in 1184 BC[3]) and it is an account of the legend of the Trojan prince Aeneas, son of Venus, who was destined by fate and the will of Jupiter to reach Italy with his retinue of Trojans and found what would become the Roman Empire. The most famous of the casualties of Aeneas's grand destiny is Queen Dido, a character based loosely on a real historical ruler of the ancient city of Carthage; the real Dido lived hundreds of years after the sack of Troy.[4] Like the real Dido, Virgil's Dido is sworn to chastity after the murder of her husband. However, in Virgil's fictionalised account in book IV of *The Aeneid*, the goddesses Venus and Juno work against Jupiter to bring Aeneas and Dido together, and Venus causes Dido to fall passionately in love with the Trojan. Jupiter then sends the messenger god Mercury to order Aeneas away to continue his quest, and Aeneas obeys. Dido kills herself with Aeneas's sword in what seems to be a frenzy of thwarted passion, anger,

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[1] Virgil (Publius Vergilius Maro), *Virgil: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-VI*, trans., H. Rushton Fairclough and G. P. Goold (Cambridge, Mass., London, UK: Harvard University Press, 1999).

[2] Publius Vergilius Maro (Virgil), "The Aeneid of Virgil: A Verse Translation," trans., edited and translated by Allen Mandelbaum (New York, Toronto, London, Sydney, Auckland: Bantam Books, 1981).

[3]

[4] Janet Schmalfeldt, "In Search of Dido," *Journal of Musicology* 18, no. 4 (2001): 584-615.

shame and grief. This narrative takes up some of Book I and all of Book IV of *The Aeneid*, and for centuries has been the most well-known and frequently adapted section of the epic.[5]

1.3 *Dido and Aeneas*

Today, Purcell and Tate's opera *Dido and Aeneas* is arguably the most famous adaptation of *The Aeneid*.[6] It is a concise version of Book IV that omits and/or changes many narrative elements. Most notably it replaces the interference of the gods with that of a malevolent Sorceress and her coven of witches; and it replaces the real Mercury with a false one. *Dido and Aeneas* was written and composed in London in the 1680s, though the exact dates of its completion and first performance remain unknown, as well as most other information on its genesis. I refer to *Dido and Aeneas* in this thesis as an opera, which is how it is generally considered in the literature, though some scholars argue that it better resembles a masque, and its genre has been the subject of much debate.[7] Although it takes inspiration from Stuart court masques[8] as well as French overtures and music-theatre,[9] *Dido and Aeneas* is most similar to its forebear and model, John Blow's *Venus and Adonis*, which was performed in 1683 at the court of King Charles II.[10] Unlike the well-established John Blow (1649–1708)[11] and the Irish-born poet Nahum Tate (1652–1715), Henry Purcell (1659–1695) was a young man in the 1680s, still developing his craft and his fame as a composer.[12] Tate had written and premiered a play based on the Aeneas and Dido story in 1678, titled *Brutus of Alba*, or, *The*

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[5] For detailed information on many of these adaptations, see: Michael Burden, ed. *A Woman Scorn'd: Responses to the Dido Myth* (London: Faber and Faber, 1998).

[6] Pietro Metastasio's libretto *Didone abbandonata* was set to music many times during the eighteenth century by different composers, but none of these are usually performed today; Hector Berlioz's 1858 opera *Les Troyens* is more famous, but this is also only infrequently performed.

[7] Walkling, "The Masque of Actaeon and the Antimasque of Mercury," 191-192.

[8] Harris, *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas*, 7-8.

[9] Curtis Price, "Dido and Aeneas," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2014). http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/O006883 (accessed 25 March 2014).

[10] Curtis Price, "Venus and Adonis (i)", Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/O905445 (accessed 30 June 2010).

[11] Bruce Wood, "Blow, John," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2014). http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/03306 (accessed 25 March 2014).

[12] Price, "Dido and Aeneas".

Enchanted Lovers, which he adapted to become the libretto for *Dido and Aeneas*.[13] The opera seems to have been little-known in its own time,[14] but it has achieved great popularity since its staged performance at the bicentenary of Purcell's death in 1895,[15] and is now frequently performed worldwide.

1.3.1 Textual sources for *Dido and Aeneas*

The association of *Dido and Aeneas* with Josias Priest's elite girls' boarding school in Chelsea near London has been widely known by scholars and by the opera-going public for many years. It has often been assumed that Purcell and Tate wrote the opera for this school, specifically for a production thought to have taken place in spring 1689. However, recent scholarship shows that it is unlikely that *Dido* was written for the school, and the performance date has been moved to approximately one year earlier.[16] This school production has provided us with the earliest extant documentation of the opera: a cheaply produced printed libretto, which was probably distributed to parents and others in the Chelsea school audience, and is now preserved at the Royal College of Music. I base my analysis primarily on the scaled-down facsimile of this libretto, which is published in the Purcell Society edition of the score.[17] This "Chelsea libretto" is full of typographical and other errors, some of which are obvious within their own context and others that are only noticeable or confirmable when compared to later sources. Despite its errors, however, the Chelsea libretto remains one of the two main primary sources for *Dido and Aeneas* upon which modern editions are based.

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Harris, *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas*, 123, 151-122.

[16] Bryan White, "Letter from Aleppo: Dating the Chelsea School Performance of Dido and Aeneas," *Early Music* 37, (2009): 417-428.

[17] Nahum Tate, "An Opera Perform'd at Mr. Josias Priest's Boarding-School at Chelsey. By Young Gentlewomen. [Libretto facsimile]," in *The Works of Henry Purcell: Volume 3. Dido and Aeneas.*, ed. Margaret Laurie (Borough Green, Sevenoaks, Kent: Novello, 1979 [orig. c.1688]), xiii - xx.

The other main source is known as the "Tenbury manuscript" (MS) and is the earliest extant full score of the opera.[18] It seems to have been copied around 1775 from a source written around 1704,[19] and is the most frequently-used reference source for modern score editions. There are other textual and musical sources, such as the 1700 playbook, the "Ohki" and "Tatton Park" manuscripts and the Academy of Ancient Music parts, but modern editions usually draw from these to a lesser extent than they do from the Chelsea libretto and the Tenbury MS.[20]

In this thesis, I primarily base my analysis on the Margaret Laurie's 1979 Purcell Society edition of the score (with continuo realisation by Thurston Dart), in the form in which it appears as the centrepiece of Price's 1986 Norton critical edition.[21] The Laurie/Dart edition of the score is arguably the standard scholarly version, and Price's version of it is useful for scanned score examples, due to its more compact formatting. When referring to music adapted for the Waltz production, which features a good deal of "reconstruction", I generally refer to the company's archive copy of the score, generously made available to me by Sasha Waltz and Guests. This score is largely based upon Clifford Bartlett's 1995 edition of *Dido and Aeneas*, published by King's Music.[22]

Modern editions of *Dido* such as the above (with the exception of the Waltz archive score) display a very high degree of similarity. This makes the assumption of the existence of a single modern "operatic text" of *Dido and Aeneas* in some sense possible. These modern editions reveal a musical score for string orchestra with continuo, with fluid, through-composed arioso, some arias, flexible, speech-like rhythm and melody for vocal lines (particularly in the recitative and arioso sections), prolific use of more rhythmically and

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[18] For a comprehensive explanation of the significance of the Tenbury MS and its relationship to the Chelsea libretto and other textual sources for *Dido and Aeneas*, see: Harris, *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas*, 45-68.

[19] Purcell, Tate, and Harris, Henry Purcell: *Dido and Aeneas*, Opera, vi.

Harris, *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas*, (1990), 1948.

[20] Harris, *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas*, 45-48.

[21] I generally disregard the "reconstructed" end of Act II by Nicholas Tilmouth, which also features separately in the Norton edition, as it is not performed in any of the four modern productions.

[22] Henry Purcell, Nahum Tate, and Attilio Cremonesi, *Dido and Aeneas: Choreographic Opera [unpublished archive score arrangement, based on King's Music score edition]*, ed. Clifford Bartlett (Berlin (Redcroft, Bank's End, Wyton, Huntingdon): Sasha Waltz and Guests (King's Music), 2005 (orig. publ. 1995)).

structurally formalised dances and choruses, and a characteristic use of *chaconne*-like ground bass.

The Tenbury MS (and thus those modern editions that are primarily based upon it) omits many sections that are included in the Chelsea libretto. The "omissions" include dance music throughout the opera, a section at the end of Act II for the witches, and most notably, a lengthy Prologue with mythical and pastoral scenes. Below I have simplified Andrew Walkling's recent tabulation of the dances from the Chelsea libretto, citing only the dances for which no independent musical setting exists,[23] and combined this table with general information regarding the other missing sections. As I do throughout this thesis, when using direct quotations from the historical text I have preserved the original spelling and presentation as far as possible, except for modernising "ſ" to "s". ("Dido Vemon" is an obvious Chelsea libretto error, and should read "Dido's Women"). The colours reflect the similarities between sections.

[23] Walkling, "The Masque of Actaeon and the Antimasque of Mercury," 201.

Figure 0-1: "Missing" sections in *Dido and Aeneas*

Act/Scene	Title of "missing" section	How it is usually performed today (if it is performed at all)
Prologue	[A number of different sections: see Appendix for a facsimile of the Chelsea libretto's Prologue]	Not usually performed—music lost, except for (possibly) the Overture
I / 1	*Dance this Cho./The Baske*	Danced during the chorus "Fear No Danger" or to an instrumental repeat of it
I / 2	*A Dance Gittars Chacony*	Improvised
II / 1	*Enter 2 Drunken Saylors, A Dance*	Danced during the Witches' duet "But Ere We This Perform"
II / 2	*Gitter Ground a Dance*	Improvised
II / 2	*A Dance to Entertain* Æneas, *by* Dido *Vemon*	Danced during the ritornello of preceding aria "Oft She Visits"
II / 2	Chorus (Witches): "Then Since our Charmes have Sped"	Not usually performed—music lost
II / 2	*The Groves Dance*	Not usually performed—music lost
III / 2	*Cupids Dance*	Danced during the chorus "With Drooping Wings" or to an instrumental repeat of it

Scholarly consensus is that the music for these "missing" sections was probably composed and later lost, with the exception perhaps of a few of the dance sections which may have been instrumental repeats or improvised (as is reflected here in the information on how they are often performed today). These "missing" sections—notably the Act II Scene 2 ending—have sometimes been "reconstructed" in various ways by musicologists and composers in recent decades. This reflects a widespread enthusiasm in WAM to rediscover an idealised "original version".[24] Of the four modern productions studied here, the Waltz production is an extreme example of this trend for reconstruction, while the LAF is a less extreme example, as it has a type of Prologue and it features some of the guitar solo dances, but it does not feature the ending to Act II. If *Dido and Aeneas* were performed with all "missing" sections reconstituted, it would be a full evening's entertainment. However, most performances of *Dido* over the last hundred years have employed scores based on the Tenbury MS, thereby omitting these added/ missing sections. These performances usually run for just under one hour and often constitute one half of a double-bill.

1.3.2 Structure of *Dido and Aeneas*

Because of its complex early history and multiple sources, the general structure of *Dido and Aeneas* is open to some debate. Though I include the full facsimile text of the Prologue in the Appendix, a little more clarification and analysis of the Prologue's content is in order here. As it appears in the Chelsea libretto, the Prologue has two main scenes. Scene 1 is set at sea, and features the rise of Phoebus in his chariot over the sea, representing the dawn. Nereids (sea demigoddesses) and later Tritons (sea demigods) play in the water. The goddess of love, sex and beauty, Venus, is "born", descending from heaven in her chariot surrounded by cupids. She is hailed by Phoebus as "the New rising Star of the Ocean". Phoebus prophesises harm to thousands of "Gods and Men" from her charms (or, in a reading of the metaphor: from the problems associated with love). The Chorus of Tritons and Nereids all hail Phoebus and

[24] This appears to be related to the *Werktreue* paradigm, which I discussed in the Introduction and revisit in the Glossary.

Venus, saying that he blesses the day and she the night (or, in a reading of the metaphor: that sunlight makes day-time pleasant, while sex and love make night-time pleasant).

There is a brief transition vignette, with dialogue between Venus and the spirit of Spring, accompanied by her nymphs, who welcomes the gods to the shore before they exit. Scene 2 is set in a Grove, and features a dance by Spring and the nymphs, then an Arcadian pastoral scene of shepherds and shepherdesses, who dance and celebrate the bounty of Spring and the sun (Phoebus). The two halves of the Prologue (Venus' birth at sea and the Arcadian celebration of Spring) are thus unified by the presence and/or mention of the sun god Phoebus, but are also divided by changes in both characters and setting. When compared with the ways in which Purcell sets the libretto in the opera proper, my own analysis reveals that the Prologue is likely to have featured musical forms that were similar to those in the opera proper: that is, a mix of recitative and arioso, choruses, dances, arias (in the Prologue, for Phoebus and possibly for Venus) duets (in the Prologue, for the Shepherdesses), and a chorus and dance for the act finale. There is a consensus in the literature that the Prologue had its own separate Overture, probably a two-part French-style one similar to the Overture for the opera proper.

The opera proper is generally considered to have six scenes. However, there is some uncertainty surrounding the original structure: *Dido and Aeneas* is divided up into three acts in two main alternative ways. The early musical score sources all feature a scene structure that Harris characterises as "3+1+2" (that is, Act I Scenes 1, 2 and 3 + Act II Scene 1 + Act III Scenes 1 and 2) rather than the Chelsea libretto's "2+2+2" (that is, Act I Scenes 1 and 2 + Act II Scenes 1 and 2 + Act III Scenes 1 and 2).[25] The latter has generally become standard practice in modern editions, so I refer to the 2+2+2 structure in this thesis for the sake of simplicity. As Margaret Laurie[26] and Ellen Harris[27] have noted, the harmonic structure of the opera corresponds to its formal and dramatic structure, with each major section or setting

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[25] Harris, *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas*, 47.

[26] Margaret Laurie, "Allegory, Sources, and Early Performance History," in *Henry Purcell: Dido and Aeneas: An Opera. An Authoritative Score, Historical Background, A Critical Edition of the Libretto, Criticism and Analysis, Production and Interpretation.*, ed. Curtis Price, Norton Critical Scores (London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1986), 42-59,53.

[27] Harris, *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas*, 69-74 and 79.

being characterised by its own tonal centre, with modulations to the parallel or relative major/minor:

Figure 0-2: Sections and Keys in *Dido and Aeneas*[28]

Act/Scene	Main key(s)
I / 1	C minor
I / 2	C Major
II / 1	F minor to F Major
II / 2	D minor to D Major
III / 1	B*b* Major
III / 2	G minor

It is possible that the Prologue's Overture survives: Margaret Laurie has suggested that it may be the G minor "Overture in Mr P Opera" that is countersigned "Mr H. Purcell" and included in MS 1172.[29] Laurie has argued that its style dates it to Purcell's early years, probably in the 1680s, and its key of G minor would round out the progression of *Dido and Aeneas*'s entire large-scale key structure. This tonal schema would assume that the Prologue's main music would have been at least partly set in the bright and violin-friendly key of G major.[30] It is probable that the entire first half of the Prologue, portraying the birth of Venus on the ocean, would have been set in G minor, while the second part, set in the Arcadian countryside near the ocean shore, would have constituted the G major section. This tonal change would have reflected the change of scene. Overall, despite the great deal of uncertainty surrounding its

[28] Ibid., 79.

[29] Laurie, "Henry Purcell: Dido and Aeneas. An Opera. An Authoritative Score," 53.

[30] Ibid.

original content and structure, *Dido and Aeneas*'s structure appears to be quite formally designed.

A little more clarification of the opera proper's content and its relationship to the formal structure seems to be in order here. As it appears in the Chelsea libretto and in modern editions, the opera proper is set in and around Dido's court at Carthage. Following the surviving Overture, Act I is set in the court (this is not explicitly indicated but is clearly implied), and its dramatic subject matter is that of Dido's resistance to Aeneas's courtship and her eventual acceptance of it. To a modern reader it appears to have only one scene, but following French seventeenth-century tradition, the entrance of Aeneas and his retinue halfway through this act arguably constitutes the beginning of a second scene, or a second "scene designation" or French scene. [31] Acts II and III have more obvious divisions of cast, setting and music than Act I. Act II Scene 1 is set in a Cave, in which the witches plot Dido's demise and magically create a storm to disrupt Dido's hunting party. Act II Scene 2 is the pivotal "Grove Scene", in which Dido's party is dispersed by the storm, and Aeneas is left alone to be confronted with the false Spirit of Mercury who tells him to leave Dido (in the Chelsea libretto, the act ends with the witches' gleeful celebration—as discussed, this music is missing). Act III Scene 1 is set at "the Ships" and features Aeneas's Sailors preparing to leave Carthage. The witches[32] then celebrate their victory (for the second time, if the ending to Act II has been included). Act III Scene 2 depicts the lovers' quarrel, Aeneas's parting and Dido's death. It may be set in the same location as Act III Scene 1, or alternatively it can be set in the court.[33] In a manner similar to the first act, this final scene is only indicated by the entrance of Dido and her retinue. Dido's final recitative and ground-bass aria "Thy hand, Belinda…When I Am Laid in Earth" is the counterpart to her Act I Scene 1 ground bass aria "Ah, Belinda… Peace and I Are Strangers Grown," reflecting her progression across the narrative arc of the opera from indecisive distress, through brief happiness to decisive despair.

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[31] Walkling, "The Masque of Actaeon and the Antimasque of Mercury," (2010).

[32] In this thesis, when discussing the antagonists as a group (including the Sorcerer/ess and chorus, etc.) I use the term "witches" with a lower-case "w", and when discussing only the Sorcerer/ess's two main henchwomen/men—the First and Second Witches—I use an upper-case "W".

[33] Roger Savage, and Tilmouth, Michael, "Producing *Dido and Aeneas*," in *Henry Purcell: Dido and Aeneas: An Opera*, ed. Curtis Alexander Price (London: Norton, 1986), 255-277,266-267.

1.4 The Four Recent Productions

The four modern productions have many elements in common, yet they also encompass a range of different approaches to *Dido and Aeneas*. Most strikingly, the Waltz production is based largely on the Chelsea libretto: alone among the four, it features a "reconstruction" of the Chelsea libretto's Prologue, as well as of its missing dances and the ending to Act II. Similarly, the LAF production also features a Prologue, but this one has only minimal musical accompaniment and does not follow the Chelsea libretto; rather, it is a spoken performance of three pieces of poetry, and is primarily performed by a solo actor. On the other hand, the ROH and OA productions essentially follow what has become the standard format for presentation of *Dido and Aeneas*, with score/ libretto editions that mainly draw from the Tenbury MS. All four productions feature the fidelity dichotomy, with theatrical elements that primarily reflect the theatrical styles and concerns of today's world, and musical elements that primarily reflect what is currently believed to be the styles of the late seventeenth-century. In addition, all four of the modern productions feature *mise-en-scène* that reflects a mix of the ancient classical world, the world of late seventeenth-century England, and today's international western culture. All four of these productions therefore feature settings that are non-literal and that do not represent any one specific recognisable place or time. This allows them to simultaneously reference the many different layers of cultural context, history and meaning associated with *Dido and Aeneas*.

All four productions are associated with major opera houses and long-established companies, though the Waltz and the LAF are led more by smaller companies (Sasha Waltz and Guests and Les Arts Florissants), while the ROH and OA productions are led more by the major ones (the Royal Opera and Ballet, and Opera Australia) and are more strongly associated with their respective opera houses (the Royal Opera House and the Sydney Opera House). I have reflected this issue in my chosen abbreviations for the four productions. The OA and particularly the ROH are also generally more conservative than the LAF and Waltz productions, as I will show. There are many striking similarities between motifs and attributes in various pairings of the four productions, which suggest the existence of an evolving contemporary performance tradition for *Dido and Aeneas*. One of the most notable of these has a wide-ranging influence: both the Waltz and ROH productions are directed by

choreographers (Sasha Waltz and Wayne McGregor, respectively) and involve dance companies (Sasha Waltz and Guests and the Royal Ballet). This means that dance plays an important role in these two productions, and the choreographer-as-director and the important role of dance both reflect growing trends in modern opera performance in general.

1.5 Structure of Analysis: These specific material resources

As explained in the Introduction, I investigate these four productions primarily in terms of their constructions of meaning as they relate to certain themes, and the themes explored in these four productions all express and/or address ambiguity. They are largely associated with narrative and with the differences between *Dido and Aeneas* and *The Aeneid*, but they are also to a lesser extent linked with stylistic and artistic issues, and with attitudes towards the cultural and artistic past. I focus on certain themes not only because they are key concerns of the four productions, but also as a way to structure the performance analysis (Chapters 3–8). Each chapter investigates a particular theme, and shows how each of the four productions addresses it. As discussed, for the most part, the themes I have chosen tie in with the chronological order of the sections in the operatic text.

In each of the performance analysis chapters, I first examine the relevant section of the operatic text, and how the stated theme relates to it, then I analyse each of the modern productions' interpretations of it in turn. In this way, the productions are able to be directly compared; I move through all four at once, as it were. I consistently follow the productions' chronological order of performance in each chapter, though the amount of attention paid to each production (and each theme, for that matter) varies slightly according to the complexity of the details discussed. The structure of my analysis is outlined in the diagram below:

Figure 0-3: Structure of Analysis

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td><td colspan="6">Dido and Aeneas (Operatic Text)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td><td>Prologue</td><td>Act I</td><td>Act II Scene 1</td><td>Act II Scene 2</td><td>Act III Scene 1</td><td>Act III Scene 2</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Performance analysis</td><td>Chapter 3
"Prologue"</td><td>Waltz
LAF</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Chapter 4
"Dido's Dilemma"</td><td></td><td>Waltz
LAF
ROH
OA</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Chapter 5
"Power"</td><td></td><td colspan="2">Waltz
LAF
ROH
OA</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Chapter 6
"Gender, Sex and Sexuality"</td><td></td><td></td><td colspan="2">Waltz
LAF
ROH
OA</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

	Chapter 7 "The Supernatural"				Waltz LAF ROH OA		
	Chapter 8 "Dido's Death"						Waltz LAF ROH OA

The correspondence of the sections of the operatic text with the themes is closest for the Prologue, Act I ("Dido's Dilemma") and Act III Scene 2 ("Dido's Death"). The latter two are grounded in narrative-based issues and the intertextual relationship between *Dido and Aeneas* and *The Aeneid*. I have classified the former simply as "Prologue", due to the very different approaches of the Waltz and LAF productions and the absence of prologues in the other two productions, and because the primary theme explored here (that is, in this section of the productions and also this section of the thesis) is just that: the theme of (re-)constructing a Prologue for *Dido and Aeneas*. The three remaining middle chapters of the performance analysis—"Power", "Gender, Sex and Sexuality" and "The Supernatural"—are concerned with both narrative- and non-narrative-based issues. These chapters correspond in a looser manner to Act II Scene 1, Act II Scene 2 and Act III Scene 1 respectively.

The four modern productions exhibit many similarities that point to the presence of an evolving modern performance tradition. Some of their similarities align them in pairs rather than as a group. The capacity for my analytical approach of AMPO to directly compare multiple modern productions of the same opera is particularly useful in this regard, as it allows the scholar to trace the complex relationships of similarity and difference between the interpretations. This allows the methodology to open up illuminating insights into the interpretative possibilities of *Dido and Aeneas* as an operatic text.

2 The Genesis of *Dido and Aeneas*

In this chapter, I give an overview of the early decades of Purcell and Tate's *Dido and Aeneas*. Much of the scholarly literature on *Dido and Aeneas* is concerned with its genesis, and much of this is composed of a large amount of interpretation and speculation based on meagre evidence. Consequently— if paradoxically— this means that for modern performance, *Dido and Aeneas* is all the more attractive. The combination of few hard facts and a diverse range of interpretations means that there are many different ways to perform *Dido and Aeneas*. Modern productions can emphasise those elements that are more relevant to the modern world, while arguably still being true to the general ethos of HIP. This enables a modern production to balance the dual needs of the fidelity dichotomy; for innovation and contemporary relevance (primarily in the theatrical elements) as well as historical accuracy (primarily in the musical elements).

My reasons for examining the earliest performances of *Dido and Aeneas* in this chapter are associated with the nature of musical HIP and its relationship to early opera performance. Musical elements generally carry less overt signification than theatrical elements; musical meaning is highly dependent on its extra-musical context. As Abbate states in "Music—Drastic or Gnostic?":

> [Music] is at once ineffable and sticky; that is its fundamental incongruity. Words stick to it (…) images and corporeal gestures stick to it as well. (…) The unromantic view would be that music exists in a state of unresolved and subservient alterity in relation to the visible world, or to language and words, as it does to culture and society.[1]

Modern musical HIP thus tends to focus on performance style and materiality, as opposed to thematic and interpretative issues, which are more explicitly the domain of the theatrical elements of opera performance. Thematic and interpretative issues are usually more context-dependent, while stylistic and material issues can be more readily reproduced in the modern world. Because the original historical context is usually lost when performing early opera in today's world, the opera's perceived meaning may be very different, while its stylistic characteristics may remain the same (or as similar as they can be made to be, following HIP

[1] Abbate, "Music--Drastic or Gnostic?," 524.

practice). Although my overall methodological focus is more on meaning-making than on stylistic issues, in order to understand how the modern performances employ HIP it is necessary to examine some of the stylistic and material characteristics of the earliest performances of *Dido and Aeneas*, as well as interpretative issues relating to their contexts.

In this chapter I discuss only the earliest four performances, and only the first three in depth. These four include the hypothetical court production (c. 1684), the Chelsea school production (c. 1688) and the two Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre productions, the *Measure for Measure/ Loves of Dido and Aeneas* production (1700), and the 1704 production in which *Dido* was presented as an afterpiece. The last of less interest to modern scholars, performers and creative teams, partly because it appears to have essentially employed the same cut-down version of the operatic text as that found in modern score editions.[2] In addition, there is no surviving playbook or reliably associated score for 1704, and thus we know almost nothing about its performance features.[3] The earlier productions are therefore of more interest and relevance to modern performance and scholarship. This is largely due to HIP's typical focus on the earliest performances of a work— particularly those contemporaneous with the composer. Under more "ideal" circumstances the first two productions (1684 and 1688) would be of the most interest to modern musicologists, opera scholars and HIP practitioners, as Purcell was still living at that time (he died in 1695). However, in the case of *Dido* there is hardly any information available about either of these productions. While the 1700 production was not contemporaneous with the composer and was probably significantly different from the two that were, it is nevertheless of interest to modern scholars, as an annotated playbook from 1700 has survived, so we have a significant amount of information available about its performance features. We also possess general information from the period about acting style, staging and musical performance, much of which is applicable to all four early productions, in lieu of more specific information about each one.

Some discussion of the scholarly understanding of *Dido and Aeneas*'s genesis is necessary for a comprehensive analysis of the four modern productions. This is because the relationship between scholarship and performance is very strong, especially where HIP is concerned, and

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[2] Harris, *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas*, 63.

[3] Ibid., 43-47.

because the opera is bound up in today's cultural consciousness with tantalising historical mystery. It must be noted that the four modern productions studied here were all performed, or at least created and rehearsed, before the publication of the recent breakthrough articles by Bryan White ("Letter from Aleppo: Dating the Chelsea School Performance of *Dido and Aeneas*", published in 2009[4]) and Andrew Pinnock ("Deus Ex Machina: A Royal Witness to the Court Origin of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*", published in 2012[5]; and also Pinnock's "Which Genial Day? More on the court origin of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas,*" published in 2015[6]). As such, the four modern productions reflect previous scholarship on *Dido and Aeneas*'s genesis and early history, which widely promoted the theory that the first performance was at the Chelsea school in 1689. However, while these two articles have changed the scholarly consensus on Dido's date(s) of composition and first performance, much of the earlier scholarship remains valid. Also, there is still much that is open to speculation and interpretation, and the historical mysteriousness that makes up so much of *Dido and Aeneas'*s aura and allure for modern audiences remains intact. From a methodological point of view, it is justifiable to use the most up-to-date information and tools with which to conduct scholarly AMPO, regardless of whether these post-date the productions. However, where applicable, any discrepancy must be noted and made overt in the written record of the scholarship—as I do here.

2.2 *Dido and Aeneas* as received in the Restoration period

We do not know the opera's exact date of composition and/or first performance, though we do know it was sometime in the 1680s. However, that decade was full of change, with the Anglican Charles II ruling until his death in early 1685, then his Catholic brother James ruling until 1688, when he was ousted and replaced with the Protestant William of Orange and his Anglican wife Mary, James's daughter, in what became known as the "Glorious Revolution". Allegory is known to have been a key means of providing political commentary

[4] White, "Letter from Aleppo: Dating the Chelsea School Performance of Dido and Aeneas."

[5] Andrew Pinnock, "*Deus Ex Machina:* A Royal Witness to the Court Origin of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*," *Early Music* 40, no. 2 (2012): 265-278.

[6] Andrew Pinnock, "Which Genial Day? More on the court origin of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, with a shortlist of dates for its possible performance before King Charles II," *Early Music* 43, no. 2 (2015): 199-212.

in this troubled period of English history,[7] and many scholars have speculated over the decades that Aeneas and perhaps also Dido may have been meant to represent at least one of the various male and female British monarchs of 1683–1689. Because there is so little reliable information about *Dido and Aeneas*'s genesis in general and particularly about its date of composition, we cannot know what Purcell and Tate intended for the opera. It is more useful to look at how it might have been interpreted by audiences of the time. The perceptions of the original audiences would have been influenced by political, cultural and artistic contextual fields. In the case of *Dido* this is fraught with complexity: from 1683–1700, audience perceptions would have been highly variable due to the fast rate of change in all three of these fields. Curtis Price has repeatedly suggested that the differences between *Dido* and *The Aeneid*—which largely consist of omissions and ambiguities in the former—probably stemmed from the need to navigate a dangerous political situation.[8] Walkling's argument also seems quite plausible, that the alterations to the Virgilian narrative were pointers designed to provoke the audience into uncovering the political meaning.[9] Catholicism more or less represented a threat to the Anglican majority during most of the 1680s, so it is likely that the witches in the opera represented Catholicism, whatever the opera's other political messages may have been.[10] Because understanding *Dido* in the context of historical political allegory is highly problematic, and of only limited relevance for modern performances and audiences, this study will not go into great detail on the possible allegorical meanings of the opera. What speculation I do make on this issue will be covered in my discussion of the various early performances of the opera, as each performance took place at a different moment in England's political history and so would have been interpreted differently. For our purposes here, it is more productive to investigate the general, non-allegorical ways in which *Dido* is likely to have been perceived by its earliest audiences. These are likewise closely related to the differences between *Dido* and Virgil's *The Aeneid*.

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[7] See: Andrew R. Walkling, "Political Allegory in Purcell's 'Dido and Aeneas'," *Music and Letters* 76, no. 4 (1995): 540-571; Welch, "The Cultural Politics of *Dido and Aeneas*."

[8] Price, *Henry Purcell and the London Stage*, 230; Curtis Price, "*Dido and Aeneas* In Context," in *Henry Purcell: Dido and Aeneas. An Opera*, ed. Curtis Price (London: W. W. Norton and Company, 1986), 3 - 41,8.

[9] Andrew R. Walkling, "Performance and Political Allegory in Restoration England: What to interpret and when," in *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell*, ed. Michael Burden (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995),173.

[10] See: Steven E. Plank, ""And Now About the Cauldron Sing": Music and the Supernatural on the Restoration Stage " *Early Music* 18, no. 3 (1990): 393-407; Walkling, "Political Allegory in Purcell's 'Dido and Aeneas'," 553; Winkler, *O Let Us Howle Some Heavy Note*, 57.

Because *The Aeneid* was also partly formed by Virgil's context and readership, some discussion of this is also necessary, but my focus here is on *Dido and Aeneas*.

Dido's original audiences were largely the socioeconomic upper half of late seventeenth-century London society.[11] They would generally have been highly educated in Greek and Roman history, mythology and literature. The story of Aeneas and Dido as it appeared in various forms was also one of the most frequently adapted and cited classical narratives of the Restoration period.[12] As Janet Schmalfeldt notes, "every seventeenth-century English schoolboy would have been expected to read *The Aeneid*."[13] In addition, Queen Elizabeth I (1533–1603) had frequently been associated during her life and after her death with the real, historical and chaste Queen Dido.[14] As Elizabeth constituted at that time the most salient image of a great female ruler without a consort, Elizabeth—and by extension Dido—would have loomed large in late seventeenth-century English minds. Although *Dido and Aeneas* omits a good deal of Virgil's detail, most audience members of the late seventeenth century would thus have been able to "fill in the blanks" from their existing knowledge.[15] The modern responder to *Dido* is unlikely to be quite as familiar with Virgil's version of the story, due to the modern world's reduced emphasis on the traditional western literary canon and classical

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[11] See: Jessica Munns, "Theatrical Culture I: Politics and Theatre," in *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1650-1740*, ed. Steven N. Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 82-103.

[12] Andrew Pinnock, "Book IV In Plain Brown Wrappers: Translations and Travesties of Dido," in *A Woman Scorn'd: Responses to the Dido Myth*, ed. Michael Burden (London: Faber and Faber, 1998), 249 - 272.

[13] Schmalfeldt, "In Search of Dido," 596.

[14] Diane Purkiss, "The Queen on Stage: Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage* and the Representation of Elizabeth I," in *A Woman Scorn'd: Responses to the Dido Myth*, ed. Michael Burden (London: Faber and Faber, 1998), 151-198.

[15] Michael Burden has argued against Judith Peraino's contention that Purcell and Tate intended their audience to fill in the blanks in this way. He writes that Peraino's argument is "without foundation," however while there is no evidence that this was the case, it is also true that there is very little evidence of *any* kind about Purcell and Tate's intentions. I would therefore more cautiously argue that this is indeed *one possible way* that Purcell and Tate may have intended their opera to be interpreted, and it is one way that it may well have been interpreted in that period, just as it may be interpreted this way today.

See: Burden, ed. *A Woman Scorn'd: Responses to the Dido Myth*, 231-232.

Judith A. Peraino, "I am an Opera: Identifying with Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*," in *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera*, ed. Corinne E. Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith (New York, Sussex: Columbia University Press, 1995), 99-131,100.

education.[16] Therefore, for the modern scholar to understand the important differences between Virgil's *Aeneid* Book IV and Purcell and Tate's opera, some more detail is required here.

As discussed, Book IV of *The Aeneid* is set in the legendary city of Carthage, shortly after the Trojan wars. Carthage is represented as a young but thriving colonial city-state ruled by Queen Dido. Virgil's account features the direct intervention of the gods: Venus disguises her own son Cupid as Aeneas's son Ascanius, to make Dido fall in love, while Juno sends a storm to bring the two together in a cave to consummate their relationship. Virgil's version presents Dido and Aeneas as enjoying a happy but debauched season together as lovers:

> …that Aeneas,
> one born of Trojan blood, had come, that lovely
> Dido has deigned to join herself to him,
> that now, in lust, forgetful of their kingdom, 255
> they take long pleasure, fondling through the winter,
> the slaves of squalid craving.[17]

Meanwhile Dido seems to assume or pretend to herself that it is a permanent arrangement: "For Dido calls it marriage / and with this name she covers up her fault."[18] Virgil makes the point that their relationship is illicit on three levels; firstly it takes place before their marriage, secondly it breaks Dido's vow of chastity and fidelity to her deceased first husband; thirdly it goes against fate and the wishes of Jove, the king of the gods.

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[16] As Grafton *et al* argue in their Preface to *The Classical Tradition*: "…The disappearance of this widespread [classical] erudition has not made the questions whose answers it had facilitated vanish with it. On the contrary, many people in modern societies remain curious about the countless traces of antiquity still visible in their world and about the ancient sources of various modern phenomena, but they do not know where to turn to satisfy their curiosity."

Anthony Grafton, Glen W. Most, and Salvatore Settis, *The Classical Tradition* (Harvard University Press, 2010), ix.

[17] Vergilius Maro (Virgil), "The Aeneid of Virgil: A Verse Translation", trans. Allen Mandelbaum, 87 (IV: 252-257).

[18] Ibid., 86-87 (IV: 227-228).

When Aeneas receives Jove's message via Mercury and makes preparations to leave Carthage, the distraught and furious Dido, (also known as Elissa) rages at him at length. Aeneas replies:

> …"I never shall
> deny what you deserve, the kindnesses 450
> that you could tell; I never shall regret
> remembering Elissa for as long
> as I remember my own self, as long
> as breath is king over these limbs. I'll speak
> brief words that fit the case. I never hoped 455
> to hide—do not imagine that—my flight;
> I am not furtive. I have never held
> the wedding torches as a husband; I
> have never entered into such agreements."[19]

Virgil's Aeneas is therefore represented as rather callous and cruel, but at the same time as a dignified and strong leader with great *pietas,* or religious piety and sense of duty.[20] The balance of Virgil's representation of Aeneas tends towards a positive light. Although Aeneas feels pain at leaving Dido, he acquiesces to Jove's wishes and departs regardless, thus placing *pietas* above personal concerns. The Emperor Augustus (63 BC–14 AD) claimed his descent from Aeneas, and Aeneas would have been interpreted in Virgil's time as Augustus's allegorical representative, so while Virgil's epic expressed and elicited some sorrow for the suffering that is part of the pursuit of Aeneas's / Augustus's grand destiny, it also flattered Augustus by presenting Aeneas in a positive light.[21] It is difficult to determine how Virgil's Aeneas would have been perceived by late seventeenth-century English readers and audiences of *Dido and Aeneas*, but it is likely that they would have been aware of the differences in values between their time/place and Virgil's.

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[19] Ibid., 92 (IV: 454-459).

[20] Kenneth McLeish, "Dido, Aeneas and the Concept of *Pietas*," *Greece and Rome* 19, no. 2 (1972): 127-135.

[21] This double interpretation has become very widespread, particularly since Adam Parry's ground-breaking 1963 article. See:Adam Parry, "The Two Voices of Virgil's "Aeneid"," *Arion* 2, no. 4 (1963): 66-80; Ernst A. Schmidt, "The Meaning of Vergil's "Aeneid:" American and German Approaches," *The Classical World* 94, no. 2 (2001): 145-171.

Dido and Aeneas is quite different from Book IV of *The Aeneid*. Purcell and Tate essentially reverse the reader's sympathies from being primarily aligned with Aeneas to being firmly aligned with Dido: the story becomes a tragedy with Dido as its protagonist. Virgil's original Dido is portrayed as sympathetic, but nevertheless inferior to the hero Aeneas. To the Romans, she is likely to have been seen as an essentially good-natured but "unbalanced barbarian queen"[22] who is driven mad with love: she pursues Aeneas, then spends a whole amorous year with him and ignores her duties; she deceives her sister Anna about her suicidal intentions and unleashes a tirade of anger against Aeneas; finally she curses him and his descendants for his betrayal, while stabbing and burning herself to death. Dido would have thus appeared to Virgil's readers as the supposed originator of the long Punic wars between Rome and Carthage, which only came to an end in the century before Virgil.[23]

Purcell and Tate's Dido on the other hand is more respectable, particularly when judged according to late-seventeenth-century Christian values. Instead of pursuing Aeneas, the operatic Dido is approached *by* him, therefore not only fulfilling the then-expected passive female role in courtship but also escaping some of the blame for the failed relationship. The operatic Dido makes up her own mind about her actions rather than being the victim of the plots of Juno, Venus and Cupid to make her fall madly in love. This would make the operatic Dido seem more culpable, but she is put under significant pressure by her ladies, her court and by Aeneas himself to accept him. Although her acceptance is tacit, the operatic Dido is more decisive than her counterpart Aeneas (although her decisions seem to be the wrong ones), especially in the second half of the opera. Dido's final Lament "When I am Laid in Earth" with its minor mode, rather chromatic melody and shifting rhythms against a slow, regular triple-time beat and descending ground bass with chromatic appoggiaturas, is rightly famous for its beauty and its ability to inspire feelings of pity and sorrow in the listener. This aria and its strikingly similar parallel, the Act I ground bass aria "Ah Belinda… Grief and I are Strangers Grown" add greatly to Dido's aura of noble tragedy in the opera. She is not without flaw from a Restoration perspective: late seventeenth-century English society is likely to have expected that a monarch would put the needs of the state ahead of their own

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[22] McLeish, "Dido, Aeneas and the Concept of *Pietas*," 127-128.

[23] *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4 ed. s.v. "Punic Wars (264-146 BC)."

personal needs,[24] and yet the operatic Dido focuses on the personal aspects of the union rather than the political, and arguably endangers the stability of her kingdom by committing suicide. However, in general the differences between Virgil's version and Purcell and Tate's version make the operatic Dido more heroic, sympathetic and respectable in comparison.

Purcell and Tate's Aeneas has often been seen in recent decades as an arrogant, vacillating and irresponsible fool: Kerman famously called him a "complete booby".[25] Aeneas initially boasts to Dido that he will "defy / the feeble stroke of Destiny" to be with her, but then when he receives the Spirit's message he immediately decides to obey Jove's apparent command and leave her. Upon witnessing Dido's great distress, he changes his mind and offers to stay, but she orders him to leave, which he finally does. In addition to thus being depicted as indecisive, the operatic Aeneas is shown to believe that the spirit is the real god Mercury when it is actually just a trick of the witches', so he is also unflatteringly portrayed as being gullible and foolish. Overall, Purcell and Tate succeed in "reducing the original from a heroic epic to a miserable tale of human folly, misunderstanding, and good intentions gone awry" as Walkling has commented.[26]

The removal of the gods from the operatic version is also notable. The Sorceress, her Witches and their false conjured Spirit of Mercury with his false message from Jove replace Virgil's real gods Jove and Mercury, while Venus is only briefly referred to as Aeneas's mother, and Juno does not feature at all. Instead of real divine revelation, Aeneas is tricked into leaving Dido through magic, while believing that it is divine and that he is following the dictates of fate—I discuss these issues of the supernatural and their representation in Chapter 7. In removing the gods and their motivations, Purcell and Tate leave little obvious motivation for the antagonists who replace them. The witches' motivations for hating Dido and engineering

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[24] This can be assumed at this period because the western world's prevailing notion of the monarch was heavily influenced by the dominating figure of Louis XIV of France, and Louis's and France's ideology on this matter can be seen in jurist Jean Domat's officially sanctioned 1697 publication "On Social Order and Absolute Monarchy", in which Domat wrote of the monarch, "his station requires him to prefer the general good of the state to his personal interests".

Jean Domat, Joseph Remy, and Ruth Kleinman (trans.), "Modern History Sourcebook: Jean Domat (1625-1696): On Social Order and Absolute Monarchy," in *Core Four Sourcebook*, ed. Paul Halsall (New York: Fordham University, 1998).

[25] See, for example: Kerman, *Opera as Drama (New and Rev. Ed.)*, 43.

[26] Walkling, "Political Allegory in Purcell's 'Dido and Aeneas'," 548.

her destruction may have been originally implied by political context, if the witches were interpreted as Catholics bent on bringing down the Anglican hegemony; but as mentioned, this has little relevance to modern audiences. In Chapter 5, I examine the ways in which the four modern productions have explored this "gaping ambiguity".

Michael Burden argues that it is Dido's *taking a lover* that is presented by Purcell and Tate as the origin of her troubles.[27] However, on the other hand the opera makes it obvious that Dido and her courtiers believe that Aeneas's intentions involve marriage. This means that the operatic Aeneas must shoulder more blame for the tragedy of their separation, and Dido less. The opera's only clear reference to the sexual side of the union—a point that contrasts starkly with the lovers' whole winter of "lust" in *The Aeneid*[28]—figures in Act II as Aeneas sings that Dido was "one night enjoy'd, the next forsook." With regards to sex and gender politics, the opera is so discreet as to be ambiguous and provides considerable room for creative freedom in performance; I explore this issue in Chapter 6.

The death of Dido is also far more mysterious in the opera, an issue that I address in Chapter 8. Purcell and Tate's Dido does not curse Aeneas and his descendants, and nor does she commit violent suicide; rather, she dies of an unknown physical cause, or dies of a psychological cause—a "broken heart"—while begging Belinda, "Remember me, but ah! Forget my fate." In Purcell and Tate's day, suicide was only just starting to become more morally acceptable.[29] This followed many centuries of its being not only illegal but also looked upon as a particularly terrible sin from a religious perspective, and called by the more condemnatory name of "self-murder".[30] This lingering stigma may be reflected in Dido's famous final plea (which may be read as "remember me, but forget that I killed myself"), and Purcell and Tate's decision to make it an ambiguous death would have allowed their Dido a more respectable status than Virgil's.

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[27] Burden, ed. *A Woman Scorn'd: Responses to the Dido Myth*, 231.

[28] Vergilius Maro (Virgil), "The Aeneid of Virgil: A Verse Translation", trans. Allen Mandelbaum, 87 (Book IV, verses 255-257).

[29] Georges Minois and Lydia G. Cochrane (translator), *History of Suicide: Voluntary Death in Western Culture* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 179-209.

[30] Ibid.

Dido and Aeneas's significant departures from Virgil's original would not have escaped the notice of wealthy classically-educated late-seventeenth-century audience members. As Price suggests, these striking differences may have been interpreted by this audience as pointing up a political allegory.[31] Such specific political and contextual issues have only limited relevance for most non-specialist audiences today. However, there are a number of sound reasons why I include this analysis of the context of *Dido and Aeneas'*s earliest performance here. Firstly, the cultural context of the time and place of the operatic text's genesis undoubtedly profoundly influenced its creation: if *Dido*'s original audiences were not familiar with *The Aeneid*, then *Dido* would probably not have been written with these omissions, but may well have been more explicit in its narrative logic. Secondly, as I have discussed above, the differences between *The Aeneid* and *Dido and Aeneas* also have consequences for the operatic text's meaning well beyond any mysterious original political allegory, as they create the "gaping ambiguities" that offer so much scope for innovation in modern performance.

Thirdly, the context of the time and place of the operatic text's genesis can still influence the opera's modern performance more generally. It is true that, in contrast with Purcell and Tate's original audiences, modern audiences are much less likely to note *Dido and Aeneas*'s relationship to its time and place of genesis, and to note any narrative departures from Virgil's *Aeneid*. However, modern productions can and do sometimes reference these points of intertextuality, regardless of whether these references are comprehended by the average audience member. The modern production's *mise-en-scène* may, for example, stand in the place of a modern audience's general knowledge of *The Aeneid*, and function to make sense of the gaps and ambiguities in *Dido and Aeneas*'s narrative. In addition, if scholarly AMPO is to follow the paradigm of the "informed audience member", as I advocate, it is important that its written analysis demonstrates a thorough understanding of the operatic text. This includes an understanding of how it would have been comprehended in its own time and place, as well as in today's context.

Fourthly, modern productions may also sometimes reference points of what might be called (to coin a term) "intercontextuality". In this case, this would constitute the relationship of today's international western cultural context with the context of late seventeenth-century

[31] Price, *Henry Purcell and the London Stage*, 230.

London, as they intersect through the operatic text and its performance. For example, modern productions may reference the intersection of modern notions of the *tragedy* of suicide, with Restoration notions of its *sinfulness* and Roman notions of its *nobility*, as they are refracted through the metaphorical prism of Dido's death. Due to the fidelity dichotomy and the different ways in which music and theatre construct meaning, issues of intercontextuality tend to be more important for the theatrical, rather than the musical, aspects of modern performance.

Again because of the fidelity dichotomy and today's musical emphasis on HIP—and because of the less tangible and independent ways that music creates meaning—for the musical elements of modern performance, the stylistic and material characteristics of the opera's genesis and earliest performances tend to be more important than its contextual characteristics. Having addressed the narrative-based elements of *Dido*'s genesis above, the remainder of this chapter places a somewhat greater emphasis on its stylistic elements. I also begin to analyse these elements in terms of how they influence modern performance of *Dido and Aeneas*. The stylistic elements of *Dido*'s genesis include the changing structural content and characteristics of the operatic text, as it appeared in these earliest performances, as well as features of performance style such as casting, *mise-en-scène*, vocal and physical performance. Before I begin my analysis of *Dido*'s mysterious earliest performances, however, I shall first address the thorny issue of its date of composition.

2.3 Dating *Dido and Aeneas*

There have been centuries of scholarly controversy over the year in which *Dido and Aeneas* was composed. From 1918 to the 1990s, scholars generally believed that it was composed for the Chelsea school performance. This was dated to 1689, largely because poet and playwright Thomas Durfey (or "D'Urfey") had written an Epilogue to the opera, marked as being spoken by one of the girls at the school, which was published in November of that year. There was scholarly speculation in the 1990s that *Dido* may have been composed for performance at the court of Charles II in 1683 or 1684, and later revived at Chelsea. The principal scholars in this debate were Andrew Pinnock and Bruce Wood arguing in favour of a court premiere and

Andrew Walkling arguing for a Chelsea premiere.[32] Until 2009, however, the notion of a Chelsea school premiere in 1689 was still widely adhered to, and this is evident for example in the LAF production, recorded in 2008: this production references the Chelsea school with an additional non-singing Chorus of schoolgirls.

In 2009 Purcell scholar Bryan White revealed new evidence in his article "Letter from Aleppo: Dating the Chelsea School Performance of *Dido and Aeneas*." Here, White convincingly argued that *Dido* was in fact performed at Chelsea in 1687 or the first half of 1688,[33] during the reign of James II. The Durfey Epilogue is openly anti-Catholic however, which would have been politically offensive under James II's rule. White believes that "on balance, the evidence points towards 1689 for D'Urfey's poem, and therefore a repetition of *Dido and Aeneas* at a ball held perhaps in May or June of that year".[34]

Currently, the most convincing theory is that *Dido and Aeneas* was written in 1684 as a private masque for Charles II's court. This argument was and still is based partly on the striking similarities of *Dido and Aeneas* with its predecessor and model, the masque *Venus and Adonis* by John Blow (c. 1683, librettist unknown). *Venus and Adonis* was performed privately at Charles II's court in 1683 and was then revived at Priest's school in Chelsea on 17 April 1684.[35] Bruce Wood and Andrew Pinnock's research in the early 1990s was prompted by the discovery of the Chelsea school libretto of *Venus and Adonis* in 1988, and by *Dido and Aeneas*'s obvious indebtedness to the earlier work.[36] Wood and Pinnock's theory is bolstered by score analysis and comparison with Purcell's other works to determine that the style of *Dido* fits better with Purcell's work from the early 1680s, rather than the latter part of that decade.

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[32] See: Andrew Pinnock and Bruce Wood, "Unscarr'd By Turning Times? The Dating of Purcell's Dido and Aeneas," *Early Music* 20, (1992): 372-390; Andrew R. Walkling, "'The Dating of Purcell's "Dido and Aeneas"'? A Reply to Bruce Wood and Andrew Pinnock," *Early Music* 22, no. 3 (1994): 469-481; Bruce and Pinnock Wood, Andrew, "'Singin' in the Rain': Yet More on Dating Dido," *Early Music* 22, no. 2 (1994): 365-367; Walkling, "Political Allegory in Purcell's 'Dido and Aeneas'."

[33] White, "Letter from Aleppo: Dating the Chelsea School Performance of Dido and Aeneas."

[34] Ibid.

[35] Price, "Venus and Adonis (i)".

[36] Pinnock and Wood, "Unscarr'd By Turning Times? The Dating of Purcell's Dido and Aeneas; Richard Luckett, "A New Source for 'Venus and Adonis'," *The Musical Times* 130, no. 1752 (1989): 76-79.

Pinnock has recently published new evidence for the court production, [37] arguing that Tate took inspiration for the Prologue and also partly for the opera proper from the now largely destroyed ceiling paintings in the state rooms of the King's Drawing Room and King's Presence Chamber at Windsor castle.[38] These paintings, by the Italian painter Antonio Verrio, would have formed a visual frame and/or background for the performance. Pinnock proposes that Tate wrote the Prologue as an allegorical panegyric to Charles II, as the King appears in the golden flying chariot of the sun-god Phoebus, in the centre of the King's Drawing Room ceiling:[39]

Figure 2-1: "Lacunar Procaetonis Cubili Regis": King Charles II's Drawing Room ceiling, Windsor Castle, Print by Pierre Vandrebanc, published London, *c.* 1682-6, by Edward Cooper and Richard Tompson. After Antonio Verrio. (British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, reference no. 1874,0808.1948.)[40]

[37] Pinnock, "Deus Ex Machina; Pinnock, "Which Genial Day?."

[38] Pinnock, "Deus Ex Machina," 380.

[39] Ibid., 267.

[40] Ibid., 268.

In another adjoining room, Venus and cupids feature in the painting; sure enough, the Chelsea libretto's Prologue mentions them. As Andrew Walkling pointed out in 2010 (even before Pinnock published this new evidence) the painted cupids hovering on the ceiling above the performed action are again reflected in the libretto at the end of the opera: [41]

Chorus: With drooping Wings you Cupids come
To scatter Roses on her Tomb.
Soft and Gentle as her Heart,
Keep here your Watch and never part.

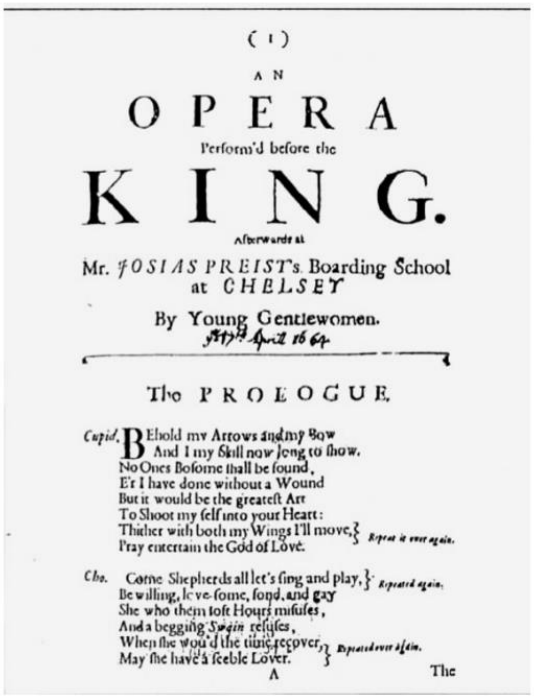
This new evidence from Pinnock makes sense of an otherwise strange and confusing Prologue with its mix of allegorical, Arcadian and mythological figures. Pinnock acknowledges that this planned production may never have gone ahead,[42] and it is true that Charles II died suddenly and unexpectedly in February 1685; therefore, it may have been abruptly cancelled. A Prologue that represented the king as the sun-god Phoebus and his libido as Venus would have no longer been appropriate with the more dour and chaste James II on the throne. Pinnock argues that it is more likely that the opera was intended to be performed for Charles' birthday on 29 May 1684. He believes that if it was cancelled, that may have been because of (for example) casting issues, or technical concerns with the flying chariots in the Prologue and Spirit in the opera proper; or due to the King's focus on Dryden's opera *Albion and Albanius*.[43]

The Chelsea libretto for *Venus and Adonis* also tends to support the hypothesis that *Dido* was never performed at court, as Priest had it printed with a drop heading on the first page that highlights the fact that it was performed for Charles II; the capitalised word "KING" is far larger than the type for any other word in the libretto. The typography and wording is notably similar to the drop heading for the *Dido and Aeneas* Chelsea libretto, with that one glaring difference:

[41] Walkling, "The Masque of Actaeon and the Antimasque of Mercury," 214-215.

[42] Pinnock, "Deus Ex Machina."

[43] Pinnock, "Which Genial Day?," 209.



(1)

A N

O P E R A

Perform'd before the

K I N G.

Afterwards at

Mr. JOSIAS PREIST's Boarding School at CHELSEY

By Young Gentlewomen.

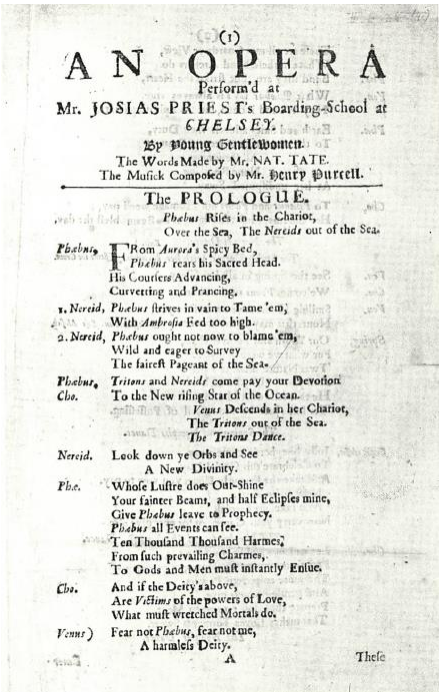
The PROLOGUE.

Cupid. BEhold my Arrows and my Bow
And I my Skill now long to show.
No Ones Bosome shall be found,
Ere I have done without a Wound
But it would be the greatest Art
To Shoot my self into your Heart:
Thither with both my Wings I'll move,
Pray entertain the God of Love.

Cho. Come Shepherds all let's sing and play,
Be willing, love some, fond, and gay
She who them soft Hours misuses,
And a begging *Swain* refuses,
When she wou'd the time recover,
May she have a feeble Lover.

A The

Figure 2-2: The first page of the Chelsea school's 1684 programme libretto for John Blow's *Venus and Adonis*. Cambridge University Library, Sel. 2.123.[44]



(1)

A N O P E R A

Perform'd at

Mr. JOSIAS PRIEST's Boarding-School at CHELSEY.

By Young Gentlewomen.

The Words Made by Mr. NAT. TATE.

The Musick Composed by Mr. Henry Purcell.

The PROLOGUE.

Phebus Rises in the Chariot,
Over the Sea, The *Nereids* out of the Sea.

Phebus, FRom *Aurora's* Spicy Bed,
Phebus rears his Sacred Head.
His Courtiers Advancing,
Curvetting and Prancing,

1. *Nereid,* *Phebus* strives in vain to Tame 'em,
With *Ambrosia* Fed too high.

2. *Nereid,* *Phebus* ought not now to blame 'em,
Wild and eager to Survey
The fairest Pageant of the Sea.

Phebus, *Tritons* and *Nereids* come pay your Devotion
Cho. To the New rising Star of the Ocean.
Venus Descends in her Chariot,
The *Tritons* out of the Sea.
The Tritons Dance.

Nereid. Look down ye Orbs and See
A New Divinity.

Phe. Whose Lustre does Out-Shine
Your fainter Beams, and half Eclipses mine,
Give *Phebus* leave to Prophecy.
Phebus all Events can see.
Ten Thousand Thousand Harmes,
From such prevailing Charmes,
To Gods and Men must instantly Ensue.

Cho. And if the Deity's above,
Are *Victims* of the powers of Love,
What must wretched Mortals do.

Venus) Fear not *Phebus*, fear not me,
A harmless Deity.

A These

Figure 2-3: The first page of the Chelsea school's *c.* 1688 libretto of *Dido and Aeneas.* (London, Royal College of Music, I.A.20)[45]

[44] White, "Letter from Aleppo: Dating the Chelsea School Performance of Dido and Aeneas," 426.

As Bryan White has argued, if *Dido and Aeneas* actually had been performed for Charles II it seems unlikely that Josias Priest would have passed up an opportunity to link his school with royalty and court culture, even if the king in question was dead by that point and his brother was on the throne. [46]

It seems likely based on the most up-to-date evidence therefore, that *Dido* was composed in early 1684, was intended to be performed, or possibly was actually performed at court for Charles II's birthday in May 1684 and that it was later adapted and performed in Priest's school, in the spring of 1688. It is likely that Durfey's Epilogue was written for a revival production in 1689, possibly in order to align the performance with the changed political climate. It is likely that the Prologue was originally set to music by Purcell and formed a substantial part of the original score, being included in the 1688 Chelsea production, and possibly also at the 1689 revival. However, the Prologue's music seems to have been disconnected from the rest at the time of the 1704 production, in which it was not performed, and it has since been lost.[47]

2.4 The Original Court Production

The court premiere theory has long convinced many scholars. Elizabeth Holland works on this assumption in her 2002 article and thesis.[48] Holland has conducted one of the most detailed investigations to date into the possible original cast—whether intended or actual—from the court production. A fresh look at Holland's claims and the available evidence on a possible court production is warranted, given recent evidence from White, Walkling and

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[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid., 425-426.

[47] Harris, *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas*, 48.

[48] Holland, "Purcell and the Seventeenth-century Voice: An Investigation of Singers and Voice Types in Henry Purcell's Vocal Music", Purcell and the Seventeenth-century Voice; ibid., Purcell's Dido and Aeneas.

Pinnock,[49] and because information about this "original" production would be the most keenly sought-after by scholars, creative teams, performers and others interested in HIP.

2.4.1 Structure

Although he was not explicitly assuming composition for the court, Andrew Walkling has recently made convincing arguments about the original performance of the Grove Scene (Act II Scene 2), based on analysis of the score and libretto sources.[50] He argues that the scene would have originally featured a "masque of Actaeon" when Dido and her courtiers are present, and an "antimasque of Mercury" in the second half of the scene, the latter part of which has been lost.[51] The first part of the Grove scene would indeed make much more sense if it were presented in this way, functioning as a "phenomenal"[52] post-hunt masque entertainment for Dido about the tragedy of Actaeon and Diana, with Dido's Ladies playing Narrators and Aeneas playing Actaeon—a masque that is then interrupted when Dido notices the coming storm that has been sent by the witches. Walkling points out that the Second Woman's aria, and in particular her deictic insistence that "here, here Actaeon met his fate" would make more sense if she were playing the role-within-a-role of a Narrator for a masque set in a Grove, rather than being merely an isolated phenomenal aria sung for no obvious reason within the logic of the narrative.[53] Although Walkling's article was published the year after the last of the four modern productions, nevertheless the LAF and ROH and to a lesser extent also the OA do in fact create "proto-masques" to make sense of the Second Woman's aria as a "phenomenal" presentation for Aeneas and Dido. As I show in chapters 6 and 7, the LAF even features Aeneas as Actaeon, which Walkling suggests may have been the original plan.[54]

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[49] Pinnock, "Deus Ex Machina."

[50] Walkling, "The Masque of Actaeon and the Antimasque of Mercury."

[51] Ibid.

[52] I follow Abbate's use of the term "phenomenal" (adapted from Kant and Nietzsche) to describe music in operas that is recognised diegetically as music, rather than going "unheard" by the characters. The antonym is "noumenal" music. See: Abbate, *Unsung Voices*.

[53] Walkling, "The Masque of Actaeon and the Antimasque of Mercury," 225.

[54] Ibid.

Walkling theorises that the second part of the scene was originally intended as a subversive antimasque about Mercury, performed by the Witches for Aeneas and using the abandoned set from the earlier masque of Actaeon. However, if this was indeed the case in the original court production or even at the Chelsea school production, then, as Walkling points out, Aeneas would have been portrayed as being even more incapable of distinguishing between magical reality and theatrical artifice.[55] He would have seemed to be even more of a gullible fool. Although this notion of Walkling's intersects with issues surrounding Aeneas's gullibility and the representation of the supernatural in the four modern productions (elements that I discuss in Chapter 7), none of the modern productions actually go so far as to represent this part of Act II Scene 2 as an "antimasque". This is not surprising, however, as Walkling's innovative article was published in 2010, after all four of these modern productions had been recorded.

2.4.2 Mise-en-scène

While the Windsor painted ceilings would have formed much of the backdrop for the Prologue and possibly for the rest of the opera, Walkling's argument about the masques-within-a-masque in Act II may have included special set decorations: he believes that they would have featured a fly space with cloud borders, for instance, from which the false Spirit of Mercury could descend.[56] Costumes would have been primarily in contemporary early 1680s style, but would have included some elements of Classical drapery. Aeneas, for instance, is likely to have been costumed with armour and drapery, in a manner similar to the figures on the far left and right in the engraving below, which appeared in Burden's *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell* and seems to be an interpretation of a late seventeenth or early eighteenth century production of Betterton and Purcell's dramatick opera *Dioclesian*.

[55] Ibid., 230-231.

[56] Ibid., 230.

Figure 2-4: Detail of engraving for the 1716 edition of Betterton's *The Prophetess; or the History of Dioclesian*.[57]

Further detailed information on relevant costume, movement and etiquette is to be found in Ruth-Eva Ronen's chapter in this collection by Burden.[58] Burden's collection is excellent in general for determining the likely style of all elements of original performance practices for *Dido and Aeneas*, and due to its date of publication (1996), it would have been available to all four modern productions (unlike Walkling's "Masque of Actaeon" article). Although much is based on surmise and educated guesses, the level of detail in the last few decades' scholarship on this issue means there is much available information upon which to base a fully-HIP production, were one so desired by creative teams. The fact that none of these four modern productions include a significant level of theatrical HIP is more a reflection of prevailing traditions and attitudes (the fidelity dichotomy), rather than a real lack of

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[57] Reproduced as plate 21 in Michael Burden, ed. *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). Has the caption: "Engraving by Elisha Kirkall for the 1716 edition of Betterton's *The Prophetess; or the History of Dioclessian* which, although it does not depict the stage or scenery, was probably inspired by a production of the opera." In 1690 Betterton adapted the 1622 play *The Prophetess* by Fletcher and Massinger, and Purcell wrote the music to form Purcell's first "dramatick" opera. Also see: Julia Muller and Frans Muller, "Purcell's *Dioclesian* on the Dorset Garden Stage," in *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell*, ed. Michael Burden (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 232-242,232.

[58] Ruth-Eva Ronen, "Of Costume and Etiquette: Staging in the Time of Purcell," in *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell*, ed. Michael Burden (1996), 197 - 211.

information. However, given that postdramatic theatre often favours the artistic expression of ambiguity, elusiveness and juxtaposition, the ambiguity and mystery of *Dido and Aeneas*'s multilayered origins also supports arguments in favour of PDT approaches to its modern (theatrical) performance.

2.4.3 Performers

The parallels between the court characters and the witch characters are striking, especially in the Chelsea libretto. For instance, like Dido, the Sorceress has two female underlings who sing in duet forms, as well as a Chorus of hangers-on. As Elizabeth Holland has argued, it is likely that the initial cast was largely doubled, probably in the manner set out below.[59] I have also included a variation on Harris's "doublings" for the Prologue characters in brackets,[60] as I consider that it is quite possible that the court production included "triplings".

Figure 2-5: Possible original court production cast doublings [triplings]

Prologue characters	"Positive" characters in opera proper	"Negative" characters in opera proper
[Venus]	Dido	Sorceress
[Phoebus]	Aeneas	--
[Spring]	Belinda	First Witch
[Nereid / Shepherdess]	Second Woman	Second Witch
[Triton / Shepherd]	Sailor	Spirit

[59] Holland, "Purcell and the Seventeenth-century Voice: An Investigation of Singers and Voice Types in Henry Purcell's Vocal Music"., 164

[60] Harris, *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas*, 60.

Harris posits the two Nereids and the two Witches as being doubled by the same performers, but this would be unlikely if the two Witches were also doubling the two Ladies and Belinda was playing the role of Spring, because Spring seems to be on stage at the same time as the Nereids. It could possibly be achieved with a lightning-fast costume change. Much of the casting for the Prologue is open to speculation because the music has not survived and so we cannot know what tessiturae were associated with individual roles.

Holland argues for the bass-baritone John Bowman as the original (or intended) Aeneas. At the time, he was a regular performer at Charles II's court.[61] Holland acknowledges that the role is written in the tenor clef and has "a range that fits the [tenor] voice-type well" but her own study of its tessitura reveals it to be suited best for a seventeenth-century "high" bass.[62] This is essentially a baritone in today's terms, particularly if the opera is performed at A = 415 Hz, the usual pitch employed today for historically informed performance of early opera. Most modern productions, including the modern four in the present study, feature a baritone as Aeneas.

Holland also notes that if the Sorceress's part is transposed down an octave, its tessitura is the same as that for Aeneas. Holland's argument that for the role of Aeneas, Purcell "may have written in a range that was deliberately interchangeable between bass and soprano" therefore makes sense,[63] because if Purcell had been writing *Dido and Aeneas* during or after 1684 when the production of *Venus and Adonis* was planned, rehearsed, or even performed at Chelsea, then Purcell could have foreseen that *Dido* could likewise later be performed at Priest's school, with a girl soprano playing Aeneas. *Dido*'s interchangeability of registers for roles is reflected in the fact that some modern productions—such as the Waltz and OA—cast a tenor as a Sorcerer, while others such as the LAF and ROH cast a female voice (contralto and mezzo respectively, in this case).

Holland suggests that the role of Dido in the court production, and perhaps also the role of the Sorceress, may have been written for the famous actress Elizabeth Barry. Barry's "breakthrough" performances occurred only a few years earlier with the roles of Cordelia in Nahum Tate's adaptation of *King Lear* and in particular of Monimia in Thomas Otway's *The Orphan*, which was strikingly similar to the role of Dido. Barry was primarily known as a tragic actress, and tended to play sexually experienced but honourable women and/or "fallen"

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[61] Holland, "Purcell and the Seventeenth-century Voice: An Investigation of Singers and Voice Types in Henry Purcell's Vocal Music", 160-161.

[62] Ibid., 143.

[63] Ibid., 144.

women,[64] categories into which Dido arguably fits. The prompter John Downes commented that she was famous at court as well as in London.[65] She was also already personally acquainted with Purcell, as they had worked together on *Theodosius* in that same year.[66] It is known that Barry sang on stage later in her career,[67] and as Curtis Price writes in *Music in the Restoration Theatre*, "a Restoration actor who lacked all musical ability was a rarity."[68] Professional stage singers (as opposed to Barry's type of singer-actor) did not become common in England until the 1690s and the rise of dramatick opera with interspersed masque segments.[69] In addition, as Elizabeth Howe points out, actors in the Restoration period were almost always typecast into particular character roles, and this was particularly true of actresses as there were fewer roles for women and the characters were more stereotyped.[70] While Dido fits Barry's primary typecasting, the role of the Sorceress fits her secondary abilities to play comedy and evil characters, a paradigm that reflects the primary/secondary nature of the two characters in *Dido and Aeneas*. The structural, narrative and musical parallels between Dido and the Sorceress strongly suggest that Purcell and Tate intended the roles to be performed by the same woman. It is quite probable therefore that *Dido and Aeneas* was written, as Holland puts it, as "a one-woman showcase" for Barry,[71] the most famous tragic actress of her era. While none of the four modern productions studied here cast the same performer in both roles, it is easy to see how this could work effectively, and it has been done in recent times—for example in Mark Morris's celebrated choreographed production, which was recorded in 1995 and is widely available on DVD.[72]

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[64] Ibid., 161-162.

[65] John Downes, *Roscius Anglicanus, Or an Historical Review of the Stage After it Had Been Suppress'd... Till the Time of King Charles the IIs Restoration in May 1660 Etc* (Playford, 1709), 37-38.

[66] Martin Adams, *Henry Purcell: The Origins and Development of His Musical Style* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 22.

[67] Curtis Price, *Music in the Restoration Theatre* (Ann Arbour: UMI Research Press, 1979), 70.

[68] Ibid., 68.

[69] Ibid., 71-72.

[70] Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses : Women and Drama, 1660-1700* (Cambridge; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 11.

[71] Holland, "Purcell and the Seventeenth-century Voice: An Investigation of Singers and Voice Types in Henry Purcell's Vocal Music", 164.

[72] Mark Morris, Dido and Aeneas, (US: Rhombus Media, 1995).

2.5 The Chelsea Production

Regardless of when, why and for whom *Dido* was composed, and regardless whether or not it was actually performed at court, it is certain that at least one performance took place around 1687–88 at the school in Chelsea. Unfortunately there is very little known about this performance. The only records we have of it are brief allusions to it in two contemporary letters,[73] the printed Chelsea Libretto, and Durfey's Epilogue, published separately.

2.5.1 Cast and Creative Team

It has long been one of the most contentious points of debate about *Dido* as to whether the Chelsea productions were performed by an all-schoolgirl cast, or whether there were some professional singers brought in for the lead roles. It is quite possible that Priest would have been acquainted with professional singers, due to the almost certain fact that he had experience as a court dancing-master and professional choreographer.[74] The orchestra may also have been made up of professionals from the theatre or Westminster Abbey.[75] The performers would have been coached by the professional singer James Hart, and the court violinist Jeffrey Bannister.[76] The dances would have been choreographed and taught by Josias Priest himself. The Chelsea school's performances, as the chief entertainment at Priest's "Great Balls," seem to have been an annual or even biannual event, based on evidence from contemporary letters,[77] and they seem to have been at least semi-public.[78] It is probable that Purcell—who was a friend of Priest's—and Tate also assisted at rehearsals, as this was usual practice with plays in the period, particularly if this was indeed the premiere: Tate may have functioned as a kind of stage director and Purcell (and/or Bannister) would have led the orchestra—Purcell would have done this from the harpsichord, as Laurie

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[73] See: White, "Letter from Aleppo: Dating the Chelsea School Performance of Dido and Aeneas."

[74] Jennifer Thorp, "Dance in Late 17th-Century London: Priestly Muddles," *Early Music* 26, no. 2 (1998): 198-210.

[75] Edward Joseph Dent, *Foundations of English Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928), 192.

[76] Adrian Tinniswood, *The Verneys: Love, War and Madness in Seventeenth-Century England*, e-book ed. (London: Vintage Books, 2008), 461-463 / 611.

[77] White, "Letter from Aleppo: Dating the Chelsea School Performance of Dido and Aeneas," 421-422.

[78] Mark Goldie, "The Earliest Notice of Purcell's Dido and Aeneas," *Early Music* 20, no. 3 (1992): 393-400.

suggests.[79] This tradition is reflected today in William Christie's conducting and leadership of the Les Arts Florissants orchestra from the harpsichord in the LAF production, and his rearrangement of the scored orchestral parts to add woodwinds and create incidental music for the Prologue; a similar hands-on approach is used by Attilio Cremonesi in the case of his arrangement and "reconstruction" of the Waltz production's music (though Cremonesi does not lead from the keyboard). With Josias Priest's many professional connections, it is indeed possible that he brought in professionals for the main roles in *Dido* while the schoolgirls performed in the Chorus and danced. This mix of professional and amateur is likewise reflected in the LAF production in its use of the amateurish schoolgirl Chorus performing alongside professional opera stars.

However, it is more likely that the Chelsea schoolgirls sang and played all the onstage roles. Contemporary letters such as those by John Verney do not refer to professional participants. Annotations by Verney on the *Venus and Adonis* libretto reveal some of the young student cast; "Mr. Priest's Daughter acted Adonis; Mris. Baker a Dutch young Gentlewom^{n} acted Venus; Mris Helsham acted Cupid."[80] It may seem unlikely to us today that such young people could possibly sing the roles in *Venus and Adonis* or, in particular, *Dido and Aeneas*, to an acceptable standard. However, our perspective and what we today deem an "acceptable standard" is influenced by the tendency of modern international star singers to use *Dido and Aeneas*, and particularly Dido's Lament, as a vehicle. We are also influenced by the tendency for modern female opera singers to be regarded as reaching their prime between the ages of 28–40, in contrast to the female singers of Purcell's time, who were usually 18–25.[81] They were thus close in age to the senior students at the school, who would have generally taken the lead roles. Our modern perspective is also influenced by the fact that, despite some recent emphasis on better quality and more dynamic acting in opera, opera singers are regarded primarily as *singers* rather than actors. In contrast, the late seventeenth-century emphasis on acting in music-theatre is reflected by Verney's note that the girls "acted" the parts.

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[79] Laurie, "Henry Purcell: Dido and Aeneas. An Opera. An Authoritative Score," 56.

[80] Verney's letter cited in: Goldie, "The Earliest Notice of Purcell's Dido and Aeneas," 76-77.

[81] Holland, "Purcell and the Seventeenth-century Voice: An Investigation of Singers and Voice Types in Henry Purcell's Vocal Music", 125.

There is also score-based evidence that the Chelsea cast was composed entirely of sopranos. Many of the roles in *Dido* are transposable up or down an octave to suit either male or female singers, with the exception of Aeneas's part. The Sailor's vocal line in the song "Come Away, Fellow Sailors" in Act III Scene 1 leads that voice into the soprano part of the chorus repeat.[82] When considered in addition to the fact that the roles of the Sailor, the Sorceress and Belinda are in the treble clef/range in the earliest sources,[83] this points to an all-soprano (or almost-all-soprano) cast at some point, and the obvious candidate in the history of *Dido and Aeneas* is the Chelsea production. While most modern productions cast sopranos as Belinda and the First Witch and mezzo-sopranos as Dido and the Sorceress, as Holland points out, there was no such thing as a mezzo in Purcell's time. Rather there were simply sopranos who tended to specialise in higher or lower repertoire, with little trained timbre difference between the two: almost the opposite of the case today.[84] On the other hand, while the modern soprano blends her vocal registers into one sonority, the Purcellian soprano (as appears to be the case with all Restoration singers) would have retained the differences between her modal and "head" registers.[85] Today such a difference in registers within the one voice would likely be considered a feature of poor technique, and is rarely found in professional opera. However, interestingly, such effects are sometimes created, not in pursuit of aesthetic beauty but rather in pursuit of stylistic variation and emotional expression. While even lead performers on today's opera stages are increasingly expected to be competent actors as well as exceptional singers, this preference for variety and "colour" over consistency and aesthetic beauty is still most evident in the case of supporting "character" roles. In the four modern productions studied here, such characteristics are particularly evident in the performance of the Sorceress role in the LAF and OA productions, as I show later in this thesis.

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[82] Curtis Price, ed. *Purcell: "Dido and Aeneas," An Opera*, Norton Critical Scores (New York, London: W.W. Norton, 1986), 156.

[83] Harris, *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas*, 61.

[84] Holland, "Purcell and the Seventeenth-century Voice: An Investigation of Singers and Voice Types in Henry Purcell's Vocal Music", 125.

[85] Ibid., 125-126.

Also see: Ellen T. Harris, "Voices," in *Performance Practice: Music After 1600*, ed. Howard Mayer-Brown and Stanley Sadie (London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1989), 97-116.

2.5.2 Movement

The Chelsea girls would likely have been coached to employ a simpler version of the acting style that was popular for serious spoken drama and for opera from around the mid-seventeenth century until over one century later.[86] This style is quite different from the loose and what we might call "post-naturalistic" acting style found in many opera performances today. The late-seventeenth-century style, as detailed in Dene Barnett's *The Art of Gesture*, focused on achieving a balance between elegance, refinement and emotional expression. Each part of the body was controlled (ideally very precisely) and it was a style of acting that was codified and stylised. It required considerable training—this is one of the reasons it is rarely seen today—and as such it is likely that the Chelsea schoolgirls would not have been particularly proficient or precise in their employment of this acting style.

It is possible that many of the dances that feature in the Chelsea libretto may have been originally composed by Purcell specifically for the Chelsea production to display Priest's skills as a choreographer and dancing-master. This aligns with the probability—as Pinnock points out in his 2012 article—that Purcell and Tate revised *Dido* for the Chelsea production.[87] It may also have been the case that the dancing itself was developed for the Chelsea production. We can know a considerable amount about the style of movement and dance in this period. Because Charles II had spent so long in French aristocratic circles as an exile during the Interregnum, the French courtly influence was profound on *Venus and Adonis* and also on *Dido and Aeneas*, as well as English Restoration theatre culture and aristocratic culture in general.[88] As Louis XIV's dance-masters Pierre Beauchamps and Raoul Auger Feuillet developed a system of notation for the French court style of dance, much

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[86] Dene Barnett and Jeanette Massy-Westropp, *The Art of Gesture: The Practices and Principles of 18th Century Acting*, Reihe Siegen, Bd. 64, Anglistische Abteilung (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1987), 15.

[87] Pinnock suggests for instance, that Tate and Priest changed "witches and furies" to "inchanteresses and fairees" to avoid upsetting the parents.

See: Pinnock, "Deus Ex Machina," 272-274.

[88] Christopher J. Wheatley, "Tragedy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Restoration Theatre*, ed. Deborah Payne Fisk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 70-85,70.

information was able to be easily communicated from France to England,[89] (and down the centuries to us). Richard Semmens writes that in his opinion "in most ways the theatrical dance of France and England c. 1685–1720 was essentially the same."[90] The Chelsea girls therefore would have performed with a French-influenced style of acting, dance and movement, and so would the court performers in 1684–5. The strong presence of dance in the earliest performances, particularly in the Chelsea production, is reflected in the four modern productions. This is true of the Waltz and ROH in particular, as they are directed by choreographers. Recent decades' interest in reconstructing baroque dance style is evident in the simple minuet that is clumsily danced by the troupe of small uniformed schoolgirls in the modern LAF production— a charming PDT reference to HIP and to the mysterious Chelsea production.

2.6 The 1700 and 1704 Productions

There is slightly more known about the first public performance of *Dido and Aeneas* at the Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre in 1700, in which it was titled *The Loves of Aeneas and Dido*, due to the survival of a lightly annotated prompt copy of the playbook and the fact that considerable evidence still exists of the theatre in which it was performed. The Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre was originally an indoor tennis court, which was converted into a theatre in 1660-1661 by Sir William Davenant and which housed his company, the Duke's players.[91] In 1695, a group of senior actors led by the famous actor-manager Thomas Betterton had moved into Lincoln's Inn Fields.[92] The theatre would have had a small stage and small forestage. It would have featured some stage machinery, probably more elaborate than that at Chelsea,[93] but finances were scarce for the fledgling company, and it is unlikely the scenery was lavish. Because of its origins, the theatre was about the size of a modern tennis court and could only

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[89] Ann Hutchinson Guest, *Dance Notation: The Process of Recording Movement On Paper* (London: Dance Books, 1984), 62-63.

[90] Richard Semmens, "Dancing and Dance Music in Purcell's Operas," in *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell*, ed. Michael Burden (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 180 - 196.

[91] Edward A. Langhans, "The Theatre," in *The Cambridge Companion to Restoration Theatre*, ed. Deborah Payne Fisk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1-18,1-3.

[92] Andrew Pinnock, "'From Rosy Bowers': Coming to Purcell the Bibliographical Way," in *Henry Purcell's Operas: The Complete Texts*, ed. Michael Burden (Abingdon: Oxford University Press, 2000), 31-94,83.

[93] Ibid., 44.

seat around 400 spectators, [94] so as with the two earlier productions, that of 1700 would have been intimate. Betterton was forced to abandon the successful but expensive genre of "dramatick opera" that he had developed with Purcell in the early 1690s, and focus more on spoken theatre.[95] The 1700 production of *Dido and Aeneas*, with its unique presentation and structure, appears to have been an attempt to forge a middle path between the two genres.

2.6.1 Structure

In the 1700 production, *Dido* was cut into four segments which were performed at intervals throughout a heavily adapted production of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure.* This practice stemmed from the dual history of the Stuart court masque with its emphasis on spectacle rather than narrative (a genre that became a more public after the restoration of the monarchy) and the strong literary tradition of Shakespeare, Fletcher and Jonson: the cut-and-paste practice combined these two genres into one entertainment.[96] Many of these playwrights' plays were adapted to include elaborate masques, such as Purcell's (and, it is assumed, Betterton's) adaptation of *A Midsummer's Night's Dream* as *The Fairy Queen* (1693). In this particular case, then, *The Loves of Aeneas and Dido* was presented as a "phenomenal" courtly masque for the aristocratic characters of *Measure for Measure*.

The four segments of *Dido and Aeneas* were performed out of order: the first was what we normally think of as Act I, the second was Act II Scene 2 with the ending omitted,[97] and *then* Act II Scene 1, the third was Act III, and the fourth was the Prologue, with an altered ending featuring the figures of Mars (the Roman god of war) and the allegorical figure of Peace. It is likely that the 1704 production was based on the 1700 score, and similarly omitted the witches' chorus and dance.[98] It also seems that between the 1700 and 1704 productions, the

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[94] Langhans, "The Theatre," 2.

[95] Pinnock, "'From Rosy Bowers': Coming to Purcell the Bibliographical Way," 83. See also: Robert D. Hume, "Opera in London, 1695 - 1706," in *British Theatre and the Other Arts*, ed. Shirley Strum Kenny (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1984), 62-91,77.

[96] Harris, *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas*, 9.

[97] Harris and Pinnock have both provided convincing explanations as to why the witches' chorus and dance at the end of Act II were cut in 1700 and 1704. See:

[98] Pinnock, "'From Rosy Bowers': Coming to Purcell the Bibliographical Way," 50-52.

Prologue was also cut, probably because it no longer made political allegorical sense and because *Dido and Aeneas* had to be shortened for presentation as an afterpiece. Today's extant score sources seem to have all been essentially based on the 1704 production's score.[99] It was probably in this way, then, that the Prologue and the original ending to Act II were lost.

2.6.2 Casting

There are strong clues as to the cast-list for the 1700 production. Laurie convincingly argues for John Bowman as Aeneas, as "he was one of the principal actors as well as the most prominent bass at the Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre in 1700, [but] he is not included in the cast-list for *Measure for Measure*."[100] Laurie suggests Mary Hodgson as Dido, "since the other main women singers of the company all took part in the play."[101] Hodgson would have been vocally quite well-suited to Dido, as she had a low soprano range and most comfortably sang repertoire we would today assign to mezzos:[102] the role of Dido is nearly always sung by mezzos today, as it is in all four of the modern productions. Hodgson was a stage singer, rather than an actress-singer, and so this casting would have fitted quite well with "dramatick" opera and its juxtaposition of spoken acting by actors and songs performed by singers, aligning the 1700 production with the Purcellian/Bettertonian dramatick opera.

We know that a John Wiltshire sang the role of the Sailor, as there is an extant publication of "The Saylors Song, set by Mr Purcell, Sung by Mr Wiltshire in the Play call'd "Measure For Measure."[103] As Curtis Price and Irena Cholij suggest in their 1986 article "Dido's Bass Sorceress", Wiltshire almost certainly also sang the role of the Sorceress.[104] The above

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[99] See:

Harris, *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas*, 48, 63, 131.

Laurie, "Henry Purcell: Dido and Aeneas. An Opera. An Authoritative Score," 52.

[100] Laurie, "Henry Purcell: Dido and Aeneas. An Opera. An Authoritative Score," 54.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Holland, "Purcell and the Seventeenth-century Voice: An Investigation of Singers and Voice Types in Henry Purcell's Vocal Music", 98-99.

[103] Harris, *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas*.

[104] Curtis Price and Irena Cholij, "Dido's Bass Sorceress," *The Musical Times* 127, no. 1726 (1986): 615-618.

publication of the "Saylors Song", as well as the 1700 promptbook listing this aria as sung by the Sorceress, strongly suggests that in 1700, the Sorceress disguised herself as the Sailor as a role-within-a-role. Price and Cholij argue that the Sorceress role was played *en travesti*, with Wiltshire playing a Sorceress rather than a Sorcerer. He had already played a female witch in a 1696 production of *Macbeth*, adapted by Sir William Davenant and set to music by John Eccles.[105] Price and Cholij believe that the Sorceress part was simply transposed down an octave from the Tenbury score part, and that Wilshire would have sung it in his chest register. Again, we do not know what the "original" vocal role was like, and it may have been deliberately gender-ambiguous. I show later in this thesis (see Chapters 5 and 6) how this historical precedent for a male Sorcerer or cross-dressed Sorcerer/ess is taken up in modern performance, such as in the Waltz and OA productions. In Chapter 7, I also show how the different options for roles-within-roles in disguise plots—as suggested by this early performance history—are created in several instances in the modern productions to emphasise the trickery, malice and power of the witches as well as balancing narrative-based innovation with historically informed performance.

2.7 Conclusions

Because of the specific and mysterious nature of its genesis, *Dido* is particularly difficult to fit into today's commonly understood notion of a "work", despite its current status in the operatic canon. *Dido* is part of the standard operatic repertoire today, but it was not always so: after the 1704 performance, *Dido* was little known for much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with only very rare concert performances until its modern stage revival in 1895. Most of the Western Art Music (WAM) canon consists of music written during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which fits reasonably well with the time period in which the ideology and the canon of musical "works" developed.[106] Earlier music tends not to fit so well with the Canonic ideology, as the former was written before the latter developed. Seventeenth-century western culture generally held more flexible views on composed music and its ontological parameters than Canonic culture allows, although the rise of post-

[105] Ibid., 617.

[106] On the history of the concept of the musical "work", see Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*. On the issue of the Canonic ideology and its relationship to the "work"-concept, see Haynes, *The End of Early Music*.

structuralism and postmodernism in the past 40 years and its incorporation into the musical sphere has done much to challenge Canonism.

The precepts of *Werktreue* tend to be applied more strongly to operas written in the standard operatic era (i.e. the "long nineteenth century" from Mozart to Puccini). This phenomenon is not only due to the uncertainty surrounding the genesis of such old texts. It is also due to the fact that, as Lydia Goehr has famously argued, the concept of musical "works" in the Canonic sense did not yet have cultural force; it was not a "regulative concept" before around 1800. Before that time, music's value was not as strongly associated with the composer's originality, or with the intrinsic musicality of the music—two aspects that came to be highly valued in the Romantic era. Instead, in the Baroque era the value of music was much more associated with its ritualistic and pedagogical functions,[107] and with its emotional effectiveness in performance.[108] The latter was especially important considering the fact that performers typically had more freedom in interpreting notated WAM in that era than they have generally had since the middle of the nineteenth century (and until the rise of aleatoric and improvisatory forms of WAM in the late twentieth century).[109] Individual performances were also arguably more important before the nineteenth century because composers tended to more frequently and openly re-work scores for different performances, borrowing not only from their own earlier work but also from the musical work of others.[110]

From the perspective of performance today, therefore, the lack of a reliable "original" for *Dido and Aeneas* offers considerable flexibility. In particular, the operatic text and its genesis are attractive for modern productions and creative teams faced with the competing conceptual and aesthetic demands of the fidelity dichotomy. In addition, the unusualness of *Dido*'s generic status as compared to opera, "dramatick" opera and masque, particularly within the

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[107] Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, 122.

[108] See: Haynes, *The End of Early Music*, 8.

[109] There is a general consensus on this point in the literature, with the usual minor exceptions. Bruce Haynes refers to Baroque styles of notation as "'thin' writing". See: ibid., 4. For further reading also see: Butt, *Playing With History*, Chapter 4: "Negotiating between work, composer and performer: rewriting the story of notational progress", 96-124.

[110] Again, the prevalence of re-working and borrowing musical material is a well-known feature of pre-Romantic WAM. See: J. Peter Burkholder, "Borrowing," *Grove Music Online* (2015). http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/52918pg8 (accessed 22 August 2015).

musical and theatrical context of 1680s England, means that information about its original performance style is almost impossible to reliably deduce from what is known of the performances of other similar works at the time: apart from Blow's *Venus and Adonis*, there essentially were none.

In addition to the mystery surrounding the early performances, there is also significant evidence to suggest that even among these productions there was a good deal of variety in the way *Dido* was performed. This is the case for the opera's overall structure, for its audience and social function or purpose, and most particularly for its casting. Because so many of the parts—Aeneas, the Sorceress, the Sailor and the Spirit— appear to have been changed between voice-types and gender casting in the early years of *Dido and Aeneas's* performance history, even probably while Purcell was still alive and involved in the production and even perhaps doing the reassigning himself, it is easy to make a strong HIP-supported argument for widely different castings in modern performance.

Because HIP is so important in today's WAM sphere, at least some level of historical information and HIP background is expected by instrumentalists, singers and audiences. The flexibility that *Dido and Aeneas*'s mysterious and multifaceted genesis offers to modern directors and conductors is attractive in that the typical PDT interest in the multifarious and ambiguous is ideologically allowed space to be expressed, without going against the grain of HIP values. The creative team's own artistic signatures can also more easily and "justifiably" be imprinted on the production. All four of the modern productions analysed in the next chapters exhibit a balance and combination of HIP with an overall directorial concept that blends the modern with the historical. They blend and juxtapose modern values, theatrical and cultural styles and concerns, with historical information and interpretation of the various layers of history that *Dido and Aeneas* has accrued, not least the mysterious history surrounding the opera's genesis.

3 The Prologue

3.2 Introduction

The Prologue to *Dido and Aeneas* has long been one of the most contentious issues in the scholarly literature, yet it has only very rarely received performance over the last three centuries, largely because Purcell's music has not survived. As I have shown in the previous chapter, it was probably cut for the 1704 productions and since then has been lost. The allegorical function of the Prologue also has little relevance in a different context. Today, audiences' main interest in *Dido and Aeneas* is arguably in Purcell's music and in the poignant tragedy of Queen Dido, neither of which are relevant in the case of the Prologue. There are thus various reasons why it rarely receives performance, though many scholars and performers find its elusiveness fascinating. For the reader's reference I include the full facsimile text of the Prologue in the Appendix to this thesis.[1]

As Bruce Haynes argues, much of the western art music (WAM) world's ideology has derived from Canonism,[2] and, in recent decades, also from the HIP ethos (as discussed, I agree with Nicholas Cook when he argues that HIP often involves *Werktreue*[3]). Within such prevailing ideologies, any reconstruction of the Prologue will tend to be viewed with scepticism. Yet the Canonic (*Werktreue*-based) paradigm does not fully apply in the case of *Dido*'s Prologue, because the music has been lost. The HIP ethos only functions with difficulty because of the same reason, and because so little is known about the original period, performances and performance style of the Prologue, as I have shown in the previous chapter. In the case of the Prologue, there is also a challenge to the conventional fidelity dichotomy, because there is more extant information about the original elements of staging than there is about the musical elements, which is the reverse of the usual situation (in which

[1] This is a scan of the relevant section of the Chelsea libretto facsimile, published in the front matter of the Purcell Society's edition of the score. Tate, "*Dido and Aeneas* [Chelsea Libretto]."

[2] I use Bruce Haynes' term, a significant aspect of which is the "Great Composer"-based notion of musical history and culture, which developed in the nineteenth century and has persisted to this day in the WAM sphere. See Glossary and: Haynes, *The End of Early Music*, 5-6.

[3] Cook, *Beyond the Score*, 26.

musical scores provide more detailed artistic information than libretti). However, it is possible to "reconstruct" the Prologue using a loose approach to HIP by employing what we know today about Purcell's style and the performance practices of the period, to fill in the gaps in the historical records. Partly because of the fact that it resists fitting into any particular prevailing operatic performance paradigm, a reconstruction of this Prologue offers unique opportunities. Modern performance of the Prologue therefore involves an exaggerated form of the same issue that I have explored in the previous chapter and that characterises modern performance of the opera as a whole: the gaps and ambiguities in the historical record allow considerable space for original creative expression in modern performance, while arguably remaining within the bounds of HIP. The current convention of the fidelity dichotomy can be maintained, while introducing more creative free reign than would otherwise be the case.

3.3 The Waltz Production

Given the lack of original Purcellian musical material, the rather confusing nature of the Chelsea libretto's Prologue text, and the lack of contemporary interest in Restoration prologues, it is not surprising that only one of the four modern productions includes Tate's Prologue: the Waltz production. Its conductor/arranger/composer Attilio Cremonesi "reconstructed" Purcell's missing music by cutting and rearranging music from Purcell's other works to fit Tate's libretto, mainly Purcell's *Ayres for the Theatre* and his *Odes* and *Welcome Songs*. Cremonesi also left much of the recitative-like text without musical accompaniment, and it is spoken by the dancers in performance. In most other respects, in "reconstructing" *Dido and Aeneas*, Cremonesi followed the Prologue's structure as suggested by the Chelsea libretto, with some exceptions, which I examine below. Cremonesi based his reconstruction on the 1995 King's Music score edition edited by Clifford Bartlett, and all image examples here of the Waltz production's interpolations and deviations from what might be thought of as the "standard" *Dido and Aeneas* derive from the Sasha Waltz and Guests archival copy of that score.[4]

[4] Purcell, Tate, and Cremonesi, *Dido and Aeneas: Choreographic Opera*

In using Purcell's own music from other sources, Cremonesi's Prologue reveals some influence of Canonic ideology. Within this ideological framework, which highly valorises "Great Composers," such as Purcell (as well as Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, and so on), only the composer's own work is generally deemed worthy of being performed under the composer's name, or of being considered in some way "equal" to the original score. Cook has also explained that the Great Composer paradigm is associated with *Werktreue*:

> The idea of the performer's duty has traditionally come in two distinct versions: on the one hand duty to the composer, on the other to the work (sometimes referred to as *Werktreue*).[5]

In this case, Cremonesi takes on the role that has been traditionally borne by the performer. He arguably fulfils the traditional fidelity to the work in some sense, by reconstructing the "missing" sections, but more importantly he privileges the fidelity to the composer. While Cremonesi's most obvious alternative way of reconstructing the Prologue would have been of writing original Purcellian-inspired music to fit Tate's text—what Bruce Haynes calls "style-copy" or "Period composing"[6]— this is still considered rather conceptually suspect within WAM, even within the HIP community.[7] In taking the Purcellian piecemeal approach to reconstructing the Prologue, Cremonesi avoids the ideological quicksand of Period composing, but encounters other problems. He achieves an overall musical style that is superficially in line with that of the opera proper, but there are some features of the selected pieces, and particularly some aspects of the way Cremonesi arranges and sets them, that do not align with Purcell's extant music for *Dido and Aeneas*, as I will show in this chapter.

Sasha Waltz, meanwhile, creates a collection of stage images and dances that work to reference some major themes in the prologue and the opera. She establishes themes in the Prologue that run throughout the entire production. Her direction also explores various ways of speaking or singing the text, some of which address the nature of text and meaning-making itself, in a playful and destabilizing manner.

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[5] Cook, *Beyond the Score*, 13.

6 Actually, in using this term Haynes really refers to composing within a style of a time and place, rather than in the style of one particular composer, but the term is a useful one and so I have adopted it for use in this context.

7 Haynes, *The End of Early Music*, 209-214.

In general, the Waltz production tends to approach its constructions of the various themes that are associated with *Dido and Aeneas* in ambiguous and complex ways that are not easily interpreted. The addition of much extra material that explores and comments on the opera rather than furthering the communication of the narrative is initially confusing, largely due to the doubling and tripling of characters but also because of the reliance upon associative imagery rather than clear didacticism. Repeat viewings of the production are required to better comprehend the complex, ambiguous themes that are expressed through the profusion of often simultaneous choreographic signs. Unfortunately, such repeat viewings also lessen this production's affective force. This is the most radical of the four productions, partly because of its through-choreographed style full of "noumenal" dancing (dancing that is "perceived" by the characters as normal everyday movement), and its innovative use of presence effects such as the huge, striking aquarium in the Prologue, but in the main because of its deconstructive departure from the traditional narrative approach.

Waltz and Cremonesi have taken approaches to the original that balance HIP and a freely creative, contemporary and PDT treatment of the Prologue. The DVD liner notes feature Carolin Emcke's Discussion with Waltz and Cremonesi, which includes Cremonesi's revealing statement: "The quest for historical authenticity does not necessarily mean you cherish things because they are covered in dust. I collect as much information as I can about the historical period, and then the real musical process begins. …Sometimes you have to break the mould."[8] The use of the word "authenticity" is somewhat out-dated,[9] but Cremonesi follows a fairly loose approach to HIP that is characteristic of much of the early twenty-first century's performance of pre-1800s music. He "breaks the mould," if the mould can be considered to be 1980s-style, rather dogmatic "authentic early music performance". It seems that Cremonesi's use of "historical authenticity" also relates on a broader level to taking inspiration from *Dido and Aeneas's* earliest sources, and in this sense (though not in the sense of stylistic HIP) Sasha Waltz has taken a similar route. Reviewer Stephen Rose explains that "although Waltz's choreography belongs to the German school of contemporary *Tanztheater*, many of her and Cremonesi's decisions stem from close study of the opera's earliest

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[8] Attilio Cremonesi, in "Gespraech ueber 'Dido and Aeneas': Sasha Waltz, Attilio Cremonesi, Carolin Emcke," trans. Alan Seaton, [DVD liner notes], *Dido and Aeneas: Choreographic Opera*, [DVD], ZDF TheaterKanal, Arte, ArtHaus Musik GmbH, 2005.

[9] Dorottya Fabian, "The Meaning of Authenticity and the Early Music Movement: A Historical Review," *International Review of the Aesethetics and Sociology of Music*, Vol. 32, No. 2, (December 2001), 153.

sources."[10] Rose points for example to Waltz and Cremonesi's decision to follow the Chelsea libretto in assigning more lines to the Second Woman than are commonly found in the Tenbury-based sources, which prioritize Belinda's role[11], but this paradigm is also evident in their "reconstruction" of the Prologue and the other "missing" sections of *Dido and Aeneas*'s music throughout the opera.

However, while Cremonesi focuses his energies in this regard predominantly on the Chelsea libretto and its peculiarities in contrast with most Tenbury-based scores, Waltz tends to focus hers instead on Virgil's original text (I discuss this further in the next chapter, as it relates to the opera proper). While Cremonesi adapts many of Purcell's other extant music for use in the Prologue, Waltz does not focus on reconstructing a historically informed interpretation of the opera's theatrical elements of the opera, but rather focuses on her present time and place in terms of stylistic materiality as well as meaning-making. Waltz and Cremonesi appear to have found common ground in their interest in the original sources and in a loose approach to "authenticity," but the fidelity dichotomy is obviously still present in this production.

3.3.1 Waltz's staging of the Prologue

Waltz begins the prologue with the most memorable image in the entire production, one that featured on almost all of the promotional material: a huge blue aquarium filled with water and light, with male and female dancers floating and dancing inside it. The dancers' bodies are sculpted and beautiful, their movements light and fluid and rather innocently sexual as they entwine around each other, and their naiveté and the classical theme are subtly emphasised by diaphanous contemporary costumes that float around them as they dance. Above and around the tank, scaffolding and ladders allow the dancers to climb up to the rim, and to walk on the catwalk above the tank, creating two levels. The two Narrators/gods declaim their text mostly while standing on this catwalk. Phoebus is performed by Juan Cruz Diaz de Garaio Esnaola and Venus by Charlotte Engelkes. Esnaola as Phoebus commands the "Tritons and Nereids" below them to "come pay your devotion". This *mise-en-scène* therefore signifies an upper "god" level and a lower "demigod" level; and later in the Prologue this

[10] Stephen Rose, "Different Didos [Review]," *Early Music* 37, no. 4 (2009): 681-683.

[11] Ibid.

symbolism is extended, with the human characters inhabiting an even lower "mortal" level on the stage floor. The dancers / demigods in the water are also silent, symbolically disempowering them as a group and emphasising their childlike and animalistic qualities, in contrast with the two Narrators / gods who perform all the spoken lines. The actual singing Chorus is offstage, creating an otherworldly, disembodied effect. At the same time, the heavy glass and steel structure of the tank and the modern-style costumes emphasise a twenty-first century aesthetic which contrasts in style—and cleverly, also blends somewhat in terms of signification and association—with the imagery of classical gods and demigods, primeval innocent sexuality and childlike play, and water.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 3.1	
Production	**Act / Scene**
Waltz	Prologue (first half)

Stephanie Rentsch stresses the importance of the symbol of water in this production, and how it persists long after the water is drained from the tank and the structure rolled offstage:

> After this moist-merry opening scene the aquarium is rolled offstage by stagehands, but water remains an important, plot-promoting element of the libretto as well as the staging (…) from Dido's perspective Aeneas, who was originally sent by Zeus (sic) from Troy to Italy, emerges suddenly from over the sea, and just as unexpectedly she falls in love with him. But the godly mission, to found a new kingdom in Italy, must be fulfilled by Aeneas; Dido's home Carthage shall be merely a stopover point in his journey over the sea.[12]

12 Stefanie Rentsch, "Fließende Übersetzungen," *Grenzgänge der Kunst(wissenschaften): Sasha Waltz' Choreographie Dido & Aeneas* (2006). http://www.sfb626.de/veroeffentlichungen/online/grenzgaenge/aufsaetze/rentsch.pdf (accessed 9 April 2012).

Original: "Nach dieser feucht-fröhlichen Auftaktszene wird das Aquarium von Bühnenhelfern zwar wieder von der Bühne gerollt, doch das Wasser bleibt ein wichtiges, die Handlung vorantreibendes Element sowohl des Librettos als auch der Inszenierung (…) Aus Didos Perspektive taucht Aeneas, der von Zeus ursprünglich von Troja nach Italien gesandt worden war, völlig unvermittelt über das Meer auf, und ebenso unerwartet verliebt sie sich in ihn. Doch der göttliche Auftrag, in Italien ein neues Reich zu gründen, muß von Aeneas erfüllt werden; Didos Heimat Karthago soll nur zur Zwischenstation seiner Reise übers Meer werden."

As the Prologue progresses, the water tank is gradually drained. This constructs the notion of coming to shore, and also hints that the godlike bodies of the swimming dancers (Tritons and Nereids) are being drained of their power, as they flap in the shallow water like fish on the shore. This is commensurate with the meaning of the text as it appears in the written Prologue, as the action shifts to a more earthly, mortal realm—yet still an Arcadian world, with its dancing shepherds, shepherdesses and springtime. Waltz thus visually signifies a shift away from the "age of myth", preparing us for the opera proper which takes place in the "age of legend", in which mortal heroes and heroines, instead of gods and goddesses, are the protagonists. This visual and symbolic shift has the effect of making sense of the rather bizarre difference in setting and tone between the first and second parts of the Prologue. Also, more importantly, by presenting the Prologue in this manner with its emphasis on water and myth, the Waltz production ties the Prologue in thematically with the opera proper. However, Cremonesi's "reconstruction" from very different sources, and his decision to omit recitative, creates a slightly jarring, patchwork sensibility, as opposed to the usually extremely fluid progression from recitative to arioso to aria and back again that characterises Purcell's score for the opera proper. In contrast, Waltz's structural and thematic directorial style in this production, like her choreography which borrows from ballet and particularly from contemporary and lyrical dance, has the fluidity of the water that she so emphasises. Thus, in some ways Waltz's and Cremonesi's respective artistic domains do not align in terms of stylistic effect in the Prologue, therefore reducing the artistic unity and effectiveness of this part of the production.

The two Narrators, standing on the catwalk and briefly swimming in the water, represent Phoebus (Esnaola) and Venus (Engelkes). Engelkes is a dancer and performance artist who has frequently worked in Waltz's company but also has her own solo career,[13] while Esnaola is a dancer and core member of Sasha Waltz and Guests, and both performers feature prominently throughout this production. At the beginning of the Prologue, as well as playing "Venus", Engelkes also performs the combined role of two lesser goddesses (Nereids) and halfway through the Prologue she also briefly takes on the role of the Spirit of Spring. However, Waltz elides the transition between the Nereids and Spring characters and the

13 Charlotte Engelkes, "Charlotte Engelkes [Official website]" www.charlotteengelkes.com (accessed 5 June 2012).

Narrator/Venus character, so that audiences who do not have an intimate knowledge of the libretto may assume they are all the same character. The fact that Engelkes, as well as Esnaola, both address the audience repeatedly as they speak the lines also situates these performers within the long-standing tradition of the Narrator figure, who inhabits a liminal ontological space; he or she is partly diegetic and partly extra-diegetic (that is, he/she stands partly within and partly outside of the fictional world presented by the *mise-en-scène*). These Narrators operate more *within* the diegetic world than outside of it, taking on several of the roles of characters within the action and interacting directly with the diegetic characters.

Cremonesi's (and possibly Waltz's) decision to leave much of the Prologue's text as spoken dialogue without musical accompaniment allows Waltz some directorial leeway that she would not otherwise have had. A director can usually experiment with the pronunciation, meaning, acting, other elements of staging, and in particular the timing and vocal modulation associated with spoken dialogue, to a greater extent than she/he can with sung dialogue. This is largely due to the FD, the musical part of which—in association with Canonic ideology—prohibits any extreme changes to an existing score or the original musical style. Specifically in this production, Waltz takes an unusual approach to the text at two points in the Prologue. The announcement of the birth of Venus, goddess of love, and the danger of her attractions as prophesised by Phoebus, is spoken in a loud whisper by both performers, with Engelkes initiating the line and Esnaola then repeating it, in overlapping fashion. This effect could not have been achieved if the dialogue had been scored and sung recitative in typical Purcellian style. Engelkes begins the section by clearly declaiming the Nereid's two lines:

Nereid: Look down ye Orbs and See

A new Divinity.

The two of them then whisper Phoebus's lines:

Phoebus: Whose lustre does outshine

Your fainter beams, and half eclipses mine

Give Phoebus leave to prophesy.

Phoebus all events can see

Ten thousand, thousand harms

From such prevailing charms

To gods and men must instantly ensue.

The result of this directorial decision is that these lines are well-nigh incomprehensible for a listener. However, the original performances also included surtitles with a German translation of the text above the stage for the original Berlin audience, making the content of the text fully understandable. Consequently, the overlapping, whispering performance style indicates a playfully reflexive approach to the text, treating the text less as something that is involved with meaning-making and more as something to be experimented with: this effect treats the libretto in a way that is similar to the ways in which music is often treated, in which the materiality of the sounds are often more important than their signifying function. The incomprehensibility of the lines and the fact that they are spoken by both Narrators instead of just Esnaola as Phoebus (they are originally Phoebus's lines) also has a more practical effect on meaning-making: it blurs the demarcation between the previous dialogue featuring Phoebus and the Nereids and the next dialogue featuring Phoebus and Venus. Thus, the change of character by Engelkes (from Nereid to Venus) is also blurred, and the result is that an audience unfamiliar with the Prologue's original text would likely barely notice that Engelkes performs two different characters. This eliding of the transition between the characters is characteristic of Waltz's overall fluidity of style.

Waltz has Esnaola and Engelkes speak their next lines using a strange pronunciation that recalls that of German or Middle English, but does not quite correspond to either of them. Again, the playful and reflexive attitude towards the text's materiality is communicated more than the text's signifying function: the exaggerated pronunciation makes the text difficult to understand, though it is more understandable in this section than in the previous, whispered section. This section is as follows in the original text:

Venus: Fear not, Phoebus, fear not me,

A harmless Deity.

These are all my Guards ye View,

What can these blind Archers do?

Phoebus: Blind they are, but strike the Heart.

Venus: What Phoebus says is always True,

They Wound indeed, but ‘tis a pleasing Smart.

Phoebus: Earth and Skies address their Duty,

To the sovereign Queen of Beauty.

All resigning, none repining,

At her undisputed Sway.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 3.2	
Production	**Act / Scene**
Waltz	Prologue (first half)

The exaggerated, rather loud and declamatory mode of performance of these lines by Esnaola and Engelkes, and also their upright posture and Engelkes’ slow walk towards Esnaola, emphasises the regal and divine dignity of these two characters. Were it not for the surtitle translation, the audience would be likely to mainly understand that these two characters are regal and/or gods having a moment of some interpersonal tension but also mutual respect, rather than understanding any other subtleties of their dialogue, which is rendered incomprehensible by the pronunciation. In such moments of what Risi calls "irritation",[14] we can identify a deliberate presence-effect; a technique that elicits an almost physiological reaction of puzzlement, frustration and/ or wry amusement in the audience. Such techniques as these may particularly frustrate those who are used to a near-transparency of communication of meaning. This would be more acutely the case for an Anglophone audience member, who would expect to understand the English dialogue. Yet this presence-effect itself has an interpretative function. Waltz shifts the focus away from the original text’s statement about the danger and attraction of love, and towards different themes that are more

[14] Risi, "Sinn und Sinnlichkeit in der Oper: zu Hans Neuenfels' Idomeneo an der Deutschen Oper Berlin," 38. Cited in: Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 10.

relevant for the immediate time and place of the performance: the interplay between German and English and the common ancestral roots of the two languages, and more generally, the postmodern theme of critical and yet playful, reflexive experimentation with the nature of verbal communication.

3.3.2 Cremonesi's reconstructed Prologue

Cremonesi's choice to arrange pieces from Purcell's body of compositions is an intriguing one from stylistic as well as ideological perspectives. Only highly informed Purcell aficionados or scholars would recognise most of the sources for Cremonesi's Prologue's pieces, and they are the only audience members likely to perceive stylistic differences between the pieces. Differences could be expected, as the pieces were written at different times in Purcell's career. In reality, it is likely that most of them would not have yet been written at the time that Purcell wrote *Dido*, particularly if we are to assume that the date of composition was 1683–4. The pieces as they appear in Cremonesi's reconstructed Prologue also differ from Purcell's other works in that they are consistently shorter than Purcell's originals of each piece, having whole sections cut out.

Cremonesi begins the performance with a double, French-style Overture, which was almost certainly the structure of the lost original. Curiously, however, he does not utilise the probable actual original; the extant, mysterious G minor "Overture in Mr P Opera" (see Chapter 2) would complete the overall key structure for *Dido and Aeneas*, as Curtis Price has argued.[15] As can be seen in the harmonic structure cited in Chapter 1 (Figure 1.2), the key centres of each act rise by intervals of fourths, if the Prologue is counted as an act and if Act II's two scenes, which otherwise function individually as part of the tonal scheme, are counted as one act. The G minor to parallel major shift for the Prologue would make sense given the joyfulness of the majority of the Prologue's libretto's content, and the association which was already present at this time (and already utilized by Purcell) between the major

[15] Price, *Henry Purcell and the London Stage*, 241, 245.

mode and a happy mood.[16] Overall, it seems quite likely that this is indeed the missing overture to the Prologue, though it has received very little performance and was difficult to obtain in 2005.[17] Yet Cremonesi does not even use this *key* in his reconstructed overture, despite the fact that transposition to G minor would have been a simple matter. Instead, he puts together an overture from two different Purcell pieces, and retains their original key of D minor for each: the slow, double-dotted first section (the "First Musick") is the Chacone [*sic*] from Purcell's music for *The Gordian Knot Unty'd,* and the fast second part (the "Second Musick") was originally the Third Act Tune from *Dioclesian*. As the first and second parts of the original overture to *Dido and Aeneas* (the opera proper) are likewise quite disparate, with their main linking feature being that they are both in the same key (C minor), to the layman the combined *Gordian Knot* and *Dioclesian* pieces therefore seem relatively convincing as an "overture" for the Prologue. D minor is an interesting choice, as Purcell's works often associate D minor (as well as A minor) with scenes of amorousness and sexuality, as Price points out,[18] and Waltz's direction certainly emphasises this element, with its images of swimming, entwining half-naked dancers. However, G minor remains more appropriate to Purcell's overall style, as Purcell often used G minor as a harbinger of death, but also of *le petit mort* ("the little death"/orgasm) in pastoral scenes.[19] Both of these associations are highly appropriate for the Prologue to *Dido and Aeneas,* as it includes the theme of Venus and love, pastoral spring scenes with flirtation between shepherds and shepherdesses, and also because it is the Prologue to an opera concerning a tragic death brought about largely through sexuality and love. Therefore, while Cremonesi's arrangement for the overture is not without merit, it is perplexing that he did not make use of such a historically, stylistically, structurally and thematically appropriate ready-made piece as the G minor overture.

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[16] Ibid., 22-23.

[17] As of the time of writing, there is only one commercial recording available, and the score has only recently begun to circulate widely in print: Volume 21 (Dramatic Music part III) of the Purcell Society's Complete Works of Henry Purcell, containing the only published edition of this overture, was finally republished in 2010 after being out of print for many years.

See: Henry Purcell and Margaret Laurie, *Dramatic Music: Vocal and Insturmental Music for the Stage, Part III [Musical Score]*, ed. Margaret Laurie, Purcell Society Edition (London: Stainer & Bell, 2010).

Henry Purcell, The Parley of Instruments, and Roy Goodman, *Purcell's Complete Ayres for the Theatre [Audio CD]* (London: Hyperion).

18 Price, *Henry Purcell and the London Stage*, 22.

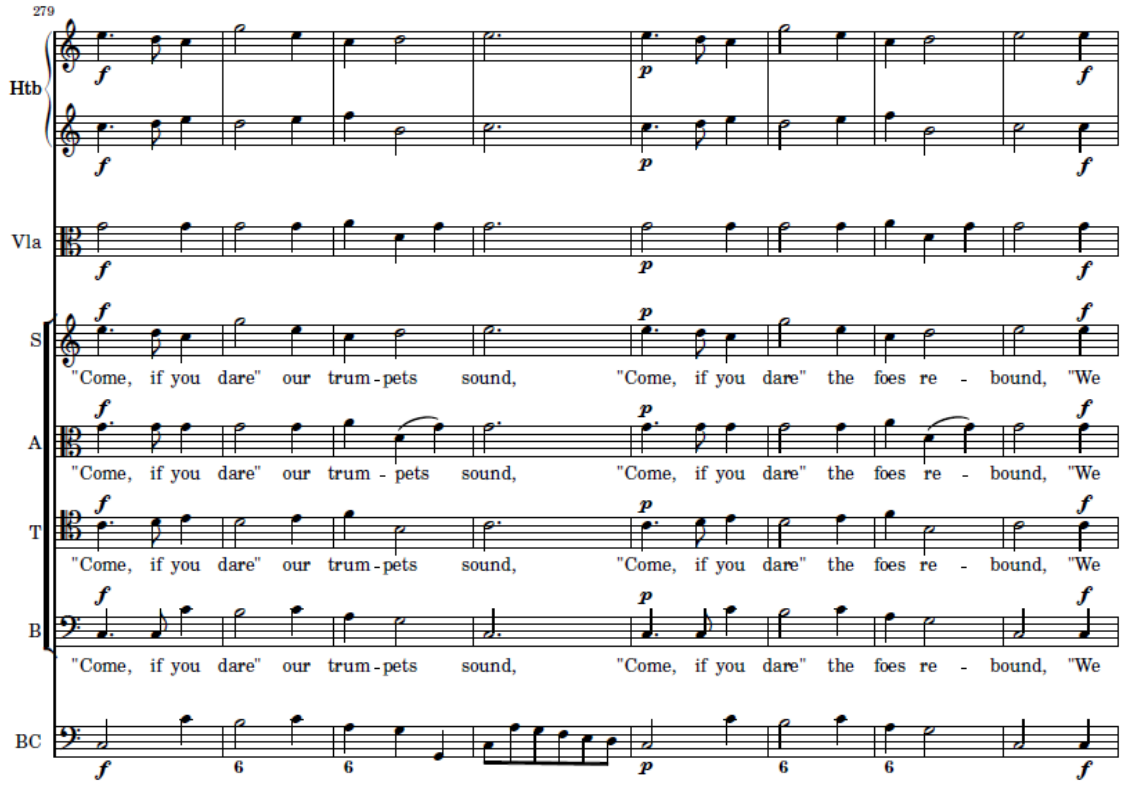
19 Ibid., 22-23.

The most notable characteristics of the music for the opera proper include sustained arioso, ground bass arias, scotch snaps and other dotted rhythms, flexible and inventive rhythms for recitative and solo arioso, and repetitive, less rhythmically complex and more melodically predictable dance-like music for choruses and dances. Considering that Purcell was and is so well-known for his excellent and seemingly natural setting of the rhythms and inflections of the English language,[20] it is unfortunate that several of Cremonesi's settings of Purcell's imported music to Tate's Prologue text do not quite achieve this natural effect. Admittedly, Cremonesi is not a native English speaker like Purcell, and Purcell's recitative contains the most rhythmically natural text-setting, which Cremonesi has not attempted to recreate[21]. A good example of some of Cremonesi's slightly jarring text-setting can be found in his version of the chorus "To the new rising star of the ocean," and the following "Tritons Dance". These are both adapted from Purcell's chorus "Come If You Dare" from the quintessentially English dramatick opera *King Arthur, or The British Worthy* (1691). Below are excerpts from *King Arthur*, followed by Cremonesi's adaptations of the same material:

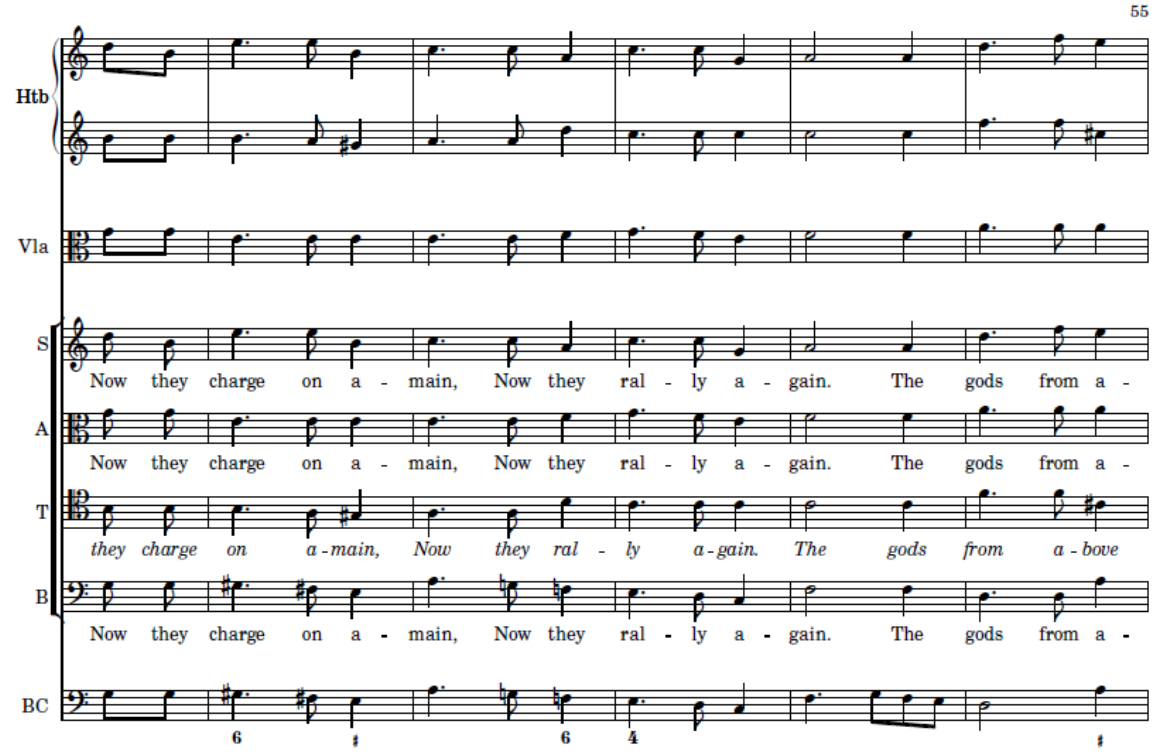
20 Purcell was even known for this talent in his own lifetime: Henry Playford's Preface to Orpheus Brittanicus, a collection of Purcell's music published shortly after his death, features the statement: "The Author's extraordinary Talent in all sorts of Musick is sufficiently known, but he was especially admir'd for the Vocal, having a peculiar Genius to express the energy of English Words, whereby he mov'd the Passions of all his Auditors." Henry Purcell and Henry Playford, *Orpheus Britannicus: The First Book, a Facsimile of the 1698 London Edition* (New York: Boude Brothers, 1965), 122.

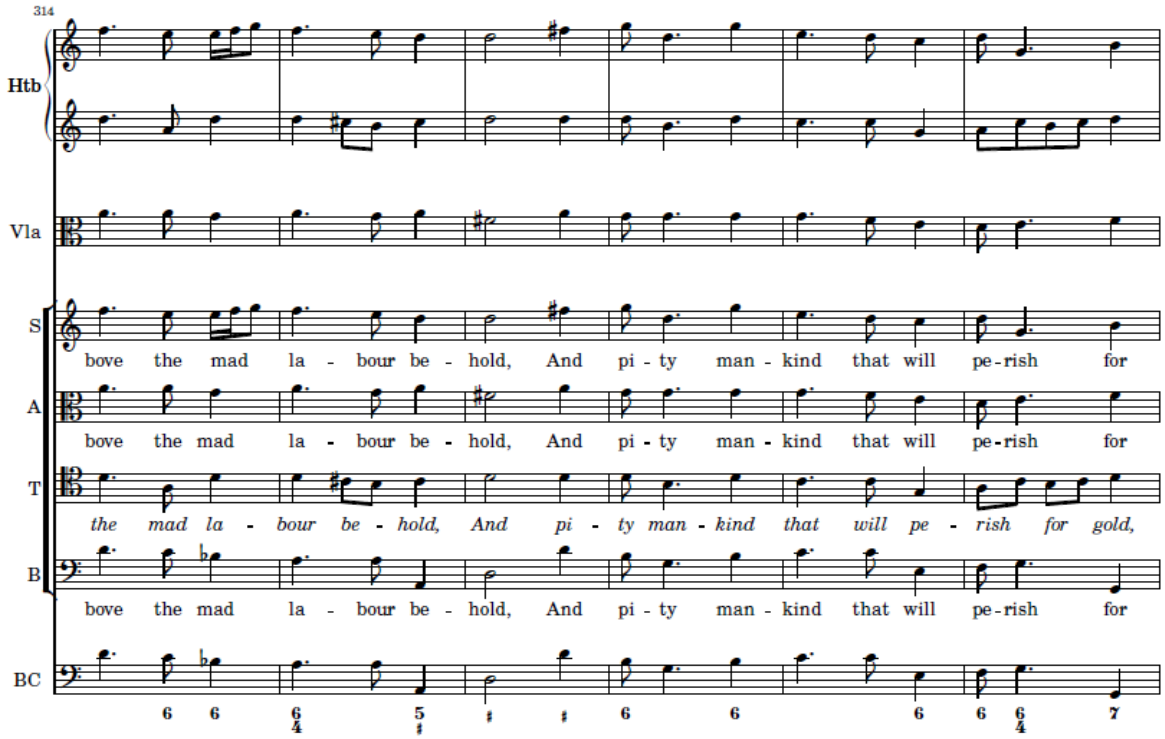
Also on this topic see: James Gifford, "Dramatic Text, Music Text: Competing Nationalist Styles in Restoration Opera," *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies* 14, no. 1 (2012): 21-37.

21 Possibly Cremonesi did not attempt to reconstruct the recitatives at least partly for that very reason. It would almost be impossible to arrange and adapt existing Purcell recitatives with different text because they are so finely-crafted to suit the original text. Cremonesi did not compose any new music for the reconstructed Prologue, and composing recitatives in the style of Purcell would be extremely difficult for a non-native English speaker, much more so than adapting existing choruses or even composing new style-copy ones.



(Bars 287–308 omitted)

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bove the mad la - bour be - hold, And pi - ty man - kind that will pe - rish for
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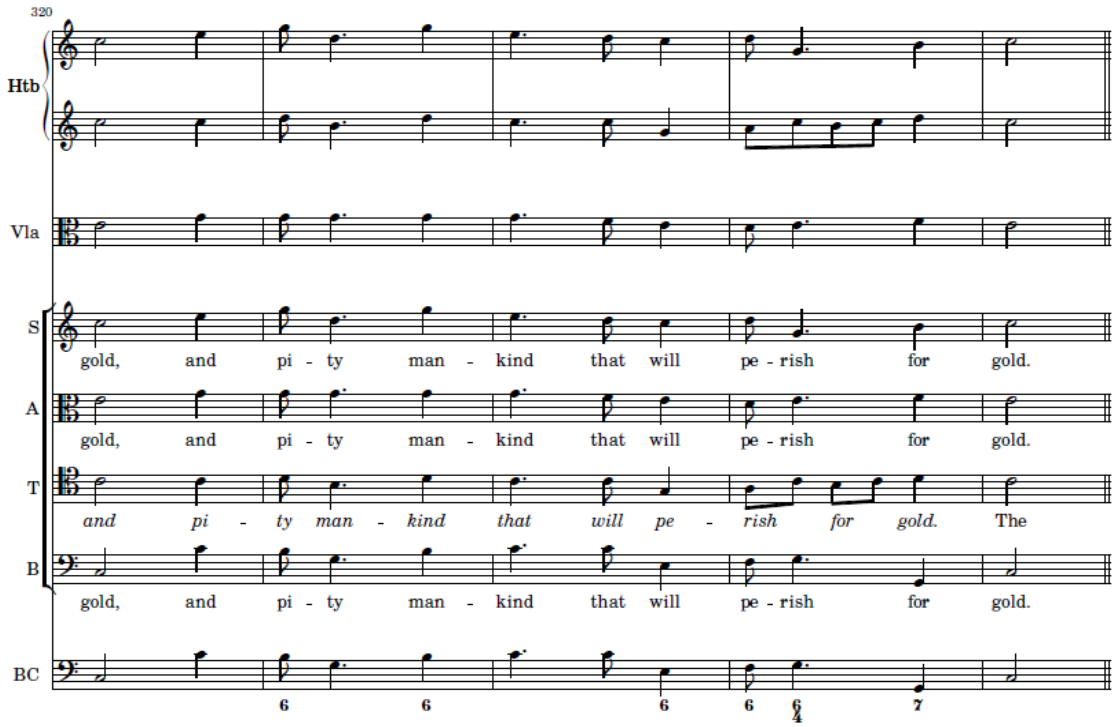

Figure 3-1: Excerpts from the chorus "Come If You Dare" from *King Arthur, or The British Worthy*.[22]

[22] Henry Purcell, John Dryden, and Edward Taylor, *King Arthur*, ed. Jean-Charles Malahieude (London: Musical Antiquarian Society Publications, 2012 (1843)), 53, 58-59.

loud soft

To the New ri - sing Star ___ of the O - cean, To the New ri - sing Star ___ of the O - cean.

To the New ri - sing Star ___ of ___ the O - cean, To the New ri - sing Star ___ of ___ the O - cean.

To the New ri - sing Star ___ of the O - cean, To the New ri - sing Star ___ of the O - cean.

To the New ri - sing Star ___ of the O - cean, To the New ri - sing Star ___ of the O - cean.

9 loud

Ve - nus De - scends in her Cha - ri - ot, Ve - nus De - scends in her ___ Cha - ri - ot, The

Ve - nus De - scends in her Cha - ri - ot, Ve - nus De - scends in her Cha - ri - ot, The

Ve - nus De - scends in her Cha - ri - ot, Ve - nus De - scends in her Cha - ri - ot, The

Ve - nus De - scends in her Cha - ri - ot, Ve - nus De - scends in her Cha - ri - ot, The

17

Tri-tons, The Tri - tons out of the Sea, The Tri-tons, The Tri - tons out of the Sea.

Tri-tons, The Tri - tons out of the Sea, The Tri-tons, The Tri - tons out of the Sea.

Tri-tons, The Tri - tons out ___ of ___ the Sea, The Tri-tons, The Tri - tons out ___ of ___ the Sea.

Tri-tons, The Tri - tons out of the Sea, The Tri-tons, The Tri - tons out of the Sea.

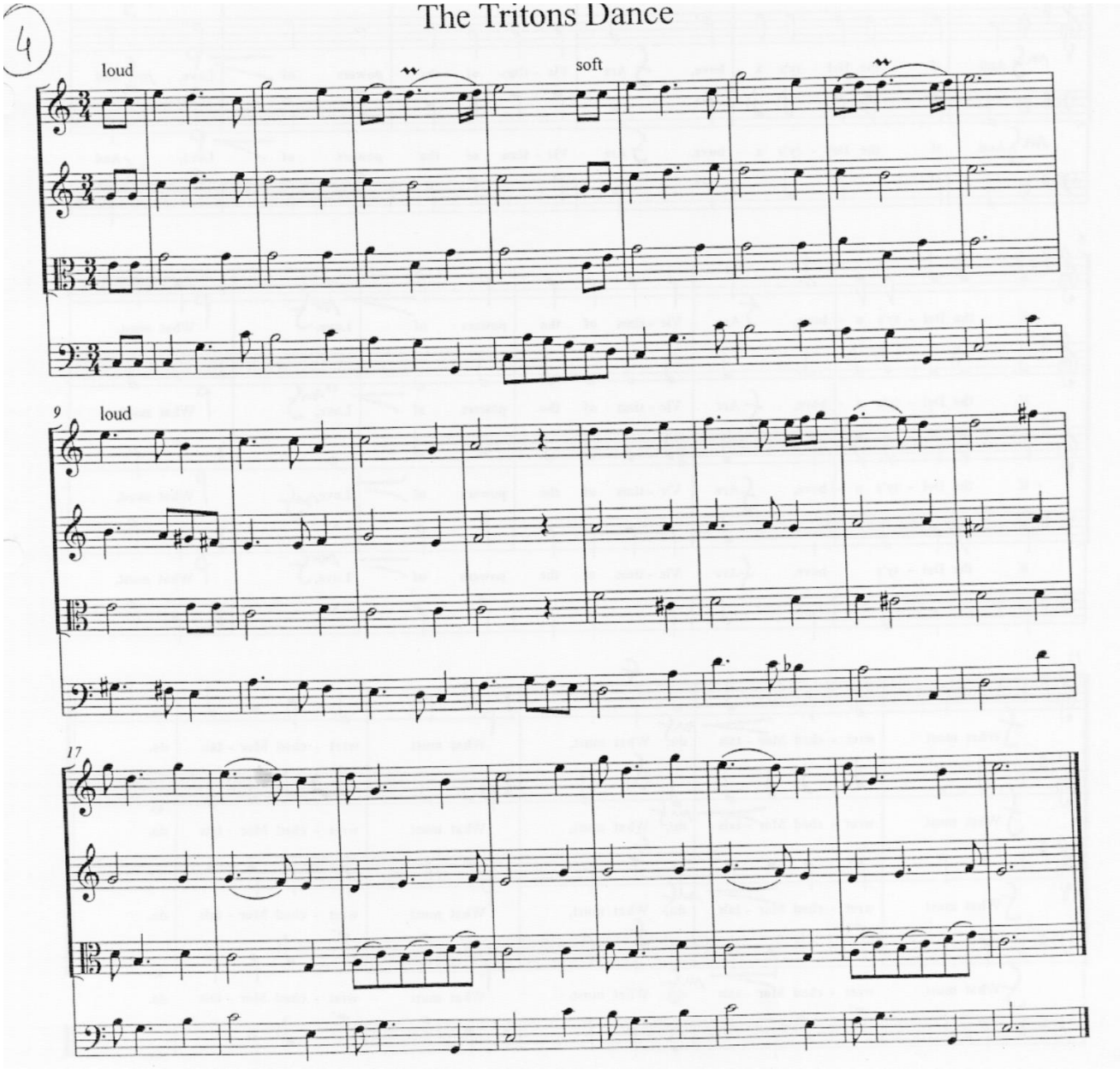

Figure 3-2: From the Prologue to *Dido and Aeneas* as in the Chelsea libretto, adapted and arranged by Attilio Cremonesi, after Henry Purcell. From the Waltz archive score.[23] From *Dido & Aeneas* (by Sasha Waltz).

Cremonesi's arrangement features rather awkward treatment of the text settings for "of the ocean" and "out of the sea". In "of the ocean", Cremonesi puts rhythmic emphasis on the relatively unimportant words "of" and "the." Similarly, with the "scotch snaps" (or quaver-crotchet motif) on a descending intervallic leap, on the words "out of", the rhythmic emphasis lands on the word "of." These settings do not sit well with a native speaker's inflection,

[23] Purcell, Tate, and Cremonesi, *Dido and Aeneas: Choreographic Opera*

which would tend more in the former case towards emphasis on "ocean" and almost none on "out of," and in the latter case, would also tend towards a reversed (crotchet-quaver) motif with the rhythmic emphasis on "out". Although Purcell is renowned for his organic use of the scotch snap for English text-setting, often in conjunction with a descending intervallic leap, his use of these devices is more suited to a native speaker's inflections, as we can see in the "Come If You Dare" chorus on the key emotive words "pity" and "perish" in the B section. We can also perceive the use of the scotch snap and the descending intervallic leap for emphasis on key words and using a native speaker's inflections, in the following examples from *Dido and Aeneas*:

(A) "*Shake* the cloud… fortune *smiles*." - Here, Belinda's key words are emphasised by scotch snaps on "shake" and a descending leap on "smiles".

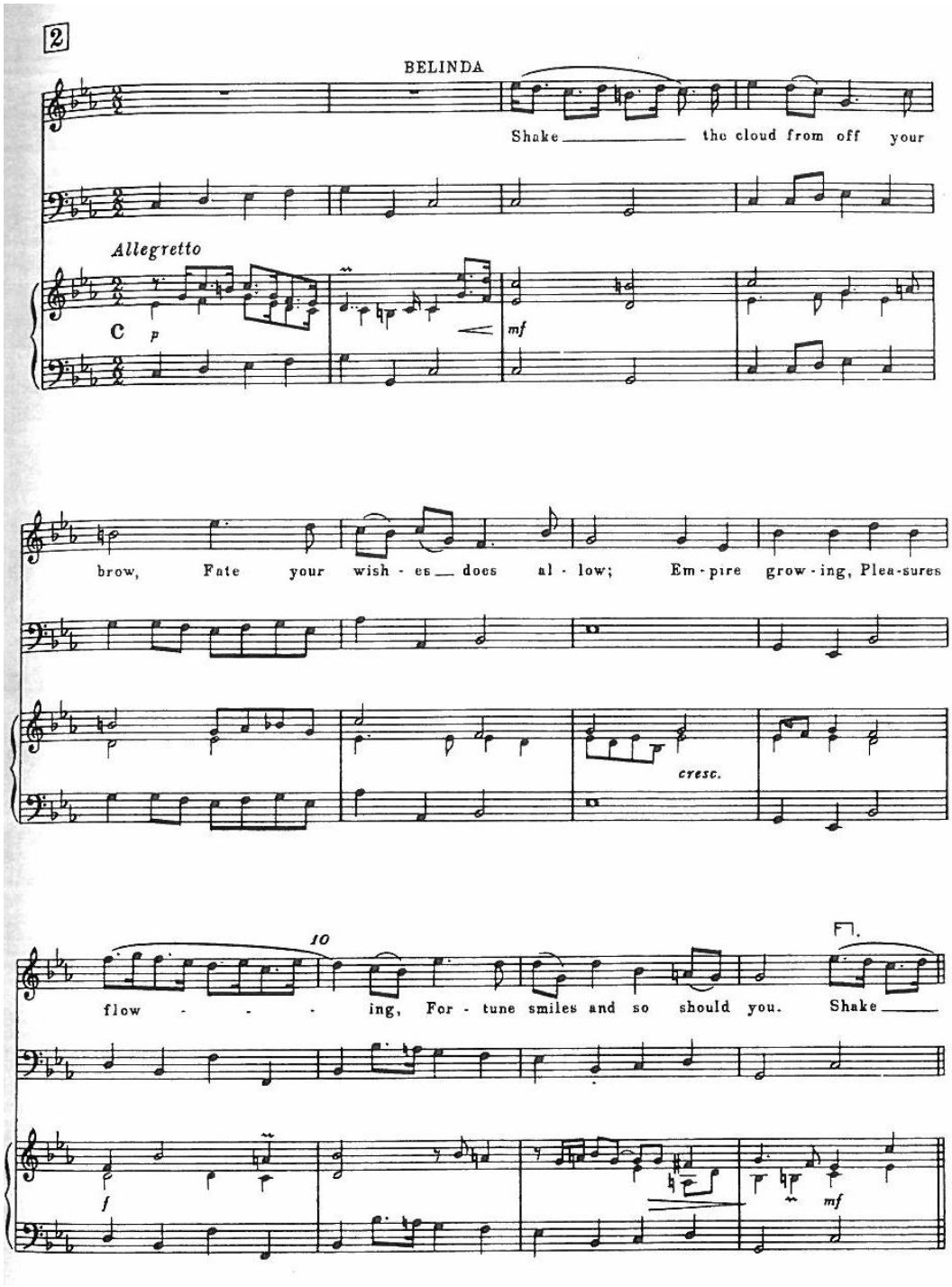

Figure 3-3: From Act I Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas*.[24] From *DIDO AND AENEAS: AN OPERA* by Henry Purcell. Copyright © 1986 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

[24] Price, ed. *Purcell: "Dido and Aeneas," An Opera*, 87.

(B) "I *pity* his too much." – Here in Act I Scene 1, Dido's key word "pity" is emphasised by both the scotch snap and the descending leap.

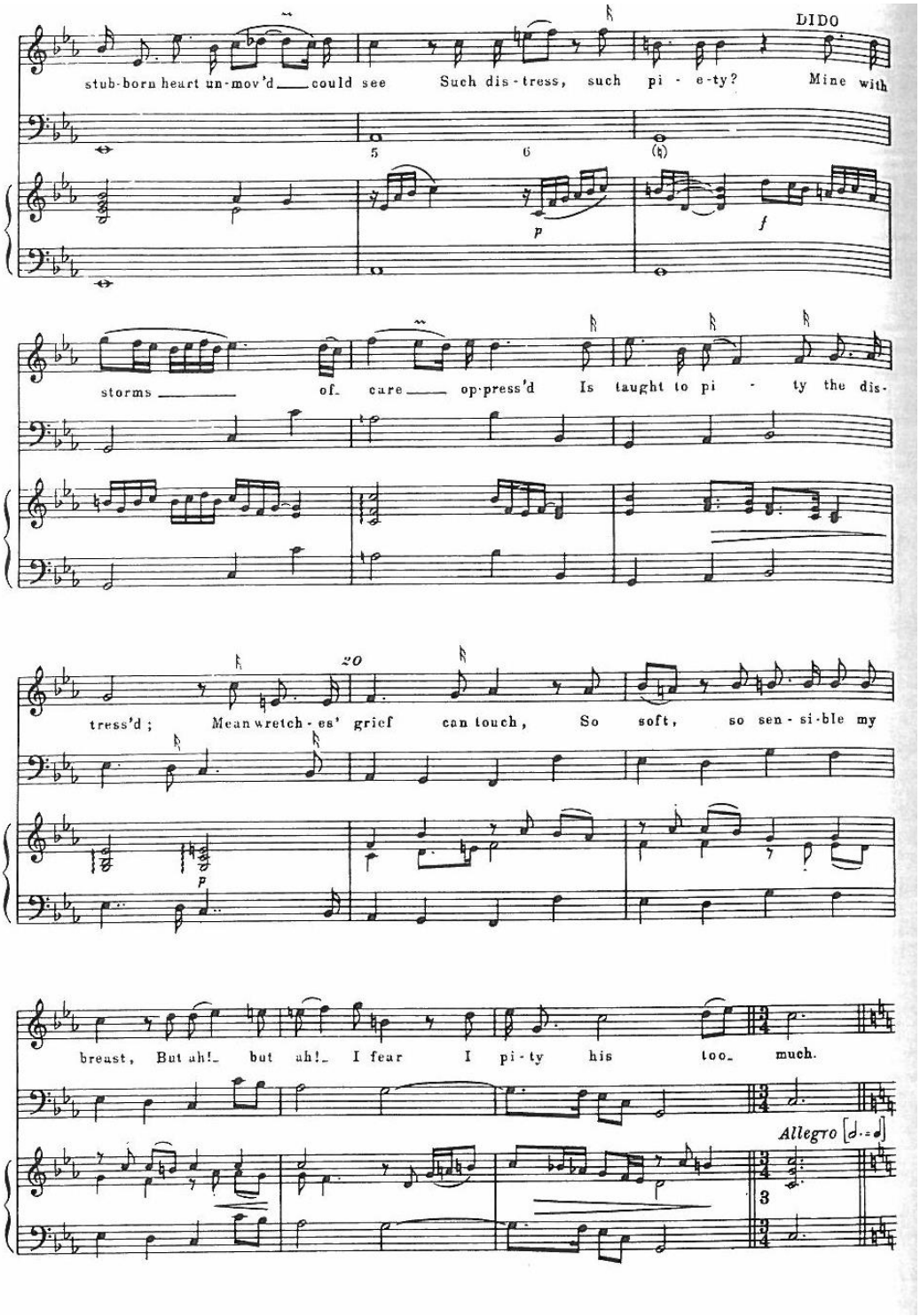

Figure 3-4A: From Act I Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas.*[25] Copyright © 1986 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

[25] Ibid., 96.

(C) "To your *promised* Empire fly…" – Again, in Act III Scene 2, Dido's key words "promised" and "forsaken" are emphasised using both motivic devices.

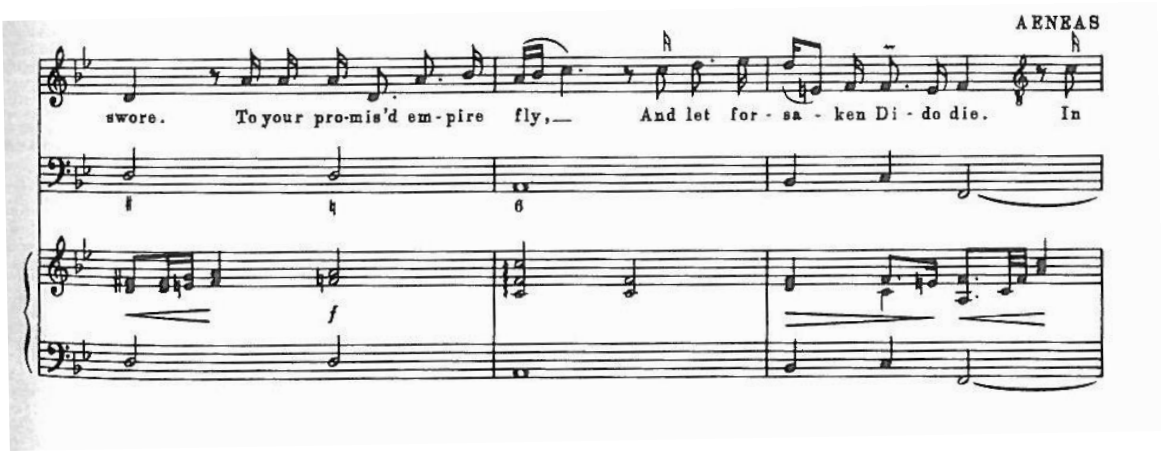

Figure 3-4B: From Act III Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas*[26] Copyright © 1986 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

In the above examples and in "Come If You Dare", one can see how Purcell uses variations of this motif as a device for emphasising certain important and expressive words. In this context then, Cremonesi's emphasis of the unimportant words "out of" is inappropriate, although his emphasis of "Tritons" is more in line with Purcell's style of text setting. Most of the time, Cremonesi's text-setting is not noticeably awkward, but such examples of awkwardness as the above are very noticeable to an Anglophone audience, and draw attention, compared with the naturalness of Purcell's text-setting in the opera proper.

Curiously, Cremonesi interprets "Venus descends in her chariot / The Tritons out of the sea" as sung dialogue text, when it was originally a stage direction (see audiovisual excerpt 3.1). It appears that this was most likely an error made because of a peculiar typesetting feature in the original printed Chelsea libretto (see Appendix). The original text features the dialogue in regular type and the stage directions for the dances and for some of the actions in italics. In this respect it is similar to most modern libretti, which usually have all stage directions in italics. However in the Chelsea libretto, other stage directions that indicate actions are sometimes printed in regular type, as is the case here. It seems a little odd that Cremonesi has

[26] Ibid., 171

misinterpreted the stage directions as sung text here, because in this instance, as with the stage directions at the beginning of the Prologue, "Phoebus rises in the Chariot / Over the Sea, The Nereids out of the Sea," the stage directions are indented considerably compared with the dialogue text. Also, curiously, Cremonesi does not interpret the latter stage direction as sung dialogue. As occurs elsewhere in the Chelsea libretto, the most likely original purpose of this particular typesetting was to indicate that first Phoebus would sing the rhyming couplet "Tritons and Nereids come pay your Devotion / To the New rising Star of the Ocean," which would then be repeated by the Chorus in a slightly adapted setting. Instead, Cremonesi has given Phoebus the single line "Tritons and Nereids…" etc, and to the Chorus he has given the three lines, "To the New rising Star of the Ocean. / Venus Descends in her Chariot / The Tritons out of the Sea," which are then repeated in a consecutive manner by the Chorus.

This (mis)interpretation would smack of scholarly negligence if judged by strict Canonic or HIP standards. It also features the awkward, verb-less line "The Tritons out of the Sea," which makes grammatical sense as a stage direction note, but not as a line of sung text. However, these negative effects are somewhat mitigated by several factors. Firstly, choosing to have the Chorus function here as an observing, commentating Greek-like chorus is in line with some of the Chorus's function in the opera proper (particularly in Act I). Secondly, this Greek-like chorus effect is of course also commensurate with the classical theme. Thirdly—and most importantly, particularly given this thesis's focus on the construction of meaning—this device is artistically effective in that it verbally communicates to the audience some narrative elements that are not enacted in the *mise-en-scène.* There is no chariot in which Venus can descend, and while the male dancers are subtly signified to be Tritons, largely through virtue of being male and being below the Narrators/Gods, these Tritons do not rise out of the tank *en masse* at this point. The Chorus's sung stage direction lines therefore communicate the arrival of Venus more clearly than the staging does. There is no retinue of cupids for Venus (Engelkes), but then as I have discussed above, the section in which she refers to them is almost incomprehensible anyway. The two main elements of the *mise-en-scène* that signal the arrival of Venus include Engelkes' change of demeanour to a stately walk, and her costume change from a transparent red gown that she wears as the Nereid, to an opaque black one that she wears as Venus, mirroring Esnaola with the all-black suit that he wears as Phoebus. Although these signs do visually signify the arrival of Venus, they are

subtle. The code of the costume change is also made ambiguous as it can be confused with a practical interest in making Engelkes comfortably dry; she swims in the red gown and then changes into the dry black one when she emerges from the water and towels herself off. Indeed, later in the Prologue, when Engelkes and Esnaola perform the roles of Shepherdess and Shepherd, they do not wear new costumes for these characters, which thereby further confuses the visual theatrical codes. Were it not for the Chorus's sung "stage direction" lines, therefore, the audience may not be aware that Phoebus is speaking to Venus until (this is likewise easily misinterpreted or missed) line 42, when the Chorus sing, "To Phoebus and Venus our Homage wee'l pay / Her Charmes blest the Night, as his Beams blest the day." Therefore, Cremonesi's interpretation of these stage directions as dialogue functions as a useful device for communicating important narrative information.

Cremonesi's approach to text-setting, or what we might call "Period arranging" (rather than Period composing) is uneven in its adherence to Purcell's style. Cremonesi for instance sets the line "Welcomes Venus to the Shore" as a chorus, setting this single line to be sung four times. It is doubtful that Purcell would ever have simply repeated the same line so many times without any variation: his settings of Tate's libretto tend to include repetition of certain words or sections of a phrase rather than the whole phrase. The phrase as a whole is not usually sung more than twice in succession. For example, the original setting of the music Cremonesi uses for "Welcomes Venus…," originally titled "May all Factious Troubles Cease" from the early Ode *What Shall be Done on Behalf of the Man* (1682), is considerably longer in terms of music and text than it is in Cremonesi's setting. Its text's most repeated part is a two-line couplet, rather than Cremonesi's single- line "Welcomes Venus to the Shore." Its text also alternates AABA fashion, in the manner of the following chorus in *Dido* proper (Act I Scene 1), for which I here give the full text with repeats:

Chorus: Fear no danger to ensue, the hero loves as well as you.
Fear no danger to ensue, the hero loves as well as you.
Ever gentle, ever smiling,
And the cares of life beguiling
Fear no danger to ensue, the hero loves as well as you.

Instead, "Welcomes Venus…" would originally probably have featured the soloist singing "See the Spring in all her glory welcomes Venus to the Shore / Smiling hours are now before

you, hours that may return no more", as this is a rhyming couplet that is obviously intended to be sung as such (that is, with both lines sung one directly after the other, by the same character or characters). Subsequently, the Chorus would have repeated the same text, in the same way as Purcell sets numbers in the opera proper that are led by Belinda and followed by the Chorus, such as "Shake the Cloud from Off your Brow" in Act I, and "Thanks to these lonesome vales" and "Haste, Haste to Town" in Act II. This hypothesised structure would fit far better with Purcell's usual settings and with the original setting of this music in *What Shall be Done on Behalf of the Man*.

From the perspective of HIP, Cremonesi's "reconstruction" of the Prologue is problematic, most importantly because he chooses not to score the recitatives. There is little historical precedent in Purcell's era for a Prologue in which only the choruses are sung and there is almost no solo singing. On the contrary, the best evidence we possess today for a model for Purcell's lost music for this Prologue is John Blow's setting for the Prologue of *Venus and Adonis*, which is sung-through and includes plenty of solo recitative as well as some choruses, although it lacks true arias.[27] In writing opera with through-composed arioso (as opposed to the later trend towards recitative and the *da capo* aria) Blow's and Purcell's work arguably reflects the aims of the earliest opera composers, who, as Price points out, wished to create a genre of *dramma per musica* that was as much like the lost musical declamation of the Ancient Greek theatre as possible.[28] However, in this case of modern operatic reconstruction, Cremonesi made the daring decision to not set to music what Tate fairly obviously intended to be recitative text.

Cremonesi's one exception to his self-imposed rule of no soloist vocal music at all in the Waltz production's Prologue is his setting of the text "Jolly shepherds come away" as a duet for two sopranos, to the music of "The King Whose Presence Like the Spring," from Purcell's *Swifter, Isis, Swifter Flow* (1681). Of all the music from Purcell's *oeuvre* that Cremonesi chooses for this Prologue, this duet is the most like the music in *Dido.* In

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[27] See: Price, "Venus and Adonis (i)"; Bruce Wood (ed.), John Blow, Venus and Adonis: A Masque for the Entertainment of the King, in *Purcell Society Companion Series* (London: Stainer & Bell, 2008). John Blow, René Jacobs, and The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, *Blow: Venus & Adonis [Audio CD]* (Arles, France: Harmonia Mundi).

[28] Price, "Venus and Adonis (i)".

particular, its chromatic dissonances, minor mode, scalic running ground bass and four-bar repeating *chaconne* form are very like those in the Second Woman's Act II aria, "Oft She Visits". See the examples below for comparison of the two opening ritornelli:

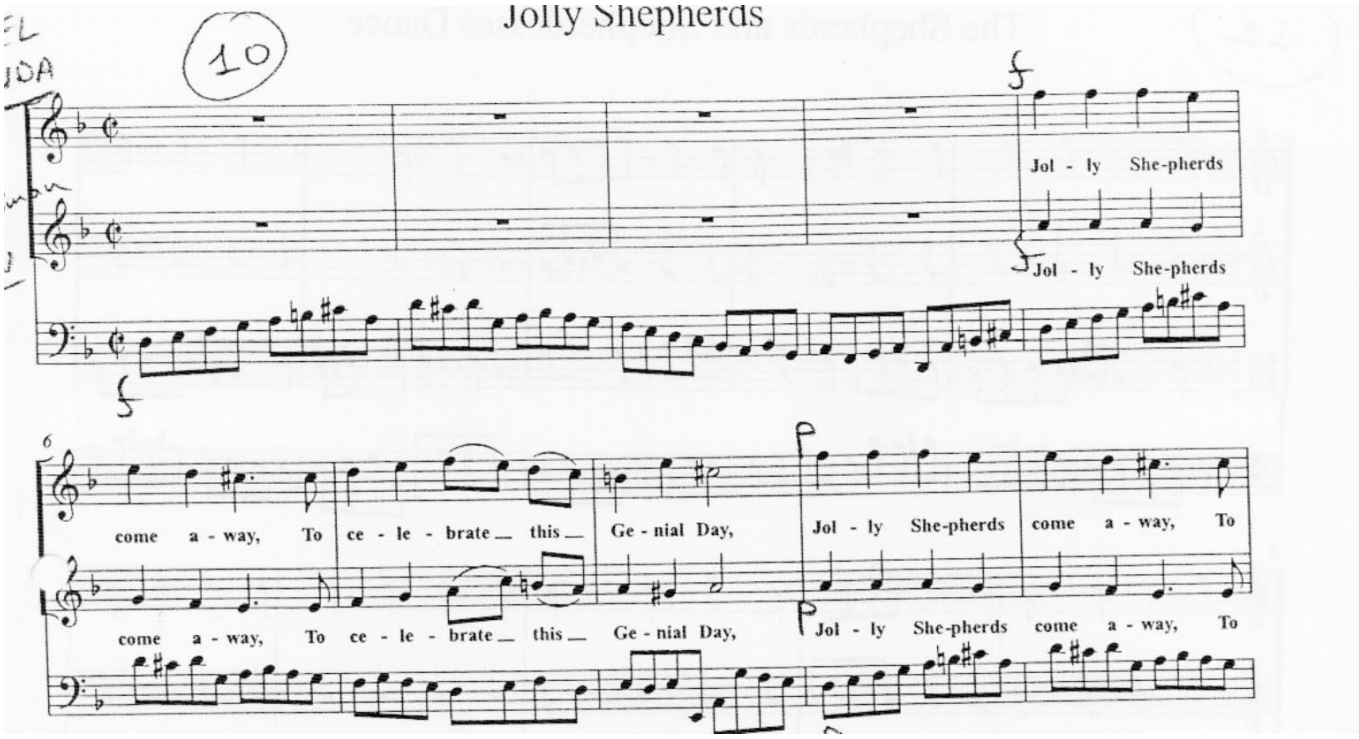

Figure 3-5: From the Prologue to *Dido and Aeneas* as in the Chelsea libretto, adapted and arranged by Attilio Cremonesi, after Henry Purcell. From the Waltz archive score.[29] From *Dido & Aeneas* (by Sasha Waltz).

[29] Purcell, Tate, and Cremonesi, *Dido and Aeneas: Choreographic Opera*

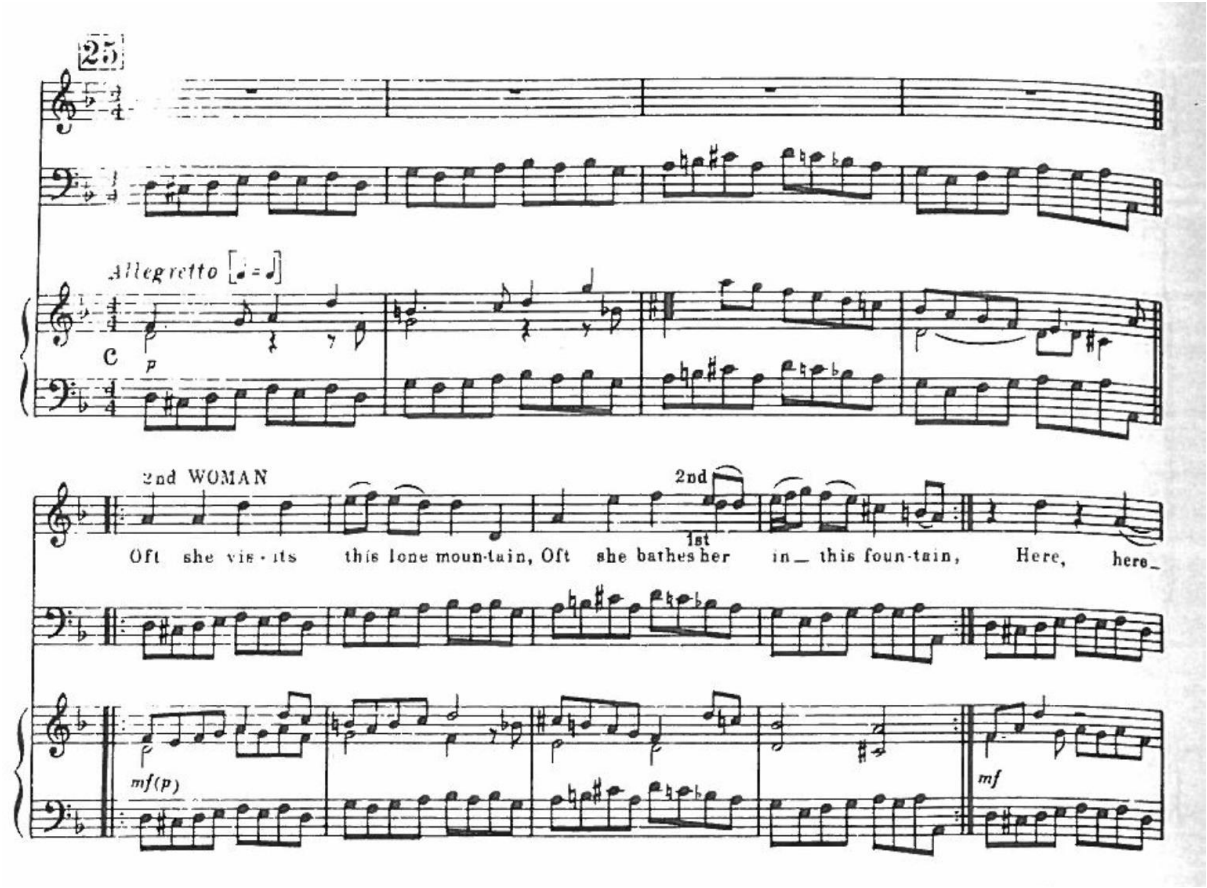

Figure 3-6: From Act II Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas*.[30] Copyright © 1986 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Notably, this "Jolly Shepherds" duet is performed by Deborah York and Céline Ricci, the two sopranos who respectively perform the roles of Belinda and the Second Woman in the opera proper. They sing this duet standing at the back of the orchestra pit, just in front of the stage, in a position that is not occupied by any other singer or dancer in the rest of the production. It is a position that, like Engelkes' and Esnaola's continued addressing of the audience, constructs York and Ricci here (briefly) as straddling the diegetic and extra-diegetic worlds, with the onstage performers otherwise fairly firmly in the former and the orchestra fairly firmly in the latter.[31] Unlike the offstage Chorus, York and Ricci are fully visible as they sing in the Prologue, and are immediately identifiable later when they enter as Dido's ladies-in-waiting. Their presence in the Prologue makes meaning-making difficult and may imply several coexisting possibilities for meaning: the Ladies seem to stand outside Dido's

[30] Price, ed. *Purcell: "Dido and Aeneas," An Opera*, 142.

[31] —With the single exception of a violinist who walks onstage at the beginning of Act III to play a solo improvisation on the "Come Away, Fellow Sailors" theme as if he were a fiddling sailor.

emotional drama, with a more rational attitude towards the action of the opera's plot, one that may be shared by the audience, but at the same time they are close to Dido's emotional journey and are her confidantes. This unique situation may be reflected in their liminal position next to the orchestra, singing the only soloist musical material in the Prologue. Their extra-diegetic power here, and the fact that they face the audience while singing "Jolly Shepherds," serves to align them with the audience. The presence of Ricci in particular in the Prologue also draws extra attention to the musical similarity of "Jolly Shepherds" and her Act II aria "Oft She Visits." The presence of both Ricci and York singing this duet, when they both sing the Act I duet "Fear No Danger" as Dido's Ladies, also serves to emphasise the continuity between the Prologue and the opera proper.

3.4 The LAF Production

Instead of approaching the Prologue in the manner of Waltz and Cremonesi and reconstructing the lost music for the Chelsea libretto's prologue, Warner "decided to maintain the principle of a prologue, replacing the text by Nahum Tate with a selection of poems," as the DVD liner notes by Agnes Terrièr explain.[32] The three poems are performed in English by well-known British actress Fiona Shaw. They are nineteenth- or twentieth-century English-language poems that bear some relationship (to lesser or greater degrees) to Roman mythology and/or *The Aeneid* and/or *Dido and Aeneas*. They are: extracts from "Echo and Narcissus" by Ted Hughes from *Tales from Ovid* (1997),[33] an extract from part II of *The Waste Land* by T. S. Eliot (1922)[34] and the relatively short poem "He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven" (or "Aedh Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven") from *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899) by William Butler Yeats.[35] These three texts are provided in the Appendix of this

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[32] Agnes Terrièr, Synopsis, in *Dido and Aeneas. Purcell. William Christie, Deborah Warner, Les Arts Florissants [DVD liner notes]*, ed. Opéra Comique (Paris: FRA Musica, 2008).

[33] Ted Hughes, *Tales from Ovid* (1997), 74-77.

[34] For an exploration of the relationship between *The Aeneid* and Eliot's *The Waste Land*, see: Marjorie Donker, "The Waste Land and The Aeneid," *PMLA* 89, no. 1 (1974): 164-173.

[35] William Butler Yeats, "He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven," in *The Wind Among The Reeds* (Montana: Kessinger Publishing, 2004 (first publ.1899)).

thesis. "Echo and Narcissus" has the most obvious link as it draws from the same Graeco-Roman mythological origin as the legend of Aeneas and Dido. More specifically, it is based on a myth from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (*c.* 8 AD). Not only does *Metamorphoses* contains an account of the myth of Actaeon and Diana in Book III, which is referenced in *Dido and Aeneas*'s Grove Scene (Act II Scene 2), but Ovid was also contemporaneous with Virgil and *Metamorphoses* has many similarities with *The Aeneid*, including the fact that *Metamorphoses* features a treatment of Aeneas's journey itself in Books XIII and XIV.[36] In this way Hughes's poem is similar to the original Prologue, which was also set in a mythological realm. Again like the original Prologue (which moves from the birth of Venus to an Arcadian scene of shepherds and shepherdesses) a more realistic and human scene is evoked with the second part of the LAF Prologue, taken from "A Game of Chess" (Part II of *The Waste Land*) in which Shaw and Warner create a dynamic interpretation of Eliot's scene of upper-class domestic quarrelling. Here, the unnamed woman grows increasingly anxious, needy and angry with her partner, while he rejects and ignores her. The neediness of the female partner (Echo) in "Echo and Narcissus" and in "A Game of Chess" foreshadows the quarrel and the rejection that is to come in *Dido and Aeneas*, although the hysterical quality of the woman's reactions in both cases bears more resemblance to Virgil's Dido than to Purcell and Tate's.[37] In the third poem, which is the best-known of the three, the vulnerability of the connection between the two lovers is also explored, but the romance of it is also emphasised. In this third section, the lovers' relationship is directly visually connected with that of Aeneas and Dido, as I will show.

Fiona Shaw's portrayal and costume situate her "Narrator" character in a similar liminal ontological position to that of Engelkes and Esnaola in the Waltz production, but Shaw is positioned slightly more outside of the action than the Narrators of the Waltz: her text is profoundly different from that of the operatic libretto. Instead, Shaw breaks the "fourth wall" and directly addresses the audience, dramatising the poems in a "storytelling" style, in an engaging and dynamic manner. It may also reference an imagined idea of the ancient

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[36]Ovid and E. J. Kenney, "Metamorphoses," trans. A. D. Melville, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[37] Although it is not in this performed extract, "The Game of Chess" also makes linguistic reference to *The Aeneid*, with its previous use of the word "laquearia", a type of panelled ceiling that Virgil refers to in Book I when Dido hosts Aeneas at a feast.

See: Book I, line 726: "dependent lychni laquearibus aureis incensi, et noctem flammis funalia vincunt."

performance of epic poetry such as *The Aeneid*. Shaw's costume consists of casual contemporary clothes of blue jeans and a grey top, visually referencing the modern world, with flat-chested, rigid seventeenth-century style stays (an early type of corset) worn over this, referencing Purcell and Tate's world. She holds a wooden sword and a cloth that she handles like a hunting/fighting net, which reference the ancient world of warriors. These props also reference the playful childlike world of the schoolgirls, two of whom appear briefly on stage with her in the first moments of the performance. Shaw symbolically "knights" the schoolgirls, tapping the wooden sword on their shoulders, and sends them away. As well as representing the three main historical periods that constitute important layers in a modern production of *Dido* (that is, Ancient Rome, Restoration Britain and the modern world), Shaw's costume also recalls modern rehearsal dress, signifying a casual self-conscious theatricality in this Prologue, and suggesting that such a playful postmodern approach will characterise the whole performance of the opera. The strikingly strange combination of flat-fronted stays and jeans, and the choice of poetic texts, as well as the style of performance, operate together to construct a postmodern "framing" device that emphasises self-reflexive theatricality and a contemporary perspective on the layered historical nature of the operatic text and its surrounding associations.

In the opera proper—which begins only moments later—the Chorus adopts and perpetuates much of the Narrator's ontological function. In stark contrast to the main characters of Dido, Aeneas, the Sorceress and the two Ladies, who are all costumed in seventeenth-century style, the members of the Chorus wear contemporary twenty-first-century dress in dark colours, with modern hairstyles and little makeup. This costuming is central to the positioning of the Chorus as existing partly outside of the main action and on a slightly different ontological plane from it. It embodies both the Greek-style commenting chorus and also the postmodern "frame" of the twenty-first-century reality around the seventeenth-century narrative. Thus, the Chorus functions as a *Verfremdungseffekt* device, its presence rendering the performance's theatricality overt. The Chorus also functions as a kind of representative for the audience, interacting with and viewing the narrative action from the contemporary perspective but not fully participating in it. The notion of the collective "we" and of unity of voice and purpose is represented by the traditional operatic Chorus. This trope invites empathy by aligning the Chorus visually and psychologically with the audience. As such, the Chorus preserves much of the function of Shaw's Narrator after she exits, and throughout the opera proper. To be

sure, their costumes are fully contemporary in style while Shaw's is partly contemporary and partly historical, and in this regard Shaw's character more obviously straddles the two time-worlds or settings that make up this production. However, the Chorus's lyrics, action and music position it on the whole as closer to the narrative's action than Shaw's Narrator. Both the Narrator and the Chorus, and in particular their costuming, signify that we filter our view of the cultural and artistic past through the perspective of the present.

Shaw enters the stage in the first moments of the performance to the music that opens the opera's Act II Scene 2 (the Grove Scene), played first by solo recorder, and then joined by string ensemble. Scholars and devotees of *Dido and Aeneas* will thus notice from the outset that William Christie has added parts for woodwinds and percussion to Purcell's scored string orchestra with continuo. When combined with the darkened stage and heightened sense of expectation, the particular timbre and historical/cultural associations of the solo recorder also elicit a nostalgic and melancholy affective response in the listener, and subtly signify the emotional isolation felt by Dido in the first part of the opera as she struggles with her feelings. As it was originally scored for violin with string ensemble, having the opening five bars of Act II played by recorder alone is a unique and innovative musical interpretation of the text. The adaptation of this musical material for the LAF's new Prologue, and the expansion of the orchestra to include winds and percussion are excellent examples of contemporary HIP being applied in a loose manner. This is looser than HIP's Canonism and *Werktreue* links might suggest would be the case, and looser than these influences would have required in past decades when they were more strongly a part of HIP. This approach towards the score and performance of it appears to draw on the more innovative, progressive and individualistic creative and ideological influence of PDT, and on the broader cultural influences of postmodernism and post-structuralism.

During the last part of Shaw’s performance of the extract from *The Waste Land*, William Christie leads the orchestra to perform an instrumental accompaniment from the Second Woman’s Grove Scene aria "Oft She Visits This Lone Mountain". This aria constitutes the most prominent overt reference to Graeco-Roman mythology within the diegetic world of the opera, as it refers to the legend of Actaeon and Diana. Both quotations subtly situate the opera in the realm of classical myth and legend, and provide some musical continuity

between the Prologue and the opera proper. This musical interlude continues after Shaw finishes "The Waste Land," as the lighting changes and the draped, rehearsal-like backcloth is raised to reveal a lit scene upstage: there is a highly decorative set suggesting a Baroque palace, and in front of this, a curtain of hanging golden chains creating an area that inhabits a space that, once again, signifies a part-diegetic, part-extra-diegetic area that is both "onstage" and "offstage". It is used in this way throughout the production. The characters of Dido and Aeneas stand behind that transparent curtain, moving furtively, as if sharing an illicit and private romantic tryst. The two characters are immediately recognisable as Aeneas and Dido, as Dido wears a regal golden seventeenth-century-style gown and Aeneas wears a seventeenth-century-style roguish seafaring nobleman's costume; they are also the first fully historically-costumed performers seen on stage, and their intimate gestures signify that they are lovers. In a gesture that emphasises the self-consciously performed, presentational nature of this double scene—existing as it does simultaneously in two different worlds of theatrical style and genre and historical period—Shaw quickly retreats into the darkness downstage upon seeing the lovers, giving the effect that she is afraid they will see her spying on them. This is the first hint of a strong theme of the public/private binary in this production, which I explore later in this thesis. As Shaw retreats, the audience is drawn visually into the upstage scene-within-a-scene, as the lights on it increase in intensity and as they dim on Shaw's downstage scene. The audience is also invited to be drawn in emotionally through engagement with verisimilitude, as the upstage scene presents a more realistic *mise-en-scène* than Shaw's overtly theatrical vignette downstage.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 3.3	
Production	**Act / Scene**
LAF	Prologue

The fact that Aeneas will eventually abandon Dido is referenced in a cynical and ironic manner. Behind the chain curtain, Aeneas draws Dido into a passionate embrace and kiss, and she briefly gives in but then pulls away quickly and exits into the darkness at the back of the stage. Maltman as Aeneas leans his head and back against the flats, sighing, closing his

eyes and/or looking up at the ceiling, creating a rather clichéd image of thwarted desire. At this point, Shaw turns back to the audience and begins the final poem of this Prologue:

> Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
> Enwrought with golden and silver light,
> The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
> Of night and light and the half-light,
> I would spread those cloths under your feet:
> But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
> I have spread my dreams under your feet;
> Tread softly, because you tread on my dreams.[38]

With the blocking, set design and timing, the LAF production signifies that Yeats's poem is in some sense speaking for Aeneas's feelings, just as many who read or hear this famous poem may feel that it has a "timeless" quality that speaks for all lovers who have confessed their love and are hoping for reciprocation. The line "But I, being poor, have only my dreams" particularly indicates the Trojan prince Aeneas, as he is a refugee guest in Dido's land with very little of his former wealth and power. During Shaw's recital of the last line, where the poem emphasises the speaker's emotional vulnerability, Maltman presses a hand to his chest, further reinforcing the impression that the poem represents Aeneas's interior monologue. Thus, Aeneas is presented as the more vulnerable of the two lovers, while Dido is placed in the position of potential wrongdoer. However, it is Dido who is ultimately wronged, and whose dreams are metaphorically trampled upon by Aeneas's decision to depart. Thus, when the end of the LAF performance of *Dido and Aeneas* is finally reached, Aeneas seems all the more weak and irresponsible when we remember this early vignette. For those of the audience who already know the plot (as do I, as the " informed audience member"), the cruel irony of this scene is striking, and elicits a wry pang of pity and anxiety. This contrasts with the pleasantly romantic, nostalgic mood that has hitherto been constructed through the familiarity of Yeats's famous poem and the popular and traditional western cultural tropes of the "secret love affair" and the "attractive royal couple". This juxtaposition creates a "presence-effect" that affectively heightens our emerging comprehension of the narrative as *Dido and Aeneas* begins.

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[38] I have included this poem in the Appendix also, but supply it here because of its brevity and usefulness in the context of this analysis. From: Yeats, "He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven."

The fact that Dido is the ultimate victim is reinforced by the subsequent mimed enactment of the plot and main characters (except Aeneas), which is performed to the accompaniment of the first part of the Overture, by young uniformed schoolgirls. These girls are part of Warner's Chorus of schoolgirls, whose presence in this production continually references the well-known Chelsea school performance, as I have mentioned in previous chapters.[39] The mime first depicts a mini-Sorceress, played by a schoolgirl of around ten years of age, wearing along with her uniform a red headdress that is like a small version of the Sorceress's headdress as she/it appears later in the production. This mini-Sorceress enters from upstage centre through the golden chain curtain, darting quickly to prompt side. The mini-Sorceress is then followed by a dark-skinned schoolgirl of around ten years of age, who walks slowly and with an upright posture from upstage centre to centre stage. This regal bearing and "blocking" signifies that she is a mini-Dido, and adds a rare instance of "race-blind" casting in an otherwise overwhelmingly white/Caucasian cast. The mini-Sorceress's hands are thrust suddenly towards the mini-Dido's in a mime of spell-casting, and the mini-Dido immediately falls down and lies still, reinforcing her construction as Dido (if the audience member already knows the opera's narrative and that Dido will die, as do I as the " informed audience member"). A very young fair-haired schoolgirl enters through the curtain and moves on hands and feet in a childlike playful scuttle over to the mini-Dido. She is signified to be a mini-Belinda in her depiction of the discovery of Dido's dead body. She confirms the mini-Dido's "death" by lifting the mini-Dido's arms and letting them fall again to the floor. This mime makes the visual point that it is primarily the Sorceress, rather than Aeneas or Dido herself, who is responsible for Dido's death. However, as the schoolgirl representing Dido lies motionless centre stage, Maltman slowly walks offstage in the background, potentially foreshadowing Aeneas's eventual departure. The fact that there is no mini-Aeneas is appropriate to the female nature of this schoolgirl Chorus, and it also highlights the opera's focus on the female and the feminine in general, and highlights this production's focus on the supposed schoolgirl origins of the opera.

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[39] At the time of this production's creation, *Dido and Aeneas* was generally thought by scholars to have been written for the Chelsea school. The fact that—as we now know— it probably was *not*, slightly diminishes the artistic effectiveness of the Chorus of schoolgirls. However, their presence in the LAF production is nevertheless historically relevant, as the Chelsea performance still certainly did take place, even if it was not the work's premiere or the purpose of its commission. Regardless of historical accuracy, the Chelsea performance is still famously associated with *Dido and Aeneas*, and so the presence of the schoolgirls is artistically relevant from the perspective of today's audiences.

3.5 Conclusions

The LAF production replaces the Chelsea libretto's Prologue with a new one that uses juxtaposed poetic extracts, musical excerpts and theatrical vignettes. This Prologue brings the historical provenance of the operatic text, the ancient classical setting, the seventeenth century and the contemporary world into a single multilayered network of signification that reflexively encompasses the diegetic world of the opera proper and the extra-diegetic world of the opera theatre. The LAF prologue hints at different perspectives and versions of the narrative tragedy: a vignette depicts Aeneas as the supposed victim, with Dido's own mysterious reticence as the main issue, which establishes the dramatic tension for Act I; and another vignette foreshadows the whole opera's narrative, but excludes Aeneas, thus emphasising the female orientation of the narrative, and emphasising the female orientation of *Dido*'s history, especially with its use of schoolgirls. These different perspectives on the opera proper are juxtaposed with the different perspectives on the reception history of classical (Graeco-Roman) texts, as represented by the LAF's poetic extracts. They combine to create a Prologue that explores the ambiguity and mystery of the multilayered textual, stylistic and thematic history of *Dido and Aeneas's* lost Prologue.

The LAF conductor/arranger William Christie's arrangements of quotations of the music from the opera proper are played during the Prologue and provide continuity between this new "replacement" Prologue and the extant operatic text. The addition of these quotations also avoids the composition of new music—the much-maligned practice of what Haynes calls "period composing". These choices by Christie, like those of Cremonesi in the Waltz production, have the effect of preserving and balancing the fidelity dichotomy, by simultaneously satisfying many of the demands of the ethos of HIP while balancing those with the demands of the ethos of PDT. The LAF Prologue overall is less in keeping with the opera proper than the Waltz Prologue is, but in completely avoiding any attempt to reconstruct the original Prologue it also avoids being compared to Purcell, which—particularly in a WAM world still heavily influenced by Canonism and its "great composer" paradigm—involves considerable artistic and ideological risk.

In choosing to "reconstruct" Purcell and Tate's original Prologue, the Waltz production has necessarily selected a Prologue that is only marginally relevant to the plot and setting of the opera proper. Several of the links that would originally have existed between the original Prologue and the opera proper (those that are at the more "timeless" end of the spectrum) are also, curiously, not emphasised in the Waltz production, such as the fact that Venus was Aeneas's mother, or the discussion between Phoebus and Venus of the danger of love, which foreshadows the tragic love story of Aeneas and Dido and reinforces the emphasis on fate that is present throughout the opera proper. Instead, Cremonesi and Waltz choose to emphasise other links. Waltz emphasises the themes of sexuality, love and water, and Cremonesi emphasises the similarities between the music of the Prologue and that of the opera proper by adapting Purcell's own music. However, Cremonesi's choice to not set the recitatives, his non-Purcellian approach to the text-setting, and his juxtapositional approach to the arrangement of Purcell's other musical works all work to prevent musical cohesion with the opera proper and with the fluidity of the choreography. Ultimately the Waltz production's approach to the Prologue is a mix of different aims and ideologies and attitudes towards the history of the operatic text; an approach that prominently features juxtaposition, deconstruction and ambiguity.

4 Dido's Dilemma

4.1 Introduction

Although it is of significant importance in *Dido and Aeneas*, the reasons behind Dido's reluctance to accept Aeneas are never made entirely clear, as Curtis Price has pointed out, calling it one of the "gaping ambiguities" in the opera.[1] Although Purcell's aristocratic audiences would have been very familiar with the legend of Aeneas and Dido and with *The Aeneid*, today's audiences are generally much less so. Yet *The Aeneid* provides crucial information that makes sense of Dido's dilemma. Firstly, the opera contains no reference to Dido's widowhood or vow of chastity. If the information is known, it makes sense of much of her anguish in Act I: it logically stems from guilt about her desire to break her vow and dishonour her husband's memory by accepting Aeneas as her suitor. Secondly, there is only minimal reference in Act I of *Dido and Aeneas* to the notion that Aeneas is destined to essentially found the Roman Empire. If this information is known to the audience (and to Dido), then her reluctance to accept his suit also logically stems from fear that he will eventually leave her to achieve his destiny. Therefore, if modern productions are to make sense of Dido's dilemma for modern audiences, meaning must be supplied within the performance. This is usually accomplished through the *mise-en-scène*: in line with the fidelity dichotomy, many modern productions are unwilling to alter the libretto or the music. However, as I have shown, *Dido and Aeneas* offers many opportunities for "reconstruction", innovation and adaptation in the various operatic artistic modalities, while remaining broadly within the ethos of HIP. The modern productions studied here make use of this flexibility, balancing the dual elements of the fidelity dichotomy while simultaneously making sense of the operatic text's inherent ambiguity about Dido's dilemma in Act I.

The two key reasons supplied by *The Aeneid* for Dido's reluctance (Dido's vow and Aeneas's destiny) seem to have been used to "fill in the gaps" in several of the four modern

[1] Price, *Henry Purcell and the London Stage*, 230.

productions studied here. Sasha Waltz and Attilio Cremonesi have acknowledged their debt to Virgil in an interview published in the DVD liner notes, with Waltz stating:

> I found that by returning to Virgil I was able to discover a little more substance with which to develop the characters – the libretto itself is a little superficial in this respect. (…) So in that sense, the choreography contains individual scenes and themes that do not occur explicitly in the libretto.[2]

Productions may also draw from Virgil in more general ways. For example, there is a great deal of emphasis in *The Aeneid* on the tension between private desire and public duty, but this is usually configured in relation to its hero Aeneas, whereas *Dido and Aeneas* also configures this conflict in relation to its own heroine, Dido. The tension between the private and the public is an issue that would have been of concern, mostly for the ruling and elite classes, in Virgil's era and also in Tate and Purcell's era, but is one that can also now resonate with almost everyone in the developed world as celebrity culture saturates our society, and various social media platforms allow every person's private life to readily become public. In this sense, these four productions weave elements from the texts and cultural contexts of *The Aeneid* and *Dido and Aeneas*, as well as the cultural context of the modern western world, into their construction of meaning in the performance of *Dido and Aeneas*.

4.1.1 The Operatic text and Dido's Dilemma

In Act I, Dido's first ground-bass aria depicts her telling her companion, Belinda, that she is in anguish:

Dido: Ah! Belinda I am press'd,
With torment not to be confess'd.
Peace and I are strangers grown,
I languish till my grief is known,
Yet would not have it guess'd.[3]

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[2] Carolin Emcke, Sasha Waltz, and Attilio Cremonesi, Discussion on *Dido and Aeneas*, in *Dido and Aeneas: Choreographic Opera [DVD liner notes]*, ed. Alan Steaton (Berlin: ZDF, Arte, 2005), 8.

[3] Curtis Price, and Purcell, Henry, *Henry Purcell: Dido and Aeneas : An Opera. An Authoritative Score, Historical Background, a Critical Edition of the Libretto, Criticism and Analysis, Production and Interpretation*, Norton Critical Scores (London: Norton, 1986).

Dido is emotionally conflicted about whether she should disclose the cause and nature of her troubles. This is the first of Dido's dilemmas that we encounter, but is only the secondary one. When Belinda quickly resolves it for her by telling Dido she already knows at least part of the cause of Dido's "grief" (in its now-obsolete sense of any kind of "hardship or suffering"[4]), it becomes apparent that it is associated with Dido's primary dilemma: she is in love with Aeneas, but for some reason is reluctant to accept his advances. Thus, the operatic text establishes from the outset of the opera proper that Dido's psychological state is one of duality.

4.1.1.1 Against Aeneas: Aeneas's Destiny

In Act I of *Dido and Aeneas*, the references to Aeneas's destiny consist of only two lines of recitative. Without knowledge of *The Aeneid*, both of these are rather cryptic. The first is sung by Dido as she rejects Aeneas with the line "Fate forbids what you pursue" (when what he pursues is her love), and the second when Aeneas replies "Let Dido smile, and I'll defy / the feeble stroke of destiny." While lovers of Virgil and/or of the opera would know immediately that this is a reference to Aeneas's destiny to leave Carthage and Dido and never return, thus dooming any relationship from the outset, today's less classically-educated (and often, relatively less operatically-educated) audiences may interpret Dido's response as superstitious and pessimistic. Alternatively, today's audiences may simply be baffled.

In Act II Scene 1 things are clarified a little, with the Sorceress explaining in recitative, "the Trojan prince you know is bound / By fate to seek Italian ground." Later in Act II, Aeneas is told by the Sorceress's Spirit messenger (disguised as the god Mercury) that Aeneas is "allowed by the almighty powers to gain the Hesperian shore / and ruin'd Troy restore," thus making the situation even clearer. Dido's comment about Aeneas's fate in Act I thus now makes sense to the audience in retrospect; it transpires that Dido has known all along about Aeneas's destiny to found Rome, and so her reluctance to accept his suit in Act I now seems more like prudent self-protection. In Act III while Aeneas is vacillating between love and

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[4] Anonymous, "Grief,*n.*," *OED online* (2012). http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/81389?rskey=MHBEmQ&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed 12 May 2012).

duty, Dido snaps at him, "to your promis'd empire fly/ And let forsaken Dido die," thus spelling out Aeneas's destiny even more clearly. However, this chapter focuses on Act I of the opera, and performance of this act can lead modern audiences to be rather baffled.

4.1.1.2 Against Aeneas: Dido's Vow

The Aeneid includes detailed information about Dido's past that *Dido and Aeneas* does not. Much of this is revealed to Aeneas (and to the reader) by Aeneas's mother Venus, near the end of Book I of *The Aeneid*. She disguises herself as a local girl hunting near Carthage, and tells Aeneas of Dido's origins as a princess of Tyre, her marriage to Sychaeus, his murder and her escape to Africa with her followers. Virgil does not make it clear whether Aeneas ever knows about Dido's opposition to marriage. However, the reader discovers Dido's dilemma at the beginning of Book IV, in the form of a conversation between Dido and her sister Anna. This dialogue was Tate's main source for the scene between Dido and Belinda at the beginning of the opera. In Book IV: 17-28 Dido says to Anna, in Allen Mandelbaum's verse translation:

"Were it not

My sure, immovable decision not

To marry anyone since my first love

Turned traitor, when he cheated me by death,

Were I not weary of the couch and torch, 20

I might perhaps give way to this one fault.

For I must tell you, Anna, since the time

Sychaeus, my poor husband, died and my

Own brother splashed our household gods with blood,

Aeneas is the only man to move 25

My feelings, to overturn my shifting heart.

I know too well the signs of the old flame.

But I should call upon the earth to gape

And close above me, or on the almighty

Father to take his thunderbolt, to hurl 30

Me down into the shades, the pallid shadows

And deepest night of Erebus, before

I'll violate you, Shame, or break your laws!

For he who first had joined me to himself

has carried off my love, and may he keep it 35

And be its guardian within the grave.[5]

Dido seems to have sworn at some point to remain celibate. Lines 28–33 feature Dido declaring she would rather be struck down into the underworld by Jupiter than violate "Shame". This is a translation of the Latin word "*pudor*," a term and a concept that was an integral part of the strong ancient Roman cultural system of shame and honour.[6] Later in Book IV, at line 552, Dido makes the statement before her suicide: "I have not / held fast the faith I swore before the ashes / of my Sychaeus."[7] A vow of chastity appears to have been made, and Virgil's Dido fears the loss of her honour—her respectable social status and positive self-perception—through breaking it. There is also the obvious issue of Dido's female sex, which due to the patriarchal sexual double standards in both the Roman world and Tate and Purcell's England, meant that Dido's vow of chastity and the social pressure to refrain from extra-marital sex were serious concerns in terms of upholding her reputation, honour and self-esteem as a woman. I discuss gender and the sexual double standard in more detail in Chapter 6 ("Gender, Sex and Sexuality"), which focuses more on Act II due to its intersection with Price's ambiguity B, but gender issues are quite diffusely spread throughout the operatic text: in Act I, they have some bearing on Dido's dilemma.

The operatic Dido, on the other hand, does not directly mention shame or honour, or issues of her reputation. As for Purcell's music, there is little indication in Act I that Dido is grieving over a dead husband or that she is constrained by a vow, by her conscience, or by upholding

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[5] Vergilius Maro (Virgil), "The Aeneid of Virgil: A Verse Translation", trans. Allen Mandelbaum.

[6] Robert A. Kaster, "Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Ancient Rome," (Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2005) (accessed 11 March 2014). See Chapter 2: "Fifty Ways to Feel Your Pudor".

[7] Vergilius Maro (Virgil), "The Aeneid of Virgil: A Verse Translation", trans. Allen Mandelbaum, IV: 765 - 767, pp. 799 - 100.

her reputation. There is however, plenty of musical indication that Dido is anxious, melancholy and troubled. One example that I have discussed in the previous chapter is the two-part French overture, with its melancholy, slow first section and anxious, fast second section. Another example, as pointed out by Risi, is the repetitive, minor-mode ground bass of Dido's Act I aria "Ah Belinda…Peace and I are Strangers Grown", which features:

> …the tension between the strict musical form on the one hand (the bass) and a soprano voice which can seem rhythmically and melodically set free within this framework, as with the singular, short motifs (the irregular, interrupted , and near to spoken declamation) and the sighs, repeatedly heard on the word "A-ah".[8]

The operatic Dido is obviously troubled, melancholy, anxious, and struggling with her feelings, as represented by the score and the libretto. However, as represented by the operatic text as it has come down to us, reputation and shame/honour are not apparent features of her dilemma.

4.1.1.3 In Favour of Aeneas: Public Duty

Act I of *Dido and Aeneas* gives the strong impression that the courtiers are controlling Dido, and that they want her to accept Aeneas. They are led by Belinda and the Second Woman: except for "Cupid only throws the dart", every chorus in Act I is led first by a short solo section by Belinda or a duet by the two Ladies. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, the Chorus sometimes functions somewhat like an observing Greek chorus, (for example, "Cupid only throws the dart / That's dreadful to a warrior's heart") and sometimes functions as part of the action, such as when its members directly pressure Dido to accept Aeneas ("Fear no danger to ensue/ The hero loves as well as you"). Dido has previously dwelled only on Aeneas's personal charms, rather than the political benefits of the union as pointed out to her by Belinda and the Chorus ("Anchises' valour mix'd with Venus' charms/ So soft, so soft in peace but yet/ How fierce, how fierce in arms!"). If the "missing", presumably originally improvised guitar dance "A Dance Gittars Chacony" near the end of Act I is omitted, then the Chorus may even sing over the actual moment of acceptance by Dido of Aeneas. By singing directly after or even during Dido's moment of acquiescence to Aeneas, the Chorus

[8] Risi, "Performing Affect in Seventeenth-century Opera: Process, Reception, Transgression," 97.

symbolically appropriates something that has been constructed as deeply personal for Dido, and makes it public.

Purcell's music for the Ladies and the Chorus in Act I often suggests the court's pomp, complacent certainty and control over Dido, particularly in "Fear no danger", which is reiterated by the Chorus in four-part harmony after being first introduced as a duet by Belinda and the Second Woman. This duet and chorus feature an emphatic triple metre with the stress on the first beat and to a lesser extent on the second, using a French-style crotchet-minim motif.[9] The stresses in "Fear no danger" on the first beat are consistently on the key words, such as "fear", "danger", "ensue", "hero", "loves", "well", "you". (Figure 4-1).

[9] Donald Jay Grout, and H. W. Williams, *A Short History of Opera* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 155.

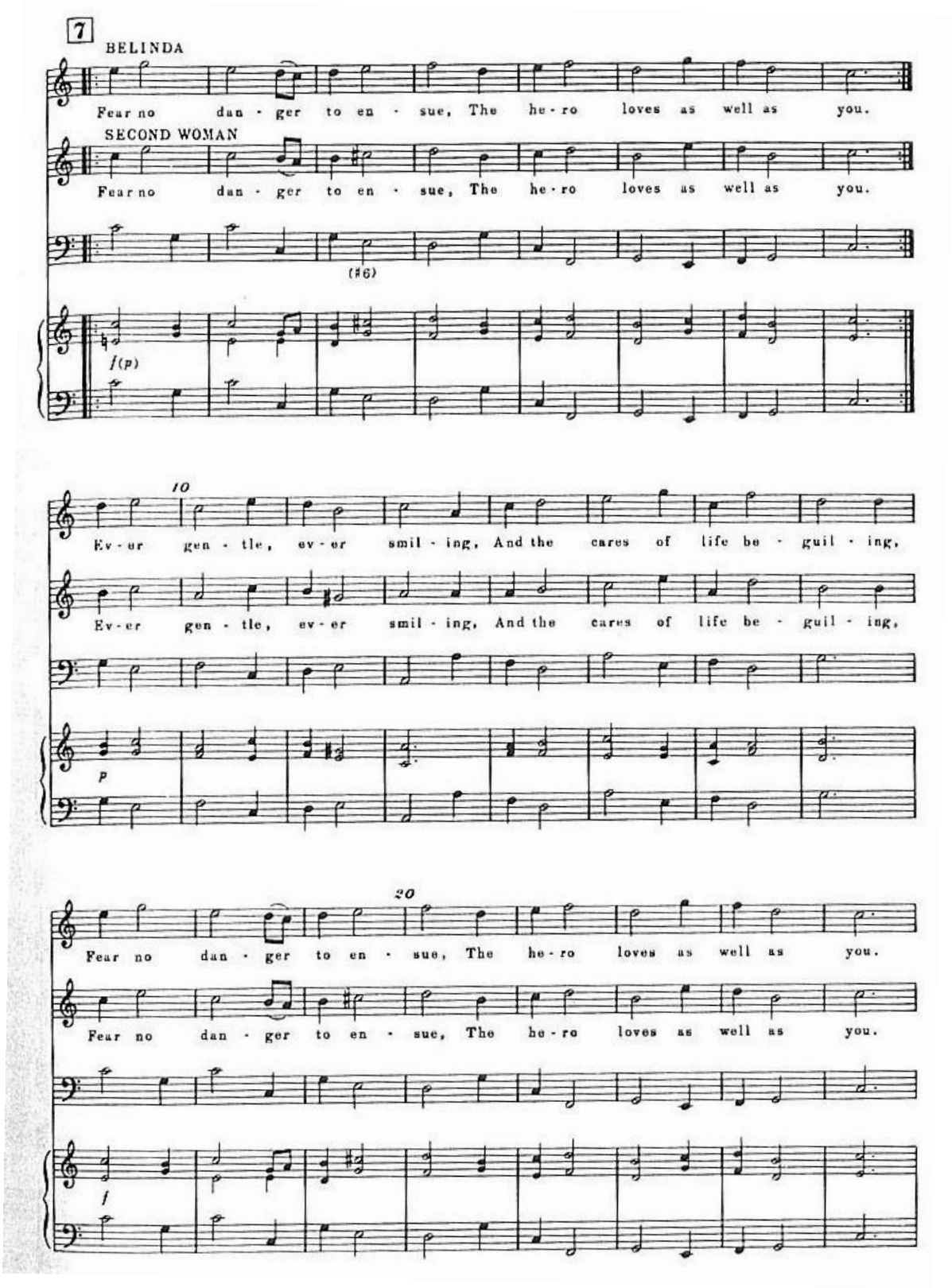

Figure 4-1: Excerpt from Act I Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas.* Copyright © 1986 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.[10]

[10] Price, *Henry Purcell: Dido and Aeneas: An Opera*, 99.

In both the poetic and operatic versions of the story, Dido's "public" values as a monarch are appealed to. Her sense of responsibility, her fear for herself and her people, and her pride and desire for glory, are employed by various characters as reasons for her to accept Aeneas. In Virgil's version, Anna says to Dido:

> (…) If you marry Aeneas, what a city
>
> And what a kingdom, sister, you will see!"[11]

Tate's version of Belinda's[12] reply is very similar:

> Belinda: The greatest blessing Fate can give,
>
> Our Carthage to secure and Troy revive.[13]

Purcell's melodic contour and rhythm here emphasise the words "greatest" and "Carthage," and the couplet is repeated by Purcell, although only printed once in the Chelsea libretto. (See Figure 4-2). The text setting strongly emphasises the benefits to Carthage of the match, both to Dido herself and the audience, as listeners.

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[11] Vergilius Maro (Virgil), "The Aeneid of Virgil: A Verse Translation", trans. Allen Mandelbaum, IV: 49 - 65, pp. 82-43.

[12] In the Chelsea libretto this couplet is assigned to the Second Woman (see this chapter's analysis of the Waltz production).

[13] Price, *Henry Purcell: Dido and Aeneas: An Opera*, 67.

4

DIDO

Mine ad-mits of no re-veal-ing.

BELINDA

Grief in-creas-es by con-ceal-ing; Then let me speak; the Tro-jan guest In-to your

Andante [𝅗𝅥 = 𝅗𝅥]

C *p* *mf*

{SECOND WOMAN}

ten-der thoughts has press'd. The great-est bless-ing Fate can give, Our Car-thage to se-

[𝅗𝅥 = 𝅗𝅥] *f*

10

cure, and Troy re-vive; The great-est bless-ing Fate can give, Our Car-thage to se-cure, and

tr

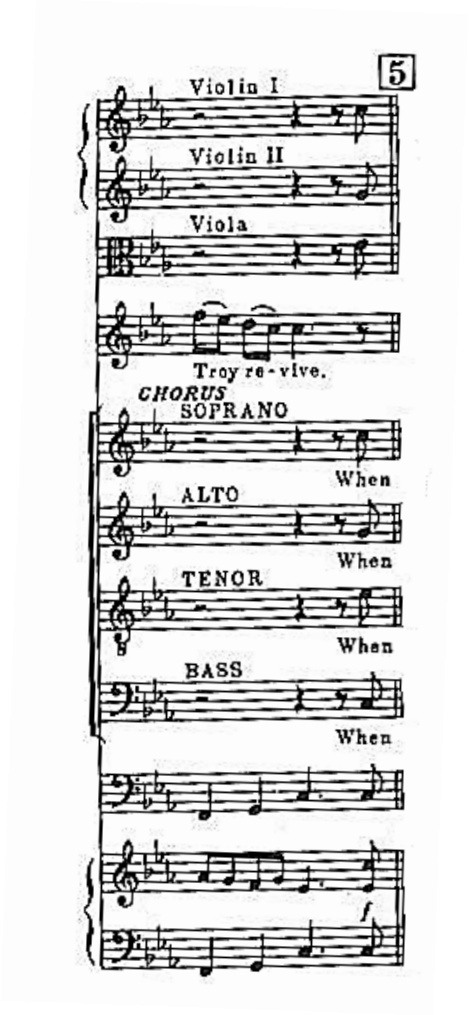


Figure 4-2: Excerpt from Act I Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas*[14] Copyright © 1986 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

The Chorus continue to extol the political benefits of the match:

Chorus: When monarchs unite, how happy their State,
They triumph at once o'er their foes and their Fate.

Purcell's triple meter here creates strong accents and contributes to a driving, forceful effect that reinforces the courtiers' almost bullying stance towards Dido. As he does so often in *Dido and Aeneas*, Purcell again repeats certain words and phrases, having the Chorus tempt Dido with the potential "triumph" associated with accepting Aeneas, by singing the word three times.

[14] Price, ed. *Purcell: "Dido and Aeneas," An Opera*, 93-94.

Later in Act I, Aeneas himself pressures Dido to accept him for the sake of politics:

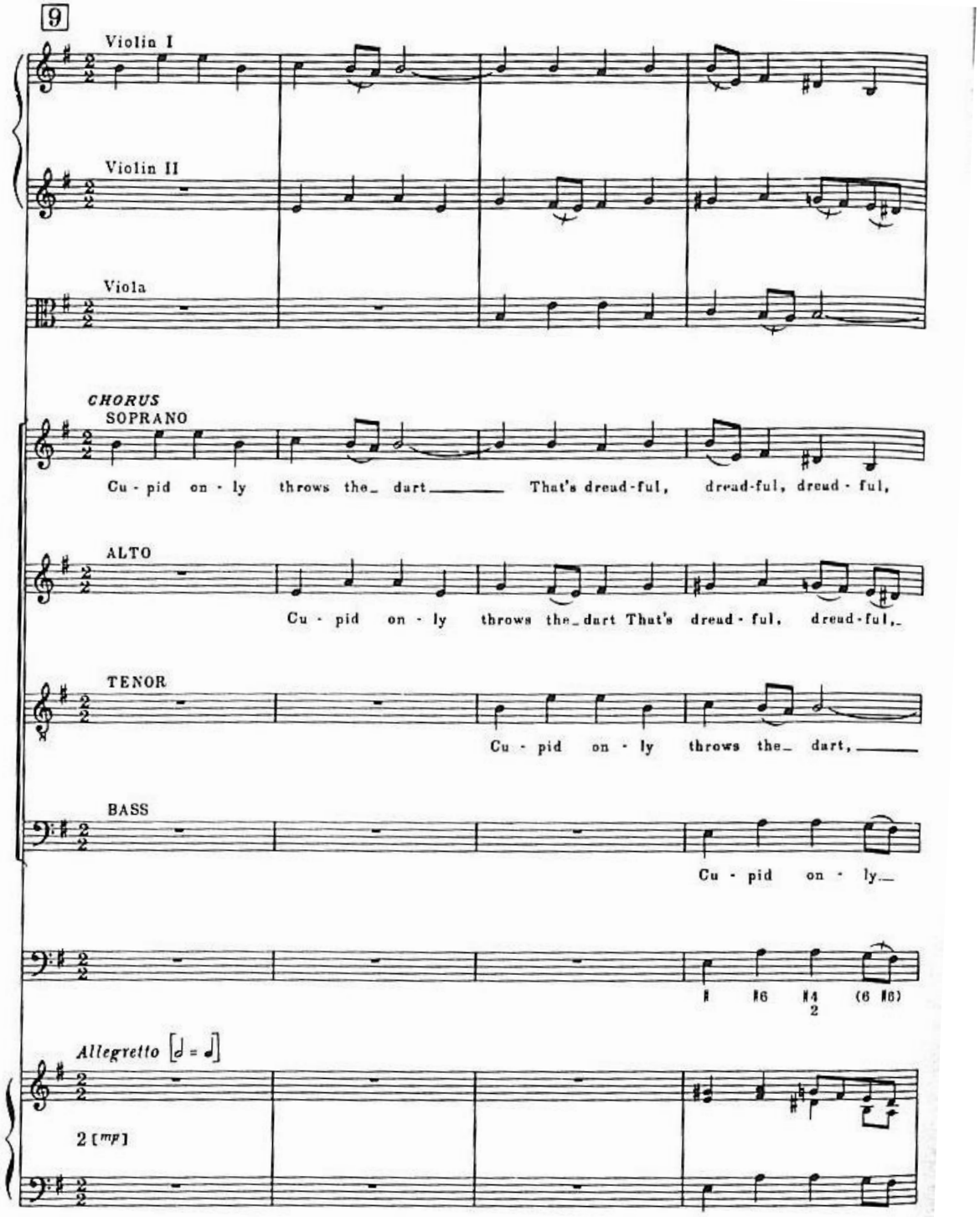
Aeneas: If not for mine, for Empire's sake
Some pity on your Lover take.
Ah! Make not in a hopeless fire
A hero fall, and Troy once more expire.

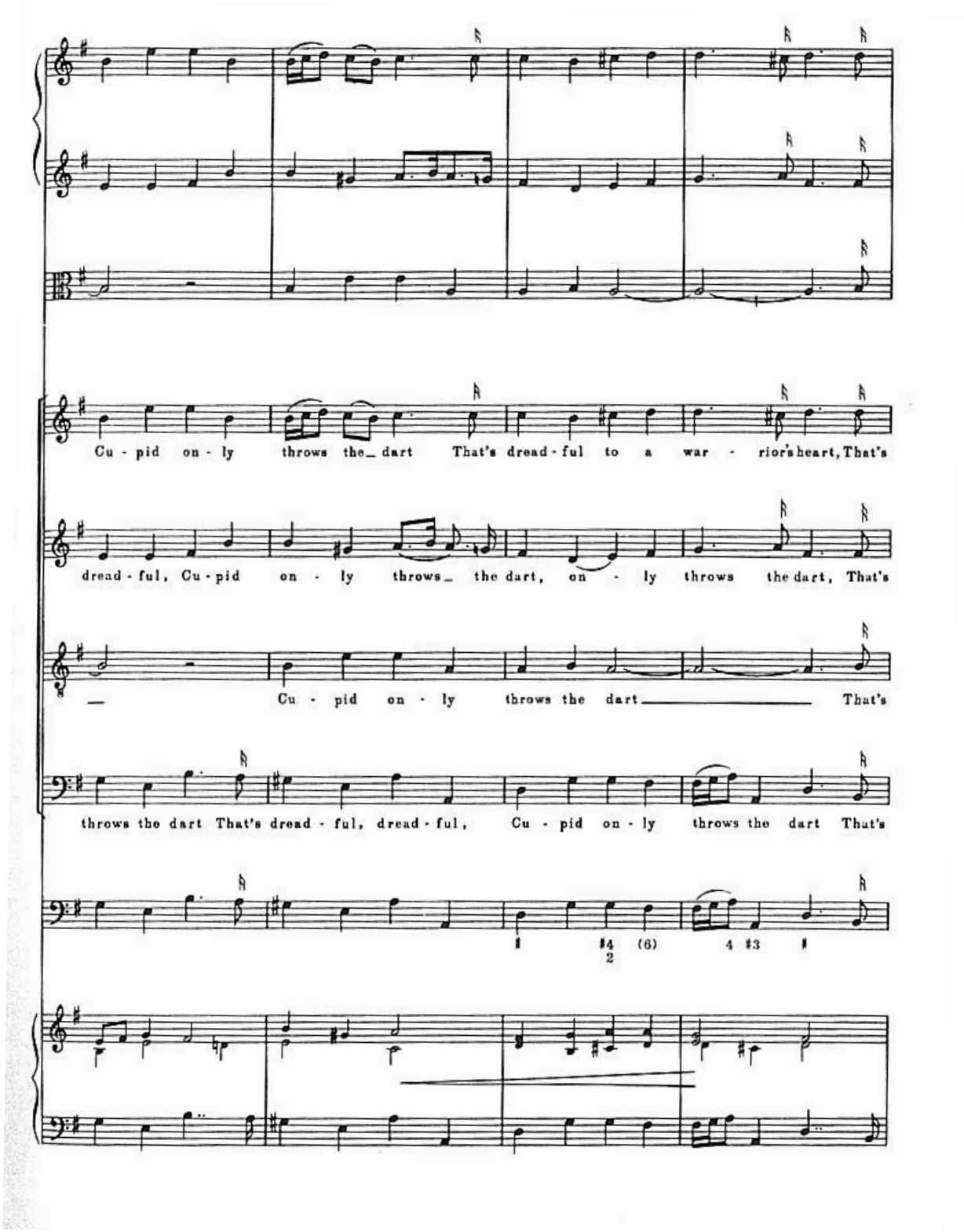
Purcell here emphasises "Empire" with intervallic leaps both onto the word, within the word and moving to "sake". In line with the seventeenth-century interest in rhetoric and the speech-like nature of music, Purcell's score tends to communicate the emotional and rhetorical aspects of the libretto through short phrases and melodic contours that often follow the natural melodies of speech. The best examples of this are to be found in the recitative sections such as this one; here, Purcell makes Aeneas seem more rhetorically persuasive by featuring melismatic word-painting on the word "fall" with a full octave descent of the scale, reinforcing the emotional impact of Aeneas's manipulative suggestion that Dido would be responsible not only for his own fall in status but also for the degradation of the Trojans as a whole people, if she were to refuse him. Purcell and Tate work sensitively together here to emphasise Aeneas's shifting of his own responsibilities onto Dido, giving a perceptive audience the insight that Aeneas is genuinely in love with her but also that he is manipulative and not entirely to be trusted. This emphasis on the social and political pressure on Dido to accept Aeneas, and the reference to conflicts and correspondences between hers and Aeneas's private desires and public duties are all interpretations of themes that are to be found in Virgil's poem: in the opera, they are given a slightly different form and given rhetorical force through Purcell's music. In the process, we are given a glimpse of Aeneas's dark side in a subtle foreshadowing of his betrayal, and most importantly we are encouraged to sympathise more fully with Dido as she comes close to accepting Aeneas.

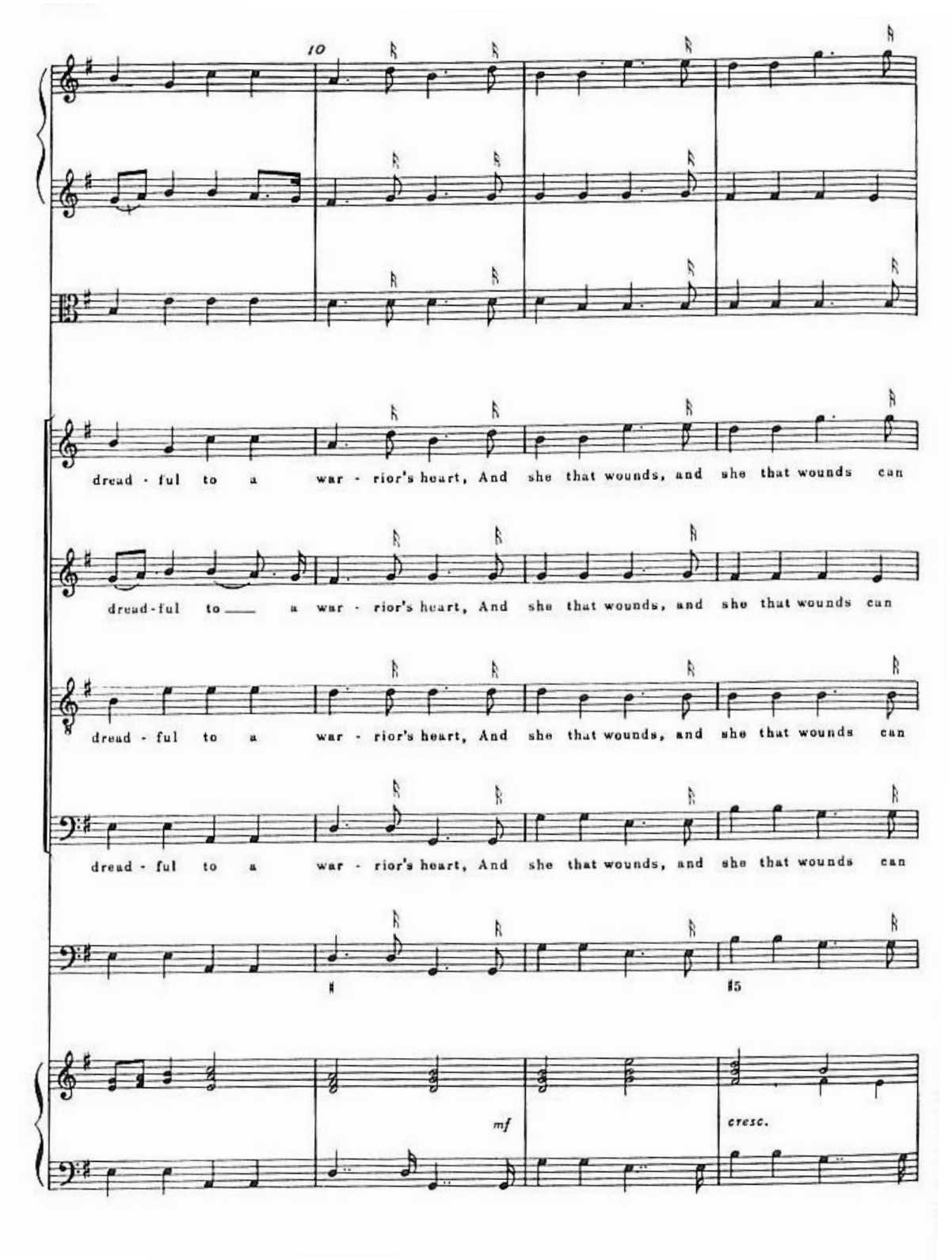
4.1.1.4 In Favour of Aeneas: Personal Emotions

In Act I of *Dido and Aeneas*, Dido's courtiers also appeal to their queen's personal feelings about Aeneas, to convince her to accept him. The chorus "Cupid Only Throws the Dart" encourages a combination of Dido's desire and pity, manipulating her in a passive-aggressive manner. The first part of this chorus has a minor mode, an imitative polyphonic texture and

sharp plosive consonants that lend themselves to a detaché or even staccato articulation, all tending to create an anxious affect. This increases Dido's pity for Aeneas's distress and also increases the distress that she herself feels about the situation. In the second section this chorus becomes a four-part homophonic section for the text "But she that wounds," which has a rhetorical, persuasive effect, as if the chorus were trying to sweep Dido along on a wave of love, guilt, responsibility and pity, and persuade her to accept Aeneas.


9
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
CHORUS
SOPRANO
Cu - pid on - ly throws the_ dart That's dread-ful, dread-ful, dread - ful,
ALTO
Cu - pid on - ly throws the_dart That's dread - ful, dread-ful,
TENOR
Cu - pid on - ly throws the_ dart,
BASS
Cu - pid on - ly
Allegretto
2 [mp]


Cu - pid on - ly throws the_ dart That's dread - ful to a war - rior's heart, That's
dread - ful, Cu - pid on - ly throws_ the dart, on - ly throws the dart, That's
_ Cu - pid on - ly throws the dart _____ That's
throws the dart That's dread - ful, dread - ful, Cu - pid on - ly throws the dart That's


10
dread - ful to a war - rior's heart, And she that wounds, and she that wounds can
dread-ful to ___ a war - rior's heart, And she that wounds, and she that wounds can
dread - ful to a war - rior's heart, And she that wounds, and she that wounds can
dread - ful to a war - rior's heart, And she that wounds, and she that wounds can
mf
cresc.

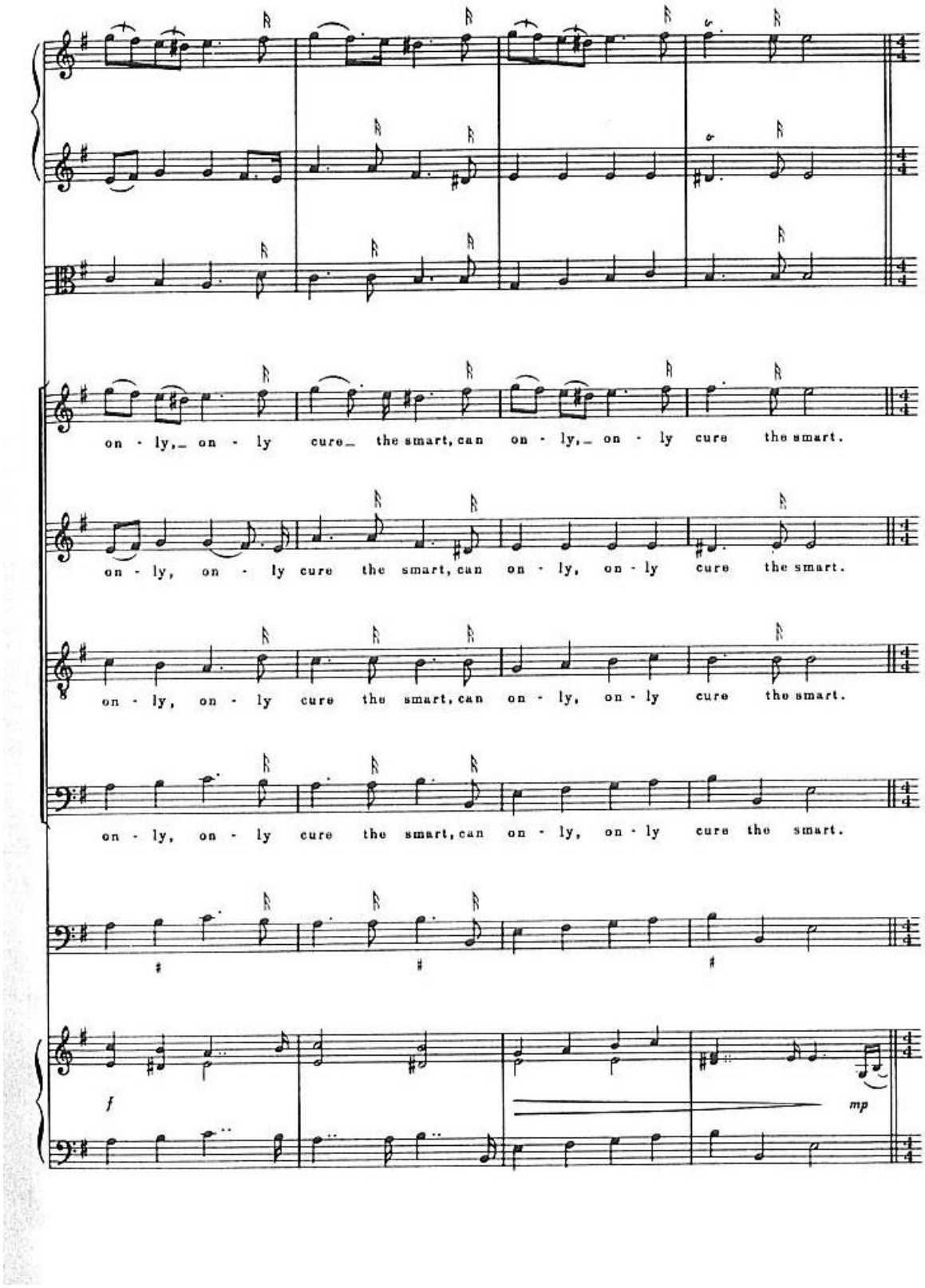


Figure 4-3: From Act I Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas.*[15] Copyright © 1986 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

[15] Ibid., 102-105.

The operatic Dido herself seems to completely focus on the personal aspects of Aeneas's attractions, and on her own love, desire, pity and admiration for him, as we have seen earlier in the first discussion between Dido and her ladies:

Dido:	Whence could so much virtue spring, What storms, what battles did he sing. Anchises' valour mixed with Venus' charms. How soft in Peace, and yet how fierce in Arms.
Belinda:	A Tale so strong and full of woe, Might melt the Rocks as well as you.
[Second Woman:][16]	What stubborn heart unmov'd could see, Such distress, such piety.

Dido's ladies seem to show some concern for Dido's personal feelings, but their words and music appear mainly designed to simply persuade her to give in to temptation. Belinda's "Pursue thy Conquest, Love" seems to be the tipping point for Dido: after this song, which emphasises her "flame" of love and desire for Aeneas, Dido apparently silently gives in and accepts him.[17]

Belinda:	Pursue thy Conquest, Love Her eyes confess the Flame her tongue denies. Pursue thy Conquest, Love.

The score and libretto therefore suggest that the personal emotions, rather than public duty, influence her eventual decision and the resolution of the dilemma.

In the operatic text, Dido is thus pressured by many different forces and people to accept Aeneas. She is assailed by political and personal arguments: political ones that appeal to her mind and emotions, in particular her sense of responsibility, guilt, pride and ambition; and

[16] In the Chelsea libretto, the 2nd Woman is allocated the second couplet here (indicated in brackets) while in most scores, based on the Tenbury MS, Belinda sings all these lines.

personal arguments that appeal to her desire, admiration and pity. In Book IV of *The Aeneid*, Dido's dilemma about Aeneas is portrayed as being mainly fuelled by the conflict between her love for him and her guilt regarding her vow to Sychaeus's memory. In contrast, in *Dido and Aeneas*, Sychaeus and the vow are never mentioned, and Aeneas's destiny is only vaguely referred to. There is thus a good deal of reticence and ambiguity in the operatic text. Therefore, knowledge of *The Aeneid* would affect the audience's interpretation of *Dido and Aeneas* in performance. However, there is also a good deal of freedom available to modern productions' construction of Dido's dilemma, without changing the verse or the music as they appear in standard Tenbury-based editions of the score and libretto. Productions are free to include references to elements of Virgil's original, and/ or to supply other meanings and reasons for Dido's reluctance, or to retain the operatic text's reticence and ambiguity on this point. Without violating the fidelity dichotomy, modern productions are at liberty to assign very old and/or very new meanings to signs that, due largely to the demise of the traditional "classical education" since the seventeenth century, have become "floating" signifiers.

4.2 The Waltz production

The Waltz production draws from Virgil's poem in several ways, but not by supplying Virgil's original cause for Dido's torment: in this production the reasons for Dido's reluctance are suggested to be about the fear of losing her independence, though this is only signified ambiguously. However, the nature of dilemma and the experience of internal emotional and psychological conflict are vividly illustrated and evoked. This eschewal of logical cause-and-effect in favour of exploration of experiential themes is in keeping with the overall style of the production, which is heavily influenced by post-structuralist, postmodernist and PDT ideas, themes and artistic styles. Rather than being didactic or straightforwardly presenting the narrative, the Waltz production tends to focus on creating "presence" and eliciting moods, and on exploring themes in a complex and rather impressionistic, ambiguous manner. It also creates self-reflexive explorations of the nature of *Dido and Aeneas* as a performable "work", the nature of through-choreographed performance, and the nature of modern opera performance.

Several elements of the Waltz production set it apart from the other three modern productions under consideration here. For instance, while the others stage Act I as one long scene, the Waltz production constructs it as two scenes with a short vignette linking scene. This features the child dancer László Sandig, as Cupid impersonating Aeneas's son Ascanius (a character that does not feature in any of the other three productions).

The most notable and unusual feature of this production is that each character is concurrently performed by a singer and at least one dancer. In this analysis, I generally refer to the singers and dancers using a hyphenated combination of the performer's surname with the character's name, such as "Deluy-Dido", or the performer's function with the character's name, such as "dancer-Dido". Notably, in this production Dido and the Sorcerer are each portrayed by one singer and *two* dancers. The Sorcerer does not appear until Act II however, by which point the audience has become accustomed through repetition to the device of the split embodiment of each character. To follow the terminology of musicologist and early opera scholar Dorothy Keyser,[18] this "device" (something that is to be noticed) is rapidly converted into "convention" (something that is to be accepted and overlooked): during Act I the double embodiment portrayal is established as "ordinary" through its frequency of use, and the triple embodiment is positioned as "extraordinary" through its relative scarcity. Thus, this directorial decision highlights the structural and character-driven parallels and oppositions of Dido and the Sorcerer, and also their social status and their primacy as characters within the narrative.

Because Dido has two dancer-doubles, the two dancer-Didos are able to be constructed as two different aspects of Dido's personality, mind, thoughts or feelings, and this is emphasised by Waltz's choreography. Thus, Dido is represented in dual form (singer *vs.* dancer) at the same time as being represented in triple form (three bodies on stage). The singer-Dido signifies through three sign-systems or channels: her words, her music and her body. Meanwhile, the dancer-Didos each signify through their bodies only. They do not speak or sing, but because there are two of them they are able to portray different aspects of Dido

[18] Dorothy Keyser, "Cross-Sexual Casting in Baroque Opera: Musical and Theatrical Conventions," *Opera Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (1987): 46-57.

simultaneously. If traditional opera's signs and sign-systems can metaphorically be said to be already "saturated", then the Waltz production's are "super-saturated"; rendered over-abundant by the addition of extra signifying bodies via through-choreographed, mostly "noumenal" dance.

In line with the general premise in this production, the two female dancer-Didos are signified to be "Dido" mainly through costuming: They wear identical dresses that are very similar to the one worn by mezzo-soprano Aurore Ugolin as the singer-Dido. However, as with the other characters, there are also other techniques Waltz uses to establish the dancers' identification as Dido, such as paralleling the movements of Clementine Deluy and Michal Mualem with those of Ugolin, particularly while Ugolin sings; and having Mualem and Deluy often closely entwine as they dance. In Act I Scene 1, the two dancer-Didos often dance in unison, sometimes with Mualem upon Deluy's back "as if Dido were carrying the weight of the world on her shoulders", as reviewer Kate Fish put it;[19] or as if one side of Dido's psyche were burdening the other. Deluy and Mualem dance together during the whole of Dido's first aria "Ah, Belinda," but separate at the point where Ugolin begins to sing "I languish till my grief is known / But would not have it guessed." At this point Virgis Puodziunas (the dancer-Aeneas) enters, and Deluy leans mournfully towards him from the other side of the stage, reaching out her arm but then letting it fall. Puodziunas turns away from her face the audience with a serious expression, and Deluy gradually and mournfully straightens her posture, signifying Dido's sadness and loneliness if she were to continue to resist her desire and reject Aeneas. In contrast, at the point where the second half of Dido's first air, "Peace and I are strangers grown" ends and the instrumental ritornello begins, Mualem begins to dance with Puodziunas. This association between the Mualem-dancer-Dido and the dancer-Aeneas at this particular point serves to construct Mualem as representing the side of Dido that wishes to give in to her desire for Aeneas. Puodziunas and Mualem continually entwine, while Deluy dances a solo, writhing and flapping her arms and torso in apparent torment.

[19] Kate Fish, "Review: Sasha Waltz & Guests in Dido and Aeneas at Sadler's Wells," *londondance.com* (2007). http://londondance.com/articles/reviews/dido-and-aeneas-at-sadlers-wells-674/ (accessed 18 April 2011).

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 4.1	
Production	**Act / Scene**
Waltz	Act I Scene 1

Because she has two dancer-Didos instead of one, Waltz is able to concurrently sketch the two possible futures for Dido at this crucial juncture. It would have been relatively simple to depict Aeneas as leaving Dido in both cases (whether or not she accepts him). However, this possibility is not portrayed, so this fear of abandonment is not emphasised as a reason for Dido's reluctance. Rather, at this early point in the Waltz production Dido is constructed as fearing primarily that accepting Aeneas will mean a loss of autonomy. When her two Ladies counsel her to pursue/accept Aeneas, and the Chorus points out the political benefits of the match ("When monarchs unite"), again the dancers symbolise union; five couples perform matching duets in unison. Here, the female dancers are controlled and whirled in continual turns by the male dancers In Waltz's production, therefore, it appears that Dido's main internal conflict in Act I stems from her desire for Aeneas and intimacy and an end to loneliness, conflicting with her fear of losing her independence as a woman and as a ruler. However, this is suggestion is only subtle and slightly ambiguous. The Waltz production does not seek to make meanings and purposes clear, but rather, in keeping with its post-structuralist and postmodernist bent, encourages the audience to intelligently seek out and creatively construct their own meaning(s).

In the Chelsea libretto, many lines that are given to Belinda in most Tenbury-based versions are assigned to the Second Woman, and the Waltz production follows this pattern. This is in keeping not only with Attilio Cremonesi and Sasha Waltz's aim to take inspiration from the "earliest sources", but also in their stated desire to contrast Belinda, "who talks of love in rather girlish terms, with the 'Second Woman.'" They write that the Second Woman "takes on a more political role,"[20] as in her couplet (sung by Belinda in most Tenbury-based scores):

[20] Emcke, Waltz, and Cremonesi, Discussion on *Dido and Aeneas*, 10.

Second Woman: The greatest blessing Fate can give,
Our Carthage to secure and Troy revive.

The two Ladies are cast to sound and look dissimilar, and to reflect the conflict of the personal versus the private elements in Dido's mind. Belinda is sung by the blonde, blue-eyed English lyric soprano Deborah York, who specialises in singing the music of Bach and Handel[21] and has a strikingly clear, sweet, bright vocal timbre. The Second Woman in the Waltz production, on the other hand, is sung by the Italian-French soprano Céline Ricci,[22] whose wild mass of long dark curly hair, unusual sharp features, gap-toothed smile and harsher, darker vocal timbre (compared to York's) make her traditionally more suited to the role of the First Witch, which she did indeed perform several years later, in the LAF production. The affective force of her unusual physical and vocal portrayal emphasises the pressure on Dido.

Figure 4-4: (L-R) Céline Ricci as the Second Woman and Deborah York as Belinda. From Act I Scene 1, the Waltz production. From *Dido & Aeneas* (by Sasha Waltz). Arthaus Musik GmbH, Cat. No. NTSC 101 311.

[21] Deborah York, "Repertoire," *Deborah York: Lyric-Coloratura Soprano* (2012). http://www.deborahyork.de/repertoire.html (accessed 20 May 2012).

[22] Celine Ricci, "Celine Ricci, Soprano" http://www.celinericci.com/ (accessed 21 May 2012).

Despite their differences in the Waltz production, the Second Woman and Belinda present more of a united front in favour of Aeneas here, than do their equivalents in the other three modern productions. This is largely because, as I have mentioned in the previous chapter, more material is given to the Second Woman in the Waltz production than is usually the case, due to Waltz and Cremonesi's focus on the Chelsea libretto as a source. The Ladies' unity of purpose is emphasised particularly in their performance of the Act I song "Pursue thy conquest, Love." Originally a solo for Belinda, Cremonesi has rearranged this song as an imitative duet. This recalls the earlier, usual duet for the Ladies, "Fear No Danger". The extra duet signifies that the Ladies and their opinions are more united and thus forceful than they would otherwise be. It thus makes Dido’s eventual acquiescence to Aeneas even more understandable, and makes Dido a more sympathetic character.

The singer-Aeneas, Reuben Willcox, first enters during the introduction to Dido’s arioso "Whence could so much virtue spring". Willcox jogs onstage and stops just behind Dido and Belinda, facing the audience with a blank stare, seemingly oblivious to Dido and the other characters. Ugolin places a hand on his shoulder while singing her first line of the arioso, indicating that Willcox represents Aeneas. Willcox plants his feet apart and stands erect, his great height and impressive muscular physique giving Dido’s words a certain verisimilitude ("Anchises’ valour mixed with Venus’ charms"), and reinforcing the link between Willcox and Aeneas. It is relatively easily comprehensible that both Willcox and Puodziunas represent Aeneas, as a double or triple portrayal of each character has been rendered as convention through repetition by this point in the performance. Willcox’s Aeneas here is just as abstract and symbolic as Puodziunas’s representation of him has been; so far, Aeneas has not uttered a word, and in most productions he does not appear onstage until the second half of Act I (in this production, Act I Scene 2). Here in Scene 1Willcox appears as an *imagined* Aeneas, conjured up by Dido’s reference to him, and reflecting the attributes that she perceives in him. Having assumed his heroic stance, Willcox is surrounded and literally covered by female and male dancers, including Deluy, who fall gently over his shoulder in bodily waves, carried softly down into the mass of other bodies by the other dancers. In combination with Ugolin's sensuous performance of the recitative, this creates a subtly erotic "presence-effect", reflecting that Aeneas is generally perceived as an object of admiration and desire, as a strong and brave warrior (reflected in the libretto: "Anchises' valour" and "how fierce in arms") who also has gentler qualities ("Venus' charms" and "how soft in peace"). This is commensurate

with the fact that neither Tate's libretto nor Virgil's poem feature Dido discussing or thinking about the political attractions of a match with Aeneas, but rather have her dwelling on the personal aspects of his attractions. In fact, in the Waltz production, with this apparent paragon of manly attractiveness, Dido's reluctance seems particularly unaccountable. Despite Sasha Waltz's purported reliance on *The Aeneid*, the reasons for Dido's reluctance are relatively vague and underdeveloped in this production, leaving the audience wondering.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 4.2	
Production	**Act / Scene**
Waltz	Act I Scene 1

The second part of Act I in the Waltz production is made into a separate scene, with a darkened stage in a bridging section indicating the passage of time. Loosely inspired by the indication for an instrumental "Baske" dance in the Chelsea libretto,[23] a guitar begins an unscored, apparently semi-improvised dance, which constitutes the music for this short vignette. László Sandig as Cupid/Ascanius runs on to the stage and performs a frolicking dance, shooting a toy bow and arrow into the air. The 1995 King's Music score edition indicates that "The whole chorus should be played again as a dance" (that is, as an instrumental) and that "*The Baske* is perhaps a rustic dance of Basque origin played by folk instruments on stage."[24] Cremonesi and Waltz do not explicitly follow Bartlett's instructions: Cremonesi's musicians remain in the orchestra pit, and they do not play folk instruments but use the same instruments as those used in the rest of Cremonesi's arrangement; that is, a period-specialist string orchestra (the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin) with violin, viola, viola da gamba, bass violin, violone, theorbo and baroque guitars, cembalo and added

[23] Tate, "*Dido and Aeneas* [Chelsea Libretto]," xvi.

[24] Henry Purcell, Purcell: Dido and Aeneas, ed. Clifford Bartlett (Huntingdon: King's Music, 1995), 13.

percussion.[25] On the other hand, Cremonesi's reconstruction is emotionally evocative of different moods. Here, the use of chimes, a major mode and a characteristically Purcellian passacaglia form creates a reassuring familiarity and cheerfulness. Combined with Sandig's childish energy and grace and the fact that Cupid is popularly associated with mischievous innocence, this short vignette creates a pleasant respite from the main action.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 4.3	
Production	**Act / Scene**
Waltz	Act I Scene 1

Audiences familiar with *The Aeneid* would know that this vignette is a reference to Aeneas's son Ascanius having been replaced by Venus with her own son, Cupid, in disguise as Ascanius, in order to make Dido fall madly in love with Aeneas. The boy's obvious association with Cupid situates the production in a mythical milieu and references *The Aeneid* and the gods' interference in Aeneas and Dido's lives. However, many audience members would find this reference to Cupid charming but mystifying, such as dance reviewer Kate Fish, who reviewed a performance in London:

> Is he a ghost of the son Dido and Aeneas are denied by fate? Is he an image of their desire made incarnate? He is just one of Waltz's variations on Purcell's original but his presence compels us to look anew at a work that is over 300 years old.[26]

All these interpretations are legitimate, and this production utilises the human ability and compulsion to make sense of ambiguous signs, while resisting fixed signification. As Fish points out here, the Waltz production explores the nature of *Dido and Aeneas* as a "work", by recasting it in a new manner that makes modern audiences think about it and experience it anew. The indirect nature of the visual references constructed by Waltz, as in this instance, is

[25] Sasha Waltz, Dido and Aeneas: A Choreographic Opera [DVD], (Germany: Arthaus Musik, 2008), DVD liner notes.

[26] Fish, "Review: Sasha Waltz & Guests in Dido and Aeneas at Sadler's Wells".

characteristic of a postdramatic approach to a Canonic written work, one that is influenced by the tenets of postmodernist and post-structuralist philosophy. It is an ambiguous approach that appears designed primarily to evoke affective and visceral responses in the audience rather than to communicate a clear concept or narrative.[27]

Waltz explores the concept that Dido's conflict also stems from the tension between her public persona as queen and her private emotional needs. Act I Scene 2 in the Waltz is markedly different from the first scene. Instead of simply-dressed courtiers and queen, the singers and dancers parade onto the stage in a mass of colourful, fantastical costumes, based very loosely on aristocratic dress from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, and on traditional *Commedia dell'Arte* costumes. There is a preponderance of white tulle and outrageous large hats, and plenty of gender play with a feminine slant— several of the male dancers wear ball gowns. Willcox as Aeneas wears a brown jacket over a white plastic breastplate, referencing the warrior attributes that Dido and her ladies had earlier discussed, but with modern, sci-fi and fantasy elements. In contrast to the theatricality of the costumes worn by the courtiers and even by Aeneas, Ugolin wears a simple, long contemporary dress, similar to her cream dress in Scene 1, but in a royal purple, indicating both her royalty and also her natural, personal humanity in the midst of pomp and ceremony. Deluy on the other hand wears an elaborate purple and blue costume in the early part of this scene that echoes the formality and theatricality of those of the courtiers; the Deluy-Dido is thus symbolically constructed as favouring the public over the private. Meanwhile, the Mualem-Dido is again choosing the private and personal; her long purple dress is even simpler than Ugolin's, while Puodziunas likewise signifies "naturalness" through his simple trousers and bare torso.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 4.4	
Production	**Act / Scene**
Waltz	Act I Scene 2

[27] See: Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*.

In stark contrast to most productions, which feature almost continuous music, in this scene the now ensemble parade onstage with no dialogue or music. Several carry long white ceremonial poles that point to the lead performers. They all arrange themselves on and around raised benches in a picturesque group, with Ugolin seated in the centre and Willcox standing behind her and to her right. While Willcox addresses his recitative to Ugolin, she does not return his gaze immediately, and instead stares out at the audience in a cold and formal manner as she replies. The temptations of love continue to assault Dido, made more potent in this Waltz production by powerful symbolism: in the first part of this Scene 3, Ascanius / Cupid sits on Willcox's shoulders. This intimacy reminds those familiar with *The Aeneid* that the child is Aeneas's son, but also suggests to all audiences that Love is attaching itself symbolically to Aeneas. Ascanius is taken down by the courtiers from Willcox's shoulders and passed to Dido during the chorus "Cupid only throws the dart". He is first handled gently by Mualem, and then kisses Ugolin and Deluy on the cheek as they smile and Ugolin begins to look directly at Willcox. Ascanius / Cupid's movement thus visually symbolises the transfer of love, or of openness about love, from Aeneas to Dido. In particular (see Fish's review, quoted above) this interaction also constructs the notion that Dido is being tempted (or Cupid is deliberately tempting Dido) with the prospect of children if she accepts Aeneas. Sandig's childish vulnerability and his tender kissing of Deluy and Ugolin constitute "presence-effects" that charm the audience and appeal to our parental instincts, further encouraging our sympathy with Dido in her choice of Aeneas.

After Dido and the audience are thus assaulted by the temptations of love, the court's manipulative pressure on Dido is emphasised by Cremonesi's adaption of "Pursue thy conquest, Love" as an imitative duet for Belinda and the Second Woman. Immediately after this duet there is an extended instrumental chaconne interlude in triple time for two guitars and theorbo, being Cremonesi's reconstruction of the Chelsea Libretto's "A Dance Gittars Chacony". Many scholars have suggested that it is in this chaconne that Purcell and Tate may have originally intended Dido to indicate her non-verbal acceptance of Aeneas as her consort.[28] Cremonesi's chaconne allows temporal space for Waltz's choreography to

[28] Fine investigations of this issue include:
Walkling, "The Masque of Actaeon and the Antimasque of Mercury."

demonstrate Dido's acceptance of Aeneas through Mualem and Puodziunas's swirling duet. The archive copy of the adapted score does not include a full arrangement for this instrumental section (see below) The piece appears to be semi-improvised over a simple repeating bass with a four-bar C major I-IV-V-I progression. The most prominent repeating ground bass is below on the right, while the two-bar repeating ground bass countermelody is on the left:

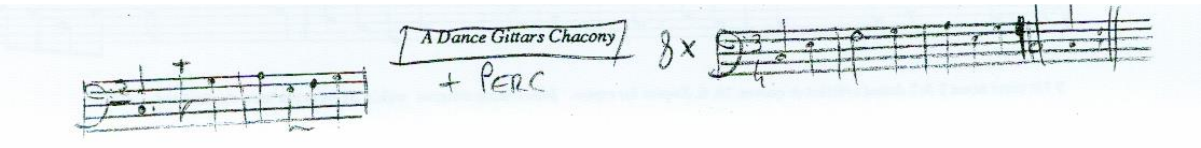


Figure 4-5: Sketches by Attilio Cremonesi for "A Dance Gittars Chacony" from the Sasha Waltz and Guests archive score.[29] From *Dido & Aeneas* (by Sasha Waltz).

Here, Cremonesi begins the chaconne with two guitars and gradually heightens the tension through thickening the texture, first with increasingly florid and scalic ornamentation and improvisatory counterpoint between the guitars, then by adding the deep bass notes of the theorbo. Variation is also achieved by moving to the parallel minor and then ending the dance in a return to C major, in a nod to the Picardy third device. Cremonesi's "chacony" is thus quite convincing as an example of reconstructed HIP.

The three Didos all have choreography at the same time, all becoming symbolically trapped in white wedding-related items. A twisting, flailing Deluy-Dido (now wearing purple like the other two Didos) becomes entangled in the wedding canopy when the courtiers wrap it around her. She disentangles herself and moves away slowly with an erect posture and a slightly lowered head and melancholy expression. Symbolically, this Dido is shown to have struggled with her feelings about marriage and become caught in them, but has eventually freed herself. This is consistent with the fact that earlier, as I have explained in Chapter 1, Deluy had been constructed as "the Dido that resists Aeneas"; although the narrative does not actually progress along those lines, in Act I Deluy represents an alternative reality that could have been the case if Dido had not accepted Aeneas and had remained single. Essentially, the

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Semmens, "Dancing and Dance Music in Purcell's Operas."

[29] Purcell, Tate, and Cremonesi, *Dido and Aeneas: Choreographic Opera*

Deluy-Dido chooses the power associated with freedom, but this comes with the drawback of loneliness.

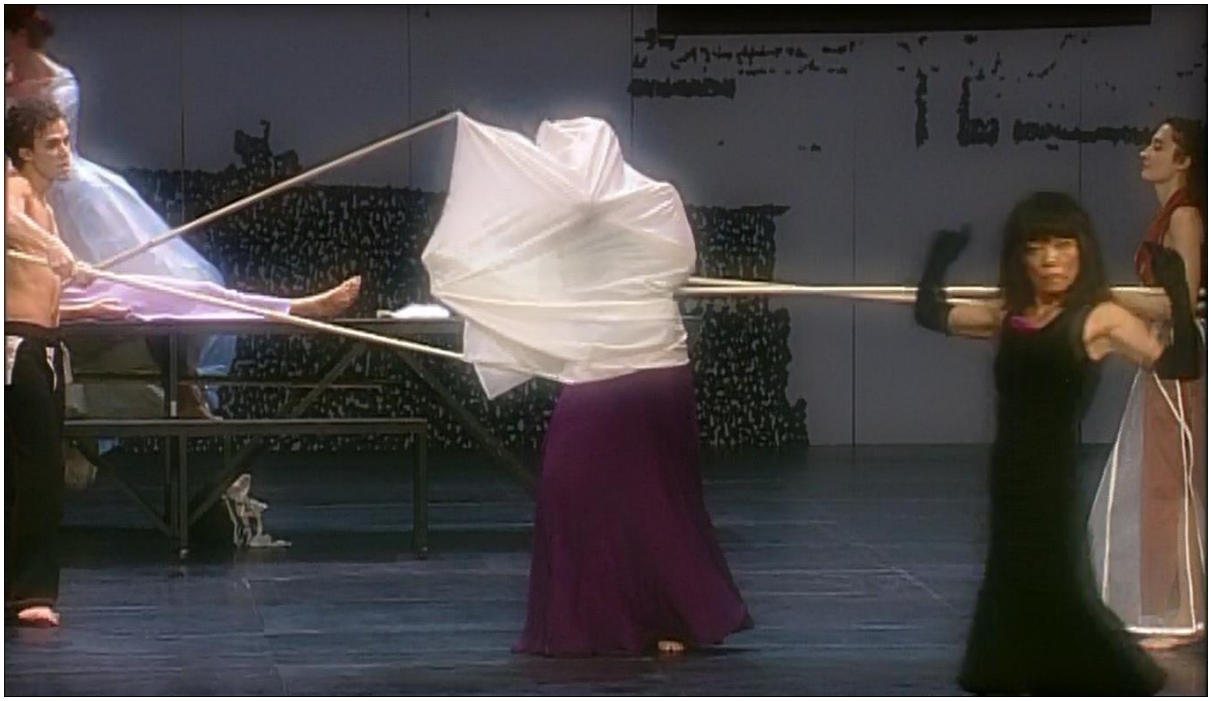

Figure 4-6: Michal Mualem as Dido (centre); dancers of the Sasha Waltz and Guests ensemble. From Act I Scene, the Waltz production. From *Dido & Aeneas* (by Sasha Waltz). Arthaus Musik GmbH, Cat. No. NTSC 101 311.

Shortly afterwards, two male courtiers trap Mualem's neck between the two poles that had previously been used for the canopy. She is forced to the ground, and one courtier takes hold of her feet and half-lifts her, her dress falling down to show her underwear; he further demeans her by twisting her legs quite violently so that she, her body limp, is made to writhe around on the floor. He then lets her go and she sits curled up on the floor. Another dancer covers her whole body with a white transparent hoop skirt with white stripes that resembles a wedding dress, but also a cage. She continues to make gentle, slow and small movements within this white cage. Symbolically therefore, this Mualem-Dido is demeaned, abused and ruined by her "marriage" to Aeneas, but she does not put up any resistance, unlike the Deluy-Dido. The Mualem-Dido thus here chooses Aeneas, entrapment and oppression.

Figure 4-7: (L-R) Juan Cruz Diaz de Garaio Esnaola and Michal Mualem as Dido (foreground); dancers of the Sasha Waltz and Guests ensemble (background). From Act I Scene 2, the Waltz production. From *Dido & Aeneas* (by Sasha Waltz). Arthaus Musik GmbH, Cat. No. NTSC 101 311.

Meanwhile, Ugolin and Wilcox are covered to an absurd extent with white clothing by the Chorus and dancers, but remain calm and serene.

Figure 4-8: Aurore Ugolin as Dido. From Act I Scene 2, the Waltz production. From *Dido & Aeneas* (by Sasha Waltz). Arthaus Musik GmbH, Cat. No. NTSC 101 311.

The three Didos in this scene therefore demonstrate three different perspectives on the union with Aeneas, but all are symbolically entrapped by it and by the court's expectations of their marriage. Whether or not they are indeed "wed" in this scene, Waltz leaves open for the audience to decide, but that they will be married is strongly suggested. The sense of joyous celebration is quite strongly marred by a sense of foreboding (see Chapter 7) and oppression for Aeneas and more importantly for Dido, despite the ostensible high status and power of the royal pair.

The Waltz production thus uses a combination of musical HIP—including a fairly flexible attitude towards musical reconstruction— and "noumenal" through-choreographed and innovative theatrical elements, most notably multiple-performer character representation, to create an Act I that vividly explores the operatic text's theme of Dido's dilemma in Act I. This production reflects the usual fidelity dichotomy, but HIP is secondary here, within a primarily post-structural and postmodern framework that emphasises a contemporary perspective on the cultural and artistic past. This primary framework also emphasises suggestion of themes, impressionistic effect and focus on presence rather than clear-cut meaning-making. While it is partly inspired by Virgil's *Aeneid*, such as in its inclusion of Cupid/Ascanius, this production does not signal Virgil's trope of the widowed and oath-bound, chaste Dido. The production delicately suggests at least one reason why Dido would be resistant to Aeneas's courtship: that she may be afraid of losing her independence and her own identity. However, it also elicits affective responses from the audience: it encourages the audience member to admire Aeneas, to generally feel at ease with the Chorus and Ladies, and be drawn to the promise of the fulfilment of desire, thus encouraging the audience member's identification with Dido and their empathy when she accepts Aeneas, and maintaining a strong degree of ambivalence in its constructed and elicited attitudes towards the characters and the narrative.

4.3 The LAF production

The Les Arts Florissants production draws on *The Aeneid* in constructing Dido's dilemma in Act I as being primarily about the conflict between her widowhood versus her passion for

Aeneas. Secondarily, it is portrayed as being about the conflict between public duty and private emotions. Dido's duality is symbolised in her costume and performance, and intriguingly, embodied in the production's representation of the two Ladies. Meanwhile casting, costuming and physical and vocal performance encourage the audience to experience identification, admiration and even a slight erotic attraction with regards to both Aeneas and Dido.

Dido is performed in the LAF by Swedish mezzo Malena Ernman. Ernman performs internationally in different styles of musical theatre and even in pop and cross-over music styles, which is unusual for an opera singer,[30] and her theatrical training, physical appearance and associations with popular culture were used in this production to encourage the audience's identification and admiration. Ernman was around 38 years of age when the LAF production was filmed for commercial DVD release in 2008.[31] In the DVD she is strikingly conventionally attractive. The lavish historically-informed costume complements her blonde, blue-eyed colouring and emphasises her height and her lean, muscular physique. Her costume by Chloe Obolensky is based on a seventeenth-century style, constructed in a rich, golden brocade fabric, with an ornamented stiffened bodice and an overskirt with hip padding. Her hairstyle (a simple mid-positioned "bun" with no headdress) and her natural-looking makeup are essentially modern in style, emphasising her character's accessibility to a modern audience. However, the differences between the juxtaposed fashions of the seventeenth and twenty-first centuries are not emphasised as they are in the case of Fiona Shaw's costume in the Prologue, but are blended and harmonious, creating an aesthetically pleasing effect that blurs the conceptual boundaries between past and present. Ernman's central position onstage, her costume, her physique and her mostly erect posture signify that she portrays a mature, established, wealthy and attractive Queen Dido. The blended signs of the regal, the historical, the attractive, the contemporary and the populist elicit affective responses in the audience, including admiration and nostalgia, and even "presence" in the sense of a performer's "aura". They also signify the filtering of the past through the perspective of the present.

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[30] Anonymous, "Malena Ernman, Mezzo-Soprano : Bio", Creuna http://www.malenaernman.com/about/ (accessed 18 May 2012).

[31] Ernman's birth year is listed as 1970 on: Anonymous, "Malena Ernman: About (Biography)," *Facebook* (2012). http://www.facebook.com/pages/Malena-Ernman/72688240730?sk=info (accessed 15 May 2012).

From the beginning of the opera proper, Ernman's dignity and beauty as Dido and her obviously passionate relationship with Aeneas is directly contrasted with her apparent anguish, emphasising the duality of her psyche. Her extremely slow walk to centre stage and the stiff tension in her body contrasts with the fast tempo of the second part of the overture and the excited running of the schoolgirls around and in front of her. Ernman's head and upper body is covered in a black transparent widow's veil. Although veils such as these are rarely seen today, their significance is immediately recognised. In this case, the veil's negative associations contrast directly with the positive associations of Dido's bright golden gown, reinforcing the theme of duality: Dido is constructed as being simultaneously a grieving widow and a vibrant, wealthy queen. The costume signifies that it is not a recent bereavement, and as we have already seen from her secret tryst with Aeneas in the Prologue, she is not fully committed to mourning and to chastity. However, Dido's torment regarding her dilemma is signalled as being deeply felt: Ernman uses exaggerated facial contortions and a rich, resonant *mezzo-forte*, communicating Dido's passionate anguish, in the first three-quarters of the two-part aria "Ah, Belinda…Peace and I are Strangers Grown". Ernman then sings the A_2 section of "Peace and I" *mezzo-piano* with a half-closed jaw, a faraway timbre, and a blank, detached stare, indicating the interiority of Dido's emotions. This Dido is thus constructed through the sign-systems of costume, physical and vocal performance as a character experiencing duality and dilemma. She is constructed as attractive but emotionally unavailable, dignified but anguished, strong but fragile, passionately in love and yet ashamed of this and resisting it, and already in a passionate relationship in private, and still a mourning widow in public.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 4.5	
Production	**Act / Scene**
LAF	Act I Scene 1

Figure 4-9 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 4-9: Malena Ernman as Dido (centre); members of the Les Arts Florissants Chorus and additional Opéra Comique children's Chorus. From Act I Scene 1 (the LAF production).

Aeneas is performed by Christopher Maltman in a manner reminiscent of a pirate, a smuggler or a Byronic hero. In a casting that is a plausible romantic match for Ernman, the British baritone Maltman is approximately the same age as Ernman (born in 1970)[32] and is approximately as physically attractive as she is, according to contemporary ideals; he appears healthy and muscular, with an upright posture. His posture is more relaxed as Aeneas than Ernman's is as Dido, his vocal timbre is dark, masculine and powerful, and his overall characterisation of Aeneas lacks the rigid dignity and the anxiety of Ernman's. Instead, Maltman conveys a sense of roguish, confident, passionate charm. Maltman's hairstyle and costume support the construction of this persona: there is still a certain macho working-class or military association made in the modern western mind with a shaved head. However, this association has lessened in the past decade due to the style's having entered mainstream fashion, especially among balding men (such as Maltman), in which case it also connotes confidence and naturalness. As with Ernman's costume, Maltman's incorporates signifiers of

[32] Richard Wigmore, "Maltman, Christopher," *The Grove Book of Opera Singers [online edition]* (2008). http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t262.e933 (accessed 18 May 2012).

the past and the present into a blended whole that emphasises an appealing, romantic view of the past. His vaguely seventeenth-century-style open jacket connotes travel and a rough lifestyle, his over-the-knee leather boots recall those of a pirate or other roguish seafarer stereotype, and his open-necked, loose white shirt is an immediately recognisable emblem of the romantic, swashbuckling rogue-lover-heroes so prevalent in Hollywood films of the past century, such as Errol Flynn's 1680s doctor/ pirate in *Captain Blood* (1935).

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 4.6	
Production	**Act / Scene**
LAF	Act I Scene 2

Figure 4-10 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 4-10: Errol Flynn as Captain Blood in the film *Captain Blood* (1935).[33]

[33] Michael Curtiz [dir.], Errol Flynn, and Olivia de Havilland, Captain Blood, (USA: Warner Bros., 1935).

Figure 4-11 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 4-11: (L-R) Christopher Maltman as Aeneas, Judith van Wanroij as Belinda, Malena Ernman as Dido. From Act I Scene 2 (the LAF production).

Despite the attractiveness of this stereotype, it is also often associated with emotional immaturity and lack of romantic commitment. Inscribed with and on Maltman's body, therefore, is a trope that makes sense of both Dido's attraction and her indecision, and also of Aeneas's eventual weakness and indecision. Even more so than Ernman's Dido, Maltman's Aeneas projects a distinctly passionate charisma.

Dido's actual decision to accept Aeneas is represented in the LAF production as being more concrete than in the ROH and OA productions. Instead of a more abstract, danced representation of their coupling as in the Waltz; and instead of the formal dance and touching of hands in a short space of time as in the OA production, in the LAF production a full 36 seconds is allocated for the hesitant and quite realistic approach of Dido towards Aeneas and their first public kiss. As in the ROH and Waltz productions, the musical accompaniment is the "Dance Gittars Chacony", here arranged for two guitars; the repetitive ground-bass piece is extended for a longer period in the LAF than in the ROH production. While Christopher Hogwood uses musical material from the Triumphing Dance to form the basis of the ROH version, William Christie constructs this triple-time dance as a historically-informed

chaconne in the LAF, with a repeating four-bar phrase with the descending ground bass B*b*-A-G-F. Thus, the chaconne is in the same key as the preceding aria "Pursue Thy Conquest, Love" and the subsequent chorus "To The Hills And The Dales," and convincingly blends in with much of the musical material in Purcell's score. The intimacy of this guitar solo is matched by the intimacy of Aeneas and Dido's nervous and erotically-charged approach to each other, and their increasingly passionate kiss. In counterpoint to this, the stares of the courtiers, the delighted clap of Belinda's hands and the giggles of the watching schoolgirls, all highlight the lack of privacy that Aeneas and Dido have as rulers, and they further the development of the "public versus private" trope that is initially constructed in the LAF Prologue (see Chapter 3). The intimacy and passion of their kiss also tends to elicit a voyeuristic blend of erotic arousal and embarrassment in the audience; this "presence-effect" would be more profound in a live performance, but can be felt when watching the recording. The musical and theatrical significations of this moment emphasise Dido's dilemma and indecision on both political and personal levels, yet they also eventually emphasise that accepting Aeneas is her own decision.

Dido's dilemma and psychological duality is also embodied in Acts I and II of the LAF production in the form of Dido's two Ladies. Judith van Wanroij portrays a warm, friendly and excitable Belinda, frequently smiling and engaging in informal, friendly physical and social interaction with other characters such as Dido, Aeneas, the Chorus and the schoolgirls. In keeping with this emotional warmth, Wanroij's costume is a dark red velvet gown decorated with gold, and her soprano voice has a warm and rich timbre, while she emphasises her fast pitch-vibrato with fast trills on the word "shake" (in "Shake the Cloud from off your Brow") and rolls her "R"'s. The Second Woman, performed by young Swedish mezzo Lina Markeby, represents a much colder, dourer character, and her costume has a more subdued dusky pink and grey colour palette. Markeby generally stands quite still, upstage at a slight distance from Ernman's Dido, her hands clasped together over her skirt. As in the ROH and OA productions (but in contrast to the Waltz), she is not given any of the extra verses that are present for the Second Woman in the Chelsea libretto, giving her no solo vocal performance in Act I, while her voice is only clearly heard during the duet "Fear No Danger". The contrast between the two Ladies is particularly cogent during the chorus "To the Hills and the Dales." At this point, Wanroij embraces Maltman's Aeneas to welcome him warmly as her queen's new husband-to-be, while Markeby barely smiles at him as she lifts her hand to be kissed,

and curtsies slightly before moving offstage. In direct contrast to Belinda, the Second Woman is therefore depicted as formal and lacking in joy or warmth.

In the LAF production Dido's duality continues to be represented in Act II Scene 2 as well as in Act I, despite the fact that by this point, Dido has already made her decision. In the Grove Scene, Dido is portrayed as having misgivings about her decision, while the Second Woman continues to embody that pessimism. A relaxing picnic is signified with minimal props and set changes: the casting down of rugs, the lounging and drinking of the lovers and the Chorus, the warmer lighting and greenery adorning the set, some "leaves" drifting down from above the stage, and the sound effect of birdsong. Belinda's aria "Thanks to these Lonesome Vales" and her wandering among the courtiers is directly contrasted here again with the Second Woman's dour tension as the latter stands alone with a troubled expression. Her aria "Oft She Visits This Lone Mountain" has a negative effect on Dido: when the Second Woman sings, Ernman's relaxed movements become quick and tense, and her face expresses fear and anxiety. The Second Woman's aria refers obliquely to the myth (described in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*) of the hunter Actaeon discovering the chaste goddess of the hunt, Diana, while she is bathing in a forest spring. Outraged that he has seen her naked, Diana turns him into a stag and he is hunted down and killed by his own hunting hounds. The Second Woman's reference to this myth could be seen to portend Aeneas's or Dido's death, suggesting that it might be some kind of divine retribution for their extramarital relationship (see Chapter 7). After her aria, the Second Woman is quickly hurried away from Dido by Chorus members, while Dido is comforted by Aeneas.

In contrast to the Waltz production, in which the two dancer-Didos seem to embody the positive and negative elements of Dido's psyche—or the pro- and contra-Aeneas elements—we can see that in the LAF production, Dido's two Ladies fulfil this function. Here, Belinda reflects the warm, loving and optimistic, pro-Aeneas side of Dido and the Second Woman represents the anxious, self-destructive side that fears a relationship with Aeneas. Meanwhile, the attractiveness of Ernman and Maltman's portrayal of the lovers encourages the audience's identification and empathy with Dido and the duality of her mind and emotions. On the other hand, none of this is signified in a particularly overt or literal manner: signification in the LAF—while a lesser extent than in the Waltz—still involves some element of ambivalence,

and requires the audience member to some extent to build on their own knowledge and understanding of the operatic text and its multilayered themes and history.

4.4 The ROH production

Unlike the Waltz and LAF productions, The ROH production does not include a Prologue and is based squarely on the existing sources for the score. The curtain rises during the first part of the Overture to reveal the well-known British mezzo Sarah Connolly as Dido, standing alone centre stage in a spotlight with her back to the audience. This Dido's costume and movements construct her initially as vulnerable and deeply human. The gown is a mixture of white and flesh-coloured sheer clinging fabric, in a contemporary style with exposed skin at her throat and lower arms. Connolly suddenly looks over her shoulder at the audience, as if shocked to discover that she is being observed.

Figure 4-12 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 4-12: Sarah Connolly as Dido. From the Overture to Act I (the ROH production).

Her anxious expression and tension then disappear and are apparently very deliberately replaced by the impression of calm authority as she turns to fully face the audience, while the cyclorama behind her is darkened from brown to black. Her calm queenly persona is thus constructed as being a "public" superimposition over her real, or "private", vulnerability and anxiety. The moment the second part of the Overture begins, she holds her bare arms out to her side, her wrists exposed, in a pose that recalls images of Christ preaching to his disciples, signifying that Dido is a revered but ultimately martyred figure. Female dancers in dark sombre robes approach her and take hold of her wrists, clamping decorative golden cuffs onto them: Dido is thus symbolically imprisoned by her role as Queen. She is made into a goddess-like figure, as the dancers dress her in a blue and gold Japanese-influenced kimono robe over her gown, suggesting a rather formal and traditional fantasy culture. The dressers add a huge clear standing collar in a butterfly-wing design, which frames Dido's head like a halo. In a nod to the prominent place of *Dido and Aeneas* in British cultural history, this also recalls the standing collars, capes and ruffs famously worn by Elizabeth I of England, as Winkler points out in her detailed review of the DVD; likewise the giant open sleeves of Connolly's overdress resemble Elizabeth's.[34] Through these signified links with Elizabeth I, the ROH Dido is constructed as a similarly "great", English, unmarried queen.

[34] Amanda Eubanks Winkler, "Henry Purcell, *Dido and Aeneas*, The Royal Opera / The Royal Ballet. Director and Choreographer Wayne McGregor; Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Conductor Christopher Hogwood DVD (Opus Arts: OW 1018D, 2009). [Review]," *Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music* 16, no. 1 (2010). http://www.sscm-jscm.org/v16/no1/rr_winkler.html.

Figure 4-13: Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I of England, c. 1592.

Figure 4-14 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 4-14: Sarah Connolly as Dido, dancers of the Royal Ballet. From the Overture to Act I (the ROH production).[35]

[35] Marcus Gheeraerts The Younger, *Queen Elizabeth I ('The Ditchley Portrait')*, c. 1592, National Portrait Gallery, London, UK.

Dido's dressers are joined by other similarly attired male and female dancers who whirl quickly around her. Connolly begins a contrastingly slow walk downstage with a steely facial expression, a choreography of different yet simultaneous tempi that has a remarkable resemblance to the choreography for the second part of the Overture in both the LAF production and the OA production (see audiovisual excerpts 4.8 and 4.9: unfortunately no excerpt of this section of the OA production was available).

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 4.7	
Production	**Act / Scene**
ROH	Overture to Act I (second half)

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 4.8	
Production	**Act / Scene**
LAF	Overture to Act I (second half)

Although the cumbersome collar is removed by a Chorus member as soon as the Overture ends, the ROH's opening sequence in the Overture strongly constructs the notion that Connolly's Dido is vulnerable and will be martyred, but that she is also hiding that vulnerability behind a mask of dignity and queenly, almost supernatural power. This suggests that her reluctance to accept Aeneas is influenced strongly by her sense of duty as a queen, and inflects her internal dilemma and disquiet as a conflict between the private and public aspects of her character.

Connolly's makeup and costume are designed to emphasise youth, while Connolly was middle-aged (46) at the time.[36] Her hairstyle is long and girlish, her makeup quite natural. In addition to creating a feminine, vulnerable appearance with a singer who is renowned for playing strong and often cross-cast (male) roles, this costuming had the effect of lowering her apparent age to correlate more plausibly with that of her co-star, American baritone Lucas Meachem, who was only 31 at the time of recording.[37] In both Virgil and Purcell and Tate's versions of the narrative, there is no mention of a significant age gap between Aeneas and Dido, and although their ages are not specified, Dido is shown in Book IV of *The Aeneid* to still be young, certainly young enough to bear children:

> And Anna answers: "Sister, you more dear
>
> To me than light itself, are you to lose
>
> All of your youth in dreary loneliness, 40
>
> And never know sweet children or the soft
>
> Rewards of Venus?[38]

Upper-class women in Ancient Rome of the Augustan period (whom Virgil's readers would have taken as their benchmark) would have been married in their teens,[39] so she might have been intended and interpreted to be in her twenties. While the operatic text of *Dido and Aeneas* does not indicate Dido's age, the original audiences of the late seventeenth century would have interpreted it in light of Virgil's portrayal. Therefore this age gap has been imposed on the opera by this modern production.

A very high tolerance has historically tended to be seen in the world of opera towards older singers playing much younger characters. As I have shown in Chapter 2, in the late seventeenth century the situation was quite different: it was common for singers to perform

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[36] Richard Wigmore, "Connolly, Sarah," *The Grove Book of Opera Singers* (2008). http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t262.e294 (accessed 19 May 2012).

[37] Charlene Baldridge, "Meachem brings heartiness to 'Barber of Seville'," *North County Times [online edition]* (2012). http://www.nctimes.com/entertainment/music/meachem-brings-heartiness-to-barber-of-seville/article_298ed98a-1ca8-5585-ba87-a006c81ca525.html (accessed 21 May 2012).

[38] Vergilius Maro (Virgil), "The Aeneid of Virgil: A Verse Translation", trans. Allen Mandelbaum, 82.

[39] Elaine Fantham and others, *Women in the Classical World* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 318.

professionally at much younger ages. In late twentieth and early twenty-first century opera performance, however, singers in their 30s or 40s—the age that in the modern era is considered to be the prime of their singing career—often play characters in their teens or twenties. This casting practice is very rare in today's film and television (and to a lesser extent in the spoken theatre), which constitutes the majority of society's exposure to performance, but it is a particular feature of opera production in the past century, particularly the Canonic type.[40] Ralph P. Locke's comment in the book *En Travesti* illustrates modern performance practices in this regard:

> True opera lovers – as opposed to habitual scoffers – don't much care if a singer conforms to some conventional standard of physical beauty or even if he or she matches a character's physical "type".[41]

It must be noted that this was written in 1995, and this casting practice is less obviously a feature of opera performance today, with the past decade's trend for greater verisimilitude in casting and more physically attractive lead singers. However, the notion that opera singers are generally middle-aged and overweight persists as a stereotype in today's broader society, and the age-gap casting practice is still widespread in opera.[42]

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 4.9	
Production	**Act / Scene**
LAF	Act I Scene 2

[41] Ralph P. Locke, "What Are These Women Doing In Opera?," in *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera*, ed. Corinne E. Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995),65.

[42] Abbate and Parker refer to this phenomenon: "That such glorious singing is often being done by silly people, often too old and too fat, whose eccentricity makes them somehow apart from us, is part of its spell." Parker and Abbate, *A History of Opera: The Last Four Hundred Years*, Chapter 20.

The issue arises in the ROH production, as with the OA production (as I demonstrate below) that there is an ambiguity about whether the viewer might comprehend the usual operatic *convention* of an older singer playing a young heroine, or the deliberate *device* of an older woman being cast in the role as a way of portraying Dido as an older woman. To reiterate, a convention is an element of *mise-en-scène* or acting that is accepted as the norm in that particular theatrical culture and that is essentially disregarded by the audience—such as the fact that a proscenium theatre may feature a set with no fourth wall that is otherwise entirely realistic. A device is an element that is deliberately introduced to draw attention to a certain theme or aspect of the production.[43] In this case in particular, the choice of which interpretation to accept devolves on the individual audience member, in a potent reminder of the subjective process of meaning-making. In the ROH production, the audience's discomfort arising from the social stigma surrounding the trope of the older woman / younger man couple is exacerbated by the discomfort created by the ambiguity of the signification. However, on balance the signification leans more towards convention than device: as we have seen from the above discussion of the hair, makeup and costume, the character of Dido is constructed as being slightly younger than Connolly actually was at the time. Likewise, the character of Aeneas is constructed in this production as being slightly older than Meachem's true age: Aeneas's costume with its baggy split skirt and jacket emphasises Meachem's large, rather overweight physique, and Meachem's vocal timbre is fairly dark. These elements function to de-emphasise the age gap between them—but it is still noticeable. In addition, there is no visual or other reference to Dido's widowhood, her vow of chastity, or the gods, and little emphasis on Dido's understanding of Aeneas's destiny. Therefore, an audience member experiencing this production could easily interpret Dido's reluctance to accept Aeneas as being largely because Dido has trouble believing that a much younger man will truly love her and commit to her. The age difference thus contributes to this production's elicitation of an empathetic sense of uncertainty and dilemma in the audience.

[43] Keyser, "Cross-Sexual Casting in Baroque Opera: Musical and Theatrical Conventions."

4.5 The OA production

The OA production bears some striking similarities with the ROH. It likewise uses a Tenbury-based score and does not attempt to reconstruct or create a Prologue or any of the "missing" music; it is produced by an established mainstream opera company; it has a fairly Canonic approach to the singing and casting and yet also features a period-specialist orchestra (the Orchestra of the Antipodes) contracted from outside the company specifically for this production. Like the ROH and LAF productions, the OA features Dido centre-stage, advancing slowly downstage during the Overture. As in the LAF, this Dido also wears a black widow's veil during the Overture, signifying that she is a widow and thus again supplying that Virgilian element in her reluctance to accept Aeneas.[44] However, the OA production does not feature any indication that Dido has sworn a vow of chastity. Instead, as in the ROH, the OA production provides a more understandable reason for her dilemma, for a modern audience: it features a noticeable age gap between the lovers, with the casting of the older, internationally-known soprano Yvonne Kenny as Dido, and a young, relatively little-known Opera Australia ensemble baritone, Luke Gabbedy, as Aeneas.

In the OA production, the age gap is even greater than in the ROH production: Kenny was 59 at the time,[45] while Gabbedy, like Meachem, was in his early thirties.[46] In addition, while Lucas Meachem appears somewhat older than his true age in the ROH recording, Gabbedy appears slender and youthful, and some elements of signification actually emphasise Kenny's age. As the two singers cast as the Ladies are both young, the fact that they stand either side of her in the opening moments of the performance emphasises Kenny's aged face and body. They also wear dazzling bright blue and red gowns, while Kenny’s costume is a duller bronze or tarnished-gold colour. In addition, Kenny does not suppress her rather wide and slow vibrato, which is a common in older singers and signifies her age. As Murray Black states in his review for *The Australian* with reference to Kenny as Dido, "her voice is past its prime

[44] The archive DVD of the Overture is very dark during the Overture and the image is unclear, so given the very limited number of DVD examples possible in the case of the OA production, I have not included an excerpt from the Overture.

[45] Elizabeth Forbes, "Kenny, Yvonne (Denise)," *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera [online edition]* (1992). http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/O009355 (accessed 21 May 2012).

[46] Anonymous, "Malena Ernman: About (Biography)".

and she can't overcome a periodically tremulous quiver."[47] This ageing effect is ameliorated by the fact that Kenny's voice is a lyric soprano, which imparts a slightly more youthful brightness of timbre as compared to many other darker-voiced mezzo-soprano Didos such as Malena Ernman or Sarah Connolly. Heavy makeup (dark eyes and red lips), a thick, long brown-black wig, and a very upright posture also somewhat lessen Kenny's/ Dido's apparent age. This production's signification is therefore slightly ambiguous on the point of the age gap between the lovers.

Figure 4-15 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 4-15: Luke Gabbedy as Aeneas and Yvonne Kenny as Dido (foreground) with Amy Wilkinson as Second Woman and Taryn Fiebig as Belinda (background). From Act III Scene 1 of the OA production.[48]

With general knowledge about the visual culture of Ancient Carthage being very scant among modern audiences, Tylesova designed costumes for Dido, Belinda (soprano Taryn Fiebig)

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[47] Murray Black, "Arcadia Sits Uneasily in Modern Age", The Australian http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25703231-5013577,00.html (accessed 4 July 2009).

[48] Anonymous, "Images of *Baroque Masterpieces*", Opera Australia http://www.opera-australia.org.au/scripts/nc.dll?OPRA:STANDARD:965063327:pc=PC_90521 (accessed 13 August 2009).

and the Second Woman (soprano Amy Wilkinson) that visually reference the much more familiar traditional motifs of Ancient Egypt and Africa in general: Dido and her two Ladies wear extremely long brown-black wigs in a mass of tiny braids, and multitudinous strings of colourful beads around their necks. However, the costumes for these three women, as well as the overall *mise-en-scène,* involve more fantasy than history. As reviewer Sarah Noble wrote, "Dido and her attendants look vaguely like North African royalty of antiquity, but that's where verisimilitude ends." [49] While Dido and her Ladies seem to be from a fantasy ancient Africa, Aeneas is constructed as a twentieth-century fantasy Westerner. His costume consists of a rather strange black woollen aviation-like suit with flared trousers and a coat with a sheepskin collar. On Gabbedy's tall slender frame the costume is ill-fitting and awkward, and his slicked-back hair with long sideburns seems sleazy. Despite Gabbedy's strong, attractive, "burnished"[50] baritone timbre, the costume elicits some dislike and disdain for the character from Aeneas's first appearance. This made more sense of Dido's reluctance to accept him. The apparent cultural differences in Aeneas and Dido's costumes arguably also add a post-colonial dimension to the production's network of signification, subtly paralleling Aeneas's seduction and abandonment of Dido with the western world's treatment of Africa—a theme that has a particular emotional resonance in post-colonial Australia. Here, however, the westerner Aeneas was "othered", while the "African" Dido was constructed as a sympathetic character for the mostly white audience. The audience's empathetic fear and suspicion of Aeneas (and of the Chorus who support his courtship of Dido), and our critical distance, guilt and repulsion in response to our own real-world colonial cultural past, repels the audience from Aeneas and makes us fear Dido's acceptance of him. On the other hand, our attraction to Gabbedy's own physical and vocal qualities, and the positive aspects of Aeneas's character as outlined by Dido and her Ladies, as well as Dido's obvious love for him, her apparent lack of a vow of chastity and the modern western cultural discomfort with extended grief, are all elements that promote our wish for the lovers' union. As with the LAF production, therefore as an audience we are thus subtly drawn into a deeper and more complex empathetic relationship with Dido, and made to feel similarly conflicted about our feelings regarding Aeneas and her decision.

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[49] Sarah Noble, "A Double Dose of Baroque Masterpieces", The Opera Critic [online magazine] http://theoperacritic.com/tocreviews2.php?review=sn/2009/ausdidoacis0609.htm (accessed 4 July 2009).

[50] Ibid.

Notably, this production's *mise-en-scene* aligns the courtiers and Aeneas with the set design, while Dido, Belinda, and to a lesser extent the Second Woman are visually contrasted with it. The *mise-en-scène* consists almost entirely of black, white and red: rectangular white proscenium-like frames and black steps set at irregular angles. It recalls German Expressionism,[51] and the strong colours and diagonal lines impart a sense of chaos and impending disaster. Meanwhile, Aeneas wears black and white wool, and the Chorus wears Halloween-like short, fluffy white wigs and white-base makeup with dark eyes and red lips, with an eclectic array of heavy red woollen costumes, resembling a variety of Western aristocratic fashions from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century. In contrast to these plain matte woollen fabrics, Dido's and her Ladies' gowns are constructed in a shimmering fabric with curved abstract designs painted on them. The Second Woman's red dress is visually aligned with the black, white and red scheme, while the gold and bright blue (respectively) of Dido and Belinda's costumes contrast sharply with it. As in the LAF and ROH productions, the Second Woman has no solos in Act I, but sings and performs a formal gestural dance with Belinda in the duet "Fear No Danger", and generally sings with the Chorus. The Second Woman is thus constructed as occupying a position somewhere between Belinda and the Chorus in terms of identity and allegiance.

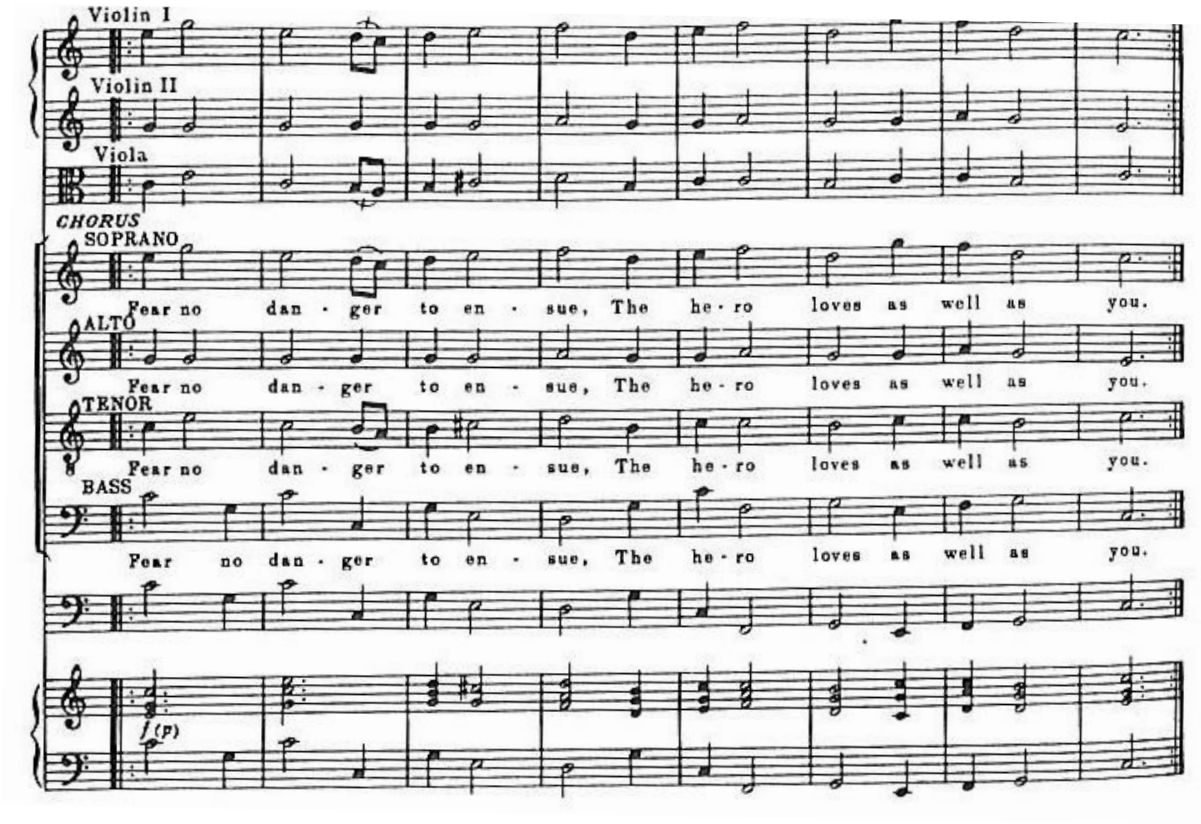
Figure 4-16 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 4-16: (L-R) Taryn Fiebig as Belinda, Yvonne Kenny as Dido, Luke Gabbedy as Aeneas, Amy Wilkinson as Second Woman, Opera Australia Chorus.[52]

[51] This set design and the Chorus's makeup and white wigs were particularly redolent of that black-and-white classic of German Expressionism, the 1920 Robert Wiene film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*.

[52] Anonymous, "Images of *Baroque Masterpieces*".

The Chorus is constructed as an ever-watchful, severely formal and judgemental group of courtiers, with blank stares, clenched fists, identical wigs, ghoulish makeup and a seated position upstage, directly facing the audience. From this vantage point they can not only be seen to observe Dido, but also the audience. When I experienced this live, I found it discomfiting and confrontational, but it even imparts some of this effect via DVD. It also constitutes a subtle break of the fourth wall, thus aligning with both of the key functions of the set's chaotic multiple proscenium frames. Conductor Antony Walker heightens the rhetorical force of the courtiers' pressure on Dido in the choral reprise of "Fear No Danger", by adding drum-beats that are played in unison with—and thus serve to emphasise—the song's formal sarabande crotchet-minim, minim-crotchet rhythm, which can be seen in the following score excerpt.



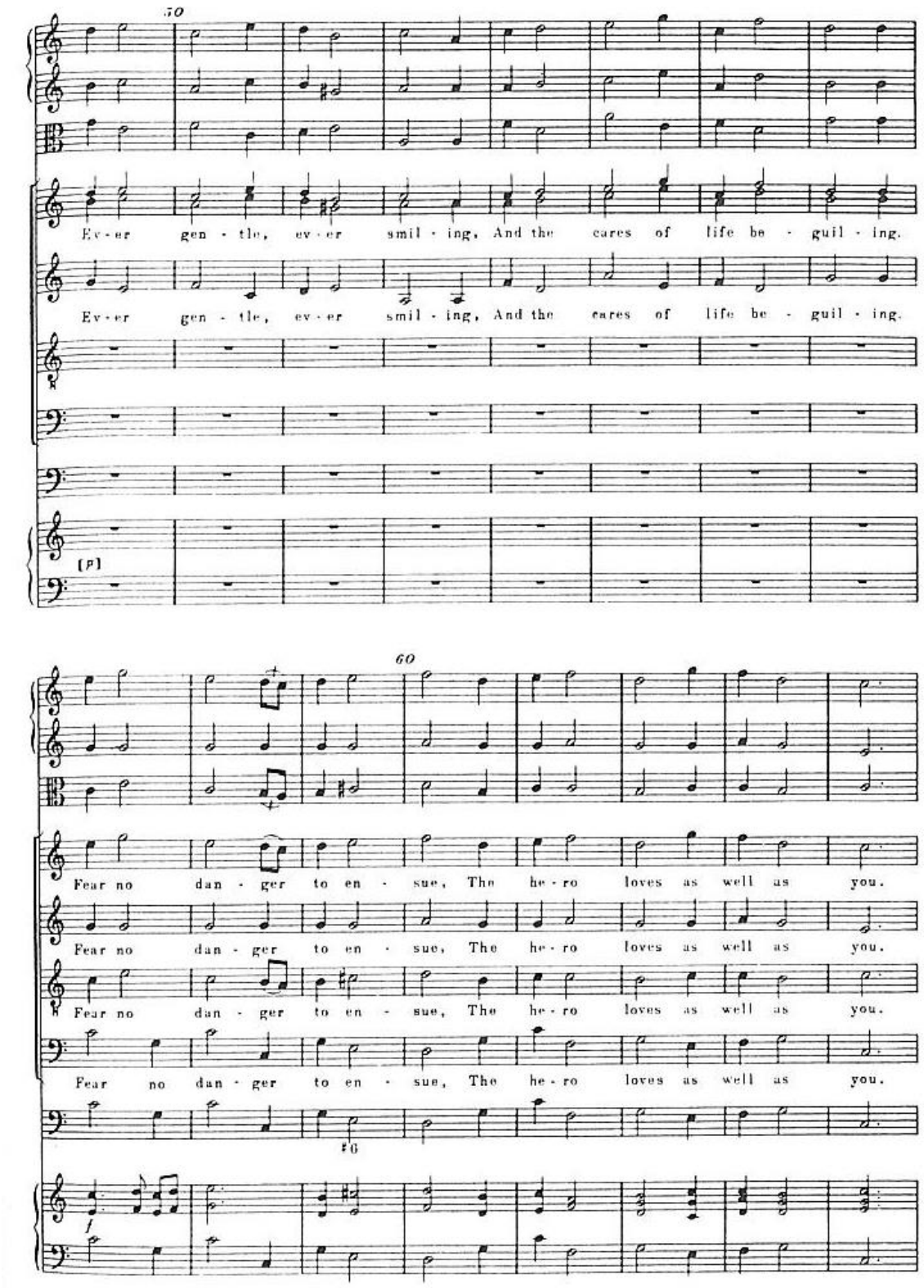


Figure 4-17: From Act I Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas*.[53] Copyright © 1986 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

[53] Price, ed. *Purcell: "Dido and Aeneas," An Opera*, 98-99.

This production emphasises the score's impression that Belinda is leading the courtiers. Her solo ariettas frequently precede choral versions of the same material (this is the case for "Fear No Danger", for example) and in this production Belinda uses overt gestures to direct the Chorus of courtiers. This can be seen in audiovisual excerpt 4.10: with a wave of her hand during the opening arietta "Shake the Cloud," Belinda directs the Chorus to cease leaning towards Dido and to once more sit upright facing the audience, directing toward us the rhetorical force of their chorus "Banish sorrow, banish care,"—while their intimidating behaviour and appearance cynically undermine their ostensibly comforting words.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 4.10	
Production	**Act / Scene**
OA	Act I Scene 1

In modern editions of the musical score, the courtiers turn Dido's personal romance into a public concern with the chorus "To the Hills and the Vales". In the OA production, this is emphasised through the Chorus's choreography for this number: from being seated upstage the Chorus walks downstage, performing a formal, gestural dance while singing "To The Hills and the Vales", and almost obscuring Kenny and Gabbedy, who weave slowly among them, with Aeneas following Dido. The courtiers' overpowering of Dido's personal choice regarding Aeneas is emphasised through the fact that there is no "Dance Gittars Chacony" during which Dido and Aeneas can come together. Dido and Aeneas do not truly embrace in Act I; indeed Aeneas does not heartily embrace her until Act III Scene 2 (see the above photograph), when Dido is ordering him to leave. Instead, Dido only ambiguously signals her acceptance of Aeneas through a formal dance—with choreography influenced by early English and French courtly dance and also by choreographers Lucy Guerin and Anton's own brands of contemporary dance—to the accompaniment of the instrumental "Triumphing Dance" at the very end of Act I. Dido is thus constructed as not truly being able to be the agent of her own destiny.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 4.11	
Production	**Act / Scene**
OA	Act I Scene 2

Through the sign-systems of costume, vocal performance, instrumentation and choreography, therefore, the OA production constructs the notion in Act I that Dido's only real ally is Belinda, but emphasises the fact that even she is leading and to some extent controlling the courtiers. It signifies that the Second Woman is at least partly in alliance with the overbearing and frightening courtiers. Meanwhile, Aeneas is marked as young and attractive but untrustworthy. This production thus offers original reasons for Dido's reluctance to accept Aeneas: apart from Belinda, Dido's advisors and Aeneas himself are all constructed as suspicious. This contributes to the sense of Dido's duality and dilemma, and encourages a similar, empathetic sense of uncertainty and duality in the audience.

4.6 Conclusions

Dido's reluctance to accept Aeneas in Act I of *Dido and Aeneas* can seem baffling, given that the score and libretto supply so many points in favour of her acceptance of him. These are pressed upon Dido by her Ladies-in-waiting and the Chorus of courtiers, as well as by Aeneas himself. Purcell and Tate would have assumed the audience's knowledge of Virgil's original story in Book IV of *The Aeneid*, in which it is made clear that Dido's main objection to coupling with Aeneas was her reluctance to break her vow of chastity, before she is persuaded otherwise by her sister's arguments and her own divinely-created love for Aeneas. Modern productions may draw on Virgil's *Aeneid* to support their interpretation of Dido's dilemma and why she is reluctant. Curiously, while the Waltz production draws on *The Aeneid* in other respects, it does not adopt and express Virgil's reason for Dido's reluctance.

However, it is certainly true of the LAF and OA productions, which follow Virgil in portraying Dido as a mourning widow. None of the four modern productions suggest that Dido made a vow of chastity. It may be that it simply seems to be of little relevance to a modern audience accustomed to more liberal sexual values than those of Ancient Rome or the English Restoration.

The Waltz and ROH productions on the other hand make little or no reference, through musical and theatrical signification, to Dido's widowhood. Instead they suggest other reasons that are likely to resonate with modern audiences. This can be seen particularly in the case of the Waltz production, in which Dido is impressionistically portrayed as a tripartite singer-dancer being who simultaneously imagines or enacts the outcomes of both her possible decisions regarding Aeneas. She is subtly shown to fear the loss of selfhood, power and independence that a relationship could entail. The rather *avant-garde* Waltz production thus highlights the duality and conflict of Dido's psychological state to a greater extent than the other three modern productions. However, the LAF, ROH and OA provide other reasons for Dido's reluctance and explore it in different ways, each combining signification and "presence-effects" that also affect the meaning-making. For instance, the ROH production portrays Dido's entire world as a constrained, depressing and rather frightening one, in which she is presented with a choice between private emotions and public duty: through identification and overall affective force, the audience themselves are made to feel constrained. The ROH, and also the OA production also—somewhat ambiguously— portray an age gap between the lovers, suggesting that Dido's reluctance may also stem from fear of a young man's inconstancy. Meanwhile, this potential for inconstancy is signified by reference to the Byronic lover-rogue stereotype in the LAF production, which also portrays Aeneas and Dido in such a way as to elicit an erotic attraction in the audience, thereby increasing identification and empathy with Dido (and also with Aeneas). Thus, a combination of Virgil's original reasons for Dido's reluctance, those suggested by the operatic text, and more modern issues are selected and/or combined, to create various types of signification and emotional expression in the four modern productions.

The fact that elements of *The Aeneid* are often referenced to support modern productions' clarification of points of ambiguity in the operatic text—such as Dido's dilemma—can result

in some confusion. Even scholars sometimes conflate Virgil's poem with Purcell and Tate's opera and the performance of it, as can be seen in Stephanie Rentsch's analysis of the Waltz production, which I have previously quoted:

> After this moist and merry opening scene the aquarium is rolled offstage again by stagehands, but the water remains an important, narrative-developing element as much of the libretto as of the performance: *since the death of her husband Dido has been Queen of Carthage and has sworn never to marry again*, but rather solely to serve her people as Queen. Her plans, however, are destroyed through the arrival of the Trojan hero Aeneas. From Dido's perspective Aeneas emerges quite suddenly from the sea, and just as unexpectedly she falls in love with him.[54] (My italics.)

Clemens Risi's analysis of the Waltz does the same:

> With Dido's very first aria, "Ah, Belinda", we see yet another way to convey musical form through choreography. In this aria, where Dido is torn between *the vow of fidelity that she swore to her deceased husband* and giving expression to her burning love for Aeneas, Dido appears on the Staatsoper's stage in three different forms…[55] (My italics.)

Neither Rentsch nor Risi discuss *The Aeneid* specifically; or acknowledge that the libretto does not mention Dido's former husband or her vow; or discuss the fact that the Waltz production does not overtly reference these elements of Dido's past. In contrast with this looser approach, in this chapter I have begun to separately identify at least three distinct versions of the narrative that operate together in modern performance: the Virgilian version, the operatic text's version, and each individual modern production's version. These three versions reflect the ideas and values of Ancient Rome, Restoration London and the modern western world respectively. All of these narrative and historical layers can influence the production's construction of meaning. In line with my overall methodology, in this analysis I have thus explored how each "text" is separate but at the same time informs the others in a web of intertextuality. The four modern productions reference these intertextual elements in a complex network of meaning-making, using the variety of different signification systems offered by opera performance.

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[54] Original German passage quoted on p.108. From: Rentsch, "Fließende Übersetzungen".

[55] Risi, "Performing Affect in Seventeenth-century Opera: Process, Reception, Transgression," 90, 96.

5 Power Relations

5.2 Introduction

Curtis Price's "gaping ambiguity" of the motivation behind the Sorceress's hatred of Dido is in some ways resolved by the four modern productions, but they also retain some of its mystery. The operatic text appears to suggest that the Sorceress and her coven are motivated by envy of Dido—what I call the "envy" trope. However, there are only two lines in the libretto—a mere half-sentence—that relate to this issue. These are sung by the Sorceress in Act II, Scene 1: "the Queen of Carthage, whom we hate / As we do all in prosp'rous state…"[1] As Anthony Welch has pointed out, Tate's earlier play *Brutus of Alba* (1678), which formed the basis for *Dido and Aeneas*, features more clarity of motive:

> In *Brutus*, the sorceress announces that "I hate all humane kind / But envy most the prosperous and great" (19). The passage survives in Tate's opera… but the revealing word "envy" has dropped out.[2]

Because of the ambiguity and brevity of *Dido*'s libretto in this regard, there are many different ways to interpret the theme of the antagonists' motivations. In general, the four modern productions take up the "envy" trope, but they extend and enrich this trope in different ways.

The witches may plausibly be motivated by envy of Dido's status, wealth and privilege, which constitutes a narrative element that might be viewed today as a power and/or class struggle. Of the four modern productions, the Waltz arguably does the most to emphasise inequality in *Dido and Aeneas* in the contrast between the opulence of Dido's court and the degrading poverty of the enchantresses' lifestyles. The ROH and OA productions also construct this binary. Meanwhile, the LAF and OA productions position the Sorceress and witches as oppressed minorities in terms of gender-expression. The ROH constructs the two Witches as being minorities in terms of ethnicity and disability, but the ROH Sorceress on the

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[1] Price, *Henry Purcell: Dido and Aeneas: An Opera*, 69.

[2] Welch, "The Cultural Politics of *Dido and Aeneas*," 8.

other hand is, of the four productions' Sorcerer/esses, most ambiguously signified in terms of power: she is simultaneously constructed as powerful *and* oppressed, as admirable *and* despicable.

There is little reference (either overt or implied) to Virgil's *Aeneid* in the operatic text's presentation of the witches and their motivations; this makes sense, as the witches were Tate's invention, not Virgil's. There is, however, significant reference in the opera to the political and social context of the late seventeenth century, which largely appears to have prompted Tate to develop these characters and their function. In constructing the witches as minority/ disadvantaged groups, the four modern productions build on and enhance links between the opera's witches and the early modern era's perceptions and stereotypes of witches. The modern productions also build on the gender- and class-based discrimination, persecution and social control that characterised that era. In order to explore these associations thoroughly it is necessary to briefly examine this historical context and its relationship with the opera. I will also make some mention of the relevance of these and/or similar issues in the modern western world, such as current perceptions of witchcraft and its association with feminism and religious minorities, and these issues' relationships to power structures in the modern world. I will show how these historical and current concerns are reflected in the musical and theatrical signification of the four modern productions.

5.3 Class

Class and institutionalised power can be seen as a significant issue in *Dido and Aeneas*. Even if it were *not* originally written for court performance, it was certainly written in a time and place in which monarchy and class stratification were of greater political, socio-economic and cultural importance than they generally are in western culture(s) today. Interdisciplinary cultural historian, literary scholar and musicologist Amanda Eubanks Winkler has historically contextualised *Dido and Aeneas*'s construction of its ruler protagonists and witch antagonists.[3] In focusing on elite ruling class protagonists, the opera is similar to much baroque tragic or serious theatrical art. However, as Winkler points out, unlike many

[3] Winkler, *O Let Us Howle Some Heavy Note*.

tragedies of the period *Dido and Aeneas* juxtaposes this musically and dramatically ordered world with depictions of the outcast underclass world of the Witches, in which their music and laughter is as chaotic as their destructive schemes.[4] In the context of today's more liberal political climate, the four modern productions studied here tend to adopt a more critical and ambiguous stance towards the portrayal and the implied moral judgement of characters of different social classes.

5.4 Witchcraft and power

The *mise-en-scène* of the four productions constructs *Dido and Aeneas* as a pseudo-historical narrative. In this context it makes sense that the witches would be politically oppressed by Dido's elite court culture, as occult groups in western society have traditionally been oppressed by the church and state. In the western world's early modern era, witches were commonly seen as truly supernatural. In the late seventeenth century however (the end of the early modern era), this was thrown into doubt by the increasing interest in rationality and empirical scientific principles. Instead, the notion that these persons were mad or melancholic was increasingly offered up as an explanation for their behaviour.[5] As mentioned in Chapter 2, the witch figure was also often perceived by the Anglican majority of the Restoration period to be linked with superstition and with Catholicism.

In the Restoration period therefore, English mainstream society was beginning to distance itself from the preceding centuries' stereotype of the witch figure, but it still held cultural weight. Elements of this trope included biological sex, gender-expression and socio-economic class as well as appearance and behaviour more generally. Today, western culture holds two main witch stereotypes: the "hag" and the "*femme fatale*." The former is typically old and physically unattractive; the latter is typically young and beautiful. The latter became dominant from the eighteenth century,[6] but in the seventeenth century the witch was

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., 43.

[6] Brian Levack and Roy Porter, *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe, Volume 5: The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, Witchcraft and Magic in Europe (Bloomsbury, 1999), 246.

primarily associated with the "hag". The Reverend John Gaule described this stereotype in1646:

> Every old woman with a wrinkled face, a furr'd brow, a hairy lip, a gobber tooth, a squint eye, a squeking voyce, or a scolding tongue, having a ragged coate on her back, a skullcap on her head, a spindle in her hand, and a dog or cat by her side; is not only suspected, but pronounced for a witch.[7]

Gaule writes from the cynical perspective of the then-emerging trend for rationalism, and therefore disregards what was commonly considered the most important characteristic of a witch in the early modern era: it was believed that the witch had made some kind of pact with the Devil in order to obtain magical powers. Although emphasis on this pact has faded as western society has secularised, the stereotypical, superficial elements listed by Gaule are still strong in western culture today. The modern "hag" and also to a lesser extent the "*femme fatale*" tropes have some factual basis in the types of people who were typically accused of witchcraft in the early modern era. Around 80% of the accused were female,[8] and the majority of these were old women.[9] Social historian Edward Bever argues that there was a strong element of patriarchal power-play involved:

> The early modern witch persecutions constituted a wide-ranging and multifaceted repression of individuals exhibiting certain behaviours and attitudes, basically women who exhibited strong sexual, physical, or psychological aggressiveness.[10]
>
> The central dynamic of witchcraft was … a struggle for power. "Witches" used the power of the range of behaviours from unconscious expressions of anger to premeditated use of poisons to compel compliance or punish defiance; accusers used the coercive power of the state as the most extreme step in a series of countermeasures… Accusers could be women as well as men, but since the suspects

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[7] James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in England, 1550 - 1750* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1996), 172. Quoted in Winkler, *O Let Us Howle Some Heavy Note*, 22.

[8] Edward Bever, "Witchcraft, Female Aggression, and Power in the Early Modern Community," *Journal of Social History* 35, no. 4 (2002): 955-988.

[9] Ibid., 957.

[10] Ibid., 973.

> were overwhelmingly female, on balance the trials served to diminish women's power and strengthen men's.[11]

Winkler also emphasises this aspect of the witchcraft phenomenon in this period, arguing that it was a means of oppressing women who were "unruly" in their assumption of male power and prerogatives.[12] In particular she explores the early modern association of androgyny and even masculinity with the (female) witch or sorceress, which I will examine in more detail in Chapter 6.

The hag's aged, physically unattractive, and androgynous attributes contributed to the establishment of a tradition that gained traction in the seventeenth century, of female witches being performed comically in drag by adult males. The reduction in the witch's status from object of fear to object of ridicule was associated with the rise of rationalism, as witchcraft became popularly divested of its believability and therefore its danger.[13] The comic representation of witches was therefore used as a way of making fun of several disadvantaged and "undesirable" social groups in the era in which *Dido and Aeneas* was written: women (particularly old and/or aggressive and/or unattractive women), Catholics, the mad and the lower class. Winkler writes:

> In particular, the idea that witches were lower class continued to resonate during the Restoration, permitting members of both the middle class and the aristocracy to distance the figure of the witch from themselves, and allowing them to ridicule her as a comical, lower-class bumpkin. [14]

The comic characterisation of the witches in the score and libretto sources for *Dido and Aeneas* is quite noticeable. However, the four different modern productions develop and portray this in different ways and to different degrees. To a more liberal modern western audience, the modern productions' sometimes comic, historically-influenced (if not quite "historically informed") portrayals of the witches may invite more positive responses such as attraction, admiration and empathy, as well as more negative ones such as disgust and

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[11] Ibid., 975.

[12] Winkler, *O Let Us Howle Some Heavy Note*, 13, 113.

[13] Levack and Porter, *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe, Volume 5: The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, 245.

[14] Winkler, *O Let Us Howle Some Heavy Note*, 43.

contempt. Because issues of gender and sexuality are at the forefront of social discussion in western societies today, and because the early modern stereotype of the androgynous and often comic "hag" witch has persisted in popular and folk culture to this day,[15] these elements of the opera are often referenced in the four productions under consideration, for example in the LAF and OA productions' portrayals of the Sorceress. Interestingly, none of the four productions' presentations of the Sorceress or her witches conform entirely to the "hag" stereotype, though the OA Sorceress comes close, but the ROH Sorceress and the LAF Witches resemble the "*femme fatale*" type quite closely. The four productions do however tend to present the antagonists as unconventional in appearance, relating to their depiction of them as minorities and/or as disadvantaged.

In the present chapter therefore, I analyse how the historically marginalised and persecuted status of witches, as well as their historical associations with the "hag", "*femme fatale*", the non-heteronormative, the disabled/ disfigured, the poor, the elderly, the female and the comic, are reflected variously in the four different modern productions. The witches' motivations for destroying Dido are shown to generally be linked in the modern productions to their ostracism, political and economic disadvantage, and envy. I explore how the relative amounts of power of the different characters and groups of characters in the opera are constructed differently in these four productions, and show how this is entwined with the different characters and groups in ambiguous ways that go some way towards disrupting the audience's sympathies. Because these issues are explored in the modern productions through their representation of Dido and her court and also to some extent through the representation of the sailors, as well through the witches, these different groups will be addressed separately in my analysis of each of the four productions.

5.5 The Waltz production

The Waltz production most strongly constructs the notion that the Sorceress and Witches have been oppressed socially and economically by Dido and her court, primarily through the interplay between Acts I and II. Because of the extended Prologue in the Waltz production,

[15] Levack and Porter, *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe, Volume 5: The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, 247.

this act division is situated almost exactly half way through the performance, and is punctuated by a long extension to the end of Act I, in which there is no music but plenty of dance and some dialogue. This extended Act I ending and its relationship to Act II Scene 1 are crucial in the Waltz production's often ambiguous exploration of the nature of power relations.

5.5.1 Dido and the Court

Where Purcell's score and Tate's libretto finish at the end of Act I, Waltz and Cremonesi have added a long section, mostly performed without music. The absence of music allows the noise created by the dancing (breathing, slapping, feet pounding) to come to the fore, emphasising the musical silence. Michael Custodis argues that this dance-noise creates connections between Purcell's music and a modern, or "new music" aesthetic.[16] Dance and dance-noise actually take the place of music in such moments: at these times, Waltz's choreography is released from the strictures of Purcell's music and can develop its own, more modern and rather more unpredictable rhythms. In addition, dialogue is added. This scene forms a contemporary temporal centrepiece and a counterpoint to the original score and libretto and to the nostalgic, HIP sound of the small orchestra of period-instrument strings and percussion. It also creates stylistic links with the spoken dialogue sections of the Prologue (see Chapter 3), heightening continuity and cohesion for the production as a whole.

As in the Prologue, the added character of Engelkes' Narrator features prominently. Also featured is a dancing and etiquette master, played by Luc Dunberry. This extended scene is mostly made up of the ensemble's performance of a series of overlapping choreographic vignettes. They continue the sense of childlike free play present during and after "To the Hills and the Vales," in which there is an orgiastic throwing of costumes into the air, accompanied by whoops and cries of pleasure, emphasising the sensuousness and excess of Dido's court as well as their celebration of the lovers' union (see image below).

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[16] Michael Custodis, "Begrenzung der künstlerischen Mittel als Dialog von Musik und Tanz," *Grenzgänge der Kunst(wissenschaften): Sasha Waltz' Choreographie Dido & Aeneas* (2006). http://www.sfb626.de/veroeffentlichungen/online/grenzgaenge/aufsaetze/custodis.pdf (accessed 9 April 2012).P. 3

Figure 5-1: Dancers of the Sasha Waltz and Guests ensemble. From Act I Scene 2, the Waltz production. From *Dido & Aeneas* (by Sasha Waltz). Arthaus Musik GmbH, Cat. No. NTSC 101 311.

The tall and attractive Engelkes (above, downstage OP side) generally holds herself with an erect often rather haughty bearing. This proud manner is consistent with the traditional "outsider" ontological status of the omniscient Narrator figure (see Chapter 3), and it is also in line with her aristocratic costume: a gown of pale blue silk and an overlaid sheer fabric, with flounced half-length sleeves. This costume is a loose, modern interpretation of aristocratic dress of the eighteenth century, and as such is in keeping with the production's general tendency away from literalism and exactitude in favour of ambiguity and association.

Engelkes's character undergoes an etiquette lesson in how to curtsey—presumably to her Queen, although Dido is not shown here and Engelkes faces the audience. The teacher is Dunberry, who wears a bizarre gender-bending costume of a bright blue clinging sleeveless dress that emphasises his masculine physique, with frilled, white, vaguely seventeenth-century-style loose breeches and blue dance leggings. Dunberry's dancing and etiquette master character is rather abusive towards Engelkes's aristocratic character, repeatedly whacking his riding crop on her back to emphasise how low she should bend in her curtsey.

Figure 5-2: Luc Dunberry and Charlotte Engelkes (foreground); Aurore Ugolin and Clementine Deluy as Dido; Virgis Puodziunas and Reuben Willcox as Aeneas; László Sandig as Ascanius/Cupid (background). From Act I Scene 2, the Waltz production. *Dido & Aeneas* (by Sasha Waltz). Arthaus Musik GmbH, Cat. No. NTSC 101 311.

Little of this type of etiquette has thus far featured in the production, as the choreographic style is very fluid and contemporary and the overall signification of the court scenes has been that of a sensual and quite relaxed aristocratic culture. This vignette thus enables Waltz to represent and critically comment on the rigid nature of traditional western courtly etiquette. This thereby does much to situate the opera's action in an unspecified bygone western aristocratic milieu, which up to this point has not been emphasised in the *mise-en-scène*. This interaction of dance master and courtier also reflects the ambiguous nature of power in unequal relationships such as those between Dido and her courtiers and advisors: she is their formal and socio-economic superior, but also subject to their intense social and political pressures. These include pressure to marry Aeneas, and to behave in rigidly defined ways that relate to her status as a female ruler—a female ruler in a pseudo-historical fantasy world that references traditional patriarchal western cultures.

Some bizarre vignettes with Engelkes follow, that show her and the other courtier-dancers exploring playful sexual *jouissance*, again emphasising the sensuality of the court culture. Engelkes then abruptly steps out of her role as "courtier" and fully inhabits the role of "Narrator", addressing the audience and engaging in the Narrator’s position of power, being

both inside and outside the diegetic action. She takes control of Dunberry, using him as her mute demonstration tool as if he were a slave or a puppet. She performs a quirky poem about the expectations of etiquette and behaviour that are placed on a queen, but also the power and luxuries accorded to her:

Figure 5-3: The Waltz production's "queen" poem and its performance

TEXT	PERFORMANCE NOTES
A queen always travel *[sic]* with shoes Exactly two hundred and thirty-two, To be able to choose.	Engelkes holds Dunberry in her grip and addresses the audience, waving her free arm about with a grandiose air.
A queen doesn't walk on her toes,	Dunberry walks on his tip-toes away from Engelkes. She pulls him back.
A queen is looking forward and up with the nose.	Engelkes turns Dunberry to face the audience and flicks his chin upwards harshly.
A queen is always happy,	Engelkes stalks around Dunberry, positioning herself behind him. She reaches around to pull his mouth into an ugly forced grin, making the queen's supposed happiness seem very false.
And with breasts, nipples pointing west.	Engelkes mimics breasts on the breast-less Dunberry by poking her hands underneath his arms and pointing her fingers forward as if they were his nipples. On "west" she turns him to her right, still addressing the audience.
No – yes. No – yes.	On each"no", Dunberry leans forward, and on each "yes" Engelkes pulls him back to her. She plants a loud kiss on his cheek in a patronising manner, as if he was a child and she was rewarding him for good behaviour.

The queen is a beauty, And knows what is best.	Engelkes waves her arm in a grandiose manner as if she were the queen, addressing the audience.
Off with the heads!	Engelkes suddenly shouts this line harshly and flings out her arm with its pointing finger at Dunberry, who ducks and looks afraid.
A queen doesn't have to obey.	Engelkes walks in front on Dunberry with a sweeping motion, waving one arm gracefully and holding up her skirts with the other.
A queen can stay bed *[sic]* the whole day… If she wants to.	At the end of "the whole day" Engelkes falls sideways in a mock swoon, and is caught by Dunberry before the line "if she wants to." This emphasises her control over him, which extends to the point that she has total trust in it.
A queen always knows what to say	Engelkes wraps her arm around Dunberry's head, fully covering his mouth with her hand.
A queen stands higher, stands tall…so to say *[sic]*.	Engelkes leans her elbow heavily on Dunberry's head, standing on tiptoe to make herself much taller than him; meanwhile, Dunberry resists and struggles to escape. He eventually does so and climbs upon her back, riding her to the back of the stage.

The recital of this poem constitutes a reference to Dido, as she is the only queen in the opera proper, but it also ties in with Engelkes's role as Venus in the Prologue, as "the sovereign queen of beauty." Engelkes symbolically mistreats Dunberry during the performance of this poem, but after the poem comes to an end Dunberry symbolically mistreats her in return, tossing her around by the hair, unzipping and removing her dress and leaving her topless. Engelkes crouches as if embarrassed to be semi-naked in front of the audience, and covers her breasts with her underskirt, exiting quickly. Dunberry exits in the opposite direction,

holding out his dress and performing a crude and mocking version of the curtsey he has taught to others.

Although there is an element of straightforward playfulness in this extended scene, on the other hand if Engelkes represents Dido and Dunberry represents her courtier(s), then the power play between the two is more darkly significant in the context of the production as a whole. We first see the courtier training the lady in the social strictures and etiquette of the court, then the Queen uses that etiquette and authority to oppress the courtier. Finally, the courtier revolts and mocks the Queen and the etiquette. If this symbolically refers to the opera's main action, then Dido is under threat from her subjects. As we see in the following scene, Act I Scene 2, this is true: the oppressed Sorcerer and his minions are plotting to bring down their queen and mock the social strictures that have supported her rule.

Dunberry's gender-bending character flags gender as a key issue here. Engelkes's use of him to demonstrate the role of a "queen" draws our attention through an ironic pun on his quite feminine gender expression. Dunberry may represent the "archetypal courtier"—of indeterminate sex and gender precisely because he represents a social and economic archetype rather than a gendered archetype.

The pervasive gender play and the poem heighten our awareness of the specifically feminine nature of the oppressive social strictures under which Dido is placed. She is expected to be "a beauty" and also to "know what is best". She is expected to take extravagant care with her appearance, here represented by shoes, these being a stereotypically feminine concern in the modern western world.

Figure 5-4: Luc Dunberry and Charlotte Engelkes. From Act I Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas*, the Waltz production. *Dido & Aeneas* (by Sasha Waltz). Arthaus Musik GmbH, Cat. No. NTSC 101 311.

Being a beautiful queen also necessitates frequent smiling: "A queen is always happy," Engelkes tells the audience with a knowing, somewhat cruel smile, as she forces Dunberry to grin grotesquely, thereby demonstrating the false nature of the queen's public smile. The tension here between Dido's public persona and her true feelings and self is highlighted, a

theme which resonates for us today with the ubiquity of celebrity culture and social networking. This public/ private binary is frequently to be found in the four modern productions (see below and also Chapter 4).

This poem references real and fictional female rulers. The "shoes" motif may recall the legendarily large and expensive wardrobes associated with Elizabeth I, or Queen Marie Antoinette of France—the latter is also suggested by Engelkes's seventeenth or eighteenth-century style costume and her abrupt command "off with the heads!", perhaps ironically referring to Marie Antoinette's own beheading. It also more obviously recalls another famous queen, albeit a fictional one: the Queen of Hearts from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll.

Figure 5-5: Charlotte Engelkes. From Act I Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas,* the Waltz production. *Dido & Aeneas* (by Sasha Waltz). Arthaus Musik GmbH, Cat. No. NTSC 101 311.

In recalling the Queen of Hearts, the "off with the heads" motif portrays Engelkes's hypothetical queen as a sadistic and frightening ruler. This points to this queen figure having an ambiguous relationship with the character of Dido, but also points to Dido's own moral ambiguity and the possibility that she and her court, like so many monarchs throughout history, have been oppressing their subjects. This notion is also visually presented through

Engelkes's raising herself up ("A queen stands higher, stands tall") by pushing the struggling Dunberry down.

Figure 5-6: Luc Dunberry and Charlotte Engelkes. From Act I Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas*, the Waltz production. *Dido & Aeneas* (by Sasha Waltz). Arthaus Musik GmbH, Cat. No. NTSC 101 311.

This scene is performed shortly before the first entrance of the witches, and thus highlights the possibility of Dido's oppression of those lower on the social scale. It reflects the Waltz production's general strategy of a disruption of the audience's usual sympathies towards protagonist(s) and antagonist(s).

As I have shown, Dido has been transgressing the rules that Engelkes has set out for us, and so in this sense the "queen poem" rings hollow. Dido has not been "happy"; she has not known "what to say"; she has not known "what is best". The Waltz production subtly suggests that Dido may be bringing her demise down upon herself by disobeying the rules a latently patriarchal society had set for her as a queen. At the same time however, this production deals with this in a sympathetic way, inviting our empathy with Dido suffering under these oppressive social expectations. The "Queen" poem constructs a politically progressive stance, challenging both these social expectations *and* challenging the validity of the rule of such a queen as Engelkes portrays. The humiliating dominion of Engelkes over

Dunberry, and his eventual revolt by climbing on to her back and mocking her, both critiques the oppression of the lower classes by the ruler, and also points to the oppression of the queen by her subjects. Thus, the ambiguity of this meditation on freedom and oppression, and the rights and responsibilities that are associated with power, makes the vignette complex and interesting and allows for the audience to ultimately make up their own minds about whether or not Dido should attract our blame or our sympathy.

5.5.2 The Sorcerer and the Witches

Act II of the Waltz production is introduced with a silent solo dance by a bare-chested dancer, who has been left onstage from the banquet scene after the other courtiers have gradually drifted offstage. A trapdoor is open in the floor near him, and Waltz's choreography for him plays with our constant expectation that he will jump or climb down into it; he moves towards it and away and back again, pausing finally at its edge to frustrate our expectation with elaborate arm and hand movements. Finally, the solo ends abruptly with him jumping into the trapdoor, accompanied at this moment by a cymbal crash, a blackout of the lighting, and the beginning of the orchestral ritornello opening to Act II. While the orchestral scoring here is based on the Tenbury MS, which indicates "at the end of the Dance thunder and lightning,"[17] Cremonesi has added the cymbal crash; it is not present in the score (though other productions such as the OA and ROH include similar acoustic and/or recorded "storm" sounds at this juncture). The crash has the effect of startling the audience, as there has been a long period of musical silence.

At the beginning of Act II the stage is quite dark, and two open trapdoors are brightly lit from below, with a slight touch of artificial fog emerging from fog machines under the stage, creating a ghostly and eerie effect. Cremonesi's historically informed French-style near-double-dotting of the rhythm (which is arguably implicit but is not expressly indicated in Purcell's score, thus serving HIP more than *Werktreue*) serves to heighten the affective tension through the repeated delay of the second note in each crotchet-quaver pair. These

[17] Purcell, Purcell: Dido and Aeneas, 23.

notes inégales also signify the grandeur of the culture of Louis XIV, giving the witches a dignified musical setting that emphasises the contrastingly lowly nature of their entrance: the Chorus of witches gradually creep out of the trapdoors, largely clothed only in flesh-coloured underwear (all the men and some of the women are topless, including Engelkes), and covered in gritty ochre. This theatrical signification suggests that the witches live in the ground, in a kind of underworld that recalls Hades in Graeco-Roman mythology; and introduces the theme of "earth" to a production that has already made much of the classical element of "water". The *Dido and Aeneas* universe is thus depicted in this production as featuring the rulers existing in an upper world of light and joy (as was indicated in the brightly coloured clothes-throwing scene) while the oppressed witches exist in a dark netherworld: this is a familiar trope in western culture.[18]

Figure 5-7: Fabrice Mantegna as the Sorcerer (right), with members of the Sasha Waltz and Guests ensemble. From Act II Scene 1, the Waltz production. From *Dido & Aeneas* (by Sasha Waltz). Arthaus Musik GmbH, Cat. No. NTSC 101 311.

After introducing water and earth, the third of the classical four elements, "air", is also hinted at in this scene with two male dancers, Juan Cruz Diaz de Garaio Esnaola (who previously featured in the Prologue as Phoebus) and the hitherto relatively un-featured Xuan Shi,

[18] For example, in opera this trope is notably found in Richard Wagner's music-drama *Das Rheingold*.

performing an aerialist dance with harness, hanging from a frame with two wires. The frame and hanging wires strikingly recalls that of marionette puppets. The classical element and theme of "air", usually associated in western culture with freedom, is here ironically associated with oppression. The choreography for Esnaola and Xuan Shi consists of floating jumps onto and over the dancer-Aeneas (Puodziunas), who is writhing on the floor. The shadow of tenor Fabrice Mantegna's singer-Sorcerer looms over the dancers, cast onto the painted cyclorama. This shadow is cast by an angled footlight that is close to the Sorcerer downstage but is far away from the aerialist dancers upstage, thereby enlarging the shadow to an enormous size. This *mise-en-scène* reinforces the notion that Esnaola and Xuan Shi, and the dancer-Aeneas are (or will be) under the Sorcerer's malignant and oppressive control. It also begins to construct Esnaola and Xuan Shi as the two dancing alter-egos of the Sorcerer: the fact that the Sorcerer is the only character other than Dido to have *two* dancer-doubles instead of one choreographically emphasises the operatic text's structural parallels between Dido and the Sorcerer/ess as her anti-self. The two dancer-Didos also appear, tormented by the dancer-Sorcerers. Without the singer-Dido, the two silent dancer-Didos signify "spirits" or abstract representations of the queen, much like the silent appearances of the dancer-Aeneas and singer-Aeneas in Act I, Scene 1 (see Chapter 4). The Mualem-Dido is half-lifted by her ankles and swung around, recalling her choreography in the previous scene. The Deluy-Dido is also symbolically abused, having her long white gown's skirt tossed around in a sexually menacing manner, and her body wrenched disturbingly (and apparently dangerously) from side to side by a male dancer who holds only her head, in a motif that recalls the choreography for Dunberry and Engelkes. The Sorcerer's power is thereby emphasised: not only does he control the witches and Aeneas, but more importantly, he controls Dido.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 5.1	
Production	**Act / Scene**
Waltz	Act II Scene 1

The Waltz production ambiguously explores the nature of power, freedom and oppression as it applies to Dido as a female leader, and also how it applies to the apparently oppressed witches. Dido is presented both sympathetically and also critically, as we perceive the reality of the expectations that oppress her, and also the nature of her and her court's elite, sensual, indulgent lifestyle and its negative results for others. Through constructing the witches as experiencing wretched, sub-human lives under the earth, the production provides a plausible class-struggle motivation for the witches' otherwise unaccountable hatred of Dido and desire to ruin her. Through emphasising those aspects of Dido's oppression of others and the oppression of Dido herself that are related to her gender, and through emphasising the masculinity of the witches, the Waltz production also subtly suggests that part of the antagonists' motivations are misogynistic in nature, as I will explore further in Chapter 6.

5.6 The LAF production

Power relations and the Sorceress's motivations in the LAF are likewise constructed as being largely related to notions of gender. In addition, the binary of the "public *vs.* private" emerges as a strong theme in the LAF production, and is shown to be related to both Dido's status and her femininity. As I began to explore in Chapters 3 and 4, Ernman's Dido's lack of privacy as a queen is consistently presented in ways that emphasise its oppressiveness for her. The rigid public persona of dignity that she is forced to maintain is shown to be related to the paradoxical nature of being a powerful female in an historical, and we may assume, a patriarchal world.

5.6.1 Dido and the Court

Dido and her two Ladies are physically oppressed by their historically informed costumes. Like Ernman's Dido, the Ladies here are costumed in fairly historically accurate early-to-mid-seventeenth-century courtly style, with full, heavy skirts with padded hips, and richly decorated fabrics that emphasise their wealth and status.

Figure 5-8 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 5-8: (L-R) Lina Markeby as the Second Woman, Judith van Wanroij as Belinda and Malena Ernman as Dido. From Act I Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the LAF production).

The heaviness of the costumes also emphasises the oppressively codified systems of behaviour that would have been expected of seventeenth-century courtiers. Belinda's bodice is perhaps the most striking aspect of her costume and does much to contribute to the notion that she is oppressed as a female in a pseudo-historical, apparently patriarchal society. Van Wanroij's tight bodice compresses her breasts to make a completely flat silhouette like that of Fiona Shaw's corset in the Prologue (see Chapter 3). This is historically appropriate but is strikingly unusual and appears uncomfortable to a contemporary viewer.

Figure 5-9 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 5-9: (L-R) Marc Mauillon; Chorus member; Damien Whiteley; Judith van Wanroij as Belinda; members of the Chorus of Les Arts Florissants. From Act I Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the LAF production).

In contrast to Dido and her Ladies, Aeneas and the Chorus are given much less restrictive costumes (see also Chapters 3 and 4). The Chorus in the LAF production wear comfortable modern-style costumes that allow for much freedom of movement, although they do not utilise this freedom: they remain on the sidelines of the action both literally and figuratively, occupying an overtly theatrical and liminal ontological space.

5.6.2 The Sorceress and the Witches

Costuming for the Sorceress and her Witches likewise offers a greater degree of movement, which is reflected in the performers' actions (see below). This is particularly true of the two Witches' costumes, as they wear simple black casual contemporary clothes in Act II, with the First Witch wearing a skirt and the Second wearing trousers. This costuming therefore situates them in the postmodern "frame" around the narrative similar to the position of Shaw's Narrator, although unlike Shaw's character, the two Witches take an active role in the diegetic

narrative. Therefore, in a manner similar to that of the Chorus, the two Witches are both inside and outside the action. The Sorceress, played by Hilary Summers, on the other hand wears a striking combination of both male and female seventeenth-century dress, with the corresponding binary of relative masculine freedom and feminine repression combined within the one costume. Summers's costume has a restrictive flat-fronted and low-cut bodice like Wanroij's and Shaw's, with a large split in the front of her skirt to reveal seventeenth-century-style men's breeches, stockings and shoes. Instead of the long, carefully groomed hair of Dido and her Ladies, this Sorceress has short and rather unkempt hair. Unlike her Witches, in Act II from her first entrance the Sorceress is therefore constructed as being situated in the fictional world of the narrative, but she tests that traditional world's cultural boundaries of gender expression.

Figure 5-10 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 5-10: Hilary Summers as the Sorceress and Celine Ricci as the First Witch. From Act II Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the LAF production).

Importantly, however, the two Witches' costumes change in Act III Scene 1. Here, both the Witches have changed into identical black dresses and trousers that are near-copies of the Sorceress's costume (but without the long sleeves). This bizarre change from modern to historical dress suggests that the Sorceress's plotting and charisma has drawn her minions into an alternative fictional world that is part fantasy, part history. It also emphasises the

restriction and political oppression of costume, of behaviour and of gender expression for the two Witches in Act III—elements that are constructed as being suffered and resisted by the Sorceress throughout the production.

Figure 5-11 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 5-11: Ana Quintans as the Second Witch; Celine Ricci as the First Witch; Hilary Summers as the Sorceress. From Act III Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the LAF production).

The witches are much freer in terms of costume, movement and behaviour than Dido, her Ladies and her court. They are essentially "private" persons, as opposed to Dido who exists almost entirely in the public sphere. They are childish and rather grotesque. The Second Witch, performed by the young and conventionally attractive soprano Ana Quintans, expresses grotesque and even rather childlike inhibition: in Act II Scene 1 she is constantly sniffling and sneezing into tissues that she then rips up and drops onto the stage. Both Witches also employ some grotesque postures and movements. Their gleeful, childlike but malevolent smiles, claw-like hand gestures, awkward marionette-like dances and their physical and sartorial attractiveness all blend together to express and embody a grotesque, debased allure.

Figure 5-12 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 5-12: Hilary Summers as the Sorceress, Celine Ricci as the First Witch, Ana Quintans as the Second Witch. From Act II Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the LAF production).

The two engage in a childish but disturbingly aggressive tug-of-war game in Act III Scene 1, with each pulling on the rope that connects their two costumes, with the First Witch winning the game and pulling the Second Witch cruelly into the water. They also mime cutting their wrists and hanging themselves in Act III as the Sorceress sings of her triumph and Dido's impending death. Overall, the combination of childlike physical freedom and yet the disturbing sense of vulgarity and menace in the Witches' actions emphasises the contrasting restricted, codified and sophisticated behaviour of Dido and her Ladies.

Figure 5-13 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 5-13: Ana Quintans as the Second Witch. From Act III Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the LAF production).

In a motif that is similar to the Waltz production's aerialist "marionette" dancer-Sorcerers in Act II Scene 1, the LAF production's Act II Scene 1 also features semi-nude male dancers, who are lowered from the proscenium on wires arch high above the stage to writhe around one another in a sinister aerial dance. They are bathed in an eerie spotlight on a dimly lit stage, and this and the astonishing acrobatics suggest supernatural forces. Their muscular nudity objectifies them for the female gaze, contributing to the impression of debauchery in the "witch" scenes in this production (I discuss the issue of the LAF Witches' debauched sexuality further in the next chapter). This similarity to the Waltz is one of many links between various pairings among the four modern productions that together suggest an evolving contemporary performance tradition.

Figure 5-14 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 5-14: Acrobats Sebastien Bruas, Romulo Pelliza, Loic Reiter and Willy Glassmann; Hilary Summers as the Sorceress, Celine Ricci as the First Witch and Ana Quintans as the Second Witch. From Act II Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the LAF production).

Figure 5-15: Virgis Puodziunas as Aeneas; Juan Cruz Diaz de Garaio Esnaola and Xuan Shi as the Sorcerer (background); members of the Sasha Waltz and Guests ensemble (foreground). From Act II Scene 1of *Dido and Aeneas*, the Waltz production. From *Dido & Aeneas* (by Sasha Waltz). Arthaus Musik GmbH, Cat. No. NTSC 101 311.

As is the case in many recent productions, the Witches are also *vocally* uninhibited, and they use non-standard vocal technique and style, signifying a lower socio-economic class than the Ladies with their more standard vocal technique. While standard technique focuses on producing the highest aesthetic quality of sound (while balancing that with the need for vocal power, flexibility and stamina), the singers playing the Witches here deliberately aim for a balance between "good" technique and grotesque elements of vocal production. While Ricci and Quintans generally sing with their usual standard techniques, they often slightly alter their intonation and "bend" pitches to emphasise the grotesque aspects of their characters. The triumphant line "our plot has took" in Act III Scene 1, which is repeated by both the First and Second Witches in one of their imitative duets, is performed with the lower voice slightly flat and the upper voice slightly sharp, to emphasise the dissonant qualities of what may otherwise be heard as quite consonant parallel minor thirds with chromatic movement. Another notable instance of this free approach to pitch is in Ricci's performance of her first line, "Say, Beldam, say, what's thy will," which is sung with an exaggerated portamento on the last syllable, rising to an undefined high squeaking pitch (refer to audiovisual example 5.2). This kind of vocal performance is in line with seventeenth century traditions involving the musical portrayal of witches, as Winkler explains:

> Although the significance of witches changed over the course of the century, composers and playwrights consistently marked witches as disorderly by rendering them incapable of producing harmony… [19]
>
> In the court masque, musical harmony represented divine harmony (…) Dissonant or harsh, noisy sounds symbolized violence, conflict, and subversion.[20]

As *Dido* is commonly recognised as having its stylistic roots in the Stuart court masque tradition[21] (see Chapter 1), and was probably originally composed for court, it is thus both a historically informed choice and a thematically appropriate choice by William Christie and Deborah Warner to encourage Ricci and the other witches to deviate in this manner from standard operatic vocal technique and style. Thus, it effectively balances the styles and aims associated with both HIP and PDT.

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[19] Winkler, *O Let Us Howle Some Heavy Note*, 24.

[20] Ibid., 25.

[21] Curtis Price, "Dido and Aeneas: Questions of Style and Evidence," *Early Music* 22, no. 1 (1994): 115-125; Pinnock and Wood, "Unscarr'd By Turning Times? The Dating of Purcell's Dido and Aeneas; Wood, "'Singin' in the Rain': Yet More on Dating Dido."

Unlike the ragged and down-trodden witches in the OA or Waltz productions, the Sorceress (and, particularly in Act III, the Witches) in the LAF are depicted as fairly wealthy. Or it may be suggested that they *used* to be wealthy: Hilary Summers in particular behaves in her first moments onstage as though she is bitter and jealous of Dido and Aeneas, implying that she is perhaps dispossessed of status, companionship and wealth, or has been denied it. Although her costume is quite rich in ornamentation and fabric, suggesting that she is or was a wealthy person, it is plain in colour in comparison with Dido's and her Ladies. The Sorceress first enters the stage with a menacing attitude, hands on hips and glaring at the schoolgirls who run away screaming. This introduces the notion that she is ostracized from the court social circle. She initially wears a red horned headdress that recalls traditional Christian iconography of the Devil, emphasising the traditional association of the witch with the Devil. This invites parallels with the Christian narrative of the "Devil-as-fallen-angel": when combined with her fairly rich costume, the LAF suggests that the Sorceress may once have been part of Dido's court, but, like the Devil in heaven, was cast out—perhaps for reasons of her transgressively gender-bending behaviour and dress. Like the two Witches, Summers is childish: in her first moments onstage she mocks Dido with a pompous walk, mimics the lovers' romantic canoodling, then leans over and waggles her backside while poking her tongue out.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 5.2	
Production	**Act / Scene**
LAF	Act II Scene 1

Figure 5-16 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 5-16: Hilary Summers as the Sorceress. From Act II Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the LAF production).

She then suddenly flings her arms away in a gesture of disgust and collapses, sobbing, to sit downstage, holding her bandaged hand gently as if she has again hurt it through throwing her arm around. This bandage seems rather incongruous and is probably a result of Summers's own injury rather than being a part of her intended costume. However, Summers incorporates it into her performance, signifying that she has been involved in a fight or other strenuous physical activity, or has hurt herself deliberately. Her sobbing, sighing and sorrowful expression, combined with her removal of the red horned headdress, suggests that her

enjoyment in frightening away schoolgirls is superficial, and has the effect of reinforcing the signification of her unhappiness, loneliness and ostracism.

The LAF Sorceress's physical and emotional suffering thus allows us to sympathise with her to a certain degree, while also emphasising her embodiment of the grotesque and the unconventional. Her apparent ostracism by the court, her mockery of Dido, her childishness and apparent emotional immaturity and the diabolical visual imagery associated with her all supply the audience with various psychologically plausible explanations for this Sorceress's motivations.

In this LAF production, costume and acting therefore signify that Dido and her Ladies are oppressed by their status as elite females within the patriarchal culture of the seventeenth century western world. The Sorceress and her Witches are constructed as having greater freedom of gender expression and behaviour, relative to the upper-class characters. However, it is also suggested that they are socially ostracized. The Sorceress is constructed as a suffering figure, and all three are positioned in terms of identity as quite opposite from Dido and her courtiers. The Sorceress is shown to exist fully in the fantastical, pseudo-historical diegetic fictional world, and to draw her subordinates into it, away from the more "ordinary" and contemporary world of the Chorus (and the audience). It is subtly suggested that the antagonists' misdeeds may be motivated by anger at the oppressiveness of the heteronormative *status quo*. In a similar manner to the Waltz production therefore, the LAF production constructs an ambiguous and complex exploration of the positive and negative facets of power.

5.7 The ROH production

Like the LAF and the Waltz productions, the ROH constructs a meditation on the experience of the monarch and in particular of the female monarch in a patriarchal world, in which those in positions of great power can simultaneously be vulnerable and oppressed.

5.7.1 Dido and the Court

As I have discussed in Chapter 4, the costume in which the dancers dress Dido during the Overture is symbolic of the oppressive as well as the regal. The gold cuff bracelets which resemble handcuffs on Dido’s wrists also contribute strongly to the symbols of power, prestige and entrapment associated with Connolly's Dido. In this production, Dido's oppression is also embodied in her surroundings. The atmosphere permeating the ROH production is cold and bleak, largely created through the *mise-en-scène*, but also constructed at the outset by the mournful and stately, and then anxious mood of the C minor Overture with its slow first section and fast second section. As in the LAF and OA productions, the Chorus members in the ROH are all costumed essentially alike. In the ROH, however, their costumes are particularly dark, drab and oppressive. They wear enveloping, baggy costumes with long coats and gowns for both sexes, in heavy fabrics in a palette of grey and brown, while Dido's Ladies’ costumes are hardly less drab, and Aeneas’s dark blue-grey, buttoned-up and baggy costume is much like those of the Chorus. As in the OA production, the Chorus move mostly in precisely regulated, almost militaristic formations of rows and groups, but unlike the OA, they usually even refrain from most gestures or overt facial expressions. Their costumes match the sparse sets by Hildegard Bechtler, in terms of colour and forms; these sets are composed of large, imposing grey blocks on the huge Royal Opera House stage, and the grey-clad Chorus almost seem to blend into this background.

Figure 5-17 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 5-17: (L-R) Lucy Crowe as Belinda, Lucas Meachem as Aeneas and Sarah Connolly as Dido, with members of the Royal Opera Chorus. From Act I Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the ROH production).

Figure 5-18 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 5-18: Ji-Min Park as the Sailor, with members of the Royal Opera Chorus. From Act III Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the ROH production).

Act III Scene 1 ("the Ships" scene) is indicated merely by a gloomy dark outline of a shipwreck upstage (see Figure 5-18). The only scene in which there is some vibrancy of colour and relaxation of movement is the Grove scene in Act II, during the brief time that Dido seems happy. Even here, however, her happiness is insecure, as Sarah Connolly's Dido panics not only at the approach of the storm, but, as in the LAF production, also at "Oft She Visits This Lone Mountain," which she appears to interpret as a bad omen or a reminder of the gods' disapproval of her relationship with Aeneas (see Chapter 6 for an examination of this device in the LAF). In this Grove scene, the courtiers and the royals sit in front of golden saplings, bathed in a warm light. Yet even here, the saplings are depressingly thin and dry, and set in an artificially straight row.

Figure 5-19 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 5-19: Lucy Crowe as Belinda, Lucas Meachem as Aeneas and Sarah Connolly as Dido, with members of the Royal Opera Chorus. From Act II Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the ROH production).

The Royal Ballet dancers, who are scantily clad throughout the performance in gym-like outfits of grey and brown to match the overall colour scheme, have angular choreography by Wayne McGregor that emphasises precision, technique and discipline, in stark contrast to the

profusion of loose movement with its suggestion of freedom and *jouissance* that characterises Waltz's choreography.

Figure 5-20 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 5-20: Dancers of the Royal Ballet. From Act I Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the ROH production).

This choreographic precision and the use of rigid, unnatural and uncomfortable pointe shoes for the female dancers also reflect the regimented nature of the training and casting of classical ballet.[22] While these movement patterns and shoes are conventions of classical ballet, they also signify discomfort, especially in the context of opera performance, in which the conventions of ballet are highlighted through juxtaposition with the more normative visible movement patterns of the singers. In terms of this study, the dance in the ROH also contrasts strikingly with the more fluid choreography and training, greater variety in body-types, and barefooted contemporary *Tanztheater* style of Sasha Waltz and Guests. The ROH dance thus contributes somewhat to the whole production's creation of a gloomy, demanding, artificial and rigidly oppressive mood. Dido is generally positioned at the centre of the stage and is thus constructed as the focus and object of this oppression.

[22] Pointe shoes are possibly the most visible aspect of a training regime, movement "language" and classical ballet industry culture that widely encourages and even glorifies discomfort and pain on the part of the dancers. See: Anna Aalten, "In the Presence of the Body: Theorizing Training, Injuries and Pain in Ballet," *Dance Research Journal* 37, no. 2 (2005): 55-72.

5.7.2 The Sorceress and the Witches

In the ROH production, traditional operatic tropes are cleverly used to signify this Sorceress's power. The British mezzo Sara Fulgoni's performance is what Haynes would describe as the most "Modern" or "Canonic"[23] and Fabian would call the most "Mainstream"[24] of the four singers who sing the role in this study, in terms of her vocal casting and performance, but her physical casting and performance, as well as her costuming, are also arguably Canonic or traditional in style. Fulgoni is a mezzo, as were many Sorceresses throughout the twentieth century.[25] Her rich and dark, warm timbre is given added power by her conventional modern operatic training, which lends her a pronounced vibrato, and her voice would generally be considered to lie in the "spinto" or even "dramatic" mezzo *Fach* range. She tends towards the standard operatic repertoire rather than being an HIP specialist.[26] In singing the role of the Sorceress, Fulgoni's vocal timbre and delivery are in line with her costume and overall physical portrayal in that they are feminine and quite attractive, including elements of "evil" characterisation, while never moving far beyond canonical operatic costume and acting style. These elements communicate a sense of personal charismatic power that is enhanced by the sense of tradition, in particular the tradition of operatic diva-worship that tends to characterise Canonic operatic performance style and its reception – as audiences and their attitudes and

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[23] Haynes, *The End of Early Music*, 5-6.

[24] Dorottya Fabian, "Is Diversity in Musical Performances Truly in Decline? The evidence of sound recordings," *Context: Journal of Music Research* 31, (2006): 165-180. See also: Fabian, *A Musicology of Performance*.

[25] Examples include Edith Coates in the 1945 Constant Lambert /Joan Hammond recording and the 1951 Geraint Jones/ Kirsten Flagstad production which was recorded live for radio, and Yvonne Minton in the 1965 Glyndebourne production featuring Janet Baker.

See:

Henry Purcell, *Dido and Aeneas* [CD recording, remastered], Constant Lambert (cond.), Philharmonia String Orchestra and Chorus, Joan Hammond (Dido), Dennis Noble (Aeneas), Isobel Baillie (Belinda), Edith Coates (Sorceress), Boris Ord (harps.), London: Opera d'Oro, Allegro Corporation, first released 1945, 1999.

Henry Purcell, *Dido and Aeneas* [CD recording, remastered; historic radio broadcast], Geraint Jones (cond.), The Mermaid Singers and Orchestra, Kirsten Flagstad (Dido), Thomas Hemsley (Aeneas), Maggie Teyte (Belinda), Edith Coates (Sorceress), first broadcast 1951, 2006.

[26] For example, among Fulgoni's repertoire are Brangäne in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, the titular role in Bizet's *Carmen*, Suzuki in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* and Lucretia in Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*.

See: *The Opera Critic*, [online magazine] http://theoperacritic.com/searchsuite/artist.php?artiststring=Sara/Fulgoni/sin&searchtype=2, accessed 26 February 2012.

behaviour are just as much part of the Canonic style as the attitudes and behaviour of those on stage.

Figure 5-21 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 5-21: Sara Fulgoni as the Sorceress. From Act II Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the ROH production).

Characteristics of the Canonic style can be noted in "Wayward Sisters," the Sorceress's first arioso: Fulgoni avoids much ornamentation apart from *portamenti* on the words "fright," "the", "appear," and "all," and she emphasises the plosive "t" consonants at the ends of "fright" and "night" to heighten their importance as keywords and also the impression of bitterness and evil in her character (refer to audiovisual excerpt 5.3). In line with what has been observed by Fabian as "mainstream"[27] practice and by Haynes also as "Canonic" and "Modern" practice,[28] Fulgoni generally emphasises the length of the melodic phrases and keeps the pauses between them quite brief, expressing more of a "long-line" rather than a "rhetorical" phrasing.[29] Her timbre is also heavily influenced by what seems to be a lowered larynx position, with a consequent rounding and darkening of her tone and a lessening in the

[27] See: Fabian, *A Musicology of Performance*.

[28] Haynes, *The End of Early Music*. See in particular p. 48.

[29] See: Fabian, *Bach Performance Practice, 1945 - 1975*, 131.

ability to communicate in a "speech-like" manner.[30] Reviewer Jonathan Keates for *Opera* magazine enjoyed the Canonic aspect of Fulgoni's performance, writing; "Sara Fulgoni was, thank goodness, majestically and appropriately operatic, rather than the cackling crone favoured by many interpreters."[31] This majesty is reflected in her costume by designer Fotini Dimou, which is a long dark blue velvet robe covered with sparkling beads. It signifies a starry night sky, and strikingly recalls the iconic Queen of the Night character from Mozart's *Zauberflöte* (1791), thereby aligning Fulgoni's Sorceress with one of the standard repertoire's most popular arias ("*der Hölle Rache kocht in meinem Herzen*"), as well as with a famous, evil and magical operatic queen. Thus, Canonic and traditional operatic tropes are referenced to reinforce the signification of this Sorceress's power.

In contrast with the Waltz production, Fulgoni's Sorceress and the ROH witches do not appear to be particularly economically oppressed by Dido and her court: the costumes, including the immensely long and groomed hair/wigs connote health and wealth at the same time as symbolising darkness, evil and magic. The Sorceress's majesty and strength as well as tension and evil are also signified in Fulgoni's strong, commanding, sometimes expansive and sometimes claw-like hand/arm gestures and her often erect but sometimes tensely hunched posture. Unlike the LAF and OA versions of this character, Fulgoni's interpretation is not comic, which would have lessened the character's impressiveness. Overall, Fulgoni's is a Canonic and quite conventional performance that portrays a dangerous, attractive, rather wealthy middle-aged *femme fatale,* who wields great charismatic and vocal power and recalls divas of the so-called "golden age" of opera.

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[30] See: Holland, "Purcell and the Seventeenth-century Voice: An Investigation of Singers and Voice Types in Henry Purcell's Vocal Music", 44. See also: John Potter, *Vocal Authority: Singing Style and Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 55.

[31] Jonathan Keates, "*Dido and Aeneas* and *Acis and Galatea*: Royal Opera at Covent Garden, March 31," *Opera*, June 2009, 731.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 5.3	
Production	**Act / Scene**
ROH	Act II Scene 1

Fulgoni's vocal range and timbre is similar to those of the two Witches, portrayed by Eri Nakamura and Pumeza Matshikiza, both of whom also sing across a variety of styles but tend towards mainstream repertoire.[32] Thus the three seem like a cohesive trio, an effect that is also reflected in their matching costumes. This stands in some contrast to the Sorcerer/esses and Witches in the Waltz, LAF and OA productions, who are vocally and physically cast (and costumed, in the case of the Waltz and OA productions) to differentiate the Sorcerer/ess from his/her underlings. The fact that they are costumed and vocally cast alike also constructs them in contrast to the Chorus within the ROH production, who remain onstage from the previous scene in the same costumes that they wore as courtiers, and who stand separately from the Sorceress and her Witches, with very little movement. However, the Sorceress is strongly differentiated from the Witches by the fact that the Witches together wear a single costume, which visually signifies that they are a pair of fantastical conjoined twins. The Sorceress also has greater power than the Witches due to her greater freedom of movement; this combines with her presumably higher social status as an able-bodied person, and her innate personal power over the Witches. All these elements of power are emphasised in one memorable moment when Fulgoni pushes Nakamura and Matshikiza's heads apart in a cruel gesture while singing the majestic and emphatically high melodic contour of the second line of the couplet in which she describes her plan for Dido's downfall: "'Ere sunset shall most wretched prove / Deprived of fame, of life and love." Her cruel power over Dido is visually reflected in her cruel power over her direct subordinates, the two Witches.

[32] [Anonymous], "Eri Nakamura: Repertoire," *Intermusica* [website], http://www.intermusica.co.uk/nakamura#repertoire, accessed 26 February 2012.

[Anonymous], "Pumeza Matshikiza," *IMG Artists* [website], http://imgartists.com/artist/pumeza_matshikiza, accessed 27 February 2012.

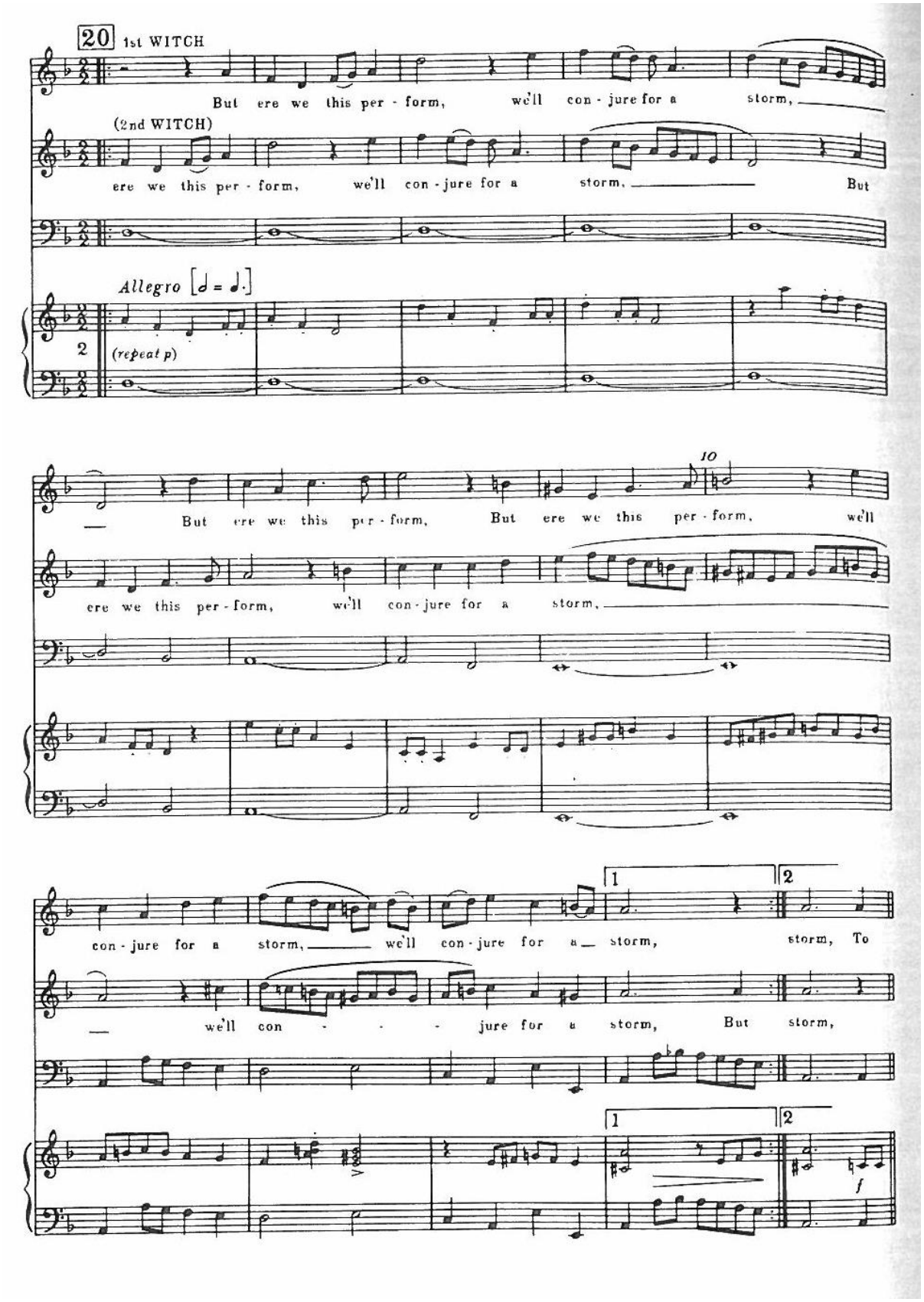
Figure 5-22 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 5-22: Sara Fulgoni as the Sorceress, Eri Nakamura as the First Witch and Pumeza Matshikiza as the Second Witch. From Act II Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the ROH production).

Fulgoni's Sorceress's greater individual power is also supported by the fact that Purcell's writing for the Sorceress is free accompanied recitative or arioso that is similar to Dido's music, while the Witches are mostly confined to duet forms with melodies that are much more intertwined than the equivalent music for their "protagonist parallels", Dido's two Ladies. The most striking instance of this in the Witches' music is in the Act II duet "But ere we this perform." Here, the two Witches emphasise the imitation and repetition of their music through the physical imitation of each other's gestures, with some humour displayed in the repeat of the B section, as Nakamura rolls her eyes when, predictably, her "twin" imitates her gesture once again.

Figure 5-23 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 5-23: Eri Nakamura as the First Witch and Pumeza Matshikiza as the Second Witch. From Act II Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the ROH production).


20
1st WITCH
But ere we this per - form, we'll con - jure for a storm,
(2nd WITCH)
ere we this per - form, we'll con - jure for a storm, But
Allegro [♩ = ♩.]
2
(repeat p)
10
But ere we this per - form, But ere we this per - form, we'll
ere we this per - form, we'll con - jure for a storm,
con - jure for a storm, we'll con - jure for a storm, storm, To
we'll con - - - jure for a storm, But storm,
1
2
f

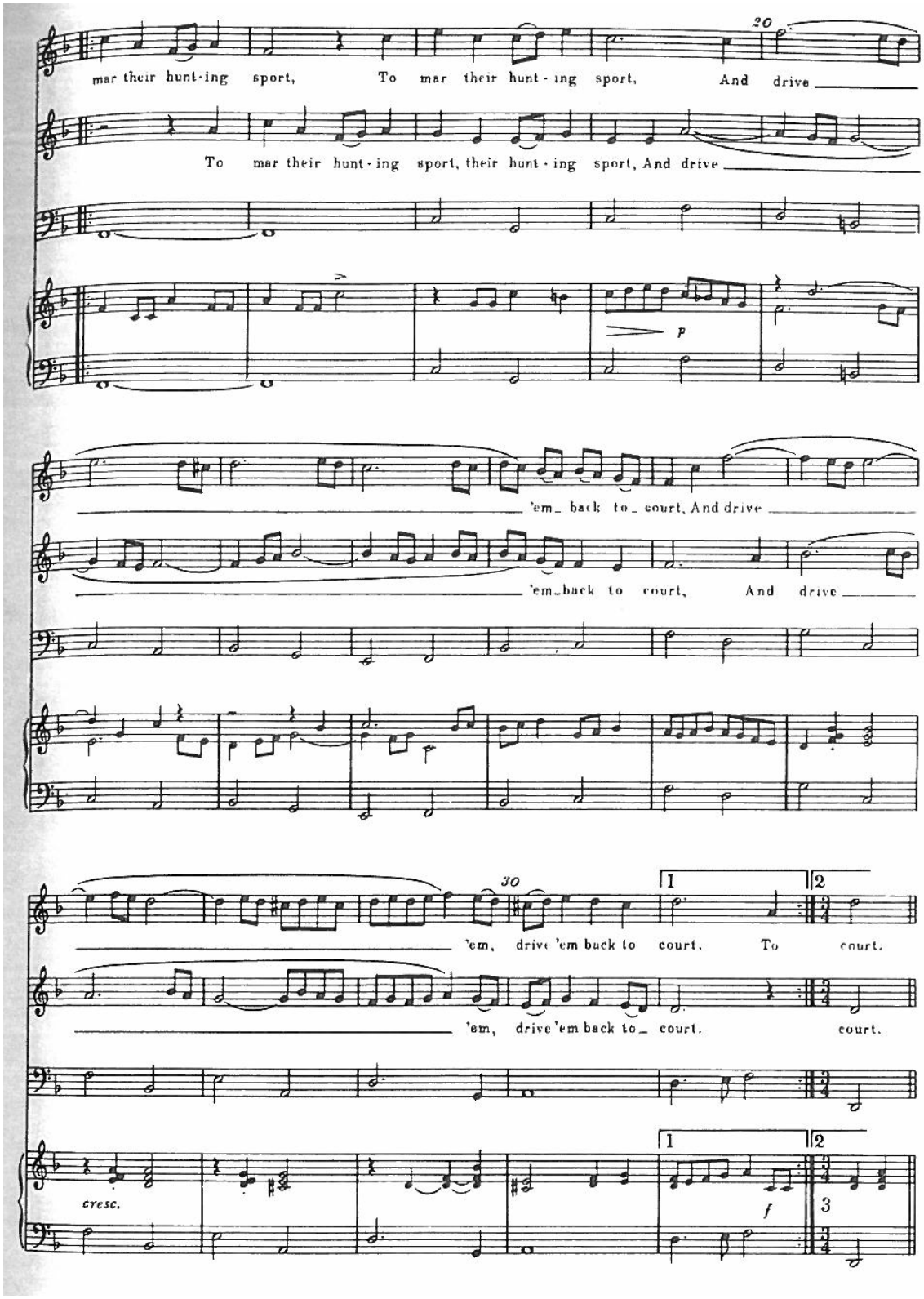


Figure 5-24: "But ere we this perform" (duet) from Act II Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas*.[33] Copyright © 1986 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

[33] Price, ed. *Purcell: "Dido and Aeneas," An Opera*, 130-131.

The joining of the Witches in a single costume as conjoined twins, as well as the similarity of their vocal timbres and styles, are thus innovative signified embodiments of their contrapuntal music. They are interdependent, positioned as such in contrast to the independent Sorceress, thereby heightening the impression of the Sorceress's power. The sense of power of the Sorceress over her Witches is therefore signified through Purcell's score and various elements of McGregor's direction and Dimou's costume design. At the same time, the vocal casting and costume design also aligns the three Witches, making them function as a group.

The mostly grey and brown colour design, and the overall sense of bleakness, gloom and evil, and impending disaster that is present in the ROH production, as well as its elements of traditionalism, and its lack of comedy and relative lack of sexual or childlike play, all combine to create a very serious and grim production. Of the four modern productions, it most effectively communicates the theme of the oppressive aspects of (female) monarchical power as Dido experiences it, but it lacks the balance, which the other productions create, of expressing the more positive and freeing aspects of that power. This production emphasises the oppressed status of the two Witches, portraying them as racial minorities as well as disabled/disfigured, thereby hinting at social and political reasons for their hatred of Dido and also for their inferior status in comparison with the Sorceress. Instead of presenting the Sorceress as particularly oppressed as in the other three productions, the ROH production emphasises the social and interpersonal power of the Sorceress, by linking her portrayal with Canonic operatic performance style and with the traditional adulation of the diva that is associated with that style. The ROH subtly suggests that the main psychological reason for this Sorceress's envy and hatred of Dido and her wish to ruin her, is based on a not unjustified sense that *she*, the Sorceress, would make a more queenly and powerful, self-assured ruler than the uncertain and fearful Dido.

5.8 The OA production

The Opera Australia production is less dour in affect than the ROH production, combining a more vibrant colour scheme with more entertaining characterisations of the antagonists. As in

the Waltz, the Sorcerer/ess is presented as a male character, but in the OA he is presented as a transvestite. As in the LAF production, in this sense the Sorcerer/ess's reasons for hating Dido are constructed as being largely about mainstream political oppression of those expressing a non-heteronormative gender. However, in the OA there is an added dimension: this Sorcerer's motivations were also constructed as being somehow about his self-identification with Dido and apparent wish to emulate her, or perhaps to satirise her, as well as to destroy her.

5.8.1 Dido and the Court

Like the ROH production, the OA production presents Dido and her court as rigid, and the Chorus of courtiers as oppressively judgemental towards their queen. In contrast to her voluptuous vocal performance, Yvonne Kenny uses very rigid, stylised hand movements in her portrayal of Dido. In opposition to seventeenth-century ideas of gestural beauty, which required that the fingers generally be slightly separated and both the fingers and arms usually gently curved,[34] Kenny's fingers are almost always held straight and together, and her arms are often held quite straight. Kenny also holds her head high and maintains an erect posture at all times. Dido's stiff gestures and bearing also have the important effect of emphasising the restrictive public persona of dignity that Dido feels is necessary to maintain. This seems even more understandable given that her courtiers are ever-watchful of her, and given that the *mise-en-scène* in general gives the impression of threatening to overwhelm her and the audience (see Chapter 4). As in the other productions, Dido's power and status are constructed as being inextricably bound up with restrictive expectations, social pressure, and the constant threat of chaos impinging on her ordered lifestyle and psyche.

5.8.2 The Sorcerer and the Witches

The sense of judgement and rigidity in the court scenes, in particular those of Acts I and III, stands in stark contrast to the wild Witch scenes of Acts II and III, the apparent chaos of which aligned thematically with the multiple diagonal proscenium frames. This is particularly

[34] Dene Barnett, "The Performance Practice of Acting: The Eighteenth Century. Part II: The Hands," *Theatre Research International* 3, no. 1 (1977): 1-19; Dene Barnett, "The Performance Practice of Acting: The Eighteenth Century. Part III: The Arms," *Theatre Research International*, (1978): 79-93.

true for Act II Scene 1, which is directly juxtaposed with the court scene of Act I, as the score—based on the Tenbury MS—has no extra music or action.[35] The main signals for the scene change are the darkening of the lighting and the "storm" sound effects, although here they are produced purely acoustically by the orchestra (in contrast with the Waltz and ROH productions, which used recorded sound effects). The OA Chorus strip off their woollen "courtier" gowns onstage during the transition from Acts I to II, to reveal raggedy white cotton shifts. Their change of character from courtiers to witches is also signalled by their complete change in bearing and gesture. Instead of being erect as courtiers, they crouch as witches; instead of having straight fingers, their fingers are made into claw-like shapes; instead of creating neatly choreographed groupings, they move in an apparently random mass, drawing towards the box in the middle of the stage upon which Kanen Breen's androgynous Sorcerer clambers and seats himself, as he calls his "wayward sisters" to appear in his opening arioso. As witches, the Chorus's creeping, crouching movements appear to be under the control of the Sorcerer's magnetic, eerie charisma and powerful leadership, similarly to the way in which Fulgoni's Sorceress is imperious with her Witches in the ROH. Both the witches and the Sorcerer are constructed in the OA production as being socioeconomically oppressed, primarily through the raggedness of their costumes, but also through the Sorcerer's non-heteronormativity and through the fact that all of the witches behave very differently from the characters in obvious positions of power and high status. However, despite this Sorcerer's rather oppressive leadership of his cringing witches, in this production the witches in general are freer in their behaviour than are Dido and her court. As in the LAF and ROH productions, this relative freedom and the entertaining attractiveness of the witches in the OA production are factors that serve to disrupt the audience's sympathies, aligning them slightly more with the antagonists than would otherwise be the case.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 5.4	
Production	**Act / Scene**

[35] Henry Purcell, Tate, Nahum, Alexander, Peter, and Gill, Richard, *Dido and Aeneas*, Orchestral score, 2004, Opera Australia, Sydney.

OA	Act II Scene 1

The fact that the Chorus remain onstage while changing their costumes and demeanour to become the witches, raises an intriguing idea that is not signified by any of the other three modern productions: the notion that the witches are actually Dido's own courtiers, living a treacherous double life as witches at night. [36] This notion has important implications: that Dido's fear, which borders on paranoia, is justified; that the sense of looming chaos that seems to threaten the court is real; that the Sorcerer may be a true contender for usurping the throne; that Dido may have been an unsatisfactory ruler. When combined with the strikingly different costuming for the lead characters, as compared with the uniform looks of the courtiers and witches, this "treacherous courtiers" trope raises the possibility that Dido, her Ladies and possibly—confusingly—even the Sorcerer are members of a different ethnicity, perhaps representatives of an invader/ conqueror race, as has so often been the case with colonial societies throughout history. This possible "treacherous courtiers" motif has particularly interesting implications when considered in the light of the historical associations of witchcraft with oppressed sections of society, and suppressed religions or religious denominations such as Catholicism and pagan religions (see also Chapters 6 and 7). However, the OA production constructs ambiguity as to whether this difference in costuming between the above groups should be interpreted as a theatrical device signifying two different *ethnic* groups, or simply as a theatrical convention for signifying different *social* groups. Likewise, it is ambivalent as to whether the costume and acting change of the Chorus from courtiers to witches should be interpreted in a "literal" sense as a device suggesting the courtiers' treachery, or as a convention (i.e., that the Chorus play both groups of characters) in the tradition of the "suspension of disbelief". As with so many aspects of these four modern productions (and as with so much of the historical data on *Dido*'s origins, as I showed in

[36] Although the other three productions do not engage with it, this "treacherous courtiers" theme has sometimes been hinted at by other productions in the past, such as the Glyndebourne production of 1965-66 starring Janet Baker, in which the Sorceress lurked in the background of the court scenes amongst the Chorus.

Chapter 3), this ambiguity is not resolved and the audience is left to decide for themselves, or simply to wonder.

In live performance, Kanen Breen's appearance as the Sorcerer often caused a great deal of surprise and laughter among audiences, particularly when he began to sing. In the OA production, the Sorcerer is costumed in a broken-down, ripped version of Dido's dark golden dress. His wig is a messy, dreadlocked black version of Dido's dark brown wig, a style that also recalls the popular drug-addicted soul singer Amy Winehouse's trademark black beehive hairstyle. His makeup is a very messy, smeared version of Yvonne Kenny's red lipstick and dark-rimmed eyes.

Figure 5-25 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 5-25: Kanen Breen as the Sorcerer, Teresa la Rocca as the First Witch, Rachel Cunningham as the Second Witch; with members of the Opera Australia Chorus. From Act II Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the OA production).[37]

Perhaps most surprisingly, the tenor Breen also sings at the notated (that is, the "feminine") pitch, with a mixture of head-voice tone and falsetto vocal production. I explore the issue of

[37] Anonymous, "Images of *Baroque Masterpieces*".

Breen's character's gender signification in greater detail in Chapter 6, but it is sufficient to note here that Breen's character was constructed as a transvestite Sorcerer, rather than as a masculine-looking Sorceress. According to at least two critics[38] and in my own personal experience, Breen's unique, androgynous portrayal was one of the most memorable, intriguing and entertaining elements of the production. Although Breen's portrayal exploits the comic potential of the character, our laughter is tinged with anxiety, even more so than in the LAF production. Because this Sorcerer is so entertaining and fascinating, this antagonist becomes more attractive than the protagonist, which creates a discomfiting moral ambiguity.

Despite a raggedy and poverty-stricken appearance that matches that of the OA witches, this Sorcerer radiates both interpersonal and magical, otherworldly power. This is partly due to Breen's own natural charisma and stage presence, but his masculinity (traditionally associated with power) and his impressive height also create interpersonal power for this Sorcerer—as does his Dido-esque costume, which is glamorous and regal despite its dilapidated state. Breen's Sorcerer is also consistently situated at a higher point on stage than any other character, and is also generally placed centre-stage. His costume highlights the parallels between Dido and her Ladies, and the Sorcerer/ess and his/her Witches, emphasising the Sorcerer's role as leader of this anarchic rebel group, or of Dido's secretly traitorous court.

As in the Waltz (and to a lesser extent in the LAF production), the motif of puppetry is used to express the Sorcerer's power and control. In the Waltz, the motif is of marionette puppetry, but in the OA it is hand puppetry that is evoked, in a striking motif that demonstrates a close relationship between musical and theatrical elements. In Act II Scene 1, Breen's Sorcerer perches for the entire scene on a tall box in the centre of the stage, thereby towering over his coven of creeping, crouching witches. During the "Echo Dance of Furies" instrumental dance in this scene, two dancers (male and female), costumed as witches with ragged white shifts—but with the addition of round white masks with dark dreadlocks—dance a duet in front of

[38] Olympia Bowman-Derrick, "Baroque Masterpieces: Opera Australia [Review]," *Australian Stage Online* 2009, no. Accessed 23 July (2009). http://www.australianstage.com.au/200907072687/reviews/sydney/baroque-masterpieces-|-opera-australia.html (accessed 7 July 2009); Marcellous, "Muddle Instead of Music," *Stumbling on Melons [Weblog]* 2009, no. Accessed 4 July (2009). http://marcellous.wordpress.com/ (accessed 28 June 2009).

Breen as the Sorcerer, downstage centre. The almost featureless white masks give an eerie and de-humanised appearance. Breen takes up two hand puppets that vaguely resemble the dancers, and is shown to—possibly but not definitively—bewitch and control the dancers through these voodoo-like dolls. To the accompaniment of the initial statement of each musical phrase in the "Echo Dance", the dancers perform a choreographic sequence. This is then followed by Breen's making the puppets perform a similar (albeit simplified) version of the choreography to the accompaniment of the truncated "echo" version of each musical phrase. Intriguingly, the dancers move first and the puppets second, instead of the other way around, which one would expect if the Sorcerer were signified to be truly magically remote-controlling the dancers. This directorial decision renders the signification ambiguous and raises the question: is he controlling them or parodying them? Regardless of how it is interpreted by the audience, having the "large" dancers performing to the *forte* "main" phrase and the "small" puppet versions performing to the *piano* "echo" phrase doubles the effect of the music's phrasing, dynamics and meaning-making, and emphasises its comedy. This makes both the Sorcerer and the old music (and the period instruments and musical HIP) seem entertainingly fresh and humorous to a modern audience.

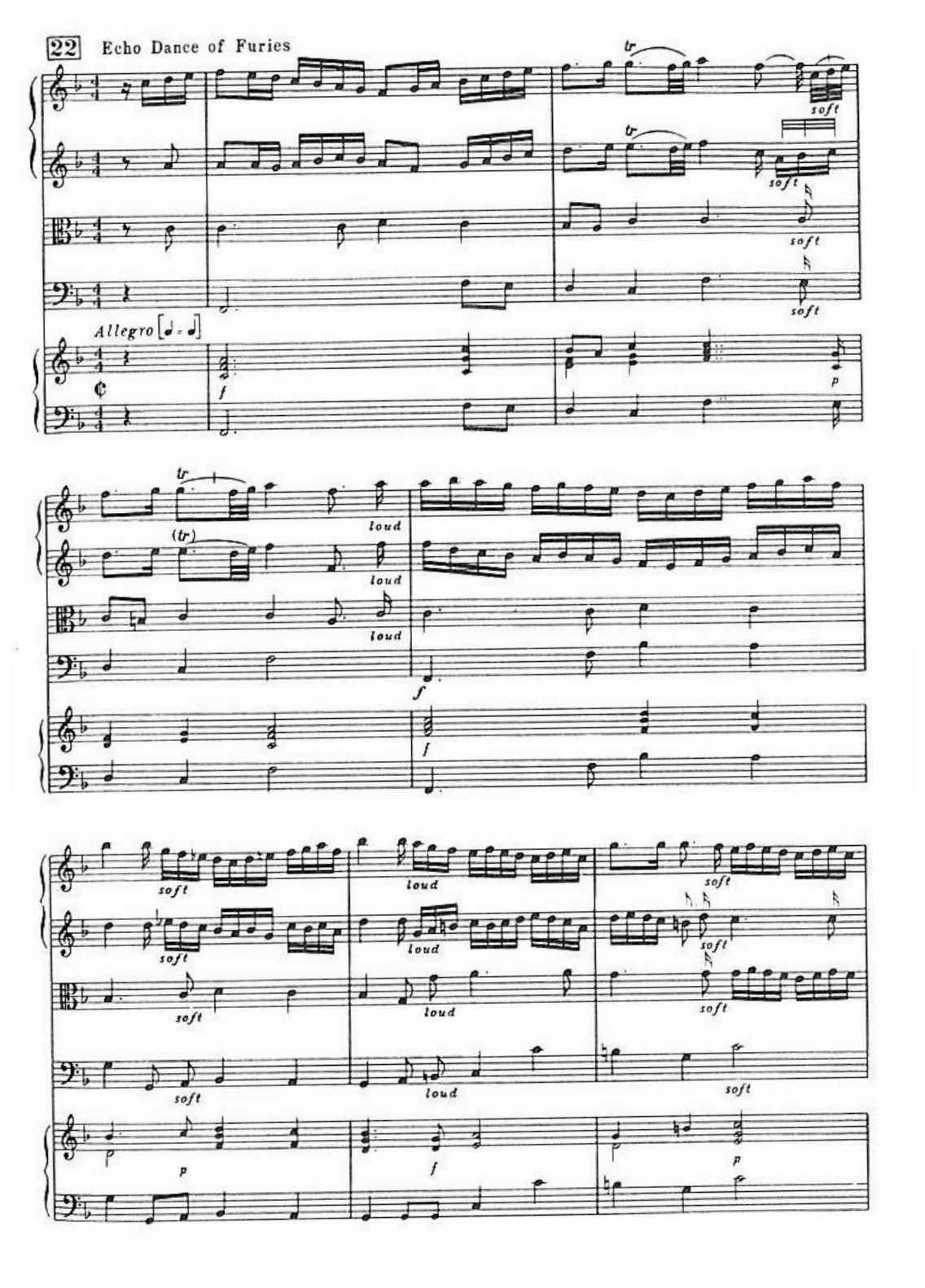


Figure 5-26: Excerpt from "Echo Dance of Furies". From Act II Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas*.[39] Copyright © 1986 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

[39] Price, ed. *Purcell: "Dido and Aeneas," An Opera*, 135.

As the "Echo Dance" progresses, the OA Sorcerer gradually begins to move the puppets in time with the dancers. On one level this device suggests that the Sorcerer is increasing his magical control over the dancers, or that he is gaining a magical ability to predict the future; while on the other hand this is a humorous instance of self-reflexive, overt and presentational theatricality. The puppet motif's sinister associations with the popular-culture trope of voodoo doll magic elicits some empathetic discomfort and fear for the dancers and for Aeneas and Dido. In this case, conductor Antony Walker's extreme *prestissimo* tempo for this "Echo Dance" is almost unplayable for the violinists, who struggle to keep in time with each other.[40] This adds an extra dimension to the affective response; an extra layer of sinister controlling power and of "performance anxiety" that communicates itself to the audience. This is a compelling instance of a "presence-effect" that is notably more powerful in live performance than when re-experiencing this production via archive DVD, because of the potential for performance errors and embarrassment for the violinists (and for the empathetic audience).[41] Because this Sorcerer is constructed as "controlling" this dance number, his power seems to extend even to the extra-diegetic. Breen's Sorcerer's power is thus constructed as sinister, magical, controlling and potentially harmful, not only to those then present (both diegetic beings, as in the case of the dancers, and extra-diegetic as in the case of the orchestra), but also to the protagonists of Aeneas and Dido.

As in the LAF production, the two lead Witches (here performed by Teresa la Rocca and Rachel Cunningham) were far freer than their respective court Ladies in their sexual behaviour. This was particularly notable in their Act II duet "But ere we this perform," in which each groped the other's breasts and body. This choreography, like that in the Waltz and LAF productions, emphasised their dual or twin-like nature in the libretto and score. This was less artistically effective than the memorable "conjoined twin" device in the ROH production, which was arguably the most successful at visually representing the form and nature of the Witches' music. On the other hand, the ROH production had the least sexual

[40] The violinists' difficulty with the extremely fast tempo was evident in rehearsals; eventually the tempo had to be slightly slowed. (Personal field notes, April–June 2009.)

[41] This empathetic effect of "performance anxiety" on the part of both audience and performer is discussed by Abbate in her "Drastic or Gnostic?" article as a point in favour of scholarly study of the vicissitudes of live performance. See: Abbate, "Music--Drastic or Gnostic?."

freedom evidenced by the witches in general. This OA production presented the most sexually free behaviour, notably in the "Ships" scene in Act III (see below). Along with the ROH production, the OA also featured the most restrictive behaviour on the part of Dido and the courtiers. This made for a particularly striking contrast in the OA production between these two groups.

5.8.3 The Sailors

Like the witches, the sailors are also sexually free, and like the witches, they are constructed as being of lower social class. Their Act III song led by the first Sailor, "Come away, fellow sailors" combines bawdy lyrics by Tate ("Take a boozy short leave of your nymphs on the shore / And silence their mourning with vows of returning / But never intending to visit them more,") with rustic hornpipe-like 6/8 time rhythms and the rousing English, folk music associations of Purcell's favoured "Scotch snap" rhythm on "no, never."[42] In this OA production, the witches are constructed as the "nymphs on the shore" whom the sailors are so cruelly abandoning. In "The Sailors' Dance" instrumental following the Chorus repeat of "Come Away", the witches' Chorus form into pairs and threes with the sailors' Chorus (the men of the Chorus had donned plain black trousers in this scene as the Sailors) to simulate boisterous sexual acts, thrusting in time with the music. In live performance, this sexual and overtly theatrical comedy often elicited laughter from the audience.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 5.5	
Production	**Act / Scene**
OA	Act III Scene 1

[42] Alison (ed) Latham, "Scotch snap," *The Oxford Companion to Music* (2012). http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e6023 (accessed 13 June 2012).

In this OA production, the lower-class associations of the Sailors are emphasised vocally by the broad and old-fashioned Cockney accent assumed by tenor Warren Fisher as the lead Sailor. There is also a slight Australian twang mixed in with the Cockney. The Cockney accent is well-known in Australia and very striking, particularly in the context of standard international operatic singing technique for English, which usually requires a kind of international, standard British English, commonly known as modified Received Pronunciation (RP).[43] Modified RP was exhibited by all the performers of the upper-class characters in the OA production, as well as most of the corresponding performers in the other three modern productions. Fisher's Cockney accent is artistically effective, as it fits into the OA's overall eclectic and non-realistic style, and reminds the audience of *Dido*'s Englishness and its status as one of the canonical works of English opera. More importantly in relation to the theme of power, the old-fashioned Cockney accent emphasises the lower-class status of the sailors and the rusticity of the music. Fisher's accent is associated with Australians' own convict heritage, especially when combined with the rope-and-pulley rigging and square sail construction on stage, designed by Gabriela Tylesova, which the sailors hoist as they sing in this scene, in a striking similarity to the visual design for this scene in the LAF production—indicating an evolving performance tradition of representing Aeneas' sailors as colonial-era western sailors, hoisting square-rigged canvas sails.

[43] Kathryn La Bouff, *Singing and Communicating in English: A Singer's Guide to English Diction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 6.

Figure 5-27: Warren Fisher as the Sailor, with members of the Opera Australia Chorus. From Act III Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the OA production): still image from archive DVD.

Figure 5-28 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 5-28: Damian Whiteley as the Sailor, with members of the Opéra Comique additional children's Chorus. From Act III Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the LAF production).

The OA production's association with Australian convict culture and with the colonial eighteenth century correlates loosely with the Baroque sound and visual appeal of the period instruments and the HIP music. This associative network of signs makes the scene particularly appealing emotionally for an Australian audience, inviting emotional identification with the sailors. However, this identification is juxtaposed with the sailors' repulsiveness due to their coarseness, their jocular attitude towards their own lies and their misogynistic lack of sympathy for the abandoned "nymphs on the shore". The OA production thus invites an ambivalent emotional reaction to the sailors. This is similar to that which the OA and LAF productions encourage with regards to the witches: a mixture of revulsion, amusement, attraction and empathy. As in the LAF production, the sailors in the OA production are constructed as representing a politically and socio-economically oppressed social group with which the witches ally themselves sexually, perhaps feeling a common sense of bitterness in their oppression by Aeneas, Dido and the upper classes in general.

In the OA production, the sense of oppression and fear of looming chaos that Dido feels is emphasised by the *mise-en-scène*, in particular by the bizarre angles of the set design, the constant watchfulness of the Chorus of strange, similarly-costumed courtiers, and by the doubling of the Chorus as both courtiers and witches, ambivalently constructing the courtiers as living treacherous double lives. A class system is constructed that contrasts the stiff and judgemental courtiers with the ragged, sexually uninhibited witches and convict-like sailors. The ragged transvestite Sorcerer radiates personal charisma and sinister magical power, and the entertaining and attractive presentation of the lower-class characters encourages our sympathy and empathy with their envy of Dido; it does not quite ethically excuse it, but it renders it more emotionally acceptable.

5.9 Conclusions

Through *Dido and Aeneas*, the four productions construct ambiguous suggestions about the nature of power, freedom and oppression that have great relevance for audiences' everyday lives. In all four productions, the audience is invited to note that power—especially for

females—is often bound up with oppression and restriction. At the same time, they suggest that living a freer lifestyle can often invite ostracism, powerlessness, suffering and resentment.

The Waltz production conveys freedom and joy through a proliferation of loose movement, but also uses rough and sometimes disturbing physical contact between performers to explore the theme of oppression, as well as presenting motifs that construct dominance of one character or group over another. Such motifs include Engelkes's Narrator/courtier/queen literally pushing Dunberry's courtier/dancing-master down; the huge shadow of Mantegna's Sorcerer looming over the writhing dancer-Aeneas; and the flamboyant, brightly-lit costume-throwing of the court juxtaposed against the creeping, dimly-lit, ochre-covered nudity of the witches. The Waltz production thus contrasts the sensual lavishness of Dido and her court with the degrading poverty and underground/ underclass/oppressed status of the witches. In doing so, it presents both groups in a morally ambiguous light and adopts a critical but inconclusive stance, partially disrupting the audience's sympathy for the protagonist(s).

The LAF production uses costume design, vocal performance and acting elements such as gesture and facial expression to draw our sympathy for Dido and emphasise the oppression that she suffers, which is signified to be societal, gender-based, and psychological. It suggests that the witches' status and resentment is linked to being ostracised by the court, and provides an explanation for the Sorceress's desire for revenge. It also shows that the witches have broken free of much of the gender-based sexual and behavioural restriction that the upper-class ladies experience. This results in ambiguous constructions of the positive and negative outcomes of being part of a privileged in-group or an oppressed counter-cultural out-group. Much the same is true of the OA production, which also uses sexualisation and comedy to invite a kind of empathy for the oppressed witches and sailors, while at the same time emphasising their unappealing roughness and vulgarity. In the ROH production, power, duty and the nature of public life is almost entirely shown as oppressive for the female leader, and a sense of impending doom and depression pervades the production. The Sorceress is shown to be beautiful and powerful, but the antagonists are not generally as engaging as in the LAF and OA productions, due largely to the ROH's lack of comedy and the rather conservative representation of the Sorceress. The two ROH Witches attract some sympathy in that they

represent several socially disadvantaged attributes—disabled, female, ethnic minorities—but these symbols of oppression are uncomfortably (and politically incorrectly) entwined with their representation as "evil". Meanwhile, Connolly's Dido is constructed as a particularly vulnerable and sympathetic character in this fairly traditional and "Canonic" production.

All four productions disrupt the audiences' sympathies and align them more ambiguously in relation to the protagonists and antagonists than would be effected by the operatic text alone. They do this in various ways, many of which are related to their constructions of power relations within the opera's diegetic world, and their encouragement of various types of audience emotional relationship to the characters or groups. With its most forceful depiction of the witches' disadvantage and degradation, the Waltz production tends to achieve a disruption of audience sympathies through encouraging *pity* for the witches. The ROH achieves this in a similar way in the case of the two Witches, but in the case of the Sorceress, the characterisation tends to encourage *respect*. The LAF and OA productions, on the other hand, achieve this disruption mainly through encouraging the audience's *attraction* to the witches. They heighten the entertaining comedy, the exciting freedom, seductive sexuality and the magnetic dark power of the antagonists. However, the witches' cruelty in destroying Dido (and Aeneas)—and the Sorceress's cruelty in particular—remains ethically repellent to the audience. Therefore, we are provided with motivations for the witches' hatred of Dido, but not excuses. The four modern productions fill in the "gaping ambiguity" of the witches' motivations to construct a more understandable psychological reasoning. In the process they also create a different kind of ambiguity: a moral ambiguity that is viscerally discomfiting but fascinating in its exploration of ethical, political and ideological issues.

6 Gender, Sex and Sexuality

6.2 Introduction

Gender, sex and sexuality are inextricably bound together in human consciousness, culture and art. *Dido and Aeneas* draws on these issues, and their interrelationship, for a considerable degree of its appeal to audiences across the centuries. In this chapter, therefore, I examine gender, sex and sexuality in modern performance of *Dido and Aeneas* as one complex and multifaceted theme. Facets that I explore in this chapter include: the nature of Aeneas and Dido's attraction to and behaviour with each other; the level of liberality of the productions' representation of matters relating to issues associated with gender and sexuality, including their representation of patriarchal and/ or feminist ideologies; and the representation of the sex, gender and gender expression of the characters, especially of the Sorcerer/ess, the witches and the Spirit of Mercury. The first of these listed facets intersects with Price's ambiguity B ("the uncertain consummation of the couple's love in Act II"). From a modern western perspective the theme of gender is also an important feature of the operatic text, though it is more diffusely distributed and cannot be pinpointed as relating to one particular ambiguity. It is often quite subtle and may or may not have been intended to be implied by Purcell and Tate. However, gender is certainly highlighted as being an important theme in the four modern performances, which all reflect modern western perspectives on the operatic text. As I have shown in the previous chapter, issues of sex and gender are constructed in the Waltz, LAF and OA productions as being part of the antagonists' motivations for hating Dido. The representation of Aeneas and Dido's sexual relationship, and of the nature of gender, in modern performance reflect changing sexual and gender mores in western society over the centuries since *The Aeneid* and *Dido and Aeneas* were written.

While sex and sexuality was strongly repressed during the Puritan era of Cromwell's rule, Charles II's restoration to the throne in 1660 saw a new era of relative sexual liberation for England. However, this liberality can easily be exaggerated in our perception today: compared to modern western standards, sex in England in the Restoration period was still contained within fairly strict boundaries. Charles II's court was unusually permissive in its

attitudes towards extramarital sex—or at least, towards extramarital sex undertaken by men of high social status. Prevailing patriarchal culture meant that women were held to a much more chaste standard if they wished to remain respectable. However, according to interdisciplinary Restoration historian Kevin Sharpe, there is evidence to suggest that by the time *Dido* was composed, the permissiveness of the early Restoration era was on the wane.[1] In addition, while the comic theatre of this period is renowned for such bawdy sex comedies as William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675) and Aphra Behn's *The Rover* (1677), such plays were often controversial even in their day. It is possible that Purcell and Tate made some amendments to the original court version of the operatic text before sending it to Josias Priest, making it more sexually ambiguous for the sake of the young aristocratic virgins performing it. However, the mystery surrounding *Dido*'s genesis means we cannot know: it may also have simply been performed (or intended to be performed) with more obviously signified sexual innuendo in the court production, and less in the Chelsea production(s). What we do know is that the operatic text as it has come down to us treats sex, sexuality and—of particular importance in the context of this study— the sexual side of the relationship between Aeneas and Dido, with great discretion and a certain repressive moralism.

Reference to sexual intercourse between Dido and Aeneas is limited to one euphemistic and slightly ambiguous line of Aeneas's in Act II, Scene 2: he sings that Dido was "one night enjoy'd, the next forsook." In Virgil's poem, intercourse occurs in a cave as they shelter together during a thunderstorm sent by Juno.[2] As Roger Savage has pointed out, it seems to be a "wry use of Vergil" [*sic*]—and, I would add, also discreetly suggestive and sardonically subversive—that in Purcell and Tate's version, the acceptance of Aeneas by Dido occurs just before Act II, which begins with a cave setting.[3] In the opera, the lovers are undone by the forces of evil, who reside in a cave. When connected with knowledge of Virgil's poem, as the opera would have been by its original audiences, this seems to symbolise that it is Aeneas and Dido's sexual relationship that is their undoing. The operatic version also radically reduces

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[1] Sharpe cites Rochester's letters as evidence: John Wilmot and Jeremy Treglown, "Letters of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester," in *The Rochester-Savile Letters, 1671-1680*, ed. J Wilson (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1941). Cited in: Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Authority and Representing Rule in Early Modern England* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 227.

[2] Vergilius Maro (Virgil), "The Aeneid of Virgil: A Verse Translation", trans. Allen Mandelbaum, 86 (IV:218-223).

[3] Savage, "Producing *Dido and Aeneas*."

the time-span of Virgil's narrative, with Aeneas's abandonment of Dido now coming only a day or two (instead of a year) after their sexual union. The opera thereby emphasises the implication that this betrayal and her death are a kind of poetic justice or punishment for Dido's "sin" and "loss of virtue" in giving in to Aeneas's advances. This didactic moral is emphasised in Thomas Durfey's Epilogue, performed by one of the Chelsea schoolgirls:

> And if by Love our hearts not yet are warm'd
>
> Great Providence has still more bounteous been
>
> To save us from those grand deceivers, men.
>
> (…) Besides, to show we live with strictest rules,
>
> Our nunnery-door is charm'd to shut out fools…[4]

Anthony Welch has commented on the relationship between Dido's sexuality and her later suffering in the context of Restoration spoken drama of the 1680s, stating that "much of the repertory shares a prurient fascination with female sexuality and victimhood".[5] The operatic text of *Dido and Aeneas* therefore has the potential for communicating messages that are sexually repressive to females, and the implication of this message is supported by historical evidence.

Dido and Aeneas also has the potential to be interpreted as expressing considerable misogyny. As I have explored in the previous chapter, misogyny is behind much of the depiction of witches in *Dido* and in the early modern period in general. Purcell and Tate also replace Virgil's patriarchal figure of the omniscient, omnipotent *male* god Jove, who sends Mercury to instruct Aeneas to leave Dido, with the purely destructive, comparatively less powerful figure of the Sorceress. The opera's chief antagonist—a creature of duplicity, evil and chaos—is a woman. Dido herself can also be made unappealing, for example by emphasising her weak and self-destructive traits. As Dido in particular is the main female figure in the opera, her positive or negative representation is important to consider in the opera's construction of meaning regarding womanhood and femininity.

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[4] Price, *Henry Purcell: Dido and Aeneas: An Opera*, 76.

[5] Welch, "The Cultural Politics of *Dido and Aeneas*," 21. Welch also cites Laura Brown's study *Ends of Empire* in making this claim. See: Laura Brown, *Ends of Empire: Women and Ideology in Early Eighteenth-century English Literature* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), 65-66.

While modern performance of *Dido and Aeneas* could seem misogynistic, it also offers considerable potential for more progressive explorations of gender, sex and sexuality. These can include a form of feminism: as I have explained in Chapter 1, Dido is converted from a casualty of Aeneas's destiny in *The Aeneid* into the protagonist of her own story in Purcell and Tate's *Dido and Aeneas*. In modern performance, the audience's sympathy and empathy for Dido can be enhanced, for example by casting a highly physically and/or vocally attractive performer, or through making her intimate relationship with Aeneas seem charmingly romantic. There is the potential for a feminist portrayal of the witches, and the Sorceress also can be converted to a Sorcer*er*, radically changing the gender politics. The ambiguity of the operatic text in relation to its presentation of issues of gender and sexuality therefore affords plenty of room for innovation in modern performance.

With regards to the depiction of gender expression, this innovation can fortuitously align with HIP. The modern productions feature much gender play, particularly in their representations of the Sorceress. Gender play has had a long and fascinating history in opera overall, but on the Restoration stage representations of gender were particularly fluid. In this regard therefore, interest in HIP in modern opera performance aligns with modern interest in liberal representations of gender and gender expression—both in operatic performance and in western culture more generally.

In this chapter, I show how these different themes and attitudes surrounding gender, sex and sexuality are interpreted in the four modern productions. Because these issues are so varied in the modern performance of *Dido and Aeneas*, in this chapter (as in Chapter 5)—within the confines of examining each production separately—I discuss the overarching theme's various facets one by one, and the ways in which they are expressed operatically. I first focus on Aeneas and Dido and the courtiers, with a focus on Act II Scene 2 and the representation of sexuality; I then discuss depictions of the Sorceress and witches and of the Spirit, with a focus on gender representations, also showing how these relate to the depictions of the lovers and the court. First of all, however, I apply the above method of structuring my analysis to show how the issues of gender, sex and sexuality are explored in the operatic text, and how

they and the operatic text relate to historical and modern cultural and performance-based contexts.

6.3 Gender Performance in the Restoration and Today

As stated above, and as reflected in my discussion of the earliest performances of *Dido* in Chapter 2, the late seventeenth century in England was a time of great play with gender and gender representation on stage. In 1660, for the first time in England, female actresses and singer-actresses began to be officially allowed to perform on the public stage. Playwrights, librettists and composers devised roles and situations that made use of the new opportunities offered by the female body and voice, including costuming them as boys or young men—known as "breeches" roles. Many plot devices were introduced in order to put breeches on attractive actresses, creating cross-*dressed*, rather than cross-*cast* roles, in which the female actress played a female character, who for part of the play dressed as a man or boy. There was also considerable male-to-female gender play in performance at this time. For instance, in Purcell's dramatick opera *The Fairy Queen*, the comic female character of Mopsa was revised from a soprano role in its premiere season in 1692 to a drag role played by the countertenor John Pate in the 1693 revival.[6] Though male-to-female cross-dressing on stage appears to have been mainly for comic effect, this tradition did not preclude male-to-female *travesti* roles from being written into tragic or serious drama for some light relief, and the Sorceress in *Dido and Aeneas* may well be an example of this category.

Today, PDT conventions regarding gender representation are strongly influenced by the ideas of queer theorist Judith Butler. Butler has famously argued, most notably in her 1990 book *Gender Trouble*, that the performance of gender is reiterated until it does not simply seem "natural" to both the subject performing it and those observing the performance, but actually *constitutes* the subject.[7] In theatrical performance it is not the subject *per se*, but the representation of the (fictional) subject—the character—that is of issue, and a fictional

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[6] Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, "Pate, John," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2015). http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/21071 (accessed 17 October 2015).

[7] Butler, *Gender Trouble*.

character does not constitute itself, so I will not go into detail about this aspect of Butler's arguments. Of somewhat greater relevance to our concerns here is Butler's argument in *Gender Trouble* that the relationship between sex, gender and sexual orientation is not fixed or causal: this concept has generated much exploration in theatrical and operatic performance in the years since. Curiously however, in these four productions of *Dido*, experimentation with gender representations is generally not linked directly to representations of sexuality, beyond the most obvious and heteronormative. In several of the productions, there is a sexualised interplay between cisgender-signified royal lovers, but on the other hand, while the Sorceress and the Spirit are frequently constructed as gender-nonconforming, these characters do not engage in any notably sexualised activity.

Perhaps the most relevant aspect of Butler's theory for the current study, therefore, is the most well-known aspect of her arguments: that gender is performative. This has been widely and rather reductively understood to mean that gender is not inborn or necessarily correlated to sex, but that it is a set of reiterated, performed "codes". Reflecting the widespread influence of this aspect of Butlerian theory in PDT practice as well as in its scholarly analogues in theatre studies, performance studies and opera studies, traditional boundaries of gender are now frequently challenged in the theatrical elements of opera performance today. Yet, as mentioned above, within opera performance this trope has long traditions that are not necessarily related to Butlerian influences. For instance, operatic texts have long featured female-to-male "trouser" roles—mainly written for mezzos—even in serious roles and in tragic operas. On the other hand, cross-cast roles of the male-to-female variety are more often associated with comedy. Challenging the boundaries of gender expression is especially relevant in the case of the modern performance of early operas. The common presence of roles in early operatic texts that were written for *castrati* has created a flurry of public and scholarly debate in recent decades, along with the rise of early opera in modern performance. This has also created space for innovation with gender representation, as the castrati roles are played variously by tenors, countertenors, sopranos, mezzos and contraltos. Even in the case of early operas that do not feature castrato roles, such as *Dido*, gender play is an important historical and contemporary issue. The fact that gender play was so prevalent in the historical performance of early opera means that modern performances are able to balance the pursuit of HIP with the exploration of modern social and political discourse, and PDT approaches, regarding gender and sexuality. This dynamic can be seen in these performances of *Dido and*

Aeneas. It is particularly evident in the OA and LAF productions, and to a lesser extent in the Waltz production, while the Royal Opera House production is more conservative in its constructed perspectives on gender expression.

6.4 The Sorcerer/ess

As I have shown in Chapter 5, the presentation of the Sorcerer/ess and witches in *Dido and Aeneas* and in the four modern productions is related to the particular historical significance of witches in western culture. Importantly, it is related to the fact that much of the "witch" figure as a mythological and/or historical phenomenon is linked with sexism and misogyny, including fear, abhorrence and ridicule of women who assumed traits that were thought to be "masculine". As I have shown, the presence of comedy and cross-casting is also a significant element of the historical and contemporary portrayal of witches and their gender in *Dido and Aeneas*, as an operatic text and in performance.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the role of the Sorceress seems to have been written to be interchangeable between the octaves and between female and male voices. In the twentieth century the Sorceress was almost without exception cast as a mezzo-soprano, and this tradition persists today, for example in the ROH production. This vocal casting capitalises on the darkness and impressiveness of the mezzo-soprano timbre, which suits the evil and regal qualities of the character as expressed in the operatic text, while maintaining flexibility in the upper register, which is necessary for the technical aspects of the role. Casting the Sorceress as a mezzo is not particularly "historically informed" however: as Holland notes, in Purcell's time all female singers called themselves sopranos.[8] She argues that a warm-toned soprano, rather than a mezzo, would be the most historically informed choice:

[8] Holland, "Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas: A Strategy for Historically-Informed Role-Allocation in the Twenty-First Century".

> …it is unlikely that [Purcell's] sopranos would ever have developed the fruity tones characteristic of the modern mezzo-soprano, but would instead resemble a slightly less developed version of the modern soprano.[9]

In recent decades, another casting tradition has arisen, which is exemplified in the Waltz, LAF and OA productions. This involves casting the Sorcerer/ess as anything but a mezzo: for example, as a soprano; as a contralto; as a countertenor singing at the "feminine" pitch that is notated in most modern score editions (based on the Tenbury MS); as a tenor using falsetto[10] (as a kind of pseudo-countertenor); or as a baritone or bass-baritone, singing one octave lower than the "feminine" pitch. This new more flexible performance tradition is related to recent interest in gender play in performance, as well as interest in HIP.

6.5 The Spirit

The character of the false Spirit of Mercury has also traditionally been a site of gender play and experimentation in performance. This is again partly due to the fact that there is so little information available about the earliest performances of the role; partly because of the nature of the character as represented in the operatic text; and partly because of general Restoration performance traditions of gender play.

As the Spirit appears in the operatic text, he/she/it seems to be otherworldly and supernatural, and gives the appearance—at least to Aeneas—of being a god. The character's sex is never made clear in Tate's libretto, and neither is it clear from the extant scores and historical references to Purcell's music. Most sources notate the Spirit's aria in the treble clef, following the Tenbury MS,[11] and it seems to have been sung by a boy treble in 1704,[12] but it may have been sung by a male voice an octave lower (see Chapter 2). The only confirmed appearance of the elf/Spirit is in its disguise as Mercury. While Mercury is a male god, the Spirit's sex and gender are not mentioned in the operatic text. The character's ambiguous representation

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[9] Ibid.

[10] For a definition and discussion of vocal register, see Glossary.

[11] Purcell, Tate, and Harris, Henry Purcell: *Dido and Aeneas*, Opera.

[12] Harris, *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas*, 63.

in the operatic text offers multiple ways of interpreting its identity, ontological nature, sex and gender. Apart from the Spirit's own presence in Act II, Scene 2, the only other reference to it is made by the Sorceress in Act II, Scene 1 (note that there is no reference to the sex of the "elf"; rather, the male pronouns refer to the god Mercury and to Aeneas):

Sorceress: And when they've done, my trusty elf

In form of Mercury himself,

As sent from Jove shall chide his stay

And charge him sail tonight with all his fleet away.

Chorus: Ho, ho, ho, ho, &c.

Enter 2 drunken sailors, a dance. [13]

The concise language of the Sorceress's arioso and the sparse stage directions for this dance offer many possibilities for interpretation in performance. This drunken sailors' dance could potentially show the Sorceress choosing one of the (male) sailors to be her servant and play the role of the false Mercury, in which case the elf/Spirit would be played by a male—and presumably gendered as masculine. This would make dramatic sense, and the OA and LAF productions construct this in this way—adding a magical element, as I discuss in Chapter 7. Another way of representing the elf/ Spirit is to depict it as one of the witches in disguise or under a spell—this device is featured in the Waltz production. In this case, the sex and gender of the elf/Spirit depends on the production's depiction of the witches' sex and gender. More traditionally,[14] the elf/Spirit can be represented as a supernatural being, possibly one that has been conjured up by the Sorceress and witches, and who is magically given a disguise. This is constructed by the ROH production, and offers particular room to depict the elf/Spirit as being of a neutral or ambiguous gender. Traditionally, the elf/Spirit has been physically portrayed as male and masculine, while its voice has sometimes been performed by a different person—often an offstage performer—and sometimes gendered as feminine. In this way, the operatic text allows for the ambiguity of the character's gender to be resolved one way or another in performance, or

[13] Price, *Henry Purcell: Dido and Aeneas: An Opera*, 70.

[14] I use the term "traditional" to refer to those traditions that characterised more recent twentieth-century performance of the opera concerned; it refers to traditions that are within living memory. See Glossary.

alternatively, this ambiguity itself can be embraced, and signified through musical and theatrical means in performance.

Today's audiences are no longer wholly familiar with *The Aeneid*. Consequently they are no longer wholly familiar with its portrayal of Aeneas and Dido's "year of lust". Because of *Dido and Aeneas*'s "gaping ambiguity" regarding the sexual side of the lovers' relationship, it would make better sense to modern audiences for modern productions to create a more straightforward depiction of the sexual nature of the relationship between Aeneas and Dido. Passionate emotion, particularly on Dido's part, would make better sense of her later actions. The patriarchal sexual double-standard that would have condemned Dido for having sex outside of marriage—whether in Ancient Roman times or in Restoration England, or indeed to some degree even still today— would make more sense of her wish to die, given that, after Aeneas threatens to abandon her instead of marrying her, she would be feeling social shame and loss of status, in addition to personal anger and grief. The contrast of sexual and gender representations between the sense of restriction, tradition, morality and duty associated with the court, and the freedom and amorality of the witches, can be heightened in performance. This contrast would clarify the reasons for Dido's feelings and actions. Alternatively, Dido's court can be represented as sensual, gender-bending and exuberant, as we have seen is the case in the Waltz production, particularly in Act I Scene 2 (see Chapter 5): this then constructs more ambiguity in terms of Dido's motivations, though it creates clearer reasons for the witches' envy. The operatic text and its early history thus align to provide a great deal of room for innovation and interpretation in the modern performance of *Dido and Aeneas*'s representations of sexuality and gender.

6.6 The Waltz production

The Waltz production constructs attitudes towards sex, sexuality and gender that are roughly commensurate with today's liberal western social norms. It focuses on the psychological aspects of Dido’s repression and duality without dwelling on the pressure upon her to remain sexually chaste; it shows Dido to be a very human, vulnerable woman, and positions Dido’s court as a culture that celebrates sensuality, sensuousness and femininity. As I have shown, it

suggests that Dido fears the entrapment or limitations on freedom that marriage or a long-term romantic partnership presents. It also constructs the witches as an oppositional, almost entirely male and masculine group, thereby subverting the usual stereotype of witches as female, reflexively drawing attention to the theatricality of this device, and constructing male as "bad" and female as "good". It also has ramifications for the psychology of the antagonists' motivations: the traditional patriarchy has been upended in this instance, with a female ruler, and the Sorcerer and Witches may wish to regain that traditional masculine power.

6.6.1 The Sorcerer and Witches

In the Waltz production, the Italian tenor Fabrice Mantegna portrays a cisgender male Sorcerer through vocal and physical means. Mantegna sings predominantly in his chest and mixed registers, not venturing into falsetto, [15] which means that his voice has a characteristically masculine timbre as well as a masculine range. While he appears to possess a vocal instrument that lies in the *spinto* or dramatic *Fach* range, his timbre is nevertheless not that of a traditional Italianate tenor; rather, he creates an otherworldly, heightened sound and uses a theatrical mode of vocal production and performance, with a consistently harsh and breathy attack, a dark and almost baritonal timbre, and an exaggerated accent. His costume is essentially middle-class and western, but influenced by Asian styles: it is composed of a black, flowing, buttoned collarless shirt and casual pendant, worn with dark red trousers with a black karate-style belt tied around his waist. He wears his own dark, slightly curly short hair and natural-looking makeup. He goes barefoot, but this is constructed as "convention" in this production, as all the performers are always barefoot.[16] (Refer to audiovisual excerpt 5.1). Mantegna's Sorcerer is thus constructed as a contemporary, western, middle-class, middle-aged white cisgender man: these are traditional symbols of privilege. This privilege throws doubt on a Marxist reading of the Sorcerer's own motivations for hating Dido; the motivation for him personally is suggested to be more misogynistic in nature.

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[15] See Glossary for a definition and discussion of vocal registers.

[16] The ubiquity of bare feet in this production is probably related to the ease of movement and reliability of friction this offers, particularly to the dancers, who frequently perform rather acrobatic acts. It is also an established tradition within contemporary dance and *Tanztheater*.

Figure 6-1: Fabrice Mantegna as the Sorcerer. From Act II Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas*, the Waltz production. From *Dido & Aeneas* (by Sasha Waltz). Arthaus Musik GmbH, Cat. No. NTSC 101 311.

The fact that the Sorcerer is the only other character in this production apart from Dido to have two dancer-doubles rather than one, signifies that the Sorcerer has a special status: he is the antagonist to Dido's protagonist, or the anti-Dido. The Sorcerer's attendant solo Witches are performed by males, and thus reflect the Sorcerer's sex and gender. This casting and representation, in parallel with the two Ladies who similarly reflect Dido's sex and gender, also emphasises the notion that the Sorcerer represents Dido's anti-self. The striking sex/gender contrast of Dido and her Ladies *versus* the Sorcerer and his Witches suggests that there is a misogynistic element to the Sorcerer's hatred of Dido.

Figure 6-2: Eberhard Francesco Lorentz as the First Witch and Michael Bennett as the Second Witch, with dancers of the Sasha Waltz and Guests ensemble. From Act II Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas*, the Waltz production. From *Dido & Aeneas* (by Sasha Waltz). Arthaus Musik GmbH, Cat. No. NTSC 101 311.

Like the Sorcerer, the two Witches in the Waltz production are also portrayed by males—Eberhard Francesco Lorentz and Michael Bennett—and like the Sorcerer, they are constructed as masculine. As they as only wear underpants, their rather heavy, hairy male torsos are emphasised. Their heads are also shaved, accentuating their masculine appearance. Their voices are closely matched: both are tenors, and although Lorentz's voice is somewhat heavier than Bennet's, they blend well. Their lighter and more lyrical vocal performances contrast with Mantegna's wide vibrato and larger sound, thereby emphasising the Sorcerer's apparent power and the Witches' similarity. Lorentz and Bennett also look almost identical from a distance, and they perform almost identical choreography, with a certain gleeful, almost demonic quickness of movement, emphasised by the more athletic, faster-moving dancers who bounce rapidly up and down around them. The heightened similarity of these two Witches reflects the imitative, intertwined nature of their duets and the similarity of their characters in the operatic text, and emphasises the consistent masculine qualities of the witches' culture in this production, as juxtaposed with the feminine qualities of Dido's court culture.

6.6.2 The Spirit

In this production Michael Bennett performs the role of the elf/Spirit in the same costume that he wears as the Second Witch. The masculinity of the Witch/Spirit aligns with Waltz's overall construction of the antagonists and their world as being male and masculine, in contrast with the feminine court. Having the male Second Witch perform the role of the Spirit as a role-within-a-role (or "disguise plot") also makes Aeneas seem more absurdly credulous. Because the Waltz production's depiction of the elf/Spirit is more interesting from the perspective of the representation of magic than the representation of gender, I investigate it more fully in Chapter 7.

The Waltz production thus constructs a binary opposition of sex and gender—a battle of the sexes— between the two groups of court and witches. The motivation for this Sorcerer's hatred of Dido is subtly implied to be about his misogyny and the anger he feels at being dispossessed of traditional male power. This trope is pertinent for the modern western world, in which many men (and some women) feel that feminism has gone too far; that women are actually dominating and replacing men instead of being equal to them. This has led to many men feeling dispossessed and angry at women in general and at feminists in particular.

The construction in this production of the witches/ Sorcerer as masculine and the court /Dido as feminine is ultimately a feminist portrayal, as it positions the male figures as the antagonists. It brings a deliberately destructive and evil element into its construction of the masculine. What seems, in most modern editions of the operatic text, to be a slightly misogynistic representation of all that is powerfully destructive within female nature, in the Waltz production becomes an image of all that is powerfully destructive about men and how they relate to women.

6.7 The LAF production

The LAF production features a romantic portrayal of Aeneas and Dido's love affair, and rather traditional and somewhat conservative constructions of gender roles for Dido, Aeneas

and the court. However, it contrasts this with very progressive and even transgressive constructions of gender embodied in the Sorceress, and to a lesser extent in the two solo Witches. The overall effect of constructing the protagonist Dido as traditionally feminine and the antagonist Sorceress as a gender-bending butch woman tends to privilege traditional femininity and denigrate the non-heteronormative. However, complicating matters is the fact that probably the most attractive character in the production is the Sorceress, largely because of her entertaining gender play. Also, in this production, Ernman's characterisation of Dido features an almost unremitting physical tension and bizarre anguished facial expressions, which may irritate the viewer. Her death is definitively constructed as a suicide, which may elicit distress or discomfort from the audience. (See Chapter 8). Thus, the audience is positioned uneasily between two conflicting emotional allegiances. Overall, the gender constructions in this production are largely of a conservative bent, but the presence of the gender-bending Sorceress and the entertainment value she offers, tip the scales more towards a more flexible and progressive attitude towards gender identity politics.

6.7.1 The Lovers and the Court

As I have shown in previous chapters, Ernman's costume, vocal casting and performance, and theatrical performance do much to contribute to the LAF production's depiction of Dido as traditionally feminine and romantically alluring. Ernman's vocal timbre is a little darker than the traditional stereotype of girlish femininity would dictate—if "tradition" is understood (as I typically use it) to mean "tradition within living memory". However, there is much evidence to suggest that in centuries past, the lower-ranged female voices and the lower registers of all female voices were considered softer and more feminine than the upper registers, with their greater brilliance.[17] The eroticism of Ernman's portrayal is most apparent in Act II Scene 2. Between Acts I and II Ernman's hair has been partially let down to cascade down her back in blonde waves, signifying femininity, youth, relaxation and freedom. The elaborate sleeves have also been removed from her gown.

[17] Richard Wistreich, "Reconstructing pre-Romantic Singing Technique," in *The Cambridge Companion to Singing*, ed. John Potter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 178 - 191,183.

In this first part of the Grove Scene, William Christie follows the HIP ethos in reconstructing the semi-improvised ground-bass guitar solo "Gitter Ground a Dance". Deborah Warner uses this additional, flexible time to clarify both the playful sexuality of the scene and the meaning of the Second Woman's otherwise puzzling aria, which is sung directly afterward. As Dido, Ernman lifts up her skirts to reveal bare feet, and paddles in the shallow water of the pond in the middle of the stage, giggling and splashing Aeneas, before they begin to playfully enact the legend of Actaeon and Diana in mime. Maltman (as Actaeon / Aeneas) mimes peering at Diana/Dido through the bushes, while Ernman gathers her dress around her and affects coy, bashful anger. Maltman uses his hands, fingers spread wide, to mime having antlers suddenly grow out from his head, then mimes running on all fours away from the pursuing hunting hounds. At this point, Maltman/ Aeneas breaks off the mime before depicting Actaeon's gruesome death at the jaws of his hounds. Actaeon's death, which in this production is constructed as an ominous reminder and portent of the coming tragedy, is reserved for the second part of this scene, during and following the Second Woman's aria (see Chapter 7). Miming the legend thus provides the audience with some explanation for the Second Woman's otherwise obscure subsequent aria, and here it also neatly intersects with the stylistic and philosophical requirements of musical HIP. It achieves all this without marring the mood of joy and erotic playfulness in this first part of the Grove scene—yet.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 6.1	
Production	**Act / Scene**
LAF	Act II Scene 2

Figure 6-3 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 6-3: Christopher Maltman as Aeneas and Malena Ernman as Dido; Judith van Wanroij as Belinda and Lina Markeby as the Second Woman; with members of the Les Arts Florissants Chorus. From Act II Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the LAF production).

Maltman's Aeneas gazes at Dido passionately and intensely, and displays great sexual interest in her in his body language, as does Ernman with him. At the end of the Second

Woman's aria, as in the ROH production, Ernman's Dido becomes very agitated. Apparently to calm her, Maltman/Aeneas blindfolds Ernman/Dido in order to give her a surprise gift. This gift is a caged bird—a recognisable tragic symbol of a woman who is trapped. In combination with Dido's blindfolding, therefore, the metaphorical suggestion is that Aeneas is leading Dido into entrapment. The moment in which he embraces her erotically from behind is strikingly similar to the way in which the ROH production's Aeneas embraces his Dido and presents her with the gift of a tusk-like crystal pendant (see below in this chapter and in Chapter 7, including audiovisual excerpts 6.4 and 7.2). They even occur almost exactly at the same moment in the opera, making some sense of Aeneas's lines "Behold, upon my bending spear / A monster's head stands bleeding / With tushes far exceeding / Those did Venus' huntsmen tear." The erotic embrace emphasises the metaphorical implication of sexual violence. It also implies Aeneas's deflowering of the virgin queen, which is rather nonsensical, given that this production has already signified that Dido is a widow. With regards to the "gaping ambiguity" of Aeneas and Dido's sexual encounter, therefore, this production titillates, provides the passion in the lovers' romance that makes sense of Dido's decisions, and provides sinister, tragic and violent undertones, but nevertheless to some degree it remains elusive and ambivalent.

Figure 6-4 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 6-4: Christopher Maltman as Aeneas and Malena Ernman as Dido, with members of the Les Arts Florissants Chorus. From Act II Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the LAF production).

6.7.2 The Sorceress and Witches

In contrast to the lovers' discreet, romantic and slightly sinister eroticism, the LAF's Witches are portrayed as sexually uninhibited and explicit. They mock and subvert the dignified sexuality of Dido and Aeneas, notably in Act II Scene 1. Here, the antagonists discuss Aeneas and Dido's hunt that is taking place offstage: "The Queen and he are now in chase" sings Summers, while the violins play a D major arpeggio that recalls hunting horns. Ricci as the First Witch moves further towards centre stage and into a spotlight. "The cry comes on apace," she sings, rolling the "r" of "cry" and using a breathy timbre and a fermata on the high f#", while closing her eyes, waving her hips, and lifting her long curly hair sensually on the high notes, then roughly cupping her breasts and pushing her hands down her torso into her groin as the melodic contour descends to the low d'. This gestural motif thereby physically embodies the melodic contour, and emphasises the Witches' uninhibited sexuality. It also reflects the arpeggiated major mode melody's associations with the violins' hunting calls by reinforcing the Sorceress's cynical metaphorical pun that likens "Dido and Aeneas chase deer" to "Aeneas sexually chases Dido".

Figure 6-5 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 6-5: Céline Ricci as the First Witch. From Act II Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the LAF production).

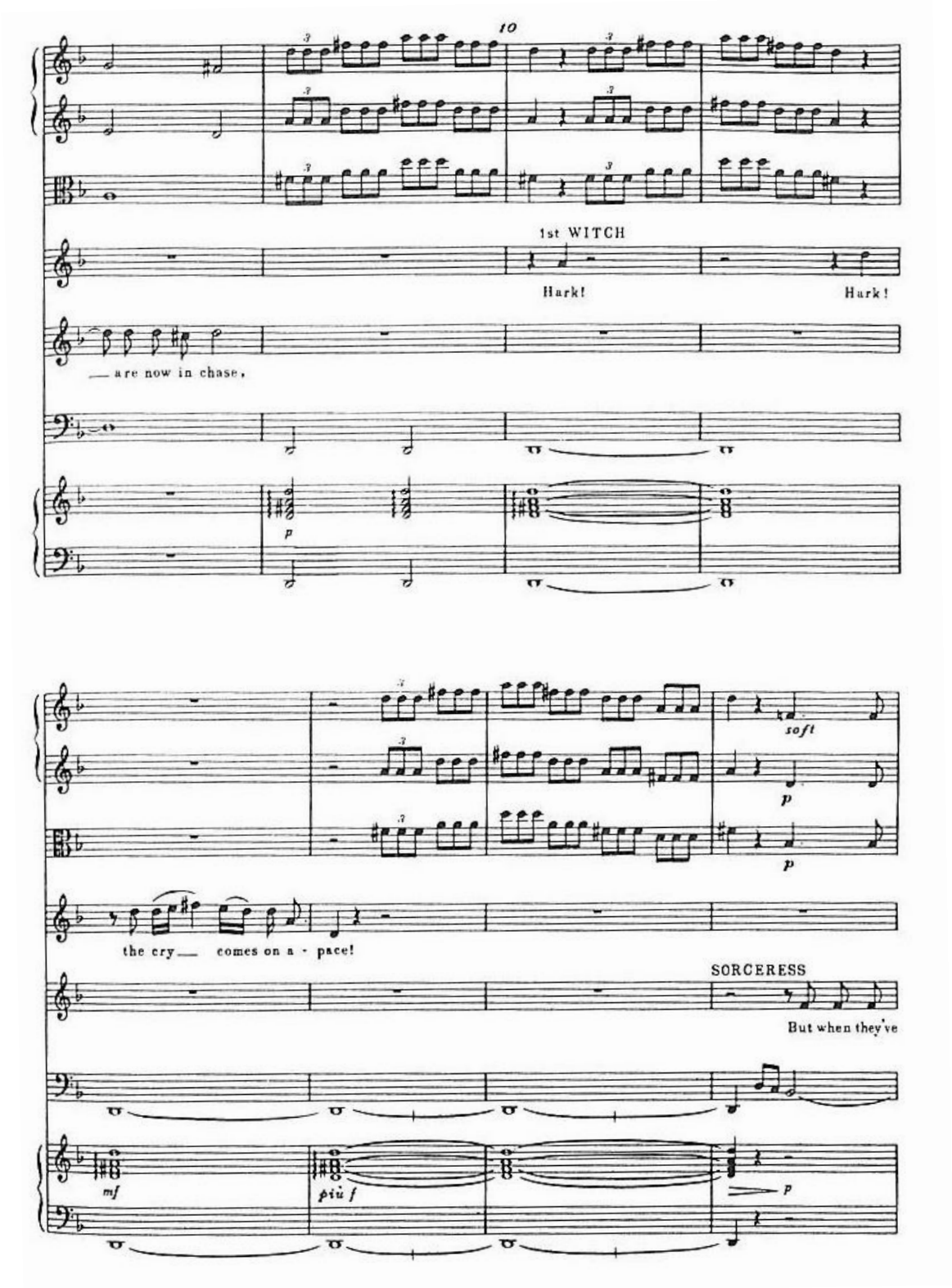

Figure 6-6: Excerpt from Act II Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas*.[18] Copyright © 1986 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

[18] Price, ed. *Purcell: "Dido and Aeneas," An Opera*, 127.

In Act III Scene 1, Ricci laughs and points her finger gleefully at a sailor who has dropped his trousers in front of her, seeming to both enjoy and mock his behaviour and his penis. Quintans as the Second Witch sensually pulls down the sleeves of her cardigan to bare her shoulders for the two Sailors in Act II Scene 1, joining with the First Witch in seducing them with drugs, alcohol and eroticism. The two Witches are thus constructed as alluring, sexually wanton and dangerous *femmes fatales*.

In the LAF production, as I have shown in the previous chapter, English contralto Hilary Summers performs the role of the Sorceress as a rather androgynous, part-seventeenth-century and part-modern, middle-aged terroriser of small schoolgirls. While it is non-traditional to cast a contralto in this role, Summers's low range and rich, dark timbre suit her overall characterisation. Summers sings the majority of the Sorceress's material in her blended-register mid-high range, whereas for most mezzos—such as Fulgoni in the ROH production—the role lies in their mid-range. As Curtis Price points out, there is difficulty with the Sorceress's music when contraltos are cast in the role:

> [The Sorceress's] tessitura, like the Queen's, begins rather low and gradually ascends. The Sorceress's final song, "Our next motion", a sprightly piece indeed, lies quite high, and has caused many a hapless contralto, especially those who favour the nasal approach, some discomfort.[19]

It is possible that the Act III song "Our next motion" was in fact originally intended for one or both of the solo Witches rather than the Sorceress; the Chelsea libretto has a typographical error at this point, omitting the earliest evidence (and the only evidence contemporary with Purcell) that we possess on this issue.[20] Fulgoni manages "Our next motion" easily in her mid-high range, using blended registers, but Summers avoids vocal strain by singing the "Our next motion" section entirely in falsetto/head voice.[21] She then repeats the B section of the

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[19] Curtis Price, *Henry Purcell and the London Stage*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, 255.

[20] Henry Purcell and Nahum Tate, *Dido and Aeneas: An Opera*, ed. Margaret Laurie, Purcell Society Edition, [Original libretto facsimile printed by permission of the Director of the Royal College of Music, London], Borough Green, Kent: Novello, 1979, xix.

[21] Were it not for the scholarly and pedagogical debate surrounding the issue of female falsetto, I would prefer to simply term Summers' timbre here "falsetto". Summers's "falsetto" has a stronger resemblance to the male falsetto than I have heard produced by any other female singer, and this appears to be deliberately in line with

arioso "From the ruin of others our pleasures we borrow / Elissa bleeds tonight and Carthage flames tomorrow," in chest voice *an octave lower*, while the two Witches sing in unison with her, an octave above her line, on this repeat only. This departs from the Tenbury MS and many of its derivative editions of *Dido*, in which there is no repeat and the score simply segues directly to the Chorus "Destruction's our delight." The repeat is to be found in the Oki MS,[22] However, no edition indicates a change of octave at this point; none of these other three productions (indeed, no production to my knowledge at all), and none of the available editions or manuscripts upon which the editions are based, include an indication for the B section to be repeated at a different pitch. Neither do they indicate that the Witches should sing along with the Sorceress. Therefore this device in the Les Arts Florissants production does not follow either established HIP practice or existing performance traditions, and is highly unusual and quite an original directorial and musical decision. It appears to be intertwined with both the non-traditional casting of a contralto and the striking ambiguity of the gender signification. The use of a falsetto register followed directly by a contrasting chest register an octave lower, highlights the androgynous, even masculine nature of the character and performance.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 6.2	
Production	**Act / Scene**
LAF	Act III Scene 1

In Act III Scene 1 therefore, the contrast of the two Witches' soprano voices against the Sorceress's contralto voice an octave lower emphasises the formers' *femme fatale* femininity

Summers' dramatic representation of gender ambiguity. Although many scientific studies have proven the existence of a female falsetto, a large number of singers including renowned vocal scholar/teacher Richard Miller, assert that it does not exist in a "pedagogical" sense because the timbre is different and the dynamic is necessarily softer in the female equivalent; such singers and scholars would likely refer to Summers' timbre/register here as "head voice". See for example: Richard Miller, *Solutions for Singers: Tools for Performers and Teachers*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 150.

[22] Henry Purcell and Nahum Tate, *Dido and Aeneas: Opera in Three Acts*, ed. Benjamin Britten and Imogen Holst, German trans. Ludwig Landgraf, London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1961, xix.

and the Sorceress's androgyny/masculinity. This androgyny references the early modern trope of the "hag" witch, though Summers's character is too young and her costume too rich to fulfil the stereotype's dictates entirely. Her vocal casting and this Act III deviation from musical performance tradition serve to emphasise the threatening and transgressive nature of Summers's acting and costume. Within the production overall, this contralto Sorceress is positioned as a direct contrast to Malena Ernman's much more traditionally feminine portrayal of Dido; Summers's overtly androgynous vocal and physical casting and performance negates the otherwise androgynous effect of Ernman's height, muscular build, and slightly dark mezzo-soprano timbre. If Dido and her court represents the "mainstream", this Sorceress's androgyny seems threatening in both its masculine aggression and in its defiant transgression of cultural and gender norms.

6.7.3 The Spirit

The Les Arts Florissants production uses an interesting theatrical device to present the Spirit as simultaneously gender-neutral and as a male character. While the Waltz production casts a tenor (Bennett) in this role, in the LAF production the role is performed by a young baritone, Marc Mauillon. Mauillon generally plays the role of one of the courtiers/soldiers, as part of the Chorus. During the very short ritornello ending of the chorus "Haste, Haste to Town" in Act II Scene 2, as all other performers are exiting the stage, Mauillon/the soldier suddenly falls on the floor and performs jerky spasm-like movements to indicate a kind of epileptic fit. This performance references the pre-modern western folk belief that epileptic fits were caused by demons possessing a person's soul and body.[23] Rising from his apparent fit, Mauillon steps into a circle of eerie blue light and approaches Aeneas with an intense, rather aggressive, otherworldly stare, as if he were possessed by the Sorceress's spirit and/or her spell. Mauillon sings the Spirit's aria in his chest voice, transposed down an octave from the Tenbury score's version. Maltman/Aeneas falls on the floor backwards in shock and fear as Mauillon/the courtier contravenes all normal social codes by patronisingly putting his hand on his prince's head. Mauillon then falls to the floor again, with another abrupt change of

[23] Thomas L. Bennett, *The Neuropsychology of Epilepsy* (Springer, 1992), 9-11.

behaviour, putting his hand to his own head with a puzzled expression and seeming shocked at Maltman's proximity, scrambling away from him.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 6.3	
Production	**Act / Scene**
LAF	Act II Scene 2

Figure 6-7 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 6-7: Marc Mauillon as the Spirit and Christopher Maltman as Aeneas. From Act II Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the LAF production).

Mauillon's presentation of the character of the Spirit is in some sense sexless, as the Spirit is an unseen force and not, strictly speaking, part of his usual character as a soldier or courtier. However, his performance employs dominant and traditionally masculine gestures, and it is situated within the body and voice of a man, so the Spirit is essentially constructed as male and masculine in this production.

The LAF production is simultaneously discreet and erotically titillating and suggestive in its portrayal of the lovers' sexuality, while it is more explicit in the case of the witches. It draws from early modern notions of the androgynous witch in its representation of the Sorceress and her gender, and from later notions of the *femme fatale* witch in its representation of the two Witches. It constructs the Spirit as gender-ambiguous, but leans towards representing it as male. The LAF in some respects constructs rather traditional and heteronormative representations of gender, sex and sexuality. However, Summers' Sorceress in particular tends to steer the production away from conservatism with her fascinating, gender-bending performance.

6.8 The ROH production

The Royal Opera House production is essentially more conservative in its representations of gender, sex and sexuality. However, in some ways it constructs elements of modern western liberal political beliefs on this multifaceted issue, making its representations of it complex and nuanced.

6.8.1 The Lovers and the Court

As I have shown in Chapters 3 and 4, Sarah Connolly’s Dido is weighed down symbolically by her role as Queen, and correspondingly by her regal and structured kimono-style costume, which she wears during almost all of Act I. Because this production references the patriarchal societies of Ancient Rome and Carthage (in its sung libretto) and Imperial Japan and Elizabethan England (in its costuming), it constructs the context of a pseudo-historical and traditional, patriarchal society. Within such a context, Dido’s position as a female ruler can be assumed to be outside of the norm, and under threat. As is a common theme in these four modern productions, Dido is caught between being female and being a ruler; she is being caught between the expectations from her court of making a good political marriage and of remaining chaste outside that (public duty), and her own desire (private emotion). As I have

shown, this Dido's costume presents the character in a manner that emphasises the vulnerable side of her femininity on the one hand, and her public image of feminine power on the other.

It is notable that in this production, Aeneas's costume does not particularly emphasise his masculinity, despite the fact that his is the only main male role. While he wears a traditionally "masculine"-style dark grey-blue jacket, with vaguely military and Eastern references with no collar, Lucas Meachem also wears matching grey-blue loose, baggy trousers that at first glance look like a long skirt. Meachem himself is tall and rather overweight, but also muscular, with broad shoulders and chest. The combination of Meachem's masculine appearance and a slightly androgynous costume has a subtly destabilizing effect on the construction of the character's gender.

In somewhat of a contrast to its costuming, this production's depiction of the relationship between Aeneas and Dido emphasises the traditional man-as-dominant/woman-as-submissive gender binary. It also emphasises the sexual element of their romance, which intersects with those gender roles. Meachem's Aeneas takes on almost an aggressively sexual role in Act II Scene 2, in which he sings the verses beginning "Behold, upon my bending spear". The innuendo of these verses is emphasised by Meachem's actions: as in the LAF production, Aeneas surprises Dido with a gift. He pulls a necklace with a long, tusk-like crystal pendant from his pocket. He swiftly moves to surprise Dido from behind, grabbing her with a mixture of tenderness and aggressiveness, pulling her hips to his in an erotic movement on the words "bending spear" to emphasise the sexual innuendo, and placing the necklace on her neck as he sings the second couplet, while she seems to swoon under his touch.

Figure 6-8 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 6-8: Lucas Meachem as Aeneas and Sarah Connolly as Dido. From Act II Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the ROH production).

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 6.4	
Production	**Act / Scene**
ROH	Act II Scene 2

As in the LAF production, this theatrical device adds a third layer of meaning to the spear and boar's head image: Aeneas appears to be referring simultaneously to the necklace, his penis, and his prowess in the hunt. At the same time as emphasising the traditional, patriarchal "man-as-sexually-dominant" trope, this gesture of Aeneas's also reinforces the traditional "man-as-protector" trope, as Aeneas gives Dido a gift and embraces her to comfort her. In addition, this gift is an adornment, which reinforces the traditional "woman-as-decorative" trope. The crude sexual violence of this image with its *double-entendre* reference to the deflowering of the virgin queen is emphasised through McGregor's selection of a tusk-like transparent crystal pendant with a trace of red within it. The darkly romantic significance of this pendant later becomes clear, as it is the sharp object with which Connolly's Dido slashes her wrists and commits suicide (see Chapter 8). In the ROH production therefore, the lovers' relationship is constructed as being rather traditional in many ways, and of a highly sexual nature. The operatic text's oblique references to the lovers' sexual acts are made more visceral and obvious.

6.8.2 The Sorceress

As I have shown in Chapter 5, Fulgoni's Sorceress is constructed as a conventionally attractive but evil and dangerous, queenly *femme fatale* witch who closely resembles the opera diva stereotype. As the Sorceress, Fulgoni is approximately as feminine in her physical performance as Connolly's Dido, but Fulgoni's generally stately or triumphant movements, upright posture, malicious and determined facial expressions, and commanding gestures contrast with Connolly's nervousness. Although strength and decision are traditionally seen as masculine traits, the costuming and makeup, as well as Fulgoni's casting and physical and vocal performance override this effect to create a strong impression of the Sorceress as a

traditionally feminine cisgender female. As I have gone into detail in Chapter 5 on the ROH Sorceress's gender representation in relation to constructions of power, I will not reiterate such arguments here.

6.8.3 The Spirit

In representing the Spirit, the ROH uses a device similar to that which is used throughout the Waltz production: the physical and the vocal aspects of the character are split, and performed by two different people. While the physical embodiment of the spirit is performed by a dancer of the Royal Ballet, its vocal representation is performed by countertenor Iestyn Davies. Although both of these performers are male, as Davies is positioned off-stage it is very difficult to determine that his disembodied voice is that of a man. Davies's sweet, powerful, flexible, highly trained countertenor vocal instrument genders it as feminine, and even ambiguously identifies its sex as female. The gender of the Spirit is thus constructed as doubled and ambivalent.

In their constructions of sexual and sinister overtones in the Grove Scene, the LAF and ROH productions bear striking similarities. However, their representations of gender are somewhat different. While the LAF Sorceress's androgyny links to the cultural and theatrical paradigms of both the seventeenth and the twenty-first centuries, the ROH Sorceress is quite a traditional, twentieth-century-style representation of evil and dangerous femininity. The body/voice duality of sign-systems and gender representations in the case of the Spirit, on the other hand, is one of the few elements of this production that move away from a fairly traditional and conservative theatrical style towards one that is more influenced by the deconstructive and pluralistic ethos of PDT.

6.9 The OA production

6.9.1 The Lovers and the Court

The physical rigidity of Kenny's portrayal of Dido creates a sense of restrained or restricted personal expression and sexual desire. This can be seen in the stiff formality of their danced duet to "The Triumphing Dance" at the end of Act I, which can be seen in DVD excerpt 4.11 (see Chapter 4). Along with a general lack of sexualised physical contact between Kenny and Gabbedy, this restraint prompted reviewer Olympia Bowman-Derrick to write that "the passion of her love for Aeneas (Luke Gabbedy) was held-back intentionally, creating a beautiful tension between the two lovers and their desire."[24] However, I personally find this dynamic rather frigid; instead of imbuing Aeneas and Dido's relationship with sexual tension, I find that it de-emphasises the sexual nature of their romance, especially when combined with the slightly discomfiting age gap between the performers, and—ambiguously—between the characters (and also when combined with their rather awkward dancing). This contrasts with the LAF and ROH productions, which are quite overt in their depictions of the sexual attraction and eroticism between Dido and Aeneas; and also with the sensuality and nudity of the Waltz production. The "bending spear" reference in the Grove Scene is, notably, de-sexualised in the OA production: Gabbedy's Aeneas does not approach or touch Kenny's Dido at this moment, but a Chorus member ceremoniously displays a fairly realistic-looking boar’s head on a pike.

6.9.2 The Spirit

Much like the similarity of the older-Dido / younger-Aeneas casting paradigms in the ROH and OA productions, the manner in which the Spirit is gendered and performed in the OA production is extremely similar to its construction in the ROH, suggesting the existence of an evolving contemporary performance tradition. Here again, the Spirit is performed by two people in a doubled body/voice performance; as in the ROH, this is the only example of this

[24] Bowman-Derrick, "Baroque Masterpieces: Opera Australia [Review]".

device in the production. In both cases, a male dancer is selected to physically represent the false Spirit of Mercury and to dance a solo, while a separate high-voiced singer sings the Spirit's aria. (See audiovisual excerpt 7.3 for the ROH production's version and excerpt 7.4 for the OA version—these are discussed in more detail in the next chapter.) The blocking is almost exactly the same in both productions: Aeneas is downstage prompt-side, while the male dancer is downstage OP. The choreography is even somewhat similar, with both employing sinuous, eerie movements, both productions feature the dancers ending on a pirouette on the final words of the aria, "Troy restore". In both cases, Aeneas wears baggy and cumbersome trousers and a rather awkward-looking costume, while the male dancer-Spirit wears a scanty and tight costume, exposing his muscled body. This casting and costuming emphasises the Spirit's male and masculine physicality, but lends it the slightly feminine grace of a dancer. It also serves to construct both Spirits as erotically alluring—particularly in contrast to the rather clumsily costumed Aeneases. The only significant difference between the two productions at this point in the opera is that in the OA the Spirit's aria is sung not by a countertenor but by a mezzo, Margaret Plummer. In both cases, Aeneas only sees the unambiguously *male* performer—the dancer-Spirit. While the singer is off-stage in the ROH, in the OA she stands onstage. As in the ROH production, the combination of male-sexed and largely masculine-gendered physical representation with female-sexed and feminine-gendered vocal representation constructs the Spirit as an otherworldly and magical, supernatural creature, and appropriates some of the visual/auditory gender conflict that was so typical of early opera—a genre that has come to be largely characterised by the gender ambivalence of the now-defunct castrato's body/voice.

6.9.3 The Sorcerer/ess and Witches

Perhaps the most intriguing representation of gender in all four productions is to be found in the Opera Australia production, in the character of the Sorcerer/ess. In this production, the character is a male Sorcerer (of sorts). Tenor Kanen Breen had already played the role as a snake-like Sorcerer in the premiere version of the production in 2004, but his role underwent the most significant change out of all the aspects of the production for the revival five years later. Instead of a reptilian man as in 2004, Breen emerged onstage in 2009 to the audience's mixed revulsion and delight in a broken-down version of Queen Dido's outfit, singing in the

original high pitch and using a blend of falsetto and his high tenor ("head"[25]) registers (refer to audiovisual excerpt 5.4). In the 2009 OA production, Breen's Sorcerer wears a single-sleeved version of Dido's long dark gold robe, with a ragged split in the skirt to display his long hairy legs. His makeup is an exaggerated and blurred version of the Queen's bright red lips and dark eyes, while his wig is a bedraggled and matted version of Dido's wig of immensely long black hair. Breen's wig is half-piled-up in a kind of messy beehive that also strongly references the iconic hairstyle of the (now deceased) popular soul singer Amy Winehouse, thereby emphasising a contemporary reference point. When combined with Breen's sinuous, feminine movement and his tenor voice in its high chest and falsetto ranges, it is difficult to determine whether the character he plays should be interpreted as a cross-*cast* female (functioning as a convention) or a cross-*dressed* male (functioning as a device). However, director Patrick Nolan ensured that Breen grew a tell-tale natural beard for the performances. [26] The western theatrical convention that cross-cast female roles are played by *clean-shaven* male performers is thus exploited to prevent the signification of a cross-casting.

This cross-dressing draws attention to the OA production's innovative psychological insights into the characters of the Sorcerer and his relationship to Dido, and indeed the psychological implications of the entire plot. The fact that the Sorcerer is dressed as the Queen suggests that he is not only struggling with status envy, but also with gender and personal identity issues. This Sorcerer evokes a confusing mix of fear and hatred as well as some pity, admiration and empathy from a modern liberal western audience. At once unreasonably evil, possibly psychopathic, and obviously a charismatic leader, he also seems psychologically damaged and confused, as well as confidently genderqueer. He does not appear in any other costume during the performance, suggesting that the costume is his normal dress and that, as well as caricaturing and satirising Dido, he seems to want to emulate or *become* her. A "disguise plot" backstory was hinted at with this portrayal; perhaps the Sorcerer had dressed himself as a version of Dido for some time; perhaps he had donned her cast-off robes; perhaps he had even been a member of her court at one time (as is subtly suggested by the "outcast Devil" imagery associated with the LAF Sorceress). In everyday life and in other forms of theatrical representation, cross-dressing has some level of acceptability in today's liberal western

[25] See Glossary for a discussion of vocal register.

[26] Holly Champion, Personal field notes, April 2009, (Sydney: Unpublished, 2009).

societies, and any amusement regarding cross-dressing for serious purposes is often moderated or repressed.[27] While female-to-male cross-dressing and cross-casting has been performed with increasing frequency in early opera in recent decades, the male-to-female equivalent appears to have not been revived with equal fervour, making Breen's interpretation particularly surprising. The unfamiliar, the odd and the unexpected tend to increase comic power, and Breen's beard renders his interpretation particularly unexpected. English literature scholar Corinne Holt Sawyer has argued that "men must be out of place in their women's garb to be truly amusing in it, and it must be obvious to us that they are men."[28] In Breen's case, the beard makes Breen's maleness obvious and the audience's laughter is at least partly predicated on that obvious oddness. If the audience had perceived the transvestite Sorcerer as a cross-cast Sorceress, the portrayal—in the pantomime Dame tradition—would likely have been even more obviously comic, which would have overshadowed the serious psychological insights.

There is little Restoration-era precedent for casting the Sorceress as a tenor, so Breen's portrayal cannot be considered to be "truly" HIP. Indeed, the tenor was a relatively neglected vocal category in England during Purcell's time, and was eclipsed by the castrato in the eighteenth century, only really coming to prominence in the nineteenth century, as John Potter explains in his *Tenor: History of a Voice*.[29] As I have discussed in Chapter 2, there is only one possible reference to the Sorceress being cast as a tenor in the earliest performances: the frontispiece of the printed sheet music for the "Saylors Song" as published separately from the rest of the score, states that the song is "as sung by the tenor Mr. Wiltshire," and Wiltshire sang the role of the Sorceress[30] (probably singing the Sailor as a role-within-a-role, performed by the Sorceress). However, as mentioned, Wiltshire was also known as a bass.

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27 See: Corinne Holt Sawyer, "Men in Skirts and Women in Trousers, from Achilles to Victoria Grant: One Explanation of a Comedic Paradox," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 21, no. 2 (1987): 1-18.

28 Ibid.

The recent rise to international stardom—through winning the 2014 Eurovision song contest with a serious, non-comic performance—of Conchita Wurst, a popular drag queen performer/activist with an obvious beard, calls the validity of Sawyer's 1987 statement into question today. However, when Breen performed in 2009, Wurst had not yet become a genderqueer icon.

See: Rodanthi Tzanelli, "Conchita's Euro-vision: On aesthetic standards and transphobia battles," *OpenDemocracy* (2014). http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/79108/.

29 John Potter, *Tenor: History of a Voice*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009, 18.

30 Price and Cholij, "Dido's Bass Sorceress," 616.

Vocal categorization in the Restoration period was more hazy and variable than it is today (though even today it is a topic of much scholarly debate)[31] and it is likely that Wiltshire was a "high" bass, or what we might term a bass-baritone today (the baritone was not yet a recognised voice type in Purcell's era[32]), and that he was capable of singing in a tenor range.[33]

However, Breen sings the role not in his usual tenor range, but more in the vocal guise of a countertenor, so we must also look at the Restoration tradition of countertenors when evaluating whether Breen's portrayal aligns with musical HIP in any way. In fact, the countertenor was typically exploited in Purcell's solo work, rather than the tenor.[34] Countertenors are generally thought to have divided into "high" (falsettist) and "low" (high tenor) countertenors at this time, although this is a matter still under some debate,[35] with Baldwin and Wilson for instance claiming that they were all high tenors who had concentrated on developing their upper range.[36] Breen's tenor/ falsetto mix is a vocal variety or technique that could well have been a feature of Purcellian countertenor technique.[37] At any rate, the technique and vocal type that Breen displays is not a typical modern one. There are very few modern "falsettist countertenors" who have a tenor modal ("chest", or

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[31] See: Sandra Cotton, *Voice Classification and Fach: Recent, Historical and Conflicting Systems of Voice Classification*, [Doctoral thesis], University of North Carolina, Greensboro: 2007, 5.

Holland, "Purcell and the Seventeenth-century Voice: An Investigation of Singers and Voice Types in Henry Purcell's Vocal Music".

[32] Holland, *Henry Purcell and the Seventeenth-Century Voice*, 47, 50.

[33] Modern performance demonstrates that the Sailor's role is comfortable for both tenors and basses: while three of the four modern productions feature tenors in this role, the LAF production's Sailor, Damian Whiteley, is a bass—yet Whiteley sings "Come Away, Fellow Sailors" with no octave transposition and with apparent ease, though it must be noted that the LAF production uses French Baroque pitch of A = 392 Hz, rather than the usual A = 415 Hz, giving the role a lower range and tessitura.

[Anonymous], "Biography," *Damian Whiteley* [website], http://www.damianwhiteley.com/biography, accessed 26 February 2012.

[34] Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, "Alfred Deller, John Freeman and Mr. Pate," *Music and Letters*, L, no.1 (1969): 103.

[35] Holland makes a detailed investigation of this issue. See: Holland, *Purcell and the Seventeenth-Century Voice*, Chapter 1.

[36] Baldwin and Wilson, "Alfred Deller, John Freeman and Mr. Pate,"105.

[37] It is not certain that Purcellian countertenors refrained from using any falsetto if they were "low" specialists, nor from using chest voice if they were "high" specialists. It is probable that they were roughly divided into two types, but that there was some crossover between the two, which is roughly the conclusion that Holland reaches after exhaustive study. Holland, *Purcell and the Seventeenth-century Voice*, 44-46.

"speaking") voice; most have a baritone modal voice.[38] Holland argues that after over half a century of almost exclusively falsettist countertenors "it is unlikely that audiences in the twenty-first century would accept a hybrid production method of falsetto and natural technique,"[39](meaning using each at different times, according to the pitch sung, the melodic contour and the effect desired, etc.). Yet reviewers of Breen's performance enjoyed exactly that, within the context of the extraordinary character he portrayed; one writing that he was "shifting from raspy tenor to grotesque falsetto with apt vulgarity,"[40] and another that "his falsetto [was] offsetting his tenor deliciously."[41] Although this vocal technique and timbre is not usual, the otherworldly and unruly nature of the character and of the character's gender expression allowed Breen to use unconventional vocal technique and effects. Essentially, theatrical elements of performance here took priority over the usual aesthetic requirements of the musical elements of performance.

Breen is not a countertenor, and so it is arguable that in this respect his vocal casting is not historically informed. If Purcell's countertenors indeed used falsetto, as seems likely, they would have specialised in the technique (as most modern countertenors do), and / or specialised in moving seamlessly from chest voice to falsetto. However, despite his lack of specialisation in the technique, Breen blends over the *passagio* with little obvious break, and it is often difficult to tell when he is singing in falsetto, though the highest notes must be in this register. For instance, in the arioso "Our Next Motion" in Act III Scene 1, Breen begins by singing in a range (e'–a') that is achievable by professional tenors in their chest or mixed registers, but then the melody moves up to the pitch e", (notated as f" in the score example due to the use of standard "baroque pitch" of A = 415 Hz in this production); this is almost one octave above the usual break into falsetto range when it is allowed to occur (the usual

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[38] See, for example: Richard Miller, *National Schools of Singing*: *English, French, German, and Italian Techniques of Singing Revisited*, The Scarecrow Press; Lanham, Maryland and Oxford, 161.

[39] Holland, *Purcell and the Seventeenth-Century Voice*, 45.

[40] Sarah Noble, "A Double Dose of Baroque Masterpieces," *The Opera Critic*, [online magazine] http://theoperacritic.com/tocreviews2.php?review=sn/2009/ausdidoacis0609.htm, accessed 4 July 2009.

[41] Olympia Bowman-Derrick, "Baroque Masterpieces: Opera Australia," *Australian Stage*, [online magazine] http://www.australianstage.com.au/200907072687/reviews/sydney/baroque-masterpieces-|-opera-australia.html, accessed 23 June 2009.

break is at e'–f#'[42]). Therefore it is reasonable to assume that by the e'' (notated f'') of "Lover", Breen must be singing in falsetto, and that the f'' (notated g'') thereafter is also in falsetto.

[42] Matthias Echternach et al, "Vocal tract and register changes analysed by real-time MRI in male professional singers – a pilot study," *Logopedics Phoniatrics Vocology*, Vol. 33 (2008), 68.

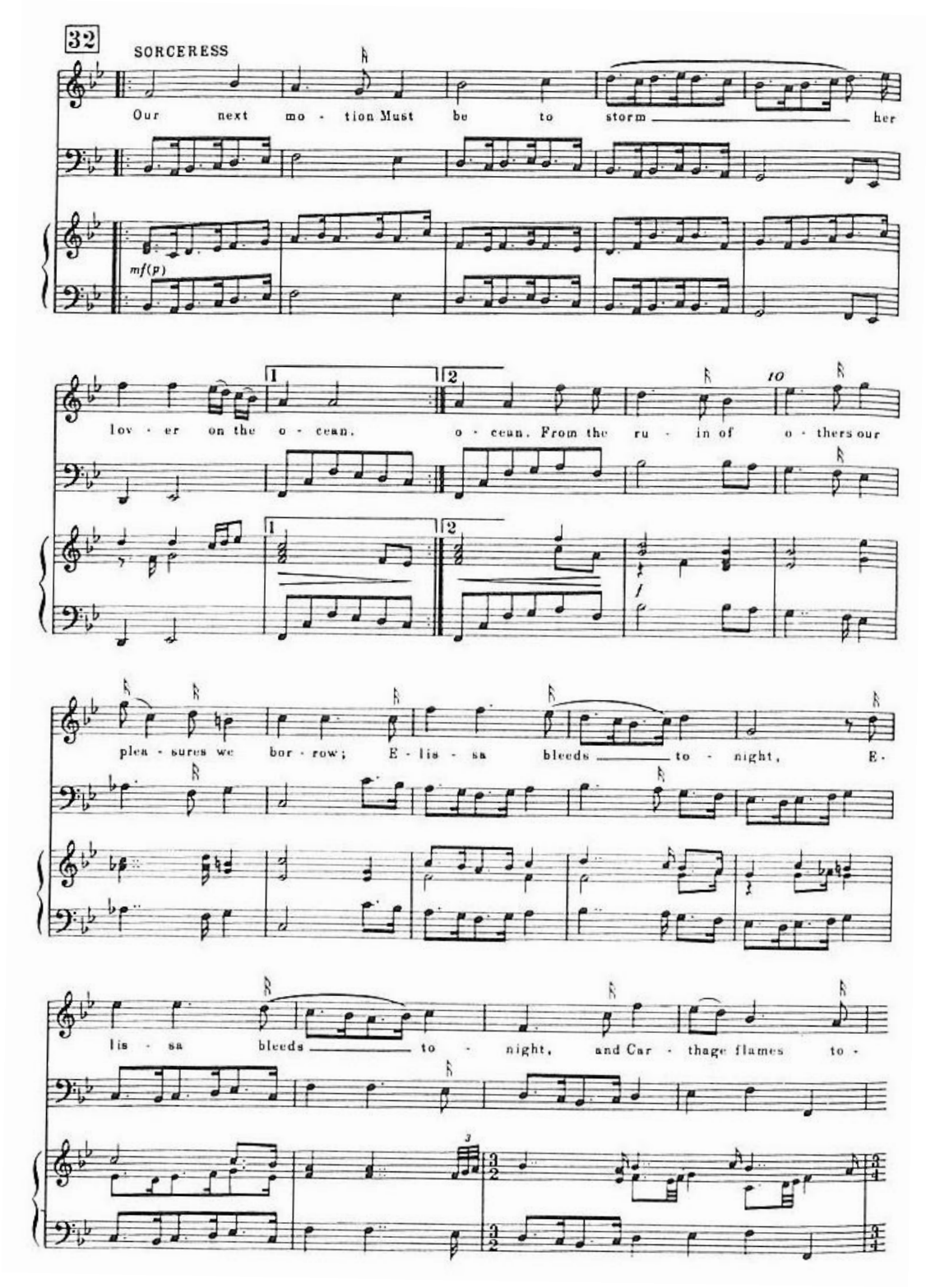

Figure 6-9: Excerpt from Act III Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas*.[43] Copyright © 1986 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

[43] Price, ed. *Purcell: "Dido and Aeneas," An Opera*, 164.

Some other aspects of Breen's vocal performance have little basis in HIP practice (for example his rather wide and notable vibrato and powerful vocal production) but the use of both chest or mixed voice *and* falsetto registers, and the manner in which Breen conceals the *passagio*, seems to be similar to the vocal type and techniques employed by Purcell's countertenors. Casting the Sorceress as a tenor / countertenor, and/or as a cross-dressed man does not seem to have had a Restoration precedent, but Purcell was known to have cast at least one countertenor in cross-*cast* roles: Mr Pate, who played Mopsa in *The Fairy Queen* (see Chapter 2). All things considered, therefore, although there is no evidence that the Sorceress was performed by a countertenor in the Restoration period, Breen's performance is broadly—or perhaps "obliquely" is a better term—historically informed. Theatrically, Breen's performance is also more historically informed than Mantegna's in the Waltz production, if Wiltshire's drag Sorceress tradition is taken as the historical basis for the argument, because Breen's portrayal is feminine and genderqueer, whereas Mantegna's is masculine and cisgender. Breen's portrayal ingeniously balances the fidelity dichotomy's HIP and PDT approaches. It takes aspects of the seventeenth century's understanding of gender and its performance of it, and reworks this phenomenon in a new way, making it relevant for today's audiences.

As for the witches in general, their loose sexuality in the OA production is contrasted to great effect with the restraint of the courtiers. Because the two groups are performed by the same actor-singers, the contrast in behaviour is emphasised. While the courtiers perform tightly choreographed gestures and head and arm movements, with little use of their torsos or legs, the witches' movements, in contrast, are choreographed to seem quite random and chaotic, with movement that uses their entire bodies. The courtiers' restrictive, heavy costuming (see Chapter 4) and rigid posture, as shown in Act I, gives way to the charged and wanton sexuality of the witches' behaviour and costuming in Act II. The witches wear only scanty, baggy and raggedy white cotton under-dresses and frequently claw and grope each other sexually; this is particularly true of the two main Witches, who grab each other's breasts and hair frequently during their duets. As in the other modern productions, the Sorcerer displays little overtly sexual behaviour, but the witches more than compensate, particularly in Act III Scene I ("The Ships"), in which they partake in a hilarious simulated orgy with the sailors (see audiovisual excerpt 5.5). This vignette is funny, graphic and memorable, and is made all

the more so by moving against opera's traditional stereotype of genteel, prudish, elite conservatism.

The disruptive, humorous, fascinating and transgressive ambiguity of the gender and sexuality of Breen's Sorcerer and the witches in general in the OA creates a sense of playful, if very dark, *jouissance*, as does Summers's Sorceress in the LAF production. The attraction of the audience to the witches is particularly strong in the case of the OA, due mainly to Breen's charismatic performance. The contrast between the attraction, as well as the repellence, of the witches' exuberantly sensual and evil lifestyle, and the sense of boredom, obligation and repression associated with the courtiers and the court is emphasised more in this production than in any of the three others. In this production, free and overt sexuality and gender ambiguity are linked, and are used to create an uncomfortable but exciting tension for the audience between temptation and obligation, and between transgression and normativity.

6.10 Conclusions

These four productions combine the elements of musical and theatrical gender play and subversion that are prevalent on today's stage with those of the late seventeenth-century stage. In doing so, they balance the different requirements of the fidelity dichotomy, by conforming broadly to HIP principles while drawing the audience's attention to issues of gender, sex and sexuality that are relevant to the modern western world. Situating the *mise-en-scène* within fantasy worlds that incorporate both the historical and the modern enables these productions to explore the layers of history and cultural meaning that surround *Dido and Aeneas*. Their exploration of historical and modern sexuality is largely achieved through their representation of the lovers' romance, especially as it emerges through Act II Scene 2; and through their representation of the sexual behaviour of the witches in Act II Scene 1 and of the witches and sailors in Act III Scene 1. The lovers' sexual relationship is eroticised in the Waltz, LAF and ROH productions. It is also achieved through vocal and physical casting: for instance, the Sorcerer/ess is cast variously as a tenor singing in falsetto, a "normal" tenor, a mezzo, and a contralto; and the Spirit is cast variously as a tenor, a baritone, a male dancer/offstage countertenor, and a male dancer/onstage mezzo.

Much of the exploration of historical and contemporary notions of gender and sexuality in these productions is entwined with their depiction of *Dido and Aeneas*'s witches. Most interestingly, the LAF and OA productions link the phenomenon of the marginalised witch figure with that of marginalised queer culture. These two productions tend to present gender and sexual transgression in ways that are more compelling than their constructions of the heteronormative, thereby disrupting and challenging the audience's preconceived ideas about gender, sexuality, good, evil and the nature of these issues in *Dido and Aeneas*.

7 The Supernatural

7.2 Introduction

This chapter examines the ways in which the four modern productions explore and represent the more mysterious, ineffable and diffusely explored themes in *Dido*, such as fate, magic and religion. As with the other themes explored above, these supernatural themes are constructed in performance in ways that reflect the various historical and cultural layers that lie in and around the operatic text. There is a complex relationship between the audience's conventional suspension of disbelief regarding magic, religion, the notion of fate and the representation of the level of "authenticity" of these elements in the opera's narrative within the diegetic world (approached with the usual and necessary suspension of disbelief). Whether the Sorceress and her witches are constructed as being "truly" capable of magic, or presented as being simply capable of clever trickery; and whether or not fate is represented as being a "real" force that predetermines events, are all highly dependent on interpretative representation in performance.

Strong mainstream beliefs in magic, religion, fate, and interventionist god(s), which were quite commonplace in Virgil's time, and which were different and slightly less widespread in Purcell and Tate's time, have today given way to a broad-based secular and scientific paradigm in the western world. Magic is generally perceived today in the western world as a fascinating but largely bygone collective cultural illusion, founded on a general lack of reliable knowledge, on individual experiences that are created by a trick of the mind, and/ or the deliberate deception of others, failure of logic, a psychological problem such as psychosis, or an altered state of consciousness induced by drugs.

As I have shown, the fidelity dichotomy and the ongoing tensions between the past and present are an intrinsic part of the modern performance of early opera. In line with many of the thematic elements explored in these four modern productions, the productions reflect and signify modern perspectives on past supernatural beliefs in ways that balance historically informed notions with those that are specifically relevant to the contemporary western world.

Apart from the Prologue, which is only very rarely performed (see Chapter 3), there is no physical representation of gods in the opera; instead, human characters simply discuss them. The opera does not even hint at Venus, Cupid and Juno's involvement in Dido's love for Aeneas in the libretto. Rather, the action of the opera begins at a point around the beginning of Virgil's Book IV, after Aeneas has apparently finished telling his tale (of the sack of Troy and his escape and wanderings around the sea with his followers). As I have shown in Chapter 4, Dido dwells on the idea that Aeneas has inherited a mix of "Anchises' valour" and "Venus' charms," although Tate does not make it clear that Venus and Anchises are Aeneas's parents, (a fact that would have been known by Restoration audiences but is not usually known by modern ones). Dido is presented thus not as a helpless victim of the goddesses' plots but rather as a free human agent who simply falls in love, mainly because of a powerful combination of admiration and sympathy. In addition to this lack of involvement by the goddesses, notably there is certainly no involvement of the "real" Mercury. The question of Jove's "actual" diegetic involvement is a more interesting issue. It certainly seems that the widespread *belief* amongst the characters that Jove and the Fates have destined Aeneas to found a new Troy in Italy plays a strong role in the events of the opera, but how well-founded this belief is understood to be within the diegetic world is open to some degree of interpretation in production.

7.3 Fate and Roman Gods

The notion of fate involves a philosophical conception of the predetermined nature of all events from the beginning of time. In the Christian tradition this is usually known as predestination. Unlike determinism, which is not in itself necessarily supernatural (for example, determinism may be biological, psychological, or physical/causal[1]) predestination is usually linked to the Christian idea of God. In the western world today, the belief in fate and determinism are not currently mainstream philosophical views of the nature of time and change, and these concepts fit only uneasily within the prevailing scientific paradigm. However, as with the other supernatural themes in *Dido and Aeneas*, there is a strong and familiar cultural history in the western world, of belief in fate and in an interventionist God or

[1] Timothy O'Connor, "Free Will," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2013). http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2013/entries/freewill/ (accessed 6 March 2014).

gods. Within English traditional folklore, beliefs and practices implied that the circumstances of one's life and death were laid down in advance as part of an orderly plan determined by the Will of God.[2] This was a strong religious theme during the Interregnum period: the Puritans' focus on the writings of St Augustine and John Calvin formed the basis for their strong beliefs in determinism or predestination.[3] However, the predominant Anglicanism of the Restoration period, as well as the gradual rise of rationalism, meant that at the time of *Dido and Aeneas*'s composition there was less mainstream belief and interest in fate, predestination and an interventionist God than there had been in previous centuries.[4] In this period in England, as in so much of the western world, there was also a keen interest in the pre-Christian culture and mythology of Ancient Greece and Rome, so to understand the role of fate in *Dido and Aeneas* it is also necessary to briefly examine the beliefs of this earlier culture.

For the Ancient Romans, as Michael Lemon describes, the notion of fate was culturally and mythically ingrained on several levels:

> …"the gods" may intervene in certain episodes—a way of "explaining" the unexpected, or of highlighting a significant event, or of lending an air of inevitability to the outcome of a battle. […] "Fortune" was personified into a *moral* force arbitrating on the deeds and character of individuals (and nations). […] moral failings would sooner or later be punished by Fortune, just as virtue would be rewarded.[5]

In addition, "fate" was personified as a trio of goddesses: namely, the Fates (or "Parcae"), who together determined one's character, destiny, and time of death.[6] However, Lemon argues that this belief in fate, what he calls a "mythopoeic mentality", was a very ancient

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[2] J. Simpson and S. Roud, *A Dictionary of English Folklore* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

[3] Gordon Mursell, *English Spirituality: From Earliest Times to 1700* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminister John Knox Press, 2001), 357-358.

[4] Richard W.F. Kroll, Richard Ashcraft, and Perez Zagorin, eds., *Philosophy, Science, and Religion in England 1640-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 120.

[5] Michael C. Lemon, *Philosophy of History: A Guide for Students* (London & New York: Routledge, 2004), 34.

[6] Ibid.

phenomenon.[7] It is difficult to determine how widespread and sincere the beliefs really were by Virgil's time.[8] It is possible that many educated Imperial Romans may have perceived the notion of "fate" in a similar way to most westerners today: that is, as a quaint relic of a former time that nevertheless has left a widespread cultural residue.

In both the *Aeneid* and in the operatic text of *Dido and Aeneas*, Aeneas's departure to found the Roman Empire, and to a lesser extent Dido's death, are portrayed as being fated to occur by the gods. In Virgil's original the gods are present as active embodied characters, while in the opera proper, in what may have been a reflection of a growing seventeenth-century secularism and/or a way of avoiding a credulous presentation of pagan gods, we only *hear* about the gods from the mortal characters (the Prologue is an exception, but as I have shown, this is rarely performed). The gods and Aeneas's fate is mentioned throughout the opera, generally in the sections that tend more towards recitative. Purcell's musical setting ensures that indications of this theme are noted by the audience.

[7] Ibid., 29.

[8] Ibid., 33.

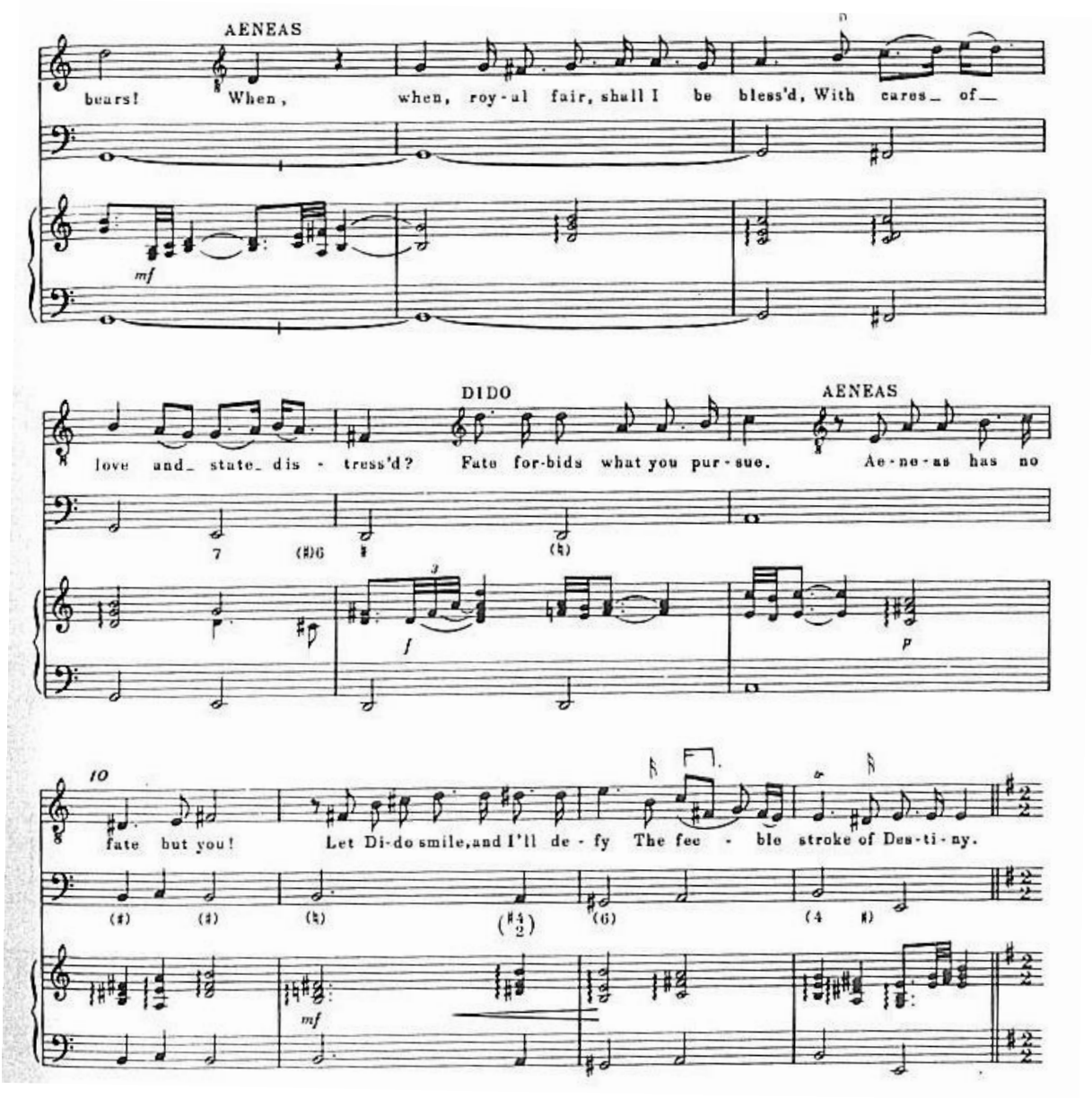


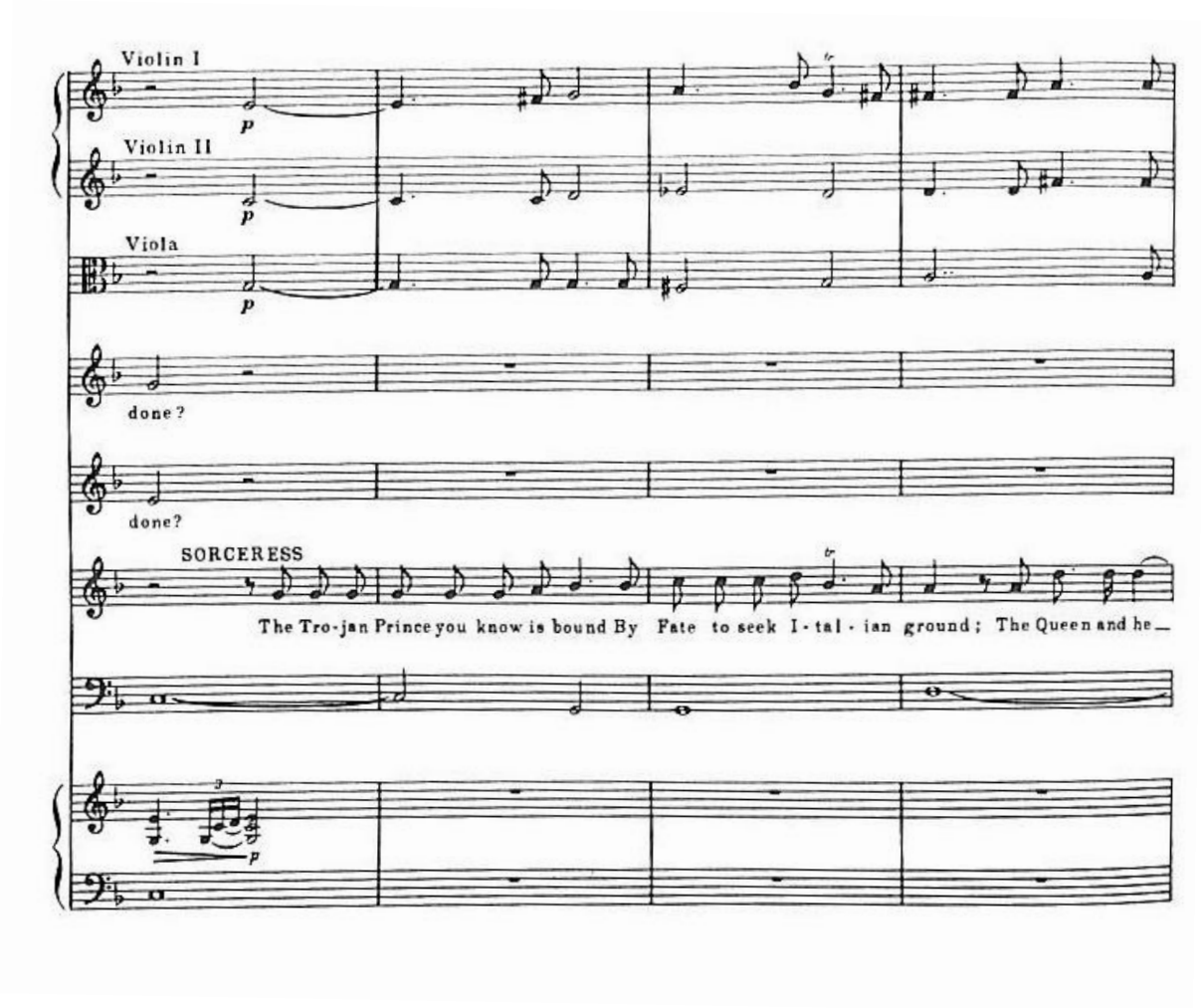
Figure 7-1: Excerpt from Act I Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas*. Copyright © 1986 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.[9]

In this interaction between Dido and Aeneas in Act I, Dido's "forbids" is set on a typical Purcellian scotch snap motif with a downward intervallic leap (see Chapter 3). Purcell's overall melodic contour for Dido's line highlights the key words "Fate forbids" and "pursue", and the mainly downward line and her insistence on the minor mode (moving from Aeneas's D major to A minor) reflects her pessimism about the future. Aeneas interrupts Dido and finishes her harmonic progression, her melodic phrase and her verse couplet for her. The

[9] Price, *Henry Purcell: Dido and Aeneas: An Opera*, 101.

bravado of his second line here is emphasised with a rising melodic contour using an almost militaristic dotted rhythm, while "feeble" is word-painted with an elongated falling and chromatic melismatic line. The thematic key word "destiny" is also emphasised with its placement on the new tonic of E, and the strong first beat of the bar.

In Act II, the Sorceress explains how she will use Aeneas's fated course for her own destructive ends:



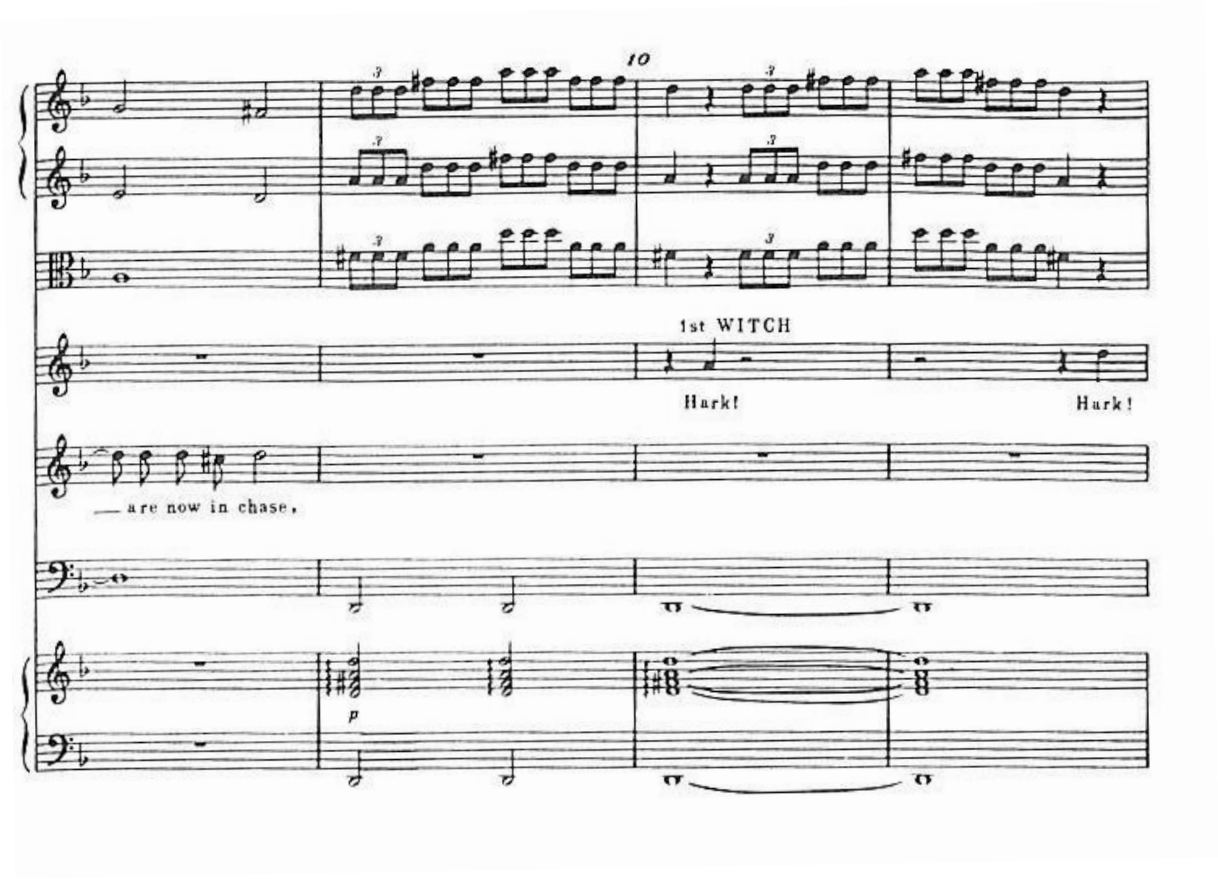


Figure 7-2: Excerpt from Act II Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas*. Copyright © 1986 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.[10]

Here, the word "Fate" is skimmed over a little, but "Italian" is elongated and is typically ornamented in performance, thereby drawing attention to Aeneas's destination.

In Act III, Dido wails to Belinda about the gods' (Heaven's) mistreatment of her, and puts her broken trust in Fate:

[10] Price, *Henry Purcell: Dido and Aeneas: An Opera*, 127.

[SCENE II – *The Palace*]

35 *Enter Dido, Belinda and women*

DIDO

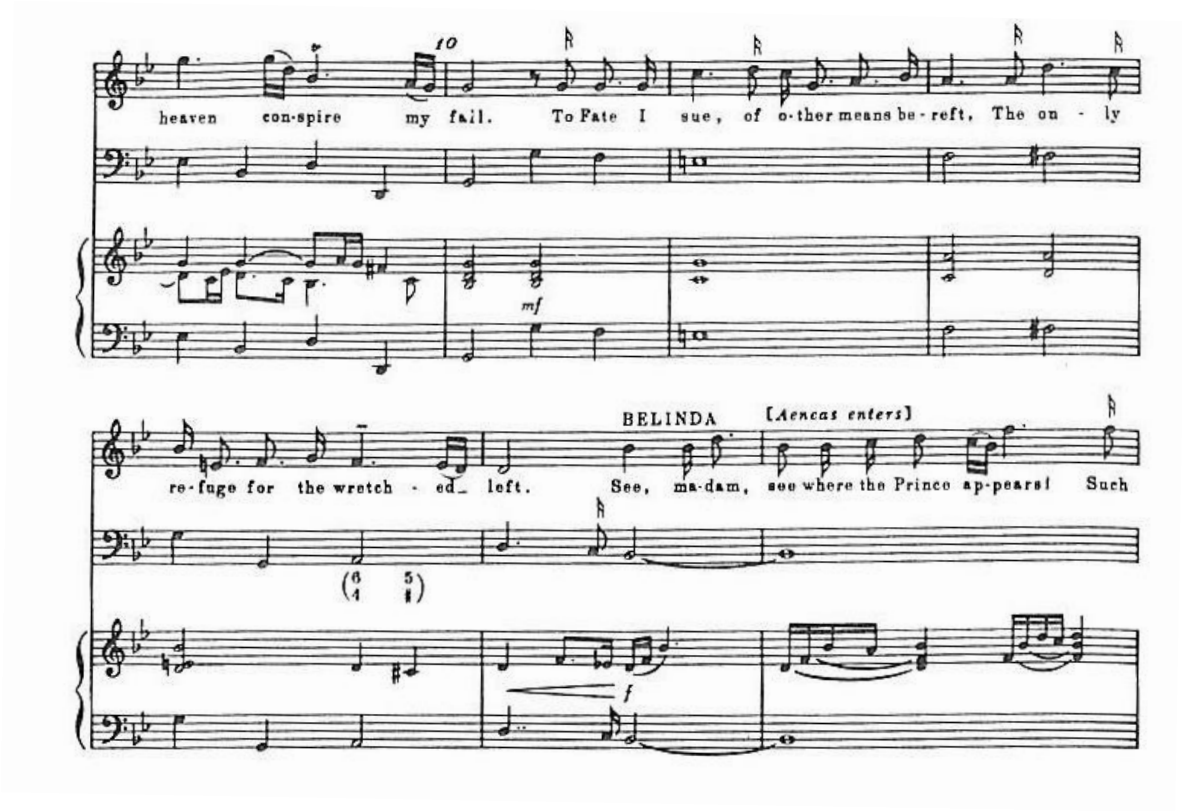
Your coun-sel all is urg'd in vain, To earth and

Adagio

C *p* *mp* *f*

heaven I will com - plain; To earth and heaven why do_ I___ call? Earth_ and

p



Aeneas enters morosely and Dido immediately confronts him angrily:

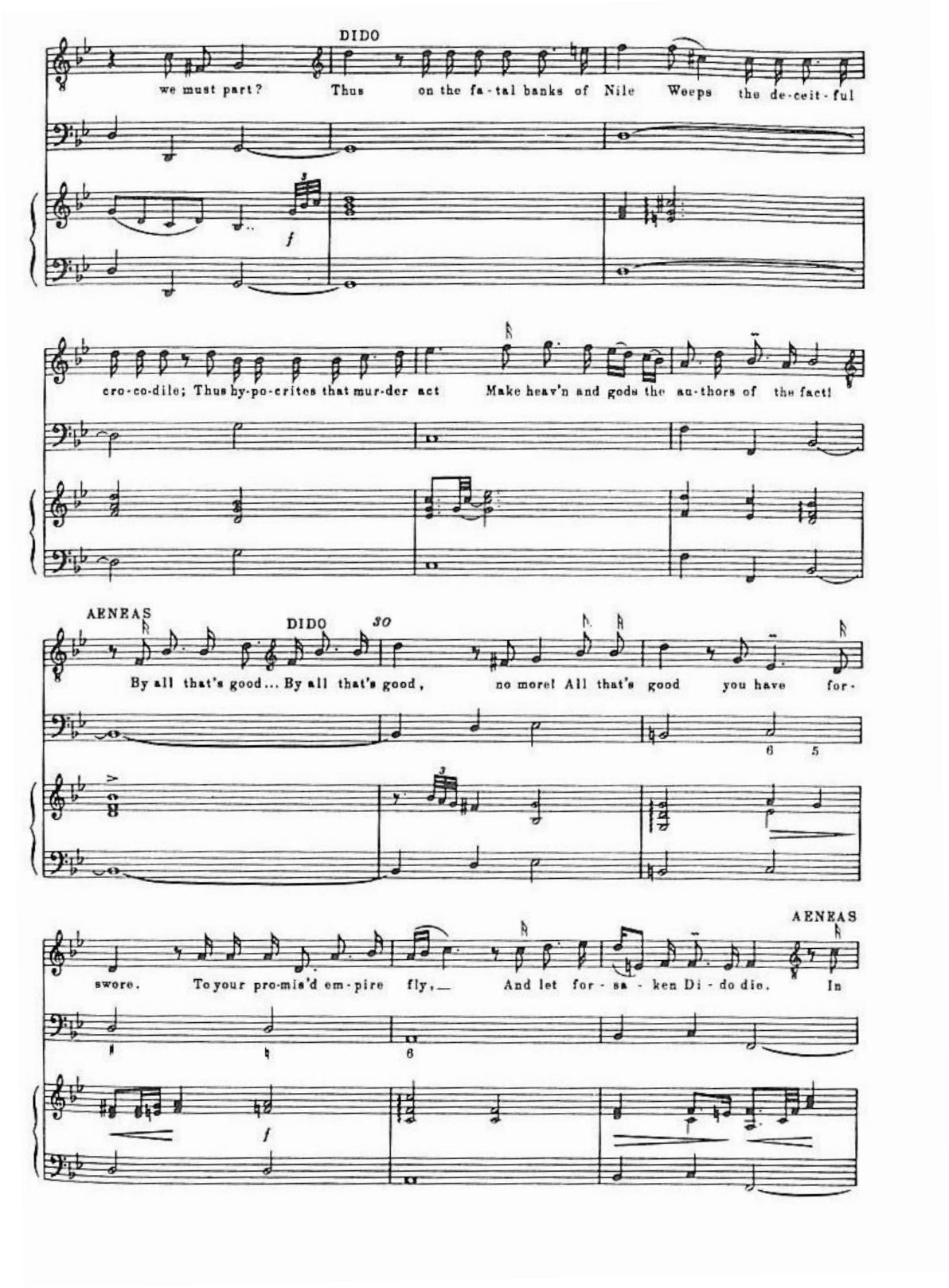


Figure 7-3A Excerpt from Act III Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas*. Copyright © 1986 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.[11]

[11] Price, *Henry Purcell: Dido and Aeneas: An Opera,* 171.

Here Purcell indulges in word-painting for the repeated words "earth" (low notes) and "heaven" (high, naturally accented notes) rhyming words "fly" (with a quick rising three-note melisma) and "die" (with an accented and held, low-register dominant note, D). Again the same downward-leaping scotch snap motif occurs with "other" and "refuge", and the emotive "forsaken," as well as "promised"—which for my present purposes is the more important word. This repetitive motif points up these words with its idiosyncratic recognisability. All of the above are recitative sections: they are not lengthy soliloquies or diatribes about the nature of fate or godly interventionism, but rather fleeting dialogic sections that serve to further the narrative. However, Purcell makes sure that the meaning is not missed. The musical settings consistently highlight the meaning and the key words in order to emphasise the importance of the themes within the narrative: in this case, the theme of fate.

The two sections of the opera that can be classified as *arias* that reflect the trope of fate and divine intervention, are the Second Woman's "Oft She Visits" aria in Act II, Aeneas's "Jove's command shall be obey'd / But ah! what language can I try" aria at the end of Act II, and of course Dido's Lament near the end of Act III. These deal with the trope more obliquely than the recitative sections listed above. The Lament represents the fulfilment of the fated events: Aeneas has departed to found Rome, and Dido is dying (see Chapter 8). Aeneas's aria features Aeneas simply immediately accepting the false Mercury's false message from Jove. After the Spirit departs, Aeneas is left to blame the gods for his misfortune instead of taking on responsibility for his own choice, which, in the light of the audience's knowledge that the gods did *not* demand his departure, to our modern secular sensibility seems all the more foolish, self-destructive and cruel to Dido.

More interestingly, the Second Woman's aria about the legend of Diana and Actaeon, and indeed much of Act II Scene 2, can be symbolically constructed as foreshadowing the coming tragedy. This sense of foreboding is constructed in both the LAF and ROH productions, with Dido's frightened and anxious reaction to "Oft She Visits". However, this sense of foreboding in the Grove Scene is not obvious unless the production emphasises it, and the Waltz and OA productions do not highlight this meaning in the Grove scene. In the opera more generally however, all four productions reinforce the theme of inevitability and fate, in their symbolic

foreshadowing of the narrative's tragic endpoint. All four achieve this effect in subtly different ways, as I explore in my analysis below.

7.4 Magic and Religion

As I have mentioned it is likely that Purcell and Tate intended the Witches to be associated with Catholicism. Although this was linked with the highly charged political-religious atmosphere of the time, there are other specific reasons why this correlation would have been constructed and perceived. Randall Styers observes that in early modern Europe a massive shift occurred in mainstream attitudes towards religion. He explains:

> Prior to the sixteenth century this term [religion] had referred largely to the dutiful performance of ritual obligations. But in various sixteenth-century accounts of non-European social practices, the word began to designate a cross-cultural, and potentially universal, phenomenon related to systems of ritual practice. By the eighteenth century, the cross-cultural aspect of religion was firmly established, but usage of the term had shifted dramatically away from attention to ritual toward an internal state of mind. Religion had become principally a matter of ideas and beliefs.[12]

As Styers points out, a large part of that shift was associated with the Reformation and the associated decreased emphasis on ritual and religious paraphernalia in Protestant and Anglican churches as opposed to the highly ritualised Roman Catholic mass.[13] As *Dido* was written in a heavily Anglican context, it is perhaps unsurprising that there is little depiction in the libretto or score of religious ritual as performed by human characters in *Dido and Aeneas* (if the Prologue is discounted). One possible instance is in the Grove scene in Act II, where there is a suggestion of a ritual associated with the Second Woman's aria and the myth of Actaeon and Diana. As discussed in Chapter 2, Andrew Walkling has convincingly argued that these suggestions represent an interrupted formal Masque of Actaeon performed in Dido's honour, with Aeneas in the lead role as Actaeon.[14] This

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[12] Randall Styers, *Making Magic: Religion, Magic and Science in the Modern World* (Abingdon: Oxford University Press, 2004), 4.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Walkling, "The Masque of Actaeon and the Antimasque of Mercury."

interpretation does not feature in any of the four modern productions studied here. However, the LAF, ROH and OA productions do signify "Oft she visits" as a ritualistic performance for the queen and her new consort. As Walkling points out, such a construction of the Grove scene could recall the ritualistic, monarch-centred and hierarchy-affirming Stuart and Carolean court masques, of which *Dido and Aeneas* itself may have originally been a modified and updated example.[15]

A more obvious instance of ritual, however, lies in the magic spell chant performed by the Chorus of witches in Act II: "In our deep vaulted cell":

[15] Ibid.

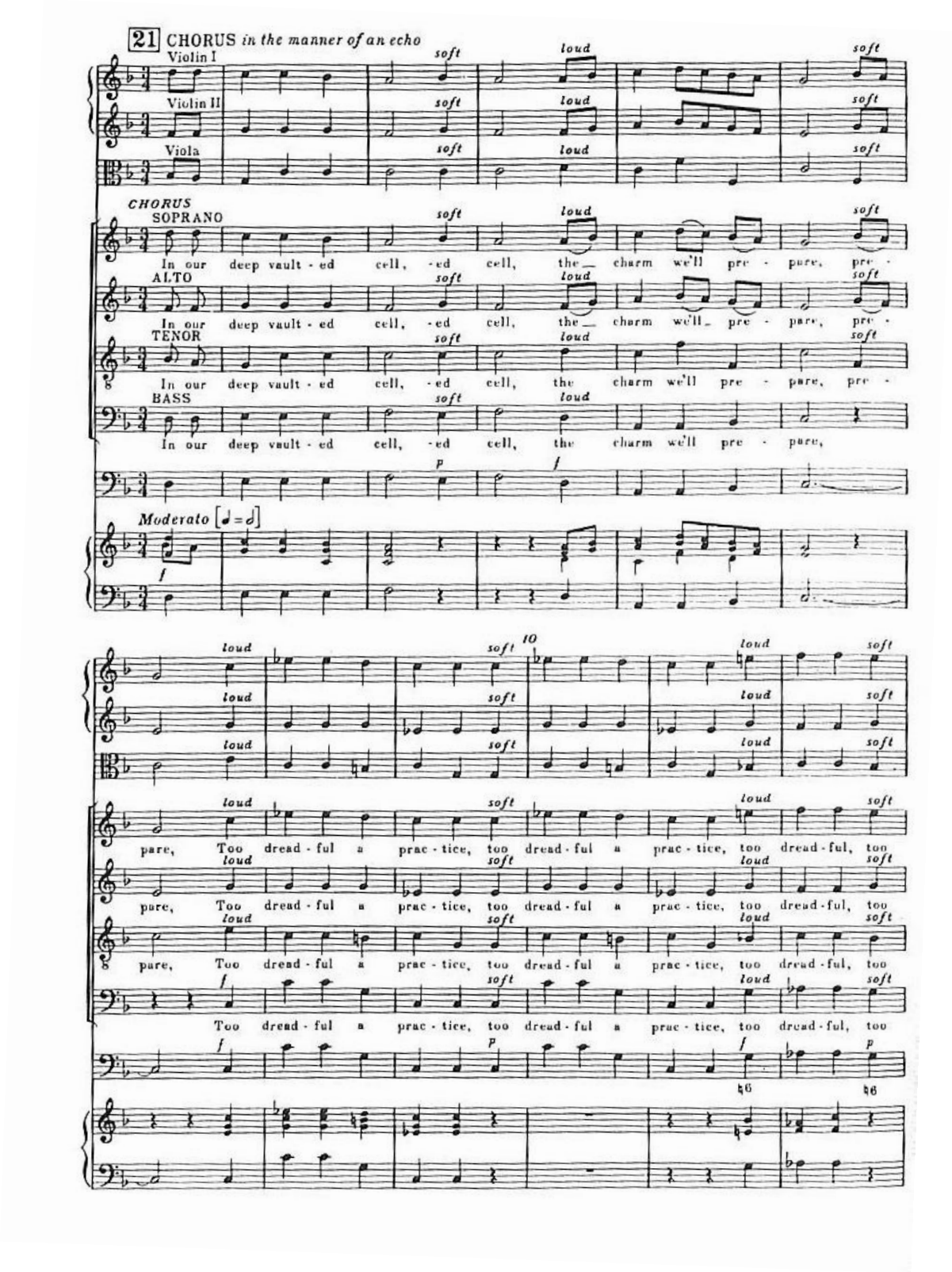

Figure 7-3B Excerpt from Act II Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas*. Copyright © 1986 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.[16]

[16] Price, *Henry Purcell: Dido and Aeneas: An Opera*, 132.

Purcell's evocative writing for this Chorus musically paints the image of the "deep vaulted cell" and its echoing acoustics. As Winkler points out, the harmonic language and the fundamentally symmetrical four-phrase structure recall Christian hymns, while the eerie echoing disrupts the phrasing's symmetry, ultimately constructing a parody of Christian ritual.[17] Winkler has shown how these parallels between the Catholic mass and the Witches' rites reflected the common Restoration (Anglican) perception of an association between Catholicism and witchcraft.[18] This connection was commonly emphasised due to Catholicism's "worship of idols" (in its use of figures of Christ and Mary) and its "cannibalistic" notion of the transubstantiation of the Eucharist. Likewise, a connection was made by Protestants at the time between Catholicism and paganism, including the pagan polytheism of Ancient Rome such as that referenced in *The Aeneid*. [19] Interestingly however, while the philosophy, science, and culture of the Ancient World were revered, its religious beliefs were antithetical to Christianity and particularly to Restoration Protestant Christianity, so an uneasy tension would have had to be maintained between pious rejection and popular adoration of all things Classical, and between the Protestants' association of Catholicism with paganism and their adaptation of the more "attractive" elements of Classicism for Protestant secular culture.

The decline in general belief in magic in the western world has been followed and arguably accompanied by diminished levels of adherence to religion. A significant number of people in the west now no longer follow any religion, although due to the flexibility in what constitutes "following a religion," it is very difficult to quantify this number.[20] An even more significant proportion do not believe in magic, but both magic and religion still exert enormous cultural influence and enormous appeal. In recent years, widespread interest in the theme of magic can be perceived, for example, by the phenomenal success of J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* and Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* series of books and their film adaptations. Likewise, the

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[17] Winkler, *O Let Us Howle Some Heavy Note*, 68.

[18] Ibid., 67-69.

[19] Grafton, Most, and Settis, *The Classical Tradition*.

[20] Robert A. Hinde, *Why Gods Persist: A Scientific Approach to Religion*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2010 (orig. publ. 1999)), 2.

appeal of the Sorcerer/ess and Witches in productions of *Dido and Aeneas* is quite apparent. It is however arguable that much of this appeal (as with *Harry Potter* and particularly *Twilight*) lies in these characters' association with horror, evil, and death, as we are fascinated by aspects of life that are important and yet dangerous, forbidden and/ or macabre.

On the other hand, there are also a small number of people in the western world that *do* consciously believe in magic. Many of these people fall into a loose category that has been called the "New Age" movement since the 1970s. Towards the more extreme end of this spectrum of "New Agers" lies the modern Witchcraft, or Wicca movement. This has popularly mythologised its origins as an ancient European, historically oppressed, Nature-based, female-orientated religion,[21] but in reality it was historically influenced by many ancient religions, as well as by modern feminist and environmentalist movements.[22] The subtle references to this modern counter-culture in the four productions, particularly in the LAF with its butch Sorceress and modern Witches, make *Dido's* witches seem relevant, contemporary and compelling. Modern witchcraft is a minor cultural phenomenon in the context of an overwhelmingly secular and rationalist western culture, yet it is a fascinating site of cultural tension resulting from the intersection of liberal, secular and feminist values with conservative and religious ones. The combination of historical and contemporary cultural, gendered, religious and political tension, and magic's innate ability to fascinate, makes modern witchcraft a potent point of reference in productions of *Dido*.

Because of the range of current beliefs in Western society about magic, the range of levels of magical thinking, the general scepticism, and the general interest in thinking about magic, productions of operas that include depictions of magic such as *Dido and Aeneas* are faced with a multifaceted challenge. They must simultaneously depict magic in such a way that it seems relatively believable within the diegetic world, often with limited practical resources, and at the same time allows for several different perspectives ranging from the more

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[21] In fact this origin-myth was a late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century invention, largely propagated by the much-maligned historian Margaret Murray, as scholars such as Nevill Drury and Michael Bailey have shown. See: Michael D. Bailey, *Magic and Superstition in Europe: A Concise History from Antiquity to the Present* (Plymouth, UK: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 241-242; Nevill Drury, *Stealing Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Modern Western Magic* (USA: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[22] Drury, *Stealing Fire From Heaven*, 179-180.

credulous to the extremely pragmatic and rationalistic. They must also refrain from offending religious members of the audience while maintaining interest and appeal. This must all be done while balancing the dual desires in modern opera performance for historical accuracy and contemporary relevance.

7.5 The Waltz Production

As shown in Chapter 3, the Waltz production's Prologue "reconstructs" the original with powerful symbolism of divine majesty and mythology. The visually impressive opening scene is effectively signified as being on a mythical, stylised, magical or supernatural plane, and the visual Graeco-Roman references are subtle but powerful.

In Act II scene 2 (The Grove), Dido arguably turns away from Aeneas both emotionally and physically, leaving him in the storm.[23] The gathering storm assumes a metaphorical status, foretelling the tragedy that lies ahead. In the Waltz production, the part of Dido that has already turned away from Aeneas—or that senses impending disaster through her association with him—is visually foreshadowed by the dancers in this scene, before the storm's arrival. As usual, the Deluy-Dido is constructed as the darker and more melancholy of the two dancer-Didos. Here, Dido is symbolically oppressed by the Esnaola-Sorcerer, as he rides on the Deluy-Dido's back while she crawls on all fours, while the Mualem-Dido is ridden by the Puodziunas-Aeneas. Deluy by this scene has changed out of the white dress she wore to be symbolically molested and tormented by the Esnaola-Sorcerer in the previous Cave scene (Act II Scene 1), and she is now wearing a bright red gown. In riding her, and in her wearing of this red dress, the Waltz production signifies both the Sorcerer's impending spiritual or metaphorical "rape" of Dido, and Aeneas's literal intercourse with her—which also constitutes a kind of abuse, as he later abandons her. Drawing attention to this Sorcerer/Aeneas parallel, Puodziunas rides Mualem next to Esnaola and Deluy: literally and figuratively, both Aeneas and the Sorcerer characters are "riding" Dido, the one sexually and the other abusively, for their own benefit. As we have seen, the Mualem-Dido is associated throughout this production with Aeneas, and with the passionate side of Dido that completely

[23] Burden, ed. *A Woman Scorn'd: Responses to the Dido Myth*, 239.

gives into her relationship with him. In contrast, the Deluy-Dido is associated typically with the side of Dido that remains introspective, alone, melancholy and self-destructive, as well as the side that is destroyed by the Sorcerer's machinations. This powerful image of the Sorcerer and Aeneas riding the two versions of Dido therefore suggest that the Sorcerer is fated to profit from Dido's self-destructiveness and Aeneas from her passion—both of them profiting at her expense.

The symbolism of Act II Scene 2 is ambiguous and subtle, like so much of this production. While on the one hand the Ugolin-Dido enters on the Wilcox-Aeneas's arm smiling, and with smooth, calm movements and erect posture with head held high, on the other hand both the dancer-Didos appear melancholy and oppressed by their role as "horses", with their heads kept down, suggesting that while Dido is calmly and happily enjoying her time with Aeneas, negative forces are brewing.

Figure 7-3: Members of the Sasha Waltz and Guests ensemble. From: Act II Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas*, the Waltz production. From *Dido & Aeneas* (by Sasha Waltz). Arthaus Musik GmbH, Cat. No. NTSC 101 311.

At the same time, Waltz presents an alternative, positive meaning: the dancers also represent courtiers on hunting horses, riding at a leisurely pace into the grove to meet the happy royal couple ahead of them, represented by the singers, Wilcox-Aeneas and Ugolin-Dido. Dido

then looks out at the audience with a trance-like stare that foreshadows Wilcox's stare as the Spirit-stricken Aeneas a short while later. At "The skies are clouded", the Ugolin-Dido's eyes are covered by the Esnaola-Sorcerer's hands reaching over her head, as he stands behind her. Ugolin brings up her hands to lock fingers with Esnaola, thereby covering her face, and potentially signifying that Dido is succumbing of her own accord to the Sorcerer's magic storm and the trickery with which he engineers her downfall. Simultaneously, this image can be interpreted to signify merely that Dido perceives that the sky is darkening. As is characteristic of this production, the symbolic choreographic images used here are subtle, ambiguous and multifaceted.

The Waltz production uses special theatrical devices to signify the extraordinary and supernatural. This is for example evident in Act II, Scene 2 where the Spirit confronts Aeneas. As discussed in the previous chapter, the same singer (Michael Bennett) performs both the Second Witch's role and the Spirit's, and the Spirit has no other physical or vocal representation. This could potentially have the effect of making the Spirit seem less supernatural and more solid and "real", compared with many of the other representations of the Spirit (in which the voice and body are separate, or the person is magically possessed with the Spirit). However, Waltz employs several devices to signify the Spirit's otherworldliness. Wilcox, as Aeneas, stares out at the audience, arms and fingers spread wide, with a wide-eyed, shocked and frozen expression. He mostly maintains this pose for the duration of the Spirit's aria and dialogue, while his dancer-double, Puodziunas, dances around and with Wilcox, sometimes facing Bennett. Meanwhile, Bennett as the Spirit is literally lifted up by dancers and is hoisted onto their shoulders.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 7.1	
Production	**Act / Scene**
Waltz	Act II Scene 2

Figure 7-4: Michael Bennet as the Spirit and Reuben Willcox and Virgis Puodziunas as Aeneas, with Xuan Shi as the Sorcerer. From Act II Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas*, the Waltz production. From *Dido & Aeneas* (by Sasha Waltz). Arthaus Musik GmbH, Cat. No. NTSC 101 311.

While he sings, Bennett's arms are overtly manipulated by the dancers, in the manner of a puppet. This has the effect of ambiguously signifying the notion of an "unseen" controlling force. It suggests that either the Second Witch has been possessed by the Spirit of the Sorcerer himself, or by an external Spirit conjured by the Sorcerer. Because the dancers have been employed by this point in so many different ways throughout the production –as courtiers, as witches, as horses, and as trees, for example—it is relatively easy for the audience to accept that the dancers represent a kind of amorphous, gestalt, possibly invisible spirit-being in this scene. This motif is very simple, relying on the power of the audience's imagination. It also relies heavily on conventions that Waltz has hitherto established within the production, such as the doubling or tripling of characters and the representationally ambiguous nature of the dancers and singers of the Chorus. However, none of Waltz's conventions are strictly employed and almost all involve some element of ambiguity or cognitive dissonance. Here, for instance, Bennett is simultaneously constructed as hovering in mid-air with no visible support, and also as being lifted by the Chorus; the Chorus is both visible and not visible; the Chorus simultaneously represents courtiers, witches, spirit(s) and landscape. Bennett is constructed as being a Spirit or "elf", and yet at the same time he is also

potentially constructed as a witch being controlled by (a) Spirit(s), or as a witch enacting the role of the Spirit. Meanwhile, Aeneas both can and cannot see him. The dancer-Spirit used here, if there can be said to be one, is also the Sorcerer's dancer-double Xuan Shi, which again creates a doubling or tripling and an ambiguity of character. It also cleverly emphasises the link between the Spirit and the Sorcerer's controlling force. While the Chorus manipulate Bennett, the dancer-Sorcerer / Spirit physically manipulates Wilcox and Puodziunas at the same time, again in the manner of a puppet, in a slow and trancelike *pas de trois*. The supernatural and evil controlling power of the Sorcerer is thus extended via the Spirit, constructed through Waltz's clever, subtle and rather ambiguous use of choreographic devices, to work its magic over both of Aeneas's incarnations, singer and dancer.

Cremonesi "reconstructs" the missing ending for Act II Scene 2. As with the possible "Masque of Actaeon" earlier in the same scene, this ending can potentially be constructed as a quasi-religious ritual—Walkling argues that the ending constitutes an "Antimasque of Mercury". Here, the witches reappear after Aeneas's exit, and rejoice in the success of their plot with the chorus "Then since our Charmes have Sped," (which translates to "then as our spells have succeeded" in contemporary English). The beginning of this chorus features polyphonic imitation, somewhat blurring the communication of the opening line, which becomes more homophonic as the four vocal parts' rhythms align for the second line "A merry Dance to be Led." As in the Prologue, in this regard the direct meaning-making function of the lyrics is obscured. However, with the lyrics obscured, the music is made the focus: the imitative polyphonic style of this piece might recall early modern sacred music if it were performed at a slow tempo and with legato articulation, but the fast tempo, emphasised triple-time rhythm and detached articulation render it as a spiky, witchy, dance-like chorus.

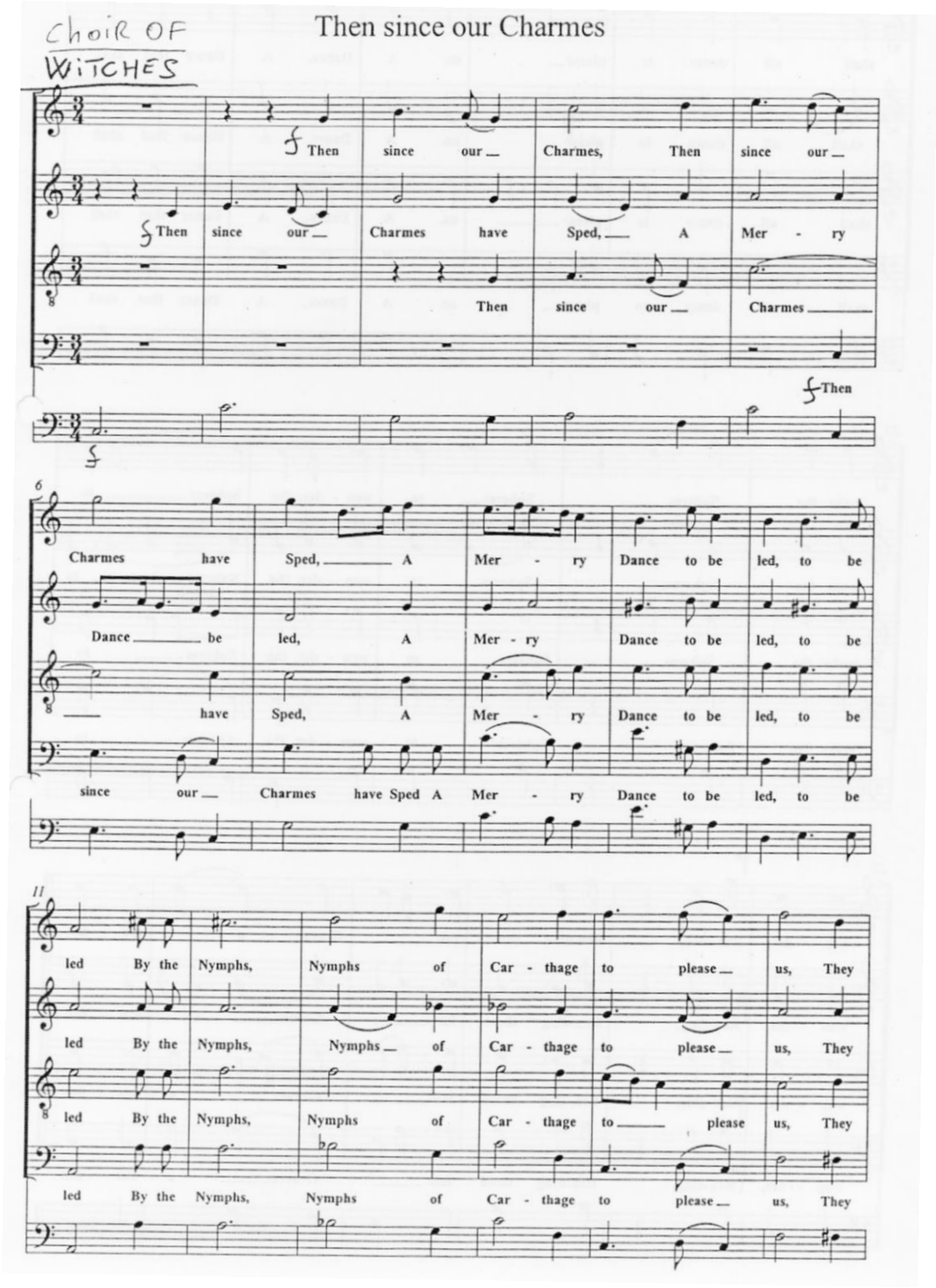

Figure 7-5: Excerpt from Attilio Cremonesi's arrangement for the end of Act II Scene 2, for Sasha Waltz and Guests's production of *Dido and Aeneas*. After Henry Purcell.[24] From *Dido & Aeneas* (by Sasha Waltz).

[24] Purcell, Tate, and Cremonesi, *Dido and Aeneas: Choreographic Opera* .

The following number, *The Groves Dance*, as it is indicated in the Chelsea libretto, is then used as the accompaniment to a short dance by the departing Chorus, and then as the accompaniment to a longer solo dance by Puodziunas. Cremonesi uses the orchestral piece "Dance of Bacchanals" from Purcell's *Dioclesian*, (or *The Prophetess*), Act 5:

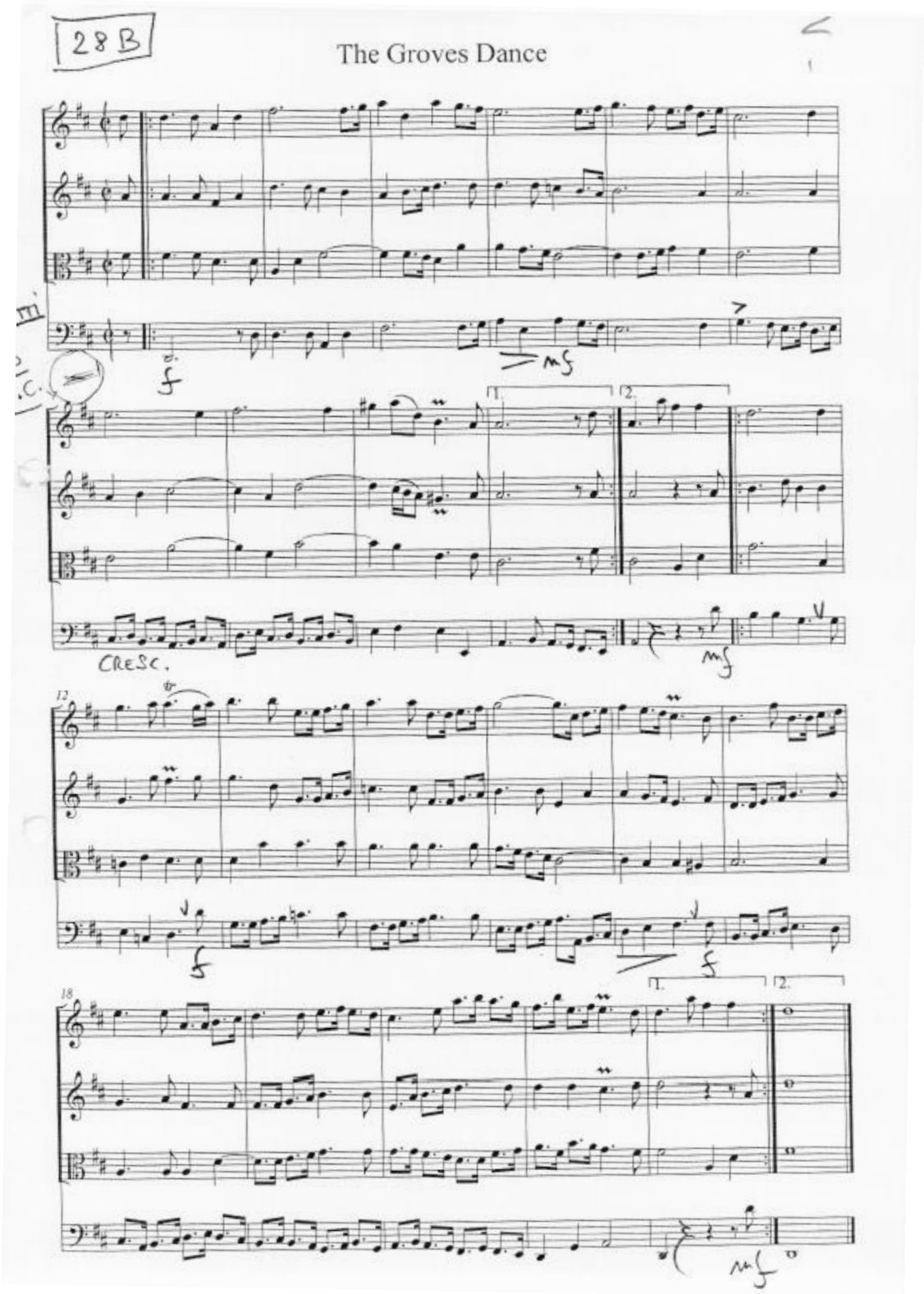

Figure 7-6: Excerpt from Attilio Cremonesi's arrangement for the end of Act II Scene 2, for Sasha Waltz and Guests's production of *Dido and Aeneas*. After Henry Purcell. From *Dido & Aeneas* (by Sasha Waltz).[25]

[25] Ibid.

This reconstructed "Groves Dance", with its major mode, lively dotted rhythms and tonal dissonance would likewise be very appropriate for a celebratory, wicked, ritualistic dance (in both the musical and the physical senses of the term). Having told us that they will lead such a physical dance, however, this Chorus of witches then frustrate our expectations. Instead, the music is used as a segue into the next scene. The Chorus perform some simple choreography to exit, followed by Puodziunas-Aeneas, who foreshadows his return to the wandering, lonely single life with an extended solo.[26] Puodziunas's choreography here is markedly similar to his earlier solo that is performed during the silence before the opera proper's Overture, representing his journey from over the sea (the emptied aquarium tank has at that point just been drawn offstage), only this time he is almost naked. This choreographic repetition creates a sense of circularity that reinforces the theme of inevitability and fate: just as he came, so Aeneas will depart, only on departure he is a broken man, stripped down to his elemental self.

Figure 7-7: Virgis Puodziunas as Aeneas. From the Overture to Act I of *Dido and Aeneas*, the Waltz production. From *Dido & Aeneas* (by Sasha Waltz). Arthaus Musik GmbH, Cat. No. NTSC 101 311.

Figure 7-8: Virgis Puodziunas as Aeneas. From Act II Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas,* the Waltz production. From *Dido & Aeneas* (by Sasha Waltz). Arthaus Musik GmbH, Cat. No. NTSC 101 311.

7.6 The LAF Production

Several theatrical and musical devices are combined in the LAF production to increase our sense of the Sorceress and Witches' magical power. When Hilary Summers as the Sorceress enters for the first time in Act II in the LAF production, she stands centre-stage and flings her arms out to the sides of the stage; at that moment, real flames shoot up from the stage floor at the places she has indicated. Suspension of disbelief and convention means that the flames are being cast by the Sorceress's magic. In modern popular culture, the casting of spells without the aid of a wand or other magical apparatus indicates an advanced level of magic. This "flame-throwing" theatrical device thereby indicates from the outset that the Sorceress is magically very powerful.

Figure 7-9 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 7-9: Hilary Summers as the Sorceress, with members of the Les Arts Florissants Chorus. From Act II Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the LAF production).

Such self-conscious theatricality and presence effects, and the slight indication of fourth-wall breaking in the LAF, which is performed by the Witches and by the Sorceress in particular, also tend to increase their apparent magical power. The Sorceress and the Witches also tend to face the audience directly while singing. In contrast, the other main characters do not break the fourth wall to any notable degree (Fiona Shaw's Narrator and the Chorus do break the frame however: see Chapters 3 and 5). This has the effect of creating what might be called reflexive "presence effects" for the witches, as opposed to the more realistic acting style of the "good" characters who remain within the diegetic frame and are "unaware" of the audience. Even the Spirit seems to look at the audience: he/it is presented as one of Aeneas's sailors who is possessed by the Sorceress, as I shall show below, and therefore arguably temporarily takes on some of the magical power of the Sorceress. In addition, the Sorceress's overt smoking while singing (in both Act II Scene 1 and Act III Scene 1) has a startling and defamiliarising effect when one considers the damage it can cause to an opera singer's voice. This device also subtly breaks the diegetic frame.

Figure 7-10 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 7-10: (L-R) Ana Quintans as the Second Witch, Céline Ricci as the First Witch, and Hilary Summers as the Sorceress. From Act II Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the LAF production).

This frame-breaking on the part of the magical characters increases our perception of their exceptionalism and power. It positions them in a different ontological realm from the "good" characters: somehow the villains are aware that they are in an opera. Like Fiona Shaw's Narrator during the LAF Prologue, and the Chorus throughout the production, the Witches and Sorceress therefore stand both inside and outside of the diegetic frame. However, as I have argued previously, the Sorceress is generally constructed as closest to the diegetic action through her costume (see Chapter 5).

The Spirit's representation as a sailor possessed by the Sorceress's magic also increases our perception of her power, given the manner in which this device is presented. This production's treatment of this character and its narrative is very similar to that of Opera Australia, in that it features one of Aeneas's sailors being drawn into the witches' power and subsequently possessed, hypnotised, or coerced into embodying the false Spirit of Mercury (see Chapter 6). Summers's Sorceress thus seems to be able to magically influence people

without actually being present. In contrast, in the OA production, Breen's Sorcerer watches over the entire Grove Scene and thus can be seen to influence it magically in a direct manner. The LAF Sorceress's influence is constructed to *possibly* (but not definitively) have more to do with drug-taking than "real" magic; her two Witches drink wine and snort unidentified recreational drugs with Aeneas's men; Mauillon and the sailor (played by the blonde-haired Australian bass Damien White) who later convinces the others to "Come Away, Fellow Sailors".

Figure 7-11 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 7-11: (L-R) Ana Quintans as the Second Witch, Marc Mauillon as the Spirit/Courtier, Céline Ricci as the First Witch and Damien Whiteley as the Sailor. From Act II Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the LAF production).

As recreational drugs that can be snorted can range from the more commonly used cocaine through to hallucinogenic drugs such as ketamine, phencyclidine (PCP) and methamphetamine (which can cause seizures) among others,[27] the choice to feature drug-taking by these characters in Act II Scene 1 allows the audience to attribute his odd behaviour in the following scene to drugs rather than the Sorceress's magical powers. The portrayal of Mauillon's and White's characters being seduced by the two Witches also signifies the possibility that the entire process with Mauillon's Mercury and later with White's Sailor is a deliberate betrayal of Aeneas by these two of his sailors/courtiers. However, Mauillon's

[27] Howard Abadinsky, *Drug Use and Abuse: A Comprehensive Introduction*, SAB 250 Prevention and Education Series (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2010), 8-11.

physical performance, especially his apparent sudden shock and horror at his proximity to Maltman/Aeneas, constructs the notion that his character really was not aware of his actions while singing the Spirit's aria. It is therefore quite plausible, within this fictional world, that the sailor was magically possessed by the spirit of the Sorceress (especially given her demonstrated flame-throwing magical power). The LAF production leaves the question of betrayal open for us to consider, but leans more towards representing the witches' tricks as real magic.

Perhaps the most obvious examples of a production's symbolic foreshadowing of Dido's fate are to be found in the LAF production. It features the construction of the Second Woman's aria about the tragedy of Actaeon's death as a foreshadowing of Aeneas and Dido's own tragedy, a representation that is made more obvious for a generally poorly classically-educated modern audience by Maltman and Ernman's playful pantomime (as Aeneas and Dido playing Actaeon and Diana) before the aria is sung (see Chapter 5). The anguished, tense expressions on the Second Woman's face and in her bodily gestures, her fast tempo and slightly detached, sharply articulated dotted-rhythm melismas, combined with the suddenness of Dido's apparent change of mood during "Oft she visits," from happy and relaxed to tense and frightened, leaves little doubt that the Second Woman's "phenomenal" song about the violent fate of Actaeon is meant to function as a metaphorical warning from the Second Woman to Aeneas and Dido (and from the operatic text to the audience) of impending danger, with a cruel suggestion that the coming tragedy would largely be Dido's fault. Of course, we as the audience know that the one who dies will not be Aeneas but Dido, but at this stage in the operatic performance, Dido does not yet know such particulars, and she appears to interpret the song as a more general warning of doom, and as a reminder of the power of the gods, the Graeco-Roman myths and of fate, towards which the lovers' relationship acts in defiance.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 7.2	
Production	**Act / Scene**
LAF	Act II Scene 2

Figure 7-12 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 7-12: Malena Erman as Dido, Christopher Maltman as Aeneas, and Lina Markeby as the Second Woman, with members of the Les Arts Florissants ensemble. From Act II Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the LAF production).

As discussed in Chapter 3, the LAF also notably features a representation of the entire opera's narrative in a symbolic, condensed form, as a mime by the schoolgirls during the opera proper's Overture (see also audiovisual excerpt 3.3).

The little girls' presence and actions are playful and charming, associating childish innocence with evil and tragedy, and thus creating slightly uncomfortable sensations for the viewer who knows that this mime represents the narrative of the opera. The accompanying Overture musically also foreshadows doom, and encourages an empathetic response of pity and fear to this tragic narrative, with its slow, melancholy minor-mode first section and fast, anxious minor-mode second section. Because the audience is thus reminded at the beginning of the performance of what will occur at its end, the notion of the unavoidability of fate is reinforced, and the audience is encouraged to accept Aeneas and Dido's inevitable suffering.

7.7 The ROH production

The Royal Opera House production approaches the characterisation of the Sorceress and the Witches in quite a conservative manner, as I have shown in previous chapters. Their costuming, singing and acting generally conforms to the traditional western stereotype of the "*femme fatale*" witch (see Chapter 5). This is truer of the Sorceress than of the Witches, as the Witches' signified deformity diminishes their physical attractiveness.

Figure 7-13 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 7-13: (L-R) Sara Fulgoni as the Sorceress, Eri Nakamura as the First Witch and Pumeza Matshikiza as the Second Witch. From Act II Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the ROH production).

The Sorceress's power is indicated through the connotations of this stereotype. Her power is also constructed through her aggressive, evil behaviour, but specific demonstrations of her magic are more subtle than the flame-throwing of the LAF's Sorceress.

The intriguing fact that the Witches are presented as conjoined twins, yet are very obviously of different ethnic backgrounds (Black and Asian) signifies many simultaneous potential interpretations. I will number a few different examples here: (1) The different ethnicities may be interpreted as a politically correct decision to highlight and promote the notion of race-blind casting. (2) On the other hand, these are the only two non-white performers in the opera, and they are cast as arguably the most despicable characters in the narrative (even the Sorceress commands more respect), so this implicitly devalues Black and Asian women. (3) The audience member could attribute their disability to their oppressed-minority status (see Chapter 5). (4) Alternatively, the audience member could imagine the fictional backstory that the Sorceress (or the Witches themselves) may have fused the Witches' separate bodies together through magical means. Due to the extreme ambiguity of the significations associated with the ROH Witches, the meaning of this curious conjoined-twin device is very much left open for the audience to ponder and interpret.

The ROH production's representation of the Spirit is surprisingly similar to that of the OA production (discussed below). The stage is darkened to pitch black as Dido, the Ladies and the Courtiers/ Chorus leave the stage. Only Aeneas is left standing centre-stage with a white spotlight on him, facing the audience and looking upwards while the recorded sound of impressively loud thunder rolls around the stage. The male dancer-Spirit emerges from the blackness into his own spotlight as the singer-Spirit, British countertenor Iestyn Davies, sings off-stage. Davies employs a choirboy-like ethereal sound with fast and almost unnoticeable vibrato, singing at the soprano pitch, which is notated in most Tenbury-based scores. Davies' voice strikes me as almost genderless, and quite eerie. The off-stage position makes it echo strangely, contrasting with Meachem's much more "human" timbre that sounds within a dry acoustic space. Meanwhile, the dancer-Spirit performs a complex, sinuous and sometimes birdlike, idiosyncratic contemporary-dance/ ballet fusion choreography that generally corresponds with the unusual style of the dancing throughout this production.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 7.3	
Production	**Act / Scene**
ROH	Act II Scene 2

The dancer-Spirit's costume is the same as all dancers' costumes in this production, regardless of their sex, that is: very short, tight, stretchy, dark brown gym shorts, and a tight stretchy grey sleeveless top.

Figure 7-14 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 7-14: Uncredited dancer of the Royal Ballet, as the Spirit. From Act II Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the ROH production).

This costuming gives all the dancers a certain androgynous and otherworldly status, as if they were not functioning as human characters but rather as symbols or a mute Greek-style chorus. *The Observer* reviewer Kate Kellaway seems to have had a similar impression:

> The dancers appear in black leotards, like swimmers gone astray. The choreography turns them into human hieroglyphs and often suggests that they are automata.[28]

I would argue that the choreography and the anonymous signification of the costuming work together to create the effect of erasing much of the dancers' signified individuality and humanity. In this way the dancers' costuming and choreography function like the similarly androgynous but contrastingly loose, heavy, long gowns worn by the singing Chorus, and the Chorus's own simple but strictly delineated choreographic blocking on the stage. The dancers actually join in with (or more likely, mime) the singing at the beginning of the opera and are at this point costumed like the singing Chorus. This joins the two groups, who are thus constructed as dancing and singing counterparts. The split between voice and physical embodiment of an individual *character*, however— as happens in the case of the ROH Spirit—does not occur at any other point in what is generally quite a traditional production. This contrasts with the more radical Waltz production, in which this doubling of character representation is commonplace. This marks out the ROH dancer-Spirit as having a different symbolic function in the narrative from that of the other dancers. Here, the character/voice split functions as a theatrical device to alert us to the fact that the character is supernatural.

7.8 The OA production

The Opera Australia production expresses an ambivalent attitude towards the concept of magic, expressing it as a combination of psychological effects and "real" magic. The "trusty Elf" who appears as the Spirit of Mercury is performed by a male dancer (Timothy Ohl) who also plays the role of one of Aeneas's sailors. This transformation from Sailor to Spirit is signified through his appearance in Act II Scene 1 in the witches' Cave, at the point when the Sorcerer sings "my trusty Elf". Dressed in the black trousers, white fluffy wig and tucked-in white shift that all the male Chorus members playing the sailors wear, Ohl performs stereotypical drunken behaviour as he staggers onstage and mimes urinating against the wall.

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[28] Kate Kellaway, "Dido and Aeneas / Acis and Galatea: The Royal Opera House, London WC2 [Review]," *The Observer (online edition)*, no. 5 April 2009 (2009). http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2009/apr/05/dido-aeneas-classical (accessed 14 November 2012).

The witches then bring him behind the Sorcerer's box, to undergo some kind of magical transformation, which is indicated by behavioural changes and by costume; he removes the trousers to let the white shift fall freely, and dons an eerie, round, white mask, and physically signifies that he is now sober. At the end of the echoing chorus "In our Deep Vaulted Cell", Ohl and a female dancer (Sarah-Jane Howard) who wears mask and white shift to match Ohl, crawl through the painted monster's mouth with pointed teeth that decorates the hole in the front of the box. They dance to the "Echo Dance of Furies" with the Sorcerer's hand puppets mimicking their actions (see my discussion of this dance in Chapter 5).

In Act II Scene 2, in which Aeneas encounters the Spirit, Timothy Ohl's costume has changed from that of a Sailor to one resembling the god Mercury, with flesh-coloured underpants and a large winged headdress; with his toned and muscular dancer's body this scanty costume recalls the traditional imagery of Mercury (although without the winged sandals: Ohl dances barefoot) and of the idealised male nudes of ancient Greek and Roman statuary in general. His choreography as the Spirit character is much more traditional in style than in previous scenes as the Sailor/Elf. The Spirit's choreography uses many more moves and motifs from classical ballet such as turned out feet, graceful curved arm movements, pirouettes, straight legs with pointed feet, and erect posture. This signifies a traditional and conservative image of elegance, and reflects the historical and classical associations of the operatic text and of this character in particular.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 7.4	
Production	**Act / Scene**
OA	Act II Scene 2

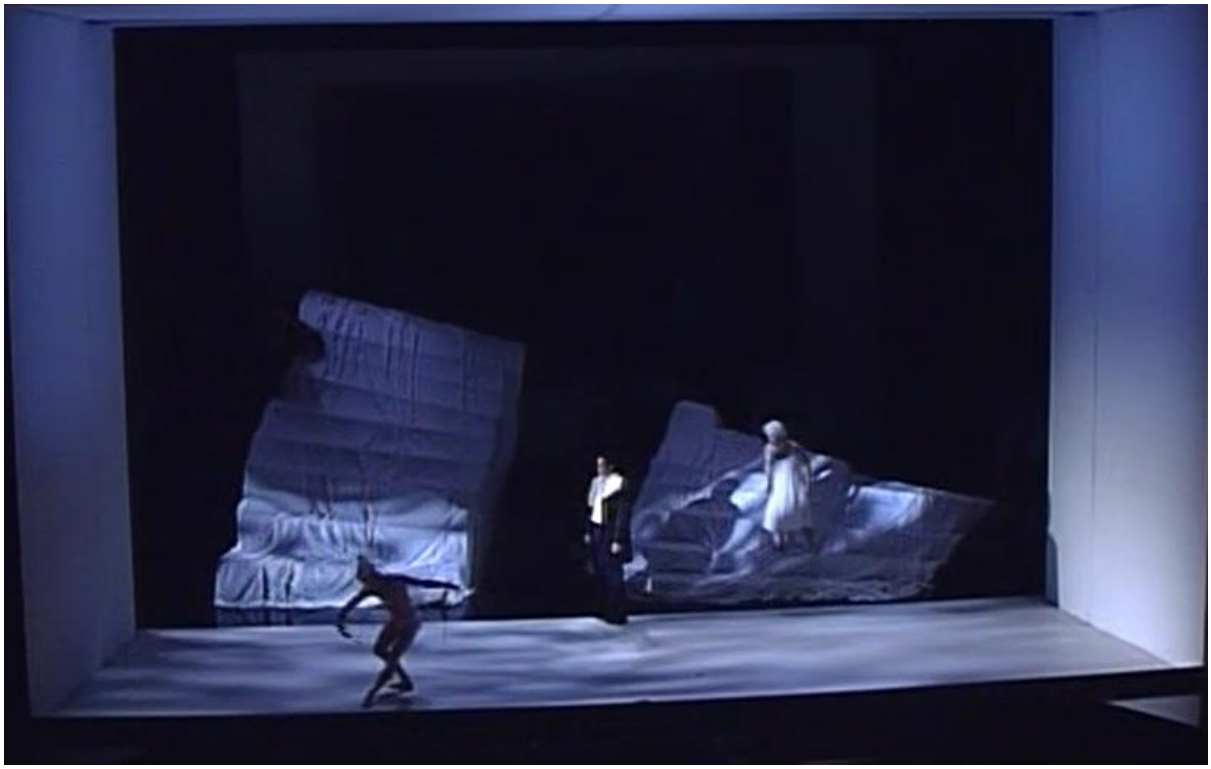

Figure 7-15: (L-R) Timothy Ohl as the Spirit, Luke Gabbedy as Aeneas and Margaret Plummer as the Spirit. From Act II Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the OA production). Still image from the archive DVD.

While Ohl performs the physical embodiment of the Spirit, the mezzo-soprano Chorus member Margaret Plummer performs the vocal aspect of the Spirit, costumed as a witch. She enters at the same time as Ohl and starts to sing as he begins to dance. Plummer stands behind Aeneas prompt-side, while Ohl dances OP and Aeneas is centre stage: Aeneas never looks at Plummer or acknowledges her in any way. Because of this, and also because the all-white costume almost camouflages Plummer against the background of the white sheet that has been draped over the black steps, Plummer's character is rendered symbolically "invisible". However, having Plummer costumed as a witch suggests that the Spirit is a trick manufactured by the Sorcerer and witches, and also reinforces the notion that Ohl's character is the enchanted drunken Sailor from earlier. Aeneas appears to be a credulous fool for thinking that this Spirit of Mercury is really singing to him without moving his lips, because the trick is so obviously artificial. However, the magic is also constructed as "real", because Ohl's Sailor has been so effectively possessed or coerced by the Sorcerer. Therefore the OA production embodies an ambivalent attitude towards magic: on the one hand, it suggests that

magic is about human psychological power, but on the other hand, it also suggests that perhaps magic is "real" after all.

7.9 Conclusions

In these four modern productions, the supernatural is generally constructed as neither obviously real nor obviously false, and maintains a certain level of mystery and ambiguity. This facilitates, and is facilitated by, multiple and simultaneous levels of signification. This caters to several different fields of tension and contradiction inherent in both narrative-based and non-narrative-based themes. One of these sites of contradiction is the widespread western rational rejection of magic, combined with the equally widespread western fascination with the idea of magic. In the case of *Dido and* Aeneas, the perception of the "authenticity" of magic within the narrative is important for our understanding of the themes, the narrative itself and the characters, in particular that of Aeneas. If the magic is constructed as "real", then Aeneas is presented as less of a credulous, ridiculous "booby." However, because of the abovementioned tensions between the narrative-based and non-narrative-based themes, none of the productions are entirely clear about the level of the "authenticity" of the supernatural elements within the diegetic world.

In the ROH and OA productions, the voice and the body of the Spirit are separated, and represented concurrently by a singer and dancer, as a theatrical device for indicating magical power. In the Waltz production, through repetition this device has already been made into a convention (that is, it is no longer perceived as something out of the ordinary by the audience) that has from the outset been "noumenal" (that is, it is not shown to be perceived as anything out of the ordinary by the *characters*), and the singer has also previously been shown to be one of the Witches, so the Waltz production's Spirit is slightly less convincingly "magical". The Spirit and the Sorceress's magic is constructed as most convincingly "real" in the LAF production, in which the Sorceress conjures flames and Aeneas's courtier is made to have a fit and is possessed by her Spirit. However, even in this production, Warner leaves the rationalist interpretative option open to the audience that the "demonic possession" may be a result of deliberate betrayal or of confusion resulting from drugs. The Waltz production

similarly presents the magical and supernatural elements in an ambiguous manner, with its characteristic symbolic and stylised conventions such as character-doubling. Like the OA production, the Waltz uses the device and motif of human "puppetry" to signify a theme of control and power that stems from interpersonal as well as (possibly) supernatural sources. The important theme of religion and fate is highlighted in all four productions, all of which feature some construction of foreboding or fateful foreshadowing of the narrative's tragedy. Yet these themes are presented in an ambiguous manner that leaves much of the interpretation about the nature of predestination and fate, religion and magic. This ambiguity allows more room for audience interpretation. Thus, it serves to facilitate the achievement of a perceived balance between the dual pressures of the fidelity dichotomy, and also a balance between the multiple historical and cultural layers of meaning that can be traced in and around *Dido and Aeneas*.

8 Dido's Death

8.2 Introduction

Along with love, death is one of the most common operatic themes,[1] and *Dido and Aeneas* features one of opera's most famous and tragic instances of a heroine's death. The foreshadowing and anticipation of tragedy (which is frequently signified in performance, as I have shown in the previous chapter) is finally fulfilled at the end of Act III. Yet, strangely, Purcell and Tate do not make it clear what type of death Dido experiences. While Virgil explicitly states that Dido kills herself by falling on Aeneas's sword on top of a blazing pyre composed of his and her possessions, including their shared bed,[2] in *Dido and Aeneas* Dido's death is much more obscure. Dido simply senses that she is about to die: "But Death, alas! I cannot shun / Death must come when he is gone," she sings, just before the chorus "Great minds against themselves conspire". After this chorus, she sings her arioso "Thy hand, Belinda"; she then proceeds to the Lament "When I am Laid in Earth", and with only a short ritornello break, the Chorus begin the melancholy, imitative "With Drooping Wings Ye Cupids Come," the funereal lyrics of which suggest that she has already died by this point. Therefore the music and libretto appear to position the moment of Dido's death during the short 9-bar ritornello between her last reiteration of "forget my fate," and the beginning of the chorus. Arguably, the music and libretto also offer a moment for an action that causes her death during the chorus "Great minds against themselves conspire". However, there is no explicit stage direction in any of the surviving early manuscripts or libretti to indicate her cause of death, the moment of the cause of her death, or the moment of death itself. Anthony Welch ascribes Dido's "mysterious love-death" to Tate's "desire to have things both ways": he argues that despite having erased the Virgilian violence of Dido's death, Tate and Purcell's Lament still aestheticized and commodified female suffering, associating it with the operatic stigma of "the exotic, the irrational, the decadent, the spectacular and the feminine".[3] The

[1] Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, *Opera: The Art of Dying*, 2nd ed., Convergences: Inventories of the Present (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004), 1.

[2] Vergilius Maro (Virgil), "The Aeneid of Virgil: A Verse Translation", trans. Allen Mandelbaum, IV: 914-916.

[3] Welch, "The Cultural Politics of *Dido and Aeneas*," 25.

famous Lament and Dido's death continue to fascinate and puzzle scholars, creative teams, performers and audiences.

Whatever the reasons behind it and the meanings that it originally communicated, much of Dido's death's interpretation by audiences relies on the way it is constructed in modern performances. The four productions studied here approach the depiction of her death and its cause in very different ways: the Waltz and Opera Australia productions signify a passive and ambiguous but apparently self-directed death, and the LAF and ROH productions clearly depict direct, active suicide.

8.3 Self-directed Death in History

Suicide is a very complex phenomenon with many causes and forms. It may be "direct", as when one stabs oneself or drinks poison deliberately; or "assisted", as when one drinks poison prepared by another person; or "indirect", as when one volunteers to put oneself in harm's way, for example to fight in the front line of battle. Self-willed death is another term for the more passive types of indirect suicide, and may involve refusing to eat and/or drink, withdrawing from society and others' care, or neglecting to treat one's own wound or potentially fatal disease, for example. Here, "suicide" refers to direct suicide, and "self-willed death" is used to refer to a more passive and mysterious type of death that is nevertheless chosen and welcomed by the individual. The four modern productions of *Dido and Aeneas* variously depict both suicide and self-willed death.

There is a particularly mysterious type of self-willed death, that may (or may not[4]) be merely a pervasive cultural myth, and that is dying of a "broken heart". In Purcell and Tate's period, it was commonly accepted that one could die of lovesickness,[5] and Winkler also demonstrates how Purcell's music for Dido reveals her lovesickness, according to the musical meaning-

[4] Recent evidence suggests it may actually be physiologically possible to die of stress and grief. See: Allahyar Golabchi and Nizal Sarrafzadegan, "Takotsubo Cardiomyopathy or Broken Heart Syndrome: A Review Article," *Journal of Research in Medical Sciences* 16, no. 3 (2011): 340-345.

[5] Winkler, *O Let Us Howle Some Heavy Note*, 111.

making codes of the era.[6] It appears therefore that this may have been the composer and librettist's original intention for the manner of Dido's death. However, historical circumstances have changed radically in this regard in the centuries since. Until the early eighteenth century, western medicine was dominated by the Galenic medical tradition that had been in place for thousands of years, in which the whole body was seen as a microcosm of the universe. Thus, the head equated to heaven/reason, the lower body to earth/nourishment and procreation, and the breast or heart to sky/emotion.[7] Within the Galenic model, death from a broken heart was understandable, as the model was what interdisciplinary historian Fay Bound Alberti has called "cardio-centric," and the heart was understood as the source and organ of emotions. However, since the eighteenth century the scientific understanding of the body has shifted to a "cranio-centric" model, and the medical world now understands emotional regulation to be controlled by the brain. [8] Although the Galenic model is not widely understood today in any depth, the notion of dying of a broken heart is vaguely associated in the popular imagination with some kind of out-dated medical belief system, and is thus generally viewed with scepticism. The modern western cultural valorisation of rationality and cynicism, and the associated cultural discomfort about strong emotions and death means that, as grief psychologist Margaret S. Stroebe writes, "in the age of postmodernism it is no longer fashionable to 'die of a broken heart'."[9] However, cultural traces of the cardio-centric paradigm remain: the heart metaphor is still in everyday use as a symbol of emotion, particularly love; the broken heart is still a recognised symbol of grief, particularly the grief associated with losing a loved one, either because of rejection or because of their death. In particular, within the often historical, mythical and/or fantastical world of opera, in which the majority of the standard repertoire was written in very different time and culture from today's western world, dying of a broken heart is still a convention. However, in a modern world in which opera is increasingly itself seen as fundamentally outdated, many creative teams may fear the audiences' perception of melodramatic cliché. This is avoided in the four modern productions, both through depicting Dido as committing

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[6] Ibid., 108- 112.

[7] Fay Bound Alberti, *Matters of the Heart: History, Medicine, and Emotion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 36.

[8] Ibid., 35.

[9] Margaret S. Stroebe, "The Broken Heart Phenomenon: An Examination of the Mortality of Bereavement," *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 4, (1994): 47-61.

suicide directly, and also through portraying her death as metaphorical and/or abstract, obtuse and mysterious.

Western cultural attitudes towards suicide have changed dramatically over the centuries, and the three historical strata that are of interest for our purposes here (Ancient Rome, Restoration England, and the modern western world) have had very different conceptions of the practice. Elements from all three periods influence the four modern productions' portrayals of Dido's death. In ancient times, self-killing was often seen as honourable, sane and appropriate under certain circumstances. It is true that the Roman world's citizens were not unanimous in their attitudes towards suicide; yet, as Minois states, "of all Western civilizations, Rome is reputed to have been the most favourable to suicide".[10] Virgil wrote *The Aeneid* under Imperial Roman law which allowed citizens the right to choose their own death, and only punished the corpses or families of those who had killed themselves while awaiting trial or execution.[11] Roman culture is generally acknowledged to have been a "shame culture," like many of those of the modern eastern world, as opposed to the "guilt culture" of the modern western world.[12] As a shame culture, Ancient Rome accepted the notion of suicide as a sane, if last-resort way of avoiding shame and preserving honour. Dido's suicide in and of itself would not only not have been viewed with repugnance; her devotion to her reputation may even have been admired. However, the fact that Virgil depicts her as falling into a grief-stricken, angry mania would probably have correlated with the Romans' disdainful views of the "hysteria" of women and of "barbarians" (non-Romans).[13] In addition, Romans may have taken the negative view, as audiences today often do, that in killing herself, Dido was once again putting her personal needs above her duty to Carthage, and that her main motivation for suicide was not to avoid shame but to end her own pain. Despite this, on balance it is likely that Virgil's original audiences would have perceived the Virgilian Dido's suicide as being far less shameful and wrong than Christian readers and audiences would have perceived it, in the following centuries.

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[10] Minois and Cochrane (translator), *History of Suicide*, 46-47.

[11] Ibid., 53-54.

[12] Carlin A. Barton, *Roman Honor: The Fire in the Bones* (University of California Press, 2001).

Note that the terms "shame culture" and "guilt culture" do not exclude the presence in those societies of their opposite element, but simply emphasise which element was more central in the regulation of behaviour.

[13] Parry, "The Two Voices of Virgil's "Aeneid"."

With the advent of Christianity in the late Roman period and the early middle ages, suicide in the western world came to be regarded as a terrible sin, as the person who chose to kill themselves had despaired of God's mercy and gone against God's will for them to live.[14] The fifteenth-century invention of printing and the subsequent wider translation and dissemination of Classical texts had a significant influence on the lasting emergence of a strong and broad-based western admiration for Ancient Greek and Roman literature and culture.[15] This admiration extended in the Renaissance period to the many famous and respectable Classical men and women who killed themselves, such as Cato, Seneca, Brutus, Cleopatra and Lucretia.[16] This did much to challenge the western world's perception of suicide as sinful and shameful, and with the development of *lassez-faire* capitalism and speculation-related bankruptcy from 1680 there was an even more significant rise in the rate of suicide in England.[17] The rise of rationalism also meant that the fire-and-brimstone rhetoric of the previous centuries was seen as reminiscent of the loathed anti-rationalist dogma and of the Puritan Interregnum.[18] However, in Purcell and Tate's England, suicide appears to have still been generally looked upon more disapprovingly than it had been in the ancient Roman world. In the context of this change in values and in alignment with the promotion of Virgil's supporting character to a sympathetic heroine in *Dido and Aeneas*, the operatic Dido does not clearly commit suicide. Instead, she dies in an ambiguous manner—possibly of a broken heart—thus avoiding the condemnation of her original audiences.

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[14] Minois and Cochrane (translator), *History of Suicide*, 64.

[15] There is much to suggest that the Classical revival had begun in the fourteenth century, but the advent of printing greatly accelerated the pace and breadth of intellectual and cultural change.

See: Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), Chapter Five: Mutation of a Classical Revival.

[16] Minois and Cochrane (translator), *History of Suicide*, 63.

[17] Ibid., 97.

[18] John Spurr, ""Rational Religion" in Restoration England," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 49, no. 4 (1988): 563 - 585.

The anti-Puritan backlash of the Restoration period probably endeared the "rational" values of Roman culture to the English. It is thus not surprising that Purcell and Tate's Dido is made much less hysterical than Virgil's, given that the overall positioning of Dido as a character in the opera privileges her above Virgil's version. A less hysterical, more rational Dido would have been a more respectable one for the English during the Restoration.

Also see: Minois and Cochrane (translator), *History of Suicide*, 188.

8.4 Dido's Desire for Death

In dying so mysteriously, the operatic Dido is therefore made more respectable than the suicidal Virgilian Dido. The operatic Dido's moods are also somewhat less in line with then-common misogynistic ideas of female behaviour: Dido appears to be rather anxious and depressed (or "melancholic" in Galenic terms) as opposed to hysterically angry, upset and suicidal as in Virgil's version.[19] However, in other ways the operatic text represents Dido's actions and psychology in a worse light than *The Aeneid*. Unlike the Virgilian Dido whose passionate love for Aeneas is caused by Venus and Cupid, the operatic Dido seems to have fallen in love of her own accord. More importantly, while Virgil's Aeneas does not change his mind about leaving after he has been visited by the god Mercury, the operatic version features Aeneas offering to stay after all, and yet *Dido still sends him away*. This serves to portray the operatic Dido as even more needlessly self-destructive than Virgil's version. Purcell and Tate's Dido is steadfast in her self-destructiveness, while Aeneas is shown to be indecisive. Purcell's music reflects Aeneas's vacillation with meandering stepwise chromatic melodies, particularly in his opening lines in Act III Scene 2:

[19] Winkler, *O Let Us Howle Some Heavy Note*, 92.

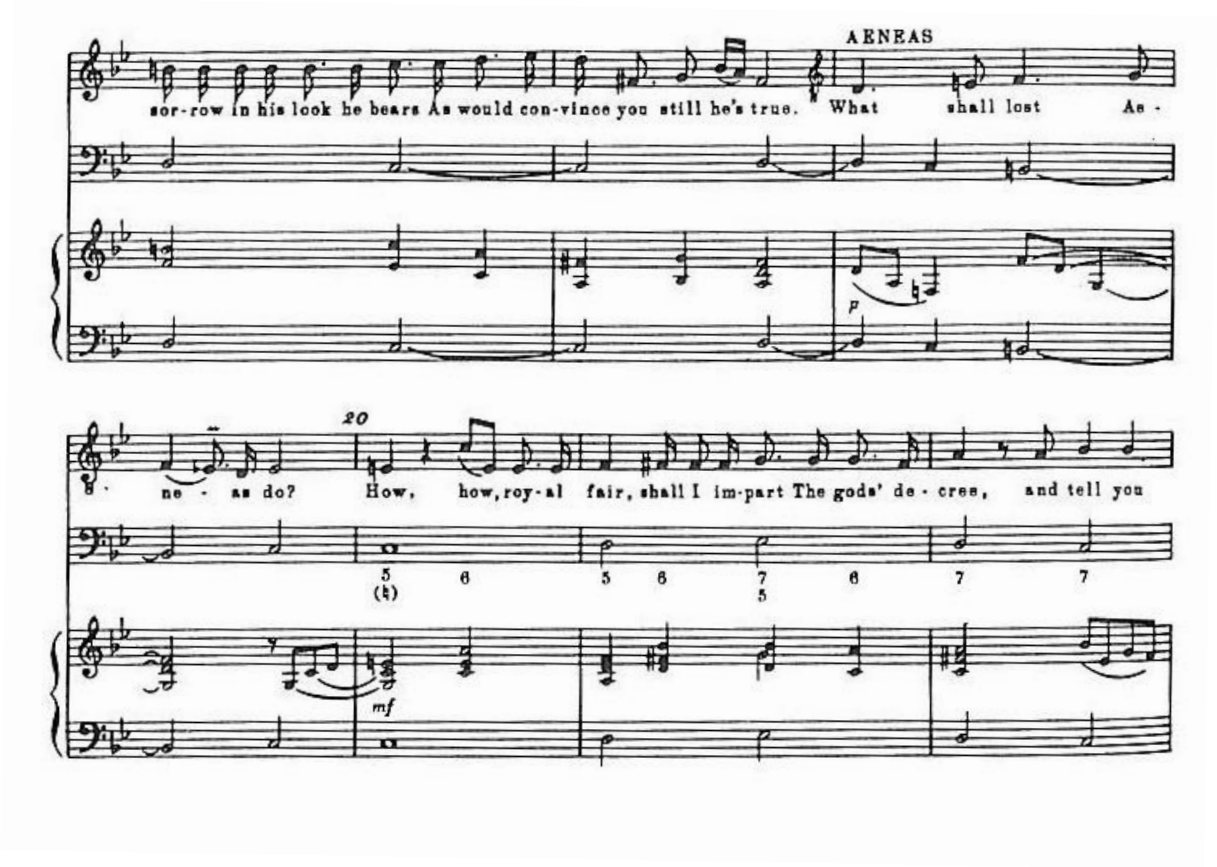

Figure 8-1: Excerpt from Act III Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas*.[20] Copyright © 1986 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

As Winkler points out, the use of both B flat and B natural, E flat and E creates ambiguity and indecision between whether Aeneas is singing in G minor (the actual key) or G major.[21] In contrast, Dido is steadfast in her sorrow, anger and determination that their relationship is at an end, and Purcell expresses this in her greater portion of authentic cadences and more diatonic melodies, as well as having her interrupt and mimic Aeneas's melodies, such as in bars 29–30 below:

[20]Price, ed. *Purcell: "Dido and Aeneas," An Opera*, 170.

[21] Winkler, *O Let Us Howle Some Heavy Note*.

DIDO

we must part? Thus on the fa-tal banks of Nile Weeps the de-ceit-ful

cro-co-dile; Thus hy-po-crites that mur-der act Make heav'n and gods the au-thors of the fact!

AENEAS DIDO

By all that's good... By all that's good, no more! All that's good you have for-

swore. To your pro-mis'd em-pire fly, And let for-sa-ken Di-do die. In

AENEAS

Figure 8-2: Excerpt from Act III Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas*.[22] Copyright © 1986 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

[22] Price, ed. *Purcell: "Dido and Aeneas," An Opera*, 171.

However, as soon as Aeneas leaves, her anger evaporates and is replaced by pure grief: likewise, her music becomes more melancholy in tone, with longer gaps between her phrases. In the four modern productions, the solo line "But Death, alas! I cannot shun" is also taken at a much slower tempo than the previous frenetic two-part counterpoint. This is in line with the *meno mosso* instruction that is given in some modern editions, including Price's edition as cited here.

way, a-way! a - way, a-way! No, no, no, no, no,

No, no, I'll stay, no, no, I'll stay, I'll stay, I'll stay,

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no, a-way, a-way, a - way, a - way, a-way, To Death I'll

I'll stay, and Love o - bey! I'll stay, and Love o - bey, I'll stay, I'll stay,

fly if long-er you de-lay. A-way, a - way! But

and Love o - bey, and Love o-bey.

Exit Aeneas

meno mosso

p

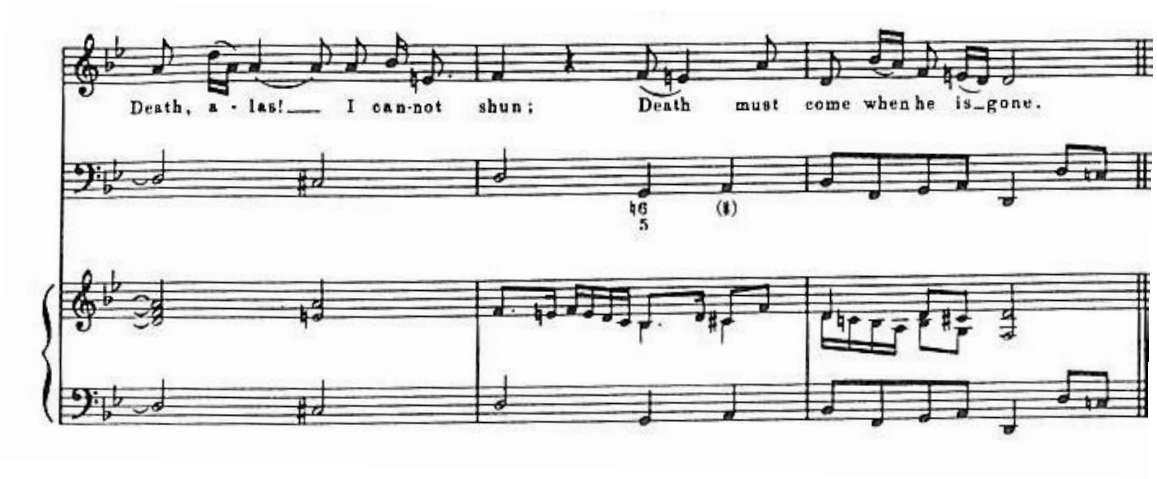

Figure 8-3: Excerpt from Act III Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas*.[23] Copyright © 1986 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Michael Burden argues in his chapter "Great Minds Against Themselves Conspire" in *A Woman Scorn'd* that Purcell and Tate intended the opera as an exploration of the passions of a great monarch who is brought to destruction through her own anxiety and self-torture.[24] Burden argues that Dido has already pushed Aeneas away by running away from him during the storm in Act II, focusing instead on her own anxiety. This is expressed in the musical score: Aeneas's lines end on a half cadence, but, as she does in Act III (see above), Dido finishes the harmonic progression of the phrase for him, turning it into a perfect authentic cadence and changing to the parallel major, thus musically representing her interruption of Aeneas and her disconnection from him.[25]

[23] Ibid., 173-174.

[24] Burden, ed. *A Woman Scorn'd: Responses to the Dido Myth*, 237.

[25] Henry Purcell, Nahum Tate, Thurston Dart and Margaret Laurie, *Dido and Aeneas*: An Opera by Henry Purcell [*score*], ed. Margaret Laurie, and Thurston Dart (London: Novello, 1966), 63.

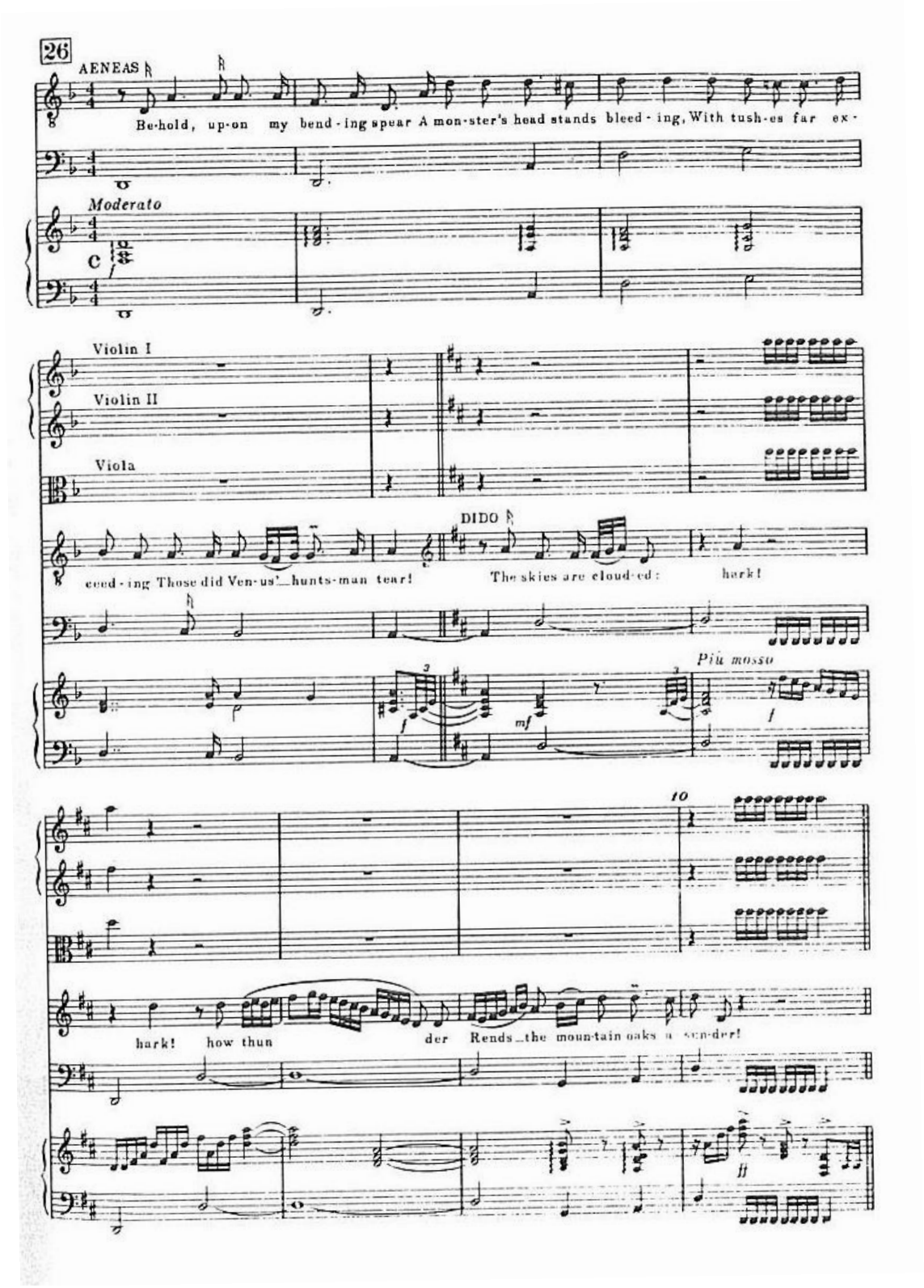

Figure 8-4: Excerpt from Act III Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas.*[26] Copyright © 1986 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

[26] Price, ed. *Purcell: "Dido and Aeneas," An Opera*, 145.

Thus, Dido is depicted in the operatic text as consistently anxious and pessimistic. It is arguable that it is this psychological self-destructiveness—rather than the Sorceress's machinations, Aeneas's lack of fidelity and the vicissitudes of fate—that constitutes the main cause of her death.

8.5 The Waltz Production

The Waltz production creates the most abstract representation of Dido's death, of the four modern productions. In the final scene of the production, the Deluy- and Ugolin-Didos wear extremely long, matted black wigs. These wigs are a notable device: they have not been worn in the other scenes. The Mualem-Dido wears her natural hair, which is appropriate given her fairly consistent representation throughout the production as the vital, loving, positive side of Dido. During Ugolin's performance of the Lament, Ugolin and Deluy draw the long hair around them, recalling widows' black veils and also shrouds and cocoons.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 8.1	
Production	**Act / Scene**
Waltz	Act III Scene 2

Figure 8-5: Michal Mualem, Clementine Deluy and Aurore Ugolin as Dido, with Deborah York and Sasa Queliz as Belinda. From Act III Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas,* the Waltz production. From *Dido & Aeneas* (by Sasha Waltz). Arthaus Musik GmbH, Cat. No. NTSC 101 311.

Clad in a contrasting white gown, the Mualem-Dido slowly dances her way into the embrace of the Deluy-Dido and her hair. Finally all three Didos sink to the floor and lie on their sides facing the audience. Deluy and Mualem are so tightly embracing within the hair that it is difficult to see that they are two people, signifying that the loving/optimistic and the lonely/pessimistic sides of Dido have now at last become one in tragedy and death: the pessimist has subsumed the optimist.

At the very end of the performance, following the end of "With Drooping Wings" in which the dancers and singers gradually move off-stage, there is a moment of silence. The dancer-Belinda, Sasa Queliz, is the only figure left on stage. She slowly lights fiery torches in a circle around the centre of the stage, thus bringing the classical element of fire into a production that has already explored the motifs of water, earth and air. This moment is full

of melancholy affective power. It draws on humanity's primeval love and fear of fire, and fire's strong historical and ongoing symbolic associations with death and the spiritual world. (This motif also recalls the flames that the LAF Sorceress creates in Act II Scene 1 of the LAF production—further evidence that modern international productions of early opera are creating an evolving performance tradition, though the LAF production was performed and recorded after the Waltz.) As the dancer-Belinda in the Waltz production lights the torch-fires, the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin begins to play Cremonesi's reconstruction of the missing "Cupids' dance" that ends the opera in the Chelsea libretto: he uses Purcell's triple-time Dance No. 8 from the *Dioclesian* suite, played *adagio*. The torch-fires eventually die out one by one, signifying the end of both Dido and the opera, and suggesting the flight of Dido's spirit into the afterlife or the classical underworld. Finally, the piece comes to an end and stage is left dark.

Figure 8-6: Sasa Queliz as Belinda. From Act III Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the Waltz production).

As usual therefore, the Waltz production does not provide clear-cut answers: we are not shown exactly how Dido dies in a rational sense. This mysteriousness adds to the production's overall post-structural and fluid approach to meaning-making. However, it is clear from the wig symbolism and the slowly descending dance that all three Didos perform (as well as from the libretto) that Dido's death is constructed, if not as direct suicide, then at least as self-willed.

8.6 The LAF Production

Ernman's Dido's death in the LAF production is an unusual interpretation of the scene compared to most other productions. This Dido takes poison and becomes blind before singing the Lament. Ernman signifies this with great dramatic flair in the approximately 14 seconds during the extended fermata between the end of the chorus "Great Minds Against Themselves Conspire" and the beginning of Dido's arioso, "Thy Hand, Belinda". As Dido, Ernman faces the audience without explicitly acknowledging them, turning her back on the Ladies. She decisively snaps the cap off the little bottle she has taken from her pocket and drinks its contents in two seconds. Continuing to use the acting style that she has employed throughout the performance—that is, somewhat realistic, somewhat exaggerated— she lets the bottle fall to the floor as she gasps, reels, blinks and rubs her eyes. From then on she focuses her wide-eyed staring gaze on a point in the distance above the audience, groping with her hands in front of her to further suggest her sudden loss of sight. She begins her arioso with a faint, breathy timbre, and takes audible breaths, signifying that the poison is affecting her respiration. However, with the beginning of the following aria "When I Am Laid in Earth," she smoothly develops the timbre into a more conventional full-voiced sound. This approach aligns with the traditional function of recitative and arioso of furthering the dramatic action, and the traditional function of aria of creating beautiful vocal display, memorable melodies and affective and physiological experiences for the audience. Ernman gives a highly effective performance of the Lament. She physically expresses Dido's varying types and levels of physical and emotional pain, and uses these as dramatically plausible ways of varying her vocal performance. She uses different dynamics and timbres, such as singing more loudly and with wider and more obvious vibrato, while grimacing and clutching at Van Wanroij, to signify pangs of pain. She sings the final high G repeat of "remember me" and the final phrases with very limited vibrato and a notable *ritardando*, giving an unearthly, floating quality to the timbre, and vocally signifying the experience of a loss of sensation, pain, numbness, spiritual transcendence and decreasing energy as Dido slowly dies.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 8. 2	
Production	**Act / Scene**
LAF	Act III Scene 2

Ernman's vocal and physical performance is strikingly detailed and visceral, but somewhat stylised and too elegant to be realistic. This blend of the affecting and visceral with the elegant and stylised is very much in line with the aesthetic nature of Purcell's music for the Lament. In this death scene Ernman does not flail, splutter, or make any other repulsive bodily motions or sounds, which may be expected if the acting style focused on realism. Rather, she falls slowly into an aesthetically pleasing and rather stylised diagonal reclining position, supported by Van Wanroij's/Belinda's kneeling lap, arms and shoulder. This pose is quite a literal interpretation of Dido's entreaty to Belinda "on thy bosom let me rest." Meanwhile, Lina Markeby/The Second Woman holds Ernman's other hand, reflecting her character's lesser status and emotional closeness to Dido compared with Belinda's.

Figure 8-7 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 8-7: Lina Markeby as the Second Woman, Judith van Wanroij as Belinda, and Malena Ernman as Dido. From Act III Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the LAF production).

Ernman represents Dido's moment of death during the aria's closing ritornello by suddenly slumping into Van Wanroij's arms and lying still, with her "blind" eyes still open. Because open eyes on a corpse are culturally considered disturbing—and because an actor cannot keep their eyes open for very long—this device reflects a less beautiful but more realistic element

of performance that contrasts with the graceful stylisation of the trio's pose. After a shocked pause, Van Wanroij hesitantly reaches out to close Ernman's eyes, symbolising recognition that death has occurred, and also allowing Ernman to avoid blinking and spoiling the realistic effect. However, before this occurs, the audience's empathetic "performance anxiety" in their anticipation of Ernman's blink reminds the audience that they are experiencing a live performance (this is also true when viewing the DVD recording—albeit to a less visceral extent—as this all occurs within a single shot). On the one hand, this "performance anxiety" lessens the illusion of reality and the audience's associated empathy with Dido as a *character*, but it also increases empathy with and admiration of Ernman as a *performer*, emphasising the liveness and "presence" of the performance.

This final scene in the LAF production combines seventeenth- and twenty-first-century artistic elements. The costumes for the lead characters are historically quite accurate; the singing is within the bounds of HIP, with its florid ornamentation, selective use of vibrato, small-scale phrasing in the recitative and judicious variation of timbre for emotional effect in the Lament in particular; and the trio's elegant and pathetic pose is reminiscent of baroque-era paintings and ideals of gestural beauty.[27] Meanwhile, the gestural style and the facial expressions are much more modern and reflect the influence of the naturalist and realist movements in theatre, as well as the slower pace of much operatic dramatic development. The scene's performance is in line with the general artistic ethos of the baroque era, which aimed to portray and induce in the audience a particular, recognisable affect/passion.[28] However, the scene's emphasis on "presence" and on eliciting fear, sympathy and pity are also very contemporary elements. While this Dido definitely does commit suicide, this production's portrayal reflects a modern western perspective that suicide is a tragedy and usually the result of a breakdown of healthy psychological functioning, rather than as a sin to be reviled (as it was in seventeenth-century England) or as an action to be admired and lauded (as it sometimes was in the ancient world). This Dido is driven to a direct suicide that is in some respects beautiful, in others ugly; in some ways artificial and in others realistic. In

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[27] Dene Barnett states: "In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries beauty was considered to be a primary feature of art, and largely a matter of decorum in its classical sense of harmonious proportions, order and grace." Barnett and Massy-Westropp, *The Art of Gesture: The Practices and Principles of 18th Century Acting*, 91.

[28] H. James Jensen, *Signs and Meaning in Eighteenth-Century Art: Epistemology, Rhetoric, Painting, Poesy, Music, Dramatic Performance, and G.F. Handel*, American University Studies, vol. 33 (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1997), 6.

its meaningful and affective portrayal of Dido's death, the LAF production strikes a balance between HIP and the postdramatic, adapting seventeenth-century artistic and aesthetic elements to contemporary ends.

8.7 The ROH Production

As mentioned above, the ROH production features Dido's direct suicide, specifically by cutting her wrists. In this production, the act of suicide occurs *during*, not after, the chorus "Great minds against themselves conspire," and it functions as a direct visual embodiment of the self-destructive impulse of which the Chorus sing. The Chorus and the Ladies are in semi-darkness, while Connolly's Dido stands in a bright spotlight during the bloody act, thereby emphasising the visual element of Dido's action and minimizing the visual presence of the Chorus. This also serves to emphasise their function as a Greek-style commenting chorus. The lighting also of course prevents the audience from missing what Dido is doing, as it is a key moment in the performance.

AUDIOVISUAL EXCERPT 8.3	
Production	**Act / Scene**
ROH	Act III Scene 2

Connolly's Dido slashes her wrists with a particularly symbolic item: the crystal "boar tusk" pendant that Meachem's Aeneas gave her, having placed it around her neck while singing "Behold, upon my bending spear" in Act II. This tusk functions as a powerful symbol of Aeneas's macho prowess as a hunter, and also as a symbol of his courtship of Dido, and of both his physical and emotional penetration of her. By killing herself in this way, this Dido visually signifies her death as being Aeneas's fault, supporting the libretto's indication that Dido holds him responsible:

Dido: To your promised Empire fly

And let forsaken Dido die.

(…)

Dido: But death, alas! I cannot shun

Death must come when he is gone.

For the audience, the emotional and cognitive power of this symbolism is heightened by the use of a good deal of artificial blood, which gives the impression of seeping over her wrists. The abject effect is quite realistic and shocking. From a practical perspective, the artificial blood seems to have been stored inside the tusk itself. In some ways, the hint of red that has always been visible inside the semi-transparent tusk, now with the benefit of hindsight also has the signifying function of an omen of fate: a bloody tragedy is constructed as having been in store for Dido since her acceptance of Aeneas's courtship and of this gift.

Figure 8-8 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 8-8: Sarah Connolly as Dido and Lucy Crowe as Belinda, with members of the Royal Opera Chorus. From Act III Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the ROH production).

Lucy Crowe as Belinda rushes to Connolly's side at her "Thy hand, Belinda". In another emotionally powerful moment that signifies the tenderness and closeness between Dido and Belinda, Crowe takes away the tusk pendant and puts it on the ground, and wraps Connolly's wrists with the loose folds of her own gown, with an expression of anguish.

Figure 8-9 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 8-9: Sarah Connolly as Dido and Lucy Crowe as Belinda, with members of the Royal Opera Chorus. From Act III Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the ROH production).

This symbolic gesture of tenderness is unfortunately subsequently rendered slightly ridiculous, because Dido then sings the entire lengthy Lament before dying, while Belinda—rather implausibly—does not make any further efforts to stem the flow of blood and save her. The suspension of disbelief associated with the recognised operatic conventions of the "dying aria" does much to alleviate the implausibility. Yet it is arguable that it is the very realism of this method of suicide—which so effectively shocks the audience—that also contributes much towards rendering the scene ridiculous: Crowe/Belinda's highly stylised and symbolic use of temporality and gesture is juxtaposed with Connolly/Dido's much more realistic use of these elements, and the disconnection between the levels of verisimilitude is somewhat jarring.

The ROH production's construction of Dido's death as a bloody, direct suicide has the effect of emphasising the horrific elements of the tragedy. However, this horror is tempered by the tender sorrow of Lucy Crowe's Belinda. This Belinda cradles the dead Dido during the first part of "With Drooping Wings," weeping silently, and eventually Crowe runs offstage as if she can no longer emotionally cope. Despite the touching-yet-abject quality of Crowe's tear-

filled nasal mucus that drips onto Connolly, this realistic portrayal of grief places the emphasis back on tragedy instead of horror.

Compared with Dido's deaths in the Waltz and OA productions, the ROH thus features a relative verisimilitude in its presentation of Dido's suicide and Belinda's reaction. In this production in general, the fidelity dichotomy of HIP music and postdramatic staging is blended with a semi-realistic approach to theatrical style (with the exception of some of the dances) and a somewhat Canonic approach to the singing.[29] This kind of semi-realistic mode of theatrical performance reflects the more conservative and traditional, Canonic style of operatic production (i.e. that which was considered cutting-edge between approximately 1945 and 1975) much more than it reflects today's more radical *Regietheater* modes of operatic performance typified by such productions as the Waltz. Musically, the long-line phrases, near-continuous and prominent vibrato, and mostly legato articulation that are so characteristic of the Canonic or "mainstream" musical performance style, as opposed to a twenty-first century HIP style,[30] are evident throughout this production, but are very prominent in Connolly's version of "Thy Hand, Belinda…When I am Laid in Earth".[31] The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment has for several decades been one of the EMM's leaders, and is a period-instrument orchestra led by HIP specialist Christopher Hogwood, so the Lament's repetitive descending ground bass and sustained string harmonies are played with timbres that are influenced strongly by the HIP ethos. Against this background, the ROH singers' vocal technique and performance style tend to stand out as being rather conservatively and Canonically "operatic". Hogwood and Connolly's very slow tempi (a flexible *largo* in the recitative and an *adagio* at approximately 49 BPM for the aria) are more problematic in terms of categorisation of the performance practice style. Fast tempi have been less strongly associated with HIP as it has developed in recent years, compared with their strong association with the light textures and sometimes "sewing-machine" (or what Haynes

[30] See in particular: Haynes, *The End of Early Music*, 48, 53.

[31] The conservatism of the ROH production is most striking in the death scene, possibly because the Lament is and always has been the main focus of the Canonic perspective on *Dido and Aeneas*.

calls "strait")[32] style popular among EMM proponents in the 1970s and early 80s (arguably since Richard Taruskin's arguments in the late 1980s and early 1990s that they are part of a modern style rather than a baroque one[33]). Nevertheless, slower tempi still often give the impression of stateliness, age and conservatism. In this case the slow tempi are justified from a HIP perspective, as they contribute greatly to the communication of the tragic affect, which is a crucial consideration for the HIP practice of seventeenth-century musical style and for the communication of the central theme of tragedy and suicide stemming from depression and profound grief.

8.8 The OA Production

The OA production features an ambiguous, stylised, quiet and mysterious death that is somewhat similar to that of the Waltz production. Kenny sings her Lament with the Chorus having turned their backs to her. This ambivalently signifies both the court's emotional abandonment of her and of her emotional departure from them, as she prepares for death.

Figure 8-10 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 8-10: Yvonne Kenny as Dido, with members of the Opera Australia Chorus. From Act III Scene 2 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the OA production).[34]

[32] Haynes, *The End of Early Music*, 61-64.

[33] Taruskin, *Text and Act : Essays on Music and Performance*.

[34] Anonymous, "Images of *Baroque Masterpieces*".

As the Chorus sing "With drooping wings", Kenny turns her back on the real audience, perhaps suggesting that she is symbolically rejecting life. Her Ladies slowly remove her heavy jewellery and robe, leaving her in her simple white shift. Similarly to the way that Connolly's nude-coloured, gauzy costume operates in the final Act of the ROH, this undressed final costume for Kenny signifies that Dido is being stripped of her worldly trappings as queen and returned to an elemental, vulnerable human state. It also signifies that the Ladies are preparing Dido for the tomb. As this Dido and her Ladies slowly move to the dark rear of the stage, the Chorus gradually move downstage to face the audience, partly obscuring our view of Kenny, who quietly lies down on the stage floor upstage. The slowly dimming lights just allow the audience to see the rose "petals" that fall gently over the whole stage from the upper proscenium arch, drawing attention to the Chorus's line "cupids come/ and scatter roses on her tomb," (a line that could otherwise easily be missed by the audience, due to the polyphonic text-setting). The red rose petals recall the brown, dried stemmed roses that the Sorcerer had flung to the sides of the stage in Act III Scene 1 in a macabre, humorous, self-reflexive and frame-breaking parody of a diva's curtain call—in this case a parody of Kenny's future curtain call.

Figure 8-11 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 8-11: Kanen Breen as the Sorcerer, with Theresa La Rocca as the First Witch. From Act III Scene 1 of *Dido and Aeneas* (the OA production).[35]

[35] Ibid.

In the final scene, therefore, the roses are still on the stage floor, and the black humour of that previous rose motif is directly juxtaposed with the genuine sorrow and tragedy of the opera's narrative. This juxtaposition reframes the audience's former attraction to the Sorcerer's humorous and flamboyant evil as being ethically questionable, thereby eliciting some uncomfortable guilt in the audience. This discomfort is reinforced as we are faced with a melancholy line of uniformed Chorus members staring judgementally at the audience. This discomfort renders the audience's experience of the sorrowful mood even more poignant. Conductor Antony Walker's decision to do an instrumental repeat of the final chorus allows the Chorus to maintain their silent stare for a time, and then gradually depart one by one as the lights are dimmed further, eventually revealing the rather pathetic huddle that is Kenny's Dido in a dim spotlight upstage.

This Dido is constructed as dying of a broken heart, but this is not represented in any kind of literal manner (for example, as a heart attack). It could easily seem clichéd, melodramatic and ridiculous if Kenny were to enact a realistic or literal interpretation of this kind of death in full view of the audience. By obscuring her and making her death ambiguous, the notion of dying of a broken heart presents itself not as a cliché but as an operatic convention that is abstracted in a symbolic manner. This symbolism and stylisation is typical of the staging elements of the OA production in general. Dido's mysterious death in this OA production has been precipitated by the consistent rigidity and restriction of Kenny's stylised movements throughout the performance, which have repeatedly signified her destructive self-oppression. Her death is represented as dignified, tragic, and mysteriously, psychologically self-induced.

8.9 Conclusions

While Virgil's Dido kills herself directly and violently, Purcell and Tate's Dido brings about her own death in an ambiguous manner. Though this "gaping ambiguity" may have originally carried some political/allegorical meaning, it also probably functioned as a way of making Dido more sympathetic for seventeenth century Christian audiences, who would have tended to condemn direct suicide despite their admiration for Classical culture. The ambiguity of the

manner of Dido's death in the operatic text, as well as modern audiences' lesser familiarity with *The Aeneid*, renders this plot point open for interpretation in modern performance. It is consistent with the operatic text both for Dido to commit suicide, *and* (alternatively) to die from a "broken heart".

The ROH and LAF productions feature quite literal and straightforward constructions of Dido's death as direct suicide: the ROH dies from slitting her wrists, and the LAF from drinking poison. The Waltz and OA productions on the other hand both signify that Dido's death is due to a broken heart. Yet they do this with a certain abstraction and ambiguity: the Waltz production's use of the cage-like wig emphasises the symbolic self-destructiveness of Dido's despair, while the OA production's obfuscation of her death renders it particularly mysterious.

In the ROH production, the fairly realistic representation of Dido's suicide by wrist-slitting reflects "post-naturalistic" theatrical traditions, and aligns with the Canonic style of singing to reinforce the generally rather traditional nature of this production's attitude towards meaning-making and performance style. The realistic poisoning in the LAF has a similar effect, but here this trace of traditionalism is offset by the more innovative musical and theatrical performance choices. The symbolic, abstract representations of the Waltz and OA productions' respective Didos' self-willed but passive deaths reflect these productions' overall stylisation.

As I have shown in this chapter, modern productions of *Dido and Aeneas* do interpret Dido's death in various different ways, but all operate generally within the bounds of the fidelity dichotomy and its typical approaches to interpreting the operatic text. The layers of changing perceptions about suicide, emotions and death over the centuries since *The Aeneid* and *Dido and Aeneas* were written are reflected with subtlety, complexity and some ambivalence in these four modern productions, which balance HIP with relevance to more specifically contemporary theatrical styles, and historical concerns about despair, grief and suicide with their contemporary parallels.

Ω. General Conclusions

This thesis has demonstrated a new methodology for the dramaturgical analysis of the modern performance of opera, focusing on analysing the construction of meaning in the selected four recent productions of *Dido and Aeneas*. The methodology I have applied is based to a considerable extent on fairly traditional dramaturgy and performance analysis as practiced within theatre studies. It also incorporates approaches from narrative and textual analysis, cultural history, musicology, performance studies and the more traditional aspects of opera studies. While it has focused on investigating meaning-making, this study has also engaged in analysing affect and artistic style in opera performance. However, these have been primarily investigated in the light of how they contribute to the construction of meaning. A vast range of artistic elements contribute to the modern performance of an operatic text, and scholarly dramaturgical analysis can go some way towards mapping these various interacting elements. In this study I have demonstrated ways in which such an approach is useful in exploring the influence of different texts, themes and narratives, different cultural contexts, and different artistic styles and sign-systems, within the modern performance of opera.

By using such an approach to compare multiple productions of the same opera, this thesis has fulfilled its research aim of yielding insights into the interpretative possibilities offered by the operatic text. As I have discovered, these mainly consist of two types: narrative-based and non-narrative-based possibilities. Within the former, two sub-categories have emerged. The first of these includes the themes that arise from Price's four "gaping ambiguities" as listed in the Introduction. These originate in the operatic text, but are inflected and interpreted by the productions.

The second sub-category of "narrative-based interpretative possibilities" arise more diffusely from the narrative, and include "the supernatural" and "gender". Both gender and the supernatural also overlap with the second major category: "non-narrative-based possibilities". They overlap because their manner of presentation often explicitly calls attention to its own materiality. To cite a "gender" example, Kanen Breen's over-the-top presentation of the

Sorceress in the OA production as a queer cross-dresser is overt in its theatricality and signifies self-reflexivity; it prompts the audience to question exactly what signifies and/or constitutes gender on the modern operatic stage. To cite a "supernatural" example, the Waltz's construction of the Spirit as a possibly enchanted and/or wilfully deceptive Second Witch, with his arms moved about by the "invisible" Chorus, likewise draws attention to this device's overt theatricality, prompting the audience to consider the ways in which magic can be signified on the operatic stage. While both gender and the supernatural are inflected with seventeenth-century (and to a limited extent, also first-century BC) cultural values via the operatic text, these are filtered through an early twenty-first century perspective in performance. This modern perspective is also directed towards the ways these themes were once performed on the operatic stage; and it juxtaposes or blends this with the ways they can be appropriately presented on the operatic stage today. In this sense, while gender and the supernatural are themes that emerge diffusely from the narrative, they also intersect with non-narrative-based themes, providing a network of possibilities for different "readings" in performance.

The analyses have shown that "non-narrative-based" themes that emerge in the four modern productions derive from issues surrounding the material and stylistic elements of the operatic text and the productions, and their cultural and aesthetic associations, rather than from the narrative. They include the theme of the operatic text's formal structure and content; that of its textual, contextual and performance history; and the tension between the historical and the modern. The latter is particularly relevant in the case of the fidelity dichotomy. In this study, such non-narrative themes have been addressed most notably in Chapter 3, but have also been investigated to a lesser or greater extent throughout the analysis. The different versions of the narratives, as expressed in *The Aeneid*, the various sources for the opera, and the opera's early performance history, could all be traced to being part of *Dido and Aeneas's* identity in the modern operatic world, and they have been shown to provide plenty of inspiration for modern productions. This is particularly true in the case of the Waltz production, which draws on *The Aeneid* and the Chelsea libretto to aid in fleshing out the standard, Tenbury-based version of *Dido and Aeneas* into a full evening's operatic performance. However, to a certain extent, all four modern productions, even those that follow Tenbury-based scores (the ROH and OA productions) take inspiration from *Dido and Aeneas*'s complex history. For example, they may reflect the influence of *The Aeneid*, as the LAF and OA productions do, by giving her a

widow's black veil. Or they may be inspired by *The Aeneid* to interpolate the Cupid/Ascanius motif, as in the Waltz; or to show Dido directly committing suicide, for example by cutting her wrists as in the ROH production, or by drinking poison as in the LAF.[1] Productions may also be inspired by *Dido and Aeneas*'s textual and performance history, as in the addition of a Chelsea-school-like schoolgirl Chorus in the LAF production; or as in the Waltz production's reconstruction of the missing Prologue and Act II ending.

Furthermore, the analytical approach has brought to light that modern productions also appear to be inspired by other modern productions, and that the performance traditions associated with *Dido and Aeneas* appear to be evolving. This is evidenced by the striking similarities I have discussed between, for example, the ROH and OA productions' casting and representation of the Spirit as a physically doubled, gender-ambiguous character; or by the unusual fact that both the Waltz and ROH productions are directed by choreographers and make a feature of highly innovative dance; by the similarity between the representations of the sailors in Act III Scene 1 in the LAF and OA productions; by the similarity between the approaches to the Grove scene in the LAF and ROH productions; or by the similarity between the writhing aerialist dancers in the Waltz and LAF productions in Act II Scene 1. Such recurring motifs may be inspired by the operatic text, but they are not intrinsic to it; nor are they part of the narrative-based meanings in the opera. They are often innovative solutions (for example, the approaches to the Grove scene and the representation of the Spirit), so they do not seem to represent a falling-back onto conventional solutions. Rather, they are part of the rich body of cultural layers that have accumulated around *Dido and Aeneas* and are continuing to do so, in an ongoing evolution of how the opera is perceived. Comparative analysis of productions can highlight such similarities and thus provide data for a performance history of the opera or for an overview of trends in operatic interpretation and staging.

In line with my approach to the structure of my argument throughout this thesis, I will now discuss my major analytical findings in a manner that blends chronological order with thematic treatment. I deal first with the Prologue and non-narrative themes; then move on to

[1] It is interesting that none of the productions, even those that are inspired more by Virgil, choose to follow Virgil to the point of depicting Dido's direct suicide by falling on Aeneas's sword on top of their burning bed.

specifically narrative-based themes in the order that they appear in the opera. I then break with the chronology by addressing the diffuse themes that encompass both types, before evaluating the effectiveness of each of the four productions. Finally, I make some overarching observations about the relevance of my findings and this study's methodology, in the context of opera studies as an evolving discipline; and I make some suggestions regarding directions for future research.

Ω.1 Sources of Interpretative Possibilities

Ω.1.1 Non-narrative possibilities/themes

One of the most intriguing and controversial aspects of modern productions of opera is the fidelity dichotomy (FD). My approach to performance analysis enables detailed examination of its components, thus addressing in specific terms the intricate layers of engagement with this dichotomy by modern productions. In the case of *Dido and Aeneas*, the mysterious nature of its genesis offers opportunities for modern performances to explore the FD in interesting ways. As I have shown in Chapter 2, the paradigm of *Werktreue* cannot be fully applied in the case of this opera. Very little is known about the earliest performances or operatic text(s) of *Dido and Aeneas*, and their meanings and contexts. The operatic text also seems to have been reworked several times, not only by Purcell and/or Tate themselves, but also by those who created very different productions of the opera in the years surrounding Purcell's death. The uncertainty and flux associated with the genesis of *Dido*, as well as the general social and aesthetic paradigms surrounding music and opera of that era, mean that the precepts of *Werktreue* cannot be straightforwardly applied to this opera. This leads to a particularly flexible treatment of it in modern performance, especially in terms of the FD. The paucity of information is both a source of frustration and also a source of artistic ideas for creative teams today: the lack of information creates space for debate and innovation, and the small pieces of evidence that do exist provide fertile ground for inspiration. In this context, these modern productions are able to balance the dual paradigms of the fidelity dichotomy, in both its HIP

and *Werktreue* forms. They are able to balance the tension between the stylistic and the meaningful, the historical and the contemporary, the traditional and the innovative.

The fidelity dichotomy is still evident in these four modern productions of *Dido*; but instead of in its "standard-era" (*Werktreue* + PDT/*Regietheater*) version, it is more often present in its "early opera" (HIP + PDT/*Regietheater*) incarnation.[2] However, there is often some overlap between the two sub-categories of FD in terms of which operas feature which type: a performance of a standard-era opera may feature some HIP, for instance, or a performance of an early opera may feature some *Werktreue*. While these four productions of *Dido* all feature the FD, they feature different degrees and types of it: for instance, the ROH production tends to align with the standard-era type and the Waltz production with the early opera type, as I have shown and will summarise below. In this sense, while I have called them "sub-categories", the different types of FD could also be described as the opposite end points on a FD continuum. The FD continuum is connected with another spectrum that has become apparent through this analysis, that of the "progressive *vs.* the conservative". In the broadest terms, *Werktreue* is correlated with a conservative approach and HIP with a progressive approach. This progressive/conservative spectrum relates to the operatic performance features, in terms of their artistic, stylistic and material approach and also in terms of the socio-political implications of their meaning-making, as I will explain below within the section "Diffuse narrative-based possibilities/themes".

The nature, structure and content of the operatic text as it is performed is one of the main ways in which the productions explore the operatic text's various potentialities—this is also connected to the productions' interpretative response to the FD. Again, due to the mystery of *Dido*'s genesis, this opera's content is particularly flexible in modern performance. Much of this thesis's examination of structural differences between the modern productions has centred on whether/how they reconstruct the lost Prologue. However, there are also some other variations between the productions, such as whether/how they reconstruct the end of Act II or the possibly once-scored dances. Like the Prologue, these are reconstructed in the

[2] As I mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis, and discuss further in the Glossary, HIP is related to *Werktreue* and partly stems from it. However, HIP focuses more on "being informed by" the performance styles of the period (as far as they can be ascertained), rather than accurately rendering the notations of the score into performance, as in *Werktreue*.

Waltz production but in none of the other three. The LAF production, however, does feature a reconstruction of the two guitar dances, which were presumably only ever unscored and semi-improvised. At the more progressive and innovative end of the FD spectrum, therefore, lies the Waltz production, which also interpolates new sections and new dialogue. At the more conservative and *Werktreue*-influenced end of the FD spectrum, the OA and ROH productions perform the operatic text as it has been handed down to us via the Tenbury MS and other supporting score sources. The LAF production, with its guitar dances, new Prologue and expanded orchestration, can be said to stand between the Waltz and the other two on our continuum. There are therefore many different ways in which the structural and compositional aspects of *Dido*'s operatic text can be validly configured and treated in performance, and we can conclude that the current western operatic performance climate is quite flexible in this regard with what it will not only tolerate, but also applaud.

Ω.1.2 Narrative-based possibilities/themes (ambiguities)

The four modern productions' different constructions of the narrative each significantly build on issues arising from the mystery surrounding *Dido*'s genesis. These issues are intrinsically related to the "gaping ambiguities" identified by Curtis Price, which have collectively served as the lens through which I have analysed the productions' dramaturgical features. These represent the points of the narrative that open up the most space for interpretation, and for differences between performances in terms of meaning-making. Price's narrative ambiguities in *Dido* generally result from omissions in the operatic version as compared with its forebear, Virgil's poetic version. To reiterate, these four "gaping ambiguities" are as follows:

A. The reason for Dido’s grief in Act I
B. The uncertain consummation of the couple’s love in Act II
C. The enchantresses’ unmotivated hatred of the Queen
D. The manner of Dido’s death.

As I see it, Price actually reversed the chronological (narrative) order of B and C: B is more related to the events at the beginning of Act II, Scene 2, whereas C is more related to Act II Scene 1. Because my analysis has consistently followed chronological progressions on

various levels for the sake of clarity, I have dealt with the ambiguities in this order rather than Price's original order. I therefore also summarise and make conclusions about the four ambiguities in the same (narrative) order here, though I will deviate somewhat from the "Waltz-LAF-ROH-OA" order of discussing productions that I have followed elsewhere, in order to have greater flexibility in making overall observations.

Ω.1.2.1 Dilemma (Ambiguity A)

In Chapter 4 I discussed the fact that Virgil's reason for Dido's grief is related to her experience of guilt and moral dilemma, with her sudden love for Aeneas interfering with her vow of chastity after Sychaeus's death. I showed how ambiguity A therefore links with the larger, "timeless" theme of "dilemma". With Sychaeus and Dido's vow removed from the operatic version of the narrative, Price's ambiguity A emerges, and I have shown how the four modern productions approach this; some draw on Virgil's version and some do not. The LAF and the OA productions draw on Virgil's widowhood trope and also on modern western visual signification by giving Dido a widow's veil. The ROH adopts a slightly different slant on the operatic text by not referring to Dido's widowhood, but instead signifying that Dido's dilemma centres on the demands of her dual public (queen) and private (human, woman, and lover) roles, and suggesting the element of pretence that is associated with the former. It does this most prominently in the opening sequence during the Overture. Here, Connolly's Dido is linked through costume to a vulnerable and soft near-nudity with her underdress, and to the immensely powerful and steely public and historical persona of Queen Elizabeth I through her overdress and accoutrements; she is linked through expressive gesture and choreography to the martyred Jesus, and most importantly she is linked to duality of representation—she is portrayed as afraid and unsure in private and deliberately inexorable in public. The Waltz production explores the theme of Dido's duality in a different way: it offers two simultaneous visions of Dido's future, embodying her dilemma of accepting or rejecting Aeneas through the two dancer-Didos. As we can see, all four productions address the theme of dilemma in different ways, and I would argue that the breadth of interpretations shows that a direct resolution of Price's ambiguity—an answer to his "question"—is not necessarily considered important in today's world of western operatic performance, even when audiences cannot be expected to know enough of *The Aeneid* to "fill in the gaps". Ambiguity can be embraced and

embodied in modern opera performance, instead of always needing to be resolved and clarified.

Ω.1.2.2 Power (Ambiguity C)

In contrast, Chapter 5 demonstrated how Price's ambiguity C is at least partially resolved by each of the four productions, and how this intersects with the more diffuse theme of "power relations". The enchantresses' hatred of Dido is shown, particularly in the Waltz and OA productions, to be driven by envy—especially status envy and political struggle. This is not signified with total clarity, but examining each production's treatment of the juxtaposition of the court scene(s) in Act I and the witches' scene in Act II, Scene 1 makes it fairly apparent. The court scenes are shown in the Waltz as sensual and extravagant, and contrasted directly with semi-naked witches covered in dirt, emerging from holes in the stage floor and performing a crawling choreography. In the OA the court scenes are lavishly costumed, but rather than being sensual they signify a restrictive culture through gesture, choreography and set design. Meanwhile, the OA witches' culture is one of gleeful fun and evil abandon, though they are also constructed as being the "underclass" through means similar to those used in the Waltz (the OA witches crawl in rags). In the ROH, the enchantresses' motivations are less clear. Through voice, music, gesture and facial expression, costume and blocking, the ROH Sorceress is constructed as cruel and power-hungry, but also as legitimately powerful and queenly. Meanwhile, via similar signifying systems the two Witches are depicted as being controlled and even victimised by the Sorceress. Their disability and ethnicity suggest that they may also be socio-economically oppressed, yet this is thrown into some doubt by their and the Sorceress's rather glamorous matching costumes. The LAF production on the other hand suggests that social ostracism, due in particular to their unruly expressions of gender and sexuality—especially in the case of the vocally/physically rather androgynous or "butch" Sorceress—is at the heart of the LAF's enchantresses' hatred of Dido. All four productions thus suggest that the psychological keys to the antagonists' motivations are envy and a struggle for power. They do this with more or less clarity; the Waltz is the most clear, the ROH the least. However, none of the four are totally unequivocal on this point. Rather, they explore the issue of motivation through non-didactic signifying strategies that tend towards the ambiguous.

Ω.1.2.3 Sexuality (Ambiguity B)

In these four productions, ambiguity B is explored mainly in Act II Scene 2, and I have discussed the four productions' approaches to this issue in Chapter 6 ("Gender, Sex and Sexuality"). It must be noted that I generally found more of interest in these four productions regarding gender, rather than sexuality. There are certain reasons why I elected to discuss gender along with sexuality and ambiguity B in Chapter 6 (and a little in Chapter 5 along with power) rather than allocating it its own chapter. Firstly, it must be noted that the dramatic themes that emerge from these productions are not easily separable into discrete units, nor do they align precisely with structural and narrative features of the operatic text/ the productions. Indeed, it is unlikely that *any* scholar undertaking dramaturgical AMPO primarily based on themes, narrative and structure, and particularly one that analyses multiple different productions, will ever find a simple and straightforward way to divide such themes. Instead, this type of analysis must acknowledge and accommodate opera's complexity and unruliness, but at the same time it must impose some ordering structure upon the discussion of it. Secondly, the most interesting points associated with gender in these four productions tend to emerge in Act II, which corresponds with ambiguities B and C. In light of these points, it has been more appropriate in this thesis to discuss issues of gender in the four productions of *Dido* primarily in the context of sexuality (and power), rather than creating an entirely new chapter dedicated to gender.

The four productions explore gender in more interesting ways than they explore sex and sexuality, and they generally steer away from featuring frank depictions of sexual activity by the opera's protagonists. This may be because opera tends to be among the most culturally and stylistically conservative of all the genres of performance (with the exception of some of the more daring *Regietheater* productions). The majority of operas in the standard repertoire depict characters from the upper socioeconomic half of society, and traditionally these classes have been publicly depicted as "decorous" in their sexual behaviour. In the OA production, the protagonists are portrayed as almost sexually repressed; while the ROH's and LAF's presentations of Aeneas and Dido's relationship in Act II Scene 2 feature more sexual signification and innuendo, though it is subtle. Subtle sexual signification is evident in a more general sense throughout the Waltz production, with its frequent nudity and the tactile, body-on-body nature of its choreography. Overall, the antagonists—who are generally depicted as

belonging to the lower classes—are more likely to be overtly sexual in their performed actions: the most salient example is that of the mimed orgy between the witches and sailors in Act III of the OA production.[3] This trope is also notable in the LAF; for example, the LAF features both Witches pointing and laughing at a sailor who drops his trousers, and the LAF First Witch fondles her own body while mocking Aeneas and Dido's sexual relationship through her words, action and music. These devices in the OA and LAF signify that the witches are free and open in expressing their sexuality, particularly in contrast to the restrained nature of Aeneas, Dido and the court. Curiously, sexuality is actually more evident in the operatic text in terms of the protagonists, rather than the antagonists, as suggested by the Aeneas/Dido focus of Price's ambiguity B. The four productions have inverted this, but in doing so they have aligned themselves broadly with traditional sexuality/class tropes. Focusing on signification and meaning in this analysis (rather than issues of "presence" or embodied experience, for example, as in many recent examples of AMPO), and focusing on comparative analysis (rather than only analysing one production) has enabled us to note such variations in the possibilities open to productions, in interpreting the subtle and discreet sexual tropes in the operatic text.

Ω.1.2.4 Suicide (Ambiguity D)

When *Dido* was composed, England had experienced centuries of Christianity's traditional condemnation of suicide. It is of course impossible to prove conclusively that lingering stigma was the reason why Tate and Purcell treated Dido's death with such extreme discretion. However, it seems like a reasonable solution, if they wished to preserve Dido's respectability for 1680s audiences. Setting speculation about reasons aside, the lack of information in the operatic text on Dido's cause of death creates a gap in the narrative: Price's ambiguity D. The methodology used here has enabled us to highlight this ambiguity by directly comparing these productions. The results show a range of approaches to this moment in the narrative, thus underscoring the flexibility of the operatic text's ambiguity.

[3] This is not surprising: lower-status characters in standard-repertoire opera have traditionally been represented as being more flirtatious and sexually charged than the (traditionally leading-role) high-status characters.

Some of the productions again draw on Virgil to clarify this ambiguity: the LAF and the ROH use Virgil's "direct suicide" trope, respectively depicting Dido taking poison and slitting her wrists, and each of these productions fit this action within the short amount of time allocated by Purcell's score between Aeneas's departure and the beginning of Dido's arioso "Thy hand, Belinda". The OA and Waltz productions instead embrace ambiguity in their approach, by portraying Dido's death as self-directed, yet ambiguous. The OA production does this specifically through its portrayal of Dido being prepared for death by her Ladies and simply lying down to die; the Waltz portrays a tripartite Dido being engulfed by her own long dark hair, suggesting that she is metaphorically suffocated by her own sorrow. That the OA and Waltz embody ambiguity on this issue is significant in view of the fact that *Dido*'s operatic text, its textual and performance history and its intertextual and "intercontextual" baggage ultimately render it profoundly ambiguous in its meanings, as an operatic text, as a performed piece of art and as a cultural touchstone. It is also significant in view of the fact that the embrace and embodiment of ambiguity is characteristic of postmodernist and post-structuralist paradigms that celebrate "emergent meaning" rather than normative discourse, and suggestions rather than dictates in art. Allowing, acknowledging and fostering the subjective construction of meaning is highly important in current western culture. The same paradigm is important in current western operatic performance culture, in which the meaning-construction is largely undertaken by audiences, and in which that very process is highlighted and made overt. With several decades now of postmodernism and post-structuralism behind us, artists and audiences operate more comfortably than ever within a framework of conscious ambiguity and subjectivity.

Ω.1.3 Diffuse narrative-based possibilities/themes

Ω.1.3.1 Gender

Gender is strongly linked to sexuality but is distinct from it; gender play has long been one of the most fascinating elements of opera performance, with opera's long history of *castrati*, cross-dressing and cross-casting. Gender itself is not one of Price's four ambiguities and does not correspond to a specific narrative point as they each do. However, gender is nevertheless undoubtedly a central—albeit more diffusely situated— theme in the operatic text as it is read today, and in the four modern productions, which reflect this modern view on the text. Dido's gender makes her dilemma in Act I more profound because by choosing Aeneas as her

husband and consort—even, perhaps, as her king—she would give up her autonomy, particularly as a ruler. Her gender inflects her emotions (which are in a state of profound distress during most of the opera) with issues of female/feminine psychology, and their historically sexist representation as being unreliable, overwrought and neurotic, in Ancient Rome, Restoration London and even in the modern western world. The gender of the Sorcerer/ess and Witches creates a parallel relationship with Dido and her Ladies if the antagonists are represented as female; and an oppositional relationship if they are represented as male. Gender also obviously influences the musical performance elements, by affecting the range and timbre of the voices concerned.

This study has brought to light that, through the signifying bodies and voices of the performers, casting has a profound effect on the construction of gender in these productions. We have already seen that multiple different structures and types of content are acceptable for the performed operatic text: similarly, my approach has enabled this analysis to discover that the modern operatic performance world appears prepared to accept a range of different castings for the characters. As with the issue of content, this casting flexibility is partly related to the opera's opaque genesis. It is also related to the need to balance and combine the potentially competing aims of the FD in performance. In addition, like structure and content, gender and its signification through casting are involved with *style* and materiality of performance as well as with narrative-based meaning-making. Through its close association with casting in these four productions, therefore, gender escapes the bounds of narrative and ventures somewhat into the category of "non-narrative-based" possibilities/themes.

In these productions the focus for gender play is on the characters of the Spirit and the Sorcerer/ess. With either one or both of these characters, each of the four productions explores innovative casting techniques that create meaning about gender, and about the way it is performed (the performance style). The Spirit can be legitimately cast as a soprano as in the OA, or as a countertenor as in the ROH, as a tenor as in the Waltz, or as a baritone as in the LAF. The Spirit can even be multiply represented, with a singer and a dancer playing the same character simultaneously, as is the case in the Waltz, ROH and OA productions. The multiple embodiment/representation of characters is another interesting aspect of these modern productions. The Waltz production actually turns this device into a convention within

the context of the performance, through using it consistently for each character. Interestingly in the Waltz, the Sorcerer and Dido are each afforded three performers when other characters are only allocated two each: in this innovative way, the Waltz flags these characters' parallels and their centrality as the principal protagonist and antagonist respectively. The LAF and OA productions both interpret the Sorcerer/ess as resisting a conventional gender binary. Meanwhile, the Waltz production changes the sex and the gender of the character from female/feminine to male/masculine. Thus, three of the four productions play with the gender of the Sorcerer/ess. This has the overall effect of making these productions more contemporary in style, and in line with the deconstructive, playful, idiosyncratic approaches of PDT and of *Regietheater*.

In the ROH production, however, the antagonist of *Dido and Aeneas* is performed by a mezzo and presented as a cisgender woman: that is, the ROH portrayal of the Sorceress conforms to heteronormative notions of gender. The ROH Sorceress is also a conventional interpretation of the character in other ways, as it is based on tradition and on the vocal register as it appears in the Tenbury-based score editions. It is aligned with Canonism and *Werktreue*; it is conventional in both its meaning and its style, and in both its embodiment and its signification. A production can "signify style" in the sense of pointing towards stylistic modes, and in the sense of creating reflexive meaning about opera performance itself. This representation signifies that the ROH supports such a conventional, *Werktreue*-aligned approach. It also signifies traditional (and sometimes sexist) meanings: as I discussed in my investigation of the early modern witch-hunts, having a woman playing a witch-like antagonist character, and having that antagonist using deception and trickery to achieve her evil ends, are tropes that were traditionally used to oppress women. In addition, the ethnic minority casting of the two Witches in the ROH, as well as the signifying of them as disabled, make for rather politically conservative-leaning implications that string together minority ethnicity and disability with wrongdoing. *Werktreue*, Canonism and the ROH's relatively traditional casting of the Sorceress and also its unusual casting of the Witches are thus all bound together with quite socio-politically conservative meanings. This does much to situate the ROH at the most artistically and culturally conservative end of our progressive/conservative spectrum.

In the middle of the conservative/progressive spectrum in the case of gender and the Sorcerer/ess lies the Waltz production, with its casting of a cisgender male tenor as a cisgender male Sorcerer. This is stylistically somewhat progressive as it is a change from the "original" performance practice, as it seems that the Sorceress was always a female character in the earliest performances of *Dido*, no matter how she was cast. However, to feature a cisgender man as the unsympathetic antagonist, when a cisgender woman is the sympathetic protagonist, may be considered socially progressive in its implication that men might feel envious and angry when women have more power than they do.

Further along towards the progressive end of our spectrum, the LAF production features Hilary Summers, a contralto (an unusual vocal casting) in the role, portraying the Sorceress as a "butch" female character. The LAF and OA, both featuring androgynous Sorcerer/esses, present more progressive stylistic choices and also more progressive political significations. Although they are still the antagonists, the LAF and OA Sorcerer/esses are somewhat more sympathetic than their more conventional equivalents in the ROH and the Waltz, as they are highly entertaining and elicit pity as well as laughter from the audience. In representing the Sorcerer/ess in this way, these productions each create ambiguous meanings about good and evil and about gender in the one stroke. This makes this signification a meaningfully and culturally progressive one, as notions of ambiguity regarding morality and gender are issues that arguably align more strongly with that side of modern western culture, rather than its traditional and conservative side.

The OA's casting of a tenor and representation of the Sorcerer as a cross-dressed, queer male are also highly unconventional choices, forming a bundle of significations that sits at the artistically and socio-politically progressive end of our spectrum. Its socio-political implications extend beyond the bounds of the individual performance, of *Dido and Aeneas* and of the operatic sphere in general, making the production meaningful on a broader scale within its cultural context of the modern western world. Instead of drawing on *Werktreue*, this device draws on PDT and HIP for its ideological justification and its stylistic antecedents. In terms of HIP it draws on the evidence of the 1700 production, in which this role was performed by a bass singer in drag. It also draws on the evidence that Purcell's

countertenors were sometimes cross-cast as female characters.[4] However, it moves to innovate beyond the usual bounds of HIP, drawing on some of the deconstructive and playful ideas inherent in PDT to make this character a cross-dressing Sorcer*er*, rather than a cross-cast Sorcer*ess*, and to cast the character as a tenor, singing in a blend of falsetto and modal register, rather than mezzo (the traditional/Canonic casting for the Sorceress) or a bass as in 1700. This feature of the OA production's treatment of gender and casting thereby takes one HIP element (a man who "performs" female/feminine attributes) and binds it innovatively to another (a tenor singing in falsetto as well as modal register), while adding a completely new element (a cross-dressing character). This is an excellent example of how modern productions can balance the dual aims and attitudes of the fidelity dichotomy, and balance the tension between HIP and PDT/*Regietheater*, and between the conservative and the progressive.

Ω.1.3.2 The Supernatural

My dramaturgical, comparative approach to AMPO allowed me in Chapter 7 to investigate how the different productions exploit musical and theatrical devices in order to signify supernatural occurrences. The themes of magic, religion and fate, like that of gender, are not directly associated with Price's four ambiguities, and are more diffusely spread across the course of the opera's chronological progression. However, again like gender, they tend to be most salient in the "witch" scenes (Act II Scene 1 and Act III Scene 1). The Spirit and the Sorceress are again the focus in this case, though the witches more generally are also involved. The aforementioned device used for the Spirit in the Waltz signifies the presence of magic, with the Chorus holding the Second Witch high and moving his arms: the Spirit and Aeneas's lack of overt acknowledgement of the Chorus signifies that the Spirit is hovering in the air. In the OA and ROH productions, the device of the multiple representations of the Spirit also signifies the presence of magic, with the Spirit's body being represented by the male dancer and the voice by the onstage soprano behind Aeneas (the OA) or the offstage countertenor (the ROH). The OA also features voodoo-doll-like puppetry by the Sorcerer during the "Echo Dance of Furies", in which the dancers are ambiguously portrayed as being controlled by the Sorcerer's magic—this is ambiguous largely because the Sorcerer copies the

[4] See: Baldwin and Wilson, "Pate, John".

actions of the dancers with his puppets, rather than the other way around. The LAF meanwhile signifies the Sorceress's magical power through featuring a flame-throwing device and having her (probably/apparently) enchant a sailor to have a fit and be possessed by the Spirit.

The operatic text makes several references to "fate", and musically and lyrically signifies its presence. It does this, for example, with the lyrically ominous Second Woman's aria in Act II, and with the music of the French double overture. The latter constitutes a case of what might be called "potential affective signification" (with its notated slow first section and its faster, shorter-note values second section), as it offers the potential for creating meaning in performance through the audience's affective responses. The LAF production in particular takes up the theme of fate, and "amplifies" it by musical and theatrical means, such as by depicting Dido's death from the Sorceress's magic through the dance-like mime of little schoolgirls during the Overture. The LAF and the ROH both emphasise the doom-signalling nature of the Second Woman's aria through portraying it as a "phenomenal" song sung ceremonially to the Queen; and by depicting Dido's obvious distress, the Second Woman's being hustled away by concerned courtiers, and Aeneas's comforting of Dido with an ominous gift. The similarity of their interpretations is a striking finding of my comparative analytical approach, and points to the emergence of modern-day traditions in the performance of *Dido*. It also seems that there is a widespread interest in the modern western operatic world in emphasising traditional cultural tropes about the supernatural.

However, many of these constructions of the supernatural are somewhat ambiguous in their signification. They seem to simultaneously signify "real" magic or predestination within the fictional world; and/or examples of overtly theatrical, self-reflexive "frame-breaking" or "fourth-wall-breaking" devices; and/or even (in the case of the Spirit in particular) simple trickery on the part of the characters. The Chorus in the Waltz may signify the magically summoned Spirit of Mercury floating in mid-air, or it may signify the other witches supporting the Second Witch, who is pretending to be the Spirit (i.e. trickery). The OA and ROH's multiple-bodied representations may signify an example of voice and body being split through magical means, or they may simply signify co-operative, theatrical trickery. The OA's dance and voodoo-like puppetry physically embody the musical gestures of the "Echo

Dance", thereby making the Sorcerer seem to be not only (possibly) controlling the dancers magically, but also "conducting" the orchestra and thus breaking the fourth wall by acknowledging the presence of the music, which has no onstage source—but again, the fourth-wall-breaking is only ambiguously signified. The LAF's flame-throwing is slightly different in that no diegetic character is intended to be fooled by it; rather, it is ambiguously signified that the Sorceress is showing off to the audience (if frame-breaking is interpreted), or to herself (if it is not). As the *protagonists* of the LAF production never overtly break the fourth wall, the possibility that the Sorceress does would signify that she operates in a separate, liminal ontological sphere that is partly inside and partly outside the fictional world; as the casually-clad Chorus and the jeans-and-stays-wearing, audience-addressing Narrator do, more obviously and unequivocally. However, these significations are all ambiguous, and the audience member is left wondering which option to choose, or whether to embrace both options at once. It is possible that this ambiguous attitude towards the supernatural is reflective of a real cultural ambivalence—the modern western world is undoubtedly still fascinated by and even fearful of the supernatural, in spite of stolid post-Enlightenment rationalism. It seems fitting that the modern performance of early opera should engage with this issue in a way that also reflects the artistic ambiguity that is characteristic of our time.

Ω.2 Methodology and the discipline

Taking a metaphorical step back and looking more broadly at this method for dramaturgical AMPO, we can note several important features that highlight its usefulness for opera studies as this discipline moves into experiencing its own "performative turn". Firstly, it is logical and helpful to employ familiar and relatively straightforward techniques when navigating fresh scholarly terrain, especially when the object of study is as immensely complex and interdisciplinary as opera performance, and when the intended readers may come from widely different backgrounds. To this end, I have employed a kind of "learned intuition" with approaches gleaned from many fields, combined with language that aims for a balance between erudition and accessibility. I have employed principles for structuring the analysis

that rely on chronological progression as well as on overarching dramatic themes that have been determined through preliminary research into the operatic text and productions.

This analysis has revealed many links between different sections and themes within the productions. Consequently, I have made many references back and forth throughout the thesis to other chapters and sections of the analysis. This method is appropriate, given that the entwined interrelationship between various elements (composition, instrumental music, theatre, dance, poetry, song, narrative, design, and so forth) has always characterised the genre and indeed constituted much of the aesthetic appeal of opera.

This analysis has also shown that recognising and addressing various types of ambiguity is crucial in analysing opera performance. Ambiguity has emerged as highly important not only as a point of departure for the performances as they relate to the operatic texts, but as an embodied signifying strategy in these productions. The Waltz production in particular continually demonstrates an embracing/embodying, rather than clarifying, approach to ambiguity. This is in accordance with the more radical precepts of postmodernism and post-structuralism, with which both *Regietheater* and postdramatic theatre have strong links. The embrace and embodiment of ambiguity in art is relatively progressive in nature—both stylistically and in terms of meaning-making—as it challenges assumptions about the purpose of communication, and challenges the responder's ingrained thinking patterns. Postmodernism and post-structuralism's playful embrace of ambiguity is one of the main ways these paradigms have continued to challenge and inspire artists and scholars over the past few decades since their initial development. Given that these paradigms and their close relations PDT and *Regietheater* are almost ubiquitous in some form within the FD in modern opera performance, it is important that analysis of opera performance takes the potential for ambiguity at all levels of opera-making into account.

The dramaturgical analysis I have demonstrated here has also placed emphasis on investigating the links between text and performance. In doing so it has taken an approach that may not be as currently popular in the fields of performance studies and theatre studies, or existing AMPO within opera studies for that matter, given the predominance in these

disciplines of "the performative turn", which tends to minimise the importance of the text or even avoid discussing it altogether. However it is necessary for scholarly analysis to acknowledge the text's importance, especially when studying such a text-dependent field as opera. The method advocated and embodied here has focused on the relationship between text and performance, acknowledging that the former chronologically comes before the latter, and profoundly inspires and influences it, offering a range of potentialities to be realised in performance. However this method has not assumed that the text is sacrosanct or that it is the ultimate location of artistic truth; rather, it has placed more emphasis on performance, which is how people primarily engage with opera. The aesthetic experience of performance is what draws people to opera. In this, a large role is played by the singing voice, as has been examined by opera scholars drawing on phenomenology and psychoanalysis, such as Michel Poizat[5] and Michelle Duncan.[6] The emotional communication is enhanced by the music; it sometimes overrides stage actions but its effect can also be disrupted by stage action. My analytical approach has not allowed me to engage with these issues to a great extent, but it is something AMPO should consider. I will now give this more consideration in the context of an assessment of the effectiveness of these four productions.

Ω.3 Subjective assessment of effectiveness

As stated in the Introduction, I assumed the role of "informed audience member" as part of my methodology for this analysis. With this in mind, it seems appropriate that some consciously subjective assessment of the four modern productions should be put forward at this point. In terms of artistic effectiveness, these four modern productions vary somewhat; though none, in my view, can be said to be either extremely effective or wholly ineffective. I agree with Richard Taruskin when he argues in his 2002 paper "Setting Limits" that ultimately, how we judge an opera performance as audience members is through subjective evaluations of its effectiveness: audiences evaluate "what it [the performance] does to them",

[5] Poizat, *The Angel's Cry*.

[6] Michelle Duncan, "The Operatic Scandal of the Singing Body: Voice, Presence, Performativity," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 16, no. 3 (2004): 283-306.

which largely relies on emotional responses.[7] Therefore, while affective issues have taken a secondary role to those of signification (and intellectual issues) throughout this thesis, I now briefly give them some attention.

To me, the OA production seems highly conceptually cohesive, with its tightly constrained visual design and interesting emphasis on the links between Dido and the Sorcerer, and between the court and the witches. Breen's representation of the Sorcerer is particularly striking and effective, being outrageously good fun, as well as appropriately disturbing, more so than the other three productions' Sorcerer/esses, and at least partly because it tests the usual boundaries of gender so profoundly. To me, the fascinating originality of Breen's vocal performance outweighs the slight unattractiveness of timbre; indeed this unattractiveness actually positively contributes to the overall comic and dramatic impact. The OA's clarification of Price's ambiguity C (the enchantresses' motivations) is particularly fascinating, as the OA suggests it is associated with dark psychological identity issues on the Sorcerer's part, and potential issues of race and subjugation on the part of the Witches. The vocal performance and casting of Breen as the Sorcerer is also fascinating from a FD perspective as it cleverly balances the aims of PDT and HIP, as I have shown. The casting of the physically and vocally ageing Yvonne Kenny as Dido, while intriguing, ultimately detracts from the effectiveness of this production, especially as she is paired with such a young (and young-looking) baritone as Gabbedy. The age difference between the performers, if considered as an operatic convention that does not reflect the ages of the characters, is nevertheless defamiliarising and requires so much suspension of disbelief that full affective involvement is curtailed. The alternative possibility that the age difference is between the characters (i.e. that this age gap was a theatrical *device*), is intellectually interesting, as is the ambiguity between these two interpretations. However, consideration of this likewise takes too much attention away from affective involvement in the story and the music. Kenny's notable vocal "wobble" (a common feature of ageing voices) is distracting as well as

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[77] Taruskin argues persuasively for the effectiveness of performing both of Verdi's contradictory endings to *Don Carlo(s)* in the same production: "If you measure greatness the modernist way, in terms of internal unity and elegant form, it is a travesty. If you measure greatness the way audiences measure greatness, in terms of what it does to them, it is a masterpiece. Modernists, for whom the very first principle of art is "the customer is always wrong," cannot be expected to respect such a definition of greatness, and that is exactly where I differ with them (though whether to call that difference premodern or postmodern I leave to you.) My sympathy, as a member of the audience, is finally with my own kind." Richard Taruskin, "Setting Limits," in *The Danger of Music and Other Anti-Utopian Essays*, ed. Richard Taruksin (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2009), 447-466,453-454.

aesthetically displeasing; it is also incongruent with HIP, given the young age of most of Purcell's singers, and it is incongruent with Dido's youthful impulsiveness as a character.

Sarah Connolly's physical ageing likewise detracts slightly from the effectiveness of the ROH production for similar reasons; however this is less notable in Connolly's case. Her softer, more fluid and realistic makeup, costume and acting (as compared with Kenny's deliberately strongly coloured makeup, and stiff and stylised costume and movement) also makes Connolly seem younger than she is, and generally assists in the suspension of disbelief. Vocal ageing is also not an issue in this case. In terms of its treatment of Price's ambiguities, as I have discussed, the ROH production generally clarifies them, rather than highlighting or embodying their nature as ambiguities. Musically, dramatically and choreographically the ROH production is aesthetically quite pleasing and coherent, though the singers' technique and timbre is more traditionally and Canonically "operatic" than the HIP timbres of the period instruments in the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment; this production also involves bizarre and sometimes abrupt contrasts between "noumenal" dance and more traditionally realistic (or semi-realistic) styles of acting and dramaturgy, yet it has an overall pervasive sense of conservatism in its stylistic and meaning-making choices. This production affectively communicates Dido's oppression so well that it makes the audience feel as uncomfortable as Dido is. The ROH leans towards oppressive gravitas—in its visual and dramaturgical construction as well as in its overall adherence to tradition—rather than appealing to the intellect and the emotions through a satisfying aesthetic variety, exciting use of innovation, and affective potency.

I tend to agree with those Sydney-based critics[8] who argued that the Waltz production's patterns of signification—in particular its blurring of the lines between characters and its obfuscation of the narrative arc—prevent the production from reaching great heights of artistic effectiveness. I found it very difficult to make any sense out of this production, despite my great deal of background knowledge on *Dido and Aeneas* and experience with opera performance in general. This production is effective in achieving an interesting,

[8] Deborah Jones, "Sasha Waltz 'pulverises' Dido & Aeneas [Review]," *The Australian* (2014). http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/stage/sasha-waltz-pulverises-dido-aeneas/story-fn9d344c-1226803903982; Jane Howard, "Dido & Aeneas, Sasha Waltz & Guests - Review," *The Guardian Australia* (2014). http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2014/jan/17/dido-aeneas-sasha-waltz-review.

innovative balance between HIP and PDT in its expansive and flexible approach to the operatic text. However, as I showed in Chapter 3, the Prologue's piecemeal approach to musical reconstruction does not align aesthetically with either the fluidity of the theatrical approach with its continual dance, or with the fluidity of the through-composed opera proper with its near-continual arioso. However, the lack of music during the long extra scene at the end of Act I makes the Waltz production go some way towards mitigating this stark difference in aesthetic qualities between the opera proper and the Prologue. Ultimately, I found the Waltz production too overwhelming and confusing, and instead of fascinating me, its thoroughgoing ambiguity, as shown throughout the analytical chapters, prompted me to emotionally disengage.

A certain amount of ambiguity may be a necessary feature of effective art; this is beginning to be recognised and supported by empirical psychological studies (though to my knowledge this field of research has not yet been applied to opera performance).[9] The process of being challenged by ambiguity can facilitate interest and engagement, though intriguingly, it does not seem to necessarily be linked to enjoyment.[10] In addition, in order for each audience member to have a deeply-felt personal experience, the art in question essentially has to be flexible enough to allow various different interpretations. However, I would argue that too much ambiguity, contradiction and vagueness can be detrimental to the production's effectiveness for audiences, eliciting responses of bafflement, anxiety and irritation—leading to disengagement. In particular, when there is little understanding among audiences of the contextual basis for performance decisions[11] it is more likely that those audiences will be uncomprehending and annoyed, rather than stimulated and curious. The latter may still occur, of course; there will be a variety of reactions, as some audience members may have more tolerance for ambiguity than others and will experience less irritation regardless of their level of conceptual understanding of the production, while others may possess more background knowledge and points of cultural reference than others, so they would experience less

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[9] See, for example: Claudia Muth, Vera M. Hesslinger, and Claus-Christian Carbon, "The Appeal of Challenge in the Perception of Art: How Ambiguity, Solvability of Ambiguity, and the Opportunity for Insight Affect Appreciation," *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts* Publish Ahead of Print, (2015); Martina Jakesch and Helmut Leder, "Finding meaning in art: Preferred levels of ambiguity in art appreciation," *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology* 62, no. 11 (2009): 2105-2112.

[10] Muth, Hesslinger, and Carbon, "The Appeal of Challenge in the Perception of Art," 2.

[11] For example, the—internationally celebrated—Waltz production had a relatively unsuccessful tour to my hometown of Sydney in January 2014, where audiences are unfamiliar with the German *Tanztheater* tradition.

bafflement. This is reflected in the stark differences between the critical reviews of the Waltz's season in Sydney: some claimed that the production "pulverised *Dido and Aeneas*" and "privileges incoherent and inexpressive movement over Purcell's imperishable score",[12] or that the plot was "essentially impenetrable",[13] while others praised its imagination,[14] or called it an "occasionally baffling delight"[15] or a "joyful, bewildering echo of [opera], as opera is of life,"—thus, even those Sydney critics that were positive about it also acknowledged the conceptual obtuseness of this production.

As for the Les Arts Florissants production, I find it probably the most effective of the four overall, as it piques both the intellect and the emotions. My wish as an audience member experiencing opera performance is the same as that of David J. Levin when he writes; "I want to have it both ways: I want to be transported and to think about where we are going."[16] The LAF production achieves this balance. It combines aesthetic pleasure (with a beautiful set design, two vocally and physically attractive lead performers and a lovely and colourful musical performance, particularly from the orchestra) with insightful explorations of the nature of the operatic text and its meanings that achieve a balance between interesting ambiguity and reassuring clarity. It includes both innovative and traditional approaches, but leans slightly towards the former. The more innovative aspects include the addition of a new Prologue that makes little attempt to imitate the overall material and stylistic qualities of the opera proper, yet incorporates some dramatic themes and some music from the opera proper; the slight changes to Purcell's original instrumentation; the inclusion of a Chorus of little schoolgirls; and the incorporation of both modern and historical costumes. The LAF production's more traditional approaches include semi-realistic, believable and emotionally moving acting; and the overall use of the FD, in that the musical aspects of the production are generally influenced by HIP and the theatrical aspects by PDT. Most fascinatingly of all, the LAF production explores the contrasts and the similarities between the opera's past and

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[12] Jones, "Sasha Waltz 'pulverises' Dido & Aeneas [Review]".

[13] Howard, "Dido & Aeneas, Sasha Waltz & Guests - Review".

[14] Miro Sandev, "Dido & Aeneas [Review]," *ArtsHub* (2014). http://www.artshub.com.au/festival/news-article/review/festivals/dido-and-aeneas-197827.

[15] Clive Paget, "Live Review: Dido and Aeneas (Sydney Festival)," *Limelight Magazine* (2014). http://www.limelightmagazine.com.au/Article/369824,live-review-dido-and-aeneas-sydney-festival.aspx.

[16] Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 10.

present, and our shared cultural past and present, through both the juxtaposition and the blending of various types of meaning-making signs.

Ω.4 Limitations and future research

The particular situation with *Dido and Aeneas*—its obscure genesis and early performance history; its combination of narrative themes that arise from the text and are explored in performance; the ancient legend and the epic poem that provided the basis for the opera's narrative; the familiarity and popularity of the operatic text in modern performance; the perceived cultural "baggage" attached to it—all these elements are in many respects quite specific to this one operatic text. In this sense, my dramaturgical analysis has been tailored to *Dido and Aeneas.* However, this does not mean that it cannot be applied with some adjustment to other operas. By adapting the essential elements of my method, focus, and structural principles for application to the analysis of other modern productions of *Dido and Aeneas*, or by further adapting it to the study of other operas and their respective modern productions, a fellow opera scholar will similarly attain and communicate a more complex and comprehensive understanding about the networks of meaning-making involved with the chosen artistic objects of study. The more abstract aspects of the themes that are studied here (such as dilemma, sexuality, gender, class, envy, the supernatural, art, history, culture and meaning) are of "timeless" human interest and value, and often feature in many operatic texts. Meanwhile, other themes influence many modern operatic *productions*. These latter themes include the culturally situated and contingent nature of history and art forms; the mutability of signification and the essence of indeterminacy and ambiguity; and the existence and expression of the fidelity dichotomy. Therefore, many of the points I have made in this thesis would be likely to inform a variety of other similar studies, even if they involve entirely different modern productions and different operas.

This study has steered a course that differentiates it from much of the existing scholarly literature on the modern performance of opera. It has focused on signification and meaning-making rather than on embodied experience; it has adopted an approach that directly compares multiple productions of the one opera rather than examining individual productions separately, or investigating multiple operas; instead of juxtaposing perspectives it has used a

coherent and integrated approach throughout; and it has primarily used high-quality DVD audiovisual recordings, instead of live performance, as the means of accessing the productions. This approach has necessarily involved certain limitations: for instance, it has not been practical to examine the minute differences between performances on different evenings; or to include a detailed investigation of affect, or of synchronous feedback between co-present performers and audience. However, it has offered opera studies scholars a fresh look at the mechanisms of signification in opera, and at the usefulness of DVDs of opera performed live for audiences, as a means of accessing and studying productions from around the world. To practitioners and opera scholars involved with the very text-orientated field of standard-repertoire opera performance, this study has offered a useful way of conceptualising, analysing and mapping possibilities for interpreting a "single" score/libretto text.

This study's focus on signification has also had a curious result: the relatively straightforward nature of the signification in much of Purcell's music for *Dido* means that this study has discussed meaning-making in the *theatrical* aspects of production more than in the *musical* aspects. It is not strictly necessary to give equal weight to both musical and theatrical considerations in works of scholarship within opera studies: much of the more recent scholarship in AMPO favours theatrical over musical analysis to a greater extent than my thesis does. This includes two of the most similar works of scholarship to my own, *Inszenierungsanalyse von Opern* by Großmann and *Oper als Aufführung* by Daude, which I discussed in the Introduction to this thesis.

The paucity of data on *musical* meaning-making in these four productions is likely to be related to the nature of early opera and its musical signification. More recently composed (e.g. standard-era) operas may be more complex in their musical signification.[17] The application of my analytical methodology (or a very similar methodology) to a study of modern productions of a more recent operatic text may therefore find that such an operatic text would be open to a greater range of interpretations in performance, in terms of the

[17] Good examples would be the late music-dramas of Richard Wagner, which (as the opera studies literature generally agrees) are laden with complex musical signification.

musical signification and the relationship between musical and theatrical aspects of meaning-making. This is an area that is ripe for further research.

On the other hand, more recent operas' geneses may be more comprehensively known through surviving documentation: some standard-era operas' earliest performances may even have been recorded on audio or audiovisual media. Compared with *Dido*, in such a scenario certain elements of the operatic text (such as musical and dramatic tropes, and structural content) would be likely to offer less ambiguity and less related range for creative interpretation in performance. This would be the case unless, of course, *Werktreue* and HIP were to be disregarded, and PDT and *Regietheater* were to be the principal regulative concepts behind the production(s) being analysed. In such a case, the production would be more in line with the genre of "post-opera", and the FD would not apply—at least, not in the form that is currently so widespread in the modern performance of opera.

Regardless of the specific results such a research direction might uncover, my analytical approach can still be broadly appropriate and useful for investigating other operas and modern performances. This is because the type of operatic dramaturgical analysis that I have advocated and enacted in this thesis has focused on elements that transcend specific operas or productions. As well as the abovementioned "timeless" dramatic themes, such elements include the comparison of productions' approaches to the operatic text and to meaning-making. They also include reflection on the regulative concepts behind the productions, overt reflection on the objects of study, and last but not least, reflection on the methods of operatic dramaturgical analysis themselves.

This thesis has aimed to carve out a niche within the emerging field of opera performance scholarship. It has gone some way towards filling a gap presented by the relative lack of engagement between interdisciplinary performance studies, theatre studies, music performance studies and opera studies. This study has posited and demonstrated an approach to combining these fields. This is an approach that focuses on the expression and analysis of meaning—understood as signification and communication of themes—within the modern performance of opera. It has fulfilled this aim by employing elements from many different related fields in the arts and humanities. To aid it in reaching its full potential as a discipline,

opera studies needs more application of such approaches to modern performance. It is important for interdisciplinary performing arts scholarship that opera, arguably the most complex and extravagant of artistic genres, should be researched in depth. In this era of financial crisis for many opera companies, opera studies scholars have an opportunity—if not an obligation—to advocate for modern opera performance and to show clearly how it can reflect the depth of the history and culture behind opera, as well as the rich plethora of meanings that are communicated through this art form.

This thesis has demonstrated ways in which AMPO can engage with the creation of culturally and artistically relevant themes through a variety of meaning-making strategies. It has shown how modern opera performances can be analysed with reference to their corresponding operatic texts without privileging text over performance. It has also shown how modern performances can realise the interpretative potentialities of the same operatic text in different ways, and how this can be productively investigated through dramaturgical analysis. This type of analysis can be applied to many other modern productions, of many other operas. As such, this thesis makes a significant scholarly contribution to an exciting new interdisciplinary field.

Appendices

The Chelsea Libretto's Prologue

The following images of the Chelsea Libretto's Prologue are from the Purcell Society's facsimile of the original, housed in the Royal College of Music, London.[1]

[1] Tate, "*Dido and Aeneas* [Chelsea Libretto]," xiii-xx.

AN OPERA

Perform'd at

Mr. JOSIAS PRIEST's Boarding-School at *CHELSEY.*

By young Gentlewomen.

The Words Made by Mr. NAT. TATE.

The Musick Composed by Mr. Henry Purcell.

The PROLOGUE.

Phœbus Rises in the Chariot,
Over the Sea, The *Nereids* out of the Sea.

Phœbus, FRom *Aurora's* Spicy Bed,
Phœbus rears his Sacred Head.
His Courlers Advancing,
Curvetting and Prancing.

1. *Nereid,* *Phœbus* strives in vain to Tame 'em,
With *Ambrosia* Fed too high.

2. *Nereid,* *Phœbus* ought not now to blame 'em,
Wild and eager to Survey
The fairest Pageant of the Sea.

Phœbus, *Tritons* and *Nereids* come pay your Devotion
Cho. To the New rising Star of the Ocean.

Venus Descends in her Chariot,
The *Tritons* out of the Sea.
The Tritons Dance.

Nereid. Look down ye Orbs and See
A New Divinity.

Phœ. Whose Lustre does Out-Shine
Your fainter Beams, and half Eclipses mine,
Give *Phœbus* leave to Prophecy.
Phœbus all Events can see.
Ten Thousand Thousand Harmes,
From such prevailing Charmes,
To Gods and Men must instantly Ensue.

Cho. And if the Deity's above,
Are *Victims* of the powers of Love,
What must wretched Mortals do.

Venus) Fear not *Phœbus*, fear not me,
A harmless Deity.

These are all my Guards ye View,
What can these blind Archers do.

Phæ. Blind they are, but strike the Heart,

Ven. What *Phœbus* say's is alwayes true.
They Wound indeed, but 'tis a pleasing smart.

Phæ. Earth and Skies address their Duty,
To the Sovereign Queen of Beauty.
All Resigning,
None Repining
At her undisputed Sway.

Cho, To *Phœbus* and *Venus* our Homage wee'l pay,
Her Charmes blest the Night, as his Beams blest the day.

The Nerieds Dance. *Exit.)*

The Spring Enters with her Nymphs, [*Scene the Grove.*

Ven. See the Spring in all her Glory,

Cho. Welcomes *Venus* to the Shore.

Ven. Smiling Hours are now before you,
Hours that may return no more. [*Exit, Phæ. Ven. Soft Musick.*

Spring, Our Youth and Form declare,
For what we were designed.
'Twas Nature made us Fair,
And you must make us kind.
He that fails of Addressing,
'Tis but Just he shou'd fail of Possessing.

The Spring and Nymphs Dance.

Shepherdesses, Jolly Shepherds come away,
To Celebrate this Genial Day,
And take the Friendly Hours you vow to pay.
Now make Trial,
And take no Denial.
Now carry your Game, or for ever give o're.

The Shepherds and Shepherdesses Dance.

Cho. Let us Love and happy Live,
Possess those smiling Hours,
The more auspicious Powers,
And gentle Planets give.
Prepare those soft returns to Meet,
That makes Loves Torments Sweet.

The Nymphs Dance.

Enter

Enter the Country Shepherds and Shepherdesses.

He, Tell, Tell me, prithee *Dolly*,
And leave thy Melancholy.
Why on the Plaines, the Nymphs and Swaines,
This Morning are so Jolly.

She. By *Zephires* gentle Blowing,
And *Venus* Graces Flowing.
The Sun has bin to Court our Queen,
And Tired the Spring with wooing.

He, The Sun does guild our Bowers,

She, The Spring does yield us Flowers.
She sends the Vine,

He, He makes the Wine,
To Charm our happy Hours.

She, She gives our Flocks their Feeding,

He, He makes 'em fit for Breeding.

She, She decks the Plain,

He, He fills the Grain,
And makes it worth the Weeding.

Cho. But the Jolly Nymph *Thitis* that long his Love sought,
Has Flustred him now with a large Mornings draught,
Let's go and divert him, whilst he is Mellow,
You know in his Cups he's a Hot-Headed Fellow.

The Countreys Maids Dance. [Exit.

ACT the First,

Scene the Palace

Enter *Dido* and *Belinda*, and *Train*.

Bel. SHake the Cloud from off your Brow,
Fate your wishes do Allow.
Empire Growing,
Pleasures Flowing.
Fortune Smiles and so should you,
Shake the Cloud from off your Brow,

Cho. Banish Sorrow, Banish Care,
Grief should ne're approach the Fair.

Dido, Ah! *Belinda* I am prest,
With Torment not to be Confest.
Peace and I are Strangers grown,
I Languish till my Grief is known,
Yet wou'd not have it Guest.

The Text of the LAF Prologue

"Echo and Narcissus" from *Tales from Ovid* by Ted Hughes[2]

In his sixteenth year Narcissus,
Still a slender boy but already a man,
Infatuated many. His beauty had flowered,

But something glassy about it, a pride,
Kept all his admirers at a distance.
None dared be familiar, let alone touch him.

A day came, out on the mountain
Narcissus was driving and netting and killing the deer
When Echo saw him.

Echo who cannot be silent
When another speaks. Echo who cannot
Speak at all
Unless another has spoken.
Echo, who always answers back.

[…]

The moment Echo saw Narcissus
She was in love. She followed him
Like a starving wolf
Following a stag too strong to be tackled.

[2] Ted Hughes, *Tales from Ovid: Twenty-four passages from the 'Metamorphoses'* (London: Faber, 1997).

And like a cat in winter at a fire
She could not edge close enough to what singed her, and would burn her.
She almost burst
With longing to call out to him and somehow
Let him know what she felt.
But she had to wait
For some other to speak
So she could snatch their last words
With whatever sense they might lend her.

It so happened, Narcissus
Had strayed apart
From his companions.
He hallooed them: "Where are you?
I'm here." And Echo
Caught at the syllables as if they were precious:
"I'm here," she cried, "I'm here," and "I'm here," and "I'm here."

Narcissus looked around wildly.
"I'll stay here," he shouted.
"You come to me." And "Come to me,"
Shouted Echo. "Come to me,
To me, to me, to me."
Narcissus stood baffled,
Whether to stay or go. He began to run,
Calling as he ran: "Stay there." But Echo
Cried back, weeping to utter it, "stay there,
Stay there, stay there, stay there."
Narcissus stopped and listened. Then, more quietly,
"Let's meet halfway. Come." And Echo
Eagerly repeated it: "Come."

But when she emerged from the undergrowth
Her expression pleading,
Her arms raised to embrace him,
Narcissus turned and ran.
"No," he cried "no, I would sooner be dead
Than let you touch me." Echo collapsed in sobs,
As her voice lurched among the mountains:
"Touch me, touch me, touch me, touch me."

Extract from "A Game of Chess" from *The Waste Land* by T. S. Eliot[3]

“My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me.

Speak to me. Why do you never speak? Speak.

What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?

I never know what you are thinking. Think.”

I think we are in rats’ alley

Where the dead men lost their bones.

“What is that noise?”

The wind under the door.

“What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?”

Nothing again nothing.

“Do

You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember

[3] T. S. Eliot, *The waste land: and other poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), lines 111-138.

Nothing?”

I remember

Those are pearls that were his eyes.

“Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?”

But

O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag—

It’s so elegant

So intelligent

“What shall I do now? What shall I do?

I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street

With my hair down, so. What shall we do to-morrow?

What shall we ever do?”

The hot water at ten.

And if it rains, a closed car at four.

And we shall play a game of chess,

Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door.

"Aedh Wishes For the Cloths of Heaven" from *The Wind Among The Reeds* by W. B. Yeats[4]

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half-light,
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

[4] Yeats, "He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven."

Glossary of Key Terms

Opera

A genre of music-theatre characterised by being through-sung, or with minimal spoken dialogue. This thesis is limited to discussion of opera from the Western Art Music (WAM) tradition. This is a multimodal performance form, usually entirely acoustic (i.e. with no artificial amplification of the voice, as opposed to the modern musical, which uses microphones). Opera often involves dance and other movement, visual arts and design elements, and orchestral accompaniment, and can potentially feature every known art form, today increasingly incorporating digital media.

Since the rise of cinema and television in the early twentieth century, opera has experienced a decline of public interest in many western countries, an unfortunate phenomenon in the opera industry which is also related to high ticket prices and opera's associated image in the community as a product that symbolises "high culture" and that is to be consumed only by the intellectual and/ or socioeconomic elite, rather than as affordable mass entertainment (a niche filled by film, television and now digital media). Because of this and the high cost of production, opera houses worldwide often struggle to make a profit, and extensive private and/ or government subsidy is usually necessary.[5]

Largely due to the lack of artificial amplification of the voice, the vocal style and technique of modern opera singing has evolved since the development of large opera theatres in the late eighteenth to nineteenth centuries to be generally characterised by great power and projection, a large dynamic range, the use of a lowered larynx position and raised soft palate, and near-continuous and highly noticeable vibrato. These features were not typically the case with operatic vocal technique before around 1800, and so singers today specialising in HIP and "early music" tend to cultivate a less powerful projection, a more mobile larynx position, and less noticeable and more adaptable vibrato.[6] The vibrato of opera singers today may be

[5] Philippe Agid, and Tarondeau, Jean-Claude, *The Management of Opera: An International Comparative Study* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 3.

[6] See: Fabian, *Bach Performance Practice, 1945 - 1975*, 78-80.

of varying widths in terms of pitch and varying speeds in terms of oscillation frequency, depending on the musical style, the singer's personal technique and also their age.

Postdramatic theatre (PDT)

"Postdramatic theatre" (or PDT as I refer to it, for brevity) is a term coined in the 1990s by theatre theorist Hans Thies-Lehmann to refer to the style of Western theatre that has emerged since the late 1960s. As the name suggests, "postdramatic" theatre rejects, or moves beyond, drama and the dramatic text. PDT is often group-devised and/or improvised without a script, and/or any text that exists is usually written specifically for the production. Postdramatic theatre is characterised by a non-linear approach to narrative (sometimes eschewing "narrative" in the traditional sense entirely); frequent employment of audience acknowledgement and/or involvement; overt, reflexive artistic reference to the nature and process of creating theatre and of reworking ideas from the past; the use of different media including new technologies such as audiovisual elements; use of non-traditional performance spaces; non-traditional casting; blending and juxtaposition of different styles and modes of performance.

To apply a postdramatic approach to early opera involves a meeting of two very different paradigms: while the precepts of traditional "drama" (narrative, character, etc.) form much of the basis for the operatic text, the postdramatic approach questions and deconstructs these precepts. At the more extreme end of this kind of postdramatic approach, one would find a radical reworking of the opera, what is today usually termed "post-opera". In today's mainstream modern opera performance a less radical form of reworking is the norm. This new norm is closely related to *Regietheater* as applied to opera—or what some call *Regieoper*.

Regietheater (and *Regieoper*)

At the most basic level, *Regietheater* simply refers to theatre (including music-theatre and opera) in which the director exercises a great deal of artistic control over the production—

sometimes including the musical elements as well as the theatrical elements— and they impart characteristics to the production that are recognisably their own and/or associated with their body of work. In practice, the label of *Regietheater* is usually applied to radical productions, often those influenced by the precepts of postdramatic theatre, in which the directorial decisions consciously depart from the overt or implied stylistic and thematic characteristics of the operatic text.

Regieoper is a term that is based in the German language, but arose in the US,[7] and is not in use in Germany. It refers to the application of the principles of *Regietheater* to opera specifically (rather than to spoken theatre). Interestingly, opera has played an important role in the development of *Regietheater*, especially as it relates to productions of Richard Wagner's music-dramas, and the focus for these has been the Bayreuth Festival. A more characteristically modernist type of *Regietheater* that was grounded in a minimalist type of stage design arguably had its origins at the turn of the twentieth century, with Adolphe Appia's revolutionary writings and designs for Wagner's music-dramas. The designs of E. Gordon Craig through the early decades of the twentieth century contributed to this growing trend, but it became more internationally recognised with Wieland Wagner's renowned 1951 production of the *Ring* in Bayreuth. I date the development of the more eclectic and deconstructive "postdramatic" type of *Regietheater* from around 1976: this was the year of the Bayreuth Centenary production of Richard Wagner's *Ring* cycle.

Observers and theoreticians of *Regietheater* include Christopher Balme,[8] Lenz Prütting[9] and Robert Sollich,[10] among others.

Werktreue

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[7] Risi, "Performing Wagner for the 21st Century [Conference Presentation]".

[8] Balme, "Werktreue: Aufstieg und Niedergang eines fundamentalischen Begriffs."

[9] Lenz Prütting, "'Werktreue': Historische und systematische Aspekte einer theaterpolitischen Debatte über die Grenzen der Theaterarbeit," *Forum modernes Theater* 21, no. 2 (2006): 107-189.

[10] Robert Sollich, "Sola Scriptura? Überlegungen zur Inszenierungsgeschichte der Oper im Lichte sich wandelnder Werkbegriffe," in *Macht Ohnmacht Zufall: Aufführungspraxis, Interpretation Und Rezeption Im Musiktheater* ed. Christa Brüstle, Clemens Risi, and Stephanie Schwarz (Berlin: Theater der Zeit, 2011), 50-65.

Werktreue is a German term meaning "fidelity to the work" that is quite frequently used in the Anglophone opera studies literature. According to Lenz Prütting's article on the subject, as a term it originally probably developed in response to early twentieth-century stagings of Wagner's *Parsifal.*[11] Although the concept has origins in literature and literary adaptations,[12] today *Werktreue* is primarily used to mean almost the opposite of *Regietheater.* It today refers to performances of music, theatre and opera that aim to be "faithful" to the intentions of the original composer/playwright/librettist (i.e. the author), as far as those intentions can be reasonably determined. This does not typically include such a focus on historically accurate stylistic and material attributes of performance as it does in the case of HIP in music. Rather, *Werktreue* when applied to theatre and opera is a more nebulous concept that involves fidelity to the "spirit" or "essence" of the author's intentions, and fidelity to all elements of the operatic text, even those that may be considered by followers of the *Regietheater* school to be of little importance, such as stage directions.

Historically Informed Performance (HIP)

Historically Informed Performance, commonly referred to as HIP, is a paradigm of thinking, research and performance within WAM that has held sway in the sphere of "early music" since the 1960s and arguably reached its apex in the 1980s and 1990s. Performers operating within the HIP paradigm base their musical interpretation on mimicking the typical style of similar musical performance in that place and time. The HIP approach is still most evident in the case of "early music" but in the last decades it has begun filtering into all eras of WAM. In general terms, HIP currently features an emphasis on using "period" instruments, as well as on small-scale, varied and speech-like phrasing, dynamics, rubato, timbre and articulation.

[11] Prütting, "'Werktreue'," 179, endnote 134.

[12] Ibid., 110.

Observers and theoreticians of the HIP phenomenon include Harry Haskell,[13] Richard Taruskin,[14] Bruce Haynes,[15] Dorottya Fabian,[16] and John Butt,[17] among others.

Fidelity Dichotomy (FD)

This term is of my own coinage, and refers to the broad-based dichotomy that currently exists between WAM and theatre in their attitudes towards fidelity to the text, the author and to historical style (in other words, in their attitudes towards the artistic past). On the one hand, the modern theatrical world tends to display a loose attitude towards fidelity, and use the operatic text as a mere basis for further exploration and interpretation, often overtly exploring the very nature of textual re-working—all of which are characteristics of the postdramatic theatre (PDT) paradigm. On the other hand, the modern musical world tends to display a stricter attitude towards fidelity, and base its approach on HIP and/or *Werktreue*. In the case of early opera, the FD sub-category that tends to regulate modern performance is that of PDT in the theatrical aspects and HIP in the musical; and in the case of standard-era opera, *Werktreue* tends to reign instead of HIP.

While the fidelity dichotomy has been developing in opera production in some form since the rise of the stage director in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the focus on "the composer's intentions" in the musical world at around the same period, the emergence of PDT and also the rise of HIP have made the differences between the approaches of the musical and theatrical worlds more apparent. The HIP + PDT/*Regietheater* category of FD is increasingly being applied to all periods of WAM, and *Werktreue* is showing signs of being on the wane as a regulative concept. Both historically informed performance (HIP) and the PDT type of *Regietheater* seem to have reached some kind of peak in the late 1980s and early 1990s, exemplified by the significant reaction to Peter Sellars' famous Mozart-Da Ponte

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[13] Haskell, *The Early Music Revival: A History*.

[14] See for example: Taruskin, "The Authenticity Movement can Become a Positivistic Purgatory, Literalistic and Dehumanizing; Taruskin, "The Pastness of the Present and the Presence of the Past; Taruskin, *Text and Act : Essays on Music and Performance*.

[15] Haynes, *The End of Early Music*.

[16] See for example: Fabian, "The Meaning of Authenticity."

Fabian, *Bach Performance Practice, 1945 - 1975*.

[17] Butt, *Playing With History*.

trilogy of opera productions from 1986. Since the early 1990s it seems that the FD has steadily become "mainstream".

However, there are a few exceptions to the current FD trend, such as productions of early operas that feature a "fully-HIP" approach (i.e. HIP in the theatrical *as well as* musical aspects) or "post-operatic" productions that feature a "fully-PDT" approach in their re-working of standard-repertoire operas. There is also some variation in terms of the degree of separation between the musical and theatrical approaches within productions: some may seem more divided; others may seem more blended and unified.

Director

The director of an opera oversees all the artistic aspects of production except those relating directly to the music; therefore the director is—broadly speaking—in charge of the theatrical aspects of production, including preparation and rehearsal, and co-direction of the creative team in conjunction with the conductor. In the UK, the director is known as the "producer", however I follow American and Australian convention in using the latter term to refer to the person in charge of overseeing the practical and financial aspects of production. During the preparation and rehearsal periods the director is usually on a level with the conductor in terms of artistic power and control; however the director's role largely ends at opening night of the performance season, while the conductor continues to actively lead the production throughout the performances.

Conductor

The conductor is in charge of all the musical aspects of production, including the vocal aspects of the singers' roles and the orchestra, and often the additional recorded sound, if there is any. During the performance season, the conductor will continue to lead the orchestra and singers—usually standing at the front of the orchestra pit, facing the stage, but sometimes the conductor leads from the keyboard if he/she is playing it during the performance, as does William Christie in the LAF production for example. From opening night onwards, the conductor is the *in-situ* leader of the production.

The Operatic Text

My concept of the operatic text is based on the notion of the "operatic work", but use of the term "operatic text" avoids some of the historical and theoretical minefields that have accreted around the term "the work". These include the still-widespread notion, associated with Canonism, that the "essence" of music is somehow contained within the notation of the score. The musical work and the history and development of that concept have been exhaustively investigated by philosopher Lydia Goehr.[18] Her central argument in *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* is that the "work-concept" originated in Europe around 1800, and that prior to this date (as with *Dido* and the context of its genesis) music was considered more a part of the fabric of social life rather than a rarefied abstract "art". Goehr's work, while having a profound effect on musicology, has not eradicated the use of the term but has made users of it more conscious of its history and meaning and made scholars wary of employing the term without devoting a good deal of space to unpacking its meaning, and without the use of "scare-quotes". Thus, the term "operatic text" is more convenient for a thesis that aims to avoid heavily abstract and involved theoretical discussions and instead aim for an applied type of AMPO scholarship.

In this thesis, then, I use the term "operatic text" to refer to the libretto and score as they exist in the most commonly and currently used versions/editions; these editions indicate some of the irreconcilable differences between different manuscript versions of the score and libretto (See Chapter 2). The operatic text therefore refers to a cluster of related textual objects in the case of *Dido and Aeneas*. Some conceptual instability surrounding the term is unavoidable.

The Production *vs.* the Performance

The term "performance" differs from "production" in that it can be used to refer to only *one* evening's performance of an opera. Meanwhile, "production" cannot be used in that way and instead refers to a cluster of performance elements that together constitute an original performed (artistic and conceptual) interpretation of an operatic text.

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[18] Lydia Goehr, "Writing Music History," *History and Theory* 31, no. 2 (1992): 182-199.
Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*.

"Production" has some instability as a concept and a term, due to the fact that opera productions are revived with changes to cast, crew, orchestra, creative team, performance space, score and libretto editions used, and even design and concept. If the design and concept are *thoroughly* reworked then the production is considered to be a "different production," however a good deal of change can be tolerated before this point is reached.

A good example of this flexibility in the concept of the "production" is in the case of the Opera Australia production discussed in this thesis, which was originally performed in 2004 in Melbourne as part of a double-bill with Monteverdi's short chamber piece *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*. This original version of OA's *Dido* featured a snake-like green Sorcerer who was definitely gendered male, a non-star singer cast as Dido, and a reduced version of the Opera and Ballet orchestra, which accompanies almost all the operas performed by OA and thus performs across a wide range of styles. The director in 2004 was Patrick Nolan and the conductor was Richard Gill. In contrast, the 2009 revival was paired with G. F. Handel's masque *Acis and Galatea*, had a transvestite Sorcerer, a star singer as Dido (Yvonne Kenny), a repainted set, and the period-specialist Orchestra of the Antipodes. The director was still Nolan, which ensured more continuity with the theatrical elements, but the conductor was Antony Walker. However, the two versions are still considered by OA to be essentially the same production.[19]

As in the case of "the operatic text", therefore, "the production" is a nebulous concept, a cluster of related conceptual elements. To make discussion simpler, I term this cluster "the production" and differentiate between the first and second "versions" if necessary. The "performance" is a term that refers more specifically to the particular, ephemeral performance on a certain date (or composite of performances, in the case of some audiovisual recordings). However, often "performance" and "production" are used almost interchangeably in this thesis.

In the context of opera studies and in this thesis, "Performance" can also be used as a mass noun, as in the term "performance practice".

[19] Personal field notes, April 2009.

Presence and materiality

"Presence" in the context of opera performance refers to the "aura" often created when the material qualities of the art(s) in question are experienced by spectator and performer.[20] It is associated with and often mentioned in conjunction with the term "co-presence", which in the context of opera studies refers to the actual and simultaneous bodily presence of performer(s) and audience. "Presence" by itself however, does not necessarily require the actual bodily presence of the performer (as encountered in live performance), though it is certainly associated with this, and it is associated with a *sense* of "being there",[21] whether or not that is the physical reality or not. The most notable theoriser of "presence" and its production from the perspective of those who work in opera studies is Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht (though Gumbrecht does not work in opera studies himself).[22] Gumbrecht states that "presence effects…exclusively appeal to the senses".[23] He further notes that "any form of communication implies such a production of presence", that "any form of communication, through its material elements, will 'touch' the bodies of the persons who are communicating in specific and varying ways"[24] and he frequently refers to presence as an aspect of the "nonhermeneutic", as it and its study do not intrinsically involve interpretation of/or signification. Rather, in its consideration of the experiential, discussion of presence is largely informed by phenomenology. It investigates those elements of the communication (in the context of AMPO, of the performance) that give it its innate appeal to, and effect on, the emotions and mind of both the sender (the performer) and the receiver (the audience). These interactions elicit certain sensations or experiences. In this thesis, I use the term "presence-effects" to refer to these experiences and the artistic moments that give rise to them. While I do not focus on materiality or presence-effects in this thesis, some mention of them is

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[20] As yet there is little focus on *performer* experience in AMPO scholarship, as it relates to production of "presence". The emphasis is almost entirely on the audience member's experience. However, the growing methodology of practice-led research may provide more personal scholarly accounts of the operatic performer's experiences in the years to come.

[21] Presence, *A Dictionary of Media and Communication,* ed. Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, in the Oxford University Press, Oxford Reference Online (accessed 7 September 2015).

[22] Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Bloomington, Indiana: Stanford University Press, 2004), Kindle.

[23] Ibid., User's Manual: "Stakes".

[24] Ibid., Chapter 1, Section 5.

necessary and useful in the context of how they contribute to the creation of meaning in the performance of opera.

"Materiality" is not equivalent to "presence", though it is strongly associated with the latter term, and—like "presence"—with phenomenology and phenomenological approaches to AMPO. Materiality refers to the qualitative and non-signifying aspects of the art(s) in question. In a semiotic sense, it is the material (for example, the text and the medium in which the text is presented) that "carries" the sign.

Standard-era opera

It must be noted that the meaning of my neologism "standard-era opera" differs significantly from the meaning of the well-known term "Common Practice Era" (CPE) and also from the fairly familiar "standard operatic repertoire". CPE is generally understood to refer to all Western Art Music (WAM) composed between c.1600 and 1950, whereas "standard-era opera" refers here to opera composed between c.1800[25] and 1930, the usual period of composition for operatic texts in the standard operatic repertoire today. In turn, "standard operatic repertoire" refers to operas that are regularly performed internationally in opera houses today, as listed in *www.operabase.com*.[26] This has historically been a somewhat flexible list; for instance, selected early operas—such as many of the *opere serie* of Handel, and also *Dido and Aeneas* itself—have been added to this list over the past eighty years, and even more notably in the past fifty. However, it is only recently that international statistics have begun to be more easily collected and disseminated via the Internet, so it is difficult to discern with any accuracy what this list may have contained in most decades past, although occasional such studies do exist.[27]

Early opera and music

[25] The period 1750 –1800 is transitional.

[26] Gibb, "Operabase: Statistics".

[27] Alain P. Dornic, "An Operatic Survey", Stanford University http://opera.stanford.edu/misc/Dornic_survey.html (accessed 28 April 2015).

Following the standard periodization of Western Art Music (WAM) and for the sake of brevity and clarity (and at the cost of some complexity and accuracy), I use several terms to refer to opera and music composed in the period before "standard-era opera". I employ the term "early opera" to refer to opera composed between c. 1600–1750, and use the term "Baroque" to refer to that WAM in general that was composed in the same era. Use of the term "early music" for music from the same period is now rather outmoded. When discussing *opera* specifically however, the term "early" is appropriate, as opera had its genesis in that period (i.e. the early seventeenth century). With regards to the broader cultural period in which this music was situated, in this thesis I use the term "early modern period" or "early modern era" to refer to the period from approx. 1500 to 1700.

Bruce Haynes has proposed the term "Rhetorical" for the pre-Mozartian or pre-Romantic era in WAM,[28] however it has not entered into widespread usage in this context. "Rhetorical" instead tends to be used in the musicological literature to describe a specific *performance style* of baroque-era WAM. This is a HIP style that—according to the most recent musicological research—appears to be the closest to the "original" historical style that we can currently achieve. This performance style reflects aspects of broader thought, art and expression in the baroque era, as rhetoric was a key principle in all these areas. However, it has not been used widely in musicological literature to refer specifically to the *music* of that era (either as it was played then or as it is played now). Consequently, I prefer the more familiar terms "baroque music" and "early opera".

Canonic performance (music)

In referring to today's primary non-HIP style of WAM performance as "Canonic" and in referring to the ideology that forms its basis as "Canonism", I am following the late Bruce Haynes. [29] Haynes uses these terms to identify WAM performance that focuses on discovering and enacting the composer's musical intentions.[30] This is heavily associated with a *Werktreue*-based ethos of a (somewhat spurious) conflation of the "work" with the "original" text/score, and the performer's obedient enactment of every detail of that text— as

[28] Haynes, *The End of Early Music*.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid., 5-6.

the composer's intentions are thought to be intimately bound to what he/she inscribed in the score.

Canonic style generally features "modern" instruments; a focus on sustained—often *legato*—long melodic lines rather than short gestural phrases; power and projection, achieved by various means including near-continuous vibrato; and a consciously musical (rather than speech-like) approach to expressive nuances such as articulation, phrasing and dynamics.[31] Nicholas Cook has recently shown how Canonic rubato and dynamics directly reflect and highlight the structural "seams" of the score. Fabian writes that in violin playing, the "aesthetic ideal is essentially a purity and evenness of tone (…) in service of power and projection of the melody" and that "inflections are kept to a minimum".[32] The Canonic paradigm is also strongly linked with a performance style that is characteristic of the mid-to-late twentieth century, but which is still being emulated today to a large degree. Haynes refers to this polished and emotionally rather cold mid-to-late-twentieth-century style as "Modern" style, and distinguishes this from "Romantic" style, which he identifies as being in vogue from the late nineteenth century to the 1930s. Haynes refers to both of these styles as variants of a broader "Mainstream" style, which he casts in opposition to the "Rhetorical" style which is a feature of most current HIP practice of early music (that is, since the 1990s). Other scholars such as Fabian and Butt have used the term "Mainstream" (Butt puts it in "scare-quotes") to specifically identify the Canonic type of performance. However, by now HIP itself has "become mainstream", so this is rather misleading. Therefore I prefer to use a different term, and to highlight this style's relationship to issues of fidelity and *Werktreue*, I have selected Haynes' term "Canonic".

What I call the "Canonic" paradigm is therefore fundamentally derived from the characteristics of much twentieth-century performance of standard-era (i.e. approx. 1800–1950) WAM. "Early music" did not become a major issue of concern until the second half of the century, so the twentieth century's WAM performance was more notably characterised by the performance of standard-era repertoire.

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[31] See: ibid., especially 48-64; Fabian, *Bach Performance Practice, 1945 - 1975*.

[32] Fabian, *A Musicology of Performance*, 21.

Canonic performance (opera)

When applied to opera performance, what I term "Canonic" is the style that was prevalent from the early twentieth century until about 1980, when it began to be overtaken by the fidelity dichotomy style. This Canonic operatic style was and still is characterised by a Canonic approach to performing the music, combined with a staging style that features rather static acting/movement by the singers, and romantic and pseudo-historical costuming in a semi-realistic style.

"Tradition"

In this thesis, I use the terms "tradition" and "traditionally" to refer to traditions that are *within current living memory* at the time of the event in question, unless otherwise indicated. In the context of opera, "traditional" performance tropes would therefore overlap significantly with "Canonic" ones, however there is now also a strong tradition of HIP and of the fidelity dichotomy.

Gender and Sex

While the two are often conflated in everyday discourse, I borrow from sociology in defining gender as distinct from biological sex.[33] Here, "sex" refers to the biological state of being male, female or intersex. "Gender," on the other hand, is constructed by cultural forces.[34]A person's "gender identity" is also primarily determined by the *individual* concerned. I employ the terms "gender-expression" and "gender performance" to refer to the signified gender of an

[33] It is true however that this binary between gender and sex has also been brought into question, most notably by Judith Butler in *Gender Trouble* (1990), in which she argues that sex, like gender, is also culturally constructed. However, in this thesis I operate using the biological definition of "sex".

[34] Anonymous, "Gender, *n.* 3b," *OED online* (2011). http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/77468?rskey=BQpDyC&result=1 (accessed 27 July 2012).

individual, based on their behaviour and appearance. I use the terms "masculine" and "feminine" as approximate gender-expression equivalents of "male" and "female"; and I use "androgynous" and "genderqueer" as approximate gender-expression equivalents of "intersex". From the perspective of signification, the performers' own physical attributes influence their performance of gender,[35] though they do not determine it entirely.

Vocal Register

A vocal register is generally understood to be an area of the voice, largely but not wholly determined by pitch, in which the sung notes all have a consistent timbre, resulting from the same essential physical method of vocal production (arrangement and use of the vocal apparatus). The late, renowned vocal scholar and pedagogue Richard Miller defines "register" more simply as a "consecutive series of tones of similar quality".[36] However, beyond that basic definition, the nature of vocal registers, their characteristic timbres, their production, their terminology, and in particular their categorisation and the boundaries between them have long been hotly disputed by scholars and practitioners.

There are two primary vocal registers in common use: the upper and the lower. The lower register is the fundamental register, commonly known as the "chest voice" or "modal register" (*voce di petto*), with which people usually speak. The upper register(s) of the voice are known as the "head voice" (*voce di testa*). There are two pivotal pitch points (*passagio*) in every voice at which there is a natural transition from chest to head voice, creating a zone in between the two in which some chest register is blended with some head register (*zona di passagio*). One of the main objectives of vocal training is to disguise the *passagio* points to create a fairly consistent timbre throughout the range of the voice, and in modern standard classical technique this is achieved through the blending of the chest and head register functions to create a timbre usually termed "mixed voice" (*voce mista*, or *voix mixte*).

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[35] Rozik, *Generating Theater Meaning*, 9-10.

[36] Richard Miller, *Solutions for Singers: Tools for Performers and Teachers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 254.

There is also arguably a third register that features most notably (or possibly solely[37]) in the male voice: the falsetto. In this thesis, I follow Miller's definition of the tenor's head voice as distinct from the male falsetto.[38] I use the term "falsetto" to mean the light, often rather fluty sound produced by male voices that enables them to sing into a contralto or even mezzo-soprano range. This type of falsetto is used by most modern countertenors, who generally have a chest voice in the baritone range.

[37] Richard Miller, *National Schools of Singing: English, French, German, and Italian Techniques of Singing Revisited* (Lanham, Maryland, and Oxford: Scarecrow Press, 2002).

[38] Miller, *Solutions for Singers: Tools for Performers and Teachers*, 143-147.

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