

**Equitantes Super Phoenix:
Cataloguing Twenty-First Century Music Making After the
Early Music Revival**

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Capaneus the Blasphemer

William Blake

Pen, Ink, and Watercolor

1824-27

Equitantes Super Phoenix

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Riding on a Phoenix: Cataloguing Twenty First Century Music Making After the Early Music Revival

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTIONS & GROUNDWORK

Classical music produced throughout the world in the past thirty years has exhibited a profound metamorphosis. Suddenly operas starring countertenors are selling out and maintaining important portions of audiences' interest and institutional prominence. In the 19/20 season the Metropolitan Opera began with a massive production of Philip Glass's *Akhmaten*, written for a countertenor in the leading role, a production which continued on to win the 2022 Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording.¹² Last year bachtrack.com, a music review website that creates aggregate counts of both concerts and composers, reported a record number of choral concerts in general, with the amount of concerts presenting early music more than doubling in the USA, Australia, and Japan, and the largest ever percentage of concerts that included contemporary works worldwide.³ The umbrella of early music has expanded and changed significantly since the beginning of the movement with titanic figures like Harnoncourt, to the nerdy counterculture treatise hounds in the 1960s, to young musicians at the turn of the millennium looking for a way forward for an artform in need of its own revival, to the now international baroque opera scene, all the way up to the professional choral scene in the United States. All of these people have a hand in creating the new playing field that has blossomed since the revival began. Each musician a simple feather on a massive revived phoenix soaring its way further and further into the musical zeitgeist.

Since the early music revival in America in the 1960s, the amount of opera companies, professional ensembles, and musicological work engaging with this field of study has expanded exponentially. Now whole organizations, with full operational budgets and musical clout, exist that focus exclusively on this repertoire. This has become a massive draw for performers' and audiences' attention

¹ "The Metropolitan Opera *Akhmaten* 19/20 Season Listing," The Metropolitan Opera, accessed November 16th 2020.

<https://www.metopera.org/user-information/old-seasons/2019-20/2019-20-season/akhmaten/>

² "2022 GRAMMYs Awards Show: Complete Winners & Nominations List," Recording Academy Grammy Awards, accessed July 25th, 2022.

<https://www.grammy.com/news/2022-grammys-complete-winners-nominees-nominations-list>

³ "Classical Music in 2019: The Year in Statistics – Bachtrack," Bachtrack, accessed December 12th 2020. <https://bachtrack.com/classical-music-statistics-2019>

and this focus has bled over to other musicians not exclusively interested in the study of early music. In the twenty-first century, almost every professional choral ensemble performs early and contemporary music. Prominent examples include the Ora Singers, Tenebrae, the Gabrieli Consort, Seraphic Fire, Voces8 and many others. Composers now write with this in mind, using various forms, vocal techniques and tuning ‘styles’ to fit more in line with earlier music. This trend can be seen in the works of Erik Esenvalds, Caroline Shaw, Jonathan Dove, James Macmillan, Judith Wier, and many others. The same wave of musical influences has reached the opera stage as well; composers like John Adams, Thomas Ades, George Benjamin and others are creating relatively big-budget productions that reference either in structure, libretto or both, the works of the past. This seemingly new pairing and its sudden change in requirements have shifted the performance field and the vocal prerequisites of performers.

This reincorporation of western classical music’s once-forgotten roots has completely relocated the emphasis and funding in the musical landscape and there have been few pieces of research on the effects this is having on the work of contemporary performers. No longer is early music a niche performance world, relegated to deeply passionate people. The Metropolitan Opera now produces baroque operas, and just this year the Gramophone Classical Music Awards gave the Il Pomo d’Oro recording of Handel’s *Agrippina* starring Joyce DiDonato the best opera recording award, something normally won by large scale romantic era recordings, and not awarded the specifically early music, choral or chamber awards.⁴ This growing openness to the baroque era’s musical world has brought different voice parts back into the fore. Most notably the countertenor and the focus of this project, the bass-baritone. The bass-baritone is a strange and often confused voice part, but by comparing it to the French baroque concept of *Basse-taille* (literally the labeled name for a vocal bass followed by the labeled name for baritone or low tenor), we can gain the perspective of what was expected of this voice type when the term was coined, and how we are writing for it actively. New compositions are also being written specifically for early music orchestras and vocal ensembles that will be explored in the fourth part of this study.

By identifying the change in performance expectations that has taken place, we can more accurately understand the trends that we as musicians, be it performers, educators and/or composers, are in the middle of. This study presents in its third part an analysis of two ensemble pieces and two solo arias

⁴ “Gramophone Classical Music Awards 2020,” Gramophone, accessed November 30th, 2020, <https://www.gramophone.co.uk/awards/gramophone-classical-music-awards-2020>

that highlight the connections between the music written in the Renaissance and the Baroque and current compositional trends. The two ensemble pieces are Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina's *Angelus Domini descendit* and Jonathan Dove's *Vadam et circuibo civitatem*, and the solo arias are "Voici les tristes lieux - Monstre Affreux" from Jean-Philippe Rameau's *Dardanus* RCT 35 and "Batter My Heart" from John Adams' *Doctor Atomic*. First establishing compositional trends in earlier music and then showing those same tools being used in contemporary compositions allows for investigation into the various levels of connection that exist between these eras. This study suggests that this trend is a reclaiming and reincorporation of a significant aspect of the western classical music canon. Interviews make up a large portion of this thesis. It is through speaking with today's musicians that are working on the highest levels that we can more clearly articulate what this musical scene has become. These are leading musical figures that are specifically straddling the line between early music and contemporary music, or who have had a hand in shaping the sound and 'second phase' of the early music movement. Christian Immler, a Swiss singer who began his career as a boy alto, and American Dashon Burton, are two bass-baritones currently working in the concert circuit, while Christopher Lowery is a countertenor at the front of his class with the technique to back it up. The composer's viewpoint is also examined via Caroline Shaw, Eriks Esenvalds, and Jonathan Dove. Each has had a rather different musical career, but all three intersect at the point where early music meets the music being composed right now. Lastly, throughout the paper we will explore an interview with Patrick Quigly, the conductor of Seraphic Fire, giving the perspective of the professional choral conductor that is often tasked with conducting late baroque and classical repertoire, as well as with some of the leading orchestras in the United States. While materials from these interviews are quoted regularly in this paper, major points from the interviews that couldn't be included in the body of this thesis are given as appendixes, allowing the reader to explore the full ideas of these wonderful thinkers and artists.

The purpose of these interviews is to gather the various viewpoints of these artists and collect them into a codified trajectory of current trends. I propose that until we as a musical culture contend with these trends and understand what their further unspooling will mean (especially for the next generation of musician that is beginning to take a hold on the creative world), the dialogue about classical music will always feel out of step with what is actually going on. It is not remotely uncommon to hear the idea that classical music is dying.⁵ If that is actually the case, then why is there so much energy around it? What does a young musician make of the new productions of *Porgy and Bess* at the Met and the smash that it

⁵ A simple search will reveal nearly countless examples of 'think pieces' and opinions from large news outlets to personal blogs. This question seems to have been going on as long as there has been a musical genre *other* than classical music that has been enjoyed.

was? What is all the fuss about loss when the Covid-19 pandemic hit if this artform is not only dying but dead and buried?⁶ It seems questionable to mourn the loss of something if everyone already felt that it was long gone. This music will exist as long as there is the passion to keep it alive. This study advocates for a clearer view of the map of our music. Without a map that we can trust, it is difficult to know how to get where we want to go. As for that trust, I hope I can build it through the fantastic interviews and gorgeous music found within. The intent is to create a starting point for further research on these topics and to simultaneously act as a ‘state of play’ for this now large musical field.

Today’s singers and composers must be versatile in a way that has not been called for in a long time, creating an extension of what the early music revival was. This study will focus on cataloguing the current trends that make the ‘second stage’ of the early music movement different from the initial revival and how that has affected the music and the lives of the musicians that make it. This study will explore three main points: how this second stage has affected performers, how it has affected composers, and how it has spawned the creation of new music. In terms of performers, we will specifically focus on vocalists and what has happened to the landscape of voice parts. Through the interviews conducted this study will explore these trends with those that are forging new pathways for us to follow.

Because a research undertaking such as this can include a large swath of musical ideas and opinions, it is important to begin with some definitions. When this paper refers to “classical music” it is in reference to the main orthodox musical culture that has prevailed in the largest of institutions, which primarily focus on the common practice period, such as the die-hard Brahms and Beethoven performing orchestras and the opera companies with near constantly produced productions of *La Boheme* and *Aida*. The term will be used as the all-encompassing culture, not specifically music from the classical era. The study further differentiates “early music” from mainstream classical music by focusing on early music as the movement to recreate and reintroduce music from the medieval, renaissance, and baroque periods. This movement has expanded to include the creative process and precision in tuning and phrasing, as well as new music written for early music ensembles, both of which have become synonymous with the people making early music.

⁶ This study was written during the fall of 2020, when the pandemic has been raging for almost a full year. If this thesis is being read after this, it is difficult to express how every living being’s attention was driven towards this one event and how almost every human being alive was effected.

Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Christian Immler

One of the most important figures that kick-started the early music revival on a worldwide level was Nikolaus Harnoncourt, the Austrian cellist, viol player and conductor that opened wide the door to early music with his ensemble Concentus Musicus Wien in 1953.⁷ The ensemble made some of the pioneering historically-informed performances of major works by Bach, Handel, and, solidifying his part in the early music movement, Mozart.⁸ As if it wasn't enough, Harnoncourt was a brilliant musical mind and thinker as well as an exemplary musician. He wrote about his work in the early music revival often and his viewpoint is one that illuminates to this day: "In the performance of early music, tradition is as formative a factor as the manuscript of the work itself. Through countless performances over the course of decades and centuries, each piece of music undergoes a formation which in time acquires almost a definitive character."⁹

One of the most fundamental features of early music is that the musicians involved are expected to bring their own personal knowledge and openness to the other musicians. A historically informed musician is expected to understand both the traditional elements (style, phrasing etc.) and have a clear understanding of the score. One such musician is Christian Immler, our first interview subject, who met and began singing under Harnoncourt's baton at the start of his career as a boy alto. Christian has performed as a concert soloist, opera singer, and as a lieder specialist with some of the most prestigious organizations in the world, such as the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, the Sydney Opera House, the Salzburg, Aix-en-Provence and Lucerne Festivals and the BBC Proms, and "His more than 50 recordings have been awarded prizes such as a 2016 Grammy Nomination, the Echo Klassik, the Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik, several Diapason d'Or, Diamant d'Opéra and France Musiques' Enregistrement de l'année."¹⁰

As a boy I was preconditioned, brainwashed practically [to love early music]. I was at the time as a very young soloist with some very old-fashioned symphony orchestras where I was appalled by the attitudes toward early music. It was always considered at the time a warmup piece. Play a little Haydn or Vivaldi to warm up your fingers and then forget about it. That is what came across when you spoke to them, if they lowered themselves to

⁷ He founded the ensemble with his wife, Alice Harnoncourt, a violinist and fantastic musician in her own right.

⁸ "Harnoncourt Biography," Bach Cantatas, accessed November 16th 2020, <https://www.bach-cantatas.com/Bio/Harnoncourt-Nikolaus.htm>

⁹ Nikolaus Harnoncourt. *The Musical Dialogue*. (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1984), 25.

¹⁰ "Christian Immler Biography," Christian Immler, accessed November 16th 2020, <http://www.christianimmler.com/biog.html>

talk to you. Now it's completely different, there is so much camaraderie and openness to the music.¹¹

Christian acts as a connecting point to the beginning of the early music revival. Contemporaries of Harnoncourt, musicians who were at the height of their powers when Christian was a boy, were convinced that this 'new' way of making music was going to disappear.

They thought this was just a crazy fashion. I was equally convinced, even when I was only twelve or fourteen, that they were wrong. This was the time when Karajan was the pinnacle. Go back and listen to Karajan's Beethoven symphonies, and then go to Harnoncourt. This will not stand the test of time, parts of it will of course, this was fantastic conducting, but there was not enough flexibility, it does not speak¹² enough, there are not clashes when there should be clashes. It is too homogenized.¹³

Both Christian and Harnoncourt constantly speak about how in early music there is a "searching" for different kinds of textures and harmonies that can be lost if you are not attentive to it. Harnoncourt said:

As I see it, this interest in old music by which I mean music not written by our generation could only occur as the result of a series of glaring misunderstandings. Thus, we are able to use only 'beautiful' music, which the present is unable to offer us. There has never been a kind of music that was merely 'beautiful.' While 'beauty' is a component of every type of music, we can make it into a determining factor only by disregarding all of music's other components. Only since we have ceased to understand music as a whole, and perhaps no longer want to be able to understand it, has it been possible for us to reduce music to its beautiful aspect alone, to iron out all of its wrinkles.¹⁴

This search for other sounds does not mean that Harnoncourt or Christian believe that you need a 'special' voice for the performance of early music. Much to the chagrin of early music skeptics, there is great evidence that we have circled back to the very beginning of the revival in terms of the demands placed on a singer.

¹¹ Christian Immler (Bass-baritone), in discussion with the author, October 2020.

¹² As someone who has spent a fair amount of time working with Christian, this concept of music 'speaking' is a consistent point of focus for him. My understanding of it is that music 'speaks' when the musicians performing it have a consistent connection of phrasing, tuning, and ensemble that is also connected to the text if there is text.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Nikolaus Harnoncourt. *Baroque Music Today: Music As Speech*. (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1982), 18.

When you listen to very early recordings of Harnoncourt, his first *Orfeo* for example, he had real opera singers, who sang with real opera voices, real big vibrato, and real presence and partially fantastic. It's much closer to where we are now, but now we are a bit more stylistically informed. The actual voice employed by baroque conductors now are full-blown instruments, especially in Europe. In between we had this phase of super thin voice, nonvibrato super white colorless sound with no power behind it. They got away with it because they only had to sing over a small orchestra. While they sang with brilliant intelligence, it did not lead the early music world in the right direction, and now there is a stereotype that early music is for people who simply cannot sing. This is now basically dismissed among the performers, you of course control your vibrato, but it is not suppression to the point of taking all core and tone away, it is near ugly and there is very little longevity for the singer.¹⁵

This realignment of larger voices singing early music is one of the hallmarks of the new era of early music that we find ourselves in. No other choir in the United States is a better example of this than Seraphic Fire, a Miami-based choir under the musical leadership of Patrick Quigly.

Patrick Quigly, Seraphic Fire, and Professional Choral Ensembles

Seraphic Fire is a perfect example of a new type of ensemble in the United States. They are a GRAMMY award-nominated ensemble that has worked with the Cleveland Orchestra and New World Symphony, and has a large educational presence, along with being a performance and recording juggernaut. While the ensemble does incorporate straight tone singing, it combines it with full voice bel canto singing on repertoire as far-reaching as medieval music through enlightenment era music, full Russian choral experiences, Brahms and other romantic compositions and contemporary compositions from around the world.¹⁶ Though Seraphic is emblematic of this approach, they have by no means trademarked this kind of concert programming. When searching through websites of major choral ensembles every single choir that is not a specifically early music ensemble and has a national or

¹⁵ I must say that personally I enjoy the many different tones heard during early music concerts. I revel in the chance to hear singers singing in parts of their voices that is rarely heard in bel canto singing. The 'ugly' sounds, the treble voices in their chest voice, the lower voices in their falsetto and everything in between. I love how the beauty of humanity can be glimpsed in a little microcosm, and while as a lower voice with a sizable enough instrument I'm glad to have a seat at this table, I hope that there will always be the room for musicians of all sorts of voices in early music. I believe it is one of its greatest strengths.

¹⁶ "Seraphic Fire Biography," Seraphic Fire, accessed November 16, 2020, <https://www.seraphicfire.org/about/>

international reach, lists these kinds of concerts on their programs.¹⁷ Also, each choral ensemble found on Gramophone's list of the 'World's Greatest Choirs' either regularly program both old and new music together or have albums of both new and old music. This includes the early music ensembles.¹⁸ Seraphic Fire operates in the vein of a 'travel choir', a new metamorphosis of the professional choir where the members fly into a specific region for that concert series.¹⁹

Seraphic Fire's conductor Patrick Dupré Quigley's experiences provide evidence for the argument that we have long since entered a new era of early music making. He has conducted the Cleveland Orchestra, the San Francisco Symphony, the Utah Symphony, the New World Symphony, the New Jersey Symphony and most notably for this study, the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra.²⁰ When asked about what the early music revival has added to the larger classical music culture, Patrick said:

I think first and foremost, the early music revival brought an attention to tuning precision. Particularly in terms of voices that had not been a part of the gestalt of the 60s and 70s and 80s, when it came to being able to make expressive decisions that were about tuning. "We're going to sing this note slightly low in order to make it feel this way or we're going to sing this slightly high." That wasn't a part of vocal music writ large, but certainly choral music specifically. I'm from a rather Romantically based music-based place, in terms of where I grew up, [when] I was in high school, the 80s and 90s. We saw all things through the eyes of Romantic music, in part because Mahler himself was very interested in historic music. And he arranged these pieces. People came in contact with some of these pieces, for the first time, through the sound world of Gustav Mahler or Felix Mendelssohn. And they fell in love with the music [but] the way that the music was performed was simply that they would perform it as contemporary music and contemporary music at the time was Romantic music. As composers went through, either a Neoclassical or a Neo-baroque phase...it definitely allows us to see them in a different sort of expressive way, and perhaps perform them in a way that calls attention to the structure of the music in the way that we weren't able to before. And I think that that's really the idea of temperament. How we're tuning in what A is, and how we're going to

¹⁷ Even the ensembles that pride themselves on early music specifically are expanding their frontiers, something that will be further explored later in the paper.

¹⁸ "Gramophone World's Greatest Choir Awards," Gramophone, accessed November 16, 2020, <https://www.gramophone.co.uk/features/article/the-world-s-greatest-choirs>

¹⁹ That topic specifically deserves its own paper, one that equally explores the opening of audiences to new 'top of the craft' singers in places they wouldn't normally be heard, while balancing that against complaints that there should be opportunities for local artists. There is simply not enough time to explore this fully here but it is a topic ripe for exploration.

²⁰ "Patrick Dupre Quigley Biography," Seraphic Fire, accessed November 16, 2020, <https://www.seraphicfire.org/about/patrick-dupre-quigley/>

tune chords. That all comes from, at least in the United States comes from either barbershop harmony or the early music movement. And barbershop is an early music, it is sort of an American early music tradition in and of itself. I do think that it's greatly influenced, and then having composers who have heard that and say, 'Oh, this is a completely different color that I can write for.' I think that contemporary composers are writing for the sound that was perfected, because of the influence of the early music or historical music movement.²¹

By incorporating the higher standards of tuning found in the historically informed performance tradition, we have deepened the pursuit of tonal music. The complexity that some musicians were hunting and striving for in the 20th century has been found but in a uniquely tonal way. Instead of the further attempts at complexity by way of serialism, expressionism, modernism, postmodernism, and any other 20th century-isms not listed for brevity; the depth of experience those musicians have always wanted can be (and is currently being) had while keeping a wider audience along for the journey. Many have said 'who cares if you listen,'²² now we say in a deeply personal way, "I very much care if you listen." And if you listen closely, there are entirely new worlds being built to be heard and rediscovered.

While there is a significant movement of professional choral ensembles in the United States, this is a worldwide phenomenon and there is fantastic work being done globally. Two examples of vocal ensembles in Europe engaged in this kind of music-making are Accentus and Pygmalion. Both are French choirs, though they have very different performing ethea. Accentus's focus is on the major a capella works; highlights in the ensemble's repertoire include new choral transcriptions of romantic orchestral music, large scale 20th-century choral showpieces like Poulenc's *Figure humaine*, and theatrical music such as their fantastic new recording of a nearly forgotten early Mozart work, *Betulia Liberata* with Les Talens Lyriques.²³ Pygmalion, on the other hand, skews much earlier and has a particular focus on baroque music. With some of the most awarded discs of Rameau's music in the past decade, Pygmalion has created a reputation for fantastic recordings.²⁴ Both ensembles have received multiple awards of the highest distinction. Though each ensemble may have different focuses, the conjoining point for them with

²¹ Patrick Quigly (Conductor and Music Director of Seraphic Fire), in discussion with the author, October 2020.

²² "Who Cares if You Listen" was a 1958 article by the American composer Milton Babbitt published in *High Fidelity* on which he attempts to show that the 'serious' composer of 'advanced music' should not attempt to be relatable to audiences.

²³ "Accentus Biography," Accentus, accessed November 16th 2020, <http://www.accentus.fr/en/the-project/accentus1/biography/>

²⁴ "Pygmalion Biography," Ensemble Pygmalion, accessed November 16th 2020, <https://www.ensemblepygmalion.com/biographie-en>

the ensemble work in the United States is the freedom that it affords its performers in terms of phrasing and vocal technique. That freedom is deeply rooted in the early music revival. The key to performing in such a varied way concert-to-concert, night-to-night, when the styles and repertoire can change so much on a performer, is to have a flexible mind and vocal technique, as described by Patrick when asked about what is needed of a performer:

We just hire good musicians who also have good technique. And if you don't have one or the other it just doesn't work out... And I think that there was a time when musical training, particularly for singers, was for one specific track. And as tastes have changed, particularly in the realm of opera, and people who compose for opera, as those tastes have changed, they've required singers to be better musicians. Once people become better, once there is a higher standard for an entire industry, there just is a higher standard of musicality. It also [causes] people who are in that industry and who have received that training to say, "Oh, I don't actually want to do that. I want to do this other thing. Because I'm a musician. Maybe I'm not a stage performer. Maybe the dramatic side of the Musical Arts is not what I am particularly interested in." I think the professional vocal ensemble world is evolving at the same time as the rest of the musical world. That we're not an outlier, we're just going through what everyone is, which is there's a change in taste, which happens, usually over a 50 year period. If we look 50 years back from now we think, "Oh, gosh, that's not our ethos at all." Tastes change constantly. It's not as if we're going to endpoint. We as Seraphic Fire focus on the full musician, we don't hire people who come to simply drop their sound into a show that's already found out, our sound is defined by the people who sing with us. If there weren't people who could sing that way, we wouldn't sound that way... We use a supportive vocal technique in the same way that a lieder or opera singer would at all times, even when we're singing, non-vibrato or less vibrato. I don't actually think that any of our musicians sing completely non-vibrato ever during the course of an evening, unless that's what they just know how to do it tastefully, where they can sort of blend into a sound. And that's more instincts. As music goes back to the way that it was during the classical and Baroque period, which is that mostly made by career professionals, or those in training to be career professionals, and I think that's certainly the case right now.²⁵

There are career professionals in the wider early music and ensemble singing world. It is one of the defining features of this new era of early music that we are in. When the early music revival began, one had to pray that you would run into other passionate musicians and create ensembles²⁶ to fill one's soul with early music, and the odds of filling your bank account at any level was exceedingly rare. Many

²⁵ Quigly, discussion: Russo, interview.

²⁶ Not that this is not still a tradition now. Many new ensembles are being founded and fantastic music is being made.

ensembles were started in this tradition such as Poerium, Anonymous 4 and others. Now there is a gigging culture built around this music. This is more than simply chasing trends, there is an audience built up to match this music-making. This 'free' vocalism that is needed to switch styles and eras quickly within the same concert or concert series is also a hallmark of this new era. This allows performers the ability to match conductors' tastes as directly as possible and stands as a contrast to some of the points made against an early music approach. These points were most articulately found in Taruskin's essay "The Modern Sound of Early Music," "It becomes ever more apparent that 'historical' performers who aim 'to get at the truth' (as the fortepianist Malcom Bilson has put it) by using period instruments and reviving lost playing techniques actually pick and choose from history's wares. And they do so in a manner that says more about the values of the late twentieth century than about those of any earlier era. Whatever the movement's aims or claims, absolutely no one performs pre-twentieth century music as it would have been performed new."²⁷

Now that we have entered into the genre-defying twenty-first century these arguments seem dulled slightly in the wake of how early music is being performed currently. Taruskin was a major part of many scholars' growth. His writing may be crystal clear and his intelligence unquestionable, but his fantastic essay "The Modern Sound of Early Music" which is often thrown to me in response to this thesis, seems to only be quoted from the first section and his own response to this point appears to be quickly forgotten:

So is Early Music just a hoax? Are the Bruggens and Bilsons deceiving us, or themselves? Is 'authentic' performance as inauthentic as all that?

Not at all. It is authentic indeed, far more authentic than its practitioners contend, perhaps more authentic than they know. Nothing said above about Messrs. Brüngen, Norrington, and Bilson or the rest should be taken in itself as criticism of the results they have obtained. They have been rightly acclaimed. Their commercial success is well deserved. Conventional performers are properly in awe and in fear of them. Why? Because as we are all secretly aware, what we call historical performance is the sound of now, not then. It derives its authenticity not from its historical verisimilitude, but from its being for better or worse a true mirror of late-twentieth-century taste. Being the true voice of one's time is roughly forty thousand times as vital and important as being the assumed voice of history.²⁸

²⁷ Richard Taruskin. *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 166.

²⁸ Ibid.

Taruskin's arguments for a more open and experimental drive within the recreation of early music has practically become the current generation's guiding light, especially within the United States. This new generation of musicians is not as caught up as the artists working in the late twentieth century on being 'historical'. You are now expected to do your homework, learn the music, read the treatises²⁹, do your ornamentation exercises, and have original ideas as a performer on the performance and to bring your character to the performance if called upon. It is not simply that this is a 'new trend' in early music, this openness combined with the individuality found in early music can be both found in other musical forms like jazz, rock, pop, and more and can be more heavily applied to larger and more romantic forms of classical music.

This is not to say that the ensembles making early music now have no form of continuity between what was being done at the start of the revival. Each class of musician does not throw out the work of one before it simply to find 'the true voice of one's time'. You take the gift of the previous example and grow from that point. This is now a part of choral music in a way that was relegated to only a few of the most massive choral ensembles, like the Metropolitan Opera Chorus. Patrick Quigly clearly explained this process during his interview:

It's what great orchestras have had for years and years, which is tradition. You sit down at the first violin section at the back and you work your way forward. And as you do, you're like, "this is the way we play through things here." And professional vocal ensembles are now getting to the age where they all have those. It's really crazy to think that we're one of the older ensembles now. But once you hit two decades, you have a tradition that isn't necessarily based on the people who are in the ensemble currently... it is now based on past traditions. And so I think that for professional vocal ensembles, we have had such a crossover between the people who sing early to contemporary music because for whatever reason, they had a calling toward things that weren't the mainstream taste. Some of that may be vocal size. But others may be just like, "I'm not particularly moved by the music of Wolf." And that doesn't mean that it's bad music. It's just that, I as a performer, so many people do have such a passion for it and I don't have that same type of passion that I needed to find other things that weren't that to feed my musical soul and members of this ensemble have too. As I imagine you have. I mean, you have a lot of blue covered

²⁹ There are many wonderful training programs to now help you build the knowledge needed. Organizations such as the Boston Early Music Festival Young Artist Program, Amherst Early Music Festival and Seraphic Fire's own Professional Choral Institute are all fantastic programs I have taken part in.

books behind you, which means that clearly you're going in a different direction than say, Rossini at the moment.³⁰

The different direction that Patrick discusses is now viable in a way that has been missing from our musical universe for some time. By embracing the changing nature and freedom of historical performance, entirely new permutations of a fulfilling musical life are available to musicians, and the fruits of their labor are changing the greater classical music audience's tastes at the same time.

³⁰ Quigly, discussion: Russo, interview.

CHAPTER II: PERFORMERS

This second era of the early music revival has changed more than just the way that ensembles function and the repertoire that they perform. It has changed the requirements asked from the performers both as ensemble members and as soloists. While the exact vocal techniques required of these performers deserve its own research, this section of the given study will focus on what this change has done to specific voice parts. The most obvious impact has come in the bright spotlight now placed on countertenors. Countertenors have gone from being relegated to being falsettists in only the most hardcore British cathedral settings to being the star draws of opera productions. Focus will also be given to one of the most confounding voice parts, bass-baritones.³¹ There is very little clarity as to exactly what this voice part is because so many of the singers who consider themselves a bass-baritone will be listed as a baritone on one program and then a bass-baritone in the next. Both countertenors and bass-baritones may now have opportunities outside of early music, but the two voice parts are connected by their constant use in the concert settings and in early music ensembles, as opposed to the operatic stage.

Christopher Lowrey, the Countertenor Phenomenon, and Castrati

Our next interview comes from Christopher Lowrey, a fellow son of Rhode Island, and one of the most sought-after countertenors of his generation. He got his start when early music was “very much a part of HIP³² and all of the assumptions and presumptions that came with it.”³³ Chris is very cognizant of what the beginning of the movement was about:

A big part of the revival in the sixties and seventies was counterculture. It’s all of a piece. All those guys who came up in that world, the people who run BEMF, Boston Baroque -- they are all still going. They are reaching their seventies and to them they are still in their way, and it’s beautiful in its way, in a camper van. That keeps them hungry and curious, somebody like Paul O’Dette, is literally still a massive geek at heart. He finds the pieces. A different sort of new person, a really slick conductor who knows everything there is to possibly know about [the current trends of] baroque style who has a cracking orchestra and really amazing singers is not really pouring over the facsimiles the way that Paul and

³¹ A great interest for the author, as I have started performing under the bass-baritone moniker for more than a year now.

³² Shorthand for Historically Informed Performance, the practice outlined as ‘Ealy Music-Making’ in this thesis.

³³ Christopher Lowrey (Countertenor and Music Director Ensemble Altera), in discussion with the author in 2020.

the type of musician he is emblematic of is. There is something to be said of that countercultural, intrepid musician that we maybe have lost a little bit in our growth.³⁴

Chris cleanly sums up the difference between the beginning of the movement and where we find ourselves now. This is yet another viewpoint of how we have entered into an entirely new phase of early music. As this early music mindset expands, we are in danger of losing our connection to the first phase of the revival if we begin overlooking this ‘head in the book stack’ aspect. However, it ends up, the countertenor is at the center of this second phase and has helped to push the popularity of early music far beyond the dimensions previously reached.

Now the success that the countertenor has achieved since then has almost become decoupled from that [head in the book stack aspect]. I see different strains, there is now a type of countertenor that didn’t exist when I started. The only thing I can call them is a Matinee Idol. I do not use that as a term of disparagement! But there are people like Franco Fagioli and Jacob Orlinski (who has a totally different type of technique even), the first person in this mold was Philip Jaroussky. They tend to be celebrated by the classical music world now as divas. In this way, when I started, that countertenors were absolutely not. There were of course famous countertenors like Bowman and Chance, and since then the English school that have taken that up like Iestyn and Tim Mead and so on, but they aren’t celebrated like Callas and Sutherland. Like essentially soprano divas, whereas this new style of countertenor fandom, not even so much the singing, because someone like Jaroussky is basically in that old school approach or someone like Fagioli, if you were to close your eyes might sound a little bit like a Bartoli. It’s big, it’s brash and it is so consistent. The public is not necessarily hearing the differences in technique yet they treat them the same. This new archetype of the countertenor, it has detached from the HIP thing and combined with the old diva culture and there is something, whisper it, sexual about it. It has always been a part of the musical identity, it’s in rock and roll, it’s in pop. And now it’s managed to make its way into opera. I can see that there are some people who find it very attractive to have men sing in a very feminine way. It’s Frankie Valley, it’s The Beach Boys, MJ, Beegees whatever, that swoon-inducing high male voice singing it’s been transplanted into the opera world and these singers are now experiencing a brand new thing.³⁵

The idea that countertenors have achieved ‘rock star’ status as far as classical musicians go is not shocking in the slightest when compared to the castrati of the musical past. “Farinelli, Nicolini, and Senesino, three of the most famous castrati, were the first musical superstars of the eighteenth century.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Lowrey, discussion; Russo, Interview.

Their voices moved the decadent baroque audience to tears and enraptured them to the point of standing ovations. But the price for this fame was high. Only through castration in their early boyhood could this bell-like voice be kept. Because of the sensational success of the castrati, a huge wave of castration swept over Italy. Ambitious parents had their boys castrated, hoping that they would also become famous opera stars. It is estimated that in Italy alone over half a million boys were victims of this mutilating procedure during the eighteenth century.”³⁶

One could observe the transcendence of countertenors as an altogether healthier reintegration of the castrati musical tradition, or in less glowing terms as the voracious human need for fame meeting the first wave of the early music revival. In reality it matters little, for now we can have our cake and eat it too with all the musicality without any need for mutilation of the human body. Though not all castrati were met with resounding success and adoration; many met with some of the worst and most monstrous descriptions, their otherworldliness used with almost a sideshow like glee. “The two most famous literary castrati of the nineteenth century, Honoré de Balzac’s ‘*Zambinella*’ (in the 1831 novella *Sarrasine*) and Violet Paget’s ‘*Zaffirino*’ (in the 1890 short story ‘*A Wicked Voice*,’ written under her *nom de plume* Vernon Lee) were both bloody, dangerous, death-dealing Gothic monsters with divine voices.”³⁷

One shudders to think of the fate that could have befallen any young, poor Italian boy with any slight musical aptitude, to have the decision made for you from above and then be mocked for something beyond your control. Though, as is often the case when investigating further into the castrati, they were not always thought of as this strange baroque creation, even “an elderly Rossini saw the entire concept and practice of *bel canto* as having been embodied and defined by the castrati³⁸: ‘The true art of the *bel canto* ended with the castrati; one must acknowledge that, even if one cannot wish for their return. These people had to exist for their art, and thus they spent the most exhausting rigor and tireless care on their training. They were always proficient musicians and, even when their own voices failed, [they were] at least effective teachers.’”³⁹

³⁶ Dr. M. Hatzinger “*Kastraten – alles für den Ruhm*”. (Der Urologe 6, 2009), 1.

³⁷ Robert William Crowe. “‘*He was Unable to Set Aside the Effeminante, and So was Forgotten*’: Masculinity, Its Fears, and the Uses of Falsetto in the Early Nineteenth Century.” *19th Century Music* 43, No. 1: 15-35.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ferdinand Hiller, “Plaudereien mit Rossini,” *Aus dem Tonleben unserer Zeit*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: F. G. Leuckart, 1871), 26 (emphases and orthography original). “Die meisten Sänger der neueren Zeit haben ihr Talent mehr ihrem glücklichen Naturell als ihrer Ausbildung zu danken, so Rubini, so die Pasta and viele andere. Die eigentliche Kunst des *bel Canto* hat mit den Castraten aufgehört; man muß das zugestehen, wenn man sie auch

When asked about the countertenor voice, one he has employed in Seraphic Fire many times, Patrick Quigly gave a summation of the countertenor's ascent:

The countertenor voice has in my lifetime gone through Alfred Deller [being] the prominent countertenor in the 80s and 70s and the difference in style between Alfred Deller who was just a great musician. He grew up in the English school, there were falsettos, this is how he brought his art. Where now there are people who actually focus on this idea of how do I use all of my voice that I don't have to just use one part of my voice. So I think that the rise of the countertenor has also shown the rise of baritones using their falsetto and composers writing for baritones in falsetto. And then thinking about that most of the tenor roles that we hear sung in full voice were actually more sort of like countertenor roles. And so is it a new voice type? Or are we just marketing in a different way? Because certainly at the first half of the 19th century, people were not hitting full high Cs in full voice, that they were hitting them in falsetto and making and producing them and often putting the male voice higher than the female voice because there's these strange voicings that we find because people were singing in their falsetto rather than on the fully approximated non-falsetto chords. Now, the countertenors are singing at the same level as and sometimes higher than, 'traditional' voice parts because there is another step up.⁴⁰

This freedom to use 'all of my voice' is another hallmark of the second wave of the early music revival. That openness to vocal technique has bled over to lieder recitals, is starting to make its way into mainstream opera productions, and even made its way into more popular genres. There is already evidence that the male falsetto is not only easily digestible, but that the next generation of musician don't even consider its use strange. The operatic countertenor John Holiday, who normally spends his seasons performing with opera companies and symphonies, has responded to the pandemic by taking part in the newest season of the NBC singing competition *The Voice*, participating entirely in his countertenor voice.⁴¹ Meanwhile, the anointed prince of falsetto use, Jacob Collier, is a genre-defying wunderkind who had his primary vocal experiences as a boy treble in opera productions and has brought that style of

nicht zurückwünschen kann. Diesen Leuten mußte ihre Kunst alles sein, und so wandten sie denn auch den ange- strengtesten Fleiß und die unermülichste Sorgfalt auf ihre Ausbildung. Sie wurden immer tüchtige Musiker und, wenn es mit Ihrer Stimme fehlschlug, wenigstens treffliche Lehrer."

⁴⁰ Quigly, discussion: Russo, interview.

⁴¹ "John Holiday," Fletcher Artist Management, accessed December 8, 2020, <https://www.fletcherartists.com/artists/john-holiday/>

singing to entirely new audiences. He has also recently received a GRAMMY nomination for Best Album.⁴² While his musical universe is not a direct part of the second wave of the early music revival, it is of extreme importance to note that an artist who regularly sings in the countertenor range while incorporating microtonal singing in his pop anthems can reach the widest musical audiences now. That freedom that he embraces is free for the taking for any classical music ensemble ready to reach out and embrace it.

Dashon Burton, the Bass-Baritone or *le Basse-Taille*

A broadminded approach to vocal technique has been a cornerstone of Dashon Burton's career. Dashon has sung with Philharmonia Baroque, the Handel and Haydn Society, Boston Baroque, the Carmel and Bethlehem Bach Choir Festivals, and the Baltimore, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Indianapolis, Kansas City, New Jersey, and Oregon symphonies, and the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic.⁴³ Between his work as an oratorio soloist or as a vocalist in *Roomful of Teeth*, he has matched his career's need for an open mind in kind, with open arms and a true willingness to experiment.

Early music has this directness of sound. There is no elevation or erudition to the sound. There is not the pressure to make this grand, glorious sound at every single point of a performance as there is in so much of bel canto and grand opera. In both early music and in contemporary music there is a lot more room for a level of intimacy, which is not 'perfect' in its immediate presentation and that level of intimacy is encouraged in both early and contemporary music. Conductors I've worked with are much more interested in that heartfelt nature and the intellectual access to the emotion first, it isn't just about the glory of the tone from top to bottom as it is in the other wonderful music that I've studied. The lenses are slightly different: bel canto is about the absolute mastery of the voice and that's what makes it so thrilling.⁴⁴

While Dashon does make most of his music within the concert frame, his career has seen him singing on the operatic stage as Sarastro in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* in Dijon and Paris, and the role of Jupiter in Rameau's *Castor and Pollux* with Christoph Rousset and Les Talens Lyriques.⁴⁵ Though his

⁴² "Jacob Collier," Jacob Collier, accessed November 30th 2020, <https://www.jacobcollier.com>

⁴³ "Dashon Burton Biography," Dashon Burton, accessed November 16th 2020, <http://www.dashonburton.com/home>

⁴⁴ Dashon Burton (Bass-Baritone) in discussion with the author in October 2020.

⁴⁵ I would also suggest the fantastic recordings of the four hand piano arrangement of Brahms' Requiem with Seraphic Fire for some cross interview examples of this open minded approach to singing many different genres and eras of music.

expertise could easily be focused solely on traditional bel canto singing, Dashon keeps an eye on exactly what he is creating and who it is being created for.

For me it's the audience, I really enjoy the process of seeing what connects to an audience... there is this element of wanting to weave this story you want to tell from whose ever perspective at that time. For me I think it's more interesting for the audience to include as many voices that are important throughout history as you can. Whether that voice is more important to you because of your background or if you find this really amazing tome or text that has been set. That's the joy of the exploration.⁴⁶

Dashon is emblematic of the bass-baritone, not only for his exemplary singing but for the attitude he takes towards the voice part itself.

I'm very fack agnostic. Especially about the bass-baritone because it comes from this opera tradition that is incredibly useful for things like color and character, affect, general physicality. I admired a lot of the bass baritones that I had come across. That's what I was listening to in my early training and I found myself gravitating to that aura, that color. The nature of what I sing, a lot of oratorio, where the basso profundo role doesn't really exist, that's more an opera or choral tradition, we fill that role. The bass-baritone color is used in its place.⁴⁷

If the voice type is simply filling a physical role in casting, why is there so much confusion about the voice type and why does it seem so ambiguous at times? Dashon's point of color choice leads us to Patrick Quigly's response to the same question:

I think that bass-baritones are used the way they are right now because of the lack of available basses. Bass-baritones would not be treated the way that they are if there were more basses. In musical terms, they sing much higher and much lower than they would ever have been able to sing. If you take the French orchestra, even from the string section, [there is] a soprano line and then four sort of middle lines between the taille and the tenor and if you look back at different era's orchestras there was a difference between a bass instrument and a baritone instrument. The bassoon is sort of a baritone instrument yet we don't think of it as such, we think of it sort of like a bass line but it's really a baritone instrument. Similarly, there is a space in between, [where] the viola is really a baritone instrument. Because there's space for a smaller viol in between the soprano and the alto part. I think that the voice types have been oversimplified because of casting. So if you want to put on a show, rather than commission a show for the people that you have, you're putting on repertory that is written for a different

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

time, a different place. You have to fit the people you have into it. So if you have a role that calls for a baritone, and you -- all you have is a bass-baritone in your company that guy's going to sing high and be pushed out of his comfort zone. Similarly, if all you have is a bass-baritone and no bass in your company, you will get a bass-baritone singing Sarastro. You can see the differentiations that an opera company would have had a lower voice than the bass-baritone and a higher voice than the bass-baritone that wasn't a tenor. Just by the casting. And we just don't think of it that way anymore.⁴⁸

The bass-baritone was always the wide-ranged work horse of the vocal work. The title was first used during the baroque era in France, where composers like Jean-Baptiste Lully and Jean-Philippe Rameau used the French word, *Basse-Taille*, to designate the part between the baritone (*Taille* in the French baroque categorizations) and bass (*Basse-contre*). The following diagram is a translation of Louis-Joseph Francoer's *Diapason general de tous les instruments à vent* from 1772 that breaks down the vocal ranges of each of the French baroque vocal categorizations found in the preface of the Rameau Opera Aria Anthologies published by the Centre de musique baroque de Versailles and the Société Jean-Philippe Rameau.

⁴⁸ Quigly, discussion; Russo, interview.

Chapter 8 HUMAN VOICES

I could have dispensed with giving here the ranges of the human voice given that this treatise is only concerned with wind instruments; however, since this will serve as a guide to composers, one that explains both the range and gives advice on each of these instruments, I feel I should add here this vital chapter for those who do not know well the ordinary ranges of the human voice.

Range or Pitch of All Voice Types

Held notes

Rarely must go beyond the notes under this bracket during recitatives, particularly for the low notes.

Passing notes for the solos, and held whole notes for the choruses.

Female voices for tender and pathetic roles

Female voices for "wand roles", or *bas-dessus* [mezzo-soprano]

Female voices for light roles, or for *castrati*

Haute-contre [tenor]

Taille [baritone]

Basse-taille [bass-baritone]

Basse-contre [bass]

The different clefs that I put at the beginning of each vocal range are the ones usually associated with each voice type. The letter "A" indicated in each vocal range shows which note corresponds to the note D, the third open string of a violin.

The whole notes must only be used for held notes or for final notes. One could also use them as passing notes, but since they are very low and barely audible, it is best to avoid them whenever possible.

The half notes indicate the most commonly used notes in each vocal range, the mean where each voice is most at ease. This is why one must not go beyond these notes in the recitatives, in order to allow the actor to speak the text instead of singing it as they [the actors] are wont to do.

The quarter notes and eighth notes indicate all the notes that must only be used as passing notes, and the smaller their value, the more it is essential to get through them quickly since these notes are too high to be held, particularly in solo airs.

Translation: Benjamin Narvey

"Range or pitch of all voices," in Louis-Joseph Francœur, *Diapason général de tous les instruments à vent*, Paris, Deslauriers, 1772, p. 72.

Ex. 1: Translation found in the foreword of the *Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles Airs d'opéra* anthology

While many of the composers of the French baroque wrote substantial roles for the *Basse-taille*, we will, for brevity's sake and because we will be analyzing an aria from *Dardanus* in the next section, focus on the impact of Jean-Philippe Rameau. Rameau wrote most of his operas for the Académie Royale de Musique or in its more unofficial designation, the Paris Opéra, and from the very beginning of his career, the *Basse-taille* was a major part of it.⁴⁹

The Palais Royal, 1 October 1733: in a room bathed in the flickering light of candles, the audience of the Académie Royale de Musique prepares to hear the first *tragédie lyrique* of Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Hippolyte et Aricie*, on a libretto by the Abbé Pellegrin. In the second act, when his death has just been announced, Thésée (Theseus) appears, driven back by the Fury Tisiphone. An eyewitness recounts: ‘The Underworld gapes open; I hear the mournful cries of the damned, the howls of the Fates; the Demons are unleashed. How frightening is the image of the Fury with Theseus! What truth there is in the expression: you are gripped, and the impression the sounds make on your ear penetrates your soul and fills it with horror.’⁵⁰

And who was standing at that gaping maw of a hellscape? None other than the *Basse-taille*, “Claude-Louis-Dominique Chassé de Chinai (1699-1786), the basse-taille who created the roles of Thésée and Abramane.”⁵¹ While much has been written about different countertenors, we can look at registers from the era to learn exactly who these men were, what was expected from them as *Basse-taille* and how it mimics what is happening in our era. “There is, however, one document of great importance... entitled *Détail de le régie actuel de l’Academie Royale de Musique avec un denombrement de tout ce qui fait la recette et la depense de ce spectacle en 1738*. As the title suggests, this inventory lists the entire company—solo singers, chorus, orchestral players, dancers, administrative employees, officials in the Académie’s Ecole and even the pensionnaires and is thus easily the most complete list of this kind to have survived from before 1750.”⁵²

This allows us to learn more about Chassé:

⁴⁹ Graham Sadler. *The Rameau Compendium*. (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2014), 6.

⁵⁰ Pierre-Louis d’Aquin de Château-Lyon, in his *lettres sur les hommes célèbres*, Part One. (1752) Translation found in the album *Enfers*’ liner notes, see below for citation.

⁵¹ Eddy Garaudel. “Enfers.” Liner Notes, *Degout, Pichon, Pygmalion*. CD. Paris. 2018.

⁵² Graham Sadler. “Rameau’s singers and players at the Paris Opéra,” *Early Music* Vol. 11, No. 4, Rameau Tercentenary Issue (1983), 454.

Chassé [Claude-Louis de]. This actor has gained esteem by his perseverance in singing. He excels in the roles of Furies, and is less appreciated in expressive roles. He has an unusual character, not very social and very unruly. Entered the Opéra in 1720; sang there for two and a half years, and was absent for 18 months. Returned in 1724 and finally returned in September 1738 because in 1737 he was with Mr. le Mareschal d'Etrees in Rennes, Brittany, where he discovered some trace of nobility; this, according to him, was the reason he left the Opéra.⁵³

The roster for the chorus of the Paris Opéra was relatively massive with 43 men and 24 women engaged in 1738.⁵⁴ The lopsided nature of this roster reflects the French voice part *Haute-contre*, which is something between a high tenor and a countertenor and most often fills the role of singing what we would normally think of altos. “Most of Rameau's choral writing is in four parts designated *dessus, haute-contre, taille* and *basse* (also called *basse-taille*) with all parts but the top sung by male voices”⁵⁵ Of note is that even within the *Détail* the Opéra didn't specifically list basses, instead choosing to list all the lowest singers as *Basse-taille*. The flexibility needed now for entirely different cultural reasons is reflected during the earliest use of the term. It is then reasonable to contend that this ambiguity is part of what makes the bass-baritone voice part virtuosic; the singers of this designation must be, and have been, able to fill whatever role is asked of them. Even if that means drastically changing musical function between operas, concerts, or even within a piece's specific musical structure. As for why this convention seems to rhyme so much with our own times, we turn again to Patrick's interview:

We now have people who are singing bass roles, who are not entirely qualified to sing bass roles. Some of that is because we don't smoke anymore as much as we used to. We don't do the things on a constant basis, to sort of abuse the voice in the way that we used to. That sound isn't around as much as it was then, particularly in the Russian tradition, where they still have that sound. But after the 1917 revolution, the basso profundo was really mainly a religious voice type that had a theatrical role. They were never supposed to sing above the staff. And if they did it would sound terrible. It was always a comedic or an expressive gesture. But that's a sound. And for whatever reason, we decided that we would make up for not having any basses or not really training any basses or honestly, not telling young men that singing is a possibility for them. This is same with the countertenors that this idea that singing itself is feminine. And that the worst thing that

⁵³ *Détail de le régie actuel de l'Academie Royale de Musique avec un denombrement de tout ce qui fait la recette et la depense de ce spectacle en 1738*. Translation found in: Graham Sadler. “Rameau's singers and players at the Paris Opéra.”

⁵⁴ Mary Cyr, “The Paris Opéra Chorus during the Time of Rameau,” *Music & Letters*, vol. 76, No. 1. (1995): 36.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

you could be is perceived as feminine. I mean, if we talk about the toxic masculinity of our times and how it shows itself in classical music, it's because men who should have started when their voice changed where people [could identify voices and say], "You're going to be a star." There's no one who can tell anyone that anymore. They can't show them, "Oh, we're in our Italian town, let's go to see the Buffo at the theatre, because this is our entertainment," and, "Oh, you could actually do that. So look how famous this person is, and how liked they are and the wonderful comedy of it."⁵⁶

At a time when 'normal' baritones are being used for more romantic parts or roles that would have been written for tenors in the past, the bass-baritone is the new work horse even in contemporary composition. If you include the bass-baritone's falsetto, the range often spans beyond three octaves.⁵⁷ At a time culturally where fewer men are involved with singing, but there is the market need for soloists and ensemble members with voices that can fill many roles, the bass-baritone is one of the defining voice parts.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Quigly, discussion: Russo, interview.

⁵⁷ One need only look at the writing for bass and bass-baritone in Gerald Barry's vocal music, such as *Beethoven*, to see the lower voices pushed to the maximum range.

⁵⁸ This is yet another doorway only peered into by this study. The issue of empowering young men to use their voices young is one that is seemingly a constant battle. The Providence Singers, a local oratorio choir in Rhode Island, has a yearly 'Young Men's Choral Festival' that hopes to address this very problem. There are many more programs like this that can begin to address this quietly heart-breaking reality.

CHAPTER III: MUSICAL ANALYSIS AND COMPOSERS

“Even in literature and art, no one who bothers about originality will ever be original: whereas if you simply try to tell the truth (without caring twopence how often it has been told before) you will, nine times out of ten, become original without ever having noticed it.” – C.S. Lewis.

The connection between early music and twenty-first-century music goes well beyond the lives of the musicians who are involved with both types of music. It is found within the very music of both eras. There are connections to be found between the two worlds that are both thematic and musical. Further investigations beyond the repertoire analyzed here include the connections between such composer sets as Adés and Purcell, Bach, and Glass, etc., as well as the further exploration of the connection between Adams’s music and composers such as Handel and others. These connections are so ripe in fact, that I’m certain more and more will be found as a younger set of composers move in from the wings of music history and take center stage. We will start from the beginning, with first focusing on the analysis of the Palestrina motet and Rameau aria, and after laying the groundwork move forward to the Dove motet and the Adams aria.

Palestrina’s Polyphonic Heaven

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525-1594) was a juggernaut of Renaissance polyphonic music and his career culminated in him holding the maestro di cappella position at Cappella Giulia, the main musical arm of *Basilica Papale di San Pietro in Vaticano* in Vatican City.⁵⁹ He wrote countless scores⁶⁰ and is a mainstay of recordings and concerts; *The Sixteen’s* recordings of his works span eight releases with more music that did not make it onto this effort.⁶¹ Long before the concept of the early music revival, Palestrina was well loved-and inspired many attempts at recreating his music, including a substantial edition from one of the romantic era’s most maximalist composers, Richard Wagner. “Richard Wagner's edition of the *Stabat mater* by Palestrina calls for a special attention among the 19th century transcriptions and practice editions of the work, since Franz Liszt declared it to be a masterpiece to be followed by others throughout

⁵⁹ Howard Mayer Brown. “*Choral Music in the Renaissance.*” *Early Music* Vol. 6, No. 2, (1978): 165.

⁶⁰ The exact number of scores written by Palestrina is in dispute as there was a period where it seems many pieces were attributed to him that were in fact most likely written by someone else.

⁶¹ “The Sixteen Product Listing,” *The Sixteen*, accessed on November the 30th, <https://thesixteenshop.com/products/palestrina-volume-1>

his life, albeit he knew and appreciated editions with historical aspect, too. Wagner prepared his version of Palestrina's composition in 1848 for his historical concert in Dresden...by the Hofkapelle on March 8th, 1848, in the Dresden Court Theatre.”⁶²

While it may feel strange to read names like Wagner and Liszt as being involved with the revival of older repertoire, it is a fact that they were some of the first people involved with its reconstruction.⁶³ The work of these composers is an aspect of the history of the early music revival that does not get emphasized much now, the main reason being that the romantic's scores, with their specific dynamic and rhythmic markings, are often at odds with what we have learned from treatises that have discovered and put to the fore since the late nineteenth century.

The early ensemble piece we will be focusing on is the motet *Angelus Domini descendit*. It must have been well received, because Palestrina wrote a parody mass after its themes, *Missa descendit angelus Domini*. Like many long-form motets of the era, *Angelus Domini descendit* is split into two parts, with a contrasting ending to both.⁶⁴ In this case, the main developmental material is in a large four pulse and then the ending material shifts to a faster three pulse, building the energy to the end of each section. There are many examples of word painting found within this motet. The piece begins with just the treble voices singing on text describing angels descending, as the vocal lines do exactly that. As the lower voices enter, they also start in higher parts of their range and mimic the falling motif that was introduced at the beginning. As the polyphonic texture grows, there are more instances of word painting, like the G-F-sharp-G motif on the text “*accendens*”, often found in the high range of the tenor and quintus parts. In the third section of the Prima Pars, there is further word-painting found in the melisma starting in a lower tessitura of each voice's range and climbing higher on the text “*jam surrexit*”. The rousing *alleluia*, found in example 2⁶⁵, ends each pars. This piece is a distinct example of Renaissance polyphony, with some of its clearest hallmarks, written by one of the masters of the style.

⁶² Zsuzsanna Domokos. “Wagner's Edition of Palestrina's ‘Stabat Mater’.” *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, (2006): 222.

⁶³ Quigly, discussion: Russo, interview.

⁶⁴ Palestrina, Giovanni Pierluigi da. Ed. Imre, Pothárn. *Angelus Domini descendit*. Transcribed from 1575 print.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

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The image shows a musical score for a vocal piece, likely a choir or solo voice. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff is a vocal line with lyrics: "al - le - lu - ja." The second staff is a vocal line with lyrics: "le - lu - ja." The third staff is a vocal line with lyrics: "ja, al - le - lu - ja, al - le - lu - ja." The fourth staff is a vocal line with lyrics: "- le - lu - ja, al - le - lu - ja." The fifth staff is a bass line with lyrics: "le - lu - ja, al - le - lu - ja." The music is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 4/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

Ex. 2. Repeated Alleluia from the Palestrina

Measure Numbers	m 1-23	m 23-62	m 62-93	m 93-113	m 1-46	m 46-62	m 62-93	m 93-113
Text	Angelus Domini descendit de coelo	Et accedens revolvit lapidem – quia crucifixum quaeritis	Jam surrexit, venite, ubi positus erat dominus	Allelujah	Et introeuntes in monumentum – et obstupuerunt	Nolite timere scio enim – Quia crucifixum quaeritis	Jam surrexit, et videte locum. ubi positus erat dominus	Allelujah
‘Key’ Center	G dorian	Alternating between G dorian, G minor, and G melodic minor.	G dorian	G dorian ending in G major	G dorian, alternating with D minor	D minor with sections in B flat major, ending in g dorian	G dorian	G dorian ending in G major
Of interest	Prima pars				Secunda pars		Same material as Prima pars	Same material as Prima pars

Table 1: Palestrina *Angelus Domini descendit* analysis

Rameau, *Dardanus*, and the God's Playthings

Our example of baroque solo repertoire is “Voici les tristes lieux...Monstre affreux” from Rameau’s *Dardanus* RCT 35. Jean-Phillipe Rameau has already been introduced in this thesis but has a further role to play. Rameau “Started as a rank outsider. Though quick-witted at school, his academic results were said to be deplorable, but the seeds of a late-germinating attraction to opera may have been sown at this stage by his Jesuit teachers’ strange initiatives in didactic music theatre that formed a part of his teaching curriculum.”⁶⁶ Through sheer force of mental will and an open and curious mind, Rameau would be acknowledged as the leading savant of the science of contemporary music during the late baroque era. Having not written his first opera until he was at the age of fifty-one, Rameau would emerge as one of the most distinctive musical voices of the French baroque, becoming the greatest exponent of *tragédie lyrique* and *opéra-ballet* in the history of French opera, though few at the beginning of his career and life could have predicted it.⁶⁷

Dardanus, the larger work that comprises the aria we will be analyzing, is one such *tragédie lyrique*. *Dardanus*, is a stereotypically French baroque plot, combining a love triangle, the influence of the Roman Gods and Goddesses, the political intrigue of two warring nations, and mistaken identities. While the hero of the opera is, as plainly to be seen, Dardanus, the aria *Monstre affreux* is sung by the character Anténor, a king and warrior, who has sworn to defeat a furious dragon sent by Neptune to win the hand of his love, Iphise. It has been found out in a previous act that Iphise loves Dardanus, not Anténor.⁶⁸ The beginning recitative tells of Anténors’ drive to slay the beast and the description of the barren place the dragon resides. The aria is comparing love and the destruction and damage it creates to the monstrous abilities of the dragon itself. It then ends with a stormy fast section where Anténor does battle with the beast. Both the beginning of the aria and the ending fast section can be found in the third and fourth examples below, both taken from the édition de Cécile Davy-Rigaux et Denis Herlin of the 1739 version of the opera published in a joint effort by the Société Jean-Philippe Rameau and Bärenreiter Verlag.

⁶⁶ John Elliot Gardiner. *Bach: Music in the Castle of Heaven*. (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House LLC, 2013), 94-95.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Much is the plight of any lower voice in opera for hundreds of years. It is a rather recent development in the lyric stage that the baritone, especially a high one, is a romantic figure of desire.

Measure Numbers	m. 596-610	m. 611-637	m. 638-648	m. 615-637	m. 649-720
Text	Voici les tristes lieux...	Monstre affreux	Contre votre fureur...	Monstre affreux	Quel bruit! Quelle tempête horrible!
Key Center	A Minor to E Major	A Minor	C Major to E Major	A Minor	F Major
Section	Prélude and Recitative	Air	'B Section' Recitative	Repeat of Air	Tempête

Ex. 3. Beginning of the air from *Monstre Affreux*

The recitative begins with a fast-moving prelude, dropping the audience directly in the action. The air has a slow-moving and undulating pulse in A minor, as if the beast was waiting, simmering under the surface, for Anténor to drop his guard. The air functions similarly to a *de capo* aria, but with a recitative as the B section that allows Anténor to further comment on love and his inability to resist ‘Love’s alarms’, which then returns to the air again. The piece ends with a final allegro that is virtuosic

music depicting the battle. Throughout the aria, the *Basse-taille* is tasked with singing quite high in their vocal range. This is an emblematic aspect of the *Basse-taille* airs in this period; the written range of this aria alone is that of two octaves, and the singer is often tasked with spanning large intervals. This device can be seen in future writing for the bass-baritone voice, but it is first and foremost the tone of a lower voice singing high that separates it from higher baritones and tenors, even if the higher pitches could be sung by any of the other voice categorizations. It is this timbral requirement of a lower or darker voice in its extremes that will connect this to the Adams aria.

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ANTÉNOR - lè - - - vent jus - qu'aux cieux ; Du ton -
tous

Vn *fort* *doux*

HcVn *fort* *doux*

TVn *fort* *doux*

Bs et Bc *fort* *doux*

670

ANTÉNOR - ner - - - re ven - geur j'en -

Vn

HcVn

TVn

Bs et Bc

6

Ex. 4: Final Allegro from the “Voici les tristes lieux...Monstre affreux”. Note the high tessitura for the bass-baritone when they are confronting the dragon.

Jonathan Dove and the Act of Rediscovery

Jonathan's fantastic motet was just one of many that the Ora Singers, a British pro-choir⁶⁹, have commissioned over the relatively short amount of time that the ensemble has been together. The conductor, Suzi Digby, gives the composers in question a motet to musically respond to and their response is often on the same text. Over the arch of this project there have been combinations of Sir James Macmillan with both Allegri and Tallis, Eriks Esenvalds⁷⁰ with Byrd, and the focus of this section, Victoria and Dove.⁷¹ For the purposes of this study, the Dove motet is consciously being compared to the Palestrina and not the Victoria that it was based on. This is to show that these musical connections are deeper than 'just' a composer basing his work on a previous piece. Even while doing that, Dove was able to connect to the long history of Renaissance choral composition by means of form, texture, and roles played by each voice part.

The work at hand is Dove's *Vadam et circuibo civitatem*, a motet for eight voices, with each of the SATB choir voices splitting to two. It begins almost exactly like the Palestrina before it, with the upper voices descending and then creating their own five-note pulse based on a fragment from the Victoria motet of the same name, which was part of the Ora Singers commission:

There are a few phrases from the Victoria in the first few pages. It's transposed up, though I thought it was a literal memory of it. The first two and half bars is enough material for pages. My second page is the entire second bar and by the third page I'm on the fifth and sixth bar of the Victoria. But that's really all of the material until figure F. Then the text and the rhythm of the text takes over. The language becomes more foreground, and Victoria takes a step back until figure M when I wanted to feel like we've suddenly shifted back a few centuries. There is no more Victoria really after that point. That is consistent with other pieces of mine with a bit of borrowing in it. A relatively small amount of material from the original is enough for quite an extended piece.⁷²

⁶⁹ The Ora Singers are the newest ensemble featured in this study, with their first recording being released in 2017. They have quickly become a powerhouse, with a massive emphasis being put on commissions. Their goal is to have 100 commissions composed and performed over the next ten years. Their newest recording of the Tallis *Spem in Alium* presented jointly with a new 40-part piece by Sir James MacMillan is particularly recommended by the author.

⁷⁰ This is addressed in the first appendix to this study, by the composer.

⁷¹ "Ora Singers About Section," Ora Singers, accessed on December the 9th, <https://www.orasingers.co.uk/about>

⁷² Jonathan Dove (Composer), in discussion with the author in October 2020.

The minimalist drive builds throughout the first section of the piece until a glorious climax on homophonic chords at measure 141 (figure M) where we have every part of the choir singing together for the first time. After that point it dreamily reconnects with the material based on Victoria.

There is an impulse that creeps up in the piece. I think in the beginning there is an early Renaissance sound world with additional pedal notes, but by the end I hope you are aware of the narrative. Even though it doesn't start in a very narrative place. The beginning is this drifting and (long pause) melancholic search before it becomes a bit more manic and desperate.⁷³

Five note
Victoria
Quote

Ex. 5. Introduction of Dove's *Vadam et circuibo civitatem*

⁷³ Ibid.

Measure Numbers	m. 1-35	m. 36-60	m. 61-87	m. 88-103	m. 104-140	m. 141-153	m. 154-165	m. 166-176
Text	Vadam et circuib civitatem	Vadam et circuib civitatem	Vadam et circuib civitatem	Per vicos et plateas	Quaesivi illum	Adiuovos filiae Jerusalem	Si inveneritis dilectum meum	languo
Key Centers	A minor	A minor	E minor	E minor moving to D major	Centers around the pitch B with time spent in B minor and E minor	Alternating between A major and C major, ending in F Major	C Major	E minor, ending with a Picardy third.
Description	Treble voices begin the five note Victoria quote.	Same material as before, now with the basses droning.	Lower voices now have the five note Victoria quote. Soprano descant is added near the end of the section.	New text and second minimalist cell.	Third minimalist cell.	Large chords with sudden long note values.	Eighth note pulses while sopranos sing a new descant.	The five note Victoria quote returns in the first soprano and harmonized in the first tenor, long renaissance style cadence.

If you take this Victoria, which I didn't know beforehand, and reflect upon it. There was some sense of being a balance between the scale of the original and the scale of the reflection. This relatively long piece came out as a result of that. For me that is not an encyclopedic length, but always in my experience a choral commission is to fill an anthem slot and therefore shouldn't be more than about six minutes. Know that it was length that it wanted to be and that was a nice luxury a composer is not often given. It was also liberating to write for a choir as a concert piece and not write something that had a direct liturgical use. Most of choral music has been commissioned by the Anglican church.⁷⁴

This work is extremely demanding for the choir that performs it. Beyond the wide vocal ranges of almost every part, the performers must have an impeccable sense of time, something Dove himself is well

⁷⁴ Dove, discussion; Russo, interview.

aware of. “I haven’t had the chance to talk about this piece very much. For some reason there are a few pieces of mine that I have had to talk about a lot. I am aware that it is not a significantly easy piece. Knowing Ora was going to sing it, I knew I could basically write anything, they are such an amazing group.”⁷⁵

This is not the first time Dove connected music from the past to new compositions:

There is a strand in my work that stems from or leaning heavily from earlier music that has gone back from the beginning [of his compositional career]. My first published piece was a wind serenade that I wrote for Glynborne in 1991 based on the marriage of Figaro. It was the Mozart bicentennial and they commissioned a different composer to compose a serenade to be performed in the garden before the opera. I remember thinking initially that I shouldn’t use any of Mozart’s music because I didn’t want to bore the audience and get them used to the tune before the opera even started. In fact, it’s entirely made up of the Mozart. It established a practice in which I explore the existing work and the freedom to explore the musical figures and phrases and obsess over them. My music has a sort of obsessing quality to them. It’s often just a few bars or even just a few notes of the original which I find to just grow from there. There is something minimal and repetitive going on that allows new things or contexts to emerge around that material... There is a Bach based piece, it was pointed out to me that Bach had written no ecclesiastical music during his time in Köthen he wrote the preludes and fugues and the Brandenburg Concertos so I wrote a mass based on those pieces (See example 6).⁷⁶ The vocal lines are free, but what the instruments are playing is all developed from those works.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Jonathan Dove. “Koethener Messe, EP 7658a,” 2002, London.

⁷⁷ Dove, discussion; Russo, interview.

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S. *Tutti* *f*
Ky - - ri - e e - le - i - son

A. *Tutti*
Ky - - ri - e e - le - i - son

T. *Tutti*
Ky - - ri - e e - le - i - son

B. *Tutti* *f*
son Ky - - ri - e e - le - i - son

ec. I, 2 *f*

Hpsd *f*

Vln I *f* *mf*

Vln II *f*

Vla *f* *mf*

Vc *f* *pizz.* *mf*

Db *f*

Ex. 6. Kyrie from Dove's *Koethener Messe*

John Adams and the American Baroque Nightmare

John Adams is an American composer that is so massive in his current recognition that it feels unnecessary to introduce him. The core of his musical identity is that of the outsider, learning from the harshest of academic modernists during the nineteen-sixties, and then making the now mythological journey from New England to the intellectual freedom of the West Coast and San Francisco. He used the tools of minimalism to pry loose from the grips of that academic modern music, creating an expansive expressive musical language that included tonality.⁷⁸ His musical combination of historical operatic tradition and large-scale modern orchestras has since become a mainstream idea. His music now plays across musical dorm rooms, the largest of opera theatres, concert halls, movie and television soundtracks, and is sampled in pop music, proving that he, much like the other musical movement of the sixties and seventies (early music), were on to a new way to reach both the educated hardcore and the fresh-eared larger audiences. Many musicians and audiences alike have reveled in this new combination of tonalities.

Dr. Atomic is one of Adams's historical operas, where he depicts an important event or person in American life. This takes a very baroque tradition of creating dramatic accounts of events past and gives it an entirely contemporary flare, focusing on the characters involved instead of just how the historical events transpired. The opera tells the story of J. Robert Oppenheimer and the 'Trinity' test of the first atomic bomb's detonation. This study will focus on the aria "Batter my heart, three-person'd God":

In an inspired decision, Peter placed the famous John Donne Holy Sonnet, "Batter my heart, three-person'd God," at the very end of act I. Oppenheimer was much drawn to the metaphysical poets Donne, Andrew Marvell, and George Herbert. The "three-person'd God" of Donne's poem provided the stimulus for Oppenheimer's whimsical naming of the test site: Trinity. The image of the physicist, alone at last, contemplating his dark, destructive creation, drew from me a musically strange response, but one that in retrospect seems entirely appropriate. After a whole act of music that teeters on the cusp of atonality, "Batter my heart" appears as an archaic trope, its D minor chord sequences projecting a slow, stately gravitas that to me spoke for the poem's content as well as for what most surely have been Oppenheimer's wildly conflicting emotions. How could this supremely intelligent and sensitive man not have peered into the terrible future of what this bomb would bring? How could he not have suspected the horrific, lingering pain and slow agonizing death that its radiation would cause for tens of thousands of innocent civilians? The Donne poem is an expression of the keenest spiritual pain, a beseeching, an

⁷⁸ "Biography," John Adams, accessed on December the 9th, <https://www.earbox.com/john-adams-biography/>

appeal to God that He physically beat and batter the speaker in order that his divided self might rise up and be made whole again.⁷⁹

A musical character we have not yet met in this story, Nico Muhly recounts in his introductory essay of John Adams' work for the Nonesuch Record Label, *A Note by Nico Muhly, from 'John Adams Collected Works,*

“Batter My Heart,” which sets John Donne's sonnet by the same name. The aria begins on a unison D (unisons in opera generally set up something scary, as we know all too well from *Wozzeck*), agitated and dramatically lit from within, and suddenly expands out to the menace of a D minor chord, again without a fifth, pulsed violently between winds, strings, and timpani. That sonority and distance between the notes becomes an *idée fixe* in the aria. Here, Robert Oppenheimer is apostrophizing the bomb itself, struggling with the Mystery of the Trinity (a loaded term in *Los Alamos*), and wrestling with reason, faith, mortification, and destruction. In contrast to the interludes, the vocal lines are lyrical as befits the poem, albeit tormented. Between each vocal utterance, the hollow menace comes back, always dragging us back from any possible resolution into some kind of inexorable terror. The bad version of the end of this act would conclude, of course, in the Saint-Saënsian way with Oppenheimer singing some ridiculously high note, as the walls of the temple come tumbling down all the way upstage. John elects to place us in the middle of a man's very human fear, and shines strobe lights on the void of this chord for the entire audience to look through.⁸⁰

The aria has three main sections, each focusing on one interaction between the poet and the divine source they are speaking to. The harmony, while filled with unresolved suspensions and added ninths or elevenths, remains squarely in either D minor or A minor. Yet again we have a tortured soul speaking to something greater than himself but in the highest vocal range, much like the Rameau, to show the extreme anguish of the speaker. The wide vocal range of the aria can be seen in example 7, in similar fashion to “Voici les tristes lieux...Monstre affreux” discussed earlier. The bass-baritone, wildly raving against the greatest of metaphysical enemies, is an archetypal aspect of the voice part. “Gerald Finley, the Canadian born baritone⁸¹ for whom I wrote the role, sang this aria with an intensity of feeling that never failed to leave the hall rapt in awe. Rarely had I experienced a moment when the performance of a piece of mine brought so much more to the music than its composer had imagined.”⁸²

⁷⁹ John Adams. *Hallelujah Junction: Composing an American Life*. (New York, NY: Picador Press, 2008), 285.

⁸⁰ “*A Note by Nico Muhly, from 'John Adams Collected Works,'* Nico Muhly, accessed July 25, 2022, <https://www.nonesuch.com/journal/note-nico-muhly-john-adams-collected-works>

⁸¹ Another example of the interchanging use of baritone and bass-baritone. Gerald Finley is another example of a lower voice that performs under both the baritone and bass-baritone moniker.

⁸² John Adams. *Hallelujah Junction: Composing an American Life*. (New York, NY: Picador Press, 2008), 286.

Measure Numbers	m. 826-837	m. 838-860	m. 861-885	m. 885-900	m. 901-935
Key Center	D minor	D minor to A minor	A minor	D minor to A minor	D minor
Text	Instrumental Introduction	Batter My Heart	I, like an usurpt town	Divorce me, Untie	Instrumental Outro

These four pieces are emblematic of the compositional connection between the early and contemporary musical eras. By thematic, harmonic, or formal means, these composers have stretched back hundreds of years to connect to the deepest parts of this musical tradition. These connections extend to other composers and works besides the four shown here⁸³ and can be exploited by performers, conductors, and composers for further permutations of concert and theatrical novelty and expansion

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the piece 'Batter My Heart'. The top system, starting at measure 850, features a bass-baritone vocal line with lyrics: 'three per-son'd God: That I may rise, and stand, o'er - throw - me, and'. The piano accompaniment includes markings for '(Str.)' and '(sol.)'. The bottom system, starting at measure 855, continues the vocal line with lyrics: 'bend Your force, to break, blow, break, blow,'. The piano accompaniment also includes '(Str.)' and '(sol.)' markings. The notation is in a 4/4 time signature and uses a key signature of one flat (B-flat).

Ex. 7. *Batter My Heart*: Higher writing for the bass-baritone voice, compare to example 4.

⁸³ For the sake of focus, our sixth interview with Eriks Esenvalds has entirely been placed as the first appendix to this thesis. The musical landscapes he builds and the mind that makes them are so wide in scope, they deserve their own section. Also for the corresponding lecture recital that accompanies this thesis, Esenvalds' music is too grand a proposition. It is for that reason alone that his interview is not in the main body of this paper. The possible performing of his music in smaller scales strikes as a potent performance opportunity but one that falls outside of the purview of this context. For his thoughts and some musical examples that neatly tie his work into the current choral movement, please proceed to the first appendix.

CHAPTER IV: NEW MUSIC FOR OLD INSTRUMENTS & FORMS

Caroline Shaw Composing and Producing the Future

Now that we have established the connection between the music of the Renaissance and the Baroque eras to music made now, let us explore one of the most interesting corners of current composition, new music specifically written for early music ensembles. The simple fact that there is now a market for early music ensembles that perform new music shows that we have crossed into an entirely new era of period-inspired performance by itself. This brings us to our last interview, Caroline Shaw. Caroline has become a massive force within the contemporary music world, having been the youngest recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for Music, which she won in 2013 for *Partita for 8 Voices*,⁸⁴ written for the Grammy-winning Roomful of Teeth as well as the 2022 Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Classical Composition.⁸⁵ Roomful of Teeth is a chamber choir that dives into the deep end of extended vocal techniques and amplified singing, of which Shaw is a member along with the previously introduced Dashon Burton.⁸⁶ She has written commissions for many of the great soloists of our era including Renée Fleming and Dawn Upshaw, along with producing for Kanye West, Nas, and many more. In the interview, Caroline revealed herself to be someone who experiences the musical process very vividly and wants first and foremost for both the musicians creating the music and the audiences listening to have a thrilling experience.

Music lives beyond the page and is changeable and shapeable. You can be so creative with it. I love the creativity of musicians playing seventeenth-century music where you can ornament, change; tempo is not clearly indicated, so there is leeway in it, dynamics were not clearly indicated, so there is leeway there as well. Within that environment, I think a lot of creativity has been encouraged so that you feel like you can take what's on the page and make something else. You can also reorchestrate it; you know about Monteverdi's orchestra, these orchestras were not standard. Sometimes you had three theorboes, sometimes a harpsichord. You make the music based on what you have. And then you have the world of contemporary music composers are living, where they are in the room and you can ask. I always tell people when I first meet them or work with them, there's room for you to be creative in this. I don't want this to be the bible, what is on the

⁸⁴ Caroline described her Partita for Eight Voices in depth during our interview, and that can be found in the second appendix.

⁸⁵ "2022 Grammy Award Winners," Grammy, accessed September 15, 2022, <https://www.grammy.com/artists/caroline-shaw/18118>

⁸⁶ "Caroline Shaw Biography," Caroline Shaw, accessed November 16th 2020, <https://carolineshaw.com>

page is a guide and I have tried to create an environment where you have enough information to make something with each other as humans that feels exciting or enjoyable or is interesting in some way. It's not about following the letter of the law it's about making something that lives and breathes and changes just the way meaning in all life changes.⁸⁷

This facet of Caroline's compositional ethos is both practical and inspiring while connecting to the compositional attitudes of the baroque and Renaissance. Caroline has been commissioned by the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra to write both large-scale multimovement works and smaller-scale songs for their historically informed ensemble and choir. Caroline's early music experiences didn't start at those commissions though; she has experienced making early music at some of the highest levels:

I have found myself playing a lot of that music during grad school while I was at Yale, which has a big early and contemporary music program. When I was there I felt like I was on the fringe around the nineteenth century. There is a part of it that there is a social and maybe political approach to thinking about what classical music is and how Beethoven and Brahms, Wagner and Schumann and early twentieth century is the focus, the meat and potatoes. And there are people who view that as the height of music. At the same time there are people who are interested in early stuff and what is being made new. And those people find each other because we exist slightly outside of what I think of as mainstream classical music culture that feels like it was really solidified in the eighties and nineties. Once you step outside of that, you find friends and gigs, and gig culture sometimes determines this.⁸⁸

Caroline clearly sees and hears a connection between early music and the music of today, across genres:

Sometimes when I'm writing music in the pop realm, or string quartet or really orchestra, I think about early music and how I love the sound of the chords and the voicings of the chords. I think they were really excited about the resonance of voices and instruments in certain spaces. You write this chord big wide spacings with the root and the fifth and the third on top and it has this certain sound. At the same time there were certain chord progressions that they were really excited about. And in pop music you see a lot of the same things. Some of it [the renaissance music] was not wildly complex harmonically but is still satisfying in this visceral way.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Caroline Shaw (Composer, Vocalist, Violinist, Producer), in discussion with the author in October 2020.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Shaw, discussion; Russo, interview.

Caroline's large-scale work for Philharmonia Baroque is called *The Listeners*, and directly addresses the golden record that was attached to the Voyager Spacecraft and launched into deep space in 1977. It is written for baroque orchestra, choir, and two solo voices, one a mezzo-soprano and the other a bass-baritone, which are referred to in the score as 'Voice 1' and 'Voice 2'. The 'Voice 2' being our previously met, Dashon Burton who when asked about *The Listeners* said "it's about finding the people, the specific colors you are looking for, the very best writing is trying to write for that specific person today. We are just lucky to have early instrumentalists who are interested in music that wasn't written back then."⁹⁰ *The Listeners* is comprised of settings of different poets and speeches:

The texts took forever to pick, it took longer than the music. I read so much before I write music, and whenever I write something with voices the text will be the longest part of the process. I knew I wanted to make something grounded in this crazy idea of the golden record on the voyager spacecraft with Carl Sagan. This beautiful and strange idea. And then Philharmonia Baroque as this ensemble that deals with and engaging with vintage instruments. Engaging with making recordings, time, time capsules, why do we play older music, and then send it out into space. Then it became about humans looking out in space and the history of writers writing about stars and the skies, and the heavens. And wanting to sit down and put pen to paper and explore that. But also thinking about contemporary issues of immigration, thinking about borders and earth and politics. The world and what that looks like after you get out beyond the romantic ideas of Tennyson and Whitman and look out from the perspective of space back at Carl Sagan's Pale Blue Dot. [Jusenia Mantia's] poem maps and turns around and looks at the earth with its borders and for me that's the real pivot point of the piece. Then the concept of the Listeners; we are sending music out into space, who is going to actually be listening to this, do we think someone will actually listen to this, are we actually listening to it, are we listening to each other? What do we reflect when we listen to ourselves? And then it's a matter of who is listening in the audience, a specifically early music audience what do we listen to, what do we program? As a culture, what are we programming, what are we recording, what are we making and who will be listening later on?⁹¹

The aural world that was created in *The Listeners* is a novel one. Even the most dedicated early music listener rarely has the opportunity to hear gut strings in sustained harmonic chords or large almost

⁹⁰ Burton, discussion; Russo, interview.

⁹¹ Shaw, discussion; Russo, interview.

romantic era gestures for early instruments (see example 9)⁹². When asked about the difference between writing for modern orchestra and period orchestra Caroline said:

There are several things that I approach differently between writing for a modern orchestra and a period one. One is that the instruments themselves are different: the gut strings behave differently. I've had a lot of experience with that and I know what is comfortable and what is strange. And the parts of that sound that I love, the low and mid-range in the strings, which I love in modern strings but particularly on gut. And the woodwinds I find also have a different quality of sound. Also, less nimble. I wouldn't write the same thing for a modern oboe than I would for a baroque oboe and vice versa. I find that there are a lot of limitations that I enjoy in baroque instruments. For me the oboe in particular is a beautiful but slightly gnarly instrument, particularly the baroque instrument. The modern one is too, but they have invented things to make it a little easier. And there is a struggle at the beginning of the sounds to make the baroque instrument play; so, I go for much more lyrical ideas with the baroque oboe. That being said in *The Listeners* I had a lot of little pointillistic movements, but I had two oboes going, where with the modern I might have one person doing that...When you are writing with voices and a baroque orchestra the volume is a lot less. It's not like writing for something as absolutely overpowering as a modern orchestra.⁹³

Caroline has a direct understanding of the of style required for early music:

The larger compositional difference between writing for the modern orchestra as opposed to the baroque is thinking about indications of dynamics and phrasing. And offering more space to the period orchestra and particularly the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra. I think that orchestra is so good, and they know each other so well, and have been together and have a shared language. I didn't feel the need to write in many hairpins or dynamics or stylistic indications because they will naturally play that way. It feels also like when you write for a pop session group, I've played in those groups, and they sort of know what to do and hear the style. When you play some line, you won't play it flat you will play it with this specific vibe. Philharmonia baroque plays with a vibe and I like to write to that vibe.

⁹² Caroline Shaw, "The Listeners" Full Score, 2019 Caroline Shaw Press.

⁹³ Ibid.

Whereas a modern orchestra will follow the rules, and play exactly what's on the page, and follow the conductor and not make so many decisions among themselves.⁹⁴

The image shows a musical score for three parts: Timp., Keys, and VOC 2. The Timp. part is in bass clef and consists of a series of quarter notes on a single pitch, marked *mf*. The Keys part is in treble and bass clefs; the treble part has a melodic line with eighth notes, and the bass part has a line with triplets. The VOC 2 part is in bass clef and has lyrics: "mil-lion of Suns?". Above the notes are annotations: "scale from lower?" above the first two notes, and "go up?" above the third note, which is followed by a slur over the next two notes.

Ex. 8. Fifth movement of Shaw's *The Listeners*: a third example of high notes written for the bass-baritone. The soloists are labeled simply voice 1 and voice 2, while the solo line of this movement is notated without exact rhythm.

⁹⁴ Shaw, discussion; Russo, interview.

Musical score for the Finale from Shaw's *The Listeners*. The score includes parts for:

- Ob. I, Ob. II, Bsn., Tpt. I, Tpt. II, Timp., Keys, VOC 1, VOC 2, S. (Soprano), A. (Alto), T. (Tenor), Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., Vc., and Cb.

The woodwind and brass parts feature long, sustained notes with dynamic markings of *f* and *ff*. The vocal soloists (S., A., T.) sing the lyrics "Bri - - - - - llas" with a *ff* dynamic. The string section (Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., Vc., Cb.) plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, marked *ff*. The string parts include performance instructions:

- Vln. I: *65 accel not together*
- Vln. II: *accel not together*
- Vla.: *ff*
- Vc.: *tremolo starts slowly & speeds up*, *ff*
- Cb.: *tremolo starts slowly & speeds up*, *ff*

Ex. 9. Finale from Shaw's *The Listeners*.

While not precisely new music written for early music ensembles, Andrew Norman's Pulitzer Prize-winning piece *Sustain*, provides a very similar aural experience as some of the most massive polyphonic structures available in Renaissance vocal works. As our collective ears get more and more used to the undulating nature of vocal polyphony of our past (the kind where the music moves in slow harmonic states instead of the wonderful bombastic fugal music that might come to mind) and the rediscovery of this music takes hold, our contemporary instrumental music is bound to follow. Much like the instrumental music of the Renaissance and Baroque, some of the most awarded and rewarded new instrumental music of our era take great cues from choral music. The other angle to connect this piece with the idea of the second wave of the early music revival would be the multiple tuning systems that are being incorporated throughout the piece.

A completely unanticipated transformation of the concept of 'new music for old instruments' are the composers who are writing new music in archaic styles for historically informed ensembles. Two examples of this are the compositions by Federico Maria Sardelli and Elam Rotem. Elam Rotem writes his music in an early baroque style similar to the declaimed monody of Monteverdi for the chamber ensemble he founded, Profeti Della Quinta. He also runs the enormously informative earlymusicsources.com, a reliable place to begin your journey with early music.⁹⁵ Rotem's most inventive piece to date is *The Lamentation of David*, recorded by Profeti Della Quinta, on the Hebrew text of II Samuel, 17-27 and has a very early Italian touch in the word painting and vocal techniques found throughout the work. On a larger scale, Federico Maria Sardelli is a conductor with some of the most prestigious European orchestras and ensembles, and has been a notable protagonist in the Vivaldi renaissance of the past few years: he conducted the world premiere recording and accompanying performance of the operas *Arsilda Regina di Ponto*, *Orlando Furioso*, *Tito Manlio*, *Motezuma*, and *Atenaide*.⁹⁶ Sardelli wrote his music for his ensemble Modo Antiquo, and his music sounds like late baroque Italian composers such as Vivaldi but with a French style-influenced weight in the bass section. He has written some chamber music, vocal music and concertos often highlighting members of his ensemble. These two composers and musicians have found an interesting facet of this new stage of early music-making; now that our new compositions are found side by side with the original compositions in that style, we can show this musical generation's mastery of both playing the music of these older eras and the mastery of the very

⁹⁵ "Biography." Profeti Della Quinta. accessed December the 10th. <https://www.quintaprofeti.com>

⁹⁶ "Federico Maria Sardelli Biography." Modo Antiquo, accessed December the 10th. <https://www.modoantiquo.com/site/index.php?lang=en&toc=524&page=Federico>

fundamental concepts on which those compositions were written by means of these new compositions in older styles.

There is not enough time to touch on every extraordinary piece that combines early music and contemporary composition. Sven-David Sandström's *Hear my Prayer, o Lord after Henry Purcell* is a great example of the type of work that Dove and Esenvalds have done in a completely different compositional idiom. Giya Kancheli's 2006 *Ex Contrario*,⁹⁷ is a large scale double concerto for two violins, string orchestra, a keyboard sampler that exclusively plays a harpsichord sound and could easily be replaced with an actual acoustic harpsichord, and bass guitar. This work is reaching in both directions at once; as the string writing sounds for a good portion of the runtime like a Vivaldi accompanying force, the bass guitar is mostly used to produce drones and longer tones. And then there is the work *Thorns* by Tawnie Olson⁹⁸ for the Parthenia Viol Consort and Dashon Burton. The primordial atmosphere created by the arpeggiating viols seems to only deepen Dashon's gravity during its performance. Again, we find brand new music being written for ancient instruments and the combination creates entirely new sound worlds. The piece describes the crown of thorns upon Jesus' head that "spread over the earth at Adam's fall, that were woven into a crown and placed on Jesus' head in order to mock him as he died, [that] stand as a metaphor for [...] the beautiful mess that is fallen creation." The piece feels like a *Dover Beach*⁹⁹ combined with minimalism and church music and is in need of further opportunities for audiences to experience it. Olson large scale choral work, *Beloved of the Sky*¹⁰⁰ was performed as part of The Crossing's¹⁰¹ Month of Moderns concert series in July 2022 and was recorded by Seraphic Fire in June 2022. This illustrates the shifting nature of the musical gameboard this thesis is codifying, and the interconnected nature of the artists highlighted here.

⁹⁷ "Composers Works: Kancheli, Giya" Sikorski Music Publishing Group. Accessed July 25, 2022. https://www.sikorski.de/463/en/0/a/0/5021272/kancheli_giya/werke.html

⁹⁸ Tawnie Olson. "Thorns," score, 2013 Revised 2017, Tawnie Olson Press, New Haven.

⁹⁹ *Dover Beach* is a 1936 composition by American composer Samuel Barber on the poem of the same name by Matthew Arnold. It is written for low or medium voice and string quartet. And similarly to *Thorns*, uses proto-minimalist gestures combined with a plaintive lower voice to depict someone deep in thought and personal turmoil.

¹⁰⁰ 'Beloved in the Sky' Tawnie Olson. Accessed July 25, 2022. <https://www.crossingchoir.org/events/2021-22/mom2>
<https://barlow.byu.edu/portfolio-posts/tawnie-olsons-beloved-of-the-sky/>

¹⁰¹ The Crossing is another professional chamber choir from Philadelphia that performs exclusively new works. Their music making is connected to this second phase described within this thesis but are deserving of their own chapter to fully explain. While performing exclusively new and mostly secular music, almost all the performers are greatly influenced by either the styles described in this paper, or a life making early music themselves. This particular combination and the extremely potent results are grounds for further research.

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f

The thorns were wound a-round his head,—

mf ————— *ff* *f*

mf ————— *ff* *f*

mf ————— *ff* *f*

mf ————— *ff* *f*

Ex. 10 Tawnie Olson: *Thorns*

Juliana Hall, Captain Ahab, and the New Cantatas

It is not just the instruments that have come back to the forefront but the compositional forms that they inhabit as well. Specifically for this investigation we will be focusing on the Cantata and its current revival across instrumental forces. The cantata has been expanded upon greatly since its inception in the Baroque era. The cantata is “a composite vocal genre... consisting of a succession of recitatives, ariosos, and set pieces (e.g. arias, duets, and choruses). A cantata may be either secular or sacred in subject matter and function, and its treatment may be lyrical, allegorical, or dramatic (although almost never actually staged).”¹⁰² In our current era we have composers and performers taking up the mantle of this form again, adding another feather to the great beast we discover ourselves riding upon.¹⁰³

Returning to Jonathan Dove’s music we see a perfect example of a new cantata in his *L’altra Euridice* or *The Other Euridice*. Scored for a baroque chamber ensemble of two violins, a cello, double bass, theorbo, and harpsichord primarily functioning as the continuo section of old throughout, with an added oboe and soprano saxophone which ‘play’ at different times other parts. *The Other Euridice* is a one-man show with a single baritone playing the role of Plutone in a new viewpoint into the immensely musical Orpheus myth. *The Other Euridice* describes Plutone’s previously un-commented on motivations, goals, and personal motivations during the Orpheus myth.¹⁰⁴ The text has an almost scientific viewpoint vividly describing natural phenomenon and the structure of the earth itself imagined by a subterranean dweller like the mythical Plutone, and his ultimate goal of spreading subterranean life throughout the earth, “Thriving Plutonic citadels would rise through our universe calmly cruising over oceans of star bright mercury”. By using recitatives, arias both da capo and through-composed, and baroque inspired word painting in the voice part and orchestra Jonathan Dove is able to reimagine both the often-used villain Pluto and the cantata itself as an impactful and intelligent exploration of what drives someone to do terrible things and expands to push the boundaries of theatre and concert further together.

That expansion of boundaries between what is a concert and what is a piece of theatre is the exact battleground where the new cantata is currently decided. This leads us to Juliana Hall and her monodramas. Juliana Hall is an American Art Song Composer, has written for almost every conceivable vocal and instrumental combination in the art song genre, has had her work performed throughout the world, and was a pioneer in self-publishing her own musical scores.¹⁰⁵ Hall has also steered herself to new frontiers of what an art song can be and while she does not refer to her works as ‘cantatas’, she does call them monodramas.

I have composed three monodramas to date, all setting wonderful texts by Caitlin Vincent (a remarkable librettist). The first of these was "Sentiment"- a piece Caitlin imagined to be a soprano song cycle. For some reason, though, I had trouble finding the

¹⁰² Cantata Definition, Randel, D. M. (2003). *The Harvard dictionary of music*. 4th ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

¹⁰³ While this thesis explores only new cantatas written for solo voice and accompanying instruments, there are examples of new choral cantatas being written as well. An apt example of this being Ešenvalds’ *The First Tears*, explored in the appendix.

¹⁰⁴ It is interesting to note for this paper that while *The Other Euridice* is scored for a baritone it has only up until the writing of this paper been performed by singers who perform under the bass-baritone moniker further accenting the odd malleability of the voice part previously explored. Also, the English translation has been performed far more times than the Italian text.

¹⁰⁵ “Biography.” Juliana Hall, Accessed July 25, 2022. <https://julianahall.com/juliana-in-biography/>

right way to set it. I was talking with my husband about it, and he said "why not just write it for voice, no piano, since it is such personal material and it can be more like a monodrama than a cycle?" Well, that was an intriguing idea and when I approached it that way, all of a sudden the piece began writing itself...it was the right way to set the words.¹⁰⁶

The word monodrama is almost just as expansive as the new working definition of cantata. With less of an exact definition, the monodrama is a work of theatre where the entire piece is played by a single actor or singer. Famous examples of these in our musical past include Arnold Schoenberg's *Ewartung* or Francis Poulenc's *La voix humaine*. One of the biggest differences between these early twentieth century monodramas and the ones coming to prominence today, is the scale. While the monodramas of the past added a single vocal performer to the massive post-romantic orchestras, the current era's monodramas have much more in common with the smaller scale of baroque cantatas. The single performer with a less robust accompanying force allows for the performers to take a chamber music approach where the text's delivery and the individual performer's phrasing and expression becomes the focal point. Though they function slightly differently than Dove's *The Other Euridice* or Hall's *Ahab*, we once again find progenitors of this new arc of the early music revival in very unlikely places.

The next was "Godiva" and that came about because I had been in touch with the brilliant English mezzo soprano Kitty Whately. She had sung a few of my songs at Wigmore Hall in London, so she knew my music and got in touch to ask me whether I had anything she might sing at the 2019 Oxford Lieder Festival. ...Having been very pleased with how "Sentiment" had turned out, I asked Caitlin to write a libretto for "Godiva" and boy, did she deliver! The text allows Godiva herself to speak and tell her story, thus correcting a thousand years of history that had been written by men.¹⁰⁷

For the purpose of this inquiry we will be focusing on Hall's newest monodrama, AHAB.

The third monodrama is "Ahab" and it, too, came about because of a performance opportunity. Zachary James had been stunning in his role in Aknaten at the Metropolitan Opera, so I gathered my courage and sent him a score to my large baritone song cycle "Death's Echo" (on poems by Auden). I didn't know if Zach would even respond...but I was thrilled that he wrote back within twenty-four hours and expressed a desire to sing the piece, and even to dramatize it in performance. A few months went by, and neither of us had any idea if or when such a dramatized performance might become possible...however, he decided to do a Carnegie Hall solo recital comprised entirely of works by women composers, and he asked me whether it would be okay with me, if he performed two or three songs from "Death's Echo" - and once again, I really felt it would be such fun to write a new piece for this stellar performer...and he agreed immediately to my suggestion of a monodrama, as a self-contained and complete work for performance on this unique recital. The only question was, who would be the character? A few days of thinking through possibilities went by, and then one night at 3:00 am I woke up out of my sleep, wide awake, and I heard only one word in my head: AHAB! So the character was agreed upon, and again I was so fortunate to enlist the talents of Caitlin, who wrote

¹⁰⁶ Hall, discussion; Russo, interview.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

an incredible libretto for the piece. Caitlin and I seem to have a type of rapport that just works, and we have discussed future monodramas too...it seems like our genre!¹⁰⁸

When asked about the comparison of monodramas to the ‘traditional’ musical form of cantatas, she said:

I know just a few such cantatas, including some gorgeous solo cantatas by Bach and a few by Alessandro Scarlatti. In these works, the voice is used in a variety of ways, and really seems to become a "character" of sorts...but when I think about it, the idea of a monodrama doesn't seem that far off from the similar performing forces of an early cantata and from the use of a single singer to express everything, from every possible angle.¹⁰⁹

Three ‘waves’ of rage create a large ABAB’AB of contrasting material in each B section but is normally characterized by a quieter atmosphere of fear and introspection. Demonic almost Ragtime-like syncopated music appears in each of the rage filled A sections. Often the B sections include freely orated sections where chords are held in the piano, just like alternating recitative and arias in baroque cantatas but the traditional order is reversed in this particular situation. While, there are some tonal centers within sections, the heavy use of chromaticism throughout the score makes a formal tonal analysis opinion at best, as the piece basically hovers around d minor before taking whichever harmonic door functions as a dominant before returning to d minor. The center C section contains some of the most expressive music Ahab is given in this monodrama. A clockwork-like 6/8 sets the scene while Ahab sings a legato line harmonized with wide internals like sixths, ninths, and tenths in the right hand giving the c section an otherworldly sweetness that contrasts heavily with the other material. The scene recalls aspects of both Billy Budd and Claggart’s music from Britten’s Billy Budd, another nautical stage show with deep connections to the baroque era from the late twentieth century. The borders of these sections are very porous and most major musical events in the score are followed by either a winding down or, depending upon how one looks upon them, a winding up for the next section.

A	B	A	C	B	A	B
m 1	m 40	m 51	m 85	m 103	m 124	m 137

The emphasis in this monodrama is on "eavesdropping" on the internal deliberations Ahab goes through in his mind during the final moments of his life. The focus that Caitlin gave Ahab - not of the "action" of the story, but on how Ahab reflects on his life - is about introspection as thought becomes his only possible activity as he is first lashed to the whale and then descends to the depths of the ocean floor, unable to act further...but he is able to think about what it means, and has meant, in his life...and able, as well, to hold onto his resentments, his hatreds, and his sense of purpose in pursuing a type of justice in bringing the whale down.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

One overriding musical aspect of this score is its heavy use of chromaticism throughout all sections and can be found in both the voice and piano parts.¹¹⁰

I'm an unusual composer, because as a pianist I compose at the piano...playing possible piano parts while singing possible vocal parts...all in direct reaction to the words of the text I'm setting. I once had a singer write a dissertation about one of my song cycles in which she claimed that I had strictly adhered to a certain type of harmonic focus. Well, after reviewing her research and looking again at the score of the piece, I realized that perhaps she was right in her assessment...but until she pointed it out, I had been completely unaware of it. When improvising, I don't think in words, and I don't plan specific usage of any particular type of feature in a work as it is being composed...and it may well end up having lots of chromatic scales, or lots of octatonic writing, or whatever...all subconscious, if that. I just write what I hear in my inner ear as I read the text.¹¹¹

One of the highlights of great cantata writing is the use of word painting and AHAH is no exception in this. There is a fantastic example that depicts a violent aspect of Ahab's last encounter with the White Whale. It can be found starting on measure 26 on the words 'The throw and the thrust' starting with the piano's enormous leaps for both hands then mimicked with the voice's octave on 'the throw' followed by homophonic planing tritones moving chromatically depicting Ahab's harpoon carving into the beast's great body. This is followed by a large outcry in response to this physical offense, followed immediately by Ahab describing the 'gush of his blood' with the singer instructed to hold out the 'sh' consonant sound that imitates the sound of blood pouring out of a wound on Ahab's leviathan. Taken in total, this hyper dense moment of word painting helps to create the sensation of a huge theatrical moment in a concert setting.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

The image displays a musical score for a scene from Ahab's "The Throw". It consists of four systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment.

- System 1 (Measures 25-26):** The vocal line begins with the lyrics "hand. The throw". Dynamics range from *f* to *ff*. The piano accompaniment features complex chordal textures and rhythmic patterns.
- System 2 (Measures 27-28):** The vocal line continues with "and the thrust.". Dynamics are marked *mp* and *accel.* (accelerando).
- System 3 (Measures 29-30):** The vocal line has the word "The". Dynamics include *ff*, *fff*, and *molto rit.* (molto ritardando). A tempo marking of $J = 92$ is present.
- System 4 (Measures 31-32):** The vocal line includes the lyrics "gush (sh) of his blood.". Dynamics are marked *p* (piano) and *mf*. A tempo marking of $J = 66$ is present.

Ex. 11. Example of Word Painting inside Hall's AHAB "The Throw"

Another connection to earlier vocal writing can be found in the coloratura writing for Ahab, an example of which can be found on measure eighty two:

The same behavior applies to this, as it does to the use of the chromatic scale...it's a direct result of what I hear when I'm improvising. In this measure, the vocal writing does seem to do two things: first, it stretches out the word "Demon" which provides important emphasis on Ahab's view of the beast he has followed around the world and second, it

intensifies the word by giving the singer an almost frantic approach to the long held note at the climax of the phrase.¹¹²

Both of these moments give the performer ample opportunity to show their vocal strength and expressivity, in the exact way that can be found in earlier cantatas. The theatre found its way to the concert stage in many ways. While Ahab might be an additional epilogue to the character's arc in the Melville novel, it ends in much the same place. Hall's Ahab constantly states how he will 'wait' and that he is 'waiting' for the White Whale itself to appear. This could be seen as either Ahab's constant obsession with slaying this mythologically proportioned beast or in Ahab's mind's last moments he is assuming the dark tenacity that the character has ascribed to the Whale itself. This piece's energy comes from the constant shifting between flight and fight, between slow and fast, and between conscious and unconscious.

The very forms that help create the building blocks of our modern art form are returning to help us transition into a new part of our collective work. Reborn into a welcome new expression of theatre in a concert setting. This allows classical music yet another avenue to continue to expand while bringing audiences along for the ride with a revival of a form that is musically dense and compositionally rich but with a surface level as appealing and easy to understand as one person playing a single character in a concert setting. So many of these influences seem to be coming to composers by way of zeitgeist composition. These ideas are existing because our contemporary tastes and expectations are changing, shaped on the largest scale by different larger socioeconomic, technological, and cultural conditions that result in a connection to our musical dawn.

Again, my compositional approach is so different from many composers...partly because having begun serious study only in grad school, I had missed all the undergraduate coursework in composition and theory and had, additionally, not been able to catch up on any of it later, because my teachers at Yale were so focused on just helping me find my own compositional voice - which was a true blessing, and I'll always be grateful to them for not trying to cram me full of knowledge but rather, helping me to discover what composer was inside of me waiting to enter the world. Due to my unusual circumstances, then, I don't think of writing coloratura - or any other device - in conscious terms...it may happen, but that is a result of improvisation on the meaning of a text, and if one looks carefully at my music, it can be seen that I don't follow any particular rules except that the form of a piece, for me, comes from the form of the text. The same goes for every other aspect of the composition; all is based on the words, and in my case, a lack of academic knowledge creates an area free from influence where I can play with sound according to how a text hits me and not imposing any particular compositional tools onto the text. Other composers will surely have their own methods which may include a very conscious awareness of coloratura, or scalar use, or whatever else may be there... and that is great for them, if it helps them to create the music they hear in their imaginations... but for me, a clean slate is the best compositional tool I have, for it speaks of an extreme openness to the power of any given text to express, affect, and influence my life.¹¹³

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

Nico Muhly: The New is Made Old Again

Nico Muhly is a composer whose musical output precisely connects and reflects this second phase of the early musical revival that this thesis is trying to catalogue. Muhly's particular brand of musical synthesis includes American Minimalism, Anglican Sacred Music, popular music, and many other influences that blend to create some of the most effective, visceral, and, put plainly, popular pieces of orchestral music, music for the stage, chamber music, and choral music. "He's received commissions from The Metropolitan Opera: *Two Boys* (2011), and *Marnie* (2018); Carnegie Hall, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, The Australian Chamber Orchestra, the Tallis Scholars, and King's College, Cambridge, among others. He is a collaborative partner at the San Francisco Symphony and has been featured at the Barbican and the Philharmonie de Paris as composer, performer, and curator {Nico website <https://nicomuhly.com/biography/>} Muhly writes music expressly for early instruments as well as instrumental forces that include a wide palette of contemporary instruments both acoustic and amplified. This particular musical amalgamation that Muhly has been able to harness was not academically discovered but found through his lived musical experience.

Speaking very personally, I mean, I grew up singing at Grace Church in Providence. Mark Johnson had, what at the time, to me, felt very normal, because I didn't know anything else- But he was doing a lot of early music and we almost always were working on Tavener or Tie or Byrd or Tallis, or Shepherd. And again, because I didn't know any differently and it wasn't like I was in some other choir, like a show choir or something, and that the early music felt weird to me. I was however, surprised, when I got into... When I started going to sort of more formal music environments, and no one had heard of Tavener. I mean, at Juilliard, when I got there, I'm sure I was the only person who had the Western Wind Masses memorized. So for me, it's so baked into the DNA, that I don't feel particularly bothered by it as a different thing. It's just so part of what I do. But I think also, an interesting thing for perhaps you to explore, is when... I mean, that music that we're talking about, is for me, almost entirely sacred. And when I write music that is sacred music, I feel like I'm accessing a register that is both practical. As in, this is not for concert performance. You hear this at four o'clock on a Wednesday or whatever, an evening song. But then also, there's something rather personal about it.¹¹⁴

This access of a sacred register is evident throughout Muhly's work. Even in his secular operas, each end with a quote from religious music even when telling decidedly contrasting stories. The influence of early music isn't only interwoven, it is a part of the bedrock. Part of what makes Muhly's work of great notice is the other influences that influence his musical architecture and personal musicianship.

To set the scene, this is maybe 1990 or 1989, when I started singing at Grace. At the same time, I was studying with this fantastic piano teacher called Bella Miller, who was this Russian speaking, Latvian woman friend. She was old school. And she was kind of on Hope street and I don't know, 11th street or whatever. And to have those two kind of poles of music making. So one was, of course, this urban ministry that happened to be doing really, really interesting music. And then what essentially amounted to a slightly eccentric, but fundamentally traditional, young pianist pedagogy. So it was the usual combination of Bach, but then there would be these, to me, rather obscure kind of Russian composers. And her pedagogical books were Russian. And those two things,

¹¹⁴ Muhly, discussion; Russo, interview.

again, I didn't choose this. It wasn't an on-purpose hybridity. But that sort of bred, somehow what... I hate to sound like Darth Vader, what I became or whatever. As I said though, there were a ton of young, very good pianists. And in that way, the choir to me, felt very special, because it was a form of music making that I hadn't seen anyone else do. It wasn't part of my family's life, growing up, obviously. And it wasn't part of my kind of conception of what a musician was. Because when you're that age, what have you seen? Amadeus or something? And so it was all kind of all over the place, but very unconsidered, for better or for worse. Providence is a weird place. My parents had... I think we're as educated about music as civilians can be, for better or for worse. We almost never went up to Boston to hear anything. Live concert going wasn't really part of our journey, but they had a ton of LPs and eclectic.¹¹⁵

From that first modest look into the musical world, it did not take long until Muhly was able to find more hospitable mental surroundings where he was able to get lost, be inspired, and evidently in the passion with which he speaks, enjoy the act of discovering an entire musical multiverse. Where he was able to follow his intuition and what he enjoyed and found bottomless levels of complexity. An act of discovery that all would be musicians would be lucky to experience.

I, of course, was obsessed by Stravinsky. And my mother also had the bizarre gift to me, essentially. She taught at Wellesley college and also at Harvard, but her office at Wellesley was very, very close to the music library. So I could just send her a list of what I wanted and she would bring me home scores, which was an unbelievable gift. Because I mean now, the availability of scores, we just take it for granted. But I remember there were pieces of music that I loved so much, right? That I never saw the score of, until I got to New York. I didn't see a score of Nixon in China until I was 20. And any of those Rice pieces, they weren't even really published then [inaudible 00:23:42] And there was no Philip Glass was published, aside from the sort of piano and organ stuff. And if it was, it would be in some special edition at the performing arts library on 67th street. So there was a real sense of... Well, at that time, having access to Wellesley and to Harvard felt like an unbelievable gift.

For the entirety of his career, Muhly's musical mind has been intertwining with the previously brought up American minimalists John Adams, and especially for a recent interview with, Steve Reich. This connection closes a circle on the new found synergy between contemporary minimalism and baroque music. That baroque connection can be found in all of the original 'class' of minimalists as well, Steve Reich's Music for Ensemble and Orchestra and the Philip Glass Ensemble's output are connected to Bach's Brandenburg concertos both musically, in the way the music functions mostly without rubato and large instrumental forces that create tension mostly through relatively simple shifts in harmony but with complex rhythmic energy, and how the ensembles themselves function as living economic entities. That baroque connection continues in operatic output as well. Baroque operas often had historical figures at their centers, which moved greatly out of fashion in the 18th and especially 19th century, but found new ground in John Adams' historical operas. His breakout operatic masterwork, *Nixon in China*, is a perfect example of this and helped to jumpstart a compositional trends that continues to expand to this day and includes Muhly's output. Muhly's approach to vocal casting continues to expand as well, in his most recent *Marnie*, the lead Marnie is a full operatic mezzo-soprano while there are 'shadow Marnies' who sing with an early music straight tone approach while commenting on her motivations and the scenes. This is a trend that is set to expand within Muhly's output:

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

But honestly, I'm still not... I'm still slightly unconvinced by the obsession with, okay, this vocal type has to be the villain. This vocal type has to be the heroine. I mean, it feels like, if we were going to undo any kind of gender stuff in opera, that would be a great place to start... And I think with countertenors, I've written for countertenors in every possible capacity, as narrators, as fill-ins, as heroes, as lovers. You name it. And whether or not that's art song, or oratorio, or on stage. So lower voices, I wish I had better things to tell you. And I say I haven't written for bass-baritone, not because I don't want to, just because no one's asked.¹¹⁶

The connection between early music and contemporary music can be seen across Muhly's musical output. Some practical examples can be found in his work for vocal ensemble and five violas da gamba, *My Days*. Written for two early music groups combined together, Fretwork and the Hillard Ensemble premiered at Wigmore Hall on October 2nd 2012, and was commissioned by Wigmore Hall itself. It was written as "a ritualized memory piece about Orlando Gibbons written for two ensembles whose recordings informed so much of my musical development." The idea of returning to ensembles that inspired him, Orlando Gibbons in general, and combining new with old will be found throughout the interview presented here. Another early music ensemble that Muhly has made a fruitful musical partnership with while being one of, if not the only, contemporary composers that ensemble works with is the titanic Tallis Scholars. A contrastingly secular work, *Rough Notes* for a ccapella divisi choir, sets a diary entry and a 'message to the public' by Captain Robert Scott, dating from 1911 and 1912, that chronicles his expeditions to Antarctica. The work itself functions almost as a monologue for choir, with mostly homophonic settings of the text that allow for an audible comprehensibility of the text while still leaving room for expressive singing. The center section of the piece includes an accompanied description of the aurora borealis, and the titular 'rough notes' in the lower voices punching through in the last section. Muhly is currently working on a new setting of the Lamentations of Jeremiah for the Tallis Scholars, which will be the first concert length work he has written for the ensemble and also the first time he has set the monumental text. If Tallis himself is any forward indicator, this work could very well become one of the works history could memorialize Muhly with.

Writing for The Tallis Scholars. I mean, I think when you write for anyone, you write for not just them, but for a scenario, right? I mean, I think if you're writing for a big hall or a small hall, you take that in mind. If you're writing for a huge choir or a small choir, you take that in mind. If you're running for the king singer, of course you keep that in the back of your mind. For Recordare Domine, it's an interesting piece, because it's obviously one of the limitations. And one of the things I've always wanted to do, is write a full set of limitations, which I hope that I can do for The Tallis Scholars at some point. And writing for them... Because I grew up with those recordings, right? I grew up with their recordings of Byrd, with their recordings of obviously with Tallis, but also the Western Wind Masses and all those other unbelievable things. And so for me, being commissioned by them... And they do a fair amount of contemporary music, but primarily not. Being commissioned by them was so moving, in a sense, because it was sort of like being given the keys to a building that you thought you would never have the run of. So a lot of what I was aiming to do, was stuff that I knew they were brilliant at already. So if you think about the year Jerusalem thing, just tuning those high, high seconds and those

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

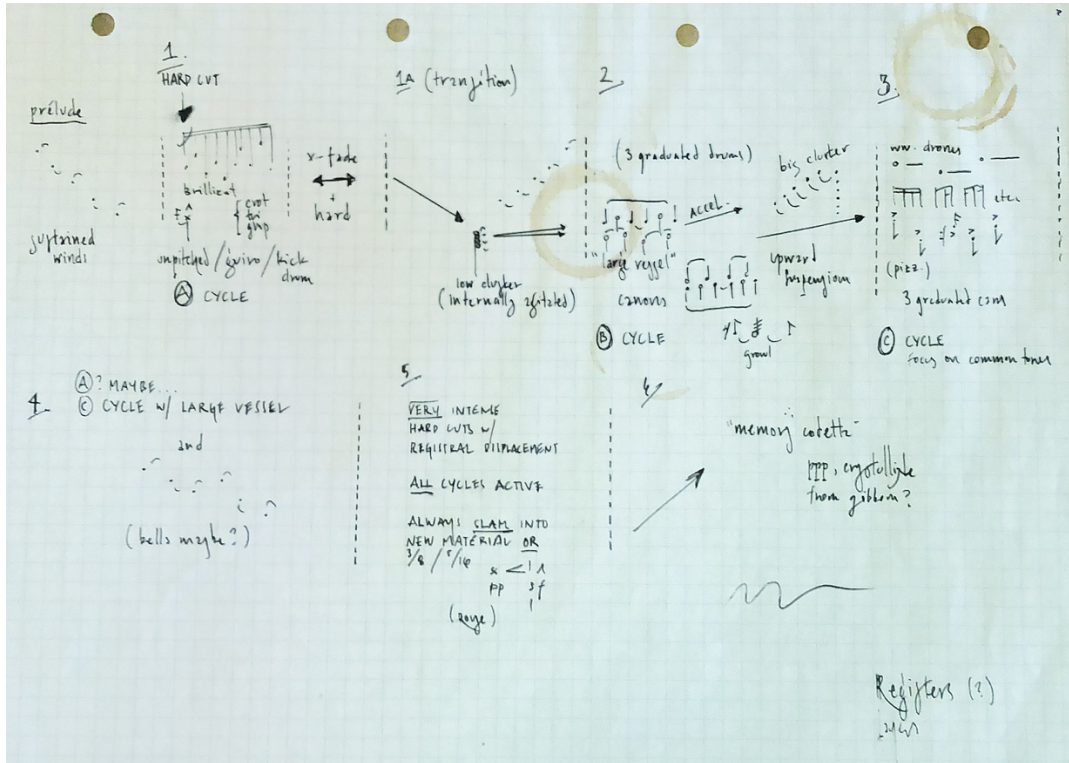
suspensions, I just thought, well, I could do that. And the other piece that I wrote for them, which I sent you, is rough notes, which is obviously a secular piece. But I hope I imbued it with the history of what they know how to do. The power of what they make. I'll also say, now going back... Sorry. I'm being circular, but my mind is like that today. Going back to something like *Spiral Mass*, I remember when I was a boy, singing things that were challenging, thinking about the tidbits in John's service or whatever. And then I also remember things that spoke so directly to me, in a way that I was shocked. That it felt like someone had reached through time and just grabbed me by the throat.¹¹⁷

Muhly's output ranges far beyond music for voices. A fantastic example of his instrumental writing can be found in his concerto for Organ and Orchestra, *Register*.

Register is, quote-unquote, about a lot of things. But one of the governing kind of principles behind *Register* and behind *Reliable Sources*, this other concerto that I'm writing now, is this idea that the music of Orlando Gibbons is sort of like a Relic that exists within my musical architecture. And that it's not necessarily the most important thing, because it's not the biggest thing, but in a sense, it is the most important thing. And in the way of those churches and Naples or whatever, where the architecture is one thing and then the alter is this other thing. But then you finally go into the back and there's this little saint's fingernail or something, on a cushion. And then the idea was that, that's kind of what Gibbons' music is for me. And so for this particular piece, Jamie McVinnie, who's one of my oldest friends, is in English obviously. He and I both love Gibbons. Listen to it for pleasure in the car. And I just thought, what better thing to do than to access... Than to try to set up this piece as a kind of exercise in revealing that Gibbons at the end. So I can show you all my weird charts about it, but the chords for the piece come literally from that *Pavana*, as if you to pedal down. So it's never chord notes that are actually played. Or it's never chords that are actually played, but it's the chords in between the chords. So all the suspensions, all the cross relations, those are the governing chords behind the piece. And it literally just does those with all these variations. [inaudible 00:13:28] I mean, the organ is one of the loudest, but I also try to treat the orchestra like an organ, in a sense that, I think an organ is a very early synthesizer. And there's a huge connection between, I think Bach and Wendy Carlos or something. And so oftentimes, the orchestra, there'll be a line and then it'll be doubled at the 12th, right? By a piccolo at half the volume, which is precisely how you add a complexity to an organ stop.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.



Ex. 12. Nico Muhly's Compositional Map for his Organ Concerto "Register"

While each individual work of Muhly's is a world unto itself, it must be emphasized that there are many musical connections across the pieces themselves. Taking either the hymns that are laid within the endings of each of the operas, or the direct quotes from Gibbons that can be found in his concertos, a mind that is operating on many levels is revealed. It begs the question 'what other subterranean musical connections that have not yet been revealed exist'?

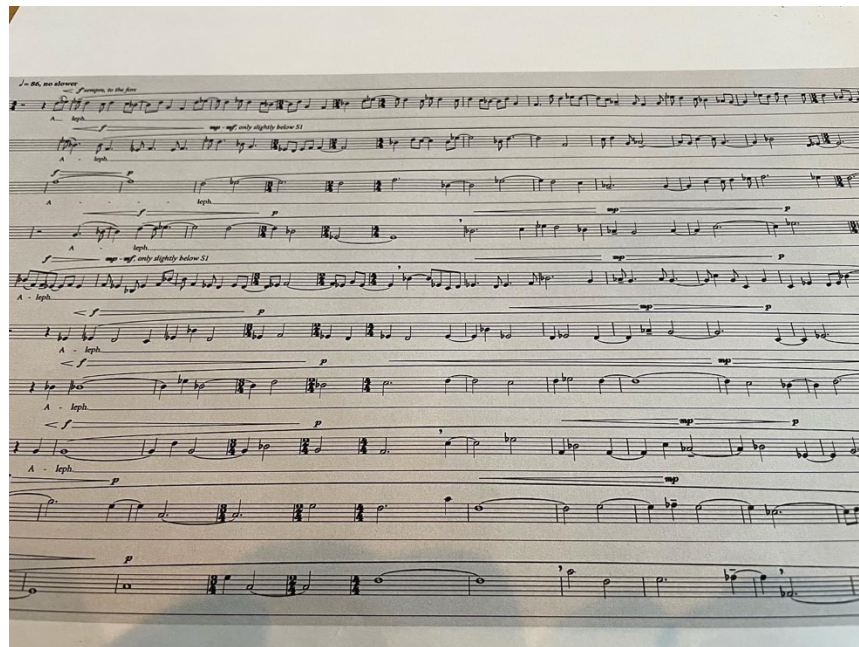
While Muhly's musical synthesis is both artistically exciting and perfectly tuned to the musical progression of this new second phase of early music, it must be emphasized that his process is not a cold systematized infusion process but an instinctive musical expression.

So I always want to just blanket anything I say about my compositional process, by saying, I really don't worry about it. And I think something that I write about often, or when I'm teaching, I'll bring up, is that you can't control how deeply embedded in your musical psyche things are. You don't get to choose. Oh, it's 25% early music and 15% post minimalism and 8% vole. And it's not like 23 and me, you know what I mean? You got what you got and you're ever expanding with that. And so I think some composers have a lot of things baked into them that they try to resist, and some composers have tried to write things that aren't baked into them and there's a lot going on. ¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

This very practical advice of instinctually accessing your music influences stretches far beyond composition but can easily find connections in performance, production, and other forms of art making.

“My mission statement is to create a musical space that encourages people to look upwards. And that’s the job.¹²⁰”



Ex. 13. Preview Image of Nico Muhly’s new setting of the Lamentations of Jeremiah

¹²⁰ Reich, Steve. *Conversations*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Hanover Square Press, 2022.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND PREDICTIONS

By exploring the current trends in performance, programming, market forces and composition, it is clear to see that we have entered into a ‘Second Phase’ of the early music revival and expectations for all avenues must be reevaluated. Be it by the creation of an international circuit of professional baroque opera companies, an entirely new landscape of professional choral ensembles, shifting emphasis in voice parts or in the simple fact that new music is being written for ensembles that used to just play old music, we can watch the ground shift under our feet and ears. If the work done in the sixties can be considered the initial revival, the reintegration of these creative practices of music-making, then we are now solidly within an era of soaring on top of the groundwork laid for us. These trends do not have any sense of slowing down or peaking at this time. This groundswell is changing the expectations we have for professional music-making in general and soon will have larger implications for the larger ‘orthodox’ classical music institutions. As the audiences’ ears shift their expectations for tuning, who can guess what combinations might grow and appear: Could there be a possible combination on the scale of grand opera with the precision in tuning found in early music? Will there be a development of a historically informed bel canto opera company, where the superstars of the Verdi or Wagnerian worlds can show their vocal intelligence on their comfortable vocal scale? Will art song performance continue to evolve to the point where we hear lieder singers accompanied by forte pianos for Schubert, and then shift to an early twentieth-century piano for Debussy, and then a modern piano for Dove? Will we, as a musical culture, be able to dive as deeply as possible into history and get as close to it as we possibly can? How will the current budding exploration of ignored black and brown composers’ works throughout history and the movement to include spirituals within the early music umbrella combine to affect the landscape and mindset of the musicians? If anything found within this excites you, know that if I believe anything, I believe that the best is yet to come for this musical movement and I am so excited both as a musician beginning his musical life and as an unbridled fan of this music and the fantastic humans that are involved in the making of it.

The artists highlighted in this paper, through their explicit application or not, are adding to the conversation between new and old that is happening simultaneously through our music making. This is broadly true of Classical music making in general but specifically articulated in this new movement of music making that was outlined in this thesis.

There are many musical conversations currently happening around Classical Music. Of the many new and vital viewpoints being discussed, the conversation between new and old music that this thesis

outlines is one of the most fruitful lines of connection in terms of new compositions, audiences, music making modes or genres that is currently unfolding. All music makers, be it Performers, Composers, Conductors, Instrumentalists, Historians, or Theoreticians can find something to connect to within this expanding movement. It is that very vital personal cross-discipline connection that has allowed this movement to expand beyond the Early Music Revival and into a more accessible mode of music making that only shows signs of further enlightening and enrichment.

This thesis itself acts as a modern treatise, on the state of making art now, immediately out of date but because of the importance of the time and the depth of knowledge presented here -- an important touch stone. Or at least that is what was purposely attempted here once the scope of the research was understood.

The very fact that during the process of reaching the final draft of this paper many of the pieces referenced in its body were written and premiered over a two year period shows the current and exuberant musical progression this thesis is attempting to harness, identify and establish. This process of cataloguing a musical spirit while it is being born has its limitations as this thesis' references have expanded to attempt to gather as large of a sampling of cutting edge compositions and musicians as possible. But at the moment this is sent to print, it will become out of date as the artists mentioned announce new seasons and works. This story is very much being written currently, and we most likely have not been to the zenith of the movement's artistry or seen the apex pieces from some of the defining composers of a generation.

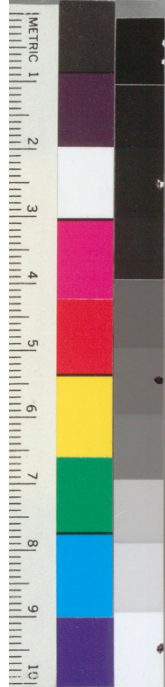
To make one prediction that can be taken with sensible grain of salt: if the large era that follows this one is a period of greater emphasis on either improvisation or structure, we can look back at what has preceded as a restart of a cycle. If the trauma of the world wars caused a enormous disruption in our joint musical mind that rendered the connection to tonality, one can see the experimental music of the greater part of the 20th century as a restart to the beginning of music history, one we pieced together with our visual scores, much like the visually adorned Medieval scores, and deeply esoteric texts creating new ways of thinking about music. See example eleven for two side by side an example of adorned Medieval scores¹²¹ and visual scores from the 20th century.¹²² The early 20th century functions similarly to the

¹²¹ Le Roman de Fauvel. Facsimile. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Fonds Français 146. Accessed through Gallica November 2018.

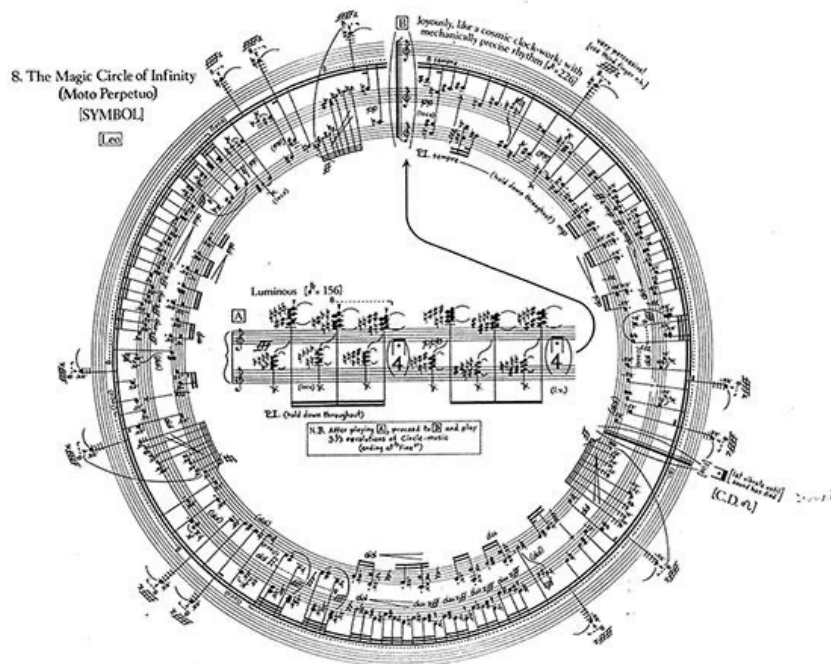
¹²² George Crumb. "Makrokosmos Volume 1: Twelve Fantasy-Pieces After the Zodiac for Amplified Piano. 1972.

Medieval Era, where relatively few people ran musical experiments to attempt to find a deep truth about how music can be made.¹²³ Following was a great splintering that included the minimalist movement and a reincorporation of tonality, which I believe culminated in this new phase of early music-making that we are currently experiencing. I would anticipate that both the audience and the performers' hunger for music has been building during the past year of a pandemic and its resulting lockdowns. Once we are free to congregate and listen to live music again it will be like pouring out of jet fuel on pent-up audience interest to result in miraculous new compositions and performing opportunities. Artists— finally free to perform the music they love, who all could have gained new experiences with producing quality recordings for themselves— are about to make a massive body of excellent live music that can now be recorded, dispersed, and digested on a global level. I would speculate that the next musical movement will be one of more strict rhythmic thinking and explorations of our now more complex and free harmony in more rigid baroque-like textures. Right now, we will explore our harmony, soon we might seek to control it rhythmically. I am not completely convinced it will happen this neatly though, hence one of the reasons this thesis had to be so wide-ranging. Advancement comes in fits and spurts. This hypothetical pattern also does not preclude entirely new permutations from arriving either. The new interconnected digital music landscape allows for a much faster exploration of musical ideas than ever before, and the rate which this 'second time around' the historical eras proceeds might be underestimated.

¹²³ G. S. Bedbrook. "The Nature of Medieval Music." *Music & Letters* 26, no. 2 (1945): 78-88. Accessed November 30, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/727107>.



En la maison de la
 Carle m'ly illu e m'entre
 ne la voy buefmeus m'estuet mo
 ma dame vraye ne
 ou je puisse a on
 plus a gent corps
 tout vraye soufite
 Se meisme vraye
 Se c'est la fleur de mon cuer deliree nul ne treuve qui nu cache m'entee
 maison t'ua pensee ne se nas nulle aultre rien a penser ce ne la plus ne vraye
 entre ne se ne Cay comment ah veur Se ne la voy buefmeus m'estuet mo



Ex. 14. Side by side comparison of one page of *Le Roman de Fauvel*, a Medieval manuscript known for its complex symbols and art and “The Magic Circle of Infinity” from *Makrokosmos* by George Crumb. Both are examples of visual scores used in the Medieval period and the 20th Century.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting pause in the great game of music-making has allowed this study to stand. By taking this pandemic's press of the pause button on music-making as an opportunity to take stock of musical markets and the trends within them, we might be able to prepare ourselves for the trends that have yet to resolve themselves and the new ones that have arisen directly because of the pandemic. This 'second phase' that this paper proposes we are in has been building for much longer than this pandemic has and will need to be dealt with for much longer following it.

We have to accept that, unless we have some sort of living connection to the composer, that everything we have to start out with...has to be conjecture once before recordings. Even once recordings started the recording quality is so poor, we wonder are we actually hearing what people sounded like or were they just excited to [be able to record sound] "Oh, my God, we can do this."... I think that some of the reasons that this is happening is all of these folks have had a connection to European conductors who were brought up post early music revival in Europe. We received that sort of early music tradition, much later than the Europeans because a lot of the initial research was done there. Then it came over to the academy here. But it's easier to adapt those things to voices before they are adapted to instrumental technique. Because if you look at the way an American or even a European orchestra is made up of is that you win your spot and then it's yours. And often you win your spot when you're very young. And so that your training in terms of style only comes at the hands of a conductor at that point... We hope that we're doing this with Seraphic, but I think the forward-thinking orchestras are realizing that larger romantic orchestral music is itself becoming a genre, rather than the bread and butter. People with taste want more than just meat and potatoes every night. You want some contemporary music, you want some earlier musical styles, but you sit with the advent of recordings particularly. [If you listen to a period recording and then the same piece recorded in the 1980s] clearly you could hear the differences in Romantic music, but it becomes much more evident in earlier and later pieces of and contemporary pieces of music, because it requires more than just one skill set and one set of knowledge.¹²⁴

The current working musician must shift skill sets more often than their predecessors, much like the interesting compositional permutations, there are now performers doing the same. Performers can sing in ensembles, on the lyric stage, in lieder concerts, and also dip their toes into more popular genres, be it musical theatre, jazz or other styles while giving each style its due. One of the greatest lessons from the study of early music is adaptability of style. As this second phase grows and expands, performers will have to adapt further and gain greater abilities in switching

¹²⁴ Quigly, discussion: Russo, interview.

styles. The ability to switch stylistic skill sets comes from the foundation of musicians in previous generations that showed that there is value in being able to perform music in different ways:

As knowledge grows [early music techniques] are not as controversial as they once were. I think that people of my generation bring a little of that controversy with them. Where we are hard-nosed and chip on our shoulders, whereas I think the people that are coming after me just see it as like the way you perform this music properly-... [this will become more evident] as younger teachers are going into conservatory. And they're replacing people from a different tradition. Our [current] tradition is broader than the tradition that people were brought up in. It's a more competitive environment. And it's no longer based on sort of, "What family did you come from? Did you come from a musical family?" You've been hearing your father play piano as an amateur for your entire life, even though they were a lawyer, but your father valued that and showed that has a value. Now the mindset is, "I just like to listen to music." The musical world is more democratic today than it ever has been. And we have a terribly long way to go. If we look back 30 years, the people that won jobs in orchestras, their teacher was that position before them or their father. Because it wouldn't have been their mother had that position before them because they didn't allow women into orchestras until recently. That's the crazy part: our concept of what a symphony orchestra is and looks like, is so vastly different than what it looked like in '78. If you look at the MET Orchestra in the 80s from those old recordings, it's like 70 men and a woman playing piccolo and one playing harp. As we expand our horizons and adjust what we think is proper these changes are [evident]. We're just getting a little less uptight about what we consider music to be.¹²⁵

The early music revival has always been about reaching back to pull something vivid and personal into our own time. The idea of a musical hero is a loaded one, and it can find musicians backed into corners or unable to grow. Or, on the other hand, the example can lift them up and show them what their music-making and dedication can bring them. Without the example of the musical generation before yours, how can you grow? Where does inspiration to make music come from without it? The literal muse descending on individuals with divine gifts? Or is it the practice of artisan and apprentice, one learning from the next the responsibilities and traditions that came before them? Equal parts of both added together with other influences? These interviews were some of the most fascinating conversations I've ever been a part of. They have taught me what this generation of the early music movement is made up of, where the movement came from, and where I think it could expand to. Because of the literal genius of these people, some things had to be prioritized for the sake of this thesis's arguments. All of the artists I was fortunate enough to interview were each unbelievably enjoyable to speak with. Each spoke with the

¹²⁵ Quigly, discussion: Russo, interview.

animation and energy of truly artistic people. It was a pleasure I hope I get to repeat again many times, and one that I hope other people are equally fortunate to experience. Everyone I've gotten the chance to talk to is because I was in the first place bold enough to send emails into the void. It might be Covid-19, but sometimes when you ask the pantheon of music as you see it to come and speak with you, they both answer that email and leave you the boons of their perspective for your trouble. This thesis would not be what it is without the time given to me by artists who were significantly less burdened with performing than their talent and careers at this point should, in an entirely moral universe, ever be allowed to be cut short. What could be the first time since some of this music was first written, we as a corporate musical body could not make it. Churches lay empty, concert halls and stages sat with their lonely lighthouses of ghost lights illuminating the spaces once filled with people. Through all of this, the early music movement, and classical music in general, must have something amazing happening, because not only do I believe that its future is a brighter one, I am also so excited to see and hear what happens next. When a Phoenix dies or slumbers in mythology, they are guaranteed to burst forth again. Storing energy and the fire of creativity for the next time they can fly at the height of their powers. This symbol was chosen for this thesis both for the generational recurrence and growth of early music as a movement of musical thought, and for the current generation of musicians trapped, waiting for their time to fly forth free and to burn as brightly as their music can allow. Just as a phoenix sleeps, early music has gone through different stages where its creation has stopped and then started again. Once these waves of music-making can be seen as linked parts, we can prepare ourselves for the next portion of music-making, and for our musicians to take flight.

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Appendix 1: *Esenvalds and the Musical Landscape*

Question: How have you seen the musical culture has changed during your career? Has the early music revival changed at all?

“I think somehow today world is living in a faster speed. We think faster, we feel faster. We are ready for new information to come faster rather than in century of back, for example. And it's also true that today in the professional world, among the professional musicians and conductors, the world is felt and read and understood today faster. I don't think that it would mean that we are less patient, but somehow the length of the scores from the previous centuries, they become... there are moments when they are, today they seem too long. And we are ready to jump and to explore, to feel another emotion in the music. So that's one comment that today the world runs faster. And in the audience, people will be happier to enjoy more different colors of music rather than just one stylistic piece during the whole concert. Another thought is that performers today are also interested to show different class and styles that they can do. Be it an instrumental chamber music ensemble or be it a choir, early music or otherwise. They can learn different pieces, different stylistical century works because we today we are capable of changing our voices and finding different voice colors. We are capable of using lot of different articulations in instrumental music. So we have learned the heritage of previous centuries and we are happy. We are happy to use them. We don't want to hide them from audience. This is actually also a story about the composers that today the audience and the critics are hoping that each new work by composer will be like a new stylistical work in his or her creative professional life. Otherwise they will say, oh, this work is already like a copy of his previous work and so on. Critics are pushing on the composers, now, come on, come on, show me something new, show me something new. Constantly sell something new, what I haven't heard. And today the composers have learned the same as performers. Composers have learned the techniques and style craftsmanship of the previous centuries. And let's be honest, Mozart wrote only in one style. Bach wrote in one style, but haven't wrote in one style, that is something changing in the late Beethoven. But today, asking a composer to write in one style, Mm-mm (negative) no one will ask it. Take us to a new horizons, show us how big the world is. Show us unheard colors and so on. So today composers are trained to many, many different techniques and styles and genres. I would say today composers are more richly equipped than Beethoven, than Mozart, than Bach.”

Question: Could you please describe how you acquired the skills necessary to be a composer so versed in so many different techniques?

If there is something already being created or found in previous centuries, so I call it as a technique and I have learned the technique as well. So for example the, was it Tallis for 50 voices? Tallis, the ..

Devon: Yes. Spem in alium.

Yes. Or let's say also the Schnittke, the Russian composer. He also wrote that, was it Minnesang for 50 voices?¹²⁶ Something like that. A similar approach, but completely different harmonical language, but still the beauty. In both of those works are the beauty, the logic, the logical flow of the harmony. From my childhood, my first teacher was Whitney Houston, the American pop star, because I was 10 years old. And she was everywhere. She was on TV, in cassette, audio cassettes in radio, in live concerts. But because I was still living under Soviet Union occupation, Latvia was still under the Soviet Union, I couldn't find her sheet music. I learned her songs just by listening to them on TV, on audio cassette. And I was 10 years old piano class pupil at the children's music school and I learned her songs to play on my piano, just by listening to audio files. And I was impressed that her beautiful songs consist only of five, six different chords. D minor, B flat major, GM7, C, nothing more. The harmony, the order of the chords was beautiful. I learned actually from the best pop music examples, I learned those relationship between tonic, dominant, subdominant; the structure of the harmony. You can see this logical order of the harmony in my works. I learned them, but today I'm in a big problem, in a bad situation if I need to write a piece just for four voice choir, like one soprano, one alto, one tenor one bass; I can't do anything just with four voices. I really need six, six is a minimum. I have the largest imagination, the widest imagination wings, if I am given eight voice choir. Eight voice harmony is fantastic. I love it. For professional choirs I have written even up to 16 voice scores, but that's real only for professionals. But also the scientists, they say that the human ear, or actually a human brain can separate like eight, nine, maybe 10 different voices simultaneously. If there are polyphonically 11, 12, 13, 14, then it's turning into abstract cloud. So I better stay mostly with eight voices in harmony. And also in my compositions world, the harmony is priority because it builds the landscape of that musical story I am going to tell in that work.

Question: Could we please go through a few major works?

¹²⁶ It is scored for 52 voices to be precise.

Infelix Ego from Ora Singer's album *Refuge from the Flames*:

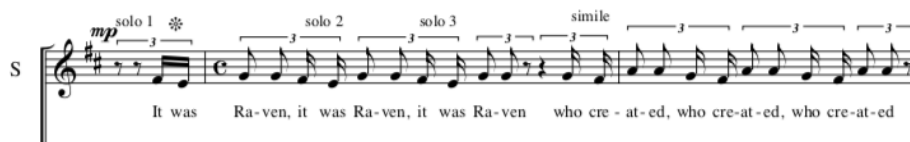
So in that work, I am using this older material, William Byrd, and I quote it purely. I don't break in. So if I quote, if there is a quotation, it's honestly Byrd's and I am just coloring around it. It can be hummed harmony, sustained harmony of the Byrd's material. But I am not changing this Byrd's material. So this approach is related to the second folklore wave. It's called second folklore wave.¹²⁷ That approach. And that approach became very popular, maybe more popular in choral music. When the choir sound gradually started to turn into landscape sound, when each coral piece became like a story. There was introduction on the background or the imagination of this... imagined stage of that story is created and then comes the textual story in the- So in general, that's a second folklore wave and I have been using this technique in several of my works, including this Ora singers commission piece. So if I quote William Byrd's music, it's a pure quotation, fragmented quotation, but I don't change it's voices. I don't, I just leave it there. Because that story was about Savonarola. You know this person in Italy who was trapped in prison and was killed. And he had a huge sorrow in the prison, while in prison, and he wrote his famous texts. So in my work I wanted to... actually I like to tell it like it is film, the movie of him or tell like Opera. The piece is actually, I cannot call my work a song, it is a composition. So it is a composition, maybe it's like a ballad or another genre name, but it's not a song. The whole CD, there was this connection between Byrd and [the past]. And at the same time when I quote material of previous centuries, I have feeling that in my composition, there is kind of bridge and on the bridge, both of these centuries meet. In this composition, we meet. Let's say also in this Ora piece about Savonarola and Byrd, I have a feeling that yes, Byrd is present there, Sabaranolla is there and also I am there. I'm reflecting, I'm telling story about them. We meet on that bridge.

The First Tears

The First Tears, again, it's a composition. It's not a song, it's a legend. It's legend, Inuit legend about how the first tears came into the world. I found that legend and it was so beautiful. So pure, so original, there was nothing of a cliché, it was pure. And I decided to compose it. That was commissioned by the Latvian Radio choir, because they were going to have a special concert, which would consist of fairytales. So three

¹²⁷ Esenvalds differentiated composers who use folk music material as the starting point of a new composition as the first wave, and the second wave including the folk music material specifically without messing with the melodic structure as the second.

composers were invited to write a new piece and just picked a Latvian fairytale. But when I introduced the conductor to that Inuit legend I had in mind, he gave me a go, yes, compose that, compose it. And I just painted, I painted all those words, all those imagined feelings that I saw in the text. Flying higher and higher and higher, I illustrated it. And then there is this, there are three moments of vocalizing when the tin whistle or Irish flute is playing. When, for example, one of the moments is the sea, the picture of the sea at the end of the peice when the tragedy has happened and the Raven was crying for what he had done. I depicted this vast Nordic Northern sea. I was in Alaska, I was in a town up there. There was no road, only plane I could reach it by. And I was standing at the seashore and I had that feeling that at the end of the world Raven could be crying there, the whale was dead. And he gazes to the whale, he gazes to the North, and there is no land. The end of the land and just the ocean, the vast horizon, that kind of freedom. But at the same time emptiness, but at the same time also the beauty, beauty of the nature there. So that's the third vocalizing moment with which ends the composition. And then in the middle vocalizing, I think that was when he fell in love with the girl, and then there is this smooth, warm harmony. And the first vocalizing moment is after the first text, which was a light, light, light, and then comes the vocalizing. So that's the picturesque of that world inside the whale.



Appendix Ex. 1. Solo vocal line in Esenvalds' *The Last Tears*

MY THOUGHTS

My Thoughts, that's a text of St. Silouan the Athonite. This Saint priest, Russian Saint priest who lived in the 1860's until 1930 or so. And the conductor of Latvian radio choir, he gave me the writings of Silouan and since I'm believer, I know the Bible and I studied two years theology, so in the world there are do exists those spiritual writings by many, many different people, by priests, by monks and so on, but their writings are reflection on some Bible verses. None of those writings seem better than the Bible, and as I was reading Silouan's writing, all of them to me, seemed too sugary. I felt that nothing will... I can't compose them because I'm a practical believer, I go to church, I led church choir for 10 years. I led senior church choir for five years. I know the daily life, the real life of a church goer and those Silouan writings were too correct, there was no real life in them. And I was thinking, what shall I compose then? And I turned the first page and they were his introduction words to the book, his only introduction words. Finally I saw the Silouan himself as a real sinful, but saint man at the same time, where he was

apologizing for his selfishness or that he is also just a human being and so on. I saw him, yes, that's what I was searching for. And I composed that preface. The basses will go down, I think, to the low C or even B flat, I don't remember. So full voices and actually that piece is composed as actually like a symphony. Well, it seems like symphony orchestra is playing. The music is just becoming more intense, intense page by page and finally it reaches the climax. Then some other tones in the last fade out. That's how I saw the Silouan, this man of the lyrics that he was speaking constantly in this preface: "And as I write, when I write then that and that." So he repeated several times "I write and as I wrote, and my hand was writing and my mind was flying."

rall.

111

Perc. id lib.)

Soli

S

A

T

B

мне, и я пи-шу е-го.

mp p

Appendix Ex. 2. Final Cadence from Esenvalds' *My Thoughts*

So I had this feeling that constantly he was in his study writing and he was listening to God and then he wrote. That's why the piece is constantly feels that it moves on except the first three minutes is more like introduction. It's after three minutes it's no excuse anymore, you just move forward, forward, forward.

Appendix 2: *Caroline Shaw and the Partita for Eight Voices*

It was a little nod to my early music folks: when I was starting to write it I was getting more serious in the period performance violin world, I was playing with Robert Mealy for a while, I was also working with dance a lot and playing ballet and modern dance classes. So thinking choreographically, movement and dance was fresh in my mind. Also I was thinking about form and Bach and making something within a fussy or old form; I will frame it within this super standard traditional form, but also saying this will not be that thing. I'll frame it as this shape, but then push it out. There is this mid-twentieth century, maybe early twenty first performance practice of calling new works passacaglia. It's a lot of little winks. I don't think it's a great name, if I went back and named it again I might not choose the same thing. But the boringness of the name, the surprise of entering that world and getting something that you don't really expect.

There is no reason to write a proper allemande. I don't even know what a proper allemande is. It's what? Generally in two or in four, it's kind of fast, it's a dance. But also it connects to the square dance idea of calling it an alleMANde. In American English, I thought was interesting. I had been to class with Mark Morris, the choreographer, and he was saying let's call it an alleMANde not allemande. It was a fun play on that, and I wanted to make this relationship between square dance calls the vocabulary of that. In Courante, it is kind of in three, but a little bit in two like the courante does. The breathing, which is a nod to the running idea but then goes off on it's own. The passacaglia isn't even a passacaglia, it's a theme and variations. Which is more experienced as, oh we hear this repeated motive and something different happens over it. Over time you hear it many times, in variations. And Saraband, it's really about the luxurious second beat. When I had been learning to play sarabands as a violinist we had been learning about the saraband dance and how the second beat has all the foot work in it, I wanted the idea of it to be scooping into this large second beat. The saraband was the only one I was specifically thinking of the dance. With curante I was thinking of a fleeting light footed time of dance, where the allemande has a lower center of gravity. It's a fun nod to dancers and choreographers. I've always kind of wanted to be a choreographer and never will be, so I thought 'why don't I just make some music?'

Question: Often in reviews, the Partita is described as a joyful piece, but to be honest, when I listen to it I don't specifically hear joy all the time. Could you respond to that?

There is a lot of sadness in the piece, I think I was very sad when I wrote it. But I think you can only find joy with sadness. Joy and sadness are very closely related and they walk hand in hand. So when someone calls it full of joy, it makes me incredibly happy. I think it is also that. And I feel there is a part in *allemande* where it is simultaneously the depths of despair and super depressing, existential and also this joy of going through that experience.

Appendix 3: Patrick Quigley and the Education of the American Musician

If we're teaching a style that the people who are at the top of the game were trained in 20 years ago, when we mount these productions for them, but we find like you found a Norma that as those people in that training and that tastes goes away, and people are interested in other things. That it, the disconnect between education and the competitiveness of the education, which right now if you want to go into, if you want to sing at the MET or want to play at the Cleveland Orchestra, you have to, it's you're trained in a tradition. You are the receiver of a great and profound tradition, which is true. But for anything else, you just have to have, your mind has to be open. And I think some of this also comes from a devaluation of contemporary American music by audiences in the 60s, 70s and 80s. As American music became more *avant garde*, and not in the style that was a European classical style, it was sort of rejected from the European classical hotbed, which is the orchestra hall or the opera. But as a result, so composers were then like, "Well, what? I don't want to write this. I can't write this." What's new and interesting. They go, "Oh, but look at this. These people are performing Bach in this crazy way. And I love how this sounds, this is so opposite of that. I'm going to think about this affect as maybe taking that on as mine," and so I think that some of this comes from the ensembles who are outside of the academy and outside of sort of the sort of high capitalist side of music are the ones who are like, "Well, I mean, we had to learn how to perform Bach. So why don't we learn how to perform this piece," Because it's all the same. Eventually they'll become sort of like, "If I do enough research and I listened to enough things and go and find some stuff, I can perform this or I can go talk to a composer and they can write something specifically for my skill set." And as those skill sets are becoming more and more about what the early music movement was.

It's a critical way of thinking that we didn't, that was not part of the top down gestalt of Romantic music. Which is very much I mean, that music, I love it. It's beautiful. But it's meant from composer is at the top, and then you get to conductor and then slowly, principal players, and then section players, and then there's, it's a different hierarchy than we as 21st century. And specifically Americans, I think, are in

because we don't have to, our music making and I see this is particular to the American tradition, which is that we don't get our money from the government to preserve a state sponsored tradition. But rather, we have to prove that music is great and have passion for it in order for people to come and say, "I'm going to pay for that." And so our motivations are so different, are much more akin to the motivations of, of like an 18th century musician or a 17th century musician. Which is that there are a set of people who want to hear this music, and they want it to be performed at the highest and be able to say, "I go and listen to, I have the best taste." It's about taste. And so like, why did people hire Mozart or Haydn? It's because they were the best and they had them in their collection. It's like, "I'm collecting the best I'm not collecting second best here." And I think that that's what people are doing now and as we're reconsidering what the economy of... It's hard to recall small C classical music, art music, lowercase Western European art music.

Appendix 4: *Nico Muhly's Four Traditional Songs*

Nico Muhly's Four Traditional Songs were performed and recorded as part of the accompanying Lecture Recital presented with the research presented here.

For traditional songs. Let's see. Odd question. What parts do you think worked the best and how did the composition process go? Well, girl, they all work the best. I mean, I wouldn't let it out there if I didn't think it worked. I mean, I think the compositional process was based on knowing. I mean, I don't know if you've... Have you listened to all those bat shit crazy Deller recordings on Vanguard? There's an endless box set of these things, where it's him and the girls or whatever, doing everything. But there's one thing in there that I'd never heard until, what? 10 years ago. Which was him singing The Bitter Withy, unaccompanied. And it's pure, pure Deller in terms of interpretation and affect. And sits in that totally weird part of his voice, where certain notes are incredibly quiet and certain notes are very loud. And of course, it's recorded in that really specific way. And for me, that performance is such a gem and so special because it's so exposed. And all you're there with, is technique and communication. I also find, in that particular case, I love old folk songs that feel slightly syncretic, right? That feels like there's a sort of pagan sensibility, a little bit more towards Wickerman than it is towards the book of Proverbs or whatever. And I think this particular story appeals to me, because we have so little, aside from the apocrypha about Christ, basically, at any point between when he would've been... From grade school, through grad school, right? And for me, again, the idea that you link, what essentially amounts to a just so story, right? In the sort of

[inaudible 00:18:43] variety of how it comes to pass that the Willow trees is like that. That there's this unbelievably nested series of kind of English anxieties, right? About class, about the death of children, which of course is something that so many folk songs deal with. About culpability, about how parents are to their children. And in this particular case, there's this beautiful reversal, where we've been in the third person. And then suddenly, Jesus says to his mother... Well, he sort of apostrophizes the tree, and says, "Oh, bitter withy! Oh, bitter withy! You've caused me to smart, and the willow should be the very first tree to perish at the heart!" It's so beautiful. So I worked backwards from there, and I made it... In that way, I made the solo countertenor function as a kind of architecture. The line is the consistent thing. And then sort of, I draped these chords that are and are not related to what the original harmonization could have been. I draped them on there sort of like Spanish Moss. And the other ones again, I just wanted to make something that really let the voice shine and that really respected the text.



Behemoth and Leviathan

William Blake

Line engraving on paper, later revised with Pen, Ink, and Watercolor

1825, revised 1874