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# **INVESTIGATING NEW MODELS FOR OPERA DEVELOPMENT**

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**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN MUSICAL  
COMPOSITION**

**UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX**

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**(incorporating minor corrections as of April 2012)**

## PREFACE

Since this doctoral submission accounts for a Composer-in-Residence scheme within the context of Glyndebourne Festival Opera in 2006-9, the bulk of this submission has grown out of collaborative relationships with writers, directors, performers and conductors. The most important collaborative partners include writers Simon Christmas, Edward Kemp and Nicky Singer; the directors Olivia Fuchs, Clare Whistler, Freddie Wake-Walker and John Fulljames, and the conductors Leo McFall and Nicholas Collon. In addition a host of young singers have contributed to this project's final performance outputs; I am greatly indebted to all of them for their imagination, generosity and commitment.

Aside from bibliographical sources detailed below (bibliography, page 360), other source material that has been fed into this submission includes interviews with Glyndebourne's General Director, David Pickard, and an archiving of the extensive email development exchange out of which the chamber opera, *The Yellow Sofa* emerged (Appendix 13, p. 251). Full permission has been sought for the use of this material.

I would also like acknowledge the substantial help and support from my two supervisors: my academic supervisor at Sussex University, Dr Nicholas Till and my non-academic supervisor, Katie Tearle, Head of Education at Glyndebourne Festival Opera. Alan Grieve is also greatly to be thanked for his generous financial support for this Glyndebourne Composer-in-Residence scheme.

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis and portfolio of compositions, has not been and will not be submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

**Julian Philips, September 30<sup>th</sup> 2010/30th April 2012**

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# SUMMARY

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

JULIAN MONTAGU PHILIPS

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## SUMMARY

This thesis is a culmination of an AHRC funded collaborative doctoral award between the Centre for Research in Opera and Music Theatre at Sussex University and Glyndebourne Festival Opera. The research took the form of a Composer in Residence scheme in 2006-9 and the submission consists of three new operatic projects, *Followers*, *The Yellow Sofa* and *Knight Crew*.

The thesis takes the form of a series of four case studies which explore the creative and aesthetic resonances of the above works in addition to a study of Péter Eötvös's new opera *Love and Other Demons*, commissioned by Glyndebourne for the 2008 Festival. The exploration of all four case studies is intended to offer a range of possible models for the future development of the operatic art form.

The central creative research questions of this project relate broadly to questions of context and the reanimation of tradition. In terms of context, each of these four operatic case studies considers the perspective of the commissioning opera company, of the creative team, of singers and instrumentalists and of audiences. In terms of the reanimation of tradition, this research considers ideas around narrativity in opera and the centrality of the operatic voice and operatic lyricism. The polystylistic nature of opera is just one of several other themes that emerge as a consequence of this research.

The thesis lays out each case study in chronological order beginning with an introductory chapter that describes the terms of the residency. Chapter Two considers the site-specific promenade opera *Followers*, Chapter Three examines the gestation of Péter Eötvös's new opera *Love and Other Demons*, Chapter Four details the chamber opera *The Yellow Sofa* developed as part of Glyndebourne's Jerwood Chorus Development Scheme, while Chapter Five projects the central themes of this research onto a larger-scale, grand operatic canvas in a community-specific context. A final Chapter Six concludes with a sketch for a new operatic aesthetic, which attempts to synthesise the creative and research experience of this composer residency.

## Chapter One

### Introduction

This creative research has grown out of an unique and groundbreaking initiative: the first ever Composer-in-Residence scheme established by a British Opera Company, set up by the Centre for Research in Opera and Music Theatre at Sussex University in partnership with Glyndebourne Festival Opera, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council as a collaborative doctoral award.

For most composers, it is a rare privilege to be able to focus exclusively on a single art form over a prolonged period; so often, creative projects have the feel of the ‘one-off’, continuity having to be imagined or even imposed on sometimes disparate creative assignments. This fragmentary pattern is hardly conducive to operatic composition, an art form where so much has to be assimilated, and so many factors impinge on the composition process: collaboration with writers, realisation with directors, negotiation with singers and performers, engagement with an audience. Over the past three years every aspect of the operatic process has been scrutinised and experienced, resulting in the composition of three substantial operatic projects, each of which explores a different model for the development of the art form. *Followers*, a site-specific, promenade opera explores the idea of ‘residency’ itself; a chamber opera *The Yellow Sofa*, inhabits an operatic ‘in between’ of shifting musical registers and structural approaches; a youth opera, *Knight Crew*, investigates the potential of grand opera within a community-specific context. In addition a fourth opera, Péter Eötvös’s *Love and Other Demons*, commissioned for Glyndebourne’s 2008 Festival, offers a valuable opportunity to step back and observe, scrutinising the development process of new main-scale opera from first conception to first night.

Taken together, these four operas are treated as a series of case studies in Chapters Three to Six with a set of fourteen supporting appendices, evidencing not only the details of libretto development but also each opera’s complete process, from conception to first performance. These four case studies detail exploration and reflection around a set of creative research questions intended to generate new models for future opera development, relating two broad areas of concern: *context* and the *reanimation of tradition*.

### *Context*

With such a powerfully social and collaborative art form as opera, this residency was bound to sharpen an awareness of context, not just creative and performing contexts, but also the context of Glyndebourne Festival Opera itself. Rarely are composers allowed access to the inner workings of an opera company, more typically kept at arm's length for fear of what might be demanded. As a result, a heightened sense of opera's many potential contexts remains a consistent concern at the heart of this residency: the commissioning context for a given new work, the creative context for that work, the social context of a particular space and audience, and the performing context of a work's vocal and instrumental resources. Within the terms of this residency, 'context' has informed the research in three important ways – the Glyndebourne Festival, Glyndebourne Education and the Jerwood Chorus Development Scheme. These three contexts will be considered briefly before a detailing of the broader British Opera context for this creative residency itself.

### *Glyndebourne Festival Opera*

This 2006-9 period of this research incorporates three Glyndebourne Festival seasons; taken as a whole, this constitutes eighteen productions on the Glyndebourne main stage, which have provided the backdrop for this residency's creative activity. All eighteen works have been observed in rehearsal and performance to a greater or lesser degree, some operas – such as Verdi's *Macbeth* (2006, directed by Richard Jones) - more directly influencing the research itself (Chapter Six). More generally, the residency has allowed for a full assimilation of how an opera company functions, and all the social, creative, musical and theatrical issues in play, when an opera is staged.

### *Glyndebourne Education*

With Glyndebourne's Head of Education, Katie Tearle, as non-academic supervisor, this research activity has been located most specifically within Glyndebourne's Education Department, emphasising the virtuous circle between new opera development and education activity that characterises most British opera companies. Each season, Katie Tearle is engaged with commissioning smaller scale operatic works for many educational and community contexts, all of which connect up in some way with Glyndebourne's main programming. In a sense, this collaborative doctoral research has been just another a strand of this network of activity, activity which has provided an

invaluable research context. In addition, Tearle has negotiated all the implications of this project's creativity activity, not only supporting the work artistically but also tirelessly solving logistical or financial difficulties. Without her crucial support within the Glyndebourne company context, very little would have been achievable.

#### *Jerwood Chorus Development Scheme*

This creative residency was designed to take advantage of Glyndebourne's existing Jerwood Chorus Development Scheme. Set up in 2005 with the generous support of the Jerwood Foundation – a foundation that also donated one million pounds for the construction of the Jerwood Studio at Glyndebourne – this scheme offers the Glyndebourne Chorus broad professional development opportunities in parallel to the chorus's performance commitment in the Glyndebourne main season and tour. Since a large number of Glyndebourne choristers are recent conservatoire graduates, this scheme offers a valuable transition from music training through into professional performance.

It is this scheme that has provided the vocal resources for both *Followers* and *The Yellow Sofa*, enabling both substantial periods of creative development and also access to a wide cross-section of young opera singers working in the British opera scene. While a lack of fluency with contemporary music did create some difficulties, none the less, the energy and commitment of the young singers involved has been of enormous value, the residency unachievable without this direct link between the creative development of new opera and the professional development of new opera singers.

#### *British Operatic Context 2006-9*

Appendices One to Three present an overview of the new operatic work staged during this 2006-9 research period, highlighting the most important repertory commissioned or staged within the British opera scene, though dealing predominantly with an English and Welsh operatic context. In a broad sense, this repertory can be divided into three categories which taken in sequence progress from the high operatic (Category One) to anti-opera (Category Three):

- Category One: Main-scale or grand opera;  
 Category Two: Chamber opera, related to Category One but conceived with fewer resources.  
 Category Three: Experimental opera, including site-specific music theatre work.

Perhaps surprisingly considering the cost implications of main-scale opera, all the Category One performances in the 2006-9 residency period achieved a relatively high degree of success:

2006-7

James MacMillan *The Sacrifice* (Welsh National Opera commission)  
 Thomas Adès *The Tempest*, (Royal Opera House, Covent Garden revival)

2007-8

Jonathan Dove *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (Opera North commission)  
 Birtwistle *The Minotaur* (Royal Opera House, Covent Garden commission)  
 Judith Weir *A Night at the Chinese Opera* (Scottish Opera revival)  
 Judith Weir *The Vanishing Bridegroom* (BBC/Barbican Centre revival in concert)

2008-9

David Sawer *Skin Deep* (Opera North commission)

These main-scale British operas were balanced by a number of important British premieres or revivals of international repertory during the residency period, featuring two major stage works by John Adams and Kaija Saariaho:

2006-7

Philip Glass *Satyagraha* (English National Opera)  
 Philippe Boesmans *Miss Julie* (Music Theatre Wales)  
 Péter Eötvös *As I Crossed a Bridge of Dreams* (Almeida Opera Festival)  
 Detlev Glanert *Three Water Players* (Almeida Opera Festival)  
 John Adams *A Flowering Tree* (Barbican Centre)

2007-8

Oswaldo Golijov *Ainadamar* (Barbican Centre)

Olga Neuwirth *Lost Highway* (English National Opera at the Young Vic)

Kaija Saariaho *Adriana Mater* (Barbican Centre)

Yannis Kyriakides *An Ocean of Rain* (Aldeburgh Festival)

Péter Eötvös *Love and Other Demons* (Glyndebourne Festival Opera)

2008-9

Todd Machover *Skellig* (The Sage, Gateshead)

John Adams *Doctor Atomic* (English National Opera)

Aulis Sallinen *The King Goes Forth to France* (Guildhall School of Music and Drama)

Kaija Saariaho *L'Amour Loin* (English National Opera)

Inevitably, Category Two – smaller-scale chamber opera – is the most substantially represented during the period of this composer residency at Glyndebourne, with companies such as The Opera Group, Music Theatre Wales or Tête à Tête maintaining an admirable commitment to developing new opera on a smaller scale, with new commissions or British premieres from composers including Julian Grant, Jonathan Dove, Lynne Plowman and George Benjamin. In this context, the Royal Opera House's Linbury Studio proved itself to be an important platform for the promotion of such operas, the Linbury also producing new work itself in-house including Dominique Le Gendre's *Bird of Night* (2006) and a revival of Tom Adès's *Powder Her Face* (2008).

The bulk of activity in Category Three is tied to Festival contexts. In 2008, both Tête à Tête at London's Riverside Studios and Grimeborn at the Arcola Theatre, Dalston, establish annual opera festivals for the presentation of small-scale new work. At the Aldeburgh Festival, new opera continued to be a particular focus: a site-specific work from Tansy Davies/Mira Calix (*Elephant and Castle*) in 2007, Yannis Kyriakides's *An Ocean of Rain* in 2008, and Birtwistle's *The Corridor* in 2009, while the final year of Almeida's Opera Festival in 2007 saw the staging of four music theatre or operatic works by Erollyn Wallen, Péter Eötvös, Detlev Glanert and Orlando Gough.

Some Category Three activity functions very much in the manner of 'opera laboratory' work. Tête à Tête's *Blind Date* in November 2007 offered six creative teams – with

composers Gary Carpenter, Helen Chadwick, Chris Mayo, Anna Meredith, Jason Yarde and Julian Grant – valuable opportunities to develop operatic practice. Similarly, Scottish Opera's 5:15 scheme, established in 2008, was established to invest in five creative teams, with the longer-term goal of commissioning the most successful on a more ambitious scale. This scheme proved a highly successful model for new opera development, continuing in 2009 and 2010.

Taken as a whole this new opera audit reflects an impressive diversity of compositional style and approach, of scale and of context, all the major British opera companies engaged at some level with pushing the art form on, whether through education department activity or on the main stage. In one sense, these three operatic categories represent something of an operatic food chain – big beasts in Category One, emerging creative spirits in Category Three. None the less, the most versatile operatic composers appear able to straddle all three – Birtwistle is represented by his main-scale opera *The Minotaur* (2008), his music theatre works *Punch and Judy* and *Down by the Greenwood Side* (2008 & 2009), and his more experimental Orphic theatre work *The Corridor* scored for two singers and six players (2009); Jonathan Dove by his grand opera *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (2007) and his chamber scale family opera *The Enchanted Pig* (2006).

### ***Reanimation of tradition***

Glyndebourne Festival Opera's unique operatic culture is posited on the highest possible standards of music and production and a strong commitment to traditional operatic repertory; none the less, the company has maintained a long history of engagement with composers and new opera development. This texture of tradition and innovation is very much at the heart of this research project; all four case studies represent an engagement with traditional operatic values, informing this tradition with the experience of broader streams of contemporary music and culture. This reanimation of tradition is explored in relation to two principle areas: *narrative* and *voice*.

### ***Narrative and its implications for operatic structure***

Roland Barthes begins his 'Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives' with an exultant declaration of narrative's all-encompassing influence:

The narratives of the world are numberless. Narrative is first and foremost a prodigious variety of genres, themselves distributed amongst different substances – as though any material were fit to receive man's stories. Able to be carried by articulated language, spoken or written, fixed or moving images, gestures, and the ordered mixture of all these substances; narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting...stained glass windows, cinema, comics, new item, conversation.<sup>1</sup>

Barthes might just as well have included opera in this list, for however fragmented, partial or fleeing, opera thrives on narrative; on the most basic level, opera tells stories with music.

Each of this research project's four case studies explores the importance of narrative for the operatic form, analysing how a dramaturgical shape is evolved and then projected onto an operatic canvas. *Followers* investigates how an operatic narrative might be fragmented by a site-specific design; *The Yellow Sofa* how a stock plot might be playfully reinterpreted through an unsettling collision of the 'real' with the 'surreal' and a closely worked performing company of ten singers; *Knight Crew* tackles a grand operatic narrative by informing it with the mixed texture of a community-specific context. All three of these operas have been informed by the opportunity to observe the creative development of Péter Eötvös's *Love and Other Demons*, and in particular the complex genesis of its libretto.

Of course, the term 'narrative' itself is widely deployed in music criticism outside of an operatic context, a usage that to Carolyn Abbate renders it a highly problematic, even promiscuous term:

Musical narrative as a musical plot does nonetheless seem to me limited in certain ways; as paradoxical as the formulation might sound, one of its *limitations* is its interpretive *promiscuity*. Broad definitions of narrative (narrative as any event-sequence, or as any text that induces mental comparisons with a paradigm, for instance) are so broad as to enable almost all music, all parts of any given work, to be defined as narrative. Put bluntly: how much intellectual pleasure do we derive from a critical methodology that generates such uniformity and becomes a mere machine for naming any and all music?<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> R. Barthes, 'Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives', in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. S. Heath, (London, Fontana Paperbacks, 1977).

<sup>2</sup> C. Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century*, (Princeton N.J., Princeton University Press, 1991) p. xi.



In an operatic context, however, discussions of ‘narrative structure’ are unavoidable, a given in any creative development process between a composer, writer and director. If narrative is a ‘promiscuous’ term in a purely musical context, then in opera - the ultimate collaborative art form - it accrues many layers of meaning: the narrative embodied by original source material (novel, short story etc.), the evolution of a libretto’s purely textual narrative, how a narrative is communicated through the sung line, and of course, the deeper narrative flow of the music, the invisible narrative that so fascinates Abbate. Each of these four case studies engages with narrative in a specific and a metaphorical sense, as part of a desire to evolve an aesthetic position around how new opera might sing its stories, generating potential models for future opera development.

### *Voice*

The bulk of Glyndebourne’s performance activity is rooted in the primacy of the operatic voice, the ‘voice’ that its audiences flock to see, despite the financial barriers or the prospect of a wet picnic on the lawn. All too often, the operatic voice is a point of tension in new opera development, many composers relishing the scale and resources that the art form offers, while lacking a basic fluency with its cultural traditions and retaining a bristling resentment for its most characteristic vocal sound.

This research project places traditional operatic lyricism at its heart, not as a reactionary position, but a pragmatic response to the precise nature of opera’s performing resources. Opera singers, whatever the level of experience, come with very specific training behind them, and while some singers are reluctant to engage with any kind of experimentation or play, most innovations around the operatic voice have to begin with a basic acceptance of how such a voice functions. All four case studies will consider aspects of operatic vocalisation, examining how traditional operatic vocal texture might be enriched or re-contextualised either through the use of extended techniques or the incorporation of musical theatre or untrained voices into the operatic sound world.

Of course, taking these two areas of *narrative* and *voice* together in this way, begs the deeper question, what is ‘tradition’? Opera’s tradition, Glyndebourne’s tradition or a specific composer’s tradition, his/her musical and broader cultural heritage? To some extent, this research project engages with all three of these ways of exploring ‘tradition’

in an operative context. But inevitably, engaging with tradition in this way, opens up wider implications, which will be considered in the final conclusion of Chapter Six.

## Chapter Two

### First Case Study – *Followers*

#### Creative context & resources

The first model this research project investigates for developing new opera emerges out of an exploration of ‘residence’ itself, in both practical and metaphorical ways. We speak of a ‘concert *hall*’ but an ‘opera *house*’, emphasising how opera has an image of residency at its heart, both alluding to its aristocratic origins – the European courts in which opera was ‘housed’, and its concern for the transcendent – ‘house’ in the sense of ‘house of God’. There is a certain inevitability, then, in the fact that Glyndebourne Festival Opera should be the first British opera company to establish a composer ‘residency’ scheme. Glyndebourne has two ‘houses’ – the 1994 Hopkins & Partners *opera house* and the Christie *family house* (in addition to memories of a third: John Christie’s ‘beautiful miniature opera-house’<sup>1</sup> built in 1934). Glyndebourne performers and creative teams often take advantage of both houses, ‘housed’ domestically at Glyndebourne as much as they are ‘housed’ musically in the theatre, and this goes some way to create the company’s unique character. Over the course of its history, a succession of composers have also flourished in both houses, sojourns in the *family house* during this creative residency often triggering reminiscences of Knussen, Birtwistle or Tippett from a surprising range of company staff.

While the culmination of this research project was clear from the outset – a chamber opera for the 2009 season to be staged in the Jerwood Studio – other creative research activity needed to be conceived to work practically within existing company schedules. ‘Residency’ allowed for this, enabling the pattern of Glyndebourne’s production activity to be quickly assimilated, and a sense achieved of where gaps in the schedule might allow for creative activity. Inevitably, while the residency offered limitless access to the main opera house for the observation of production rehearsals, *Sitzprobes* or dress

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<sup>1</sup> Jani Strasser’s description, quoted in J. J. Norwich, *Fifty Years of Glyndebourne: An Illustrated History*, (London, Jonathan Cape, 1985), p. 21.

rehearsals, it was largely unavailable as a performance space; as a consequence, Glyndebourne's *family house* offered an ideal context – itself an imposing theatrical edifice, with an array of inviting interior spaces and decades of operatic echoes and memories.

This first creative project was thus intended to engage with opera *outside* the opera house, but *inside* the family house – an 'opera in residence' in fact. It evolved out of series of development periods – Parts One and Two in July 2007, Part Three in August 2008 – with two work-in-progress performances in October 2007. To date, the piece has still to find its definitive final shape and although developed within the space of this residency 2006-9, its premiere has now been scheduled to coincide with the reopening of Glyndebourne's refurbished Ebert Room in August 2011. Appendix Four lays out a detailed timeline for the whole project.<sup>2</sup>

While the other three case studies of this research project deal with adaptive processes, in each case developing opera out of novels, this first project began with a blank canvas, entirely responsive to overriding research questions and the practical realities of the Glyndebourne context. As a result, while the other case studies present works that are notionally stable artefacts, this project was approached more experimentally - an opera for a creative laboratory that would allow for the central research questions to be tested. Furthermore, while previous operatic experience had been entirely located in the realm of opera education – two chamber operas *Dolffin* and *Wild Cat* for Welsh National Opera<sup>3</sup> – here for the first time was the opportunity to work without an applied agenda, an opportunity to face the challenge of an operatic *tabula rasa*.

Early creative development, which began in spring 2007 with writer, Simon Christmas - an existing collaborative partner<sup>4</sup> - very much played with ideas of 'residence' and 'house' while directly confronting the central concerns of this research:

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<sup>2</sup> *Followers* was eventually staged complete at the 2011 Glyndebourne Festival. While the completion of the opera's final version falls outside the scope of this research project, the final August 2011 score is included with this submission, together with a DVD of director Freddie Wake-Walker's premiere production.

<sup>3</sup> Philips *Dolffin*, *Wild Cat* (London, Edition Peters, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Philips & Christmas, *Life Lessons*, a dramatic monologue for mezzo-soprano and piano (2003).

### Context: creative and performing

- an investigation of how physical space impacts on operatic texture;
- an exploration of the relationship between voice and instrument;
- an exploration of the relationship between performer and audience;
- a desire to empower the audience and encourage more direct engagement;

### Narrativity and operatic structure

- an intention to allow an array of performance spaces to shape narrative, and vice versa;
- a desire to engage with opera's founding myths, none the less prioritising an investigation of profoundly human content as a central concern.

### Reanimation of tradition/operatic lyricism

- an intention to explore different kinds of operatic texture;
- an intention to explore different kinds of operatic vocalisation;
- a desire to return opera to an intimate, chamber music form.

At the outset, in resource terms alone and without any kind of narrative frame, the intention was to explore operatic texture on the small-scale, researching a model for genuine 'chamber opera' in the spaces of the Glyndebourne house. This notion was partly conceptual, partly a response to the prospect of developing a site-specific work, and partly a question of available resources. Just as Glyndebourne's *opera house* was unavailable as a performance space, so were the eminent and experienced operatic performers who make up the casts for each of the annual Festival's six productions. Instead, this creative research was to draw on a few members from the Glyndebourne Chorus, enabling a symbiotic relationship between new opera research and new opera performance. What emerged from this was an idea for a trio of 'stock' operatic characters: a *buffo* baritone and a pair of soprano/tenor lovers, and the possibility of placing this trio in a number of different spaces, each space re-contextualising both narrative and operatic texture. Balancing this trio would be a small ensemble of three to four musicians, very much integrated with the action and vocal texture.

The controlling image that emerged for this initial creative development was the idea of a 'ghost walk', whereby an audience might be lead through a series of spaces in the

Glyndebourne house, ‘haunted’ by three operatic shades, hence an early working-title for *Followers - Ghosts*. Such a frame allowed for games with operatic style and convention, but also established the idea of promenades between each part and the potential for time-shifts between one space and another. While the courtly grandeur of Glyndebourne’s famous organ room, completed in 1923, might suggest opera’s aristocratic past, other available spaces were less specific; by conceiving a narrative that travelled across (operatic) history, the ‘promenades’ could be seen as poetically travelling across time as much as travelling across the Glyndebourne grounds.

Final clarification was achieved by an audit of the available spaces around the Glyndebourne grounds. While the Organ Room offered an ideal performance space, with all its distant echoes of early Glyndebourne operatic performances, other spaces in the house proved less practical or accessible, and eventually a three destination route emerged connecting up the Organ Room to the Old Green Room and finally through to the Ebert Room, a more neutral studio space, where Glyndebourne houses its pre-performance talks and study days.

### **Performing Context: a site-specific promenade opera**

In a sense, then, the first model for opera development investigated as part of this research, is site-specific promenade – a familiar enough notion in broader theatrical contexts, but less familiar in opera. Of course, Glyndebourne itself could be described as already housing the ultimate site-specific opera with its *opera house* standing adjacent to its *family house*, and audiences picnicking in the back garden. None the less, precedents for this ‘promenade opera’ were more easily located in spoken theatre, music theatre or educational contexts than in conventional opera.

Founded in 2000, Punchdrunk offered this research its clearest precedent – a theatre company that has arguably lead the field in site-specific work, with acclaimed productions such as *The Masque of the Red Death* staged at Battersea Arts Centre in 2007, its ethos capturing some of the same concerns that were central preoccupations for *Followers*:

Punchdrunk rejects the passive obedience expected of audiences in conventional theatre. Our desire is for the audience to rediscover the childlike excitement and

anticipation of exploring the unknown and experience a real sense of adventure. Masked for anonymity, audience members are given the freedom to roam entire buildings, to follow any theme, plot line or performer they choose, or simply soak up the atmosphere of magical yet fleeting worlds.<sup>5</sup>

Main-scale opera typically refrains its audience members from ‘roaming’ *inside* the comfort of its opera house, though the classic music theatre and anti-opera works of the 1960s and 1970s did manage some kind of an escape, existing very much on the *outside* of the form. In a twenty-first century context, however, where notional boundaries between ‘opera’ and ‘music theatre’ have all but evaporated, opera has arguably stabilised, largely on account of the form’s capacity to assimilate even the most confrontational of creative approaches. As a consequence, precedents for ‘site-specific’ opera are often more easily found in spheres where context is key: companies with a strong urban character such as the Birmingham Opera Company, Festivals with an occasional, event-driven remit - the annual Tête à Tête Opera Festival at London’s Riverside Studios, or the many inventive community contexts explored by opera education departments. The annual YO! Opera Festival in Utrecht, for example, has pioneered many such site-specific operatic platforms, most notably ‘De Operaflat’:

Twenty-five doors in a single apartment building, behind which 25 mini-operas await. The door opens and someone sings a one-minute opera for you, close up. About food: favourite foods, memories of your father’s chewing, of traditional Dutch dishes and sweet baklava. Choose yourself which doorbells you ring and construct your own opera. Or do them all!<sup>6</sup>

Of course, in essence, the ‘site-specific’ originated as a visual art phenomenon, its broad impact emphasised by the way in which the concept is now applied in a host of different artistic contexts. As Miwon Kwon has observed;

The term is indeed conspicuous in a diverse range of catalogue essays, press releases, grant applications, magazine reviews, and artist statements today; it is applied rather indiscriminately to art works, museum exhibitions, public art projects, city art festival, architectural installations; and is embraced as an automatic signifier of “criticality” or “progressivity” by artists, architects, dealers, curators, critics, arts administrators, and funding organizations.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.punchdrunk.org.uk/index\\_old.htm](http://www.punchdrunk.org.uk/index_old.htm) [accessed 27th September 2010].

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.yo-opera.nl/werkplaats\\_alg.php?item=48](http://www.yo-opera.nl/werkplaats_alg.php?item=48) [accessed 27<sup>th</sup> September 2010].

<sup>7</sup> M. Kwon, *One Place After Another*, (Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 2004), p. 1.

In a visual arts context, site-specificity developed a history and discourse all of its own, which Kwon describes as evolving out of the late 1960s from the *phenomenological*, to the *social/institutional* and finally to the *discursive*. In its purest, most idealised form, the movement grew out of minimalism, escaping authoritarian modernism with a more holistic, responsiveness to place:

Site specificity used to imply something grounded, bound to the laws of physics. Often playing with gravity, site-specific works used to be obstinate about “presence”, even if they were materially ephemeral, and adamant about immobility, even in the face of disappearance or destruction. Whether inside the white cube or out in the Nevada desert, whether architectural or landscape-oriented, site-specific art initially took the site as an actual location, a tangible reality, its identity composed of a unique combination of physical elements: length, depth, height, texture, and shape of walls and rooms;<sup>8</sup>

While Kwon’s work explores the many hidden complexities of the site-specific – the compromises required for a site-specific art-work to achieve permanence or the tension between site-specific art and social context – two of her categorisations for site-specificity proved instructive for *Followers*: firstly, the idea of the site-specific as ‘phenomenological’ and secondly, site-specific art’s capacity to investigate the invisible structures and hierarchies that surround the social realities of a given art form. Site-specificity as a ‘discursive’ concern, chiefly in how it relates to ideas of community-based art, will be considered in this research project’s final case study, *Knight Crew* (Chapter Five).

With three performance spaces identified, focussed work on *Followers* did indeed take its sites as ‘actual locations’ or ‘tangible realities’, as a way of ascertaining both their acoustic and theatrical potential. At the very least, what these smaller, chamber spaces implied was an operatic texture that could exploit a high degree of intimacy – no orchestra pit or fourth wall, and no separation between singer, instrumentalist or observer. The Organ Room offered a number of hidden spaces and a raised gallery; the Old Green Room a long corridor-like room with many doors off, and the Ebert Room a more functional box with double doors leading out into the gardens. While the promenade from Organ Room to Old Green Room required a short walk across

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<sup>8</sup> Kwon, *One Place*, p. 11.



Glyndebourne's main lawn, the journey down into the Ebert Room could be achieved through a long passageway and down a flight of stairs.

Throughout this initial process of evaluating spatial and performing resources, the notion of returning opera to a form of chamber music was central to this model, not only as a response to the realities of the spaces available but also as a creative ideal. Inevitably, such a concern invoked opera's founding myth, specifically Monteverdi's *Orfeo* which when first performed to the members of the Accademia degli Invaghiti in Mantua in 1607, was probably performed in a similarly small space:

Prevailing nineteenth century notions of opera, together with the list of instruments printed at the front of the score, have combined to produce rather grand performances, in opera houses on large stages and with large choruses and instrumental ensembles. But other evidence suggests that the work [*Orfeo*] was given in a small room<sup>9</sup>

This single connection between the development of a new, site-specific opera with the 'legend' of opera's birth in Monteverdi's *Orfeo* provided the final conceptual frame for this project. While it is not wholly accurate to describe Monteverdi's *Orfeo* as the 'first true opera', there can be no doubt that the Orpheus myth was intimately connected with the birth of opera: after all, both Peri and Caccini worked on *Euridice* operas. As Carolyn Abbate argues, Orpheus *is* opera – a myth that explores the power of love and death, and the power of music<sup>10</sup>; if *Followers* was seeking to investigate opera in a laboratory, then Orpheus was unavoidably present.

### **Narrative structure**

In operatic history, the Orpheus myth has proved critically important not just for creative practitioners but also musicologists and cultural historians. The line of Orphic operas is a long one: Peri, Caccini, Monteverdi, Gluck, Haydn, Offenbach, Berio or Birtwistle quite apart from operas that appear to allude very directly to its images: Mozart's *The Magic Flute* or Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. Similarly, the myth is often deployed by commentators as a filter for understanding opera's shifting network of

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<sup>9</sup> I. Fenlon 'The Mantuan Stage Works', *The New Monteverdi Companion* (London, Faber & Faber, 1985), p. 264.

<sup>10</sup> C. Abbate, *In Search of Opera* (Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press, 2001).

meanings – Joseph Kerman’s *Opera as Drama*<sup>11</sup> and Péter Conrad’s *A Song of Love and Death*<sup>12</sup> both begin with ‘Orpheus’, Adorno declares in *Bourgeois Opera*<sup>13</sup> that ‘all opera is Orpheus’, while Abbate’s *In Search of Opera*<sup>14</sup> develops the image of Orpheus’s severed head as the master symbol for an exploration of five major operatic works by Monteverdi, Mozart, Wagner, Debussy and Ravel. Compositionally, an engaging with the Orpheus myth either seems to constitute a dialogue with operatic history – Berio’s *Opera* (1970) uses the image of Euridice as a metaphor for opera’s imminent death, or a dialogue with Greek myth – as in Birtwistle’s *The Masque of Orpheus* (1986) or a smaller-scale recent work like *The Corridor* (2009).

Dialogues with history and myth both informed the design of *Followers*, though its narrative approach is perhaps closer to Cocteau’s *Orphée* (1949). Like the Cocteau, here fragments of the Orpheus myth are reinterpreted, broken out of their original context, with key narrative functions surviving: *singing, judging, dying, following, looking back*. Each of the three parts essentially investigates the triangular relationship between Orpheus, Eurydice and Hades, re-imagined in three different time periods - the specific myth surviving as background context. These three time periods were offered up by the three performance spaces; in a very real sense, site-specificity helped to generate an effective narrative strategy:

Part One: The Organ Room, Eighteenth Century

*Promenade* (through the gardens)

Part Two: The Old Green Room, Nineteenth Century

*Promenade* (along a corridor)

Part Three: The Ebert Room, present day

*Promenade* (out into the gardens?)

Overlaying a chamber opera with a site-specific, promenade structure of this kind had a very immediate impact on the development of the operatic narrative, encouraging a

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<sup>11</sup> J. Kerman, *Opera as Drama*, (Berkeley & Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1988), p. 18.

<sup>12</sup> P. Conrad, *A Song of Love and Death*, (London, Chatto & Windus, 1987), p. 19.

<sup>13</sup> T. W. Adorno, trans. D. J. Levin ‘Bourgeois Opera’, in *Opera Through Other Eyes*, ed. Levin (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 33.

<sup>14</sup> Abbate, *In Search of Opera*.

more fragmented, less through-composed approach with particular focus on the interrelationships of its characters. In a sense, the three parts treat the same basic material, but viewed from different perspectives, coloured by the different periods while at the same time accumulating psychological resonance and meaning as the piece unfolds. The specifically musical challenge was how to achieve, or imply continuity from one part to another and particularly through the promenades.

The fundamental narrative material for *Followers* derived from simple tropes of the Orpheus myth – the love of Orpheus and Eurydice, the death of Eurydice, Hades’s role as judge or arbiter. In each part, the lovers are separated, one desiring the other to follow, with Hades as master of ceremonies. A certain ambiguity is allowed for in the way the characters develop – they are both the *same* characters across the time shifts, and yet *different*, specific to the context of each part. Overlaid on this narrative frame is a concern with the hierarchies of opera itself – the composer (Orpheus), the singer (Eurydice), the impresario (Hades) – allowing not only for a familiarly self-reflexive operatic dynamic, but also a play with opera’s invisible power structures:

#### PART ONE: The Eighteenth Century (Organ Room)

- Courtiers assemble for a ‘command performance’ in honour of the visiting Archduke, featuring a scene from a new opera by Orpheus.
- Eurydice is anxious of losing her Orpheus since the Archduke has offered him a position, far away in his court.
- Eurydice sings the aria, which presents the death of Eurydice.
- Orpheus departs and does not look back; Eurydice does not follow.

#### PROMENADE

- The dead Eurydice gets up, turns to the audience and beckons them to follow across the gardens.

#### PART TWO: The Nineteenth Century (Old Green Room)

- Invited guests are welcomed by Hades to a soirée at which La Signora will sing an aria by an Eighteenth Century Orpheus.

- Hades recounts the story of the dead Orpheus: one hundred years ago, summoned to court by the Archduke, he lost his power to write, having abandoned the beautiful singer he loved, whose ghost can be heard ‘singing still were his music is played’
- Aside. Hades argues with C19th Orpheus: where is La Signora? Why haven’t you written anything?
- A distraught La Signora appears and sings the ‘aria’, but collapses and is carried from the room.

#### PROMENADE

- The audience follow Eurydice out of the Old Green Room and down into the Ebert Room.

#### PART THREE: The Present Day (Ebert Room)

- Eurydice is in a coma, on a life-support machine. Orpheus plays the recordings of her great performances in the hope of bringing her back.
- A doctor (Hades) discusses her case with Orpheus: his purpose is to ‘smooth the path to death’. The life-support machine is eventually turned off.
- Eurydice rises up, does not look back and walks out into the gardens.
- Orpheus follows.

Inevitably, this definitive scenario evolved out of concentrated development work around the Glyndebourne grounds in July and October 2007 and August 2008. Together with director Olivia Fuchs, who had a critically important impact on the project’s gestation, aspects of this material were workshopped as a way of exploring its potential and readability to an audience. For example, Part Three’s image of Eurydice on a life-support machine emerged through the workshop process as the opera’s almost inevitable vanishing point.

None the less, a number of key operatic narrative strategies were put in place from the outset. Firstly, the idea of a three stanza ‘aria’ that would appear in each of the three parts, varied and transformed not just on account of the stylistic implications of the time-shifts but also in response to deeper psychological resonances:

May the torch of living light your way!  
 Hold aloft your dreams and let them burn.  
 Be sure I follow. Do not think to turn  
 back to shades of yesterday.

May the ground of memory hold fast!  
 Underfoot lies all that you have learned.  
 Be sure I follow if you think to turn  
 your back on shades of yesterday.

May the souls of those before now follow.  
 Fantasies and fates alike hatch out  
 On shores of passion washed by waves of doubt.  
 Ghosts shall lead them to tomorrow.<sup>15</sup>

This through line was intended to pull the three parts together, with a complete treatment of all three stanzas at the work's close. Secondly, the notion of each part interlocking with its predecessor in a kind of Russian doll effect allowing for earlier events to be recalled or remembered at a distance – for example, the way in which the action of part one becomes the 'story' delivered by Hades in Part Two.

### **Reanimation of tradition: games of style in *Followers***

The three-part narrative structure of *Followers*, with its clearly delineated time shifts, was to provide an ideal research field for one of the project's chief aims: an exploration of different kinds of operatic texture. This both suggested three Orphic operas which might 'haunt' the work – the 'ghosts in my head' that Orpheus refers to in Part Two – but also, the specifics of instrumentation that might map out a kind of timbral progress through the work with a continuo of shifting keyboards: harpsichord, piano and then lap-top.

#### **PART ONE**

Ghost opera: Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*

Instrumentation: clarinet, violoncello and harpsichord (plus discreet percussion that anticipates Part Two)

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<sup>15</sup> In the final August 2011 version of *Followers*, stanza three of the aria was revised; this emerged partly a consequence of the August 2008 development work, and partly from the August 2011 production rehearsals.

## PART TWO

Ghost opera: Offenbach's *Orphée aux Enfers*

Instrumentation: bass clarinet, violoncello, piano and percussion

## PART THREE

Ghost opera: Monteverdi's *Orfeo*

Instrumentation: clarinet, vibraphone, violoncello, piano and lap-top (as life-support machine)

At the heart of this game of styles, of course, is a more fundamental question of trying to develop a compositional identity, specifically an operatic compositional identity. Like Strauss's *Capriccio* or even Donatoni's *Alfred-Alfred* here the composer is onstage; to some extent, *Followers* is attempting to dramatise a composer's search for an operatic language. In Parts One and Two, 'identity' is expressed through filtered pastiche, coming close to parody in Part Two. Part Three, however, is intended to liberate a more developed and personal operatic identity, an identity unlocked by the founding myth of Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, thereby creating a sense of where opera might go in future while 'looking back' to where the form has travelled from. In this way, the idea of 'following' and 'looking back' operates on many levels: on the level of myth – Orpheus follows Eurydice at its close, performance – the audience 'follow' the action around Glyndebourne spaces, and composition – the composer 'looks back' to the operatic past, 'follows' models.

This sense of 'looking back' in order to look forwards compositionally and formulate a developed position towards the creation of new opera, inevitably results in games of pastiche and parody in Parts One and Two of *Followers*. Frederic Jameson in *Postmodernism and Consumer Society* sees 'pastiche' as a defining aspect of post-modern culture:

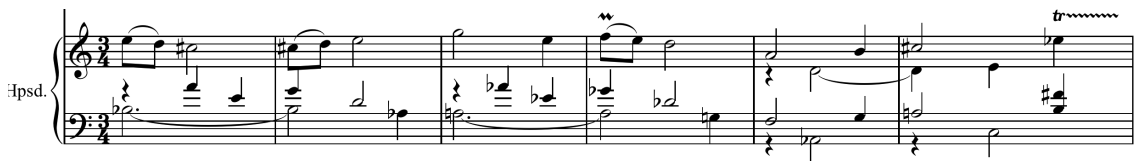
Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique style, the wearing of a stylistic mask, speech in a dead language: but it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without parody's ulterior motive, without the satirical impulse, without laughter, without that still latent feeling that there exists something *normal*

compared to which what is being imitated is rather comic. Pastiche is blank parody, parody that has lost its sense of humour<sup>16</sup>

It is certainly true that both Parts One and Two of *Followers* engage in the ‘wearing of stylistic masks’ but not necessarily with the ‘neutrality’ that Jameson identifies. In Part One, the intention was to take on the colour and gesture of Gluck’s *Orfeo ed Euridice*, to allow it to inform the music out of an exploratory dialogue. Only rarely is this specific – in *Followers* (version two) the *Dance of the Muses* (1.4) is very directly modelled on the final *Ballo* from Act 2 of Gluck’s opera:



**Example 1a:** Gluck *Ballo*



**Example 1b:** *Followers*, Part One, Version Two (1.4, bar 67)

and occasionally the Gluckian dialogue is more deliberately stylised, the emphatic gestures of Eurydice’s death song (1.6) closely modelled on the first two accompanied recitatives from Act 3 of *Orfeo ed Euridice*:

<sup>16</sup> F. Jameson ‘Postmodernism and Consumer Society’, in *Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster, (London, Pluto Press, 1987), p. 114.



## 1.6 Eurydice's death song

**33** Allegro recitativo  
♩ = c.120

277 *Eurydice shrieks as the snake bites her.* *f agitato*

E. Ah! A vi - per! Trea-che - rous

Cl. *tr*

Vc. *f*

Hpsd. *f*



280

E. ve - nom. crea-ture of de - ceit Stop, ea-ger blood in my veins.

Cl.

Vc.

Hpsd.

**Example 2:** *Followers Part One, Version Two, (1.6, bar 277)*

Elsewhere, Gluckian references are more buried - the 'aria' itself, though not directly modelled on any specific number from *Orfeo ed Euridice*, nevertheless teases the ear with Gluckian echoes:



209 *p dolce* *cresc.*

E. a - loft\_ your dreams and let them burn\_

Cl. *cresc.*

Vc. *cresc.*

Hpsd. *cresc.*

**Example 3:** *Followers*, Part One, Version Two (1.5, bar 209)

Of course in a purely musical context, this kind of stylistic play is nothing new, Stravinsky's *Pulcinella* or *The Rake's Progress* representing definitive models for neoclassical adventure. The difference in intention though is that the pastiching is neither born of modernist neoclassical stylisation nor of Jameson's postmodern neutrality but rather an intention to investigate the sentiment behind character and situation while allowing the core musical discourse to take on the characteristics of its theatrical setting. In a very genuine sense, the concern here is with 'reanimating tradition'.

The tension that results from this play of Gluckian allusion breaks out when the music appears to remove its 'stylistic mask' thereby revealing a more unstable, less grounded sound-world underneath. A specific example is found in Eurydice's *Death Song* (1.6) where twice the *Allegro molto* material is interrupted as Eurydice calls out Orpheus's name (figures 38 and 43). There is of course a blurring of frames here: the 'Opera' within the opera creates a kind of *mise en abyme*. In the 'Opera' Eurydice calls to Orpheus who doesn't hear her; in the opera, Orpheus observes Eurydice calling, observes his not hearing, and yet doesn't want to hear:

**43** Andante  
♩ = 60  
*mp*

417

E. Or - phe - us! Or - phe - us! Your love cries out.

O. Or - phe us! Or - phe us!

Cl. *p* *pp*

Vc. *pp*

421

E. Or - phe - us! Or - phe - us! Your love cries out.

O. (Offstage) *p echo* Or - phe us! Or - phe us!

Cl. *p*

Vc.

**Example 4:** *Followers*, Part One, Version Two (1.6, bar 417)

When this material recurs at figure 43, in the outer frame of the opera, Orpheus has abandoned Eurydice and yet this time her calls are echoed back by an off-stage Orphic voice. In both instances, the Gluckian allusions appear to dissolve revealing the music's darker purpose, suggesting not only the promenade through time that is about to take place but also the more substantial, existential concerns that come to dominate the piece.

While the musical material of this episode may escape pastiche, the trope is a deliberately familiar one to dramatisations of the Orpheus myth: echo and the offstage voice. Both Monteverdi's and Gluck's *Orfeo* operas exploit echo effects e.g. 'Possente

Spirto' in Monteverdi or 'Chiamo il mio ben così' in Gluck, both sung by Orpheus himself. Although echo effects were well established in other musical genres, the Orpheus myth's concern for music and death ensured a unique place for the disembodied, off-stage voice.

Disembodied voice...is a voice originating from an unseen locus of energy and thought, and it has distinct powers, especially as represented in opera and film. If philosophical writings on voice have established a metaphysics of presence in Western thought, there is a powerful metaphysics of absence that runs alongside it, a tendency, at least before modernist disenchantment redefined the terms, to associate the voice with no visible point of origin with omniscience. Such voices are considered divine, or at least supernatural, free of ordinary encumbrances.<sup>17</sup>

In both Monteverdi and Gluck, supernatural echoed voices 'bring the beyond downstage' (Abbate, 2001, p. 27) alluding to the transcendental, and unrepresentable, unseen worlds offstage. For Güçbilmez:

When *stage* is inclined *offstage*, when nothing is the object of representation, there is a recognition of the audience as a being capable of remembering and expecting. The offstage, being the unconscious or the memory of the stage, an imaginary locus where theatre has buried what it cannot present, makes itself representable only to meet the memory or the unconscious of the audience. Thus, being enriched and decomposed at the same time by the offstage, the stage becomes a matter of remembrance, not perception; or allusion instead of illusion.<sup>18</sup>

In *Followers*, this final musical-theatrical image of the dying Eurydice crying out for Orpheus, answered by a disembodied voice from offstage proved highly effective in opening up the expressive purpose of this site-specific opera. What might easily have been misunderstood as *just* a game with style is re-contextualised by a visceral sonic experience which colours the memory or unconscious of the audience, as Güçbilmez implies above. On another level, this vanishing point for Part One played out the phenomenological potential of this site-specific work – Orpheus's voice was positioned in a stairwell behind the Organ Room's wooden screen, a stairwell that amplified and resonated his voice in a genuinely uncanny way. While *Followers* is certainly

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<sup>17</sup> Abbate, *In Search of Opera*, p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> B. Güçbilmez, 'An Uncanny Theatricality: the representation of the Offstage', *New Theatre Quarterly*, p. 152.

concerned with reanimating traditional ways of realising operatic texture, it is equally concerned with re-contextualising this familiar operatic texture within the uncanny.

Re-contextualising the familiar within the uncanny comes to the fore in Part Two, which by its association with Offenbach's *Orphée aux Enfers*, explores a more comedic register. Here Hades abandons his aloof aristocratic airs of Part One, to become an extrovert Master of Ceremonies, revelling in the gothic undertow of the music. Here, the prevailing dynamic is parody:

Parody capitalizes on the uniqueness of...styles and seizes on their idiosyncrasies and eccentricities to produce an imitation which mocks the original. I won't say that the satiric impulse is conscious in all forms of parody. In any case, a good or great parodist has to have some secret sympathy for the original, just as a great mimic has to have the capacity to put himself/herself in the place of the person imitated.<sup>19</sup>

Jameson's definition goes some way to define the difference of approach between *Followers* Parts One and Two. While the Gluckian influence on Part One could be described as benign, the impact Offenbach on Part Two is more destabilising, as if the narrative action and the uncanny final gesture of Part One have disturbed the opera's centre of gravity. Since this second part takes place in Glyndebourne's Old Green Room – the space where the company's most important fund-raising and sponsorship events take place – the action is all framed within the premise of a nineteenth century soirée. Piano, bass clarinet and violoncello create an altogether different instrumental world, one that evokes a stuffy Victorian salon. The bulk of the music was conceived as a classic operatic 'party scene' – shades of Lady Macbeth's 'Brindisi' or Alfredo's 'Libiamo ne'liei calici' – in which the audience are guests, encircled by the unfolding action. The material itself was derived through a process of pastiche distorted into parody, beginning first with a direct Offenbach pastiche:

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<sup>19</sup> F. Jameson 'Postmodernism', p. 113

**Allegretto** ♩ = 135

Bass Clarinet in B $\flat$

Violoncello

**Allegretto** ♩ = 135

Piano

*f*

9

B. Cl.

Vc.

*p*

Pno.

**Example 5:** *Followers*, Offenbach pastiche sketch 1 for Part Two

then distorted rhythmically:

8

H.

B. Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

14

2

1.

2

*p*

8<sup>va</sup>

8<sup>va</sup>

1.

**Example 6:** *Followers*, Offenbach pastiche sketch 2 for Part Two

before a final filtering tri-tonally, so that piano, bass clarinet and violoncello are each transposed into different keys (Bb major, Db major and G major):

## 2.2 Hades' aria

**1** *Allegretto* ♩ = c.120  
Hades enters and brings this to a close, as if 'putting a lid' on something.

H.

B. Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

*mf* *mp*

**8**

H.

B. Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

*mf*

**14** **2**

H.

B. Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

*mf* *leggiere*

*mf* *leggiere*

*mf* *leggiere*

*8va*

*8va*

*1.*

*1.*

Example 7: Followers, Part Two (2.2)

The musical ‘number’ that results from this process has a kind of autonomous flow and instrumental quality, shared by many a classic operatic drinking-song; once again *Followers* is engaging directly with a classic operatic convention. However, in addition to the parodic manipulation that this material undergoes, the music is further re-contextualised by the narrative song that Hades delivers over the top of it, as if this diabolic showman is bending some kind of musical automata to his will. Twice he interrupts the music’s flow for urbane interaction with his audience (figures 6 and 8) while from figures 11 to 12, the music splutters into silence as he describes Orpheus’s inability to compose:



91 **11** *f* *mf*

H. *f* *mf*

B. Cl. *mf* *mf*

Vc. *naturale* *mf* *mf*

Pno. *mf* *mf*

It was not to be. The young man's ta-lent wi-thered.

96 *mp*

H. *mp*

B. Cl. *mp*

Vc. *mp*

Pno. *mp*

His mu-sic lost its charm

101 *p*

H. *p*

B. Cl. *p*

Vc. *p*

Pno. *p*

His muse was gone.

**Example 8: Followers, Part Two (2.2, bar 91)**

Finally, in the scene's most parodic sequence, as he describes the 'beautiful woman' that Orpheus abandoned, the ensemble delivers a mocking *bel canto* cantilena, with a warbling, ludicrously high violoncello line standing in for the soprano:

115 **13** Andante doloroso ♩ = c45 *mp* *dolcissimo*

H. A sin ger, a beau-ti-ful wo man,

B. Cl. *p* *legato*

Vc. *mp* *molto vibrato e dolcissimo*

**13** Andante doloroso ♩ = c45

Pno. *p*

8<sup>vb</sup>

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121

H. the wo-man he loved wrote mu - sic for, wrote this a - ria for,

B. Cl. *mp*

Vc. *mf*

Pno. *mp*

(8)

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126 Orpheus steps out of "backstage" to come and talk to Hades. He hovers until noticed, trying to catch Hades' eye.

Orpheus

H. left be - hind.

B. Cl. *p*

Vc.

Pno. *p* *pp*

(8)

**Example 9: Followers, Part Two (2.2, bar 115)**

Once again, and in an analogous way to the end of Part One, this ‘uncanny’ sequence – concluding with an ethereal coda (figures 14 – 16) - removes the music’s stylistic mask, liberating a more purposeful, individual operatic manner in the ensuing argument between Hades and Orpheus (2.3). While this extended duet retains the colour of the scene’s parodic material, it breaks free into an operatic language unencumbered by historical models. Appropriately enough, the theatrical argument broadens out here from questioning the absence of La Signora, to a reflection on the impossibility of the creative act itself:

Orpheus:  
 What’s left, though?  
 What’s left to be written?  
 They took it all.  
 The jealous dead.  
 The ghosts in my head.<sup>20</sup>

Parody returns for La Signora’s aria – the music can be heard to hastily reapply its mask at figure 28 – which reconceives the aria material within a nineteenth century stylistic frame. What ensues is an operatic mad scene, its cadenza at figure 35 heralding a series of musical collapses that eventually usher La Signora/Eurydice out of the performing space.

### **Towards a definitive version: the *Followers* development process**

As implied at the outset of this chapter, while this research project’s other three case studies were conceived for clearly defined and fixed performance spaces, *Followers* responded to the shifting realities of three different Glyndebourne contexts and two promenades, each with its own acoustic properties and implications for the dramatic structure. The project could not have been realised without concentrated development time as a way of researching its potential and in a sense it remains acutely dependent on the reality of live performance. Inevitably, any creative project that engages with the site-specific has to examine questions of permanence; in its purest sense, a site-specific project is ephemeral, unrealisable without its specific site. Perhaps inevitably then, the model used to develop *Followers* was vulnerable to the logistical difficulties that

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<sup>20</sup> S. Christmas *Followers* (2008).

surrounded its definitive realisation in the Glyndebourne context; it depended not just on the availability of performers but also on the availability of the space itself.

During the course of this creative residency, Parts One and Two were staged in two work-in-progress performances in October 2007, while Part Three was creatively developed in August 2008 culminating in an improvised workshop performance, which is submitted here on DVD. While a complete version was not stageable during the residency period, a premiere is scheduled for August 2011 to mark the refurbishment of the company's Ebert Room. That this strand of creative research remains ongoing is testament to the many practical factors that press down on new opera, particularly an experimental site-specific work of this nature. Since so many crucial decisions and ideas were generated through creative development with both performers and director, this process has been organic and open-ended, very different in texture from the more contained compositional approach that generated *The Yellow Sofa* (Case Study Three).

None the less, the *Followers* creative development process within this residency was characterised by some of the project's most directed creative research. The October 2007 work-in-progress performances provided a valuable opportunity to test the work's effectiveness, its readability with a real audience. A post-show question and answer session on the 26<sup>th</sup> October threw up a number of structural weaknesses:

*A lack of clarity in the function of the musicians, sometimes theatricalised, sometimes treated as if hidden by a non-existent pit (especially in Part One).*

This proved a major flaw in the first version of *Followers* Part One. While the musicians were theatricalised from the outset - both violoncello and clarinet warming up as if for ensuing court performance - none the less, in version one from figure 5 to 17, Orpheus and Eurydice inhabit an interior world. They are notionally unseen by the court occupying the Organ Room's upper gallery, with the audience allowed to eavesdrop on their conversation. At this point, however, the once theatricalised musicians become de-theatricalised as pit musicians, providing the accompanimental texture for this extended duet. While this sequence was expressive and effective in musical terms alone, it failed to read theatrically – why are these court musicians communing with off-stage singers? Version two of *Followers* Part One removes this entire section, ensuring that the

instrumentalists are ‘on-stage’ throughout, with no virtual pit. Problems around the omission of this important dramatic content was then solved by the incorporation of a ‘Dance of the Muses’ (1.4), a keyboard solo which takes place within the public space of the court, with the anxious duet of Eurydice and Orpheus occurring simultaneously in a private space (the upper gallery). This is a prime example of how sometimes a purely music-driven agenda can complicate a stage picture in a negative way. The revised material might be plainer – certainly the interaction between Eurydice and Orpheus in 1.4 is less highly characterised – but it reads more clearly theatrically, driving the action forwards more effectively.

*The full ‘aria’ of Part One is musically very beautiful but holds up the action and the opera as if it has stopped.*

In a similar way to the revision detailed above, here the Part One aria in *Followers* version one proved too extended, the performance within a performance too literally complete, allowing the audience to forget its frame or deeper psychological purpose. In version two, the aria was compressed to give an impression of breath without losing the dramatic focus.

*Audience confusion about both situation and narrative but also its own function in the piece.*

Any site-specific project of this nature remains incomplete without its audience. Meyerhold talked of the ‘unfinished’ quality of a production when it appears onstage because it awaits the ‘crucial revision’ of the spectator<sup>21</sup>. In this sense, *Followers* required work-in-progress performances in order to ascertain its theatrical effectiveness. What emerged from the post-show discussion was that for many audience members, there was a degree of confusion, even disorientation in their experience of the work – and in particular, Part One. What Part One required was a clearer ‘signing’ of the opera’s function and discourse at the outset. Many audience members settled into Glyndebourne’s Organ Room without quite appreciating that in a gentle way, they were being theatricalised. Since so many informal performances occur in the Organ Room, there is an already established convention of performer-audience interaction in that space. As a consequence, *Followers* needed to be less *assimilative* in its interaction with

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<sup>21</sup> S. Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, (Abingdon, Routledge, 1997), p. 7.

Glyndebourne space and more *interruptive*, imposing its theatrical frame more forcefully so that its audience could access a more direct engagement with the work.<sup>22</sup> Some of this was achievable by working more closely with the network of Glyndebourne stewards who could discreetly shepherd audience members from one space to another. However, at the start, a bolder intervention was needed to establish how this opera functions in an analogous way to *The Yellow Sofa*'s overture, discussed in Chapter Four. In *Followers* version two, more prescriptive stage directions establish a more specific position for the opera's audience:

The audience assembles outside the Organ Room. From inside the Organ Room, the sound of Eurydice warming up is occasionally heard – especially whenever the door opens. As the audience are gathering, musicians come through and enter one at a time.

Orpheus comes to greet the audience (the Archduke's court). He asks the ushers whether there is any word on when the Archduke will arrive. He distributes playbills, which describe 'a command performance for the Archduke' featuring and instrumental Dance of the Graces and the first performance of a scene from a new opera.

At some point during this, one of the musicians will engage Orpheus in a brief discussion about the score: e.g. Orpheus stops the musician on his/her way in to give a note from rehearsals; or the musician comes back out from the Organ Room carrying a score to ask Orpheus a question.

An usher informs Orpheus that the Archduke is now approaching. He goes back into the Organ Room. The audience are also ushered in to take their places.<sup>23</sup>

This pre-show business outside the first performing space, communicates context, character and action in a deliberately informal and open-ended way. The use of spontaneously improvised dialogue, vocalisation and interaction over and above the specific musical requirements of the score had proved highly effective elsewhere in *Followers* – particularly in Part Two – and it made sense to deploy it here. This kind of non-musical, improvised material seemed to incorporate itself very naturally into the musical discourse of *Followers*, though its effectiveness depended on a confident sense

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<sup>22</sup> This differentiation between *assimilative* and *interruptive* site-specific work is detailed by Kwon *One Place After Another* p. 56 and p. 170.

<sup>23</sup> *Followers*, version two, (1.1).

of theatre from the performers. On the main-stage, spoken dialogue and non-musical vocalisation is often highly problematic, partly for acoustic reasons, partly because operatically trained performers often enunciate text in a rather stilted way. In a site-specific context, however, acoustic difficulties evaporate while the intimate nature of the performer-spectator relationship in a site-specific context encourages a more natural theatricality.

*The parodic element that closes Part Two, specifically the aria, has unforeseen/unwelcome consequences in relation to the portrayal of Eurydice.*

The final musical sequence of Part Two inevitably plays with the operatic trope of the 'mad scene', amplified by a double frame: Eurydice delivers a performance within a performance, framed by the action and dialogue of both Orpheus and Hades. As Susan McClary explores in *Excess and Frame*<sup>24</sup>, this kind of operatic framing of the 'hysterical' woman connects up not only with *Lucia* or *Salome*, but also a whole cultural tradition of the feminizing of insanity. This uncomfortable territory was a direct consequence of the comic play in Part Two but also the limitations of the role's first interpreter. The young soprano Katharine Moore, in her first year of Glyndebourne Chorus, despite a genuine and generous commitment to the project, had no experience of contemporary music and a reluctance to explore different kinds of vocalisation. This rendered the climax of Part Two largely unrealisable since the theatrical notion of achieving performance failure in a live performance was an impossible goal. Here the music itself also failed to find a comfortable balance between the genuine sincerity of the aria text and the comic play of the action; the aria registers its historical period but lacks a convincing interweaving of the familiar with the uncanny. Since this sequence was intended very much as a performance piece built on a specific singer, once casting is completed for August 2011, the aria will be reworked, in an attempt to achieve a greater degree of sincerity within the comic context of Part Two.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> S. McClary, 'Excess and Frame', in *Feminine Endings*, (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota, 1991), p. 80.

<sup>25</sup> While this sequence was fully recomposed and complete by the time rehearsals began at Glyndebourne in August 2011, the Romanian soprano, Gabriela Iștoc in the role of Eurydice could be said to have found a conclusive answer to these many questions and tensions.



As this discussion makes clear, spontaneous audience response proved highly instructive in helping to inform a site-specific operatic approach. Perhaps the most important lesson related to how the audience might be handled more inventively through the work. What emerged from these work-in-progress performances was a sense that the audience had the potential to be a silent chorus, provided their integration into the action was signified more clearly. While Punchdrunk theatre's masking of its audience suggests a more interruptive site-specific theatricality, here a desire for audience inclusiveness was not born of a wish to alienate or assault the spectator, rather to deepen his/her engagement, to envelop him/her with character and action. After all, the work's title, *Followers*, might be most accurately applied to the audiences who follow this opera around the Glyndebourne grounds.

Other creative issues emerged out of post-performance discussion amongst the creative team, chiefly relating to the promenades and the precise nature of Part Three.

### *The Promenades*

For the October 2007 performances, the first promenade was achieved through instrumental improvisation, the clarinettist following Eurydice out of the Organ Room, improvising on the motivic material of her final calls to Orpheus. This proved functional at best; what it lacked was a sense of connection with the character of Eurydice, who in these first performances, travelled unseen to the Old Green Room by a different route. For the August 2011 performances, this promenade will be led by Eurydice herself and a theatrical sequence evolved that will cross the Glyndebourne lawn, pre-empting her disintegration at the close of Part Two.<sup>26</sup>

In October 2007, the promenade into Part Three was simply accompanied by a discreet percussive element that heightened the sense of *unreality* down into the Ebert Room. This promenade will have to be rethought for August 2011 as with the refurbishment of the Ebert Room, this route will become inaccessible. An alternative solution is for a montage of pre-recorded voices and sounds – 'echoes' of Eurydice's experience in the

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<sup>26</sup> As it turned, this first promenade was reconceived as 'Eurydice's cadenza' for the August 2011 premiere, developing melodic shapes and key text as a free monologue. This was designed to map onto the specific locations of the journey across the lawn from the Organ Room and up the stairs into the Old Green Room, where the percussionist would already be playing.

opera up to this point – to be fed in the promenade space. This is very likely to be the Glyndebourne theatre foyer, which these sounds might easily be fed into via existing speakers.<sup>27</sup>

The essential difficulty of these *Promenades* relates to striking a balance between sustaining a sense of operatic continuity while ensuring that the material used has the right degree of flexibility and responsiveness to space. Both promenades are absolutely assimilative, they are not required to interrupt the space or distract from the content of Parts One to Three, rather to constitute a free collage of sound or gesture that holds the spectator's imagination. If they feel like 'intervals' then the work's conception fails.

### *Part Three*

As the supporting DVD makes clear, Part Three sets out to achieve the opera's greatest intensity and intimacy; its final image – Eurydice rising up and disappearing out into gardens – constituting a deliberately transcendental breaking of the scene's naturalistic style. In a sense this final gesture could be said to be a third promenade, the promenade where the audience travel out of the opera and back into their own lives, perhaps haunted by the sounds and images that had appeared to haunt Orpheus.

The use of a pre-recorded material connects up to a number of interpretations of the Orpheus myth that interprets its narrative as an allegory for modern recording technology. Klaus Thewleite sees Orpheus as 'media technologist' who attempts to capture/record his own singing through the body of Eurydice:

You may laugh, but here in 1607, as he seeks to install music upon the throne of enlivening media, Orpheus is asking for Edison. He is calling (into the woods and into the chasms and down the stairs) for something that will record his song and return it to him wholly. He is serious, he isn't joking with Ms. Echo, and he

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<sup>27</sup> For August 2011, the route was indeed through the Glyndebourne theatre foyer, past the bar and into the new entrance to the Ebert Room. This 'Second Promenade' was experienced as an audio cue in the corridor out from the Old Green Room into the foyer, whilst simultaneously cued inside the Ebert room itself. This promenade is entirely electro-acoustic and presents a kind of dream-like montage both of Eurydice's musical journey but also the process of making itself – the sound of footsteps, for example, was extracted from a recording of the first work-in-progress performance in October 2007.

is not simply mourning for his various loves: he himself creates this recording medium and he creates it out of his dead lover, Eurydice.<sup>28</sup>

This connection of Orpheus to recording technology is here inverted; Orpheus plays back Eurydice's voice, not his own, and more particularly her recording of 'Ahi, vista troppo dolce' from Act Four of Monteverdi's *Orfeo* - the aria that Eurydice sings the moment that Orfeo looks back and she is lost to him. While a pre-existing recording was used for the August 2008 workshops, in 2011 the aria will be pre-recorded by Eurydice herself enabling this recording to function like an offstage, generating an uncanny effect which like the echoes of Part One 'brings the beyond downstage', drawing past and present together in this one scene.

### Conclusion

As this chapter outlines, this case study could be said to have generated some of the most formative and developmental research experience of this entire residency. It emphasised both the enormous potential of site-specific opera as a model for opera development while at the same time highlighting in a very real way, the unavoidable complexities and practical issues that this kind of operatic work entails. At the very least, it depends on close and fluent collaborative relationships with singers and instrumentalists; a fact reinforced by this composer's role as keyboard music director in the October 2007 work-in-progress performances.

In terms of this research project's central research questions, the experience of *Followers* demonstrates the positive potential of a re-engagement with operatic tradition while at the same time highlighting the creative pitfalls that lie in both pastiche and parody, the former sometimes risking a kind of creative neutrality, the latter mere grotesquery. It also helped to reveal the very real creative possibilities of re-contextualising what is operatically familiar with what is operatically uncanny.

The opera's site-specific design helped to reveal how critically the specifics of both space and performing resources can shape a new opera for the better, the reality of a

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<sup>28</sup> K. Theweleit, 'Monteverdi's Orfeo', in *Opera Through Other Eyes*, ed. Levin (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 147.

performing context liberating the creative imagination. Similarly, an operatic narrative can be richly transformed both by relating its progress to the specifics of space and by developing a more intimate and direct engagement with the spectator.

The only aspect of *Followers* that proved harder to research related to its approach to the operatic voice and the range of its vocalisations. This was an inevitable consequence of working with less experienced operatic performers. While all three singers brought an energy, commitment and generosity of spirit to the creative development process, their lack of fluency and even confidence with new music ensured that the opera's vocal approach remained very traditionally informed, its extended techniques ranging no further than a scream in Eurydice's mad scene or the improvised spoken dialogue which so helped to glue the action together.

One final important lesson emerged out of this case study, chiefly that however intense a collaboration or creative development, however devised or improvised the material, at some point an opera still has to be written, with whatever notational strategies are required to achieve it. Writing an opera about writing an opera can itself seem like the ultimate *mise en abyme* and in a strange way, since Part Three is about achieving a sense of compositional confidence in opera, there is a certain inevitability in the definitive completion of *Followers* only being achieved outside the time frame of this research. And yet with Punchdrunk now staging a site-specific production for English National Opera - Torsten Rasch's *The Duchess of Malfi* in June 2010 – there is a very real, emerging sense of the creative possibilities of an operatic approach that responds very directly to the specifics of space.

## Chapter Three

### Second Case Study - Péter Eötvös's *Love and Other Demons*

Glyndebourne's 2008 main-scale commission from Hungarian composer Péter Eötvös's - *Love and Other Demons* - sits at the heart of this creative residency, offering a unique opportunity to explore the project's central research questions outside the notional boundaries of individual creative practice. *Love and Other Demons* thus forms the second case study and will be examined firstly in terms of its commissioning, creative and performing contexts, and secondly, in its relationship to questions of narrative and musical structure, and the operatic voice.

In terms of context, the development of *Love and Other Demons* offers valuable insights into how a British opera company commissions and supports new main-scale opera and the first part of this chapter will investigate a number of central issues. What is the rationale for choosing this or that composer, and who makes the final decision? How much influence does the company have over the composer's choice of subject matter? How involved is the company in questions of dramaturgy or even the nature and quality of the new score? Eötvös's own context is particularly intriguing. Though closely associated with European avant-garde music during his formative years, 1997-2007 saw his extraordinary rise and success as an opera composer, growing out of an already distinguished conducting career. This chapter will not only go on to examine Eötvös's own context and aesthetic position towards the operatic form, but also how he achieves a balance between his own creative ideals and the pressured reality of an opera company environment. A final context for *Love and Other Demons* will also be considered – the extent to which this new work was conceived *for* Glyndebourne, both stage and audience, and what role these acoustic and social realities had in shaping the gestation of this new opera.

The second part of this case study considers more specifically compositional questions of narrative/musical structure and operatic lyricism. Eötvös's new opera is based on a

novel<sup>1</sup> and as such presents one of opera's more conventional adaptive processes – book into opera, or story onto stage. With that in mind, is the narrative integrity of the original novel translated simply into the libretto? To what extent is this process shaped by the composer out of a need for autonomous musical structure(s)? How conventional is the operatic narrative that results and to what extent might it advance the form or offer models for future opera development? Finally, Eötvös's approach to the operatic voice will be considered in detail together with the range of vocalisation that this new opera employs. In conceiving the performing resources for this new opera, was Eötvös simply writing within the existing parameters of a received operatic model or pushing at the boundaries of this model from the inside?

### Commissioning context

Before laying out the full development process for Eötvös's *Love and Other Demons*, a brief overview of Glyndebourne's long history of engagement with new opera is required, not least in order to emphasise the unique status of this 2008 commission.

With the very considerable support we receive from Members and public, we can and should be adventurous.<sup>2</sup>

That was how George Christie presented Glyndebourne's 1961 world premiere of Henze's *Elegy for Young Lovers*, going on to refer to "our intention to put on in future a few more contemporary operas, if convinced that they, in each case, are of particularly high value".<sup>3</sup>

Glyndebourne's own position in relation to the commissioning and developing of new opera is an unusual one. In 1934 when John Christie embarked on his first country-house opera season at Glyndebourne, England had no operatic establishment to speak of and no tradition of state arts funding; in this context, *new opera* was just about any opera. In these pre-war years, Glyndebourne was largely concerned with establishing an operatic culture of the highest musical standards in England, with the vision and

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<sup>1</sup> G. G. Márquez, *Of Love and Other Demons*, translated by E. Grossman (London, Penguin, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> Programme book (Glyndebourne Festival Opera, 1961), p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 26.

guidance of émigrés from Nazi Germany, such as Fritz Busch and Carl Ebert. From 1934-1940, Glyndebourne's programming focussed exclusively on the Mozart operas, supplemented by Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* (1938 & 1939) and the first British production of Verdi's *Macbeth* in 1939.

Since these early years, Glyndebourne has continued to depend on private patronage and members' generosity for its survival, remaining largely independent of state funding<sup>4</sup>. And with such a history, one might have thought that this company would preserve itself from the very real commercial risks that staging new opera entails. However, when Glyndebourne emerged from the Second World War, its first and only opera in the 1946 season was Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, closely followed by *Albert Herring* in 1947. On the one hand, this programming decision evidences the canny impresario skills of John Christie – Britten was then enjoying wide acclaim in the wake of the premiere of *Péter Grimes* in June 1945; on the other, two new operas after a decade of Mozart could be said to have planted the idea of new opera in the founding myth of Glyndebourne, and although it was another twenty years before the company formally commissioned its first full-length opera, the quality and significance of British premieres in the interim is not unimpressive: Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* (1953, revived in 1954, 1955, 1958 & 1963), Poulenc's *La Voix Humaine* (1960) and Henze's *Elegy for Young Lovers* (1961) in addition to Von Einem's *The Visit of the Old Lady* in 1973 (revived in 1974).

Plans for commissioning a new full-length work for Glyndebourne began in 1966, culminating in 1970 with the world premiere of Nicholas Maw's comedy *The Rising of the Moon* to a libretto by Beverley Cross, revived the following year. Maw's opera established a number of characteristic precedents for Glyndebourne commissioned operas: a British composer; traditional operatic values – Maw's programme note insisted that his music “should have pace, wit, a strong sense of direction and, if possible, a number of good tunes”<sup>5</sup> – and a perhaps inevitable preference for comedic rather than “serious” subject matter.

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<sup>4</sup> Glyndebourne Touring Opera has been supported by Arts Council England since 1968.

<sup>5</sup> Programme book, (Glyndebourne Festival Opera, 1970), p. 62-64.

With the appointment of Anthony Whitworth-Jones in 1981 as Administrator and eventually, Director of New Opera Development in 1984, Glyndebourne's emerging commitment to new opera was significantly consolidated and the ensuing decades were marked by a series of substantial commissions from leading British composers. In a sense, Whitworth-Jones repositioned Glyndebourne; perhaps his own experience of working closely with composers at the London Sinfonietta informed his decision to develop a Glyndebourne new opera policy, more closely associating the company with the development of new work. This vision was outlined in the 1984 Festival Programme Book:

New opera will, we plan, become a familiar and vital aspect of Glyndebourne's activities. Nothing is more important in artistic life than the encouragement and cultivation of today's creators. Not only is this of fundamental importance for its own sake, but a positive attitude towards the new has a crucial regenerative effect of attitudes to the standard repertory of the past.<sup>6</sup>

While on average, the first fifty years of Glyndebourne saw one new opera a decade; this was trebled in the 1980s (three commissions) and again doubled in the 1990s (six commissions). This enhanced commissioning activity was underpinned by a number of crucial developments: the establishment of an education department at Glyndebourne, with the appointment of Katie Tearle as Education Organizer in 1986; the opening of Michael Hopkins & Partners' new theatre in 1994, and ongoing Arts Council support for Glyndebourne Touring Opera, enabling the company to tour its most challenging repertoire within the context of leaner touring budgets, where commercial risks could be better handled, and the company's artistic profile enhanced.

Taken together, these initiatives diversified the available platforms for the development of new opera. New commissions for the main stage - Oliver Knussen's *Where the Wild things are* and *Higglety Pigglety Pop!* (1984) and Michael Tippett's *New Year* (1990); new commissions for the tour - Nigel Osborne's *The Electrification of the Soviet Union* (1987), Birtwistle's *The Second Mrs Kong* (1994) and *The Last Supper* (2000), Jonathan Dove's *Flight* (1998, revived in the 2005 Festival) and a host of new commissions for a variety of community and education contexts.

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<sup>6</sup> Programme book, (Glyndebourne Festival Opera, 1984), p.13.



As part of Glyndebourne's emerging commissioning strategy, Whitworth-Jones singled out an organic synthesis between new opera development and education/outreach work:

commitment to any new work is, or should be the most important aspect of policy in any arts organisation...integral to Glyndebourne's New Opera Policy is a comprehensive Education Programme<sup>7</sup>

Throughout this period, composers were presented with opportunities to develop new operatic projects in a variety of different contexts, away from the main stage. This resulted in a series of community operas from Jonathan Dove: *Hastings Spring* (1990), *Dreamdragons* (1993) and *In Search of Angels* (1995); music theatre pieces for Glyndebourne's newly established Youth Opera Groups from Ian MacCrae (*Airheads* 2001), Will Todd (*Firework* 2002) or Orlando Gough (*Ancestor in the Chalk* 2003) and a series of primary school operas from James Redwood (*Cinderella* 2005, *Still Water* 2006, *Two Truths* 2007). In addition, Glyndebourne's creative vision to transform both opera itself and the nature of its audience was consolidated with a series of youth opera commissions for the main stage, intended to pull all the company's resources together for a target audience of families and young people, largely unfamiliar with opera or Glyndebourne. *Misper* (1997), *Zoe* (2000) and *Tangier Tattoo* (2005) by composer John Lunn and writer Stephen Plaice, were devised for a mix of young performers and professionals, while *School 4 Lovers* (2006) celebrated Mozart's 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a hip-hop treatment of *Così Fan Tutte*.

Perhaps sensitivities around Glyndebourne's unique, aristocratic history catalysed such an intensification of activity around commissioning and education work from the 1980s onwards, or perhaps it was the shared vision of individuals such as Anthony Whitworth-Jones and Katie Tearle. In a new century however, and with the appointment of David Pickard as General Director in 2001, Glyndebourne's commissioning policy underwent further change. To some extent the company was now operating in a different climate – a greater proliferation of new opera projects on the UK scene and ever-greater pressure on financial resources. Despite this, Pickard renewed Glyndebourne's commitment to new opera development while at the same time re-evaluating its creative outputs. A new

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p.13.

opera committee, convened several times a year, was to review Glyndebourne's new opera strategy around a set of evolving objectives:

- to emphasise the importance of contributing to the operatic art form through commissioning new work;
- to inspire/excite the whole Glyndebourne company around the staging of new work;
- to enjoy the artistic freedom that staging new opera brings;
- to enrich audiences through their experience of new work;<sup>8</sup>

and this led to a 'change in emphasis' in two broad areas: a harder-nosed approach to the realities of commissioning; fewer commissions for the main stage but increased activity on a smaller, studio theatre scale. To Pickard, new opera had to be balanced against the need for new productions of existing repertory; in the commercial realities of a privately funded opera company relying heavily on sponsorship and the generosity of its members, a new 'commission' was simply another new 'production', but with far greater risks attached. In order to anticipate these risks and plan the commissioning process carefully, Pickard saw Glyndebourne commissioning one new opera for the main Festival every decade. Though this bald statistic might be interpreted as a retrenchment from the glory days of the Whitworth-Jones era, it has to be seen in the context of a renewed emphasis on developing new work for Glyndebourne's black box performance space (Jerwood Studio); the creative development of composers through a variety of community and education contexts, and the company's well-established commitment to staging newly commissioned youth operas for the main stage on a three to four yearly basis. Seen in this broader context, Pickard could be said to have balanced a more cautious main-scale commissioning policy with an enhancement of the virtuous circle of new opera development and education activity, working closely with Head of Education Katie Tearle to ensure a degree of artistic continuity. This Composer-in-Residence project itself expresses a more diverse approach to facilitating new opera development.

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with General Director, David Pickard, 5<sup>th</sup> August 2010.

Péter Eötvös's *Love and Other Demons* thus represents *the* main-scale commission of Pickard's first decade as Glyndebourne's General Director, balanced by two new Youth Operas – *School 4 Lovers* (2006) and *Knight Crew* (2010)<sup>9</sup>. In many ways, the choice of Péter Eötvös marked another shift in Glyndebourne's new opera policy. Unlike *Albert Herring*, *The Rising of the moon*, *Where the Wild Things are* or *Flight*, *Love and Other Demons* was not by a British composer, not a comedy and not an opera with an entirely straightforward relationship to the operatic tradition. It's an extraordinary fact that although the past seventy-five years had seen performances of Henze's *Elegy for Young Lovers* (1961) or Siegfried Matthus' *Cornet Christoph Rilke's Song of Love and Death* (1993), no non-British composer had ever received a Glyndebourne commission. When John Christie founded the company in the early 1930s, the venture depended critically on attracting foreign talent; here was a country with no operatic establishment that needed the artistic skills and expertise of European artists to build an indigenous operatic culture. By contrast, Glyndebourne's commissioning of composers such as Maw, Tippett, Knussen, Birtwistle, Osborne or Dove from 1970 onwards, was all about looking closer to home, attracting native composers in order to develop a distinctively British contemporary operatic tradition.

At the outset of a new millennium, however, the British operatic landscape looked very different. Six major national opera companies, a significant array of smaller, touring opera companies, in addition to a handful of country-house operatic ventures, shaped in Glyndebourne's image (Garsington 1989, Longborough 1991, Grange Park 1997). John Christie's vision of a thriving British operatic establishment had been largely fulfilled, and many national companies were committed to the commissioning of new, often British opera and to building innovative education programmes and outreach work.

So in 2001, the first year of David Pickard's tenure, with Vladimir Jurowski appointed Music Director and Gus Christie succeeding as chairman the previous year, this youngest ever management team could perhaps afford to be more internationalist in its commissioning policy, securing a foreign composer in the way the company had been securing foreign artists since its foundation. With its world-class theatre and the highest possible music and production standards, here was Glyndebourne flexing its corporate

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<sup>9</sup> *Knight Crew* is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

muscle and positioning itself as a major broker on the international opera market. Pickard freely admits that this commission was in part about reinforcing Glyndebourne's credentials as an international opera house, leading the way in making the British opera scene less parochial.<sup>10</sup> None the less, the drive to commission Eötvös was clearly lead by Vladimir Jurowski, who already enjoyed an association with the composer, having given frequent performances of Eötvös orchestral works such as *Zeropoints* (1999)<sup>11</sup>. In fact, considering he was then far better known in the UK as a conductor, Péter Eötvös is better described as a colleague of Jurowski's. From 1985-88 Eötvös had been Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and since then had appeared regularly with British orchestras, including the London Symphony Orchestra and London Sinfonietta. His British reputation lay chiefly in highly regarded interpretations of twentieth century and contemporary music, including landmark premieres by British composers such as Harrison Birtwistle and Jonathan Harvey.

In 2001, however, Eötvös was not widely known in the UK as a composer and thus an Eötvös commission demanded something of a commercial leap of faith from the whole Glyndebourne company. Initial conversations centred around the viability of a new Glyndebourne production of Eötvös's *Three Sisters* (1997) commissioned and staged by Opéra National de Lyon in 1998 to wide acclaim. Pickard recalls discussing this prospect with the composer in Summer 2001, when Eötvös was making his Glyndebourne debut conducting Janáček's *Makropulos Case*.<sup>12</sup> At this early stage, however, a new Eötvös opera looked unlikely in terms of the composer's existing commitments, and other names were certainly considered: Thomas Adès and Marc Anthony Turnage, for example. An unexpected change in the Eötvös diary finally opened up the possibility of his writing a new opera specifically for the Glyndebourne stage and from 2002, discussions began in earnest.

Appendix Five<sup>13</sup> details this development process right up to first night evidencing the different parties closely involved with this new opera's gestation: David Pickard, Vladimir Jurowski, Katie Tearle, Steven Naylor (Director of Music Administration)

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with David Pickard, 5<sup>th</sup> August 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Jurowski conducted *Zeropoints* at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2007, for example.

<sup>12</sup> Telephone discussion with David Pickard, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Appendix Five, page 219.

Eötvös's agents Harrison & Parrott, and publisher, Schott. At first, it is the sheer length of this trajectory that is most striking – from Eötvös's 2001 debut with the company to the opera's premiere as part of the 2008 Glyndebourne season, emphasising how much time new main-scale opera development requires. A closer scrutiny of this timeline, however, reveals clear stages in the way Glyndebourne develops this new opera. Firstly, a "formal" phase of discussion and negotiation (2001-2004) between the company's senior management, Eötvös and his representatives culminating in a meeting at Glyndebourne in April 2004, which Head of Education, Katie Tearle, later attended. Once subject matter and librettist had been agreed, a more operational phase begins (2005 - May 2006) in which contracts are agreed and performing resources fixed. Then follows a phase of libretto development (May - October 2006) in which drafts are submitted and feedback circulated, drawing in the dramaturge Edward Kemp (June 2006). A final compositional phase, in which further changes are made to the libretto, culminates with the submission of the vocal score (Part 1 February 2008, Part 2 May 2008) and full score (Part 1 March 2008, Part 2 June 2008).

Observed as a process, it is striking how in its early stages, the process hinges almost exclusively on Glyndebourne senior management – Pickard, Jurowski, Christie – but that once the opera is in creative development, questions of dramaturgy and structure seem to be almost exclusively managed by the Head of Education, Katie Tearle and dramaturge Edward Kemp, with very occasional input from Pickard or Jurowski. Perhaps this marks the fulfilment of Whitworth-Jones' vision of an organic integration of new opera development and education work. None the less, there is a degree of ambiguity here in relation to the company's long term commissioning policy. Who leads the decision-making process with regard to developing new work and particularly, new main-scale opera? General Director, Music Director, Chairman or Head of Education? As it stands, this process seems to evolve organically, relying on good working relationships at a high level in the company's senior management structure. But as a consequence, it is sometimes hard to locate a centre of gravity for the company's long-term vision for new opera development.

Another distinctive quality of this developmental process is its mixed texture, an interlacing of old and new models of commissioning and developing opera. An old model divests creative and artistic responsibility almost exclusively in the hands of the

composer – arguably a post-Wagnerian dynamic and modernist paradigm; a new model places the composer in an integrated creative team, alongside writer, director, conductor and designer; the tension between these two modes of commissioning is an ever recurring theme in opera development. At the 2006 Opera Europa conference in Paris,<sup>14</sup> Bernard Fouccroulle, Director of the La Monnaie in Brussels, spoke eloquently in favour of the new model while British opera director and Intendant of the Bregenz Festival, David Pountney, was trenchant in his criticism of allowing composers too much power<sup>15</sup>. For much of the *Love and Other Demons* development process, the old model dominates. In early ‘formal’ discussions there is certainly productive interaction between Composer and Opera Company but none the less, a sense that Glyndebourne was happy to defer to Eötvös’s specific requirements. Even though all the key Glyndebourne parties read the choice of subject matter – the Márquez novel *Of Love and Other Demons*, the company appears to have conceded to the composer’s wishes rather than to have undergone a systematic consideration of the source material’s full implications. Once difficulties arose between composer and librettist in the first half of 2006, then Glyndebourne’s shifts to a more collaborative, new model approach with Katie Tearle and dramaturge, Edward Kemp, working closely with the composer to support the compositional process. None the less, through this whole period, the new opera’s director, Silviu Pucarete, remains a remote figure, contributing only one, significant email on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2006. As this chapter goes on to examine some of the more problematic aspects of this new opera, it is difficult not to conclude that greater interaction between composer, librettist, director and conductor would have guaranteed greater coherence, and that the responsibility for creating an ideal context for staging a new opera lies chiefly with the commissioning Opera Company.

### **Creative Context**

From Glyndebourne’s perspective, commissioning the first UK staging of an Eötvös opera was something of a coup, despite bringing with it very real commercial challenges.<sup>16</sup> From Eötvös’s perspective, this Glyndebourne commission was to be his

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<sup>14</sup> ‘Where is tomorrow’s audience’: European Opera Days (18/02/07), Amphithéâtre, Opéra Bastille, Paris.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Commissioning Opera’: European Opera Days (18/02/07), Foyer Panoramique, Opéra Bastille, Paris.

<sup>16</sup> Pickard later described the commission as “a big financial risk. We can’t afford to commission new work as often as we’d like, and it does mean, for example, that these

sixth large-scale operatic work for a European Opera House and the climax of an intense decade of creative activity around opera. Financial pressures aside, it seems to have been this extensive track-record in the theatre that gave Glyndebourne the final confidence to take forward Jurowski's desire for a new Eötvös opera.

From 1997 onwards, Eötvös had emerged as one of the most important of all European opera composers with a series of new works commissioned and premiered by French opera companies: *Three Sisters*, by Opera National de Lyon in March 1998, *Le Balcon* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival in 2001, *Angels in America* by the Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris in 2004, and *Lady Sarashina*, again at the Opera National de Lyon in March 2008. Eötvös's *Three Sisters* achieved particular distinction going on to receive a host of productions internationally, and coming to wider renown through an acclaimed and award-winning Deutsche Grammophon recording (2000).<sup>17</sup> This impressive track record was matched by other operatic works – nine different productions of *Le Balcon* (2002) in 2002-9, seven of *Angels in America* (2004) in 2004-9 for example. Eötvös seems to have found an operatic approach that saw his works entering the mainstream operatic repertory of French, German and Dutch Opera Houses – a remarkable achievement considering the extraordinary risk and expense of staging new opera. How might one account for such a rapid rise to operatic prominence?

Clearly as a conductor-composer, Eötvös was uniquely placed to navigate the management of European opera houses, with his own extensive performing experience with the Royal Opera House, La Scala Milan, La Monnaie or Glyndebourne. Secondly, Eötvös demonstrates shrewd, almost strategic thinking in his choice of source material – the familiarity of Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, Jean Genet's *Le Balcon* or Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* strongly enhancing the feasibility of his operatic transformations. Finally, Eötvös's highly distinctive profile as both practical man-of-the-theatre and champion of the European avant-garde – member of the Stockhausen ensemble (1968-76), music director of Ensemble Intercontemporain (1978-91) - inevitably guaranteed him a broad constituency of support.

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performances will be surrounded by 17 of *Carmen*" C. Wrathall, (9/08/08) 'New Aria Codes', article in Financial Times, London.

<sup>17</sup> P. Eötvös, *Three Sisters*, Lyon Opera Orchestra. Conductors: Nagano/Eötvös. 459 6942 8 (1999).

Eötvös's own early compositional development was perhaps typical of composers of his generation - studies at the Darmstadt summer school, a German scholarship to study with Zimmermann in Cologne (1966-8), where he later worked as a music technician in WDR electronic studio (1971-79). Compositions from this period reflect a breadth of interest that demonstrates his own engagement with the music of Stockhausen, ranging from ensemble works such as *Windsequenzen* (1974-5), or tape pieces such as *Märchen* (1968) or *Cricket Music* (1970); none the less, a concern for theatre seems to have been a constant thread. While still a student, Eötvös was music director of the Comedy Theatre in Budapest (1962-4), from 1967-8 he worked as a répétiteur at Cologne opera, while also working extensively as a composer in both film and theatre. Two small-scale works from this early period could be said to anticipate Eötvös's later operatic career: the scene with music *Harakiri* of 1973, composed at the WDR in Cologne, and the forty minute chamber opera *Radames* of 1975, revised in 1997.

Taken in isolation, *Radames* might suggest an emerging opera composer with a decidedly experimental and radical view of the art form. Its action centres around three directors - of opera (music), theatre (words) and film (image) – who drive their leading tenor (Radames) to a final complete collapse. The economy of material that *Radames* employs – etiolated, post-Stravinskian chorales scored for soprano saxophone, horn, tuba and electric piano – and its deliberate stratification of sung (Radames) material or sprechgesang/speech material (Directors), presents a bleak operatic, if not anti-operatic model. As all three directors stand over the body of Radames, face down on the floor at the opera's close, it is hard not to interpret the film director's final text as playing out the death of the operatic form itself:

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Film director: | - camera's rolling,<br>that's good, I can still use his back<br>keep quiet, with your last strength,<br>your last rest,<br>yeah – yeah! <sup>18</sup> |
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<sup>18</sup> P. Eötvös, *Radames*, (Mainz, Schott, 2001), page 35.



Although Eötvös's later sound theatre piece *As I crossed a bridge of dreams* (1998-9) adopts an analogous, experimental approach - achieved in an infinitely more accomplished and positive way to *Radames* - there is no doubt that Eötvös's mature operatic aesthetic proves more traditionally informed than the radical operatic deconstruction that *Radames* presents. Perhaps Eötvös's experience conducting the 1981 and 1988 world premieres of *Donnerstag* and *Montag* from Stockhausen's *Licht* cycle suggested ways of achieving a rapprochement between an avant-garde sensibility and an almost post-Wagnerian theatricality. But what most impresses about his third opera *Three Sisters* of 1996-7, is the ease with which Eötvös inhabits an operatic canvas, managing to enrich a traditionally informed operatic sensibility, with key aspects of the European avant-garde: an interest in sonic adventure – *Three Sisters* deploys two orchestras, chamber orchestra in the pit, larger orchestra hidden behind the stage; an exploration of unconventional vocal textures – the original version deploys an all male cast with three counter-tenors singing Olga, Masha and Irina and bass singing the nanny, Anfisa; and a collage-like approach to narrative structure – the opera reorders Chekhov's four-act structure with three sequences focussing on Irina, Andréi and Masha. What perhaps clinches the opera's broader appeal, is the way Eötvös engineers a specific, poetic sound-world for the specific universe of this story, not shying away from almost cinematic, instrumental allusions - his use of accordion, for example – that ensure a degree of immediacy and contact in an otherwise elaborately conceived, and uncompromising score.

The richness and definitive nature of *Three Sisters* might seem surprising after *Radames* but it is important to emphasise the centrality of theatre as an image in the purely instrumental works Eötvös completed in the twenty years that separate them.

*Korrespondenz* (1992) for string quartet, for example, transcribes textual fragments from Mozart's letters to his father creating a strangely theatrical effect in performance; *Shadows* (1995) explores the abstract drama of solo flute and clarinet foregrounded against four separate groups of musicians, in addition to six loudspeakers concealed in the acoustic space; the large ensemble work *Chinese Opera* (1996):

was written with a scenic and presentation in mind. It is an ‘opera’ from my own province<sup>19</sup>

Projecting forwards from *Three Sisters*, the consistency of Eötvös’s operatic aesthetic is impressive; perhaps without such a clarity of creative purpose, his completion of a further five operas in the ensuing decade would have been impossible to achieve.<sup>20</sup>

Although a significant minority of opera composers could be said to have encapsulated their theatrical vision in single works (Debussy, Messiaen, Ligeti), most effective opera composers with an eye on commercial success, are required to work fast and effectively, produce material with ease and fluency, and retain creative focus even when external pressures require them to work on several stage works simultaneously.<sup>21</sup>

Eötvös is absolutely in this latter category and in all his workings around opera, creative ideals are tempered by practicalities and a shrewd, almost business-like sense of what “works” in an opera house context. Such a broader, almost artisanal approach to making opera runs the risk of squeezing out the radical or the visionary, creating the kind of “culinary” theatre that Brecht identified in *The Modern Theatre is the Epic Theatre*<sup>22</sup>, and this risk will be considered later in relation to the narrative structure of *Love and Other Demons*. However, there is a refreshing directness in Eötvös’s operatic from which one might deduce the following set of aesthetic principles:

- A practical approach, posited on the idea of making opera that works effectively for specific performing contexts;
- An essentially reconciliatory position, one which strives for a balance between ‘radical’ (European avant-garde) and ‘progressive’ (the operatic tradition) dynamics;
- A broader sensibility, informed by cross-arts experience of straight theatre or film, with particular implications for narrative and story-telling;

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<sup>19</sup> Cited by T. Schäfer, ‘With New Sounds on a Search for Lost Music’, (Kairos CD 0012082KAI, 2000).

<sup>20</sup> Appendix Two lists the Eötvös operas completed prior to *Love and Other Demons*.

<sup>21</sup> Chapter Two of Roger Parker’s *Remaking the Song* discusses this last situation in relation to Verdi’s *Il Trovatore* and *La Traviata*. R. Parker, *Remaking the Song*, (Berkeley & Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2006), p. 22.

<sup>22</sup> J. Willett, ed. *Brecht on Theatre*, (London, Methuen & Co, 1964), p. 33.

- A reallocation of musical ‘style’ *away* from the composer and *into* the specific narrative world of each opera: Russia in *Three Sisters*, French chanson in *Le Balcon* or the Broadway musical in *Angels in America*,<sup>23</sup>
- By implication, a poly-stylistic attitude, with a chameleon-like ability to absorb other musics should subject matter require it;
- An active concern for the poetics of acoustic space within the operatic theatre: the two orchestras in *Three Sisters* or *Love and Other Demons*, the onstage band in *Le Balcon* or more generally, the integration of electro-acoustic elements into a traditionally acoustic operatic sound-world;
- Although the operatic voice remains central, this is enriched by a wider interest in other kinds of vocalisation (actors, non operatically trained voices)
- Essentially driven by an objective theatricality, one that creates distance between composer and material and ‘allows in’ the audience.

### Performing context

In a pre-performance talk on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2008, Péter Eötvös admitted that the idea of treating Gabriel García Márquez’s novel *Of Love and Other Demons* had come from his wife, Mari Mezei – both a professional and personal partner, who had already written libretti for three Eötvös operas, mostly notably their adaptation of Tony Kushner’s *Angels in America* for the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris (2004). Clearly this 1994 Márquez novel was one of several ideas considered for this Glyndebourne commission - Edward Kemp recalls that Eötvös had even toyed with a story by Ray Bradbury<sup>24</sup> - but Eötvös pitched this idea out of a sense of the story’s particular relevance to the Glyndebourne and its audience:

When I received this commission, there was a discussion with David Pickard and especially, with Vladimir Jurowski, about what kind of subject would make a good opera for Glyndebourne. I proposed *Of Love and Other Demons*, a novella by Gabriel García Márquez, because I thought, and everyone agreed, that a British audience would clearly understand all the elements that are at the centre of the story: the clash between black and white, between different cultures, the Catholic milieu and the transformations of the 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> During the rehearsal period around *Love and Other Demons*, Eötvös repeatedly talked of each of his operas having ‘a style’ but not their composer.

<sup>24</sup> E. Kemp, ‘In the beginning’, (Glyndebourne Festival Programme Book, 2008), p. 106-13.

<sup>25</sup> N. Kimberley (August, 2008), ‘Colombian Blend’, article in *Opera*, p. 901-2.

The action of Márquez's novel is set in Eighteenth Century Cartagena. A young twelve-year-old girl, Sierva María de Todos Los Angeles, raised largely by African slaves in her father's house, appears to have been bitten by a rapid dog during an eclipse. The bite is treated by the slave woman, Dominga who raises Sierva as her own; none the less, Sierva's melancholic father is perturbed by her wild behaviour and persuaded by the Bishop to hand her over to the care of the Convent of St. Clare. There Sierva's Africanised behaviour causes havoc and the Bishop dispatches a young priest, Gaetano Delaura, to take charge of her case. Delaura falls in love with her and once this love is discovered, Sierva endures a brutal exorcism from which she eventually dies.

Eötvös's claim here for the unique relevance of this story for a Glyndebourne audience, plays into analogous questions of Opera 'House' and 'residency' that provided the starting-point for this research project's first case study in Chapter Two - the promenade opera, *Followers*. With *Love and Other Demons*, his concern is both with audience (the wider Glyndebourne interpretative community) and with acoustic space (the Glyndebourne theatre). In terms of audience, Eötvös makes the rather startling observation that this 'story' could only work in Glyndebourne's specific national context:

I would never have done this piece had the commission come from Budapest...In Hungary, the conflicts would not have spoken to people in the same way<sup>26</sup>

In terms of theatre, Eötvös repeatedly emphasised his need to make this new opera work specifically for the Glyndebourne stage. This second concern chiefly relates to exploring the poetic potential of sound placement in acoustic space. Clearly Eötvös's own experience of Glyndebourne's unique acoustic in 2001 must have informed his own creative imagination:

I know the sound of this house and of this orchestra [the London Philharmonic] from conducting here. I remembered that the acoustic is so clear that you can really hear a difference between sound coming from the left side and sound coming from the right.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> F. Maddocks (30/07/08), 'Eötvös is the Modern Music Man', article in *The Evening Standard*, London.

<sup>27</sup> Kimberley, 'Columbian Blend', p. 905.

This results in his decision both to rearrange the opera's orchestral resources into two antiphonal ensembles, displaced to the left and right of the orchestra pit, and to deploy a central 'continuo' instrumental group dominated by celeste, harp and percussion.

Taken together such apparent sensitivity towards the realities of an opera company's performing context seems admirable and doubtless ensures Eötvös's appeal to other potential commissioners. None the less, behind this position lie more complex and less stable cultural and social questions. If a new opera depends too closely on a specific theatrical context, chances of future production are severely curtailed. During the *Love and Other Demons* period, Eötvös repeatedly stated that his new opera was made specifically for the Glyndebourne House, yet even the realisation of his antiphonal orchestras - notionally inspired by Glyndebourne's 'clear acoustic' - proved problematic, owing to the size and proportion of Glyndebourne's pit, forcing supposedly spatially separated ensembles into too close a proximity. The fact that *Love and Other Demons* has now been staged in Vilnius (2008-9), Chemnitz (2009-10), Cologne, Strasbourg and Mulhouse (2010) suggests a certain disingenuousness in Eötvös's own discourse. Perhaps such claims are a by-product of the composer's artisanal instincts for making opera, or even a shrewd playing of the international opera market by the cultivation of a 'safe pair of hands' image. None the less, Jurowski's observation that "this piece has no specific audience in mind"<sup>28</sup> opens up genuine questions about the depth of Eötvös's concern with context.

More complex still is Eötvös's claim that *Love and Other Demons* was a 'multi-cultural' opera for 'multi-cultural' Britain. The action of Márquez's novel takes place against the backdrop of the eighteenth century Spanish colonial town - Cartagena, in Colombia. Founded in 1533, Cartagena was one of the most important ports for slave-ships and the colony depended on slaves and slave trading to function, African slave labour replacing an indigenous American population that had largely died out with the arrival of the Spanish. Central to the Márquez novel is the way that Sierva comes to be adopted by the Yorùbá slaves forced to work in her father's house. As consequence, she finds herself at a focal point of tension between eighteenth century Spanish colonial culture, the traditions of the Catholic Church and the indigenous Yorùbá music of her

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<sup>28</sup> Interview with Andrew McGregor (11/10/08), BBC Radio Three, London.

father's slaves. In choosing this material and identifying it as particularly relevant for a British cultural context, Eötvös was perhaps trying to make a connection between British and Spanish colonial histories. But any composer tackling this material could not avoid the theatrical conflict of these different cultural elements. In such a context, there is clearly a fine balance to be struck between latter-day operatic exoticism and a notionally more enlightened, postcolonial approach. In his 1955 lecture *Bourgeois Opera*, Adorno saw operatic exoticism as symptomatic of the form's devalued status as a "bourgeois vacation spot":

Opera has shown an endless love for those who are of foreign blood or are otherwise 'outside'. Halévy's *La Juive*, Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine*, *La Dame aux Camélias* in Verdi's version and the Egyptian princess Aida, Delibes' *Lakmé*, and in addition the slew of gypsies, culminating in *Il Trovatore* and *Carmen*: all ostracized or outsiders, around whom passions explode and come into conflict with the established order.<sup>29</sup>

An "ostracized outsider in conflict with the established order" is a perfect description of the young girl, Sierva María De Todos Los Ángeles, at the core of the Márquez novel. Perhaps the outsider archetype identified above by Adorno was at the back of Eötvös's mind in choosing this as source material – thereby making an overt and deliberate connection to a thoroughly mainstream operatic tradition, a tradition that Glyndebourne's audience would know well. However, the original Márquez novel, far from being mere exotic novelty, can be seen as a rigorous dissection of the dislocation and fragmentation of Western colonialism and its brutal impact on the lives of the vulnerable and innocent. Márquez achieves this by contextualising a simple narrative progress inside a wash of rich descriptive magic which creates a tension between Spanish colonial and Yorùbá slave cultures. Surely one potential of this material lies in the possibilities of inverting the dynamics of conventional operatic exoticism: after all, here Western colonial characters are held within a frame of non-Western, (Yorùbá slave) culture. However, as this plays out in Eötvös's opera, explicit Yorùbá elements are largely consigned to the opera's opening scene, and although the Yorùbá language survives in the character and imagery of Sierva and her maid, Dominga, it results in only very superficial musical consequences relating to text-setting and orchestrational

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<sup>29</sup> T. W. Adorno, trans. D. J. Levin 'Bourgeois Opera', in *Opera Through Other Eyes*, ed. Levin (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 25.

detail, chiefly a seven note descending pattern on the cow bells with associated high oboe and alto flute colours:



**Example 1: Eötvös *Love and Other Demons* (Scene 1/C)**

Perhaps this marginalising of any potential Yorùbá influence reveals a measure of discomfort with how this Márquez story sits with Eötvös's modernist pedigree; after all, his colleague, Pierre Boulez occupies a highly critical position in relation to the incorporation of non-Western elements:

There is no sense in trying to build specimens of Oriental [by implication, or African] music into contemporary music; no influence is good except when it is transcended.<sup>30</sup>

Conceptually, Eötvös's incorporation of 'exotic' elements into *Love and Other Demons* is hardly that different than Verdi's 'Egyptian princess Aida' or his 'slew of gypsies' - an elusive poetic metaphor for the non-Western. Furthermore, such seemingly innocent markings such as the alto flute's "*imitate African flute with breath, imperfect sound*" (Scene 1/C, letter E), the '*approximate pitches and rests*' of the slave chorus (Scene 1/C) or the white note wind and brass clusters that answer Don Ygnacio's line "*The girl has only one family and that family is white*" (end of Scene 1/D) reinforce the very real risks that lie at the heart of any attempt to operatically treat the world of this Márquez story. Perhaps for Eötvös, falling back on nineteenth century models of exoticism was the only workable solution for a Glyndebourne context. None the less, this decision to 'contain' the non-Western musical implications of the story was to have serious impact on the opera's dramaturgy and musical structure, as the following section goes on to explore.

<sup>30</sup> P. Boulez 'Oriental Music: A Lost Paradise?', in *Orientations: Collected Writings*, (London, Faber, 1986), p. 421-24.

### **The narrative structure of Eötvös's *Love and Other Demons***

In its development from novel to opera, *Love and Other Demons* provides this case study with arguably its most valuable material, most specifically in confronting its interlinked processes of novel into libretto, and libretto into opera. To what extent does the musical architecture of the completed opera depend on these earlier processes, and in what ways can the composer maintain his/her vision throughout? Of course, such adaptive processes depend critically on the strength of a new opera's creative team, and in the formal stage of this opera's development, Glyndebourne was guaranteeing Eötvös particularly distinguished collaborative partners. Joining Jurowski, here conducting his first ever new opera, were two acclaimed Romanians: the director Silviu Pucarete and designer Helmut Stürmer, both bringing very particular theatrical approaches that would ensure a unique production style for this new opera.

### **Text**

A review of the *Love and Other Demons* process reveals that both director and designer emerged out of dialogue between composer and opera company, with Eötvös's breadth and fluency with theatre strongly informing this decision making process. Surprisingly, however, the choice of librettist seems to have been almost exclusively Eötvös's own, routinely approved by the email circulation of a Curriculum Vitae in December 2004. Kornél Hamvai, the Hungarian poet and playwright, joined the *Demons* team as its most junior member, in every sense: in his mid thirties, with no experience in opera or with developing a libretto. In his favour was firstly a collaborative history with Eötvös – Hamvai prepared the Hungarian text version of *As I crossed a bridge of dreams*; secondly, Hamvai came with extensive theatrical experience: five plays, three stage adaptations, and an astonishing sequence of translations into Hungarian from the English including Harold Pinter's *Homecoming*, Michael Frayn *Noises Off*, Brian Friel's *Philadelphia* and Tom Stoppard's *The Real Inspector Hound*. As if further proof was needed of his fluency with the English language, Hamvai had spent a period of postgraduate study at New College Oxford researching Anglo-Saxon irregular verb formations in 1996-7.



Eötvös's rationale for working with Hamvai seems to have been largely pragmatic, driven by an imperative to ensure an ease of communication through the collaborative process:

If I had chosen an English writer, it would have been difficult for me to explain correctly what I wanted. My English is not bad, but I don't understand 100 per cent. Kornél not only understands English, he writes it: in fact he writes poetry in English, which is fantastic. He also writes for the stage, he has a powerful sense of the dramatic, he understands everything about what works on the stage. We worked on the piece for three years, beginning in 2005, and for me it made it easier that whenever I returned to Budapest, I could call him up and say, 'How is it going? How far have you got?' and he could tell me precisely, in Hungarian.<sup>31</sup>

A closer reading of Eötvös's explanation throws up two key requirements: his need firstly for a "powerful sense of the dramatic" and secondly, for a poetic sensibility. Dramaturge Edward Kemp, who joined the creative team in 2006, outlined the Eötvös-Hamvai relationship in terms of its 'sense of the dramatic' by talking of Hamvai's *deformalizing* of the original Márquez novel<sup>32</sup>. The first manifestation of this is presented in Appendix Seven – Hamvai's draft synopsis/outline that breaks down the Márquez novel into a complex sequence of short scenes, broadly grouped into two acts. Circulated as early as December 2004, this draft synopsis laid out a number of early decisions:

- The novel's prologue is not treated;
- Certain key characters from the novel are not treated e.g. Bernarda or Dulce Olivia, but also minor roles (e.g. Father Tomas or the slaves in Santa Clara Convent);
- Some narrative elements become mere context e.g. the doctor Abrenuncio's bookish world or the Amor dos Dos Hospital;
- Some narrative elements are compressed: e.g. Delaura's judicial hearing, punishment and banishment or Don Ygnacio's attempts to make his daughter happy;
- Some narrative elements are simply cut, especially episodic material e.g. the visit of the Viceroy/Vicereine in chapter four;

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<sup>31</sup> Kimberley, 'Columbian Blend', p. 904.

<sup>32</sup> BBC Radio Three, (11/10/08).

No direct evidence survives to account for the how the Eötvös-Hamvai partnership worked towards achieving this ‘powerful sense of the dramatic’; from Eötvös’s comments above, one has to assume that the two were in regular contact - but as Kemp was to later observe, it was largely Hamvai who “did this fantastic job of carving the book up into some kind of dramatic structure”<sup>33</sup>. This ‘fantastic’ job was largely a process of reduction – cutting characters, pushing certain narrative elements into background or simply compressing the novel’s sequence of events, and a first draft was submitted to Glyndebourne by Hamvai in May 2006.

But at this key stage, two years before the opera’s notional premiere, the second of Eötvös’s key requirements came into play with both positive and negative consequences: namely his desire for a poetic quality to the libretto. Such a ‘poetic quality’ seems to have been the primary motivation behind Eötvös’s decision to treat this Márquez novel. Repeatedly, the composer talked of the novel’s theme of love and how that required ‘something quasi *bel canto*’:

...my other operas are written in dialogue form – question-answer – this time because the theme of this opera is about love and heavy drama, I was sure that I would like to use longer melodies so that one person sings for a long time...I call it a *bel canto* opera because I was very interested to give a real *bel canto* line for each role<sup>34</sup>

Taken together with Eötvös’s startling admission during the *Demons* rehearsal process that his intention was to approach opera in the spirit of Puccini, such a desire to create twenty-first century *bel canto* creates a familiar tension between modernist and traditionalist trends in the development of new opera. On the one hand, the machinery of Eötvös’s operatic aesthetic appears to suggest a modernist position - demanding fluency with a wide range of contemporary musical techniques, much of which could be described as post avant-garde. On the other hand, his choice of subject matter – the “ostracized outsider in conflict with the established order” as described by Adorno – and his explicit intention to write *bel canto*, suggests a thoroughly traditional if not conservative approach. Such a pull between old and new in opera is of course nothing new, whether in Gluck, Mozart, Verdi or Wagner, but the key question here is the

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<sup>33</sup> BBC Radio Three, (11/10/08).

<sup>34</sup> BBC Radio Three, (11/10/08).

extent to which this intriguing contradiction within Eötvös's operatic aesthetic impacts on the success of his opera in performance, and specifically whether the supposedly *bel canto* approach deployed in *Love and Other Demons* offers a working model for the development of new opera for the future. To what extent could Eötvös be said to be reanimating traditional operatic values?

In May 2006, however, the circulation of Hamvai's first libretto draft problematized any putative reanimation of traditional operatic values. Here Eötvös found his own vision of a poetic, *bel canto* opera to be at odds with that of Hamvai, whose first libretto draft evidenced an elegant formality, highly evocative of nineteenth century opera. As director Silviu Pucarete expressed it in July 2006:

The script is indeed focussed on the melodramatic aspects (that is not necessarily bad) but I found a certain C19th perfume. I would listen to Donizetti rather than Péter Eötvös.<sup>35</sup>

These and other concerns had been explored by the composer with David Pickard and Vladimir Jurowski on the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2006 at Glyndebourne. The libretto was considered too 'narrative driven', lacking in atmosphere and its characters rather two-dimensional<sup>36</sup>. In addition, Hamvai's poeticizing and in particular his use of rhyme were considered too contrived. It's not clear to what extent Hamvai had simply delivered a libretto that responded directly to Eötvös's instructions – *bel canto*, poetic – or whether the composer had achieved greater clarity in his textual requirements through the process of being presented with a 'wrong' solution. Either way, this breakdown in composer-librettist communication required a response, so Glyndebourne decided to appoint Edward Kemp as dramaturge, with a brief to help shape the libretto more in accordance with Eötvös's wishes.

Such an intervention by Glyndebourne management inevitably constituted a violation of the composer-writer relationship and to such an extent that Hamvai - though credited in programme and publicity - did not attend any of the final performances of the opera and largely withdrew from the process, after a series of development meetings/exchanges on the libretto with Edward Kemp (July to November 2006). Kemp, a distinguished writer,

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<sup>35</sup> Silviu Pucarete (3/07/06), email to David Pickard.

<sup>36</sup> Briefing notes of meeting, (25/05/06).

director and librettist in his own right, clearly pursued his objectives with sensitivity and sophistication; none the less, it appears that Hamvai found this stage in the opera's development frustrating. He submits a second draft on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2006 noting:

Here is the second draft of the libretto. I have introduced the suggestions and corrections made by Péter, Ed and Silviu as well as those of David and Katie. The script is cut down by almost 1500 words. I hope it's bordering on the acceptable now, or might even be considered something of a final version.<sup>37</sup>

Appendix Eight lays out the developing libretto structure from first draft (May 2006), to second draft (September 2006) to final version (Summer 2008). Essentially Kemp preserves the poetic core of Hamvai's libretto while breaking down its formal structure to create a narrative that achieves a greater degree of flow. Kemp relates this process of deformalization to a need for a greater reflection of the magic realist context for Márquez's novel:

...there seemed to be an issue around trying to render this thing called magical realism on stage so about two years ago I sat down with Péter and Kornél and just began to dismantle the libretto and reorganise it and help Péter find a form that he really felt represented what he really wanted to achieve on stage.<sup>38</sup>

while also connecting with Eötvös's ideas around *bel canto*:

Péter talked about wanting to write a bel canto score and that means actually not a lot of words to actually show off the voice. You want a few words well chosen that the composer can then write melodies around, not an enormous...chunk of stuff full of consonants that you have to fight your way through.<sup>39</sup>

A fascinating polarity emerges here between Eötvös's two librettists. On the one side, Hamvai had created an elaborately structured libretto with arias, choruses, recitatives and ensembles, a libretto that implied a traditionally informed operatic aesthetic. On the other, Kemp – with his own first hand experience of theatricalising 'magic realism'<sup>40</sup> – was striving for a more fluid, free-flowing approach in which narrative could be advanced through elision, allusion and suggestion. Put another way, Kemp's vision was

<sup>37</sup> Kornél Hamvai (1/08/08), email to Edward Kemp and Katie Tearle.

<sup>38</sup> BBC Radio Three, (11/10/08).

<sup>39</sup> BBC Radio Three, (11/10/08).

<sup>40</sup> Kemp's theatrical adaptation of Bulgakov's *The Master and the Marguerita* was premiered at the Chichester Festival Theatre in July 2004 to wide critical acclaim.

overlaid as a palimpsest on Hamvai's original libretto, and the resulting tension between the two mirrors Eötvös's own concern to occupy a kind of aesthetic centre ground in opera. The complicating effects of these two layers of tension – both in text and in music – impact in a very real way not only on the opera's narrative structure but also its musical architecture. An analogous process is uncovered by Philip Brett in his re-evaluation of *Peter Grimes* in the light of the many individuals that worked on the opera's libretto. Brett sees the *Peter Grimes* gestation process as:

no better parable in the twentieth century of the social process by which operas come into existence, or, alternatively, of the bankruptcy of the modernist model of criticism based solely on the composer and the score.<sup>41</sup>

For *Love and Other Demons*, the consequences of this twice-made libretto are traceable through a comparison of the three drafts (Appendix Eight). Essentially, in the final libretto the complex network of scenes evidenced in drafts one and two is compressed into tighter narrative units in which several scenes either play out simultaneously or in alternation. For example, scene 1/B rolls several scenes into one so that the world of the Bishop and Delaura observing the eclipse interlocks as a 'double scene' with Sierva dancing with the slaves; scene 2/C presents a triple scene in which dialogues between Ygnacio and Dominga, the Bishop and Delaura, Abrenuncio and Sierva are presented in fluid alternation while scene 3/C ingeniously presents the Abbess Josefa writing her letter to Don Ygnacio who simultaneously reads the letter back – functioning as much as an ingenious compression of two scenes as it is a useful clarification of text and meaning. The final libretto for *Love and Other Demons* evidences similar compressions or elisions of narrative throughout, as much a result of Kemp's theatrical instincts as Eötvös's creative experience in film<sup>42</sup>, where this kind of crosscutting is standard practice. None the less, underneath this fluid narrative surface, Hamvai's formality remains, so that intermittently structural units are foregrounded - as arias: the Bishop's aria in Scene 2/A, Ygnacio's aria in Scene 3/A or Josefa's demons aria in scene 8; as choruses: the Gregorian chants of the nuns in scene 4/A or the final exorcism in part 2; and as recitatives: the dialogue scenes between the Bishop, Delaura and Josefa.

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<sup>41</sup> P. Brett, 'Grimes is at His Exercise', in *Siren Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera*, (Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 237-249.

<sup>42</sup> Eötvös has written over twenty film scores.

Compounded by the fact that the bulk of the final libretto's language had been extracted from Hamvai, the opera's resulting narrative structure is a curious mixture of form and flow; individual scenes benefit from an embedded sense of structure and formality, while transitions are often achieved with a theatrical slight of hand. Consequently, the opera's narrative process sits uneasily between magic realist dream and nineteenth century formal convention. Certain compressions test plausibility, certain elisions create a 'one-thing-after-another' dynamic in the story-telling and certain formal units that 'survive' seem to lock characters into a static, even tableau-like state.

Three examples. Firstly, drafts one and two of the libretto both space out the evolving Delaura-Sierva relationship over an accumulating series of duets – four separate scenes in draft two, each with its own focus. In the final version, this sequence is compressed into the last scene of part 1 and scene 7 of part 2 – a radical reduction in material, which arguably limits scope and tests credibility. Is this love between a twelve year-old girl and a catholic priest given sufficient 'space' for its abusive and complex nature to be unlocked and explored? After all, the texture of this relationship in the Márquez novel is drawn out in a suspenseful way that creates a visceral sense of impending catastrophe. In the opera, this final catastrophe doesn't feel earned – Delaura's ineffective shouts of "Sierva! Vuelve y revuelve" in the exorcism simply reinforce a sense that this relationship lacks sufficient experienced action – nothing seems to be at stake; dream-like compression seems to have undermined narrative impact.

Secondly, while the many elisions already described in Part One create an effective sense of flow, in Part Two, flow feels more routine, with scenes sequenced with almost casual inevitability. It is as if a desire to keep the second half short overrides any deeper sense of how much space this particular material requires. Did Eötvös's need to strip back Hamvai's libretto through Kemp create an undue anxiety, depriving the opera of a certain richness or complexity? Certainly this creates dramaturgical problems: Ygnacio, Abrenuncio and Dominga all disappear from the bulk of Part Two, something Pucarete addressed with a directorial intervention – an opening *tableau vivant* presenting the principal characters in frozen, statuesque poses. Even the final exorcism, rather than a culmination of the opera's central themes of demonic possession and illicit love, falls flat because of its predictable position in the opera's narrative scheme. Just as Tosca must leap from the battlements or Mimi expire, so Sierva must be brutalised by a horde

of hysterical ecclesiasticals. At least Hamvai's earlier libretto drafts juxtaposed this material with the chanting of Dominga and the slaves, thereby weaving the story's two cultural worlds together and escaping this kind of blatant depiction that leaves nothing to the imagination and no space for reflection.

Thirdly, Ygnacio's aria in Scene 3/A for all its stylisation and detail, seems to lock its character inside the formality of his aria. In itself, perhaps this appropriately encapsulates his morbid decrepitude but at the same time, it deactivates him as a character and peripheralises him too early in the opera. Pucarete's decision to include him as a silent figure in the opera's final stage picture went some way to explain his sudden absence from the narrative, but the theatrical potential of Eötvös's characters, their ability to act as dramatic agents, can feel compromised between the formality of Hamvai and the flow of Kemp.

### **Music**

Such a critical evaluation of the libretto development behind *Love of other demons* is not intended to imply that such a process need be systematic and contained; most significant creative work of this kind demands an acceptance, even an embracing of instabilities and uncertainties, a relishing of its essentially exploratory nature. In this case study however, the tensions laid out above speak of a difference of approach towards the intrinsic nature of adaptation and operatic narrative, a difference that can either be related to contradictions in Eötvös's operatic aesthetic, or to insufficient clarity of vision in the opera's formative stages, or both. Adaptation for Hamvai implies a traditional process of respectfully translating a narrative from one form to another; adaptation for Kemp implies a more complex refashioning of narrative, in which story/situation can be remade in a myriad of often radical ways. Eötvös's desire for a poetic *bel canto* opera seems to fit more closely with Hamvai and yet the broader theatrical approaches evidenced by his other operas are closer to Kemp. How do such dichotomies of textual approach impact on this opera's musical structure, and does Eötvös find a way to bend them to his own advantage?

Eötvös repeatedly talks about each of his operas having its own 'style':

Each [opera] has a completely different musical style, which he explains as an attempt to make the music absorb the story and reflect it as a mirror.<sup>43</sup>

In the case of *Love and Other Demons*, the style is a composite one, comprised of a number of different musical strands:

- Spain (Scene 1/A)
- magic realist dream music (Sierva/off-stage voices)
- Sierva's scream (top E)
- Yorùbá materials (Dominga, Sierva, the slaves)
- Ygnacio: Eighteenth Century Spanish baroque
- Abrenuncio: Armenian music, quasi-baroque fioritura
- Gregorian chant/Catholic liturgical music (Bishop, Josefa, Nuns)
- Tolling bells (Bishop, Convent of St Clare)
- Love sonnets of Garcilaso de la Vega (Delaura/Sierva)

The corollary of this objective approach is that Eötvös advances his musical argument through an almost collage like alternation of these nine strands of material. Some strands evoke cultural worlds: passing bolero rhythms, muted brass and percussion for Spain (Scene 1/A); cow bells, alto flute and high oboes for Dominga and the Slaves (Scene 1/C); Gregorian chant, in clustered harmonies for the St Clare Convent (Scene 4/A); some strands delineate character: fragments of Scarlatti and baroque music for Ygnacio, a florid Kantor style for Abrenuncio. Either way, Eötvös's deployment of these different musics is entirely responsive to action on stage, reflecting the story 'like a mirror'. In this sense, the relationship between theatrical narrative and musical architecture is disconcertingly straightforward: enter Dominga, the cowbells sound; enter the nuns, Gregorian chant. His is an almost cinematic approach where music enhances an image's meaning in a one-dimensional way. Rarely does what we hear work against what we see; complexity is located within the detail of a gesture rather than in the way a gesture is used.

The advantages of such an approach to form building in opera are clear enough: a transparency in operatic dramaturgy and even, traditional operatic nostalgia when an

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<sup>43</sup> Maddocks, 'Eötvös' (30/07/08).



idea can function poetically as a leitmotif – e.g. the recurring cowbells in Dominga’s final lament. However, such a simple alternation of musics in response to the libretto’s uneasy modal shifts, such a pacification of music’s function generates a lack of overarching structural tension that causes moments of real stasis in Part One and a ‘one-thing-after-another’ feel to the narrative sequence of Part Two. Adopting a poly-stylistic approach certainly evidences a sensitivity and responsiveness to narrative but without an exploration of the inter-relationships and contradictions between these different musics, or a deeper concept or rationale for their deployment, musical tension dissipates into the incidental or descriptive.

Ascertaining to what extent this collage approach relates back either to the final state of the libretto or Eötvös’s own structural instincts is no straightforward question. Certainly Kemp’s revisions break down many of Hamvai’s structural units thereby exacerbating problems of musical continuity between the different worlds of the story. However, it is in the domain of the poetic, that Kemp’s work on *Love and Other Demons* brings its greatest rewards. Perhaps his own experience of rendering magic realist material for the stage gave Eötvös what he needed to realise his original vision more fully. As a result, the opera’s most successful and effective sequences relate to the dream world and inner life of the story’s central character, Sierva María de Todos Los Angeles.

Aside from baroque figuration used to vocalise Ygancio and Abrenuncio, Sierva’s music is the most important character-driven material in the opera, material that Eötvös does indeed deploy in a structurally, at times creating a poignant tension with the action on stage. Sierva’s theme is stated at the outset of the opera, a collection of seventeen pitches that spells out her full name:



**Example 2:** Sierva’s seventeen-note scale

This elusive musical scale, with its beguiling patterned intervals becomes a potent musico-dramatic image in the opera, its open-ended quality evoking both childhood innocence and dream. This scale is used throughout the opera – scored on celeste, harp,

percussion and string harmonics at the opening (Overture); recurring in Sierva's dream of flight (scene 3/C); as poignant fragments in her Convent cell (scene 4/A); in Delaura's and Sierva's dreams (7/A & B) and at the very close of the opera. This web of six statements could be said to have an important structural function, creating an autonomous musical discourse underneath the action on stage, rich in poetic resonance. Far from being mere leitmotivic signposts, this material acts as a frame for much of the action, reinforcing Sierva's position at the heart of the story and imbuing the whole work with a dream-like quality. The libretto might have cut the Márquez prologue, but in a sense here Eötvös reinstates it in purely musical terms; with Sierva, music asserts itself outside of the theatrical frame, challenging action on stage.

This central Sierva music has other associated material: an unseen celestial chorus of eight solo female voices that enriches her character with particular expressive significance; a single note (high E) which both represents Sierva's 'scream' while connecting subliminally to the high textures of her dream music, and finally Delaura's sung recitation of the love sonnets of Garcilaso de la Vega, first heard in Delaura's aria at the end of Part One (scene 6), restated in Sierva and Delaura's Part Two duet (scene 7C) and forming the main material for Sierva's death scene (scene 9/B). Taken together, this material perhaps comes closest to Eötvös's vision of a *bel canto*, poetic opera. The Garcilaso sonnet material is the most overtly melodic and expressive music in the score and its trajectory –Delaura alone, Delaura and Sierva duet, Sierva alone – has genuine psychological significance that generates a palpable poignancy in Sierva's death scene, a scene that could have so easily fallen into the wrong kind of melodrama. Similarly, the celestial voices that haunt Sierva's character in the prologue, tellingly recur in the opera's most vulnerable moments: cross-cut into the orchestral texture (divided violas) at the climax of scene 4/A; echoing Sierva's longing for invisibility in scene 5 or haunting both Delaura's and Sierva's dreams in scene 7/A.

It is with the realisation of this material that Eötvös achieves his greatest success in *Love and Other Demons*, creating a quality of expressive and poetic depth that could be said to offer some kind of stimulus for future operatic development. The character Sierva is located within this operatic narrative with great sensitivity, her emotional fragility inspiring a more complex and subtle relationship between text and music. Far from the opera's bombastic set pieces (e.g. the exorcism), Sierva's scenes demonstrate

opera's continuing potential for the exploration of profound and intimate human questions whose existential dimension Eötvös unlocks through the poetics of sound itself – off-stage voices, orchestrational delicacy, thematic material that resonates inside the memory. Tellingly, it was these scenes – the Overture, scene 3/C or the end of 4/A for example – which inspired in Pucarete and Stürmer their most arresting and involving stage pictures.

Relating the effectiveness of this material back to the preceding discussion of musical narrative arguably reveals a certain lost potential in *Love and Other Demons*. By surrounding Sierva's music with routine sequences of scenes whose text-music relationship operates with far less sophistication or distinction, its structural impact is significantly diminished. Surely a more radical and imaginative structure could have been deployed in this opera, filtering action and depiction *through* the magic realist dream world of Sierva – a more thorough-going remaking of the Márquez novel designed to avoid one-dimensional text-music relationships. The looser formal approach that Eötvös does deploy might ensure theatricality, but it undermines not only musical integrity but also the very rationale for treating this material in the first place. The opera's balance between the flow of slow and fast musics seems to bear this out. Is this a slow or a fast opera? Most of the opera is slow, most of the opera's important material is slow, its faster sequences – however much 'required' by the narrative – seem to function on a low level: supplying contrast, creating variety. As such, *Love and demons* sits uneasily between theatrical meditation and suspenseful action, never quite committing to one or the other. For all the vicissitudes of the libretto's genesis, if only the precise operatic nature of *Love and Other Demons* had been identified with greater clarity at the outset, then Eötvös's vision could have been thoroughly and more distinctively realised.

### **The voice and operatic lyricism**

To conclude this case study, *Love and Other Demons* will be considered with regard to its distinctive vocal characteristics: what informs Eötvös's choice of voice types? How does he exploit or enrich traditional operatic vocalisation? Does the opera offer any models that refresh operatic lyricism?

Consistent with the discussion of context earlier in this chapter, Eötvös insists on the casting of his operas as early as possible in the development process. David Pickard recalled his surprise at the composer's clarity on this issue - even at a preliminary stage of their negotiations, Eötvös was adamant about the need to cast Don Toribio, the Bishop, with a deep bass voice. As the composer later expressed it:

I always choose the singers before I write the first note – that's very important. I need to know the character of the voice, as well as the face and the figure. That helps me to write for them<sup>44</sup>

Matching character to voice type in operatic composition, particularly operas that depend on an adaptive process, can be as much a dialogue with tradition and existing repertory as a desire to carve out new territory. In a sense, there is a certain inevitability in this decision-making process and Eötvös, with his practical, artisanal approach, exploits these operatic stereotypes for his own purposes:

|                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Sierva María            | Coloratura soprano     |
| Don Toribio, Bishop     | Bass                   |
| Father Cayetano Delaura | High baritone          |
| Dominga de Adviento     | Mezzo soprano (low)    |
| Don Ygnacio             | High tenor             |
| Josefa Miranda, Abbess  | Mezzo soprano          |
| Abrenuncio              | High tenor             |
| Martina Laborde         | Mezzo soprano (medium) |
|                         |                        |
| Nuns                    | Female chorus          |
| Slaves                  | Male actors/dancers    |

The composer appears to have arrived at this definitive list early on and its impact cannot be underestimated—fixing voice types arguably dictates terms for musical material long before the composer has written a note. To give one example, in opera most ecclesiastical male characters are bass - e.g. Grand Inquisitor in *Don Carlos* – so by following this convention, Eötvös's Bishop is bound to deliver text slowly and

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<sup>44</sup> Kimberley, 'Columbian Blend', p. 904.

deliberately, supported by appropriately weighty orchestrational textures. Eötvös's other choices are made in a similar spirit: maternal figures are mezzos (Dominga or even Josefa), comic or eccentric male characters are tenors (Abrenuncio) while central male characters struggling with destiny are baritones (Delaura). The decision to cast Sierva as a coloratura soprano could be said to evidence a more recent operatic trend, that of reclaiming 'forgotten' voice-types of opera's past – e.g. the refugee in Dove's *Flight* and the Snake Priestess in Birwistle's *The Minotaur* (both counter-tenors), or the Maid and Ariel in Adès's *Powder her face* and *The Tempest* (both coloratura sopranos). The advantage of using such voice-types is the strongly delineated contrasts they bring to an ensemble of operatic voices, ensuring that these particular characters are set apart. In *Love and Other Demons*, Eötvös clearly felt that the timbre of the coloratura voice would imbue Sierva with an 'otherness', creating an audible difference to articulate her outsider status from the rest of the cast. Consequently his decision to cast her father, Don Ygnacio as a tenor could be said to emphasise high vocal registers as a familial quality; by defying operatic convention that most fathers are baritone or bass voices, Ygnacio's reaching up to inhabit a high tenorial tessitura symbolises his repeated attempts to understand his daughter.

Of course, one important area of Eötvös's vocal approach in *Love and Other Demons* relates to his intention to create a *bel canto* opera. In a sense, the composer seems to be using this term in an allusive rather than historical sense, to describe a more *sung* operatic dynamic as opposed to more dialogue-based mode of delivery. As already discussed, Delaura's renditions of Garcilaso de la Vega's love sonnets evoke a kind of operatic lyricism remote from modernist conventions. But even Sierva's exploitation of extreme register in moments of emotional duress could be said to connect to nineteenth century portrayals of female insanity. Susan McClary's description of Lucia di Lammermore could equally apply to Sierva:

Her exuberant singing leaves the mundane world of social convention behind as she performs high wire, nonverbal acrobatics that challenge the very limits of human ability<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> S. McClary, 'Excess and Frame', *Feminine Endings*, (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p. 92.

A perfect example can be found in scene 4/A where Sierva's refusal to conform to the strictures of a convent environment results in a dazzling display of neo-*bel canto* coloratura, brilliantly integrated into the surrounding musical texture, again, McClary's description of Lucia maps onto this perfectly:

...when the form of the piece refuses to accommodate her, she spills out in the only direction available: upward into coloratura delirium<sup>46</sup>

Such a reclaiming of nineteenth century Italian operatic convention, realised in a radically different way, constitutes one of this opera's more intriguing creative suggestions, and implying one kind of possibility for the future. So much of modern operatic vocalisation has grown out of expressionist, Austro-German practice, and rarely nineteenth century Italian opera. In this context, not only do Sierva's coloratura roulades accrue an apt psychological significance, they also cross operatic history suggesting that the complexity and richness of Italian *bel canto* can be unlocked from its nineteenth century heritage and reutilised in a contemporary context without falling into reactionary neoclassicism. Even a gesture of such apparent simplicity as Eötvös's repeated deployment of a text-less, vocalised high E for Sierva's scream, represents a shrewd fusing of old and new – the texture of nineteenth century coloratura spliced up into an acoustic fragment. Eötvös uses this fragment in a thoroughly instrumental rather than vocal way, the E disappearing into the orchestral texture as it becomes coloured and blended with equivalent instrumental sounds e.g. flutes, clarinets, oboes and percussion in scene 1/D or high oboes, and 'celli in scene 3/C.

The only character to match Sierva's fantastical singing is Abrenuncio, whose linear material is characterised by an at times dizzying coloratura. In part this is a response to the character's Jewish heritage – Eötvös describes him as a kind of Armenian Kantor - but just as Ygnacio's high tessitura mirrors Sierva, so Abrenuncio, as the only character to come close to understanding Sierva, could be said to enter her vocal world, taking on the colours of her coloratura with playful abandon:

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<sup>46</sup> McClary, *Feminine Endings*, p. 92.

**ABRENUNCIO**

And in the mean - time\_\_\_ give her eve-ry thing that makes her hap-py No lo - - -

tion, pill or balm,\_\_\_\_\_ no e - li - xir\_\_\_\_\_

**Example 3:** Eötvös *Love and Other Demons* (Scene 3/B, bars 50-61)

Unsurprisingly, these three roles – Sierva, Ygnacio, Abrenuncio – present the greatest casting challenges for *Love and Other Demons*. The original Glyndebourne Sierva, Marisol Montalvo withdrew due to ill-health to be replaced by her cover, the Australian soprano Alison Bell; Ygnacio (Robert Brubaker) required much of his material to be rewritten in rehearsal due to its unforgiving tessitura while tenor John Graham-Hall managed to manipulate Abrenuncio’s often ferociously difficult, if not impractical, melismatic sequences and convey a sense of light and play. Clearly this kind of neo-*bel canto* complexity brings with it real challenges, both in terms of casting but also in the sheer physical demands it places on a singer. While Rossini’s Don Ramiro can toss off *bel canto* figuration over modest orchestral forces, Abrenuncio must negotiate his stratospheric linear patterns over the bright, power of a modern orchestra in an acoustically live theatre. The ever-practical Eötvös responded directly to all these difficulties, transposing some material (Ygnacio) or adjusting underlay and breathing (Sierva, Abrenuncio). As Jurowski recalls:

this is the first case where I saw a composer so open to creative suggestions coming from other people, not only from me, especially from the singers<sup>47</sup>

If operatic tradition and the influence of *bel canto* can be said to exert a strong influence on the vocalisation of character in Eötvös’s opera, a second influence relates to language and its impact on the musical discourse. From the outset, Eötvös’s operatic approach is strongly responsive to the internationalism of the art form, perhaps an inevitable consequence of the smaller circulation of his native Hungarian or professional experience in the operatic rehearsal room where a conductor is expected to negotiate an interpretation from singers of many different nationalities. As early as

<sup>47</sup> BBC Radio Three, (11/10/08).

1975, Eötvös's *Radames* explores this by the use of different languages for each of the directors that torment the central tenor: Italian for opera, German for theatre, English for television; this is both psychologically true – evoking communication difficulties germane to operatic rehearsal – and an acoustical phenomenon, as the texture and sound of the three languages come into play. What results is a kind of *multi*-lingual opera, central to Eötvös's operatic aesthetic, though a characteristically ambiguous position that seems to blend both the conceptual (the 'sound' of language) and the commercial (the realities of the international opera market).

The idea of multi-lingual opera runs as a thread through Eötvös's operas:

|   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <i>Harakiri</i> (1973)                          | Japanese + home language        |
| <i>Radames</i> (1975)                           | German, English, Italian        |
| <i>Three Sisters</i> (1997)                     | Russian                         |
| <i>As I crossed a bridge of dreams</i> (1998-9) | English or Hungarian            |
| <i>Le Balcon</i> (2001-2)                       | French                          |
| <i>Angels in America</i> (2002-4)               | English                         |
| <i>Lady Sarashina</i> (2007)                    | English                         |
| <i>Love and Other Demons</i> (2007)             | English, Latin, Spanish, Yorùbá |
| <i>Die Tragödie des Teufels</i> (2009)          | German                          |

In a sense Eötvös could be said to be incorporating opera's multiplicity of languages into his own aesthetic, immunizing his operas against *wrong* kinds of translation. But there is indisputably a deeper, conceptual element to his multi-lingual operatic approach, posited on ideas of the 'sound' of language – one might even say the 'grain of the voice'.<sup>48</sup> *Three Sisters*, for example, is set in Russian, a decision that clearly exerted a powerful impact on the nature of the musical material:

The music really does stem from the Russian language, yes. I've composed music for several languages, and they have always been influential because I hear languages like instruments: they have their own particular tone and timbre.

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<sup>48</sup> Barthes distinction between geno and pheno-song has some relevance to this discussion.



One has more buzz, another has less. That's a basic given, to which I can shape the music.<sup>49</sup>

The four languages deployed in *Love and Other Demons* can be seen as a direct consequence of Eötvös's polystylistic collage approach to form building in opera. The opera's main language is English – for the Glyndebourne audience, while Latin evokes the church, Yorùbá the world of the slaves and Spanish the love sonnets of Garcilaso de la Vega that Delaura teaches Sierva. Of course in the sung, *unreality* of opera, the notional implausibilities of this approach evaporate<sup>50</sup> reminding us of the uniquely different way that language functions in opera. However, considering Eötvös's distinctive idea of language as an instrument, why was this story not treated in Spanish rather than English? The impact of Spanish on Eötvös's score is slight; the distilled Spanish musical elements that the composer incorporates in the opening scene are hard to perceive, buried deep within the fabric of the orchestra. Perhaps only Ygnacio's scene 2 aria, with its web of connections to Scarlatti keyboard sonatas, goes some way to evoke the world of an eighteenth century Spanish colony in Cartagena, where the story is set. But if the Russian of Chekhov influenced *Three Sisters*, why not the Spanish of Marquez? Perhaps the notion of two Hungarians treating a Spanish novel in English translated into Spanish was a step too far, and an impossible prospect considering Eötvös's need to collaborate with Hamvai in his native Hungarian. None the less, if Hamvai could rise to the challenge of using as remote a language as Yorùbá, why not exploit Spanish as a *language-instrument*, particularly with subject matter that so strongly juxtaposes a Spanish colonial world with an African one?

An interesting precedent for *Love and Other Demons* makes a telling comparison in this context. Daniel Catán's opera *Florencia en el Amazonas* (1996) loosely based on Márquez's novel *Love in the time of Cholera* and with a libretto by a Márquez student Marcela Fuentes-Berain, represents the first Spanish language opera to have been commissioned in the United States. Staged by Houston Grand Opera, Los Angeles and Seattle Opera, the work uses the *language-instrument* of Spanish to generate a thoroughly Latin American *tinta*, heightened by Catán's use of traditional dance

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<sup>49</sup> R. B. Wilson, 'Péter Eötvös in Conversation about 'Three Sisters'', *Tempo*, New Series no 220 (April 2002), p. 11-13.

<sup>50</sup> Implausibilities celebrated in a mainstream televisual comedy such as *'Allo, 'allo* where English is 'coloured' with the timbre of French or German accents.

rhythms and tuned percussion. The musical approach of the opera might be more consistently traditional than Eötvös – a kind of Latin-American Puccini – but none the less, the opera could be said to embrace the poetic and cultural world of Márquez in a more thorough going way. For all the apparent fluency and versatility that *Love and Other Demons* evidences, Eötvös's partial multicultural approach, his partial sensitivity to certain cultural elements generate troubling inconsistencies.

Such inconsistencies become more explicit through a closer examination of the differing functions of Eötvös's four languages in *Love and Other Demons*. English, as the opera's controlling language is exploited less as *language-instrument* and more for the clear delivery of information, though the score is littered with underlay errors that had to be corrected through the rehearsal process. Spoken English is used intermittently, chiefly in relation to the murderess Martina Laborde whose vocal material falls back on a rather generic *Sprechstimme* in scene 7/B<sup>51</sup>:

(insane "demonic")  
(from throat)

(thin voice)

(ord.)

(seriously)

(she broke into a smile)

*pp* < *f* > *pp* < *f* > *pp* < *p* > *sf* (seriously) (she broke into a smile)

I need his help. I need his help In ex-change of my soul.

**Example 4:** Eötvös *Love and Other Demons* (Scene 7/B, bars 61-62)

Latin comes into the opera through specific Gregorian chants used for the convent scenes, thereby generating an appropriately liturgical syllabic underlay:

<sup>51</sup> Martina Laborde is arguably the least convincingly drawn character in the opera, a fact somehow emphasised by her rather automatic vocalisation in this scene.

not synchronised!

(♩ = ca 76)

Nunc San - cte no - bis Spi - ri - tus, U - num Pa - tri cum Fi - li - o,

Nunc San - cte no - bis Spi - ri - tus, U - num Pa - tri cum Fi - li - o,

Nunc San - cte no - bis Spi - ri - tus, U - num Pa - tri cum Fi - li - o,

Nunc San - cte no - bis Spi - ri - tus, U - num Pa - tri cum Fi - li - o,

**Example 5:** Eötvös *Love and Other Demons* (Scene 4/A, bar 10-18)

Eötvös allows this syllabic quality to cross-fertilize with English in the vocalisations for the Bishop, Josefa or Delaura with a vocal approach in scenes 2/B or 2/C that abandons the rhythmicization of text altogether in favour of a plainsong style<sup>52</sup>:

Fa - ther Ca - ye - ta - no De - lau - ra, it is my pas - to - ral de - ci - sion that you ex - or - cise her.

**Example 6:** Eötvös *Love and Other Demons* (Scene 2/C, bar 4-6)

Spanish is confined to Delaura's quotations of Garcilaso de la Vega, a decision clearly motivated by the ability of this liquid and vowel rich *language-instrument* to convey the sensuous or seductive:

<sup>52</sup> For all the elegance of this solution, these scenes lost momentum in performance constituting the most static sequences in the opera.

**SIERVA** *p*

y re - vuel - ve a -

**DELAURA** *p*

Shall we recite the poems I've taught you? 'Vuel - ve a - mor

- mor mi pen - sa - mien - to y en - cien - de

hie - re y en - cien - de

el al - - - ma te - ne - ro - sa.

el al - ma

**Example 7:** Eötvös *Love and Other Demons* (Scene 7/C, bar 122-143)


But where does this leave the opera's fourth language, Yorùbá? Chiefly it is used to evoke the culture of the slaves – as a brief choral element in scene 1/C, in Sierva's bird-song in scene 4/A and intermittently through the opera as a way of revealing the strong bond between the slave Dominga and her charge, Sierva. In his handling of the Yorùbá language with its implications for vocalisation, here Eötvös's notional multiculturalism is tested. How does a Western composer evoke the reality of Yorùbá slave culture in the eighteenth century, without committing follies of cultural insensitivity or evoking the kind of operatic exoticism that makes Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers*, Delibes' *Lakmé* or Massenet's *Thaïs* potentially problematic to stage?

Hamvai responded in part by responsibly researching traditional Yorùbá texts, the majority of which do not appear in the Márquez novel. Secondly, as detailed in Appendix Five, he emphasised the need for a Yorùbá specialist to both check these new texts and provide language coaching for the singers; this role was carried out by Dr Akin Oyètádé from the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London.

Eötvös's response was partly evasive, partly creative. The Yorùbá slaves who feature in the opera's opening scene, quickly disappear from the opera and Hamvai's original interweaving of Latin and Yorùbá in the opera's final exorcism, was not treated by the composer. The choral Yorùbá that does survive in the score is treated with a simpler, syllabic vocal style either with 'approximated pitches and rests' e.g. the male slaves (scene 1/C):

(♩ = ca 60)  
Approximated pitches and rests

SLAVES  
MEN



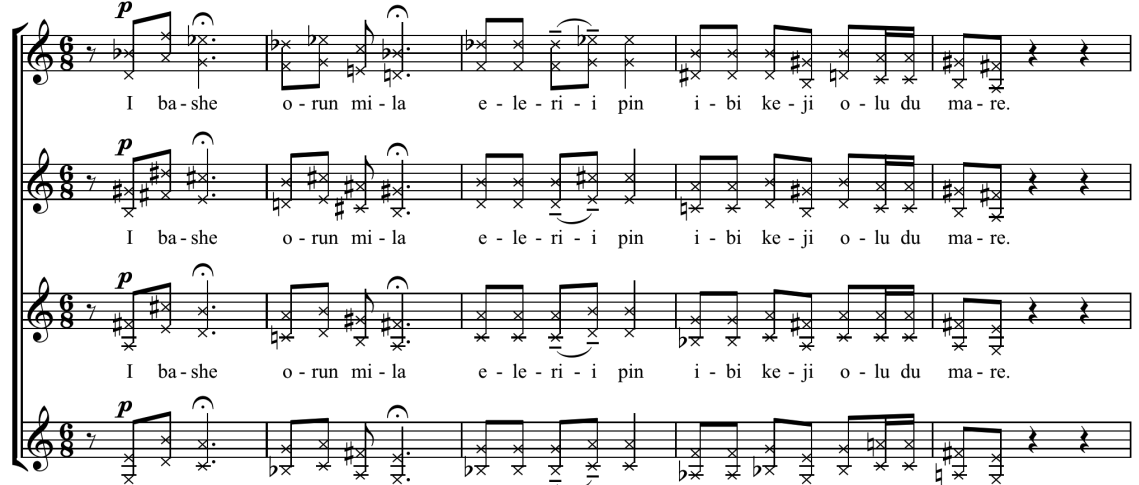
O-lo-mo-lo - lai-ye O-lo-mo-lo - lai-ye O-mo ti-tun to was si-le ai-ye.

**Example 8:** Eötvös *Love and Other Demons* (Scene 1/C)

or with deliberately written out 'dirty' tuning e.g. the slave women (scene 1/C):

Singing-speaking  
without conductor  
not synchronised

*P*



I ba-she o-run mi-la e-le-ri-i pin i-bi ke-ji o-lu du ma-re.

I ba-she o-run mi-la e-le-ri-i pin i-bi ke-ji o-lu du ma-re.

I ba-she o-run mi-la e-le-ri-i pin i-bi ke-ji o-lu du ma-re.

I ba-she o-run mi-la e-le-ri-i pin i-bi ke-ji o-lu du ma-re.

**Example 9:** Eötvös *Love and Other Demons* (Scene 1/C)

It is hard to escape the implications of Eötvös's choral vocalisation of the Yorùbá language: Western languages are set with precision, in contexts that depend on accurate tuning (operatically 'right'), a non-Western language is set without precision, in contexts that don't depend on accurate tuning (operatically 'wrong'). Arguably by handling this non-Western language in an analogous way to nineteenth century exoticism, the story's slave culture – such a strong presence throughout Márquez's

novel – is rendered impotent. With such a limited approach to the choral vocalisation of the slaves, the composer is prevented from weaving this element throughout the opera and after scene 1/C, the slaves drop out of the operatic action. One direct consequence of this is that the final exorcism scene is left isolated as a mere sensational depiction at a critically climactic point in the opera's structure, weakening the impact of final scene.

Eötvös's use of Yorùbá in more intimate scenes between Dominga and Sierva is arguably more sophisticated, coming to symbolise Sierva's innocence and childhood experience. Here, there is a sense that Eötvös is exploiting Yorùbá as a *language-instrument* that registers as a different colour in scenes in which Latin or English dominate. This is particularly striking in the way Sierva's bird-song melody, introduced in scene 1/C, returns in scene 4/A as a glittering descant to the nun's chants. This material is then worked up into an aria of genuine brilliance – one of the most exhilarating sequences in the entire opera. None the less, taken together, all this Yorùbá music is essentially imagined rather than researched; it is not clear that the composer engaged in any analogous research to Hamavi. The pitch content of Sierva's bird-song melody for example is constructed out of standard pentatonic collections:

**"BIRD-SONG"**  
(♩. = 120)

I - ra - wo kan - o                      te - mi - ni kan - ma - ni                      i - ra - wo - o - lo - ki - ki yen

te - mi - ni kan - ma - ni                      Bi - mba g'bo - ju                      mi - so - ke

**Example 10:** Eötvös *Love and Other Demons* (Scene 4/A, bars 28-39)

leaving the distinct impression that for all the orchestrational detail that collects around Yorùbá as a *language-instrument*, the underlying concept fails to transcend the legacy of nineteenth century exoticism or offer any model of how Western and non-Western elements might be explored in the operas of a post-colonial age. Perhaps grand opera on this scale is simply too unwieldy, even crass, to deal with such delicate racial material. A music-theatre work like Heiner Goebbels's *Ou bien le débarquement désastreux*

(1993)<sup>53</sup> offers a better model of exploring cross-cultural, post Colonial ideas in the way it enables beguiling windows of Senegalese music to co-exist with Goebbels's own material.

### Critical reception

Before extracting a set of conclusions from this case study, the critical threads of the preceding discussion will be tested against the 2008 critical reception for *Love and Other Demons*. Thanks to Glyndebourne's prestige, the opera inevitably received wide coverage in the press, on line and on BBC Radio Three, which co-commissioned the opera. Appendix Ten presents a digest of the most important reviews scrutinised in terms of the main issues of this case study: the Glyndebourne company context, the opera's impact in performance, how music and text creative narrative and the opera's vocal style and approach. To what extent do these critical responses resonate with this chapter's central concerns and what might this tell us about wider perceptions about the operatic art form?

In terms of the commissioning context for *Love and Other Demons*, all thirteen reviews are consistent in their admiration, though only Paul Driver in the Sunday Times offers any detailed contextualisation for the commission. Glyndebourne is praised for its 'courage' and its 'brave undertaking', disarming even the most sceptical:

I have nothing but admiration for the élan with which it was presented<sup>54</sup>

In terms of performance, Vladimir Jurowski and the London Philharmonic Orchestra receive unanimous praise, Jurowski singled out for his 'staggering finesse', 'admirable control of the idiom' or 'forensic conducting' while minor quibbles aside, the singing is deemed 'remarkable' with a 'fine and obviously committed cast'. In terms of production, Pucarete's and Stürmer's approach is admired for its colour, sense of place and atmosphere, despite reservations expressed around Andu Dumitrescu's projections. If any creative context for Eötvös's new opera is offered, this mostly relates to

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<sup>53</sup> Heiner Goebbels. *Ou bien le débarquement désastreux*. 78118-21552-2 (Munich, 1995).

<sup>54</sup> M. Tanner (3/09/08), 'Colour and Energy', article in *The Spectator*, London.

questions of nationality or the success of *Three Sisters*; only Paul Driver (Sunday Times) and Andrew Porter (Times Literary Supplement) reveal genuine fluency with the Eötvös operatic output.

Two thirds of the sample engages with the quality and effectiveness of the libretto, which though noted for its ‘formal crispness’, is criticised for its elliptical manner, its failure to translate magic realism on stage and to develop depth in its characters:

The...libretto by Kornél Hamvai fillets the already slender tale expertly enough, but leaves the piece curiously deracinated<sup>55</sup>

Only Paul Driver and Andrew Porter discuss Edward Kemp’s involvement.

When it comes to the opera’s narrative structure, two-thirds of this sample occupies highly critical positions. Positive responses focus on the opera’s orchestrational originality, its uniquely poetic sound-world – ‘ravishing’, ‘spellbindingly beautiful’ – and its ‘suspenseful’, ‘cinematic’ qualities. Negative responses centre on pacing, modernist sound-world, questions of structure and compositional approach. A majority of reviewers finds the opera’s pace too slow – ‘glacial’ is how Andrew Clarke in the Financial Times describes it. The sound-world is widely praised, but seen as symptomatic of music ‘more concerned with timbre than drama’<sup>56</sup> that does ‘little more than create an atmospheric context’<sup>57</sup>. Structurally the opera is seen as lacking in momentum and resisting ‘traditional operatic potential’:

he [Eötvös] is reluctant to leave behind modern opera’s lingua franca and lift the discourse out of continuous arioso (however nuanced) into full-blooded aria, or risk more than hint of ensemble (though there are deft atmospheric choruses)<sup>58</sup>

while Eötvös’s own compositional approach is criticised for its ‘cool’, ‘precise’ objectivity:

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<sup>55</sup> A. Clements (9/08/08), review in The Guardian, London.

<sup>56</sup> A. Clark (11/08/08), review in The Financial Times, London.

<sup>57</sup> G. Hall (11/08/08), review in The Stage, London.

<sup>58</sup> P. Driver (17/08/08), review in The Sunday Times, London.



what is both arresting and frustrating about Eötvös's approach is his wilful refusal to let the music overheat...a brilliant but sterile stylistic exercise, impressive but not involving<sup>59</sup>

If reviewers engage with Eötvös's approach to operatic lyricism, then comment centres on the character of Sierva; Michael Tanner's outburst in *The Spectator* typifies much of the negative response to Sierva's coloratura;

What there are, are unwelcome quantities of are inordinately high passages of vocal squealing, such as I've tired of in *The Handmaid's Tale*, *The Bitter Tears* of Petra von Kant, Ariel's infuriating music in *The Tempest*. Why are contemporary composers so attracted to the stratosphere...?<sup>60</sup>

More intriguing is a frequent charge that the opera lacks lyricism or that the composer's vocalisation is routine:

angular vocal lines that rarely so much as hint at lyricism<sup>61</sup>

In a nod to *bel canto*, Eötvös supplies stratospheric melismas for the semi-feral Sierva Maria. The rest of the English, Latin, Spanish and Yoruba libretto is set syllable by syllable<sup>62</sup>

Edward Seckerson interprets this syllabic vocalisation as a direct consequence of Eötvös's theatrical experience:

What we have is the framework of a play infused with music. Eötvös sets his text as heightened speech, the better to convey the words, which are ritualised, carried on an instrumental current that behaves like underscoring<sup>63</sup>

Taken together, this collection of critical responses expresses confusion about whether to perceive this new opera as traditionally informed or modernist; concern about whether the opera is merely atmospheric or conventionally narrative; doubt about how to perceive ideas of *bel canto* when the overtly melodic is hard to perceive and anxiety about 'tone' – is this composer a cool, objective modernist and if so, where is *emotion* located? Positive responses single out the originality of the opera's orchestration and

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<sup>59</sup> R. Christiansen (13/08/08), review in *The Daily Telegraph*, London.

<sup>60</sup> Tanner, 'Colour and Energy', (3/09/08).

<sup>61</sup> Christiansen, (13/08/08).

<sup>62</sup> (17/08/08), review in the *Sunday Independent*, London.

<sup>63</sup> E. Seckerson (14/08/08), review in *The Independent*, London.

harmony; its poetic and diaphanous textures (Sierva!) and a ‘cinematic’ quality which was clearly perceived to aid accessibility.

Of course such a sample is selective and highly expressive of specific, British cultural sensibilities, which often prize traditional over modernist values. A contemporaneous review in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* is striking for its difference of approach – a detailed comparison of Eötvös’s opera with the original novel, praising the composer for ‘transforming a literary work of art into a composition which speaks to us in the same seductive way’<sup>64</sup>. None the less, many of this chapter’s concerns are mirrored in these responses, rearticulating questions around Eötvös’s aesthetic position, the precise nature of how his opera functions – directional narrative or meditation, and its relationship to the operatic tradition.

## Conclusion

Any attempt to draw concrete conclusions from this case study, begins with a consideration of how Eötvös’s aesthetic position manifests itself in practice. To what extent does *Love and Other Demons* embody a distinctive approach to new operatic composition and what kind of a model might it offer for opera development in the future?

What both critical discussion and reception underlines is the ambiguity, if not the contradictory nature of Eötvös’s operatic aesthetic. His is an approach that attempts to embrace the traditional and the modernist. On the one hand his operas seem to espouse conservative operatic values and yet on the other, their musical substance never really escapes the central European avant-garde tradition. His vocal style draws on the operatic tradition and yet holds a mainstream expressionist sensibility at its core. His narrative approach is highly responsive to character and situation and yet the energy of his music is often dissipated by a concern for atmosphere or textural finesse (the ‘cinematic’).

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<sup>64</sup> W. Sandner (13/08/08), review in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Frankfurt.

Perhaps the most fundamental ambiguity relates to the artistic motivation behind the Eötvös operatic progress. Is Eötvös a visionary, striving for synthesis between old and new operatic imperatives, or an artisan, shrewdly fabricating artefacts for the international opera market, artefacts that have the potential to appeal to modernists and traditionalists alike? The striking fact that since its 2008 premiere, *Love and Other Demons* has been staged at Vilnius, Chemnitz, Cologne, Strasbourg and Mulhouse suggests that Eötvös knows well how to play the operatic system. Or is the system playing him? Has the composer, through his own professional experience of the opera market, identified the defining characteristics of successful new opera in the early twenty-first century and is the composer simply providing this market with what it needs? Andrew Porter described this new opera as ‘culinary’, slyly alluding to Brecht’s *The Modern Theatre is the Epic Theatre*, which is particularly relevant in this context:

The *avant-garde* don’t think of changing the apparatus, because they fancy that they have at their disposal an apparatus which will serve up whatever they freely invent, transforming itself spontaneously to match their ideas. But they are not in fact free inventors; the apparatus goes on fulfilling its functions with or without them; the theatres play every night; the papers come out so many times a day; and they absorb what they need; and all they need is a given amount of stuff.<sup>65</sup>

Here then is the final question. To what extent is Eötvös making fodder for opera’s entertainment machine rather than challenging or scrutinising its function? Are all successful main-scale opera composers required to accept the terms of opera’s apparatus? Is it possible to do so without sacrificing genuine vision and innovation? Or can genuine vision and innovation in new opera only really be found outside the trappings of the nineteenth century theatre – in the small-scale or site-specific? Eötvös’s *Love and Other Demons* does not entirely lack vision – the portrayal of Sierva with its magical suggestiveness, its drawing on nineteenth century *bel canto*, its investigation of the possibilities of a polystylistic approach to form-building, its multilingual approach all suggest possible lines of enquiry, aspects of which might develop into operatic models for the future. And yet, the vision is only partially realised, firstly because of discontinuities in its development and its rather disjointed creative team; secondly because of a failure of creative nerve, a sense that the opera’s real poetic potential was

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<sup>65</sup> Willett, *Brecht*, p. 34.

never followed through and that by force of necessity, the 'visionary' had to be abandoned for the 'well-made'.

## Chapter Four

### Case study 3 - *The Yellow Sofa/Of Water and Tears*

The preceding study of Eötvös's *Love and Other Demons* sought to extrapolate a set of creative concerns out of pre-existing operatic material; this chapter attempts the opposite. By using these same concerns as a stimulus for the creative process, this case study seeks to research them through practice, endeavouring to create a viable operatic artwork that offers one possible model for new opera development. The composition of the chamber opera *The Yellow Sofa* thus explores questions around *narrative* and *voice*, while also engaging directly with the implications of Eötvös's *Love and Other Demons*. The inevitable cross-fertilisation between these two new operas was further consolidated in August 2008 when Edward Kemp agreed to collaborate on *The Yellow Sofa*, during the *Love and Other Demons* run of performances.

This chapter follows a similar pattern to *Love and Other Demons*: questions of commissioning, performing and creative contexts will be considered in detail before an examination of how *The Yellow Sofa* furthers this project's concerns around operatic narrative and lyricism. The study attempts both to evidence how a smaller-scale operatic venture of this kind can be developed within the remit of a national opera company's core activity, but also how a company's traditional values might be reanimated in a contemporary context.

#### Commissioning context

Naturally the commissioning contexts for both *Love and Other Demons* and *The Yellow Sofa* are radically different; as both works claim to respond to specific realities of space and performance, this has very direct consequences on the nature of each work. While the composer of *Love and Other Demons* was fully expected to make extensive demands on Glyndebourne's performing resources on the main stage, *The Yellow Sofa* was required to function within existing performance parameters of smaller scale, studio work in the company's Jerwood Studio. More critically, while Eötvös's opera could be said to have been 'acquired' by Glyndebourne in a commodified, international opera market, *The Yellow Sofa* was born of creative research, free of commercial pressures or hardened expectations from its producing opera company.

Glyndebourne's Jerwood Studio was built in 2001 as a suite of rehearsal studios that would allow production rehearsals a space of identical proportions to the main stage. The Jerwood Foundation's one million pound grant for its construction was awarded in recognition of the company's long-standing tradition of nurturing young operatic talent, and in the ensuing decade the Jerwood Studio has become a focal performance platform for the development of young singers. The establishment of the Jerwood Chorus Development scheme in 2005 consolidated this, offering the scheme a space where a Jerwood chorus event might be incorporated into the main Festival season. *Dovetails*, staged in 2005 before the last three performance of Jonathan Dove's *Flight*, programmed two short Dove operatic works – *Pig* and *Greed* – together with operatic excerpts and chamber works. As the company's Jerwood Chorus Development Scheme report outlines:

Having had the experience of *Dovetails* we feel that the Jerwood Studio is a viable performance space. The seating capacity was 120 people but we would like to accommodate more audience and this would be possible with more advance planning. The performances were free to audiences attending the performance of *Flight* and they were made aware of the event through an e-mail. However we might make a small charge for the event next year in order to give the event 'value' for the audience. The performances were 'sold out' and were received very warmly by the audience, and greatly enjoyed by all those who took part. We felt that the event gave the audience more understanding about chorus development.<sup>1</sup>

This use of the Jerwood Studio as Glyndebourne's 'alternative', small-scale performance space has continued year on year, showcasing young operatic performers while at the same time offering possibilities for new opera development, consistent with the company's broader commissioning approach outlined in Chapter Three. While the Jerwood Studio Performances in 2006 and 2008 arguably presented conventional sequences of operatic scenes, *Of Water and Tears* staged by director Clare Whistler in 2007 represented a more exploratory, devised work that challenged automatic assumptions about the operatic art form. This research project's close involvement with *Of Water and Tears* provided invaluable research training - not only in gaining deeper knowledge and experience of the Jerwood Studio as a theatrical space, but also a fuller understanding of the performer-audience relationships it nurtures through live performance. This proved critical for the composition and staging of *The Yellow Sofa*, a

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<sup>1</sup> Glyndebourne's Jerwood Chorus Development Scheme Report, 2005.

culmination both of this research project and the fifth Jerwood Chorus Development Scheme, in the 2009 Glyndebourne Festival.

### **Performing context**

While the creative development of *The Yellow Sofa* was largely free of the pressures or constraints that a formal commissioning process can sometimes bring, none the less it was fully expected to respond practically to the existing parameters of the Jerwood Chorus Development scheme and Glyndebourne's accumulated experience of staging performance events in the Jerwood Studio as part of the main Festival.

The performance parameters could be summarized thus:

- a company of young choristers from the Glyndebourne chorus (typically 15-20);
- a small instrumental ensemble;
- simple elements of design, costume and lighting;
- a pre-performance event of approximately 60 minutes duration;
- an average audience of 120 people.

More broadly, each of these five factors was further controlled by the spatial and psychological properties of the Jerwood Studio itself:

- black box studio space i.e. no proscenium arch theatre;
- no pit, ensuring the visibility of the orchestra;
- open question about how the audience is arranged: horseshoe, traverse, surrounded?;
- Intimate, small-scale, ensuring immediacy while allowing the audience to experience a very direct theatricality.

Clare Whistler's *Of Water and Tears* (2007) was probably the first Jerwood Studio piece to fully exploit the parameters detailed above in any thoroughgoing way.

Exploring themes of grief, heartache and loss through the metaphor of water, the work was devised for a company of nineteen singers from the Glyndebourne chorus and small ensemble (London Philharmonic Orchestra). Falling in the first year of this creative

residency, Whistler's production presented this research project with a unique opportunity for formative practice; joining the *Of Water and Tears* creative team as composer, allowed for the Jerwood Studio to be experienced practically as a performing space, and for collaborative strategies to be further evolved around the development of new work for opera chorus. The precise creative commitment was to involve direct collaboration with Whistler on the *Of Water and Tears* musical sequence in addition to discreet orchestrational and compositional tasks, detailed below.

Out of this experience, a number of important creative principles were established that were to significantly inform the creation of *The Yellow Sofa*:

- A studio performing context, with no pit, no proscenium, allows for a uniquely intimate and direct operatic theatricality;
- The visibility of the musicians escapes the fourth wall problem, allowing for a more meaningful engagement between voice and instrument;
- opera as 'poor theatre': limited production resources seemed to liberate a more fluid, inventive and sophisticated operatic style and approach;
- While 'number' or 'aria' in main-scale opera can undermine momentum or generate risky stasis, in studio opera, they can achieve a unique intensity and intimacy between singer and audience;
- The potential of a performing 'company' in new opera i.e. where each singer functions both individually as voice/character and collectively as part of a chorus;
- An audience is more engaged by a horseshoe seating arrangement; action and sound can envelop and surround it, encouraging more active responses.

For the purposes of this research, *Of Water and Tears* was taken as a *positive* model for an investigation of new opera development - its smaller scale, studio context offering rich narrative and vocal possibilities, whereas imagined as a *negative* model *Love and Other Demons*, could be said to emphasise how compromising and complicating main-scale opera can be. The less the resources and the smaller the scale, the greater the



freedom and flexibility that a new opera can enjoy in its development. A sweeping generalisation, perhaps, but one born out by the specificities of this research project.<sup>2</sup>

### **Creative context**

While one creative context for the composition of *The Yellow Sofa* was generated by the central research questions of this residency, the practical experience of Whistler's *Of Water and Tears* and the shadowing of Eötvös's *Love and Other Demons*, another more subjective level of context was provided by existing compositional preoccupations. Even at an early stage, before subject matter had been identified, two instinctive ideas emerged: firstly, an impulse to make 'a piece about love', exploring human vulnerability and fragility; secondly, an impulse to engage with aspects of Portuguese culture, specifically the urban folk tradition of Fado, characterised by a vocal sound that paradoxically comes close to opera in the intensity of its projected timbre and energy of its ornamental performance traditions.

In year two of the residency (2007-8), prior to the engagement of Edward Kemp as writer, these two ideas were taken to writer-director Neil Bartlett in July 2008 with a view to a potential collaboration. Although this proved impossible with his existing commitments, none the less this meeting was fruitful in developing *The Yellow Sofa* concept. Bartlett's approach - with his diverse experience as writer, translator, collaborator and director - was to pose seemingly naïve questions of this as yet unwritten, unrealised work.

- What colour is it?
- What texture?
- If it was a meal, what would it be?
- How does it smell?
- What does it deal with, what are its concerns?

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<sup>2</sup> Opera's financial implications are much more concerned with time than physical resources. Even small-scale work demands considerable rehearsal time which impacts heavily on a Company's budget. None the less, *The Yellow Sofa* was staged at a fraction of the cost of *Love of and other demons*.

Bartlett seemed adamant that grappling towards the sensual life of a work before it exists is a key strategy for informing its gestation. Ideas around musical integrity were also discussed, particularly opera's capacity for advancing narrative and developing character through non-text driven musical sequences. Bartlett's specific example of Britten's *Peter Grimes* was particularly instructive; what fascinates him is less the central role of Grimes, but more the shifting significance of the opera's orchestral interludes that ambiguously resonate with the scenic action. This notion of directly confronting both questions of musical integrity within an operatic structure and also musical's essential ambiguity strongly influenced the development of *The Yellow Sofa*.

Of course, *Love and Other Demons* itself provided a literal context at Glyndebourne for these early explorations of this new opera's potential. Inevitably, a number of key ideas and reflections emerged from the Eötvös:

- a desire to explore 'adaptation' with a more consistent through-line and approach;
- a desire to explore opera's *un*-reality, to embrace its capacity for the surreal, the dream-like, the magic realist;
- a desire to explore a pivotal human relationship with greater depth and space;
- a desire to explore the structural and narrative potential of a poly-stylistic approach, incorporating musical registers untypical of standard operatic practice;
- a desire to play with conventions of operatic structure and the dynamic between voice and chorus;
- a desire to cultivate a distinctive sound-world out of the texture of a specific narrative;
- a desire to explore characterisation both through pitch material and style of vocalisation.

As this research project's evaluation of the Eötvös opera involved much close work with its dramaturge Edward Kemp, Kemp seemed an obvious collaborative partner once Bartlett's unavailability had been confirmed<sup>3</sup>. Early conversations emerged out of a

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<sup>3</sup> Bartlett confirmed his unavailability by email on the 13/07/08.

critical dialogue around *Love and Other Demons*, specifically Kemp's interest in theatre's *un-realities*, and his strong resistance to 'consistency' as a theatrical ideal. Much of this initial interaction jumped from Márquez's magic realism to Italo Calvino – discussions of both *Invisible Cities* and *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller* – but also more recent novels such as David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*. By implication, Kemp's response to Bartlett's impossible questions was a strongly articulated desire to develop an opera of playful, spontaneous theatricality that might turn the form inside-out, or at least an opera that might confound its audience as much as it might delight. This was born out by Kemp's existing libretti forwarded by email on the 17<sup>th</sup> September which ranged from *After Figaro* (with composer Terry Davies) – a site-specific opera in a theatre bar, to *Travels in the Arctic Circle* (with composer Geoff Westley) in which the central 'Walker' encounters a singing Tern, Seal and Bear. Throughout this early exchange, Kemp's approach concerned itself with embracing the opera's artificiality, enjoying a kind of creative irresponsibility where theatrically, anything might be possible. This was to have a profound impact on this project's investigation on narrative form-building in opera, stimulating a yet bolder deployment of seemingly disparate musical materials as a way of developing both structure and story.

### **Towards a narrative structure for *The Yellow Sofa***

#### ***Of Water and Tears***

It was back in summer 2007 that work as a composer-collaborator on Clare Whistler's *Of Water and Tears* that allowed for a detailed insight into the Jerwood Studio and first-hand experience of small-scale operatic material might be developed. Much of director Clare Whistler's work - informed by her own collaborative partnerships with directors Péter Sellars and Bill Viola - is essentially experimental, motivated more by reflective processes rather than by the development of narrative trajectories. *Of Water and Tears* assembles images and music around a central exploration of grief and loss. Its simple design presents the audience with the ambiguous image of an iceberg, from which run two parallel channels of apparently melting water. This image serves both a metaphorical and a spatial function, resonating poetically with human tears whilst simultaneously providing a playing area across which the performers' movements could be directed.

The musical ‘argument’ was devised in partnership with Whistler, and assembled out of an interlacing of arias, duets and chorales from Bach cantatas with Britten folk-song arrangements – two composers represented in the 2007 Festival by Katie Mitchell’s staging of the Bach *St Matthew Passion* and a revival of Peter Hall’s production of Britten’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Rather than assembling this sequence out of a hidden narrative, arias, chorales and folksongs were juxtaposed in an intuitive way to formulate a satisfying emotional curve. Larger ensembles of voices were used for the chorales – which inevitably acquired a structural function in the final sequence – while individual voices were distributed through the work’s sequence of arias, duets and folksongs, both providing each young chorister with his/her focussed solo whilst also developing an effective theatrical sequence. The only point of tension between Whistler’s overarching vision and Glyndebourne’s own requirements for this particular Jerwood Chorus Development scheme performance surrounded the inclusion of the Act 3 Threnody from Britten’s *Albert Herring*. Although this was effectively incorporated and thematically linked through controlling images of grief and loss, the specificity of its original narrative context and its parodic, operatic gestures sat uneasily in the *Of Water and Tears* scheme. Repeated attempts were made to remove it, but its eventual retention highlights a degree of conflict and compromise between Whistler’s set of artistic ideals and Glyndebourne’s need to develop its chorus professionally.

**Table 1:** The *Of Water and Tears* sequence

|   |                 |  |   |
|---|-----------------|--|---|
| 1 | Julian Philips  | Fantasy <i>O Waly, Waly</i>  | Ensemble  |
| 2 | Britten         | <i>O Waly, waly</i>  |   |
| 3 | Bach            | Cantata BWV 56: <i>Ich will den Kreuzstab gerne tragen</i>         | Thorbjørn Gulbrandsøy   |
|   |                 | Cantata BWV 56: <i>Mein Wandel auf der Welt</i>                    | Lukas Jakobczyk   |
|   |                 | Cantata BWV 56: <i>Endlich, endlich</i>                            | Christopher Dixon   |
|   |                 | Cantata BWV 56: <i>Ich stehe fertig und bereit</i>                 | John Mackenzie  |
|   |                 | Cantata BWV 56: <i>Komm, o Tod, du Schlafes Bruder</i>             | Chorale in four parts   |
| 4 | Bach            | Cantata BWV 26: <i>So schnell ein rauschend Wasser schießt</i>     | Oliver Mercer, Nicola Mills   |
| 5 | Britten         | <i>Down by the Salley Gardens</i>                                  | Nicola Hughes, John-Colyn Gyeantey  |
| 6 | Bach            | Johannes-Passion: <i>Zerfließe, mein Herze in Flutender Zähren</i> | Verity Parker, Elodie Kimmel, Katharine Moore                                 |
| 7 | Britten         | <i>Albert Herring</i> : Act 3 Threnody                             | Moore, Wagner, Taylor, Shakesby, Williams, Zetterström, Hellier, Lilly, Evans |
| 8 | Britten Philips | <i>Sail on, Sail on</i>  | Ensemble  |

The composer's role in this process was partly logistical - ensuring that fragments of contrasting musical material could be successfully recontextualised within the *Of Water and Tears* sequence; partly recreative – the work concludes with a new orchestration of Britten's folksong arrangement *Sail on, Sail on*, and partly compositional – the work begins with a newly composed 'fantasy' on the traditional melody *O Waly, Waly* whose function was to transition from the dimming of the house lights to the first formal number: Britten's own arrangement of *O Waly, Waly* for voice and piano.

In a conventional, theatrical sense, *Of Water and Tears* does not engage with narrative; its musical sequence was arrived at in an analogous way to song recital programming where key, tempo, character or scoring inform the final ordering. Whistler's theatrical vision was constantly in play, concerned with the arrangement and displacement of the singers in the space. The work's experiential journey only emerged through its rehearsal

process which presented real rehearsal challenges with a group of conservatoire trained young singers inured to operatic texture unfolding as directional narrative rather than contemplative ritual.

The experiential journey that did emerge functioned more like a collage of narrative fragments rather than a single trajectory; *Of Water and Tears* revealed narrative resonance, but a multiplicity of narratives in a polyphonic play. Each narrative (musical number) of the *Of Water and Tears* sequence had its own expressive focus, explored through the voice and movement; the cumulative effect was a gathering together of human experiences, shaped and held by the flow of music. In this way, collaborative experience on *Of Water and Tears* broadened the scope of this research around narrativity in new opera, and the *O Waly, Waly* fantasy – though arguably conceived more as a ‘concert work’ to be staged within an operatic frame<sup>4</sup> – proved an important staging post in *The Yellow Sofa*’s gestation. Abbate’s idea of the ‘promiscuity’ of narrative as a musical descriptor, is worth recalling here; after all, the stimulus for what is perceived as effective narrative in opera, might have very little to do with conventional narrative in the sense of plot.

The multiplicity of narratives contained within *Of Water and Tears* emerged both out of contemplative Bach cantata texts, and story-telling folk-songs; bridging the gap between sacred and profane were the Lutheran Chorales, many of whose melodies were originally derived from folk melodies in the early sixteenth century. The *O Waly, Waly* was to frame for this network of Bach, Britten and folksong, presenting a microcosm for the *Of Water and Tears* journey, utilising both the full nineteen voices (the ‘chorus’) as well as individual voices contained within. Inevitably, the folksongs within the *Of Water and Tears* sequence presented the most narrative driven material – each telling/singing its story through regular poetic verse forms supported by strophic musical material. Carolyn Abbate’s *Unsung Voices* - which systematically investigates the shifting function of narrative song in opera – offers a useful codification of the balladic approach that could be said to typify most folksongs:

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<sup>4</sup> Of course, all the material for Whistler’s *Of Water and Tears* was derived from concert rather than operatic material which accounts for why the incorporation of an extract from Britten’s *Albert Herring* felt so problematic.

If the same music runs under each verse of text, then the music merely echoes the repeated phonetic and prosodic cycle of meter, rhyme, and verse-length; it effaces itself to become the patterned sonority of words made louder. Music neither interprets the poem nor introduces an alien element – its own sonic reemphasis – but instead collaborates with the poem, helps the words to shout out their own sounds.<sup>5</sup>

This *O Waly, Waly* folksong dates back to the early seventeenth century, using the metaphor of water to unfold a story about the gaining and losing of love. If this melody ‘collaborates’ with the text in way Abbate describes, then narrative is foregrounded as the controlling element. If the melody is developed and varied, with shifting sonic landscapes around it, then narrative is arguably distorted:

so-called ‘through-composed’ settings of narrative ballads, by breaking free of repetition in order to create musical representations of action-sequences, overwhelm their texts by burying them in musical matter with its own fascinations<sup>6</sup>

Since the rationale for *Of Water and Tears* was posited on poetic reflection rather than direct narrative, this *O Waly, Waly* fantasy sought to emphasise the poetic dimension of the folk-song text – its images and textures – burying the specificity of its narrative structure. This approach was further compounded by the many variant texts that exist, and early collaboration with Whistler focussed on pulling out the stanzas with the strongest resonance – constructing a poetic narrative out of a pool of stanzaic text that worked specifically for *Of Water and Tears*. What the chosen seven stanzas then presented was an emotional curve from the serenity of its opening exhortation – *The Water is wide, I cannot get o’er* – to a final crisis – *I care not if I sink or swim*:

The Water is wide, I cannot get o’er  
And neither have I wings to fly.  
O go and get me some little boat,  
To carry o’er my true love and I.

A down in the meadow the other day  
A-gathering flowers both fine and gay  
A-gathering flowers both red and blue,  
I little thought what love could do.

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<sup>5</sup> C. Abbate, *Unsung voices: Opera and musical narrative in the nineteenth century*, (Princeton N.J., Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 71.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

I put my hand into one soft bush  
 Thinking the sweetest flower to find  
 I pricked my finger to the bone  
 And left the sweetest flower alone.

I leaned my back up against some oak,  
 Thinking it was a trusty tree.  
 But first he bended then he broke,  
 So did my love prove false to me.

Where love is planted, O there it grows,  
 It buds and blossoms like some rose;  
 It has a sweet and a pleasant smell,  
 No flower on earth can it excel.

Must I be bound, O and she go free!  
 Must I love one that does not love me!  
 Why should I act such a childish part,  
 And love a girl that will break my heart.

There is a ship sailing on the sea,  
 She's loaded deep as deep can be,  
 But not so deep as in love I am;  
 I care not if I sink or swim.

This 'curve' could be said to be the fantasy's *musical* narrative, a journey from collective, serene reflection to personal, existential crisis. The opening 'serene reflection' (full score, figure 1) constitutes two beginnings – the fantasy itself, and *Of Water and Tears* as a whole, the delicacy of the first musical sonorities establishing the work's tone and purpose out of silence. The final 'existential crisis' (figure 12), aligned to the poetic image of drowning, constitutes two ends and a beginning – the end of the fantasy, the end of this particular narrative voice (a drowning) and the beginning of the second number of the *Of Water and Tears* sequence, namely Britten's own setting of the *O Waly, Way* folksong for voice and piano. Britten's iconic arrangement, which emerges freely out of the decaying sounds of the fantasy (figures 14-16), treats stanzas 1, 2, 4 and 7 from the fantasy text with the addition of:

O love is handsome and love is fine,  
 And love's a jewel while it is new,  
 But when it is old, it groweth cold,  
 And fades away like morning dew.



In many ways the more regular, formally closed nature of Britten's treatment – closer to Abbate's codification of balladic song – provides a punctuating full-stop to the *O Waly, Waly* fantasy which would otherwise have remained unfinished and open-ended, its text literally and metaphorically 'overwhelmed by musical matter' (the welter of vocal and instrumental sounds at figure 12).

Table 2 expresses the broad structure of this *O Waly, Waly* fantasy, revealing how both distribution of voices – solo-tutti, male-female, high-low – and also the use of the ensemble help to establish a purely musical narrative that allows the poetic text to resonate (pace Abbate). Some of this entails an alignment of gender with poetic image – female voices with the 'flowers' of stanza 2, male voices with the oak tree of stanza 4, gender play in stanza 3 where the male voice is taunted by multiple female voices; some entails pulling out individual voices to flesh out more personal experience – the solo soprano in stanza 2, the 'lovesick' tenor in stanza 3, or the dialogue of a solo tenor and baritone in stanza 6.

The full chorus, however, is used sparingly in the slow and reflective textures of stanzas 1 and 5; this ensures the full impact of the fantasy's important single narrative event: namely the poet's nihilist indifference to whether s/he 'sink' or 'swim'. Whilst stanza 7 effects a gradual transition from solo voices to full choral voices, the work's final cataclysm – notionally a submerging in the poetic waters (figure 12) – allows each individual choral voice to break free with his/her own material, preparing the ground for the intimate sequence of arias and duets that is to follow in the full *Of Water and Tears* sequence. Whistler's staging amplified this quality by moving all the choral voices into the performing space during stanza 7, then allowing each to vocalise their free material at figure 12 as part of a gradual movement away into the offstage area. This coming together of musical gesture and visual/choreographic image, emphasised opera's unique capacity to explore resonant poetic and emotional material through the interplay of text, music and movement, however fragmented or buried a narrative or narratives might be.

**Table 2:** Fantasy *O Waly, Waly*

|   | <b>Stanzas</b>   | <b>Musical treatment</b>   | <b>Tempo</b> |
|---|--|--|--------------|
| 1 | The Water is wide, I cannot get o'er<br>And neither have I wings to fly.<br>O go and get me some little boat,<br>To carry o'er my true love and I.                   | <b>Choral unison</b> , ending with three<br><u>solo female voices</u>  | Slow         |
|   |  | Short instrumental interlude: <i>O Waly, Waly</i> melody varied in sprung rhythm                                 | Fast         |
| 2 | A down in the meadow the other day<br>A-gathering flowers both fine and gay<br>A-gathering flowers both red and blue,<br>I little thought what love could do.        | <u>Solo soprano</u> , three accompanying<br>soprano voices   | Fast         |
|   |  | Short instrumental interlude: <i>O Waly, Waly</i> melodic variant treated canonically                            | Fast         |
| 3 | I put my hand into one soft bush<br>Thinking the sweetest flower to find<br>I pricked my finger to the bone<br>And left the sweetest flower alone.                   | <u>Solo tenor</u> , accompanied by four<br>soprano voices  | Fast         |
| 4 | I leaned my back up against some oak,<br>Thinking it was a trusty tree.<br>But first he bended then he broke,<br>So did my love prove false to me.                   | Male voices, three parts: tenor,<br>baritone and bass  | Fast         |
| 5 | Where love is planted, O there it grows,<br>It buds and blossoms like some rose;<br>It has a sweet and a pleasant smell,<br>No flower on earth can it excel.         | <b>Tutti chorus</b> , with interjecting<br>string melodies   | Slow         |
|   |  | Short instrumental interlude (horn solo)   | Slow         |
| 6 | Must I be bound, O and she go free!<br>Must I love one that does not love me!<br>Why should I act such a childish part,<br>And love a girl that will break my heart. | <u>Solo tenor and baritone</u> two-part<br>inverted canon  | Fast         |
| 7 | There is a ship sailing on the sea,<br>She's loaded deep as deep can be,<br>But no so deep as in love I am;<br>I care not if I sink or swim.                         | <u>Solo soprano, mezzo, tenor and baritone</u> four-part canon, gradually becoming a <b>tutti choral texture</b> | Fast         |
|   | I care not if I sink or swim.  | Reiterated into climax; each individual voice breaking off with his/her own pattern                              | Free tempo   |

### **Evolving the narrative structure of *The Yellow Sofa***

As this account demonstrates, *Of Water and Tears* provided this research with an ideal context in which to investigate how new opera development can embrace unconventional approaches to narrative. Despite the difficulties of its libretto development, *Love and Other Demons* takes a far more conventional approach to operatic narrative than Whistler's *Of Water and Tears*; *The Yellow Sofa* set out to occupy a middle ground between these two models – to acknowledge the continuing expressive and theatrical potential of a central narrative in building an operatic structure, whilst also being informed by the creative possibilities suggested by production.

This research position in relation to narrative was consistently explored in early formative dialogue with Edward Kemp, which initially focussed on the form defying narrative strategies of writers such as Calvino, Márquez or Mitchell. In addition to a shared desire for exploring these questions of character and narrative in an operatic context was a strong impulse to do so in a playful, experimental way – to take the kind of risk with the form that Whistler had done with *Of Water and Tears*. This tension between maintaining a through narrative line but then disrupting or undermining it proved a consistent thread throughout the libretto development, composition and rehearsal of *The Yellow Sofa*.

Appendix Eleven lays out the development process for *The Yellow Sofa*. Most striking is its relative brevity – the opera was conceived, completed and staged in well under a year. The intensity and focus of this process worked to its advantage – less parties involved (composer, writer, director and opera company), and a shared sense of context with which the whole creative team was fluent; crucially, composer, writer and director each had well-established relationships with Glyndebourne and direct experience of the realities and implications of staging new work there. Furthermore, this creative residency and the research agenda itself offered this opera development process ideal conditions, enabling a remarkable degree of fluency between creative team and Opera Company.

As Appendix Eleven demonstrates, the bulk of the interaction between composer, writer and director was facilitated by email; between August 2008 and the delivery of the

vocal score in June 2009, there were only two meetings as opposed to a welter of emails, chiefly between composer and writer, with director Freddie Wake-Walker actively involved from January 2009. Appendix Thirteen presents a comprehensive digest of this email exchange, detailing each stage of the libretto development and musical conception. As this creative residency scheme allowed for its composer to be ‘on the ground’ within the Glyndebourne company, this almost exclusively email-driven process worked well, allowing for an ease, spontaneity and flow, perfect for a creative team focussed on playfully exploring an operatic narrative.

The narrative that emerged was derived from the novella *Alves e Companhia* by the nineteenth century Portuguese novelist, Eça de Queiróz (1843-1900) – a work which had presented itself some years earlier as a possibility for musical treatment, but which re-emerged in September 2008 as the perfect vehicle for the creative instincts outlined above: a desire to make a work ‘about love’ and ‘about Portugal/Fado’. Eça de Queiróz is little known to British readers despite his extraordinary status and importance in the Portuguese literary tradition<sup>7</sup>, an importance signified in Lisbon by a memorial in Rua do Alecrim, which portrays Eça de Queiróz with a sprawling, naked female figure in his arms. This disconcerting image signifies one of the most important qualities of his work: the tension between the upright façade of social respectability (the statue of Eça dresses him in a stiff frock-coat) and the raw emotions and instincts that lie beneath, which cause such damage in the events of his novels (the suffering, naked figure in Eça’s arms). Most of Eça de Queiróz’s work investigates this tension, with a distinctive blend of comedy - tinged with irony – and a daringly modern empathy for his characters, whose personal happiness is often elusive and fleeting. *O Crime do Padre Amaro* remains his most celebrated novel – adapted for the cinema in an updated version by Mexican director, Carlos Carrera in 2002. The novel explores the tension between ‘God’ and ‘Sex’ through its main protagonist, Amaro (literally ‘bitter’), who like many orphans of the period were ordained as Priests regardless of any sense of vocation or purpose. Amaro’s sexual urges, that emerge with an almost animalistic quality, eventually cause the disgrace and death of a young religious devotee Amélia, a

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<sup>7</sup> Between 1992-2002, Dedalus with the support of Arts Council England, The Portuguese Book Institute, The Camões Institute and the Gulbenkian Foundation embarked on the publication of the Eça de Queiróz novels, translated into English by Margaret Jull Costa. But to date, many of his short stories remain unavailable in English translation.

‘crime’ from Amaro emerges scot-free. The novel’s shockingly frank portrayal of sexual desire and its systematic attack on a hypocritical and corrupt church, populated by venal priests and hysterically superstitious women, renders it one of the most daring works of late nineteenth century European fiction.

Only five Eça de Queiróz novels were published in his lifetime, seven published posthumously, including *Alves e companhia*, which was discovered by his son José Maria d’Eça de Queiróz in 1924 along with other papers in a trunk:

It came to light one evening at the beginning of the year 1924, in the now famous trunk in which my father’s unpublished manuscripts had been lying for more than a quarter of a century. There were 115 loose sheets, untitled and undated, covered with his usual rapid handwriting, and, as usual without any polishing up, any correction<sup>8</sup>

José Maria d’ Eça de Queiróz goes further in this 1924 introductory note to compound this sense of an open-ended, unfinished novel of uncertain purpose or identity:

this novel has no history, it cannot be explained. It is not known whence it came, nor at what date. It is not even known what title the author intended for it. It is anonymous and unknown. The author never referred to it in any letter, any conversation, any article; he never offered it to his publisher, never even mentioned it!<sup>9</sup>

In a sense, not only did this novel’s content resonate with emerging creative ideas around *love* and *Fado* when circulated to Edward Kemp and Katie Tearle in September 2008, but even its very confused and ambiguous origins, its open-ended nature, fed into existing debates around experimenting with narrative in opera. A first direct consequence of this surrounds the question of the novel’s main eponymous image. In Portuguese, this title-less novel was christened *Alves e Companhia* or *Alves and Co.*, after its main character, the business man *Godofredo Alves*. In English, John Vetch’s 1993 translation<sup>10</sup> is entitled *The Yellow Sofa*, an extraordinarily witty yet interventionist decision which highlights a piece of furniture in the novel’s title, in such a way that the reader inevitably filters the action through this all-controlling image. And

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<sup>8</sup> J. M. d’ Eça de Queiróz ‘Introductory note’ to E. de Queiróz, *The Yellow Sofa*, (New York, New Directions, 1996), p. 3-4.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> de Queiróz, trans. J. Vetch, *Yellow Sofa*, (New York, New Directions, 1996).

however important the yellow sofa might be for the novel's one real event, it is barely referred to in the text, though Eça de Queiróz is renowned for his vivid evocations of late nineteenth century interiors.

An unusual synchronicity presented itself at this stage, between on the one hand how a narrative's identity shifts under different titles, and on the other, how this same narrative might receive a further identity when transformed into opera. John Vetch's title could be said to have provided the spark for this operatic treatment; by highlighting a piece of furniture in his title, his translation offered the idea of a surreal, even magic-realist interpretation of the novel in which the theatrical experience of a singing sofa might be analogous to the experience of a reader of John Vetch's translation.<sup>11</sup> More critically it suggested that perhaps by introducing a surreal component into a seemingly ordinary story, the familiar might be reoriented by the uncanny.

*The Yellow Sofa* was circulated to Kemp and Tearle with an accompanying proposal - *Initial Ideas for The Yellow Sofa* (Appendix Thirteen, page 251) – which lays out the rich theatrical, musical, operatic possibilities of this Eça de Queiróz novel. The proposal highlights the story's unique tone, with daring shifts between comedy and sentiment; its simple narrative on the one hand, with complex resonance on the other; its unusual relationship to nineteenth century romanticism –a wholesale assault on melodrama; its many allusions to opera, both hidden and revealed from playful use of proto-operatic situations to quotations from Verdi's *Rigoletto*; finally, its strongly drawn characters. At this early stage, the proposal offers a number of ideas for adapting the novel: cutting the events of its final chapter, embracing the idea of Lisbon as its specific poetic context, extending the journey of its central character, and the idea of theatricalising the sofa itself:

[I] Can imagine a kind of very conventional treatment of this story – impeccable, conversational, witty in a familiar operatic sense. A kind of Strauss *Capriccio* meets Britten with a Latin accent. BUT it is absolutely not what is intended. A few crucial ideas:

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<sup>11</sup> A useful context for this analogy between 'theatre audience' and 'reader' is found in Susan Bennett's *Theatre Audiences* (Chapter Two), which systematically explores a range of reader-response theories as a way of understanding contemporary theatre audiences. See S. Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, (Abingdon, Routledge, 1997) p. 20.

We theatricalise the sofa in some almost magic realist, surreal way. Man in yellow suit? This could generate at times a more dream-like feel to the piece. Maybe the Sofa is a kind of Greek Chorus, or a world-weary observer of human frailties, or the spirit of Lisbon? A Fado singer?<sup>12</sup>

Kemp's positive email response on the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2008<sup>13</sup> marks the definitive green light for the opera's development; his detailed twelve point response tackling the material head on, while raising concerns about the sheer quantity of potential material, a concern echoed by, Katie Tearle, part of whose role was to ensure that the work fitted within the parameters of the Jerwood Chorus Development Scheme parameters detailed above.

Over five months, the narrative structure and textual detail of the libretto was developed between writer, composer and director with a first complete draft circulated on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2009. The development of the narrative structure hinged critically on ideas of 'adaptation' and while *Love and Other Demons* evidenced a pronounced tension between its two librettists' approaches, *The Yellow Sofa* emerged out of a symbiotic empathy between writer and composer. A number of core adaptive principles were jointly maintained throughout this development process:

- creative energy around the source material;
- an embracing of the destructive/recreative nature of adaptation: the material is confidently *remade* not respectfully translated across art forms;
- a rejection of 'theatrical consistency' as limiting dramatic and poetic potential;
- relishing the irresponsibility of not treating any plot/character material that held no interest, whatever theatrical problems this might create;
- confidence in adapting the narrative to allow for opera's *un*-reality, its potential for the surreal, where anything can be achieved without the necessity of set or prop;
- no compulsion to create a 'complete' or formally closed work, this adaptation could treat a partial narrative, its final state deliberately open-ended, even 'unfinished'.

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<sup>12</sup> 'Initial Ideas for The Yellow Sofa' (Appendix Thirteen, p. 251)

<sup>13</sup> Appendix Thirteen, p. 251.

This sense that the operatic structure might be based on a *partial* narrative and therefore incomplete, both reflects back to José Maria d' Eça de Queiróz's description of the novel as 'untitled...undated...without any polishing up, any correction' and forwards to director Freddie Wake-Walker's production concept. Growing out detailed interaction between writer and composer, Wake-Walker brought in the sensibilities of 'poor theatre', turning a negligible production budget to the opera's own advantage, while creating a kind of inclusive, enveloping theatrical experience that might have been described by Meyerhold:

Nowadays, every production is designed to induce audience participation: modern dramatists and directors rely not only on the efforts of the actors and the facilities afforded by the stage machinery but on the efforts of the audience as well. We produce every play on the assumption that it will be still unfinished when it appears on the stage. We do this consciously because we realize that the crucial revision of a production is that which is made by the spectator<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps inevitably with such a fluid approach and the spontaneity of communication that email exchange allowed for, the libretto itself emerged gradually and non-chronologically. Both musical and dramatic imperatives were constantly in play, but with a continuously shifting relationship between the two, so that an intrinsically musical idea could be incorporated as much as a sequence of spoken dialogue. Here was an opera of many tonal and textural shifts, an opera that refused to settle into any one way of being.

Appendix Twelve presents the detailed working out of novel into libretto, scrutinising an early rough draft from December 2008 and the definitive final text. As this table indicates, a workable narrative structure for *The Yellow Sofa* was achieved early on, no doubt in part because of the novel's own pithy style which Eça himself described thus:

The attraction of these tales is that there are no digressions, no rhetoric, no philosophising: everything is interesting and dramatic and quickly narrated<sup>15</sup>

To use elements of Roland Barthes' *Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives*, Eça de Queiróz's novel might be said to have been uniquely suited for an

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<sup>14</sup> V. E. Meyerhold, *Meyerhold on theatre*, ed. E. Braun, (New York, Hill and Wang, 1969).

<sup>15</sup> J. M. d' Eça de Queiróz, 'Introductory note', p. 4.



adaptation process of this kind, not just on account of its unfinished condition but also since the story can be reduced into six cardinal functions or sequences of narrative ‘nuclei’:

1. Godofredo Alves, finds his wife Ludovina in the arms of Machado, on their yellow sofa.
2. Godofredo throw his wife out, leaving her to her father Neto; he agrees to pay a stipend to cover their leaving Lisbon for Ericeira.
3. Godofredo demands that he and Machado draw straws to decide who should commit suicide; Machado rejects this.
4. Godofredo decides on a dual, handing over his affairs to his friends, Carvalho and Medeiros. They decide that nothing should be done.
5. Godofredo is reconciled with his wife.
6. Godofredo is reconciled with Machado.

Firstly, according to Barthes’ system, the narrative of *Alves e companhia* or *The Yellow Sofa* is not heavily functional; its character is more indicial, dependent on psychological factors that register at higher levels of narrative structure. Secondly, the sequence of cardinal functions described above could be classed simply as a narrative of *adultery*, *betrayal* or even *seduction* which ensures that the reader/audience applies his/her own experience of such a familiar narrative type in the way they engage with the material:

The narrative language within us comprises from the start these essential headings [e.g. adultery, betrayal, seduction]: the closing logic which structures a sequence is inextricably linked to its name; any function which initiates a *seduction* prescribes from the moment it appears, in the name to which it gives rise, the entire process of seduction such as we have learned it from all the narratives which have fashioned in us the language of narrative.<sup>16</sup>

In a sense the cardinal functions of this narrative are not what make it distinctive. Rather it is the way that Eça de Quieróz denies and subverts an archetypal *adultery* narrative, denying its ‘tragic’ denouement – which is expected by stage 4 above – and instead allows the narrative to collapse into bathos. To quote Alves’ smooth-talking friend, Carvalho: ‘Everything should stay as it was, that would be common sense’ or in

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<sup>16</sup> R. Barthes, ‘Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives’, in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. S. Heath (London, Fontana Paperbacks, 1977), p. 102.

other words, nothing happens. Viewed in this context, this untitled, undated, unpolished story is both literally and metaphorically unfinished: it has no end; its *adultery* narrative remains unfulfilled.

Appendix Twelve shows how this narrative complex was recreated as an operatic structure. The action of chapters three and nine were easily removed as was the first half of chapter seven – chapter three absorbed to inform the development of Godofredo's character, the second gathering of Godofredo and his friends easily expunged from chapter seven, while chapter nine, describing the sequence of domestic events once Godofredo, Ludovina and Machado are reconciled could be left entirely untreated. Much of the detail of what is removed relates to the enriching units of narrative that Barthes codifies as *catalysers*, *indices* and *informants*; while stripping away these units might appear to impoverish the narrative, these units are subsequently re-imagined either through musical gesture and material or the visual dimension of the production. Finally, a number of transformations relate to the different conventions of a novel narrative compared to an operatic narrative. While in chapter two, Godofredo discovers a bundle of love letters in Ludovina's dressing table, in the opera these letters become one, enabling a single music-text image to signify their potential romantic entanglement.

Two other important aspects could be said to have impacted on the narrative development of *The Yellow Sofa* – the structural implications of *Fado* and the logic of the story's temporality.

### **Fado and its impact on *The Yellow Sofa* narrative**

While the core narrative of *The Yellow Sofa* responds directly to the early creative impulse to develop an opera about 'love', an accompanying desire to incorporate Portuguese *Fado* into an operatic canvas was more problematic. To what extent could such a specifically music-driven impulse be incorporated into the discourse of this narrative without either destroying its integrity or rendering the opera as a kind of debased picture postcard? What was being tested here, was opera's capacity to synthesise seemingly contradictory musical registers as a way of building narrative or even autonomously musical structures.

*Fado* remains one of the most mysterious and elusive of European folk traditions, which flourishes in a contemporary Portuguese music scene reasonably well preserved from the commodification of the ‘*World Music*’ phenomenon. Paul Vernon’s *A History of the Portuguese Fado* classes it as ‘urban folk music’ along with ‘American blues, Greek rebetika, Argentinian tango and Cuban rumba’<sup>17</sup> going on to emphasise the tradition’s complex and ambiguous origins: from Portuguese sailors or African slaves, traditional Portuguese folk poetry or Brazilian dance forms? While Flamenco’s *Cante Jondo* shares similarly mysterious origins, *Fado* is very much the younger tradition. Earliest printed sources trace it back to the early nineteenth century, the term *Fado* derived from its performer or *Fadista* (fatalist) – at the time, a notorious class of Portuguese low-life. By the 1840s, *Fado* became closely identified with the cult of the first great ‘*Fadista*’ Maria Severa (1820-46) whose love for the Conde de Vimioso and subsequent death from ‘apoplexy’ was immortalised in the ritual of *Fado* performance:

To this day, women *Fadistas* will don a black lace shawl, in her honour before singing<sup>18</sup>

Although both male and female singers sing *Fado*, the legacy of Maria Severa has ensured that the female performer has a unique status in the tradition, a status maintained in the twentieth century by Amália Rodrigues, or by Mariza and Ana Moura in the contemporary *Fado* scene.

In every sense, *Fado* was a music of the streets, with separate traditions in the cities of Lisbon, Coimbra and Porto. Its defining sound is characterised by an intense juxtaposition of plangent, often harsh voices with the sweet delicacy of the Portuguese guitarra (a descendent of the Eighteenth Century English guitar), the impact of which is described idiosyncratically in the *Travel Diaries* of William Beckford:

Those who have never heard this original sort of music, must and will remain ignorant of the most bewitching melodies that ever existed since the days of the Sybarites. They consist of languid, interrupted measures, as if the breath was gone with excess of rapture, and the soul panting to meet the kindred soul of

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<sup>17</sup> P. Vernon, *A History of the Portuguese Fado*, (Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1988), p. 5. A more recent study *Fado and the place of Longing* by Richard Elliott was published in June 2010 (Ashgate)

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

some beloved object. With a childish carelessness they steal into the heart, before it has time to arm itself against their enervating influence; you fancy you are swallowing warm milk, and are admitting the poison of voluptuousness into the closest recesses of your existence<sup>19</sup>

The sonorous intensity of *Fado* and the almost exaggerated emotional fervour of its performance, give this street music tradition a strangely operatic quality. With the greatest *Fadistas*, its vocal texture is highly florid, involving a complex coloratura, which seems to evoke both the Arabic music of Portugal's Moorish past and the *bel canto* traditions of nineteenth century Italian opera. The ambiguity of its origins, of its nature (high or low art?) and even of its heritage (Arabic or European?) gives the tradition a unique potency and theatrical potential. Though damaged by its association with Salazar who was to exploit the tradition for propagandist ends during the years of his dictatorship (1932-1968), *Fado* has regained its position as Portugal's definitive vernacular song.

As an essentially 'street music' tradition, *Fado* would have little place in Eça de Queirós's story of Lisbon socialites; only the maid and the cook in Godofredo Alves's house are likely to relish *Fado* – Godofredo himself is more partial to Verdi's *Rigoletto*. None the less, once the idea of theatricalising the sofa was established, so was the notion of associating this device with the sound and texture of *Fado*. The early September 2008 proposal had suggested a male *Fadista* - a 'man in a yellow suit' - but Kemp quickly changed the gender, solving issues around the opera's balance between male and female characters while also releasing the *Sofa* to draw on the archetypal gestures of the female *Fadista*:

If I have a 'form' question at all at the moment it is that the male voices seem pretty dominant - that might of course be the point. In which case this to me begins to make [sense to] ...use...the Yellow Sofa as a female voice - who because of the 'device' [h]as the opportunity to comment in a way that it might be hard for Lulu to, without stepping outside the frame of the story<sup>20</sup>

Now into the predominantly male world of this story is thrust a dangerous female voice, that could challenge social conventions by confronting, manipulating or goading the central character of Godofredo Alves. Though Godofredo's wife, Ludovina and her

<sup>19</sup> W. Beckford, *Travel Diaries*, (London, Constable & Company, 1928).

<sup>20</sup> *The Yellow Sofa* email development (Appendix Thirteen, p. 251).

sister Teresa might seem peripheral to Godofredo's central journey, this female, *Fadista* sofa could enable all the women of the narrative to have a voice. Equally, here was an opportunity for polystylistic play in which a non-operatic 'popular' musical tradition is embodied in one character (and a sofa!), and then set up to challenge and confront the 'serious' musical registers of the other characters.

Much of the ensuing libretto development from this point focussed around what the *Yellow Sofa* might signify. A piece of furniture that has seen it all? A *Fadista*? A Greek chorus? A gypsy? The archetypal woman? As the work developed it became clear not only that the *Yellow Sofa* could be associated with a multiplicity of meanings in constant play, but also that Godofredo and Ludovina both project meanings onto it:

I think the sofa represents something slightly beyond the pale, a degree of risk, a desire for adventure. It should be one notable thing that G[odofredo] has ever done - something aspiring to his heroic name - buying this slightly too bright, too daring piece of furniture (like having a very sombre suit with a bright lining or a very prim woman wearing scarlet stockings or a flash of a garter...) Buying the yellow sofa was an aspiration for another kind of life - one where he and Lulu might suddenly have sex in the middle of the afternoon on the yellow sofa - an aspiration yet to be achieved (tho' I think that's what he's come home for at the beginning - inspired by Machado he's bunked off a bit early hoping that today might be the day) It does in a sense represent the stage, the place where G would be notable, notorious, noble. It is a tempting force - Lulu should feel that she was tempted by it.<sup>21</sup>

This sense that the *Sofa* might embody Godofredo's 'aspiration for another kind of life' was the key to allowing *Fado* into the musical language of the opera. The textual content of the *Fado* tradition is extraordinarily broad: city songs of Lisbon or Coimbra; songs of love, lost or desired; narrative songs that reflect historical events or folk-tales; self-reflexive songs about *Fado* itself or the life of a *Fadista*, and even songs that celebrate the mundanities of domestic life. If there is one recurring thread it is this same 'aspiration for another kind of life', a melancholic longing for something unobtainable, the *Saudade* that so defines Portuguese culture and life. By locating the character of *The Yellow Sofa* within this tradition, the *Yellow Sofa* as *Fadista* could express both Godofredo's and Ludovina's aspirations in pure sound, while at the same time shifting focus and position as *Fado* shifts its content.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 264.

In this sense alone, investing *Fado* in the character of the Yellow Sofa – eventually christened *Amarela*, or yellow (feminine) in Portuguese – could be described as both a textural and a structural decision, ensuring that the opera’s musical ‘narrative’ would be constructed around a central thread of *Fado*. However, since one of the Sofa’s emerging functions was that of ‘narrator’, *Fado* also offered a structural frame for the entire opera. As already implied, *Fado* is often a narrative genre, functioning in line with Abbate’s description of ballad cited above where ‘music collaborates with the poem, helps the words to shout out their sounds’<sup>22</sup>. Often narrative *Fado* concerns an individual, describing aspects of their life or character; the popular *Fado*, *Júlia Florista* is a case in point, whose text was used as a model for Amarela’s song:

*Júlia Florista*

Júlia the flower girl, an enchanting *fadista*,  
 So says tradition  
 In Lisbon she was a proud singer of our song  
 A singular figure that lived the fado to the sound of the guitar  
 She would sell her flowers, but she never sold her love.

With slippers on her feet, she walked with a commonplace air  
 But if Júlia walked by, Lisbon would stop to hear her sing of love  
 In the air a street chant, in her mouth a song  
 And gracefully held to her breast, a basket of flowers.

*Refrain*

Júlia the flower girl, time has implanted your  
 Beautiful story in our memory  
 Julia the flower girl, your voice echoes  
 Through the haunting fado nights of our Lisbon.<sup>23</sup>

Once the Yellow Sofa was imagined as a *Fadista*, one of her roles could be the ‘narrator’ and Godofredo Alves her subject matter. The structural conceit was that the whole narrative of the opera might be contained within the frame of a traditionally narrative *Fado*; the subject matter – love, loss, despair, domestic life – all germane to the tradition. This *low* art, street music frame could thus contain a high art, operatic texture, while at the same time intervening, cutting across, undermining the more elaborate operatic music with a blunt, comic or ironic directness:

<sup>22</sup> Abbate *Unsung voices*, p. 71.

<sup>23</sup> Transcribed in D. Cohen, *Fado Português, songs from the soul of Portugal*, (Wise Publications, London, 2003), p. 82.

AMARELA    Once in Lisbon  
                  Lived a someone  
                  Who was no one.  
                  Though his parents gave their son  
                  A name to conjure fame

CHORUS     Godofredo

AMARELA    He had never ever done  
                  One thing noble in his life  
                  Except to buy his wife  
                  To buy his wife a yellow sofa

AMARELA    *Refrain*  
                  To buy his wife,  
                  To buy his wife,  
                  To buy his wife a yellow sofa.

In the novel, of course, narration is conducted through the gentle, ironic authorial voice of Eça de Quieróz himself; in the opera, by allocating *Fado* to the Sofa, the action becomes her story, witness as she is to all the human peccadilloes that occur on top of her. Such a decision to cast the Sofa as operatic narrator engages directly with conventions of operatic narrativity, conventions that are richly explored in Abbate's *Unsung Voices*:

All operas have scenes of narration, scenes in which a character tells a story. But what, meanwhile, is being done by and within the music? Put another way: what occurs at this juncture that brings music together with a representation of the scene of the narration? Operatic narration must lie at the heart of any speculation about the 'voice' of musical narration, yet is often perceived as dull, and literally goes unheard.<sup>24</sup>

Abbate sees narrative song as 'one of opera's most elaborate points of tension'<sup>25</sup> largely a result of its shifting between 'monaural' and 'reflexive' narrating, or the different levels on which a narration functions – as factually reported events or in inverted commas, at play with the different frames of theatre and music. By characterising the Yellow Sofa as a *Fadista*, she *is* the narrative, both as narrative singer, composer, writer and even author:

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<sup>24</sup> Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, p. 61.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

When a character in opera...launches into a narrative song, the listeners know the music is sounding around them. By performing narrative in song, he or she underscores doubly two acts of making – enunciating words in narrative, and producing music. For a few moments, he or she is both a poet and a composer<sup>26</sup>

Put another way, in a monaural sense of narration, the Yellow Sofa is a *Fadista*; in a reflexive sense, she stands outside the action and observes it with the audience. This free play between being both *inside* and *outside* the narrative proved critical for the development of the opera's musical structure, allowing for supposedly antithetical dynamics of formal structure and free spontaneity to coexist.

The Sofa's narrative *Fado* runs throughout the opera, breaking up the action like recurring chorales in a baroque passion. Though its balladic nature is preserved as the action unfolds, the *Fado* gradually takes on the colour of the musical action, so that the frames of *Fado* and *opera* become increasingly blurred. At the outset there is a clear distinction between the two, the *Prologue* juxtaposing the Sofa's *Fado* pastiche with the choral harmonies that spell out Godofredo's name. The *Fado* is tonal (A minor), traditional and 'popular'; the choral material non-tonal, non-traditional and 'serious':

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p.117.



8

rit. . . . . **Ritenu**

Am. *f* Once in

Gtr. rit. . . . . **Ritenu**

**1** Poco piu mosso  
♩ = c.45

12

Am. Lis-bon lived a some-one who was no - one\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ though his pa-rents

**1** Poco piu mosso  
♩ = c.45

Gtr. *mf*

16

Am. gave their son a\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ name\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ to con - jure fame\_ \_ \_ \_ \_

Gtr.

**Example 1:** *The Yellow Sofa*, Prologue (bars 8-22)

**2**

19

Am. *f* He had

Lu. *p pure* Go - do - - fre - - do

Ter. *p pure* Go - do - - fre - - do

Ma. *p pure* Go - do - - fre - - do

Nun. *p pure* Go - do - - fre - - do

Mach. *p pure* Go - do - - fre - - do

Ne. *p pure* Go - do - - fre - - do

Car. *p pure* Go - do - - fre - - do

Me. *p pure* Go - do - - fre - - do

**2**

Gtr. *mf*

Example 1: continued

But as the balance of Godofredo and Ludovina's lives collapses so the prologue's uneasy balance between the languages of *Fado* and *Opera* is lost: the *Fado* reprise in number 5 complicates the tune's A minor tonality with bitonal harmony; in the dialogue (no. 8), A minor is lost altogether in queasy mix of Bb minor and C minor which culminates in an augmented statement of the *Fado* tune, reharmonised bitonally in E and F sharp minor:

72 *f* impassioned

Bar. 47

Pno. *mf* sonorous

No ——— I — am not

51

Bar. No - one I am some - one

Pno.

73

Bar. 54 I am Go - do - fre - do Al - ves I will

Pno. 73

57

Bar. be no - ticed Will be no - ted

Pno.

Example 2: *The Yellow Sofa*, no. 8 Dialogue (bars 47-59)

Once Godofredo has been humiliated through his confrontation with Machado (no 9) and reaches his lowest point in the story, his *Fado* is broken – Amarela can no longer sing it and instead changes focus with an alternative *Fado* (no. 11 *O por do sol no Tejo*) that offers Godofredo and the audience a distinctly different, female perspective on the witnessed events:

Down streets as wide  
 As a young girl's heart  
 The gentlemen prow  
 In the evening air  
 And if you stroll with him  
 Lisbon girl  
 He'll show you the lights  
 He'll show you the lights  
 And you'll wake alone  
 In a sea of sheets  
 And know you're a woman  
 Of Lisbon  
 Of sadness

Finally, as Godofredo is forced to confront his own mortality and the apparent futility of his whole existence (no. 14), his original *Fado* melody returns, sung by Amarela together with all the opera's female characters as a kind of ghost voice from beyond the grave (fig. 120):

God. <sup>23</sup> *mf* wound - ed in bed in a - go ny, and gang - rene

Pno.

**120** Again more movement  $\text{♩} = \text{c.46}$

God. *mf* Who will care for me? *mf with horror* Who will vi-sit me? will

Lu.

Ter.

Am. *p ghostly* Em Lis - bo - a mo - ra - va un fil - ho de nin -

Mar. *p ghostly* Em Lis - bo - a mo - ra - va un fil - ho de nin -

Ne.

**120** Again more movement  $\text{♩} = \text{c.46}$

Pno. *mp* *p* *mf* *f*

Example 3: *The Yellow Sofa*, No. 14 Godofredo's Dark Night of the Soul (bars 23-8)

Here burying the *Fado* melody inside a complex, non-tonal vocal and instrumental texture suggests a vision of the world beyond Godofredo's death, taunting him with how this tune might be sung as a memorial. For the first time in the opera, Godofredo could be said to 'hear' this tune, and to 'hear' his own narrative, even taking on the textual structure of his own *Fado* as he looks death in the face:

So I go to my death  
To my agony and pain  
A nobody of Lisbon  
Who will die for nothing  
Who will die for nothing  
And (will) never come again  
Pierce a sword through the heart  
Put a bullet through the brain  
Of this nobody of Lisbon  
Who will die for no reason  
Having lived for no reason  
Except to buy for his wife  
To buy for his wife

Frames are super-imposed - this is both a version of Godofredo's *Fado* and an operatic death scene where Godofredo finally experiences the intensity of his own emotions, while confronting (and accepting) how the world (or a *Fado*) describes him. On a structural level, the expressionist fervour risks swallowing up the physical presence of Godofredo back into the *Fado* where he might exist between the lines of a song text. Only once reconciliation with Ludovina is achieved, Godofredo's domestic world reconfigured, and the opera's two musical strands fixed securely back in their frames, can Amarela deliver his *Fado* with the poise and irony with which the opera began (no. 19 Epilogue).

### **Temporal logic and its impact on *The Yellow Sofa* narrative**

If the interlocking of *Fado* and *Operatic* trajectories could be said to generate the work's structure in purely musical terms, another element proved critical in clarifying how the operatic narrative functions – namely its temporal logic:

It has already been pointed out that structurally narrative institutes a confusion between consecution and consequence, temporality and logic. This ambiguity forms the central problem of narrative syntax. Is there an atemporal logic beyond the temporality of narrative?<sup>27</sup>

Clearly Barthes' question is already complex enough within a written or spoken narrative, but in a theatrical context there is a still richer interplay between textual, musical and theatrical time, whether *real* or *poetic*. In developing a musical structure of real integrity within an operatic context, 'time' is often the most elusive and punishing dimension. As Meyerhold observed above, a production is left unfinished until 'crucially revised' by its audience; seconds on the clock mean nothing until those seconds are genuinely experienced as part of the dialogue between performer and audience.

As implied above, the narrative of Eça de Queiróz's novel is striking because in a sense, *something* and then *nothing* happens; Ludovina is caught with Machado (something), there is no dual or tragic outcome (nothing). Even the *something* is probably *nothing* as it's not clear that Ludovina and Machado's association was much more than a flirtation. Godofredo's friend, Medeiros' describes this as Nunes' dilemma:

Nunes propounded this dilemma: the gentlemen demand swords. Very well, very well, but if there really had been misconduct, the sword is not enough; if not, it would be too much...And in that way, we were agreed that there should be no duel...<sup>28</sup>

In other words, nothing happened, do nothing, let time pass.

This sense of *nothing happening* and of *time passing* is critical to *The Yellow Sofa* narrative. Even in such a relatively short novel, the reader is constantly reminded of how slowly time can pass, whether the frozen time of Godofredo's return home in chapter one:

On the carpeted floor, his light summer shoes made not the slightest sound. Everything seemed deserted, in a silence so complete that he could even hear the

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<sup>27</sup> Barthes, 'Introduction', p. 98.

<sup>28</sup> De Queiróz, transl. Vetch, *The Yellow Sofa*, p. 83.



sound of frying coming the kitchen and the canary hopping about in its cage on the balcony<sup>29</sup>  
or the desolate empty days he spends once his wife has been thrown out:

He sat up on the sofa. In the house and in the street profound silence reigned: it was only six o'clock...as on the previous evening, he paced around; in the dining-room, the table still bore the previous day's tablecloth, and on the sideboard a forgotten candle had guttered and gone out in the candlestick<sup>30</sup>

While director Freddie Wake-Walker picks up on the book's unique handling of time in an email on the 9th January 2009 – “there are lots of mentions of silences in the book...”<sup>31</sup> – Edward Kemp thematicises time itself by introducing the clock as both stage image and metaphor. As a stage image, the ticking clock represents the domestic balance of Godofredo and Ludovina's marriage: everything in its place, especially ‘the wife’, with time passing inconsequentially. Once this balance is disrupted, then the stopping and starting of the clock mirrors the vicissitudes of the story. By replacing the novel's use of a broken lamp with a stopped clock to effect the couple's eventual reconciliation, time as both mechanism and metaphor have a strongly controlling influence on the opera's narrative flow.

Musically, this resulted in a decision to counter-balance the formality of the *Fado* material - often contained within numbers (e.g. no.'s 1, 5, 8 or 11) - with open-ended ‘mobiles’ where time itself is allowed to speak. Technically this was a question of drawing on both the ‘Time’ convention of musical theatre where a section might be spontaneously repeated depending on the scenic requirements, but also on conventions of twentieth-century aleatoric procedures. On a functional level, these three ‘mobiles’ and the ‘Overture’ that they spring from allow the musical structure to breathe, and to breathe spontaneously since each mobile has a time continuum that allows for the pacing to be achieved instinctively. The clock ‘ticks’ themselves are generated from within the ensemble with a metronome that the conductor stops and starts – an obvious device perhaps but one that ensures the ‘atemporal logic behind the temporality of the narrative’ touches every level of the operatic texture: visual and aural, *real* time as well as *poetic* time, practical performance as well as theatrical illusion.

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 49-50.

<sup>31</sup> The Yellow Sofa email development (Appendix Thirteen, p. 251).

While the *Fado* strand is principally concerned with narrativity and to some degree the cardinal functions of the action, the *mobile* strand is all ambient texture, the *indices* and *catalysers* that Barthes identifies as serving to enrich the psychological resonance of the narrative discourse at a higher level. The use of these time pools in the musical structure was triggered by Edward Kemp's email on the 29<sup>th</sup> December:

I am increasingly thinking that the best way to get the sense for the audience that the show has already started is to have an almost cyclical presentation of their domestic bliss - what G finds so satisfying and L stultifying - as the audience are coming in. This can involve LULU singing her waltz from time to time (for G's delight). The clock should be ticking. There needs to be a certain repetition of activity. The maid brings in cups and glasses of things, takes them away. LULU needs to wind the clock. It should be once we're ready to go (at the actual start time) that AMARELA (she doesn't have to be called that, but I felt I wanted to give her a bit of a name) starts to sing.<sup>32</sup>

What this implied was that the already identified unfinished quality in the narrative could allow for a blurring or smudging of how the opera commences, in effect an annexation of the liminal aspects of performance within the operatic frame. This possibility is scrutinised by Richard Schechner in his *Essays on Performance theory*:

Too little study has been made of the liminal approaches and leavings of performance – how the audience gets to, and into, the performance place, and how they go from that place; and in what ways this gathering/dispersing is related to the preparations/cooling-off aspects of the performers' work. The coming and going of both audience and performers guarantees...the existence of the 'theatrical frame' so that events can be experienced as *actual realizations*: in other words, the reality of performance is in the performing;<sup>33</sup>

In a majority of traditional operatic repertory, the 'Overture' constitutes the liminal access point for an audience, a convention that could be said to allow for a shift of focus from an external reality to an internal *un*-reality. Kemp's suggestion opened up the possibility that in *The Yellow Sofa*, the 'Overture' could achieve this in a more thoroughgoing way, creating a mobile of musical material that runs automatically as the audience enters. On one level, this allows for Kemp's 'cyclical presentation of domestic bliss' to be established, on another it subliminally introduces musical material that

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<sup>32</sup> *The Yellow Sofa* email development (Appendix Thirteen, p. 251).


<sup>33</sup> R. Schechner, *Essays on Performance Theory 1970-76*, (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1997).

could be said to prepare the audience for the sound-world into which they are about to be immersed – also a function of a traditional Overture.<sup>34</sup> Here, the clock ticks (metronome) and chimes (prepared piano), birds twitter outside the windows (strings) and a street cry wafts across the space (offstage tenor); Godofredo and Ludovina are seen coming and going while their maid, Margarida, hums to herself as she indolently cleans. The audience are introduced to physicality of all three characters, invited to observe them, absorb the *indicial* detail of the setting; at the same time they catch a pre-echo of Amarela's *Fado* as it is this very tune that Margarida hums to herself as she dusts. When each character comes and goes, a 'door motif' in the strings opens and closes, pre-empting the crucial moment at the end of number 3 ('A scene') when this same door motif opens on Ludovina embracing Machado on the yellow sofa. This reconstituted overture playfully breaks the operatic frame while ensuring that audience perceptions have been primed before the first formal number begins.


### 3. Door motif (lower strings, cued by conductor)

Play a) intermittently throughout the overture, always with space between; never close repetitions.  
Play b) more rarely, to allow either *GODOFREDO* or *LUDOVINA* to exit the stage (conductor to cue).  
For both a) & b), the speed should vary with each statement, ranging from  $\text{♩} = 40$  to  $\text{♩} = 80$

**a) OPEN**  
*gliss, flautando*



**b) CLOSE**  
*gliss, flautando*



### Example 4: *The Yellow Sofa*, No. 1 Overture

As the final performance instructions indicate – circulated to Edward Kemp by email on the 30<sup>th</sup> May 2009<sup>35</sup> - this *Overture* consists of 'constant' and 'intermittent' sounds. The

<sup>34</sup> This deconstructed *Overture* is balanced by a 'real' *Overture* – Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore* – referenced in no. 17, as Godofredo and Ludovina's reconciliation is triggered by a chance encounter at the Opera. *The Yellow Sofa* itself might be described as meta-*Overture*, designed as a pre-performance event to Glyndebourne's production of *L'Elisir*.

<sup>35</sup> *The Yellow Sofa* email development (Appendix Thirteen, p. 251).

‘constant’ sounds – clock ticking and chiming, birdsong etc – recur in all three subsequent mobiles (no.’s 10, 16 and 18), though in each a fragment of material from the previous scene bleeds in – a tormenting laugh in mobile 1 (Medeiros), strained dissonant violin sevenths in mobile 3 and a reconciliatory B flat major chord in mobile 4 (strings). The intention here is to use this network of overture and mobiles to establish the idea of ‘nothing happening’ as an action in itself – at the start, this ‘nothing’ is the domestic humdrum of Godofredo and Ludovina’s married life, while in mobiles 2 and 3 this ‘nothing’ is bleak void into which Godofredo’s whole life appears to be collapsing. The final mobile restores order as if Godofredo and Ludovina’s reconciliation enables the birds to sing and an off-stage street trader to sell his wares once more.

While the relentless ticking clock that dominates this network of overture and mobiles emphasises a sense of temporal reality within the opera, a counter-balancing set of *tableaux* explores the opposite dynamic – a sense that time is frozen or held; this phenomenon occurs three times in the opera, each time relating to the character of Ludovina. Tableau 1 freezes the critical moment when she is discovered by Godofredo on the yellow sofa with Machado, time spluttering into a stilted nonsensical sequence of phatic utterances between the three characters. Tableau 2 presents Ludovina once again, with the stage direction ‘Ludovina sits upon the yellow sofa, nothing happens’ and another stilted conversation ensues, this time between husband and wife.

The final tableau (no. 3), which follows Amarela’s central *Fado*, presents Ludovina in her isolation, frozen in time. The material here is text-less, music driven, a transformation of a waltz-tune first associated with Ludovina in the Overture (one of its ‘intermittent events’). The connection comes from the novel and a ‘certain waltz’ - the *Souvenir of Andalusia*<sup>36</sup> - that Ludovina used to play for her husband. The melody is seeded in the Overture, worked into the orchestral texture of number 6 as Neto reads out her infamous love letter (no. 6, fig. 41) and reaches its culmination in this tableau. The purpose of freezing time in this instance was to advance Ludovina’s narrative in purely

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<sup>36</sup> The waltz melody used in the opera comes from R. Gallop, *Cantares do Povo Português* (Lisbon, Instituto para a Alta Cultura, 1937), p. 140, intriguingly described as a ‘Spanish song’, which Gallop collected in Sércio. Gallop’s work proved a useful source for *The Yellow Sofa* – the street cry ‘*O Pedra!*’ used in the overture was drawn from R. Gallop *Portugal, a book of folk-ways*, (London, Cambridge University Press, 1936), p. 200, a melody Gallop heard sung by a shanty-man near Braga.

musical terms – the once familiar, *salon*-style Waltz of the Overture now transformed into an icy music box, whose slowly rotating patterns suggest how trapped she is both by Godofredo's infantilisation of her and by her own lost dreams:

## 12. Tableau 3

*LUDOVINA alone.*

$\text{♩} = \text{c.95}$

Pno.

(strings - harmonics)

*pp*

*pp*

7

94

13

19

rit.

*A tempo*

$\text{♩} = \text{c.95}$

rit.

Example 5: *The Yellow Sofa*, No. 12 Tableau 3

Opera's capacity here is to *suggest* the possibility of another narrative line solely through music, a narrative line that had to be discarded from the main dramatic structure. The character of Ludovina may be contained within a brief aria and fleeting conversation, but tableau 3 enables her to emerge from Godofredo's shadow, allowing the audience to reflect and engage on the poignancy of her position in the story.

### **Voice and operatic lyricism in *The Yellow Sofa***

While the experience of working on *Of Water and Tears* helped to generate fresh thinking around narrative strategies for *The Yellow Sofa*, its influence was most significantly felt on the work's handling of voice(s). Just as *Of Water and Tears* had embraced a company of singers, allowing for fluidity between solo and choral textures, so *The Yellow Sofa* was conceived for a company of ten singers – a figure specified by Glyndebourne management - which could function both as operatic chorus and a cast of individual operatic characters. Edward Kemp's email of the 29<sup>th</sup> December 2008 pointed up the advantages of this *company* approach:

I have begun to feel a small amount of chorus-work - I wrote a chorus singing of Godofredo's name in the last draft and I think some sense of physical chorus-work might be a solution to the staging limitations - my feeling is always if one has bodies make use of them because they are cheaper, more flexible and more movable than most forms of set. However it doesn't feel to me right (at present) that anyone should double - so that G&L's maid shouldn't suddenly pop up as Neto's maid or even as TERESA, and so the choral texture is a way of giving a feel of Lisbon the city (if we ever need to beyond anything AMARELA may tell us).<sup>37</sup>

Once the opera's main characters had been identified and allocated, a strong sense emerged that all ten could be described as the 'people of Lisbon' out of which individual personalities appear. As a consequence, each singer has a double function – to *act* as a specific character in a specific situation, and to *comment* as a chorus on other 'events' in which their character might not appear, but might still have a view. As Kemp indicates above, this was partly of necessity – using 'bodies' rather than set when resources are limited – but it became both an important compositional technique and production aesthetic, resonating with director, Freddie Wake-Walker, for whom Giorgio

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<sup>37</sup> *The Yellow Sofa* email development (Appendix Thirteen, p. 251).

Strehler's acclaimed production of Goldoni's *Arlecchino Servitore di due padroni* was an important model.<sup>38</sup>

This notion of an opera built on the physicality of its cast, a 'chorus' opera in a sense, had a direct impact on the vocality of the score. Notionally all ten voices were available theatrically throughout, offering the music rich sonorous possibilities. Sometimes the libretto itself writes in this 'choral' dimension – reiterations of Godofredo's name in the *Prologue*, or the almost Gluck-ian choral interjections that escalate the stakes in no. 9 (Confrontation); sometimes, the production imperative 'requires' it e.g. to enable the stage picture to function, and sometimes the chorus offers purely musical possibilities for subtle textural shifts, largely unachievable within the more formalised solo-chorus dynamic of main-scale opera. As a consequence, the function of the chorus in *The Yellow Sofa* is ever-changing, used almost as a resonant sounding board for the action sequence.

This ever-changing sequence of choral functions is laid out in Table 3, detailing the contribution made by the chorus in a total of eleven out of the nineteen numbers. Only Godofredo is excluded from the double function principle established above; every other character exists both individually and within the company ('the people of Lisbon'). In this way, vocal distribution could amplify his feelings of isolation or dislocation from society, whilst also emphasising the narrative *Fado*'s structural conceit: that Godofredo Alves alone is the 'subject' of the story.

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<sup>38</sup> Freddie Wake-Walker's email, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2009, *The Yellow Sofa* email development (Appendix Thirteen, p. 251).



**Table 3:** Vocal distribution in *The Yellow Sofa*

| Scene                           | Action   | Focus                             | Chorus  | Choral function                        |
|---------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>1.Overture</b><br>(Mobile 1) | Godofredo's domestic world   | Godofredo, Ludovina, Margarida    | One off-stage voice (street cry)                          | -                                      |
| <b>2. Prologue</b>              | Amarela's <i>Fado</i>  | Amarela                           | 8 voices interject singing Godofredo's name               | Textural                               |
| <b>3. A scene</b>               | Godofredo's office, Machado leaves, Godofredo buys gifts for his wife and returns home | Godofredo Machado                 | Silent <i>but</i> used theatrically                       | Physical                               |
| <b>4a. Tableau 1</b>            | Godofredo discovers Lulu and Machado on the Yellow Sofa                                | Ludovina Godofredo Machado        | 7 voices vocalise on the syllables of Ludovina's name     | Sensuous                               |
| <b>4b. Tableau 2</b>            | Ludovina sits on the sofa, nothing happens but Godofredo then throws her out           | Ludovina Godofredo Margarida      | -   | -                                      |
| <b>5. Fado</b><br>(reprise)     | Amarela, together with Lulu, Teresa and Margarida reprise Godofredo's <i>Fado</i>      | Amarela Ludovina Teresa Margarida | Quartet of four female voices                             | Close harmony                          |
| <b>6. Another scene</b>         | Neto visits Godofredo who agrees to pay for their holiday in Sintra                    | Neto Godofredo                    | Quartet of four male voices, Neto's comic 'backing group' | Barber shop                            |
| <b>7. Invocation</b>            | Lulu's family anticipate their holiday   | Ludovina Teresa Neto Margarida    | Five voices vocalise 'sunny Sintra' evoking the sea       | Textural Sensuous                      |
| <b>Aria</b>                     | Lulu reflects alone  | Ludovina                          | -   | -                                      |
| <b>8. Dialogue</b>              | Godofredo consults the Yellow Sofa   | Godofredo Amarela                 | -   | -                                      |
| <b>9. Confrontation</b>         | Machado calls at the office, Godofredo's proposal is rejected                          | Godofredo Machado Amarela         | 7 voices goad and taunt Godofredo                         | Choral Textural (whispers, laughs etc) |
| <b>10. Mobile 2</b>             | Godofredo is left alone on the sofa  | Godofredo                         | 1 solitary laugh hangs in the air                         | Comic                                  |
| <b>11. Fado</b>                 | Amarela sings a song of Lisbon   | Amarela                           | -   | -                                      |
| <b>12. Tableau 3</b>            | A vision of Lulu alone   | Ludovina                          | -   | -                                      |
| <b>13. Trio</b>                 | Godofredo consults his friends   | Godofredo Carvalho Medeiros       | 3 unseen male voices amplify/mirror the onstage trio      | Close harmony                          |

|   |  |  |   |                                   |
|---|--|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| <b>14. Godofredo's dark night of the soul</b> | Godofredo is left alone on the yellow sofa in the dark and confronts his own mortality     | Godofredo<br><i>Offstage:</i><br>Nunes<br>Carvalho<br>Medeiros | 6 voices: Lulu, Amarela, Margarida sing the <i>Fado</i> ; Neto and Teresa recall the <i>Invocation</i> ; Machado phrases from 'confrontation' | Choral collage then close harmony |
| <b>15. A finale?</b>                          | Nunes, Carvalho and Medeiros tell Godofredo to do nothing                                  | Godofredo<br>Nunes<br>Carvalho<br>Medeiros                     | -   | -                                 |
| <b>16. Mobile 3</b>                           | Godofredo is left alone at home  | Godofredo<br>Margarida   | -   | -                                 |
| <b>17. Another Finale</b>                     | Amarela sings <i>the Fado</i> , Godofredo meets Ludovina at the opera, they are reconciled | Amarela<br>Godofredo<br>Ludovina                               | i) background noises at the opera<br>ii) 8 voices interject singing Godofredo's name  | Noise<br>Textural                 |
| <b>18. Mobile 4</b>                           | Godofredo and Ludovina at home   | Godofredo<br>Ludovina  | One off-stage voice (street cry)  | -                                 |
| <b>19. Epilogue</b>                           | Amarela completes her <i>Fado</i>  | Amarela  | -   | -                                 |

The final column of table three evidences the many different ways in which choral voices are deployed: textural, physical, sensuous, close-harmony, collage and noise (whispers, laughs etc.). These shifting functions are intimately related to vocal scoring, the four most important action sequences deploying the full complement of ten voices: the discovery of Lulu and Machado (no. 4a), Godofredo's confrontation with Machado (no. 9), Godofredo's 'Dark Night of the Soul' (no. 14) and his reconciliation with Ludovina (no. 17). Even within these four, full choral scenes, the chorus is used in radically different ways:

- 4a. *Tableau 1*: seven voices vocalise on the syllables of Ludovina's name (erotic);
- 9. *Confrontation*: seven voices interact with the scene as formalised chorus, amplifying Amarela's observations (an opera chorus in the traditional sense which deteriorates into whispers, shouts and laughs);
- 14. *Godofredo's dark night of the soul*. Three voices are *in* the scene but off-stage, six voices weave a collage of thematic reminiscences as Godofredo's recalls recent events (dream-like collage);
- 17. *Another Finale*. Eight voices sing Godofredo's name (surreal).

By contrast, omnipresent choral resources also offer the score the possibility of more subtle, intimate vocal textures using smaller vocal ensembles. As in *Of Water and Tears* this often involves the polarisation of female and male voices. As Kemp established early on, *The Yellow Sofa* narrative is distinctly male dominated; as a result the opera deploys just four female voices to its six male voices. This female quartet gains a heightened significance as the action unfolds both theatrically and musically, amplifying or universalising Amarela's thoughts. In No. 5, the quartet taunts Godofredo with his own *Fado* in close harmony, a gesture they repeat at the climax of Godofredo's nightmare (No. 14) where the intensity of their rendition (*fortissimo, sempre marcato*) creates the sense of a female last judgement on this sorry specimen of a man:

**123** Again more movement\*  
♩ = c.55

49

iod.

Lu.

Ter.

Am.

Mar.

*ff* sempre marcato

*ff* sempre marcato

*ff* sempre marcato

*ff* sempre marcato

Lis - - - - - bo - a mo-ra-va um fil -

Lis - - - - - bo - a mo-ra-va um fil -

Lis - - - - - bo - a mo-ra-va um fil -

Lis - - - - - bo - a mo-ra-va um fil -

**123** Again more movement\*  
♩ = c.55

(8)

no.

*ff*

*sfz* *p*

**Example 6:** *The Yellow Sofa*, No. 14 Godofredo's dark night of the soul (bars 49-51)

**Rubato (colla voce)**  
*ff* now with defiant fatalism

God. 51 So I go to my death to my a - go - ny and pain\_

Lu. ho

Ter. ho

Am. ho

Mar. ho

Pno. *cresc. molto*

### Example 6: Continued

By contrast, smaller ensembles of male voices are used to reinforce the male-dominated world of the narrative, often for comic effect. In No. 6, Neto's shameless hypocrisy is exploited for comic effect by the use of a barber-shop quartet of voices who not only help to reinforce Godofredo's male shame, echoing back the words of Ludovina's love letter as Neto reads them out (fig. 42), but also an old-boy charm as he extols the virtues of an enforced summer holiday<sup>39</sup>:

<sup>39</sup> The comic nature of this sequence allows Amarela to draw in the *Fado* register (fig. 46) as if Neto is imagining the street-singers serenading him on his holidays.

**42** *Neto reads the letter*

38

God. *mf* "My sweet an -

Ne. *f* *dolcissimo* "My sweet an - gel \_\_\_\_\_

Nu.

Ma. *mp* *dolciss* (supporting Neto) an - gel \_\_\_\_\_

Car. *mp* *dolciss* (supporting Neto) My sweet an - gel \_\_\_\_\_

Me. *mp* *dolciss* (supporting Neto) My sweet an - gel \_\_\_\_\_

Str.

Pno.

**Example 7:** *The Yellow Sofa*, No. 6 A Scene (bars 38-45)

42

God. - gel?" "What af - ter -

Ne. What af - ter - noons we share

Nu.

Ma. af - ter - noons we share

Car. What af - ter - noons we share

Me. What af - ter - noons we share

Str.

Pno.

### Example 7: Continued

However, perhaps the most important consequence of this *choral* approach is the emphasis it throws on the opera's interior scenes. By animating a social context for the central action, the vulnerabilities of Godofredo and Ludovina are exposed in a more direct way. The scenes where the chorus falls silent – Godofredo attempting to talk to his wife (no. 4b), Godofredo arguing with Amarela (no. 8), Ludovina alone (no's. 7 or

12), the reconciliation (no. 17) - can access a greater degree of intimacy not only because of the absence of the chorus but also the threat of its imminent return.

While the character of an individual voice rarely figures within the homogenised vocal sound of a main-scale opera chorus, in *The Yellow Sofa* each of the ten voices maintain their vocal and theatrical identity throughout generating a polyphonic rather than homophonic effect. As ever, the allocation of voice-types was arrived at through a push-and-pull between creative ideals and Glyndebourne's own practical requirements. A list was circulated by email on the 9<sup>th</sup> January<sup>40</sup>, eventually followed up in detail by a meeting with Steven Naylor (Head of Music Administration) on the 24<sup>th</sup> April at which questions of casting were decided. Inevitably, while the Jerwood Chorus Development Scheme offered an ideal context for the development of a new opera, the varying experience of the singers participating created some difficulties, though more around questions of theatrical confidence than musical limitations. This soon manifested itself through the rehearsal process; chiefly that the opera's aesthetic approach required a high degree of alert responsiveness from its cast. In the rehearsal room, *The Yellow Sofa* revealed itself to be a 'chamber' opera more in the spirit of 'chamber music' than a scaling down of main-scale opera, and this demanded close ensemble work throughout. Freddie Wake-Walker had repeatedly voiced anxieties about how achievable this was with the limited rehearsal time available; as it turned out, extra calls were indeed required, squeezed in the gaps of Glyndebourne's complex production schedule.

Admittedly, the defining quality of this new opera's development process was its context; driven both by research (the Creative Residency) and by Professional Development (Jerwood Chorus Development Scheme); intriguingly, the tension between the two manifested itself most at the level of characterisation in *The Yellow Sofa*.

As Chapter Three demonstrated in its discussion of the vocal language of Eötvös's *Love and Other Demons*, operatic characterisation is often built very directly on the performance traditions surrounding a specific voice-type, or a specific performer or the interaction between the two. Like Eötvös's opera, at the outset the strongly drawn

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<sup>40</sup> *The Yellow Sofa* email development (Appendix Thirteen, p. 251).



characters of Eça de Quieróz's novel were re-imagined within the conventions of the operatic vocalisation:

|                 |                              |                 |
|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Amarela         | a yellow sofa                | mezzo soprano   |
| Godofredo Alves | a small businessman          | high baritone   |
| Ludovina (Lulu) | his wife                     | soprano         |
| Margarida       | their maid                   | mezzo soprano   |
| Machado         | Godofredo's business partner | tenor           |
| Neto            | Ludovina's father            | medium baritone |
| Teresa          | Ludovina's sister            | soprano         |
| Medeiros)       | friends of Godofredo         | bass            |
| Carvalho)       |                              | low baritone    |
| Nunes Vidal     | Machado's second             | tenor           |

While there was a clear need to ensure an array of ten voices that would work effectively as a musical ensemble, there was also a strong need to use every means available to focus and differentiate each of the opera's ten characters. One of the attractions of the original novel as source-material was Eça de Quieróz's unique approach to characterisation where whole personalities are imagined at a deep level in appearance, gesture and outlook. Godofredo's friend, Medeiros is a case in point:

From the shade of the bed curtains, Medeiros's ill-humoured voice demanded to know what sort of invasion this was; and when they opened the curtains, he cried out, buried himself in the sheets, unable to bear the bright morning light. But at last he showed his sleep-drenched face; then he roused himself, raised himself on to his elbow, and took a cigarette from the bedside table<sup>41</sup>

This kind of focus on character, particularly in such a short novel with such a slender plot, generates a palpable sense theatre. The awakening of Medeiros described above *is* a theatrical performance – the (bed) curtains, the unseen voice, the old rake finally revealed, the cigarette. Furthermore, Eça de Quieróz's habit of accumulating seemingly insignificant details around a character in order to communicate a deeper psychological message enables his characters to be re-imagined operatically in an analogous way. The manner of Medeiros's introduction, dishevelled and hung over, with all the scatology of his morning ritual, might serve Eça de Quieróz's comic purpose – the cuckold consulting the womaniser – but provides strongly resonant material for an operatic reinvention of his character. One detail proved the key:

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<sup>41</sup> de Quieróz, transl. J. Vetch, *The Yellow Sofa*, p. 66.

And he withdrew into a little cubicle, where they heard him cleaning his teeth, rinsing his mouth, making a noise in the wash basin<sup>42</sup>

It is the *voice* of Medeiros that Eça de Quieróz introduces first, a voice he associates with animalistic grunts and gurgling and out of this emerged the decision to colour Medeiros's vocality in the opera with analogous extended techniques. In the *Trio* (no 13), he first appears with 'a tumbler of something...he appears to be swilling round his mouth' and for nearly twenty slow bars, his only vocal contribution is a sequence of incoherent gargles which interrupt Carvalho's attempts at a serious conversation:

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 70.

## 13. Trio


CARVALHO and MEDEIROS are now with GODOFREDO. The former is expensively preened, the latter dishevelled and somehow half-dressed. MEDEIROS has a tumbler of something which he appears to be swilling round his mouth; he has a terrible headache. CARVALHO holds the letter.

$\text{♩} = \text{c.45}$  **ma molto rubato**  
*p* **dolcissimo e poco flautando**


Car. 

'My sweet an - gel, \_\_\_\_\_

**Ritenuto**  
*mp* imploringly

God. 

My friends \_\_\_\_\_


Car. 

What af - ter - noons we share \_\_\_\_\_

**95** **Now in tempo (tempo 1)**  
 $\text{♩} = \text{c.45}$


God. 

Medeiros gargles

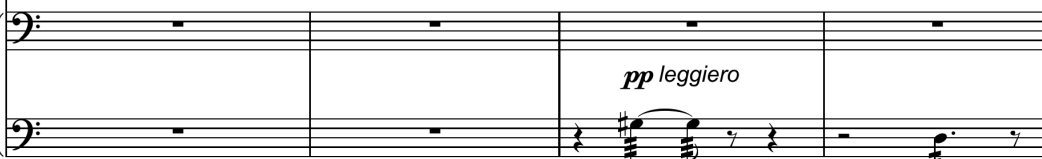
Car. 

*mp* more marked

Sheer mad-ness!

Me. 

argh \_\_\_\_\_ argh \_\_\_\_\_

Pno. 

*pp* **leggiero**

**Example 8:** *The Yellow Sofa*, No. 13 Trio (bars 1-11)

Although the surrounding colour of Eça de Quieróz's scene has gone, the notion of an old rake pulling himself together is maintained, encapsulated in a vocal transition from these nonsense gurgles to *almost* an aria (fig. 102). By controlling the pitch element of these gargles and tuning them into the instrumental texture, the whole scene becomes a Medeiros fantasy, its entire pitch content built around the possibilities of alternating between open strings and harmonics to enable the bariolage effect that instrumentally mimics Medeiros' vocality. This mimicry is maintained right through to the scene's final suave exhortation – *Place your honour, in our hands* – with Medeiros' gargles coalescing into orchestral rocking semiquavers:

**114** **Alla marcia (tempo 2)** 159

$\text{♩} = 57$

*mp coaxing*

144

Car. *mp coaxing*

Place your ho - nour in our hands

Me. *mp coaxing*

Place your ho - nour in our hands

Pno. *p leggiero*

147

Car.

Dear friend She will lie safe with us

Me.

Dear friend She will lie safe with us

Pno.

150 *poco a poco cresc.*

Car. *poco a poco cresc.*

Or - der your af - fairs

Me. *poco a poco cresc.*

Or - der your af - fairs

Pno. *poco a poco cresc.*

**Example 9:** *The Yellow Sofa*, No. 13 Trio (bars 144-152)

This translation of a novelist's eye into musical sound was the guiding principle for vocal characterisation in *The Yellow Sofa*. With the exception of Godofredo, Ludovina and Amarela, the vocal quality of the seven other characters was created in an analogous way - Machado a lovesick tenor stuck in a *bel canto* tessitura; Nunes a pedantic and fussy coloratura tenor who guilds fugues with trills (fig. 133); Carvalho a suave, Verdian baritone, who repeatedly attempts to raise the tone (fig. 109). Naturally, such specific musical detail can only lay out a field of possibilities for the creation of an operatic character; it is in the interface between the musical score and the performance realisation that remains key. As director Freddie Wake-Walker repeatedly observed, operatic characters often emerge from a process of negotiation between the parameters of the performance material and the realities of what a specific singer can achieve. In the case of Medeiros, the Romanian bass Ciprian Droma - who was identified as ideal for the role in April 2009 - continually struggled with the musical material, coming with little or no experience of contemporary music performance. Although this created very real difficulties through the rehearsal process, both singer and director were able to mould this sense of 'struggle' into the character so that what might have been experienced as musical insecurity amongst the cast, could be read as Medeiros' scatty mind by the audience.

The vocality of the opera's three central characters, however – Amarela, Godofredo and Ludovina – was approached in an entirely different way, chiefly because they embody the heart of the narrative. While the other seven voices were highly stylised and characterised, often in close connection to Eça de Quieróz's narrative detail, the material for these three characters is driven by deeper musical concerns.

As discussed above, Amarela's vocal character is *Fado* itself, and her vocality was arrived at through a painstaking process of *Fado* transcription carried out in order to research the most effective way of capturing this aural tradition within the specificity of a score. In a sense, the challenge here was analogous to Eötvös's engagement with the possibility of African musical elements in *Love and Other Demons*, though here the juxtaposition was between Western high art values and Western folk traditions. The difference of approach in *The Yellow Sofa* is that Amarela's music was developed out of close study and analysis of *Fado* models, supported by the inclusion of two guitars in the score – one Portuguese, one Spanish in line with standard *Fado* performing

traditions, pizzicato double bass standing in for the bass guitar<sup>43</sup>. While the risk here was free of the sensitivities that surround any engagement with colonial history (*Love and Other Demons*), the notion of trying to capture the flexibility of *Fado* within the constraining boundaries of opera presented very real challenges. *Fado* itself is characterised by a highly sophisticated rhythmic suppleness – often compared to jazz – whose accompanimental texture, conceptually at least, is spontaneously realised and whose vocal style depends on the singer’s mastery of *Fado* coloratura traditions. To transplant such a rich performance culture into opera is fraught with difficulty; after all operatic voices are very specifically trained; beauty of sound, clarity of diction far more important than the ‘grain of the voice’.

Regarding *Fado*’s rhythmic character, a decision was made to achieve this through careful rhythmic transcription; a number of *Fados* by the contemporary *Fado* composer Jorge Fernando were analysed closely<sup>44</sup>, particularly with regard to how the voice ‘escapes’ the oom-cha regularity of the accompaniment. From an operatic perspective, the resulting material invites the singer to learn a set of irrational rhythms accurately and then own them in performance as spontaneous gesture:

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<sup>43</sup> These instruments are deployed quite systematically for all of Amarela’s *Fado* numbers.

<sup>44</sup> Albums by the acclaimed young *Fadista* Ana Moura, particularly the albums *Para além da Saudade* 06025-1733898-2 (Portugal, 2007) and *Guarda-me a vida na mão*, 067 923-2 (Portugal, 2003).

**8 Poco piu mosso**  
♩ = c.50

Am. *mf* 61 *3* bought his wife \_\_\_\_\_ ex-cept he bought his wife \_\_\_\_\_

**8 Poco piu mosso**  
♩ = c.50

Gtr. *mp* he bought his wife a yel -

rit. . . . .

rit. . . . .

cresc.

**Molto rubato (colla voce)** *piu f* **A tempo** ♩ = c.45 **attacca**

Am. 66 *mf* *6* *3* low\_ so - fa\_

**Molto rubato (colla voce)** **A tempo** ♩ = c.45 **attacca**

Gtr. *f*

**Example 10:** *The Yellow Sofa*, No. 2 Prologue (bars 61-67)



The young mezzo-soprano Martha Bredin who first tackled the role found this kind of notated vocal freedom counter-intuitive, her own ingrained educational culture fighting with this pattern of freedom through accuracy. In the longer term, the role arguably needs a rather different stage performer, one for whom opera and perhaps cabaret are equally familiar. Amarela's final vocal gesture presents an example of the tensions generated by the conflicting performance traditions of *Fado* and *Opera*. Sung operatically, the coloratura smacks of nineteenth century *bel canto*; sung in the spirit of *Fado* and the coloratura is *about* the grain of the voice. Without this 'grain', a relishing of raw vocal timbre, the role all too easily falls into generic gypsy music:

**154** A little slower  
 $\text{mf}$   $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 50$

Am. re - cor - dou, \_\_\_\_\_ sim, re - cor - dou \_\_\_\_\_ a mul -

**154** A little slower  
 $\text{mp}$  *piu leggero*  $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 50$

Pno.

**155** Rubato (colla voce)

Am. her no so - fà a - - ma re - lo, a - ma - -

**155** Rubato (colla voce)

Pno.

**32**  $\text{ff}$  abrupt, in tempo

Am. - re - lo \_\_\_\_\_ a - ma - re - lo

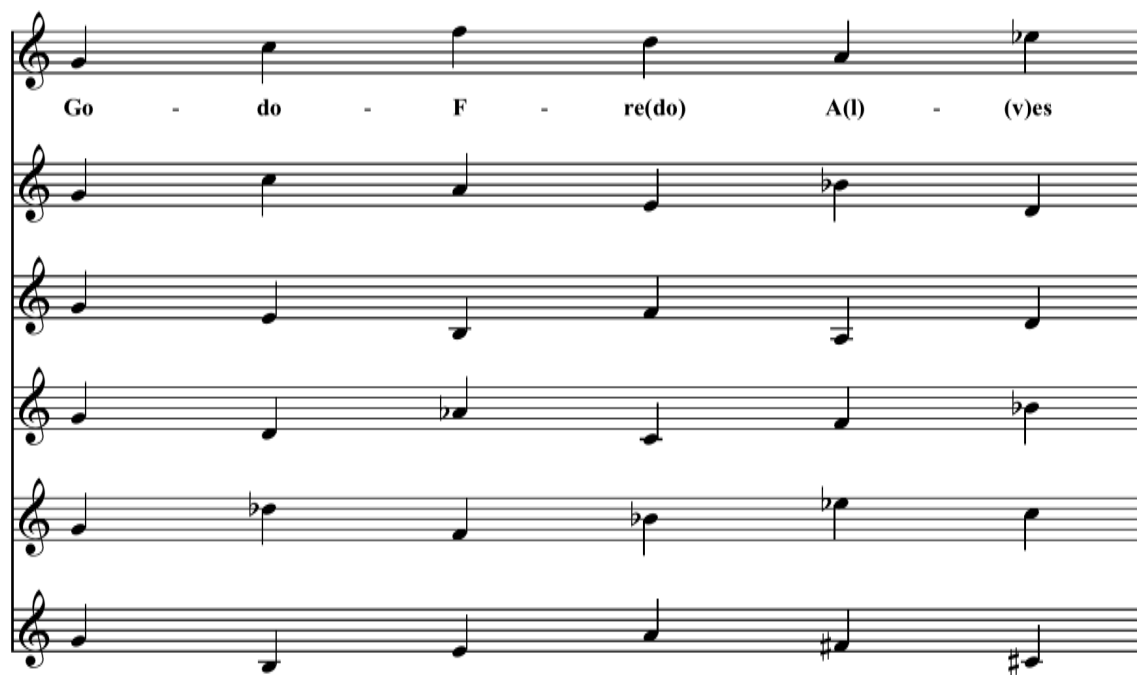
**32**  $\text{ff}$  abrupt, in tempo

Pno.

**Example 11:** *The Yellow Sofa*, No. 19 Epilogue (bars 24-35)

Godofredo and Ludovina are arguably the only characters whose vocal material was not generated either out of a pre-existing musical style or Eça de Quieróz's narrative detail. From the outset, it was clear that Godofredo would carry the story – he leads all the opera's 'cardinal functions' listed above and is on stage almost continuously, the developmental progress of the narrative impacting heavily on his vocalisation. All the action pivots round him, presenting a variety of theatrical and sonorous landscapes which he is forced to navigate while crucially, both he and his wife are changed by the course of events. Clearly a strategy was required that would enable Godofredo's through line to be clearly articulated throughout this operatic sequence, enabling the final reconciliation to feel like a genuine culmination.<sup>45</sup>

The solution lay in adopting Eötvös's respelling of a name from words into music; just as Sierva Maria de Todos Los Angeles is spelled out as a line of pitches, the name Godofredo Alves proved to translate itself elegantly into a hexachord:



**Example 12:** Godofredo's hexachord

<sup>45</sup> Early on, Kemp questioned the opera's deeper intentions behind this final reconciliation (email 4/10/08) but it was strongly felt to be genuine, even if only in the moment itself.

However, whereas Eötvös's line is a theme of reminiscence, Godofredo's hexachord is his DNA; it generates his entire musical material in both line and harmony, first introduced as a mysterious chorale in the *Prologue* – all six chords generated by transposed inversions of the basic hexachord – it then informs his entire musical discourse; in structural terms, he *is* a theme and variations, the idea of 'variations' allowing for genuine musical development in line with the action. This was achieved broadly in a number of ways. Firstly, the 'mysterious chorale' chords are used to heighten his most profoundly existential moments:

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <i>Prologue:</i>      | the chorus chant Godofredo's chorale chords;   |
| <i>Tableau 2</i>      | Godofredo's chorale is softly enunciated in the orchestra as he attempts a conversation with his wife;               |
| <i>Another Finale</i> | an unseen chorus sing Godofredo's chorale 'hushed and mysterious' as a blessing on his reconciliation with Ludovina. |

Secondly, this 'existential' treatment of Godofredo's hexachord is playfully mimicked by the chiming clock, which presents his cipher harmonised in parallel major sixths:

1. **Clock chime** (prepared piano) - play 3 times, but *only* when *GODOFREDO* is on stage.

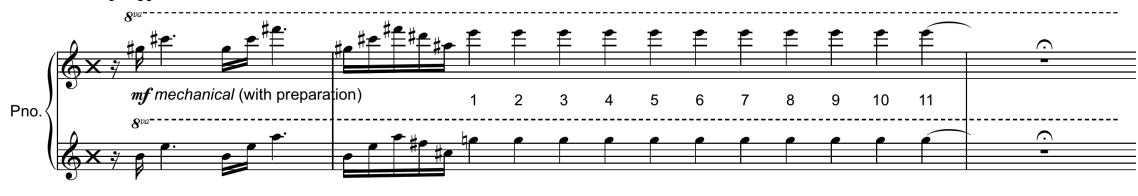
Play this first and third:

$\text{♩} = 60$



Play this second:

$\text{♩} = 60$



### Example 13: The clock chimes Godofredo's name

But thirdly, and perhaps most critically, the developmental process of these hexachordal variations is pinned down to a tonal scheme which screws the harmonic tension into his 'Dark Night of the Soul' (no. 14). This was achieved by multiplying the Godofredo hexachord against itself at an intervallic distance that gradually decreases as the action develops, creating an ever-darkening harmonic language as his world collapses. As bi-products, these multiplications lead to an increasing harmonic complexity, whether the laughter climax at figure 84 or the confused density of figure 110, anticipating the chromatic passacaglia that underpins Godofredo's nightmare (no. 14).

Of course, as Amarela's *Fado* points out, Godofredo is a 'someone who is no one'; as a consequence, the notion that his identity is located more in the fabric of the music than his own voice, seems fitting. As a consequence, his vocality lacks the melodic grace that many other characters evidence. Much of his vocal material is sentence-like, often

with the feel of accompanied recitative, largely ‘tune-less’ in fact<sup>46</sup>. This enables him to slip easily into spoken dialogue in number 8 or to achieve expressionist declamation in his nightmare, desperately calling out his wife’s name:

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<sup>46</sup> This tuneless quality to Godofredo’s role was much commented on by the cast, not least out of admiration for baritone Michael Wallace’s extraordinary achievement in mastering the role so completely.

**Poco a poco accel**  
his 'sung' voice begins to break down into half-shouts

God. 44 *cresc. sempre*  
could you how could you, how could you? Lu - do - vi - na? How could you, Lu-do -

**Poco a poco accel**

Pno. *cresc. sempre*

God. 47 *fff* shouted  
vi - na, Lu-do - vi - na? Lu - do - vi - - - - na? *f*

Lu. *f*

Ter. *f* Em

Am. *f* Em

Mar. *f* Em

Pno. (8)

**Example 14:** *The Yellow Sofa*, No. 14 Godofredo's Dark Night of the Soul (bars 44-48)

The only moment where Godofredo comes close to achieving a melodic grace comes in his final reconciliation with his wife, Ludovina (no. 17). Ludovina's music is constructed out of another hexachord, not derived from the letters of her name but the complement to her husband's (i.e. the six remaining pitches from the complete 12 note set). The resulting hexachord – very much a modal fragment – generates her main thematic material, introduced as sensuous chords in tableau 1 (No. 4a), as an orchestral line in the 'sea interlude' (fig. 50 – 52) and then explored in her aria (fig. 61) where a sequence of hexachordal rotations of her cell provides an analogue to her repeated questions:



## Aria

09

**61** *Slow and serene*  $\text{♩} = \text{c.45}$  *LUDOVINA apart.*

139 *p dolce*

Lu. Was it the way he looked at me?\_\_

**61** *Slow and serene*  $\text{♩} = \text{c.45}$

Pno. *p dolce*

140

Lu. Was it the time of day?\_\_\_\_\_

Pno.

141

Lu. Was it some - thing that he said to me?\_\_

Pno.

142

Lu. Or I wan - ted some - one to say?\_\_\_\_\_

Pno.

**Example 15:** *The Yellow Sofa*, No. 7 Ludovina's aria (bars 138-142)

Unlike her husband, the scalar nature of Ludovina's hexachord ensures that her vocality is highly lyrical in a thoroughly conventional operatic sense; her material strives to achieve a traditionally operatic lyric fervour, but reanimate it through context, control of pitch (her hexachord) and delicacy of orchestration. This 'grace', which so defines her, comes to the fore in the couple's final reconciliation. Here, as they sing instructions of how to re-wind the clock, their twin hexachords are conjoined within an accompanimental texture which mimics the clock chimes that have so tormented Godofredo. What were two separate hexachords become one modal pool; both voices achieving a 'traditionally operatic lyric fervour', both released into song:

**146** Always with the feel of movement

♩ = c.90

36 *p tentative*

Lu. If you turn\_\_\_\_ the clock You'll find

**146** Always with the feel of movement

♩ = c.90

Pno. *p*

42

Lu. a key\_\_\_\_ If you tip the clock\_\_\_\_

Pno.

48

Lu. You'll see a lock\_\_\_\_ For e - v'ry

Pno.

54

Lu. hour\_\_\_\_ you wind\_\_\_\_ it twice\_\_\_\_ For e -

Pno.

**Example 16:** *The Yellow Sofa*, No. 17 Another Finale (bars 36-83)

60

Lu. *v'ry mi - nute you wind it thrice*

Pno.

66

**Poco meno mosso** **rit. . . . .**

Lu.

**Poco meno mosso** **ten. rit. . . . .**

Pno. *p tender*

**Poco rubato** **147 A tempo**

72 *p* *mp*

Lu. *shall I? If you turn the*

God.

**Poco rubato** **147 A tempo**

Pno. *mp*

78

Lu. *clock You'll find a key If you*

God. *the clock You'll find a key If*

Pno.

Example 16: Continued

Taken out of context, this final duet might seem tinged with a reactionary operatic aesthetic in its thoroughgoing lyrical sweep. However, in a theatrical form, context is all; this release has been earned, all the strands of the operatic structure – *Fado*, *mobiles*, *tableaux*, hexachords are pulled towards it, generating a moment of ‘sentiment’, a held image of human vulnerability and love which lies so strongly at the heart of the Eça de Quieróz story, and which opera is uniquely placed to explore.

## Conclusion

How then has the creative experience of *The Yellow Sofa* advanced this project’s central questions – how to develop a new thinking around narrativity and voice in opera as a way of reanimating tradition and generating new models for the future?

Perhaps most fundamentally, this case study emphasises the advantages of relishing an operatic ‘in between’ of supposedly entrenched aesthetic dichotomies: high-low, popular-serious, familiar-uncanny, real-surreal, simple-complex, consistent-inconsistent. So much of opera’s history has involved one tabula rasa after another as composers bang their aesthetic colours to the mast. In a twenty-first century context, however, so many identities and approaches co-exist that a dizzying array of options are available to the opera composer. As a result, developing a convincing set of aesthetic ideas around the building of an operatic narrative, for example, need not be a question of resolutely accepting or rejecting any one particular approach. Why should an artist have to be consistent, or make his/her mind up about anything definitively? *The Yellow Sofa* gives the impression of telling a story, through its narrative *Fado* or its controlled pacing. None the less, its *tableaux*, its *Overture* and *Mobiles* are moment forms, anti-narrative in effect; they stop the action and the work waits for something to happen. This kind of exploration of supposedly contradictory ways of making opera – opera and anti-opera, side by side - seems to both engage with the shifting nature of our contemporary age, reflecting back its many contradictions, while offering rich potential for further creative expansion. What *The Yellow Sofa* process revealed was the intellectual and expressive energy released by interweaving narrative and anti-narrative techniques in a single frame, valuing the freedom of being ‘in between’ aesthetic positions rather than hemmed in by one single modernist dogma.

Of course, analogous oppositions of contrasting musical styles have long been a characteristic of the operatic form. At its best, opera *is* a chaotic, polystylistic art form, its greatest composers deploying many different registers to reflect character relationships, respond to drama or simply establish a sonic equivalent to the stage picture. Although these kinds of musical juxtapositions can achieve an immediate and effective sense of structure, without an underlying sense of expressive purpose, their impact is little more than superficial. The challenge is to find the right kinds of creative and performing contexts for this stylistic play, and meaningful poetic or dramatic concerns that can allow opera to achieve more than mere versatile collage or cinematic commentary, resonating in a thoughtful way with contemporary experience. The dramatic content of *The Yellow Sofa* might seem little more than a *recherché* Portuguese storm-in-a-teacup, and yet since the work is engaging at a deep level with universal human frailties and vulnerabilities, all its formal devices or conceits are underpinned by a profound concern with ‘sentiment’ in the best, traditional sense. In an English context, this word might be loaded with negative associations, but to the Portuguese, ‘sentiment’ is to be valued and cherished, and opera comes into its own when traditional ‘sentiment’ is released. Without this core existential connection between the theatrical experience of the operatic material and the life experience of the operatic audience, any amount of narrative game-playing or stylistic collage will fail to reanimate opera’s traditional values.

*The Yellow Sofa* received a range of critical responses in the Evening Standard<sup>47</sup>, Opera Now<sup>48</sup> and Opera<sup>49</sup> Magazines, in addition to an extended article in the Times Literary Supplement, in which Guy Dammann recognised the opera’s polarised extremes between the real and the unreal, and between one musical register and another:

Anyone familiar with the ‘verismo’ of *fin-de-siècle* Italian opera...will know that reality, in the usual sense of the term, ventures only with great caution on to the operatic stage. In large part this is down to the basic unreality of the mode of representation itself: in real life we speak rather than sing. But with song’s easy recruitment of a kind of attention focused less on what is being said, than on

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<sup>47</sup> N. Kimberley, (21/08/09), ‘Rising Stars Shine in the Land of Picnics and Champagne’, review in the Evening Standard, London

<sup>48</sup> E. Pomfret, (December 2009), ‘The Yellow Sofa’, review in Opera Magazine, London

<sup>49</sup> L. Battle, (November 2009), ‘The Yellow Sofa’, review in Opera, London.

how someone says it, when some facet of reality is successfully conveyed at all, it is conveyed with great force. It is just such a measured realism that one finds in Julian Philips's and Edward Kemp's interesting new chamber opera, *The Yellow Sofa*. On first impressions, the drama seems more symbolist than realist: the action and dialogue are both highly stylized; the music protean, revelling in a wide variety of styles, without ever seeming to settle; and one of the main characters is a piece of furniture<sup>50</sup>

and yet what Dammann ultimately focuses on is the opera's underlying sentiment, how its playfulness is underpinned by an engagement with real, shared human experience however unsettling or elusive its structural devices:

...but Philips and Kemp's short opera leaves one with a sense of something very normal having taken place: two lovers reunited because they miss the domestic habits that once bound them together in modest comfort and affection...the emotional climax, when it comes, takes one by surprise only in the sincerity and warmth of feeling it generates.<sup>51</sup>

Arguably, it is 'sincerity and warmth of feeling' that ultimately underpins traditional operatic values; a fact that any model for new opera development ignores at its peril.

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<sup>50</sup> G. Dammann, (4/09/09), 'Cushion the Blows', review in the Times Literary Supplement, London.

<sup>51</sup> G. Dammann, (4/09/09), 'Cushion the Blows', review in the Times Literary Supplement, London.

## Chapter Five

### Fourth Case study: *Knight Crew*

The opportunity that this final case study represents was an unexpected one. Whereas the operas *Followers* and *The Yellow Sofa* were specifically designed to function within unconventional performing spaces around the Glyndebourne grounds, *Knight Crew* was conceived for the main stage and the full Glyndebourne Company resources. This proved a valuable opportunity to project the central creative research questions on to a larger canvas; to look grand opera in the face, equipped with the experience of *Followers* and *The Yellow Sofa*. Consequently, *Knight Crew* found itself in the same territory as Eötvös's *Love and Other Demons*, with one crucial difference: an overarching educational and social purpose which would place a body of young people and non-professional performers at the heart of an operatic narrative, in order to widen the appeal and appreciation of opera. In a sense, if *Followers* could be described as 'site-specific', *Knight Crew* is 'community-specific'<sup>1</sup>, required to engage with a number of performing constituencies – amateur/professional, operatic/non-operatic. This chapter will explore the implications of such a high level of community engagement within an elaborately made operatic artwork and its implications on the central questions of this research. To what extent is it possible to reinhabit the grand operatic tradition without compromising a contemporary musical sensibility, and might a 'community-specific' context be an appropriate territory in which to attempt this?

### Commissioning context

*Knight Crew* emerged from the first few months of this creative residency; Glyndebourne's Education Department was inviting pitches for a new youth commission to be staged in 2010. A proposal was submitted with director John Fulljames, based on the idea of an operatic treatment of Nicky Singer's then unpublished novel, *Knight Crew* – a modern retelling of the King Arthur myth in a contemporary gangland setting – which evolved into a formal commission in spring 2007. Appendix 14 (page 256) lays out the opera's development process, which evolved

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<sup>1</sup> This distinction is taken from M. Kwon *One Place After Another* (Cambridge Mass., MIT Press, 2004), p. 109.



gradually over the full three years of this residency, culminating four performances in March 2010.

As Chapter Four outlines, Glyndebourne has a long-established commitment to developing community and youth opera work. Thanks to its unique Festival structure, Glyndebourne's main theatre lies dormant during the early spring, enabling the company's production resources to be easily reallocated for the staging of a new opera, specifically aimed at young performers and family audiences, largely unfamiliar with either Glyndebourne or Opera. While Jonathan Dove's *Hastings Spring* (1990), *Dreamdragons* (1993) and *In Search of Angels* (1995), commissioned by Glyndebourne Education, were all models of 'community-specific' opera away from Glyndebourne itself – devised and performed with communities in Hastings, Ashford, Peterborough – subsequent ventures took advantage of Glyndebourne's main stage, establishing a tradition of new main-scale opera for young people staged at Glyndebourne during the early spring period. *Misper* (1997), *Zoe* (2000) and *Tangier Tattoo* (2004) by Jonathan Lunn and Stephen Plaice each pushed the boundaries of what this kind of opera might achieve, while the 'hip-hop-era' *School 4 Lovers* (2006) explored a collision between Mozart's *Così Fan Tutte* and contemporary hip-hop. Glyndebourne's ongoing commitment to offset its main season with an ambitious opera commission for young people, staged in March, every three to four years, is impressive. In a large part a fulfilment of the vision of its Head of Education, Katie Tearle, the commitment is none the less held by the entire company:

Something like this is hugely valuable for bringing a company together behind education – and its success will make it easier to go back to the Board to do something else. No longer can anyone say that this kind of work is a distraction from what we should be doing. In fact, it has opened up new sources of funding for the future.<sup>2</sup>

Behind this commitment lies a set of very clear educational and social objectives, summed up the Education Department's broad statement of purpose: 'to enrich people's lives through opera'. While the Dove model involved going out into a community and devising a work in partnership with that community, the youth opera model involved

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<sup>2</sup> David Pickard, quoted in R. Ings *Knight Crew evaluation report*, (Glyndebourne, July 2010), p. 61.

almost ‘inventing’ a community for the Glyndebourne itself, by engaging and recruiting young people in the local area. On the ground, there is a clear distinction between these two operative models for investigating new opera development, one intervening in a local community for the staging of an event, the other assimilating community elements into the Glyndebourne infrastructure. For the purposes of this research, however, the implications of both could be said to be ‘community-specific’; both requiring a composer to adapt his/her compositional approach to the realities of the performing resources.<sup>3</sup>

In a youth opera context, recruitment can be as much about finding performers as it is finding a potential new audience for opera. With *Knight Crew*, nearly five hundred young people were touched by the process – no doubt partly persuaded by the presence of television cameras filming for a parallel BBC Two documentary – and many of those who were unsuccessful at audition were encouraged and supported to attend the final performances of the opera. The *Knight Crew* recruitment process was also driven by a social purpose to access young people normally missed by this kind of creative venture:

Knight Crew is an especially ambitious project in that we are specifically targeting groups of young people who are especially hard to reach and hard to engage in the 14-19 age group. We are therefore collaborating with a number of agencies through the local authority children’s services to discover the best way of identifying these young people and adapting the ways we can deliver this project that best suits and supports them. We are hoping that this project is transformative for the young people taking part and our organisation as a whole.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, as the wider potential impact of this commission became apparent, *Knight Crew* was positioned at the centre of a more ambitious education project – the Round Table Project – which was directly involved with the delivery of the new Creative and Media Diploma in schools local to Glyndebourne.

In terms of the scope of this specific research project, however, the rich educational and social contexts for this commission presented a number of profound creative dilemmas. For Glyndebourne:

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<sup>3</sup> Kwon rightly raises concerns about the ‘highly charged’ and ‘elastic political’ nature of the term ‘community’. See Kwon *One Place*, p. 112.

<sup>4</sup> Amy Bere, quoted in R. Ings *Knight Crew*, p. 10.

the paradox...[was] trying to maintain its ambition to 'try to do the best that can be done anywhere' whilst opening up its main stage, reserved usually for highly trained professional performers, to teenagers with little or no experience of hearing opera, let alone performing it.<sup>5</sup>

for this project, a tension between a desire to project its main research questions onto a broader, grand operatic canvas and a professional requirement to respond directly to a commissioning brief. Kwon describes this tension in an American visual arts context, as part of a wider discussion of how the original ideals of site-specific art have broadened out into social and community engagement:

Generally speaking, the artist used to be a maker of aesthetic objects; now he/she is a facilitator, educator, coordinator, and beaurocrat. Additionally, as artists have adopted managerial functions of art institutions (curatorial, educational, archival) as an integral part of their creative process, managers of art within art institutions (curators, educators, public program directors), who often take their cues from these artists, now see themselves as authorial figures in their own right.<sup>6</sup>

In a very real sense, the specific educational remit behind Glyndebourne's cultivation and commissioning of youth opera together with its very real resource implications, has built within it a set of expectations that the composer is required to fulfil; these were laid down by Glyndebourne as prerequisites from the start. The challenge here, therefore, was to evolve a strategy for meeting these requirements head-on without dangerously compromising artistic integrity or deactivating this research project's central questions.

### **Performing context: the resources for *Knight Crew***

While Kwon rightly describes all artist-commissioner partnerships in community art ventures as 'a form of artistic collaboration in its own right' (see Kwon, 2004, p. 124), in a Glyndebourne youth opera context, the commissioner, and specifically Katie Tearle, possessed a body of accumulated knowledge and experience around staging projects of this nature, knowledge that proved invaluable for this opera's development. The recruiting of young people and the assembling of a chorus, the balance between

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<sup>5</sup> R. Ings, *Knight Crew*, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> M. Kwon, *One Place After Another*, (Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 2004), p. 51.

professional performers and non-professionals, the make-up of the orchestra – all of these factors were managed by Glyndebourne Education itself, presenting the creative team with a clear set of resources:

- Six professional singers
- Chorus of young people (c. 50)
- Smaller chorus of younger boys (average age 12)
- Women's chorus
- Youth orchestra, with professional players contained within

Put another way, while Eötvös was expected to stretch the Glyndebourne company, even encouraged to exert creative pressure on its resources, *Knight Crew* needed to satisfy very specific constituencies, whether a group of 14-19 year old performers, many of whom had little familiarity with singing or opera, a chorus of women with little or no choral experience, or a youth orchestra of varying musical abilities.

What such a clear set of resources presents to a composer is a set of challenges around musical difficulty, performability and the approachability of the basic compositional material. While the professional core of six singers could be relied on to carry a grand operatic narrative with the requisite vocal energy, younger voices needed to be handled differently, both in terms of balance and stamina. From the outset, for example, it was clear that the young people's material would need to be vocally sympathetic in terms of register, and easily graspable, while the women's chorus – many of whom were parents of the young people participating – needed to be practical, any harmonic textures easily achieved with simple parallel chords. Similarly, the orchestral writing had to find exactly the right kind of challenge to enable the 37 young players to flourish, supported by 13 professionals. All of these factors had to be assimilated into the compositional design without losing sight of deeper creative concerns.

### **Creative context**

Nicky Singer's novel *Knight Crew* presented an ideal vehicle for this kind of community-specific venture. Singer was initially approached with a view to treating her successful novel *Feather Boy*; as this was already in development as a musical –

(music: Rachel Portman, lyrics: Don Black) – *Knight Crew* was offered as an alternative. This modern retelling of the King Arthur myth in which the young Art(hur) takes control of the Knight Crew gang, attempting to change its violent nature, offered a strong narrative arc. Its interlacing of the everyday with the magical and its juxtaposition of intimate, interior scenes with choral tableaux seemed to evoke the grand operatic tradition, the tension between its mythic source and contemporary setting analogous to the social challenges of the project itself: how to make opera (myth) speak to a community of young people (contemporary setting).

Like *Love and Other Demons* and *The Yellow Sofa*, *Knight Crew*'s starting point was a novel, albeit a then unpublished one.<sup>7</sup> However, while the text-music development process with Edward Kemp on *The Yellow Sofa* had been characterised by a refreshing degree of like-minded fluency, eased along by an out of copyright novel and long dead author, the gestation of *Knight Crew* was more problematic, evoking analogous tensions to those that surrounded the libretto development for *Love and Other Demons*. Firstly, like Kornél Hamvai, Singer had no experience of libretto writing; secondly, she was adapting her own material and was at times, painfully close to it. As a result, the development process was not always straightforward, disagreements resulting from the different perspectives of novel and opera, the novel relishing in detail, narrative complexity, richness; the opera requiring simplification, the pairing down of material, clarity of shape and structure.

While the development process for *Followers* and *The Yellow Sofa* allowed text and music to develop often in parallel, the *Knight Crew* libretto required many stages of filtering, honing down scenes to their bare essentials, carving out structures or shapes out of extended dialogues. As this was often achieved in partnership with director John Fulljames, this development process was a more active, three-way dialogue; Fulljames's ability to envisage the theatrical reality of specific action sequences had a critical impact on the opera's composition. None the less, the accrued experience of developing *Followers*, adapting Eça de Queiróz and scrutinising *Love and Other Demons*, ensured that a wide range of accumulated knowledge and experience was available to inform the

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<sup>7</sup> Intriguingly, Singer's novel was altered as a direct consequence of the libretto development for this opera.

shaping of long, extended dialogue sequences, in addition to a honed sense of what the libretto text needed to deliver for this specific operatic world.

The great strength of Singer's book is its strongly drawn characters, its bold action and powerful tragic sweep. In terms of the specific youth opera remit, of course, it also crucially places a group of young people at the centre of its story. Perhaps in a more thoroughgoing way than *The Yellow Sofa*, *Knight Crew* had the potential to be a 'chorus' opera, the chorus is the central 'character', onstage throughout, as its young performers were later to recognise:

We had the title role! So we already had a lot to live up to...  
We were the structure of the opera, as all the events happened in or to the Knight Crew  
We are the moving force behind the opera. We are the ones who affect the soloists and their characters' lives.  
The chorus brings the story to life and helps narrate the story.<sup>8</sup>

The creative opportunity that emerged early on from this chorus-driven narrative was the chance to investigate a traditionally informed grand operatic model, in which the individual experience of its central characters (professional singers) might play out against a canvas of dramatised chorus. The aim was to pursue this research project's concern for reanimating traditional operatic values by deploying a neo-Verdian approach in which a high, grand operatic aesthetic could embrace more popular, contemporary musical registers. Certainly on a basic level, this was a question of 'solving' the challenges of the commission's specific performing constituencies; however, more fundamentally, *Knight Crew* concerned itself with reconciling the grand operatic tradition with late twentieth and twenty-first century contemporary musical practice, while exploiting the different musical registers this implies as a way of building a convincing narrative.

### **The narrative structure of *Knight Crew***

While the polystylistic approach of *Followers* was a direct result of the work's design – its time shifts suggesting a succession of at least three different operatic languages, *The*

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<sup>8</sup> B. Ings, *Knight Crew*, p. 46.

*Yellow Sofa* attempted to draw its diverse musical elements together in more focussed way, juxtaposing its different registers as a way of building operatic form. *Knight Crew* takes this further; by allocating specific musical material for each of its performing constituencies, a musical narrative could emerge from the juxtaposition and play of different materials, sometimes resonating directly with the onstage action, sometimes advancing deeper, more psychologically driven concerns in purely musical terms.

This solution of tailoring musical material to the specific requirements of the performing constituencies, but then transforming this approach into an aesthetic principle – a desire to continue this research project’s engagement with polystylistic opera – unlocked the *Knight Crew*’s operatic world. Just as *The Yellow Sofa* had explored the poetic and theatrical effect of generating structure out of the interweaving of ‘high’ and ‘low’ registers, so the larger scale, expansive nature of the *Knight Crew* story allowed for the long-range exploration of seemingly disparate elements, from post-serial linear manipulation to folksong. Consequently, *Knight Crew* could also be said to question the play of the ‘serious’ and the ‘popular’ in contemporary operatic practice.

Inevitably the ‘popular’ elements in the *Knight Crew* score relate chiefly to the Knight Crew itself. The story’s main focus, the Crew is onstage throughout, hence Es Devlin’s remarkable stage design which suggested council estate as much as climbing frame, and facilitated the gang’s constant presence. As a consequence, the Knight Crew would inevitably be confronted by a very substantial amount of musical material in rehearsal, and the score needed to find a strategy for enabling the young people to confidently inhabit this over two substantial acts. The solution was to respond directly to the practical challenge this presented, while reinterpreting this pragmatic response as an aesthetic principle in relation to building the operatic narrative. The *Knight Crew* material is thus derived from a precise pool of pitches which then runs as a through line throughout the opera. On a practical level, this could facilitate the learning process by ensuring an intervallic consistency in all the Knight Crew’s music; on a conceptual level, this almost monomaniac obsession with the same basic set, not only suggested the gang’s brutality but also clarified its position in the narrative structure. This approach is not a question of reminiscence themes or *leitmotif*; rather, a desire to use pitch DNA for character building – analogous to Godofredo’s hexachord in *The Yellow Sofa*, the





20

137

E. *f* We're

M. *f* We're

Crew (girls) *f* We're

Crew (boys) *f* We're

Pno. *ff* *sempre marcato* *mf*

142

E. the mans

M. the mans

Crew (girls) the mans

Crew (boys) the mans

Pno. *ff*

**Example 2:** *The Knight Crew*, Scene 1 (bars 137-163)

148

E. Knight Crew

M. Knight Crew

Crew (girls) Knight Crew

Crew (boys) Knight Crew

Pno. *mf*

151

E. mans

M. mans

Crew (girls) mans

Crew (boys) mans

Pno. *ff*

Example 2: (continued)

21

155

E. Ur - ban sold - iers Street

M. Ur - ban sold - iers Street

Crew (girls) Ur - ban sold - iers Street

Crew (boys) Ur - ban sold - iers Street

Pno. 21

*f* *mf*

159

E. walk dons.

M. walk dons.

Crew (girls) walk dons.

Crew (boys) walk dons.

Pno.

*f*

Example 2: (continued)

This core material, its intervallic structure and triadic harmonisation, constitutes one of the central narrative threads of the opera. While it is certainly true that whenever the Knight Crew is theatrically present, this material is treated, it is nevertheless treated more as a pool of pitch shapes, harmonies and melodic material than formalised repetition. Certainly the gang chant quoted above is repeated directly when the drama demands it – most strikingly in the fight between Art and his half-brother Mordec at the end of Act 2 (fig. 102) – but elsewhere this pool of pitches is manipulated in a freely developmental way, whether the playful ‘*big yard, charge card*’ number in Act 1, scene 3 (fig. 62) or the orchestral fight sequence (Act 1, scene 8, fig. 123) in which the Knight Crew cell is splintered and developed in a symphonic interlude. While conceptually this approach to the Knight Crew music is informed by post-Stravinskian serial practice, its immediate characterisation deliberately alludes to more popular, vernacular musical styles – Act 1, scene 3 evoking a musical theatre register which resonates with the gang’s obsession with glamour, while in Act 1 scene 6, electric guitars allude to rock music traditions with repetitions of a funky riff derived from the Knight Crew’s basic set (example 3). From the outset, no attempt was made to directly refer to the popular musical material that such a street gang might identify with today – the opera’s sense of ‘reality’ needed to remain, paradoxically, poetical – but rather to take on some of the colour, timbre and rhythmic profile of contemporary popular musical practice.

## Scene 6

**Fast**

(♩ = c.150)

*ART arrives at the Mill. The pictures have preceded him. The crew are playing them back, again and again, the Saxon falling, falling*

**Mother**

*p*

good.

**Fast**  
(♩ = c.150)

**Piano**

*pp*

*p poco marcato*

If this Knight Crew thread articulates the contemporary urban world of Singer's story, intertwined against it is another stream of musical material that evokes the mythic origins of the story. In Singer's novel, Myrtle is the Merlin analogue – an old bag lady, living in rubbish by the canal who encourages Art to look beyond the sordid realities of the everyday and strive for a more meaningful engagement with the world. In her language, her association with water, and the prophecies that foretell Art 'as king', Myrtle is set up in direct opposition to the Knight Crew – a pastoral, sage-like figure out of kilter with the Knight Crew world. In a sense, it is this Myrtle-Knight Crew tension that generates the score's narrative energy and forward drive, and as a consequence her musical material was conceived in a radically different way, its breadth, flow and lyricism intended to throw the jagged Knight Crew music into stark relief.

From a polystylistic perspective, envisaged here is a classic urban-pastoral dichotomy: the urban grunge of the Knight Crew music set in tension against Myrtle's neo-pastoral sonorities. Once again, a pitch row generated Myrtle's entire musical language, but whereas the Knight Crew row was conceived as deliberately short-winded, even mechanistic, Myrtle's pitch DNA was comprised of a long breathed eighteen note melody, divided into three phrases, from which all her melodic and harmonic material is derived:



#### **Example 4:** Myrtle's pitch sequence

The pentatonic, modal nature of Myrtle's pitch pool creates an entirely different harmonic field to the Knight Crew, reinforced orchestrationally by a decision to flesh out her sonic world with strings, tuned percussion (especially vibraphone), horn and low winds – all the instruments 'avoided' by the Knight Crew sound. In narrative terms, however, Myrtle could be said to occupy an ambiguous position. Arguably the story's most important character, she disappears early on (Mordec stabs her in Act 1, scene 8) and yet her influence continues to be felt throughout the ensuing action. In the novel, narrated by the dead Art, this continuing influence is easily achieved, but in opera? How

can a character, no longer onstage, receding in the memories of the audience, continue to be felt as a controlling influence on events?

It is here that the polystylistic approach developed in *Followers* and *The Yellow Sofa* comes into its own. Myrtle's material generates such breadth and expansiveness, is so strongly characterised against the texture of the Knight Crew's material, that the story's central account of how a violent street gang might be changed for the better is articulated and mapped out through the play of these two different kinds of musical languages. The tension between the two is felt throughout. Myrtle's music opens the opera's *Prologue* as a dead Art tumbles through the water; once the real world intervenes, then Knight Crew chants are heard offstage, first in the horns and secondly from the whole chorus. For the majority of Act 1, these two musics are held closely in tension, almost as if the old pastoral myth is fighting against this modern recontextualisation. Knight Crew scenes are built up out of the Knight Crew set (scenes 1, 3, 4, 6 & 8), Myrtle's scene gently elaborates her eighteen note plainsong (Prologue, or scene 2). In scenes 3 and 8, the two worlds collide as Art's half-brother, Mordec brutally confronts Myrtle. In scene 8, (figure 136 onwards), their two musics cut across each other at ever diminishing distances as Mordec closes in on Myrtle with his knife:

**136** Quasi recitativo (tempo 2)  
(♩ = c.40)

*mf* declamatory

Myr. 172

What ho - nour, what res - pect\_\_\_\_\_

**136** Quasi recitativo (tempo 2)  
(♩ = c.40)

*pp* repeat ad lib.

Pno.

**137**

Myr. 173

send - ing a boy to stab a stran - ger?\_\_\_\_\_

**137**

Pno.

**138** Tempo 1  
(♩ = c.160)

Myr. 174

\_\_\_\_\_

*ff* molto marcato

Mor.

**138** Tempo 1  
(♩ = c.160)

*ff*

Pno.

You

Example 5: *Knight Crew*, Scene 8 (bars 172-182)



**139** Recitativo (tempo 2)

178 *poco piu f*

Myr. What cour - age lob - bing pet - rol

Mor. what?

**139** Recitativo (tempo 2)

Pno. *p* repeat ad lib.

179

Myr. at an en - e - my you can - not see?

Pno.

**140** Tempo 1

180 *f*

Mor. What you say - ing bag -

**140** Tempo 1

Pno. *f*

Example 5: continued

And finally in the moment of her death, as Myrtle collapses and dies, all eighteen notes of her set are heard simultaneously in a clustered gesture that suggests the 'pastoral' suffocated by the 'urban', as if Myrtle's sound has been irrevocably tainted by the dirty chromaticism of the Knight Crew set:

**150** **Tempo 2**

223 *fff*

Pno.

*pp*

*repeat ad lib.*

*fff*

224

Q. *Shouted:*  
Myrtle! Bubz. Bubz!

*MYRTLE doesn't stir*

Pno.

225

Q. *Shouted:*  
What are you on? What have you done?

**Suddenly faster**  
(♩ = c.120)

**Suddenly faster**  
(♩ = c.120)

Pno.

**Example 6:** *Knight Crew*, Scene 8 (bars 223-5)

Since Myrtle's example and spirit continues to exert a strong influence over the ensuing events of *Knight Crew*, this process of musical juxtaposition and development continues through the course of the entire opera. In scene 9, Art and Quin are drawn close together after Myrtle's death, their burgeoning love music made entirely out of statements of the Myrtle row which sounds in the orchestra as a benediction (figure 165). More critically, in Act 1, scene 11, the Knight Crew's golden age when Art manages to transform the gang for the better, the entire musical material is generated out of slow triadic harmonisations of Myrtle's eighteen-note melody. Unlike Act 1, scene 8's Mordec-Myrtle confrontation, here Myrtle's music wins through, completely transforming the Knight Crew sound despite her absence from the story:

## Scene 11

The Mill. ART calls his loyal "Knights" to the stone.

**Plainchant-recitative (sempre colla voce)**  
 ♩ = c.40 but freely

*p dolce e legato*

Art

Here, \_\_\_\_\_ I sit here Here \_\_\_\_\_ at the stone

**Plainchant-recitative (sempre colla voce)**  
 ♩ = c.40 but freely

Piano

*pp misterioso (strings)*

Art

and the best of the Knights sit with me \_\_\_\_\_

Pno.

Art

To - ge - ther we shape A new world

Pno.

*cresc.*

Art

A gol - - den \_\_\_\_\_ earth a wide blue sky \_\_\_\_\_

Pno.

*p*

*mp*

Example 7: Knight Crew, Scene 11 (bars 1-8)

Inevitably considering the scope of the *Knight Crew* narrative, this central opposition between Knight Crew and Myrtle material is enriched by other musical strands that in narrative terms function at a lower level. These other strands were developed in an analogous way – practical limitations around the mothers’ chorus giving rise to a folk balladic style, a Yorùbán melody informing the music for Quin (Guinevere), pastoral soul music for Lance(elot). Nonetheless, the opera’s central discourse is generated almost exclusively through a double variation/development process between Knight Crew and Myrtle, a process continued on through Act Two, allowing the opera to come full circle at the end, back to the Myrtle music with which it began.

1333

Pno.

1336

Pno.

Slower  
♩ = c.50

15<sup>ma</sup>

1339

Pno.

rit. . . . .

repeat ad lib, fade to nothing

pppp

**Example 8:** *Knight Crew*, Act 2, scene 12 (bars 1329-1339)

### **Operatic lyricism and the reanimation of tradition**

Of course, it is in the area of voice that Knight Crew's different performing constituencies are most directly experienced; the trained operatic voice colliding with untrained teenage singing. Considering the care that Glyndebourne devotes so many resources to nurturing its choral sound for the main Festival season, a chorus of non-professional women, placed centre stage is a radical gesture. On one level, the mixed sound that results is a given for community-specific work of this nature, even considering the expressive benefits that result:

What you can sometimes get in a community opera like this is something that may be a little crude in the way that it is sung or performed compared to professional, but what the amateur has that the professional sometimes doesn't is performing as though their life depended on it. So you may not get excellence in terms of artistic standards, as you would with professionals, but a level of emotional involvement that can sometimes exceed what professionals could deliver.<sup>9</sup>

However, for the purposes of operatic form building this kind of clear differentiation between even contradictory styles of vocalisation is highly valuable. It enhances the musical profile of different characters in the story, allowing the music to achieve a wider range and scope. In *Knight Crew*, operatic lyricism is inevitably the domain of the principal characters but this grand operatic register is used for psychological ends rather than just being 'put on' in an artificial way. Myrtle's *un*-reality is enhanced by her heightened operatic lyrical style, the vocal register communicating magic and difference, regardless of whether a line of text has been absorbed by the audience. In the case of Art and his half-brother Mordec, this is more of a journey. For Art, as he grows into his role as 'King', his vocalisation gains in power and presence so that Act 1, scene 11 is as much about his coming of age as an 'opera singer', as it is about a transformation of the Knight Crew, Art's vocal material finally ringing out, matching Myrtle's beauty of sound. Similarly, in Act 2 scene 1, Mordec's vocal style broadens out and darkens; as his malevolence grows, his vocal style gains a heightened, operatic quality – once again, Myrtle's shadow.

If the operatic registers of *Knight Crew* are used to intensify character, so the deployment of two musical theatre voices for Elayne and Lance provides a useful

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<sup>9</sup> Quoted in R. Ings, *Knight Crew*, p. 59.

middle ground between operatic and untrained teenage voices. On a social level, this incorporation of a more popular vocal style, one which would be far more familiar to a majority of the young participants, helped to demystify operatic singing and in an invisible way, emphasise that the vocal sound of popular contemporary music is no less stylised or mannered than an operatic vocal sound. Inevitably, youth or community opera can sometimes explore only a very casual relationship to the operatic tradition resulting in a kind of standard musical theatre style under the operatic banner. This is of course a direct consequence of trying to incorporate untrained voices, whether young or adult, into the genre. What *Knight Crew* tries to achieve is a convincing synthesis of highly trained operatic voice, musical theatre voice and raw, untrained young and adult voices. Naturally, this creates practical difficulties in the theatre – the unbroken boys voices of the Danny chorus had to be amplified from the back of the stage, similarly the final female solo in (Act 2, scene 11, fig. 136). Even the two musical theatre voices required amplification, since their training and style of projection typically depends on the presence of a microphone. No doubt for some, introducing amplification into an operatic context is fraught with dangerous contradictions, after all, voices are trained operatically in part to enhance projection. None the less, the sophistication of contemporary spot-mic techniques ensures that these elements can be incorporated with great sensitivity, without damaging the immediate impact of the operatic vocal sound. And in the end, it was the sheer physical impact of the operatic voices that appeared to engage and inspire the young people the most, reinforcing the primacy of opera as lived experience:

How different opera is to what I thought it would be. I thought it was boring but this has changed how I feel about opera. Opera is cool.<sup>10</sup>

## Conclusion

In two important ways, *Knight Crew* attempts to engage with operatic and musical theatre traditions. Firstly, by embracing a neo-Verdian grand operatic approach to chorus and form-building, the opera aims to espouse traditional high operatic values in a contemporary context. Sometimes, this influence is very deliberate. Act 2, scene 5, for example, in which Art is haunted by Danny, the boy he killed, is closely modelled on

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<sup>10</sup> Quoted in R. Ings, *Knight Crew*, p. 33.



the Apparition scene from Verdi's *Macbeth*, a connection evidenced by its juxtaposition of a solo treble voice with dark, lugubrious scoring, and slow unfolding triadic harmony. Similarly, in the following scene, Act 2, scene 6, in which Quin's guilt is revealed, the chorus material is treated in a block-like way, figures 68-71 repeated directly at figure 75 as the stakes are raised. This choral panelling of the musical structure here is analogous to Verdi's treatment of chorus in both the finales of *Macbeth* Acts 1 and Act 2.

The other important way in which *Knight Crew* engages with operatic tradition relates to its attempt to reconcile 'high' and 'low' operatic registers, a facet of the polystylistic approach highlighted in Chapter Five. While this itself could be described as a neo-Verdian approach, a more recent model is found in Bernstein's *West Side Story*, a work which though inhabiting a mainstream American musical theatre world, none the less espouses high operatic values. Clearly *Knight Crew*'s gangland story, its retelling of an old love story in a contemporary context is directly analogous to *West Side Story*, a score which is deliberately evoked in Elayne's 'charge card' number in Act 1 scene 3. In terms of the future development of the operatic art form, however, Bernstein offers a valuable example of both the inspiring potential and pitfalls of attempting to straddle high art and popular music. If opera as an art form is to retain its relevance and appeal, this kind of creative endeavour which attempts to synthesise the seemingly contradictory musical elements of our contemporary world in a theatrical form, has particular resonance and meaning.

This capacity for opera to explore stylistic diversity, and engage with tradition, informed a number of critical responses to the March 2010 performances. The opera received wide coverage in the national press, which celebrated the project's creative ambition, the energy and commitment of its cast and its high musical values. Negative comment, however, repeatedly teased over the question of the score's stylistic identity, praising its versatility but by implication, suggesting the lack of an underlying compositional voice. Even a four-star, Independent review (5/03/10) implies confusion around the nature and purpose of the music:

The moment the curtain rises on Es Devlin's slowly rotating giant cube, onto which a desperate face is projected while the modern-day Arthur launches into a

plangent recitative, we know beyond any shadow of doubt that we are in safe hands. The orchestral sound is marvellously translucent, the vocal line could have come from Britten: Glyndebourne's first composer-in-residence Julian Philips is a master of pastiche.<sup>11</sup>

While *Followers* constitutes this research project's most direct engagement with 'pastiche' as a way of engaging with different operatic textures, the contrasting registers of *Knight Crew*, though a consequence of its different performing constituencies, were deployed out of a profoundly held aesthetic position about development models for twenty-first century opera. While one for reviewer, this was seen as a defining characteristic:

Philips has never shied away from co-opting contrasting musical styles for dramatic purposes, and his score is a riot of references, taking in popular and operatic lyric idioms in a way that allows seamless interaction between professional soloists and chorus.<sup>12</sup>

For another, such an approach implies almost a 'death of the subject':

Yet the opera doesn't grip as it should. One disconcerting element is Philips's music, which ricochets between disparate styles like a pinball. Vaughan-Williamsy strings; driving riffs; Hollywoodish fanfares; atonal mood-painting; saccharine ballads: it's all expertly pastiched and ebulliently played by a youthful orchestra under Nicholas Collon's direction. But too little is memorable.<sup>13</sup>

This yet more savage response highlights the very real risks of a musical approach that embraces difference and contradiction. Such a critical response disappoints primarily since the musical narrative of *Knight Crew* is posited on such carefully made, long-range strategies intended to pull the score's disparate elements together. Perhaps this is a perennial reception problem for any operatic composer whose work has yet to establish itself in the broader public sphere. Nevertheless, Morrison's response can perhaps be taken as symptomatic of the risks to identity that surround any attempt to use a community-specific model for the development of twenty-first century grand opera, risks that Kwon nevertheless reassuringly expresses as a 'productive source of exploration':

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<sup>11</sup> M. Church (5/03/10), review in the Independent, London.

<sup>12</sup> G. Dammann (8/03/10), review in the Guardian, London.

<sup>13</sup> R. Morrison (9/03/10), review in the Times, London.

...a situation can leave the artist with a sense of isolation and estrangement in that his/her identity cannot be fixed to either side...But this is not to romanticize the role of the artist as a lonely outcast or to presume that the community and the art world themselves have stable identities. In fact, the uncertainty of identity experienced by the artist is symptomatic of identities of all parties involved in the complex network of activities comprising community-based art...And of course, all subjects within this network are internally split or estranged as well, continuously negotiating a sense of identity and subjectivity through differential encounters with the other. But this does not foreclose the possibility of generative discussions between contemporary art and the needs and interests of nonart constituencies. In fact this instability of identity and subjectivity can be the most productive source of such explorations.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Kwon, *One Place*, p. 136.

## Chapter Six

### Conclusion

As the preceding four chapters demonstrate, each of this project's four case studies has explored quite different responses to questions of *context* and *reanimation of tradition* in opera development. Perhaps this is a direct consequence of an underlying approach to this composer-in-residence scheme: rather than seeking to refine one particular new operatic model, the project has sought to mark out a creative field within which to experiment, experience and develop new opera in a responsive, assimilative way. Within the framework of this research, however, one question remains – what kind of new models might this body of work offer for future opera development?

The notion of a 'model' for creative and artistic development is of course nothing new, and particularly in opera. One thinks of the modelling effect of the Metastasian libretto on Eighteenth Century opera, Gluck's search for new models for operatic composition with his 1767 preface to *Alceste* or even Wagner's proselytising for Music Drama. In a contemporary context, a work such as Gerald Barry's *The Triumph of Beauty and Deceit*<sup>1</sup> is very self-consciously *modelled* on Handel's *The Triumph of Time and Truth*, albeit in a highly idiosyncratic manner. In the context of this research however, '*model*' is understood in the logical sense of (artistic) experimentation, rather than as an attempt to establish a formal paradigm. Few composers would wish for their creative outputs to be categorised as 'models' in this way - particularly before any wider reception has taken place. Instead, this research entails a sharing of creative and collaborative process and an offering of possible strategies and approaches to opera development for fellow practitioners. As this conclusion will call for the establishing of analogous composer-in-residence schemes within other British opera companies, it is hoped that the models offered here might constitute a significant contribution.

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<sup>1</sup> Gerald Barry *The Triumph of Beauty and Deceit* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996)

### *Context*

When reviewing all four case studies, it is perhaps *context* that has been proved to have the most powerful controlling influence and effect. This research has reinforced an instinctive sense that opera is nothing without its context and that any composer working in opera development needs to engage with the many contextual layers that s/he might confront: an individual or shared creative context, a commissioner's context, an opera company's context, the theatrical context, the audience context and of course, the wider cultural and social context. Perhaps this goes some way to explain Opera's remarkable ability to survive – that as an art-form it thrives on context; Opera has the potential to be music's most socially-aware genre, however paradoxical that might sound when one considers its close and often dependent relationships with wealth and the social elite.

Arguably *Followers* and *The Yellow Sofa* offer this project's most effective models for how a contemporary opera might respond to context. For *Followers*, this is a question of site-specificity; an exploration of how new opera can respond directly both to an opera company's visible sites – often unconventional spaces, outside of the theatre - but also its invisible sites – its history, culture, character or texture as a company. *The Yellow Sofa* was conceived to work more directly with the specific parameters of an opera company's performing resources – from working pragmatically with the singers available in a given period (through Glyndebourne's Jerwood Chorus Development Scheme), to accepting the realities of very limited theatrical resources and devising a theatrical style and approach that turned this to its own advantage.

By contrast, context proved itself to be rather more problematic for *Love and Other Demons* and *Knight Crew*. It is striking that for all Péter Eötvös's discourse around his desire to write an opera specifically for a Glyndebourne and British cultural context, the piece should have enjoyed far greater success abroad than at home and as it stands, a Glyndebourne revival seems unlikely. Perhaps this implies some insularity in the British opera scene, a disinterest in certain kinds of contemporary opera, as discussed in Chapter Three. However, it is more likely that Eötvös misunderstood the Glyndebourne context - or Glyndebourne misunderstood Eötvös's context – and that the modernist-traditionalist opera that resulted proved a better fit for opera companies in Vilnius, Chemnitz, Cologne, Strasbourg and Mulhouse.

Any difficulties that *Love and Other Demons* and *Knight Crew* may have had with context could also be related back to their larger-scale – both conceived for Glyndebourne’s proscenium arch main stage, both engaging with nineteenth century operatic heritage. It remains an unavoidable fact of new opera development, that smaller-scale forces and spaces, whether conventional or not, prove far more conducive for the development of new opera, allowing for a freer sense of creative play and experimentation and potentially a more direct and involving relationship with an audience. With *Love and Other Demons*, there remained something of a ‘fourth wall’ problem with the opera’s larger-scale scenes, which proved curiously uninvolved in the theatre. By contrast, the opera’s strongest musico-dramatic material – chiefly that relating to the character of Sierva – was its most intimate and small-scale, much of which might have been greatly enhanced by being reimagined in a smaller performing space.

With a community-specific project such as *Knight Crew*, any difficulties around context relate less to performing space, and more to the future life of the work itself and its performers. In terms of the specific theatrical space, the scale of Glyndebourne’s main theatre seemed to match the project’s ambition perfectly and its sense of drawing many different social constituencies together. As discussed in Chapter Five, here was a ‘community-specific’ project, albeit one where a performing community had been created specially to stage a new opera, from the wider Glyndebourne region. However, from an artistic standpoint, what is the future for a work of this kind? How adaptable might such an opera prove in terms of finding a place in twenty-first century operatic repertory? This might be a question of intrinsic artistic value but equally it relates to context in an important way. *Knight Crew* was staged through a logistically complex and intricate auditioning and rehearsing process. Such a process is irreplicable in any precise way so any future producer has to find alternative, community-sensitive strategies for staging the work, respecting and then solving its mix of operatic amateurs and professionals. And what happens to the community of non-professional performers once this process has run its course? In a broader historical context, these challenges are the age-old challenges of staging any opera; however for the contemporary composer it presents acute difficulties. How does a composer respond with sensitivity to a specific community context, while simultaneously ensuring that what s/he creates might have resonance and meaning for other, possibly very different communities, in the future?

After all, few composers are motivated to devote significant periods of creative activity for the sake of creating an operatic white elephant, particularly if a composer is engaged with the social implications of what s/he makes. While the *Knight Crew* case study evidence goes some way to share this contextual complexity, taken as a model for new opera development, it suggests that any composer involved with equivalent operatic ventures needs to remain strongly grounded in his/her own creative thinking, solving the theatrical challenges for a specific first production, while over time evolving strategies that might help the work enjoy some kind of after-life.

While Chapter One outlined Glyndebourne Festival Opera itself as the first context for this composer residency, a second context was provided by through the company's education department. The need for such departments within established opera companies is now well-established and recognised, thanks largely to the vision and persistence of key figures such as Anthony Whitworth-Jones and Katie Tearle. However, as British Opera enters a new, more critical funding climate, the links between opera and education are evolving from traditional outreach and small-scale commissioning, to more ambitious strategic partnerships that match an opera company's (sometimes fluctuating) interest in developing new work with education's ever-renewing need for experimentation and innovation. In this context, this composer-in-residence collaborative doctoral scheme is an ideal *model* for the development of new opera. It allows the developing opera composer to experience the hard realities of making opera in a professional context, while simultaneously reflecting on the art-form itself – a kind of virtuous circle in the commissioning of new work. Furthermore, on a practical level, this *model* for developing new opera over a longer time-span and resourcing its creation through a mix of operatic and educational funding may well prove a rather effective model in an increasingly difficult funding climate. With that in mind, it is striking how this research has been able to straddle all three operatic categories that were laid out in Chapter One – experimental work (*Followers*), chamber opera (*The Yellow Sofa*) and grand opera (*Knight Crew*) and it is to be sincerely hoped that other British opera companies will establish similar composer-in-residence schemes. It does enormous credit to the Glyndebourne Festival Company that the

composer Luke Styles was appointed in autumn 2011 as their second composer-in-residence.<sup>2</sup>

### *Reanimation of tradition*

Chapter One concluded with the open question ‘what is tradition?’; in a way, each of the preceding four case studies offers a slightly different answer, emphasising that the notion of ‘tradition’ in opera is a shifting and fluid one. ‘Tradition’ might be a question of performance – the established culture of training opera singers, the conventions of operatic staging, the accumulated experience of operatic conducting and orchestral-playing. ‘Tradition’ might equally be a notional canon of ‘great’ operas or ‘great’ opera recordings, and it may simply be just a question of history – the ‘tradition’ of *Opera Seria*, *Opera Buffa*, *Bel Canto* or *Music Drama*. Why ‘tradition’ remains a key issue for twenty-first century opera composers is because it is deeply embedded in the infrastructure of opera companies and conservatoire opera training. Any composer approaching this art-form is quickly forced to develop some kind of individual aesthetic position towards the tradition of opera itself, whether that might be assimilative and responsive - as in this doctoral research project - or more radical, even anti-operatic. While engaging with opera in this way might trigger anxieties of influence in the composer, it is worth considering that tradition might also simply equate to an individual’s own, unique artistic experience. For the opera composer, tradition can be his/her tradition – the operas s/he has encountered, experienced or studied, however cultural trends may have shaped this. Taken in this way, the three new operas that constitute this research have all been informed by an individual sensibility - one composer’s personal sense of tradition from Gluck, Offenbach and Monteverdi in *Followers*, to *Fado* in *The Yellow Sofa* and *Verdi* in *Knight Crew*.

### *Voice*

As all four case studies have outlined, at the heart of operatic tradition is the operatic voice, which Chapter One described as a ‘point of tension’ in the development of new

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<sup>2</sup> While Luke Styles’s composer residency at Glyndebourne has no direct affiliation to a university doctoral programme, the scheme nevertheless preserves a similar level of opportunity and creative development.



opera. In *Followers*, *The Yellow Sofa* and *Knight Crew*, the approach to the operatic voice has been one of honest engagement with the specificities of this performing resource. While both *Followers* and *The Yellow Sofa* demonstrated the need for the composer to be very alive to the different levels of experience and interpretative skill that opera singers might possess in relation to new opera, none the less, both operas reconfirm the extraordinary possibilities for new opera development that the operatic voice still offers, a vocal tradition that is far from outmoded, old-fashioned or irrelevant. With the complete performance of *Followers* staged at Glyndebourne in August 2011, the casting of soprano Gabriela Iştoc as Eurydice completely transformed the potential of the musical material, particularly in Part Two, where a genuine composer-performer collaboration, and the insight of director Frederick Wake-Walker ensured that the overtly operatic nature of the vocal writing could shine through a highly trained operatic voice and a performer with a deep theatrical imagination. Taken together with the casting of baritone Mike Wallace as Godofredo in *The Yellow Sofa*, both works evidence the critical importance of direct collaboration between the composer and performer in the development of new opera.

Both *Love and Other Demons* and *Knight Crew* build their narratives on key operatic voices – *Sierva* and *Delaura* in *Love and Other Demons*, *Myrtle* or *Art* in *Knight Crew* - but both operas also introduce non-operatic voices into their performing companies. For *Love and Other Demons*, this was a question of casting the Yorùbá slaves in Don Ygnacio's house; for *Knight Crew*, the musical theatre voices of Lance and Elayne were used to bridge the gap between the operatic voice and the young non-professional performers. Such a decision is not without its consequent difficulties – for Eötvös, casting black singing actors as Yorùbá slaves opened up real ethical questions; for *Knight Crew*, the need to amplify the non-operatic voices risked jeopardising the integrity of the overall sound, even though subtle and effective solutions were found. None the less, both operas strive in their different ways to reassert the importance of the traditional operatic voice whilst also suggesting that a twenty-first century opera composer might be less hidebound in his/her choice of voice-types.

### *Narrative*

To return to the Roland Barthes observation cited in Chapter One<sup>3</sup>, if the ‘narratives of the world are numberless’, it is hardly surprising that each of the four case studies employs radically different strategies for the building of operatic narrative. Arguably both *Love and Other Demons* and *Knight Crew* take a more conventional approach – in both cases, perhaps, a consequence of problematic libretto development. As Chapter Three argues, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that discontinuities in the development of the *Love and Other Demons* libretto had a negative impact on the final form of this opera. For *Knight Crew*, the opera would perhaps have found a stronger narrative shape, had a second writer been commissioned to produce the libretto, with greater objective distance from the material. As Chapter Five outlines, the narrative structure of Nicky Singer’s novel can be very easily mapped on to narrative archetypes of nineteenth century grand opera and Singer’s own strategies for treating this material were themselves very traditionally informed.

In terms of narrative, perhaps *Followers* and *The Yellow Sofa* offer the most meaningful models for operatic form building. In *Followers*, the whole narrative concept emerged from questions of performing space, how these spaces might map on to operatic history, and how fragments of the Orpheus myth might be used to frame this cross-fertilisation between past and present. As the conclusion of Chapter two makes clear, this kind of creative project brings many unforeseen difficulties and logistical challenges, but the experience of its making and performing reinforced a sense that new opera can feel most free when its ‘numberless narratives’ are reimagined in more experimental or radical ways. By contrast, *The Yellow Sofa* reimagines a conventionally operatic *adultery* narrative not by relocating the opera in an unconventional performing space, but by recontextualising the opera from within. Once conceived as a dream-like, magic-realist fantasy where anything might happen, a seemingly conventional *adultery* narrative is reactivated, free from its grand operatic baggage.

All four case studies offer a wide range of approaches around how to build and sustain an operatic narrative, and it is perhaps the accumulated collaborative experience, the lessons learned, that offer the most useful models for new opera development. A wide

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<sup>3 3</sup> R. Barthes, ‘Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives’, in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. S. Heath, (London, Fontana Paperbacks, 1977).

range of writer-collaborators have participated in this doctoral research - Simon Christmas, Edward Kemp, Kornél Hamvai, Nicky Singer – and each in their turn has had a major impact on the operatic outcomes. At this point of conclusion, it is abundantly clear that new opera development depends critically on its writers; on a basic level, an opera stands or falls on its dramaturgy, the depth and quality of its characters and situations, whatever approach a composer might take in response. In terms of ‘lessons learned’, however, effective librettists for new opera development are more likely to come from straight theatre, television, even film, than necessarily from a poetic background. Composers do not always come to opera with a sufficient breadth of theatrical experience in its widest sense, and it is often around questions of theatricality that contemporary opera narrative falls short. As a result, there is a need for the art-form to embrace more inventive, experimental approaches to story-telling and to shake off a kind of operatic default mode where the music can come across either merely as an incidental film score or a kind of unthinking throw-back to Puccini or Strauss. Like the writer, a director’s role is crucial, and each of this research project’s five directors – Olivia Fuchs, Silviu Purcarete, Clare Whistler, Frederick Wake-Walker and John Fulljames – has made significant contributions to the development of this project’s four case studies. Any new model for opera development should place both writer and director at the heart of the creative process - few composers can claim to have sufficient breadth of theatrical experience to manage effectively without either.

#### *Sketch for a new operatic aesthetic*

Looking to the future, it is striking that while the operas *Followers*, *The Yellow Sofa* and *Knight Crew* acquire a sense of finality in the context of this doctoral submission, each work is now not only finding new performing contexts but also sparking new potential projects for the future. In August 2011, outside the timeframe of this research project, *Followers* was staged complete at Glyndebourne and discussions are on-going about the implications and possibilities of mounting further performances in different spaces, independent of Glyndebourne. In August 2012, *The Yellow Sofa* is being revived, again at Glyndebourne, before a regional tour, including a performance at the Royal Opera House’s Linbury studio in November 2012. In 2014, the Rangi Ruru School in Christchurch, New Zealand is planning to stage *Knight Crew* and discussions are underway about adapting the work for slightly smaller performing contexts. Such

initiatives emphasise the open-ended nature of operatic art-works and the need for responsiveness and adaptability if new work is to find a lasting place in the repertory.

Perhaps the strongest evidence for the positive impact of this doctoral research project is a sense that its creative concerns are on-going, that this composer residency has not only generated the three operas of its specific timeframe (2006-2009) but that its impact will be felt very deeply in forthcoming operatic ventures. The site-specificity of *Followers* is informing developing plans for a promenade opera for the Barbican Campus; the experience of *The Yellow Sofa*, and specifically the Philips/Kemp/Wake-Walker approach to adapting Eça de Queirós is triggering creative discussion around a sequel, and the idea of community-specific opera and opera for young people is resulting in *Good Intentions* for W11 Opera (December 2012) and a possible opera for young people for the Linbury Studio in December 2013.

With such a sense of continuity and so many creative possibilities for the future, it is almost impossible to draw a clear line under this project at its close. In a sense the operatic works speak for themselves – it is outside of the scope of this research to consider whether they might constitute specific models for operatic composition. However, as outlined above, the sharing of collaborative process and experience around opera development may well offer strategies for fellow practitioners. While such experience is difficult to distil and often too open-ended to pin down precisely, this research project concludes with a *Sketch For A New Operatic Aesthetic*, which pulls together the many threads of this research and represents its overriding preoccupations. This is offered not as definitive statement, more a record of four years' creative research – a distilling of its concern for context, tradition, the operatic voice and how twenty-first century opera might tell its stories.

### SKETCH FOR A NEW OPERATIC AESTHETIC

- Opera is a 'proposition' for singers, performers, space and audience;
- Opera as a genre today is loose and open-ended, a continuum of possible meanings; each composer, writer or director must engage with what it might signify and function;
- Opera is a social art form, it thrives on its social contexts;
- Opera is a collaborative art form, it depends on collaborative partnerships at every level from conception to performance;
- Opera holds the operatic voice at its centre, though it can access a wide range of other vocalisation and performance traditions;
- Opera has the capacity to be the most popular of high classical art forms;
- Opera has the capacity to be the most serious of high classical art forms;
- Opera depends on narrative, but narrative can be explored in an infinite number of ways;
- Opera depends on sentiment, but sentiment must be earned;
- Opera offers ideal territory for polystylistic play, a locus for exploring the contradictions and complexities of contemporary culture;
- Opera's past is as contemporary as its future, it remains a highly reflexive art form;
- Opera can respond creatively to space and need not only exist within nineteenth century traditions of the proscenium arch theatre;
- Opera can respond creatively to its audience, encouraging a more active, less passive level of engagement.
- Opera is a performance art, nothing without the live experience.

**APPENDIX ONE: NEW OPERA IN THE UK, 2006-2007 Season**

| <b>Date</b>       | <b>Composer</b>      | <b>Work</b>                   | <b>Company</b>   |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 3rd Sept 2006     | Lynne Plowman        | <i>House of the Gods</i>      | Music Theatre Wales Tour, National Tour including Linbury Studio, Covent Garden (3rd & 4th Oct 2006) |
| 6th-8th Sept 2006 | Stuart MacRae        | <i>The Assassin Tree</i>      | Linbury Studio, Covent Garden  |
| 7th Sept 2006     | Asian Dub Foundation | <i>Gaddafi: A Living Myth</i> | The Coliseum, English National Opera   |
| 12th Sept 2006    | Will Todd            | <i>Sweetness and Badness</i>  | Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff, Welsh National Opera   |
| 22nd Sept 2006    | James MacMillan      | <i>The Sacrifice</i>          | Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff, Welsh National Opera, National Tour                                |
| 10th Oct 2006     | Julian Grant         | <i>Odysseus Unwound</i>       | Tête à Tête, Riverside Studios and national tour   |
| 19th Oct 2006     | Dominique Le Gendre  | <i>Bird of Night</i>          | Linbury Studio, Covent Garden  |
| 1st Dec 2006      | Johnathan Dove       | <i>The Enchanted Pig</i>      | The Opera Group, The Young Vic   |
| 25th April 2007   | Julian Philips       | <i>Wild Cat</i>               | Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff, Welsh National Opera   |
| 27th Feb 2007     | Karen Wimbhurst      | <i>Another Life</i>           | Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff, Welsh National Opera   |
| 12th March 2007   | Tom Ades             | <i>The Tempest</i>            | Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (six performances)  |
| 5th April 2007    | Philip Glass         | <i>Satyagraha</i>             | English National Opera   |

| <b>APPENDIX ONE: NEW OPERA IN THE UK, 2006-2007 Season</b> |                           |  |  |
|--|---------------------------|--|--|
| 26th May 2007  | Philippe Boesmans         | <i>Julie (UK Premiere)</i>             | Music Theatre Wales, National Tour                     |
| 3rd June 2007  | Helen Chadwick            | <i>Feast</i>                           | Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff, Welsh National Opera |
| 18th June 2006   | David Bruce               | <i>Push!</i>                           | Tête à Tête, Riverside Studios and national tour       |
| 20-21 June 2007  | Tansy Davies & Mira Calix | <i>Elephant and Castle</i>             | Aldeburgh Festival                                     |
| 5th July 2007  | Julian Joseph             | <i>Bridgetower - A fable of 1807</i>   | City of London Festival                                |
| 5th July 2007  | Erollyn Wallen            | <i>The Silent Twins</i>                | Almeida Opera Festival                                 |
| 9th July 2007  | Péter Eötvös              | <i>As I Crossed A Bridge Of Dreams</i> | Almeida Opera Festival                                 |
| 13th July 2007   | Detlev Glanert            | <i>Three Water Plays</i>               | Almeida Opera Festival                                 |
| 21st July 2007   | Orlando Gough             | <i>Critical Mass</i>                   | Streetwise Opera/Almeida Opera Festival                |
| 22nd July 2007   | Edward Rushton            | <i>The Shops</i>                       | The Opera Group, CBSO Centre and national tour         |
| 10th Aug 2007  | John Adams                | <i>A Flowering Tree</i>                | Barbican Centre  |
| August-07  | Various                   | Inaugural Opera Festival               | Tête à Tête, Riverside Studios, London                 |
| 19 August - 2 September                                    | Various                   | Inaugural Opera Festival               | Grimeborn, Arcola Theatre, Dalston, London             |

**APPENDIX TWO: NEW OPERA IN THE UK, 2007-8 Season**

| <b>Date</b>              | <b>Composer</b>  | <b>Work</b>   | <b>Company</b>   |
|--------------------------|--|---|--|
| 8th September 2007       | David Bruce  | <i>The Singing Shop</i>   | The Opera Group  |
| 12th November 2007       | Gary Carpenter, Helen Chadwick, Chris Mayo, Anna Meredith, Jason Yarde, Julian Grant | <i>Blind Date</i>   | Tête à Tête, Riverside Studios, London & National Tour |
| 21st December 2007       | Jonathan Dove  | <i>The Adventures of Pinocchio</i>  | Opera North, Grand Theatre, Leeds and national tour    |
| 18th - 20th January 2008 | Judith Weir  | <i>Telling the Tale</i> - Judith Weir Weekend including <i>The Vanishing Bridegroom</i> , <i>King Harald's Saga</i> , screenings of television operas | BBC/Barbican Centre                                    |
| February                 | Various  | 5 x 15  | Scottish Opera   |
| 13th April 2008          | Osvaldo Golijov  | <i>Ainadamar</i>  | Barbican Centre  |
| 15th April 2008          | Birtwistle   | <i>The Minotaur</i>   | Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (six performances)    |



**APPENDIX TWO: NEW OPERA IN THE UK, 2007-8 Season**

|                        |                     |                                       |   |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| 4th April, 2008        | Olga Neuwirth       | <i>Lost Highway</i> (UK Premiere)     | English National Opera, Young Vic, London                       |
| 21st April, 2008       | Harrison Birtwistle | <i>Punch and Judy</i>                 | English National Opera, Young Vic, London                       |
| 24th April 2008        | Kaija Saariaho      | <i>Adriana Mater</i> (UK Premiere)    | Barbican Centre   |
| 11th April, 2008       | Judith Weir         | <i>A Night at the Chinese Opera</i>   | Scottish Opera (four performances in Glasgow, two in Edinburgh) |
| 21st May 2008          | John O'Hara         | <i>The Merman King</i> (Film Version) | Welsh National Opera, Wales Millennium Centre                   |
| 13th June 2008         | Tom Ades            | <i>Powder Her Face</i>                | Linbury Studio, Covent Garden (seven performances)              |
| 17th June 2008         | Yannis Kyriakides   | <i>An Ocean of Rain</i>               | Aldeburgh Festival  |
| 11th July 2008         | Brian Irvine        | <i>The Calling of Maisey Day</i>      | Welsh National Opera, Wales Millennium Centre                   |
| 10th August 2008       | Péter Eötvös        | <i>Love And Other Demons</i>          | Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Glyndebourne (Eight performances)  |
| August                 | Various             | Opera Festival                        | Tête à Tête, Riverside Studios, London                          |
| 4th - 23rd August 2008 | Various             | Opera Festival                        | Grimeborn, Arcola Theatre, Dalston, London                      |

**APPENDIX THREE: NEW OPERA IN THE UK, 2008-9 Season**

| <b>Date</b>         | <b>Composer</b>                      | <b>Work</b>   | <b>Company</b>   |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| 11th September 2008 | Julian Philips                       | <i>Varjak Paw</i>                                       | The Opera Group, Basingstoke and national tour                         |
| 28th October 2008   | Michael Berkeley                     | <i>For You</i>  | Music Theatre Wales, Linbury Studio, Covent Garden (four performances) |
| 24th November 2008  | Todd Machover                        | <i>Skellig</i>  | The Sage, Gateshead  |
| 16th January 2009   | David Sawer                          | <i>Skin Deep</i>  | Opera North, Grand Theatre, Leeds and national tour                    |
| 1-Feb-09            | Various                              | 5:15  | Scottish Opera   |
| 4th February 2009   | Will Todd                            | <i>Sweetness and Badness</i>                            | Welsh National Opera, Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff                 |
| 14th February 2009  | George Benjamin, Harrison Birtwistle | <i>Into The Little Hill, Down by the Greenwood Side</i> | The Opera Group, Linbury Studio, Covent Garden (four performances)     |
| 25th February 2009  | John Adams                           | <i>Doctor Atomic</i>                                    | English National Opera, Coliseum, London                               |
| 4th March 2009      | Aulis Sallinen                       | <i>The King Goes Forth To France</i>                    | Guildhall School of Music and Drama                                    |

**APPENDIX THREE: NEW OPERA IN THE UK, 2008-9 Season**

|                         |                     |                                       |  |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 5th May 2009            | Orlando Gough       | <i>On The Rim Of The World</i>        | Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Glyndebourne                            |
| 20th May 2009           | John O'Hara         | <i>The Merman King</i> (live version) | Welsh National Opera, Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff               |
| 28th March 2009         | Huw Watkins         | <i>Temptation</i>                     | Music Theatre Wales, National Tour                                   |
| 11th June 2009          | James MacMillan     | <i>Parthenogenesis</i>                | Linbury Studio, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (five performances) |
| 12th June 2009          | Harrison Birtwistle | <i>The Corridor</i>                   | Aldeburgh Festival   |
| 3rd July 2009           | Kaija Saariaho      | <i>L'Amour Loin</i> (UK Premiere)     | English National Opera, Coliseum, London                             |
| 20th August 2009        | Julian Philips      | <i>The Yellow Sofa</i>                | Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Glyndebourne                            |
| August                  | Various             | Opera Festival                        | Tête à Tête, Riverside Studios, London                               |
| 24 August - 5 September | Various             | Opera Festival                        | Grimeborn, Arcola Theatre, Dalston, London                           |

**APPENDIX FOUR: FOLLOWERS A timeline 2007-2011**

| <b>Date</b>      | <b>Where</b>                           | <b>Who</b>   | <b>What</b>          |
|------------------|--|--|----------------------|
| Spring 2007      | London/Glyndebourne                    | Julian Philips, Simon Christmas  | Creative Development |
| 2/7/2007 morning | Organ Room                             | Julian Philips   | Composition          |
| 3/7/2007 morning | Organ Room                             | Julian Philips   | Composition          |
| 4/7/2007 morning | Organ Room                             | Anthony Cleverton, Jonas Cradock, Katharine Moore, Julian Philips, Simon Christmas, Olivia Fuchs                         | Development work     |
| 5/7/2007 morning | Organ Room                             | Anthony Cleverton, Jonas Cradock, Katharine Moore, Julian Philips, Simon Christmas, Olivia Fuchs                         | Development work     |
| 6/7/2007 all day | Organ Room                             | Anthony Cleverton, Jonas Cradock, Katharine Moore, Julian Philips, Simon Christmas (performers joining pm), Olivia Fuchs | Development work     |
| 7/7/2007 morning | Organ Room                             | Anthony Cleverton, Jonas Cradock, Katharine Moore, Julian Philips, Simon Christmas, Olivia Fuchs                         | Development work     |
| 10/10/07 all day | Organ Room, Old Green Room, Ebert Room | Anthony Cleverton, Jonas Cradock, Katharine Moore, Julian Philips, players, Olivia Fuchs                                 | Production Rehearsal |
| 11/10/07 all day | Organ Room, Old Green Room, Ebert Room | Anthony Cleverton, Jonas Cradock, Katharine Moore, Julian Philips & players, Olivia Fuchs                                | Production Rehearsal |

**APPENDIX FOUR: FOLLOWERS A timeline 2007-2011**

|                       |  |   |                                    |
|-----------------------|--|---|------------------------------------|
| 13/10/07<br>morning   | Organ Room, Old Green Room, Ebert Room | Anthony Cleverton, Jonas Cradock, Katharine Moore, Julian Philips & players, Olivia Fuchs | Production Rehearsal               |
| 16/10/2007<br>morning | Organ Room, Old Green Room, Ebert Room | Anthony Cleverton, Jonas Cradock, Katharine Moore, Julian Philips & players, Olivia Fuchs | Production Rehearsal               |
| 17/10/2007<br>all day | Organ Room, Old Green Room, Ebert Room | Anthony Cleverton, Jonas Cradock, Katharine Moore, Julian Philips & players, Olivia Fuchs | Production Rehearsal               |
| 18/10/2007<br>morning | Organ Room, Old Green Room, Ebert Room | Anthony Cleverton, Jonas Cradock, Katharine Moore, Julian Philips & players, Olivia Fuchs | Production Rehearsal               |
| 19/10/2007<br>morning | Organ Room, Old Green Room, Ebert Room | Anthony Cleverton, Jonas Cradock, Katharine Moore, Julian Philips & players, Olivia Fuchs | Production Rehearsal               |
| 22/10/07<br>morning   | Organ Room, Old Green Room, Ebert Room | Anthony Cleverton, Jonas Cradock, Katharine Moore, Julian Philips & players               | Music Rehearsal                    |
| 23/10/2007<br>morning | Organ Room, Old Green Room, Ebert Room | Anthony Cleverton, Jonas Cradock, Katharine Moore, Julian Philips & players, Olivia Fuchs | Production Rehearsal               |
| 24/10/07<br>morning   | Organ Room, Old Green Room, Ebert Room | Anthony Cleverton, Jonas Cradock, Katharine Moore, Julian Philips & players, Olivia Fuchs | Music Rehearsal                    |
| 25/10/07<br>Morning   | Organ Room, Old Green Room, Ebert Room | Anthony Cleverton, Jonas Cradock, Katharine Moore, Julian Philips & players, Olivia Fuchs | Music Rehearsal                    |
| 26/10/2007<br>morning | Organ Room, Old Green Room, Ebert Room | Anthony Cleverton, Jonas Cradock, Katharine Moore, Julian Philips & players, Olivia Fuchs | Final production rehearsal (dress) |

**APPENDIX FOUR: FOLLOWERS A timeline 2007-2011**

|                      |  |  |   |
|----------------------|--|--|---|
| 26/10/07<br>5.30pm   | Organ Room, Old Green Room, Ebert Room | Anthony Cleverton, Jonas Cradock, Katharine Moore, Julian Philips & players            | Work in progress Performance 1  |
| 27/10/2007<br>7.30pm | Organ Room, Old Green Room, Ebert Room | Anthony Cleverton, Jonas Cradock, Katharine Moore, Julian Philips & players            | Work in progress Performance 2  |
| 25/8/08              | Ebert Room                             | Nicholas Merryweather, Daniel Joy, Katharine Moore, Julian Philips, Olivia Fuchs       | Development work  |
| 26/8/08              | Ebert Room                             | Nicholas Merryweather, Daniel Joy, Katharine Moore, Julian Philips, Olivia Fuchs       | Development work  |
| 27/8/08              | Ebert Room                             | Nicholas Merryweather, Daniel Joy, Katharine Moore, Julian Philips, Olivia Fuchs       | Development work  |
| 28/8/08              | Ebert Room                             | Nicholas Merryweather, Daniel Joy, Katharine Moore, Julian Philips, Olivia Fuchs       | Development work  |
| Aug-11               | Organ Room, Old Green Room, Ebert Room | Gabriela Iştoc, Andrew Dickinson, Alexander Hargreaves, Freddie Wake-Walker (director) | Production Rehearsal  |
| 21/8/11              | Organ Room, Old Green Room, Ebert Room | Gabriela Iştoc, Andrew Dickinson, Alexander Hargreaves, Freddie Wake-Walker (director) | Complete performance 1 (pre-performance event before <i>Turn of the Screw</i> ) |
| 24/8/11              | Organ Room, Old Green Room, Ebert Room | Gabriela Iştoc, Andrew Dickinson, Alexander Hargreaves, Freddie Wake-Walker (director) | Complete performance 2 (pre-performance event before <i>Turn of the Screw</i> ) |
| 26/8/11              | Organ Room, Old Green Room, Ebert Room | Gabriela Iştoc, Andrew Dickinson, Alexander Hargreaves, Freddie Wake-Walker (director) | Complete performance 3 (pre-performance event before <i>Rusalka</i> )           |

**APPENDIX FIVE: LOVE AND OTHER DEMONS, a timeline 2001-2008**

| <b>When</b> | <b>Where/what</b>          | <b>Who</b>   | <b>Nature of discussion</b>  |
|-------------|----------------------------|--|--|
| Summer 2001 | Glyndebourne               | Péter Eötvös   | Eötvös' Glyndebourne debut, conducting Janacek's <i>The Makropulos Case</i>  |
| Jul-03      | Email                      |  | Discussions begin in earnest, Péter Eötvös's agent involved  |
| 19/12/03    | Email                      |  | Unsuccessful attempt at meeting between Vladimir Jurowski/Péter Eötvös. Rescheduled for Paris in March 2004  |
| Apr-04      | Glyndebourne               | Péter Eötvös, Vladimir Jurowski, David Pickard, Jasper Parrott, later Katie Tearle     | Discussed: subject matter, scheduling, forces, director, materials, casting, chorus, language, libretto, co-commission, education department involvement, "Three Sisters" at Glyndebourne? |
| Nov-04      | Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris | Katie Tearle + Gus Christie  | Péter Eötvös' "Angels in America"  |
| Dec-04      | Email                      | David Pickard, Dominique Toennesmann (Harrisson/Parrott Ltd)                           | Kornél Hamvai proposed as librettist, CV forwarded to Glyndebourne   |
| 22/4/05     | Glyndebourne               | Péter Eötvös, Vladimir Jurowski, David Pickard, Pal Moe, Steven Naylor, Lydia Connolly | Contract/rights, casting, duration/interval, orchestra, co-commission, director  |
| 19/7/05     | Glyndebourne               | Péter Eötvös's agents/Glyndebourne   | First draft of Péter Eötvös's commissioning contract   |
| 20/10/05    | Glyndebourne               | Kornél Hamvai & Glyndebourne   | First draft of Kornél Hamvai's commissioning contract  |
| Apr-06      | Letter                     | Schott Concert Opera Media Division  | Initial rights clearance for Márquez short-story   |
| May-06      | Email                      | Kornél Hamvai to David Pickard   | First draft of libretto submitted to Glyndebourne  |
| 12/5/06     | Glyndebourne               | Steven Naylor, David Pickard, Vladimir Jurowski, Katie Tearle                          | Discussion of libretto; concerns expressed re: structure, essence and atmosphere of book   |

**APPENDIX FIVE: LOVE AND OTHER DEMONS, a timeline 2001-2008**

|             |                             |  |   |
|-------------|-----------------------------|--|---|
| 17/8/06     | Email                       | Péter Eötvös-Edward Kemp   | Initial responses to second draft of libretto; Péter Eötvös happy but keen for further corrections/changes to be finalised by October   |
| 17/8/06     | Email                       | Edward Kemp to Kornél Hamvai   | Initial response to second draft of libretto  |
| 1/9/06      | Email                       | Edward Kemp to Kornél Hamvai, Péter Eotovs, Katie Tearle, David Pickard                        | Detailed textual suggestions on second draft of libretto  |
| 5/9/06      | Email                       | from Kornél Hamvai   | Minor revisions to second draft (2a)  |
| 9/9/06      | Email                       | Vladimir Jurowski to David Pickard   | Positive response to libretto   |
| 12/9/06     | Email                       | David Pickard to Kornél Hamvai   | Feedback on second draft, with a few comments re: text and the pacing of the love-story   |
| 12/9/06     | Email                       | Edward Kemp to Kornél Hamvai   | Feeds into Pickard's issues and suggests a few further text changes   |
| 18/9/06     | Email                       | Edward Kemp to Katie Tearle, David Pickard   | Meeting with Péter Eötvös proposed 21/22 October  |
| 29/9/06     | Email                       | Kornél Hamvai-David Pickard  | Response to David Pickard's suggestions; David Pickard replies - Glyndebourne to find Yoruba specialist, Hamvai to have Latin/Spanish texts checked in Hungary  |
| 1/11/06     | Email                       | David Pickard to Gillian Brierley, Katie Tearle  | Details of copyright agreement with Márquez estate circulated   |
| 21-22/10/06 | Eötvös ' house, Budapest    | Edward Kemp, Péter Eötvös  | Edward Kemp records spoken libretto for Péter Eötvös; further libretto concerns: conclusion of love story, dream sequence; ongoing questions about Yoruba text - Glyndebourne to find Yoruba specialist |
| 23/4/07     | Little Tufton House, London | David Pickard, Vladimir Jurowski, Péter Eötvös, Katie Tearle, Helen McCarthy, Kirsty MacDonald | New commission event to engage with potential supports for <i>Love and other Demons</i>   |



**APPENDIX FIVE: LOVE AND OTHER DEMONS, a timeline 2001-2008**

|  |                             |  |   |
|--|-----------------------------|--|---|
| 18/11/07                                   | Quality Crown Hotel, London | Péter Eötvös, Silviu Purcarete, Helmut Sturmer, Vladimir Jurowski, Edward Kemp, David Pickard, Steven Naylor, Gillian Brierley, Katie Tearle | First meeting of full creative team: Péter Eötvös presented 16 out of 29 scenes in vocal score and some full score - vocal score to be complete by mid-December 2007. Singers to be contacted. Discussion of electronic sounds, need for rough recording of opera, Purcarete's assistant, design requirements (projectors) and proposed meeting in the UK between 13-17th April 2008. |
| 7/2/08                                     |                             |  | Submission of vocal score (part 1)  |
| 6/3/08                                     |                             |  | Submission of full score (part 1)   |
| 10/4/08                                    |                             |  | Submission of revised full score (part 1)   |
| 21/5/08                                    |                             |  | Submission of vocal score (part 2)  |
| 4/6/08                                     |                             |  | Submission of full score (part 2)   |
| 10,13, 16, 19, 22, 24, 27 & 30 August 2008 | Glyndebourne                | Glyndebourne Festival Opera, London Philharmonic, Vladimir Jurowski (conductor)  | Eight public performances   |

**APPENDIX SIX: The Operas of Péter Eötvös, 1973-2003**

| OPERA                                  | DATE           | DESCRIPTION                     | LIBRETTIST   | LANGUAGE                  | DURATION | COMMISSIONER                                       | PREMIERE  | SUBSEQUENT PRODUCTIONS                  |
|--|----------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------|----------|--|---|---|
| <i>Love and other Demons</i>           | 2007           | Opera in two acts               | Kornél Hamvai  | English, Yoruban, Spanish | 156 mins | Glyndebourne Festival Opera                        | 10th August 2008  | Vilnius, Chemnitz, Cologne, Strassbourg |
| <i>Lady Sarashina</i>                  | 2007           | Opera in one act                | Mari Mezei   | English                   |          | Opera National de Lyon                             | 4th March 2008  |   |
| <i>Angels in America</i>               | 2002-4         | Opera in two parts              | Mari Mezei, based on Tony Kushner's play               | English                   | 140 mins | Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris                         | 23rd November 2004  |   |
| <i>Le Balcon</i>                       | 2001-2         | Opera                           | based on Jean Genet's play                             | French                    | 110 mins | Aix-en-Provence Festival                           | 5th July 2002   |   |
| <i>As I crossed a bridge of dreams</i> | 1998-9         | "Sound theatre-scenic on stage" | Mari Mezei from the diary of Lady Sarashina, Year 1008 | English                   | 50 mins  | Donaueschingen Festival and Land Baden-Württemberg | October 1999, Donaueschingen                                  |   |
| <i>Three Sisters</i>                   | 1996-7         | Opera in three sequences        | C H H Henneberg and Peter Eötvös after Chekhov play    | Russian                   | 100 mins | Opera National de Lyon                             | 13-Mar-98   |   |
| <i>Radames</i>                         | 1975 rev. 1997 | Chamber opera                   | Peter Eötvös   | German, English, Italian  |          |  | March 1976 WDR Musik-Theater Festival; revision Budapest 1997 |   |
| <i>Harakiri</i>                        | 1973           | Scene with music                | István Bálint  | Japanese & home language  | 20 mins  | WDR Cologne  | Bonn, September 1973  |   |

**APPENDIX SEVEN: *Love and Other Demons*, Hamvai's 2004 Synopsis**

| <b>Act</b> | <b>Scene</b> | <b>Setting</b>         | <b>Action</b>  | <b>Characters</b>   |
|------------|--------------|------------------------|--|---|
| 1.1        | 1a           | Ygnacio's: slaves      | Maria's birthday/AFRICAN   | Maria, Dominga, Slaves  |
|            | 1a           | Ygancio's: slaves      | on rabies  | Ygnacio, Dominga  |
|            | 1b           | Ygancio's: room        | Maria returns to own room  | Maria, <b>Ygnacio</b>   |
|            | 1b           | Ygancio's: room        | doctor's visit, Maria lying - Abrenuncio's orders: make her happy/LATIN                | Maria, Ygnacio, Abrenuncio                                    |
|            | 1c           | Ygnacio's: room        | happiness cure - Maria gets worse/AFRICAN + LATIN                                      | Maria, Ygnacio, Abrenuncio, Dominga, slaves (as entertainers) |
|            | 1c           | Ygancio's: room        | Bishop's visit - girl to be saved by entering a convent                                | Maria, Ygnacio, Delaura, Bishop                               |
| 1.2        | 2a           | Santa Clara: cloisters | Ygnacio introduces Maria to nuns   | Maria, Ygnacio, nuns, slaves                                  |
|            | 2a           | Santa Clara: cloisters | Maria's taken over, nuns shocked - Maria's song/BLACK                                  | <b>Maria</b> , nuns   |
|            | 2a           | Santa Clara: cloisters | gossip: Maria's charm causes unnatural occurrences                                     | nuns  |
|            | 2a           | Santa Clara: cloisters | Martina and Josefa's visit - Maria won't let her pearls taken from her, a little Demon | Maria, Martina, Josefa  |
|            | 2c           | Santa Clara: cell      | Delaura's visit: examination of Maria - brings food - friendship                       | Maria, Delaura  |

**APPENDIX SEVEN: Love and Other Demons, Hamvai's 2004 Synopsis**

|  |    |                   |   |                                      |
|--|----|-------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
|  | 2c | Santa Clara: cell | Maria learns that Delaura is an exorcist - Josefa is desperate to get rid of Maria and her demons                   | Maria, Delaura, Josefa               |
|  | 2d | Dream world       | Maria's dream   | <b>Maria</b> , (Delaura)             |
|  | 3a | Bishop's          | Bishop's old age and illness - Bishop almost dies with asthmatic seizure - Maria is to live free within the convent | Delaura, Bishop                      |
|  | 3a | Bishop's          | Preparations for exorcism - Bishop entrusts Delaura with the investigation  | Delaura, Bishop                      |
|  | 3b | Bishop's          | Eclipse of the sun - Delaura blinded - he is unsure that Maria's possessed  | Delaura, Bishop                      |
|  | 3c | Dream world       | Delaura's dream of the girl (same as Maria's)   | (Maria), <b>Delaura</b>              |
|  | 3d | Bishop's          | Ygnacio brings along Maria's box - Ygnacio sings Maria's song   | Ygnacio, Delaura                     |
|  | 3d | Bishop's          | Delaura's doubts: Maria is a probe of his faith - he picks up on the song   | Ygnacio, Delaura                     |
|  | 3x | Bishop's          | Abrenuncio's visit/LATIN  | Ygnacio, Delaura, Bishop, Abrenuncio |

**APPENDIX SEVEN: Love and Other Demons, Hamvai's 2004 Synopsis**

|   |    |                     |  |                              |
|---|----|---------------------|--|------------------------------|
|   | 3e | Bishop's            | Delaura's confessions  | Delaura, Bishop              |
|   | 3f | Bishop's            | Delaura, crazy with love, examines the contents of the box - whips himself   | <b>Delaura</b>               |
| 2 | 4a | Santa Clara: cell   | Delaura gets to Maria through secret tunnel - visits her every night - teaches her poetry confesses love - nuns bringing breakfast don't see him - nights turn lustful - they decide to get married - trials of love | Maria, Delaura, nun          |
|   | 4b | Santa Clara: cell   | Maria wants to run away with Delaura, to the slaves' village - after Delaura leaves, Maria sets cell on fire   | <b>Maria</b> , Delaura       |
|   | 4c | Santa Clara: cell   | Martina: don't forget me - she flees through tunnel which is then walled - Maria locked up, separated from Delaura   | Maria, Martina, Josefa, nuns |
| 2 | 5a | Santa Clara: chapel | Delaura driven away as Satan/LATIN   | Delaura, nuns                |

**APPENDIX SEVEN: *Love and Other Demons*, Hamvai's 2004 Synopsis**

|  |    |   |   |  |
|--|----|---|---|--|
|  | 5b | Santa Clara: chapel + Ygnacio's: slaves | Exorcism - Maria's head is shaved - she cries - horrible noises throughout ceremony - Maria kicks Bishop in loins (/Bishop faints) - after 3 days, she's in ruins/LATIN + AFRICAN | Maria, Bishop, Josefa, nuns, Ygnacio, slaves                         |
|  | 5c | Dream world                             | Maria's dream again   | Maria, Delaura   |
|  | 5d | Santa Clara: chapel + Ygnacio's: slaves | Maria dies during ritual - her hair starts growing again/LATIN + AFRICAN  | Maria, Bishop, Josefa, nuns, ecclesiastics, Dominga, Ygnacio, slaves |

**APPENDIX EIGHT: LOVE AND OTHER DEMONS, Breakdown of first three libretti drafts**

| SCENE    | DRAFT 1 May 2006   | SCENE | DRAFT 2 July/September 2006   | SCENE | DRAFT 3 July 2007   |
|----------|--|-------|---|-------|---|
| Prologue | Maria is bitten by dog   | 1.1   | Sierva is bitten by a rabid dog in the market   | One.1 | Bishop/Delaura observe the eclipse; Sierva is bitten by a rabid dog in the market                   |
| Scene 1  | Dominga/slaves sing around Maria on her birthday; Maria collapses and tells Dominga of her bite, who then cleans the wound; angry Ygnacio enters and is told of his daughter's birthday - he insists that she is bathed clean. | 1.2   | Dominga/slaves sing around Sierva on her birthday   | 1.2   | Dominga/slaves sing around Sierva on her birthday   |
|          |  | 1.2a  | Sierva tells Dominga of her bite; Dominga cleans the wound  | 1.3   | Sierva tells Dominga of her bite; Dominga cleans the wound  |
|          |  | 1.2b  | Bishop/Delaura observe the eclipse; Ygnacio is told of his daughter's birthday and insists that she is bathed clean   | 1.4   | Ygnacio stops the slaves, is told of his daughter's birthday and insists that she is bathed clean   |
|          |  |       |   | 1.5   | Bishop's aria - "Dear oh dear, I'm old"; Ygnacio/Sierva scene concludes                             |
| Scene 2  | Bishop discovers Delaura in the library; they observe the eclipse; Bishop's aria; joined by Josefa, they decide to send Maria to the Convent of St Clare; Delaura is to be her exorcist  | 1.3   | Bishop/Delaura discuss eclipse, Bishop's aria, then discuss Sierva's condition with Josefa; Sierva to be sent to Convent of St Clare & Delaura to be her exorcist | 1.6   | Bishop and Delaura discuss Sierva's condition with Josefa; Sierva to be sent to Convent of St Clare |
|          |  |       |   | 1.7   | Bishop tells Delaura he is to be Sierva's exorcist  |
| Scene 3  | Ygnacio discovers bite, chides Dominga; Ygnacio's aria (in front of painting of his wife); Abrenuncio discusses Maria's condition; Abrenuncio's aria   | 1.4   | Ygnacio discovers bite and chides Dominga; Ygnacio's aria   | 2.1   | Ygnacio discovers bite and chides Dominga; Abrenuncio examines Sierva (interspersed)                |
|          |  | 1.4a  | Abrenuncio examines Sierva  | 2.2   | Ygnacio's aria  |
|          |  | 1.4b  | Abrenuncio offers diagnosis to Ygnacio and they discuss her care, Abrenuncio's aria   | 2.3   | Abrenuncio offers diagnosis to Ygnacio and they discuss her care                                    |
|          |  |       |   | 2.4   | Abrenuncio's aria   |

**APPENDIX EIGHT: LOVE AND OTHER DEMONS, Breakdown of first three libretti drafts**

|                   |  |      |  |       |  |
|-------------------|--|------|--|-------|--|
| (Sc. 3 continued) | Josefa arrives to notify Ygnacio of Bishop's decree; Maria enters and is told; Maria's scream; ensemble (quintet) incorporating Maria's aria; Ygnacio bids farewell, recalling her mother; | 1.4c | Letter: Josefa writes to the Marquis; intertwined with Abrenuncio and with Sierva's scream/aria; Dominga bids farewell to Sierva (Yorùbán), Ygnacio bids farewell and recalls her mother, Olalla | 3.1-2 | Letters: Josefa writes to the Marquis, Marquis reads it; intertwined with Abrenuncio   |
|                   |  |      |  | 3.2   | Letter writing/reading continues; Sierva's scream  |
|                   |  |      |  | 3.3   | Sierva's aria; Dominga bids farewell to Sierva (Yoruban) as does Ygnacio   |
| Scene 4           | Convent of St Clare - cloisters; Maria led in by nun; nuns sing; Maria's aria, then aggression (necklace); chaos; Maria sent to her cell   | 1.5  | Convent of St Clare - cloisters; Sierva is lead in by nun  | 4.1   | Convent of St Clare - cloisters; Sierva is lead in by nun; Nuns sing, Sierva's aria and then aggression (necklace); chaos; Sierva sent to her cell |
|                   |  | 1.5a | Nuns sing the terce, Sierva's aria and then aggression (necklace); chaos; Sierva sent to her cell  |       |  |



**APPENDIX EIGHT: LOVE AND OTHER DEMONS, Breakdown of first three libretti drafts**

|            |   |     |   |     |  |
|------------|---|-----|---|-----|--|
| Scene<br>5 | Martina Laborde - Duet, then<br>Martina's aria; Delaura's first visit<br>(pirate/demons/invisible);   | 1.6 | Complex sequence of scenes interwoven:<br>i) Martina and Sierva - Martina's aria;<br>ii) first duet for Delaura and Sierva<br>(pirate);<br>iii) Abrenuncio with Ygnacio at Bishop's<br>palace aim to get her out of the convent<br>- Ygnacio carries a little valise for Sierva;<br>iv) Delaura/Sierva's second duet "please<br>make me invisible";<br>v) Ygnacio/Abrenuncio visit the Bishop<br>and fail to secure Sierva's release but<br>Ygnacio leaves valise<br>vi) Third duet for Delaura and Sierva,<br>Delaura confessing his love; Garcilaso<br>love-sonnet, Sierva attacks Delaura<br>vii) Delaura and the Bishop, Delaura's<br>dream and skepticism of possession<br>viii) Delaura's final aria - opens the<br>valise, flagellation (incorporating<br>Garcilaso) | 5.1 | Martina and Sierva - Martina's aria;   |
|            |   |     |   | 5.3 | first duet for Delaura and Sierva<br>(pirate)                                      |
|            |   |     |   | 5.4 | Abrenuncio with Ygnacio at Bishop's<br>palace aim to get her out of the<br>convent |
|            |   |     |   | 5.5 | Delaura/Sierva's second duet "please<br>make me invisible";                        |
| Scene<br>6 | Abrenuncio and Ygnacio at<br>Bishop's palace aim to get her out<br>of the convent; ensemble<br>(quartet) with Bishop/Delaura;<br>Ygnacio gives Bishop the valise;<br>Delaura discusses Maria with<br>Bishop; Delaura's dream &<br>skepticism; Delaura's final aria -<br>opens the valise, flagellation<br>(incorporating Garcilaso) |     |   | 5.6 | Ygnacio/Abrenuncio visit the Bishop<br>and fail to secure Sierva's release         |

**APPENDIX EIGHT: LOVE AND OTHER DEMONS, Breakdown of first three libretti drafts**

|                |  |     |   |     |  |
|----------------|--|-----|---|-----|--|
|                |  |     |   | 6.1 | Third duet for Delaura and Sierva, Delaura confessing his love; Garcilaso love-sonnet, Sierva attacks Delaura  |
|                |  |     |   | 6.2 | Delaura and the Bishop, Delaura's dream and skepticism of possession   |
|                |  |     |   | 6.3 | Delaura's final aria - flagellation, incorporating Garcilaso   |
| <b>ACT TWO</b> |  |     |   |     |  |
| Scene 7        | Maria's dream and demon duet with Martina; second duet of Delaura/Maria - lovemaking/Garcilaso sonnet; Josefa interrupts and throws Delaura out  | 2.7 | Sierva's dream and demon duet with Martina; Fourth duet of Delaura and Sierva - lovemaking/Garcilaso love-sonnet; Josefa interrupts and throws Delaura out  | 7.1 | Sierva's dream and demon duet with Martina; Delaura arrives  |
|                |  |     |   | 7.2 | Fourth duet of Delaura and Sierva - lovemaking;  |
|                |  |     |   | 7.3 | Garcilaso love-sonnet; sudden arrival of Josefa who throws Delaura out   |
| Scene 8        | Trio of Ygnacio, Abrenuncio and Dominga discussing Maria's fate and Ygnacio's desire to rescue her; Delaura arrives begging to be allowed to marry Maria; Abrenuncio remembers the tunnel into the Convent; Ygnacio aria - lament and suicide (shoots himself in the head) | 2.8 | Trio of Ygnacio, Abrenuncio and Dominga discusses Sierva's fate and Ygnacio's desire to rescue her; Delaura arrives begging to be allowed to marry Sierva; Abrenuncio remembers the tunnel into the Convent | 8.1 | Trio of Ygnacio, Abrenuncio and Dominga discusses Sierva's fate and Ygnacio's desire to rescue her; Delaura arrives begging to be allowed to marry Sierva; |

**APPENDIX EIGHT: LOVE AND OTHER DEMONS, Breakdown of first three libretti drafts**

|          |  |       |   |      |  |
|----------|--|-------|---|------|--|
| Scene 9  | In the tunnel: Trio of Martina, Delaura, Maria; Martina escapes; Duet - Maria longs for escape but Delaura forces her to stay; embrace (+ eye glowing); Josefa arrives with nuns/guards and separates them; Josefa's demons aria   | 2.9   | Little duet for Sierva (head shaved) and Martina; Delaura appears from tunnel; Martina escapes; Fifth duet - Sierva longs for escape but Delaura forces her to stay; embrace (+ eye glowing); Josefa arrives with nuns/guards and separates them  | 9.1  | Little duet for Sierva (necklace/loss of hair) and Martina; Delaura appears from tunnel; Martina escapes; Fifth duet - Sierva longs for escape but Delaura forces her to stay; embrace |
|          |  |       |   | 9.2  | Josefa arrives with nuns/guards and separates them;  |
| Scene 10 | Split scene:<br>i) Dominga & slaves pray for Maria<br>ii) exorcism - Bishop, nuns, Josefa; Delaura bursts in - short duet; exorcism; Maria's prayer (Oshun) & death exorcism; split chorus of nuns and slaves; dead Maria's hair grows back, sheet laid over her; Dominga's lament | 2.10. | Exorcism  | 10.1 | Exorcism   |
|          |  | 2.10a | Dominga/slaves pray for Sierva  |      |  |
|          |  | 2.10b | Ygnacio's final aria and death; Delaura attempts to reach Sierva (Garcilaso love-sonnet) but is driven back; Josefa's demons aria; cry of peacock is heard - Sierva's prayer (Oshun)- death?; Sierva carried back to cell where walls open up to reveal Sierva's snow dream + Delaura singing Garcilaso | 10.2 | Ygnacio's final aria and death   |
|          |  |       |   | 10.3 | Delaura attempts to reach Sierva (Garcilaso love-sonnet) but is driven back;   |
|          |  |       |   | 10.4 | Bishop continues exorcism  |
|          |  |       |   | 10.5 | Josefa's demons aria   |
|          |  |       |   | 10.6 | Bishop continues exorcism  |
|          |  |       |   | 10.7 | Cry of the peacock is heard - Sierva's prayer (Oshun);   |
|          |  |       |   | 1.8  | Bishop continues exorcism  |
|          |  | 2.10c | Dominga/Slaves lament   | 10.9 | Sierva carried back to cell; Sierva's dream; Sierva sings Garcilaso and dies; Dominga/slaves lament  |

**APPENDIX NINE: LOVE AND OTHER DEMONS, digest of final libretto**

| Scene          | Setting                             | Characters  | Action   |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>ACT ONE</b> |                                     |   |  |
| Overture       | Dream world, which overlaps into... | Sierva, off-stage female chorus                   | "Love and..."  |
| Scene 1        | Bishop's Palace/Market place        | Bishop, Delaura, Slaves, Dominga, Sierva, Ygnacio | Bishop/Delaura observe eclipse; Sierva is bitten by a rabid dog in the market; Dominga/Slaves sing around Sierva; Sierva collapses and tells Dominga of her bite; Ygnacio is told of his daughter's birthday and insists she is bathed clean             |
| Scene 2        | Bishop's Palace                     | Bishop, Delaura, Josefa                           | Bishop's aria; Bishop/Delaura discuss Sierva's condition with Josefa; Sierva to be sent to the convent of St Clare with Delaura as her exorcist; interwoven with: Ygnacio discovers bite and chides Dominga, Abrenuncio examines Sierva;                 |
| Scene 3        | Ygnacio's house                     | Ygnacio, Abrenuncio, Josefa, Sierva               | Ygnacio's aria; Abrenuncio offers diagnosis to Ygnacio and they discuss her care; Abrenuncio's aria; Letters: Josefa writes to the Marquis, Marquis reads; interwoven with Abrenuncio, Sierva's scream/aria and Dominga; nuns overlap setting up scene 4 |
| Scene 4        | The Convent of St Clare             | Nuns, Sierva, Martina, Josefa                     | Nuns sing, Sierva's aria then aggression (necklace); chaos; Sierva consigned to her cell; Martina and Sierva - Martina's aria  |
| Scene 5        | Sierva's cell                       | Delaura, Sierva                                   | Delaura visits Sierva - amalgam of duets 1-3   |
| Scene 6        | (Bishop's palace)                   | Delaura   | Delaura's aria - flagellation  |

**APPENDIX NINE: LOVE AND OTHER DEMONS, digest of final libretto**

| <b>Scene</b>   | <b>Setting</b>                           | <b>Characters</b>                     | <b>Action</b>  |
|----------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>ACT TWO</b> |  |                                       |  |
| Prologue       | Dream world                              | Abrenuncio/off-stage female chorus    | "...and other demons"  |
| Scene 7        | Bishop's Palace then Convent of St Clare | Bishop, Delaura                       | Delaura's dream and skepticism of possession; Sierva's dream and demon duet with Martina; Delaura arrives; Delaura/Sierva love duet - Garcilaso love-sonnet; sudden arrival of Josefa who throws Delaura out; Sierva is prepared for exorcism - Martina cuts her hair; Sierva sings to Oshun |
| Scene 8        | Convent of St Clare                      | Bishop, Josefa, Nuns, Sierva, Delaura | Exorcism; Delaura comes in but is driven back; Josefa's demons aria; Sierva kicks the Bishop;  |
| Scene 9        | Sierva's Cell                            | Sierva                                | Cry of the peacock is heard - Sierva's prayer to Oshun and Garcilaso sonnet; Sierva dies; Dominga's lament   |

**APPENDIX TEN: LOVE AND OTHER DEMONS**  
**UK Critical Reception August-September 2008**

| Paper            | Date     | Reviewer         | Glyndebourne   | Score   | Vocal writing                                 | Libretto  | Production   | Performance   |
|------------------|----------|------------------|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| The Stage        | 11/08/08 | George Hall      | 'Glyndebourne has backed the wrong horse'                              | 'a thin and pallid achievement that does little more than create an atmospheric context. Never does it grab and hold the attention as it should'  | Characters overwrought                        | -   | 'instils Latin American colour and an atmosphere of decaying baroque splendour'  | 'Jurowski and the LPO do everything possible with it'                             |
| Financial Times  | 11/08/08 | Andrew Clark     | 'At least they tried'  | 'another nail in the coffin of opera'; 'music more concerned with timbre than drama'; 'draws the sting out of the characters'; 'pace is glacial'  | 'vocal lines laden with meditative arioso'    | Eötvös alights on 'old-fashioned operatic subject', chooses 'a librettist...with no experience of opera'; fails to focus on Sierva and Delaura, treats all characters equally, neuters Marquez; 'the magic element is lost' | 'has splashes of conventional operatic colour'   | Jurowski/LPO handle Eötvös 'with staggering finesse'                              |
| Evening Standard | 11/08/08 | Barry Millington | 'brave undertaking...fine achievement'                                 | 'often strikingly original, in scoring and harmonic invention'; 'too many static episodes...tax the patience'; Part 1 'lacks dramatic momentum', Part 2 has a 'clear dramatic trajectory...music is spell-bindingly beautiful, understated, haunting' | -   | Lunacy not 'conducive to either elegant word-setting or intelligibility'  | Set 'evokes the colours...of the African Slave community'  | Jurowski demonstrated 'an admirable command of the idiom'                         |
| The Times        | 12/08/08 | Geoff Brown      | -  | 'Nothing is sustained, that's the disappointment. Soaring scenes alternate with deserts'  | -   | 'Action arrives in simultaneous layers'; 'brief lines are stunted'; 'few chances of an aria'  | 'emotional tapestry of Helmut Stürmer's lighting – so vital in colouring his rudimentary set and the ritualised staging' | Singing throughout is impressive; no one could moan about...Jurowski and the LPO; |
| The Guardian     | 12/08/08 | Andrew Clements  | Not 'renowned for its adventurousness ...a measure of Eötvös's status' | 'full of authentically magical things'; 'ravishing sounds'; drama needs more of a 'musical push'  | 'convincing... spun over diaphanous textures' | Hamvai 'fillets the already slender tale expertly enough by leaves the piece curiously deracinated'   | Disappoints – 'failure to evoke any real sense of place'   | Accomplished;   |

# **APPENDIX TEN: LOVE AND OTHER DEMONS**

## **UK Critical Reception August-September 2008**

|                 |          |                     |  |   |   |  |   |   |
|-----------------|----------|---------------------|--|---|---|--|---|---|
| Telegraph       | 13/08/08 | Rupert Christiansen | 'Glyndebourne does it proud'   | 'a wilful refusal to let the music overheat'; 'everything is dry, cool and precise'; 'Eötvös sets a slow pulse and eschews any sense of cumulative tension in the narrative'; 'a brilliant but sterile stylistic exercise'  | 'angular vocal lines that rarely so much as hint at lyricism'; role of Delaura 'underwritten' | -  | 'dreamy vividness'; 'some banal video projections could be dispensed with'                              | Jurowski's 'forensic conducting'                          |
| New Statesman   | 14/08/08 | Ian Irvine          | -  | 'an intense and dark sound-world, suspenseful and expressive in a cinematic way'  | -   | -  | -   | 'fine and obviously committed cast'                       |
| The Independent | 14/08/08 | Edward Seckerson    | -  | 'framework of a play infused with music'; 'songs...feel subsumed by the lento pacing of the score...as if the whole evening is under hypnosis'; 'instrumental current that behaves like underscoring'; music is 'organic and superbly accomplished'   | 'Eötvös sets his text as heightened speech'; words are 'ritualised'                           | Eötvös & Hamvai not fully succeeded in translating 'magic realism' onto the stage          | 'Stürmer's striking design'; 'beautifully handled by Silviu Pucarete'; 'Pucarete's production delivers' | 'under Jurowski, the LPO shimmers and growls evocatively' |
| Sunday Times    | 17/08/08 | Paul Driver         | Contextual introduction outlining Glyndebourne's history of commissioning new work | Eötvös too modernist to develop story's traditional operatic potential; simply manipulates stage time, ciphers Sierva's name; 'reluctant to leave behind modern opera's lingua franca and lift the discourse out of...arioso...into aria, or ensemble'; high points...lose emotional reality' | 'strident expressionism is privileged over vocal display'                                     | Credits Kemp & Hamvai – 'a formal crispness in contrast to the torrid emotions on display' | 'Stürmer's set...overlain by Andu Dumitrescu's video projections...is stylish enough'                   | 'one couldn't fault the conductor...or the LPO'           |

**APPENDIX TEN: LOVE AND OTHER DEMONS**  
**UK Critical Reception August-September 2008**

|                           |          |                |   |   |   |   |  |  |
|---------------------------|----------|----------------|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| Sunday Telegraph          | 17/08/08 | John Allison   | 1 <sup>st</sup> non-British commission; confidence  | Effective, dark, gritty   | Sierva 'comes close to cliché'  | -   | Richly textured; should travel well  | Jurowski/LPO 'sound superbly well'; 'cast from strength' |
| Sunday Independent        | 17/08/08 | ?              |   | 'Understated, ambiguous and minutely controlled'; 'Eötvös's introverted, icy sound-world is fundamentally ill-suited'   | 'stratospheric melismas for the semi-feral Sierva'; 'the rest of the libretto is set syllable by syllable'          | 'Hamvai's crude libretto... a tropical Thorn Birds'   | 'Pucarete's production is as over-heated as the score is languid'                | 'beautifully realised by the LPO under Jurowski'         |
| Times Literary Supplement | 5/09/08  | Andrew Porter  | '11 <sup>th</sup> new piece and the first by a non-British composer'; Eötvös's opera 'apt for Glyndebourne' | 'well-made opera'... carefully tailored to bring out the best in its singers and entertain its audience'; Eötvös's music 'makes its points deftly'; 'culinary'                                  | Sierva's 'often stratospheric lines'  | Discusses process, mentions Kemp who creates 'less formal libretto' and 'adds magic'  | 'Purarete's staging and Stürmer's varied box set were serviceable'               | 'efficient', singers 'remarkable'                        |
| Spectator                 | 03/09/08 | Michael Tanner | 'courageous... nothing but admiration for the élan with which it was presented'                             | 'a weak piece'; tense drama 'never happens'; music in short supply; antiphonal effects failed to register; 'three major, brief orchestral outbursts, otherwise singing is skeletally supported' | 'inordinately high passages of vocal squealing'; 'why are contemporary composers so attracted to the stratosphere?' | Compact, moves things along but language is 'strained, ungrammatical constructions and passages of mere obscurity... macaronic to a degree' | Lucid, economical; 'many fascinating projections'; a short-ish colourful evening | Jurowski gives 'a very strong lead'                      |



**APPENDIX ELEVEN: THE YELLOW SOFA, A timeline 2008-9**

| <b>When</b>             | <b>Where/what</b> | <b>Who</b>  | <b>Nature of discussion</b>   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|---|---|
| Aug-08                  | Glyndebourne      | Edward Kemp and Julian Philips meet during <i>Love and other demons</i> run | Kemp floats ideas around Calvino and Cloud Atlas                                      |
| 17th September 2008     | Email             | Julian Philips to Edward Kemp   | Email to initiate more focussed work on project, suggesting stories by Eca de Quieros |
| 17th September 2008     | Email             | Edward Kemp to Julian Philips   | Replies, sending a sample of previous libretti  |
| mid September           | Post              | Glyndebourne to Edward Kemp   | Mailed copy of The Yellow Sofa  |
| 1st October 2008        | Email             | Julian Philips to Edward Kemp, Katie Tearle                                 | Sends document: "Initial ideas for The Yellow Sofa"                                   |
| 1st October 2008        | Email             | Katie Tearle to Julian Philips  | Concerns re: duration (will it come in at 60 minutes?) and copyright                  |
| 2nd October 2008        | Email             | Katie Tearle to Julian Philips, Edward Kemp                                 | Copy requested for Glyndebourne marketing department                                  |
| 4th October 2008        | Email             | Edward Kemp to Julian Philips   | Detailed but favourable first response to idea, raising twelve detailed issues        |
| 12th October 2008       | Email             | Julian Philips to Edward Kemp   | Detailed response to twelve points raised in Edward Kemp's email                      |
| 26th October            | Email             | Edward Kemp to Katie Tearle, Julian Philips                                 | Final copy confirmed for Glyndebourne publicity                                       |
| 17th-28th November 2009 | Emails            | Edward Kemp, Julian Philips   | Various attempts to organise a meeting  |
| 8th December 2008, eve  | Meeting           | Edward Kemp and Julian Philips  | Libretto meeting in London  |

**APPENDIX ELEVEN: *THE YELLOW SOFA*, A timeline 2008-9**

|                         |       |  |  |
|-------------------------|-------|--|--|
| 14th December 2008      | Email | Edward Kemp to Julian Philips                      | Rough libretto 1   |
| 16th December 2008      | Email | Edward Kemp to Julian Philips                      | Rough libretto 2 (tidier version)  |
| 16th-17th December 2008 | Email | Julian Philips to Edward Kemp                      | First response to rough libretto, raising issues around shape, the door, the sofa, scenes, the clock, use of Fado and the end  |
| 28th December 2008      | Email | Freddie Wake-Walker to Katie Tearle                | Has read story and is confident it will make a good piece; wants to feed into the libretto development   |
| 29th December 2008      | Email | Edward Kemp to Julian Philips                      | Continued discussion around distribution of characters and use of ten voices, establishing the world and its staging, and the wider significance of the Yellow sofa itself |
| 5th January 2009        | Email | Katie Tearle to Freddie Wake-Walker                | Putting Freddie Wake-Walker in touch with Julian Philips and Edward Kemp   |
| 9th January 2009        | Email | Julian Philips to Edward Kemp, Freddie Wake-Walker | Proposed casting list circulated for the ten singers   |
| 10th January 2009       | Email | Freddie Wake-Walker to Julian Philips              | Initial thoughts re: characterisation, structure, doors, period and the silences in the book   |
| 15th January 2009       | Email | Julian Philips to Freddie Wake-Walker, Edward Kemp | Response to points raised, copying in Edward Kemp: ambiguity, the sofa, Lulu, the period, use of silence   |
| 19th January 2009       | Email | Freddie Wake-Walker to Julian Philips              | Continued discussion: setting, character and casting; concerns at the size of the Godofredo role   |

| <b>APPENDIX ELEVEN: <i>THE YELLOW SOFA</i>, A timeline 2008-9</b> |        |   |   |
|---|--------|---|---|
| 20th January 2009   | Email  | Julian Philips to Freddie Wake-Walker               | Continued discussion: rehearsals (lack of them!), casting, Lulu-Godofredo, setting                                  |
| 20th January 2009   | Email  | Edward Kemp to Julian Philips & Freddie Wake-Walker | Continued discussion: rehearsals, Lulu, danger of caricature, setting (avoid Chekov), how to theatricalise the maid |
| 21st January 2009   | Email  | Freddie Wake-Walker to Edward Kemp & Julian Philips | Continued discussion re: doors, setting, casting, maid  |
| 22nd January 2009   | Email  | Julian Philips to Freddie Wake-Walker, Edward Kemp  | Portuguese Quartrains and Fado texts in relation to Amarela's character   |
| 22nd January 2009   | Email  | Julian Philips to Freddie Wake-Walker, Edward Kemp  | Continued discussion  |
| 25th January 2009   | Emails | Edward Kemp to Julian Philips                       | Draft 2 and discussion, mostly in relation to Amarela, use of English and Portuguese                                |
| 26th January 2009   | Email  | Julian Philips to Edward Kemp                       | Brief response to draft 2   |
| 2nd February 2009   | Email  | Edward Kemp to Julian Philips                       | Draft 2 revised   |
| 9th February 2009   | Email  | Freddie Wake-Walker to Edward Kemp & Julian Philips | Update on rehearsal schedule anxieties and casting  |
| 14th February 2009  | Email  | Julian Philips to Edward Kemp                       | Prologue Fado text  |
| 15th February 2009  | Email  | Julian Philips to Edward Kemp                       | Forwarded Julian Philips' own reformatted libretto, taking account of the musical structure                         |
| 17th February 2009  | Email  | Edward Kemp to Julian Philips                       | Draft text for "Once in Lisbon"   |
| 18th February 2009  | Email  | Edward Kemp to Julian Philips                       | Draft 3   |

| <b>APPENDIX ELEVEN: THE YELLOW SOFA, A timeline 2008-9</b> |                       |   |   |
|--|-----------------------|---|---|
| 21st February 2009   | Email                 | Edward Kemp to Julian Philips                                   | Amarela's song & Draft 3 revised  |
| 19th March 2009  | Email                 | Edward Kemp to Julian Philips                                   | Draft 3 revised   |
| 20th March 2009  | Email                 | Julian Philips to David Pickard, Steven Naylor and Katie Tearle | Instrumentation list, copy of the libretto in progress and a proposed list of voice types |
| 22nd March 2009  | Emails                | Steven Naylor, Julian Philips                                   | Request to cut one of the guitar parts; Julian Philips insists on retaining it            |
| 22nd March 2009  | Email                 | Edward Kemp to Julian Philips                                   | Draft 4 - A first complete draft  |
| 20th-29th March 2009                                       | Email                 | Julian Philips to Edward Kemp                                   | Hasn't had time to read through, will be in touch later                                   |
| 20th April 2009  | Email                 | Freddie Wake-Walker to Edward Kemp & Julian Philips             | First response to draft 4: Amarela, the clock, the sofa, use of chorus and costume        |
| 21st April 2009  | Email                 | Edward Kemp to Julian Philips & Freddie Wake-Walker             | Response to Freddie's email   |
| 22nd April 2009  | 2 Emails              | Julian Philips to Freddie Wake-Walker, Edward Kemp              | Continued discussion, plus reformatted libretto and character breakdown sheet             |
| 24th April 2009  | Meeting, Glyndebourne | Steven Naylor, Julian Philips                                   | Fix casting for The Yellow Sofa, discussing available performers from Glyndebourne chorus |
| 22nd April 2009  | Email                 | Julian Philips to Edward Kemp                                   | Continued discussion: overture, use of 'tableaux', text issues and Fado                   |
| 27th April 2009  | Email                 | Edward Kemp to Julian Philips & Freddie Wake-Walker             | Detailed response to Julian Philips   |

**APPENDIX ELEVEN: *THE YELLOW SOFA*, A timeline 2008-9**

|                  |                       |  |   |
|------------------|-----------------------|--|---|
| 27th April 2009  | Email                 | Freddie Wake-Walker to Edward Kemp & Julian Philips    | Feedback on recent email exchanges; mentions Strehler production as potential model                             |
| 28th April 2009  | Email                 | Freddie Wake-Walker to Edward Kemp & Julian Philips    | Concerns re: rehearsal schedule   |
| 28th April 2009  | Email                 | Edward Kemp to Julian Philips & Freddie Wake-Walker    | Response to Freddie's email   |
| 30th April 2009  | Meeting, Glyndebourne | Freddie Wake-Walker, Glyndebourne                      | Initial production meeting re: design, costume and rehearsal schedule   |
| 1st May 2009     | Email                 | Julian Philips to Edward Kemp                          | Tying up loose ends   |
| 1st-6th May 2009 | Emails                | Julian Philips to Steven Naylor                        | Guitarists contact details  |
| 3rd May 2009     | Email                 | Freddie Wake-Walker to Julian Philips                  | Detailed feedback re: costume, rehearsals; serious concerns re: lack of resources and inadequate rehearsal time |
| 30th May 2009    | Email                 | Julian Philips to Edward Kemp                          | Draft Overture performance instructions for discussion  |
| 31st May 2009    | Email                 | Edward Kemp to Julian Philips                          | Happy with Overture text  |
| 31st May 2009    | Emails                | Julian Philips, Edward Kemp                            | Discussion of the "shut up" line: English or Portuguese?  |
| 1st June 2009    | Email                 | Edward Kemp to Julian Philips                          | Discussion of Medeiros line "The only colour is black"  |
| 4th June 2009    | Email                 | Julian Philips to library, Glyndebourne Festival Opera | Numbers 1-13 in vocal score   |
| 5th June 2009    | Email                 | Freddie Wake-Walker to Julian Philips                  | Has the Yellow Sofa emerged?  |
| 22nd June 2009   | Email                 | Julian Philips to library, Glyndebourne Festival Opera | Numbers 14-17 in vocal score  |

| <b>APPENDIX ELEVEN: THE YELLOW SOFA, A timeline 2008-9</b> |              |  |  |
|--|--------------|--|--|
| 24th June 2009   | Email        | Julian Philips to Edward Kemp                          | PDFs of complete vocal score   |
| 24th June 2009   | Email        | Edward Kemp to Julian Philips                          | Positive response  |
| 30th June 2009   | Email        | Freddie Wake-Walker to Julian Philips                  | Looking forward, but can we do it justice with the rehearsal time we have allocated? |
| 13th July 2009   | Email        | Julian Philips to library, Glyndebourne Festival Opera | Orchestral score & parts minus no.14   |
| Week of 13th July 2009                                     | Glyndebourne | Full Company   | Music calls begin  |
| 14th July 2009   | Email        | Julian Philips to library, Glyndebourne Festival Opera | Orchestral score & parts for no.14   |
| 12th-14th July 2009  | Emails       | Edward Kemp to Julian Philips                          | Discussion of clock winding, transition to domestic stability                        |
| 16th July 2009   | Email        | Freddie Wake-Walker to Julian Philips                  | Rehearsal schedule, discussion of which rehearsals to attend                         |
| 20th July 2009   | Glyndebourne | Full company   | Production rehearsals week 1   |
| 27th July 2009   | Glyndebourne | Full company   | Production rehearsals week 2   |
| 3rd August 2009  | Glyndebourne | Full company   | Production rehearsals week 3   |
| 9th August 2009  | Glyndebourne | Britten Sinfonia/Leo McFall                            | Orchestral rehearsal 1   |

**APPENDIX ELEVEN: *THE YELLOW SOFA*, A timeline 2008-9**

|                  |                              |   |  |
|------------------|------------------------------|---|--|
| 11th August 2009 | Glyndebourne                 | Britten Sinfonia/Leo McFall               | Orchestral rehearsal 2   |
| 11th August 2009 | Glyndebourne                 | Tiago de Neta, Leo McFall, Julian Philips | Portuguese guitarist replaced due to difficulties with the part  |
| 12th August 2009 | Glyndebourne                 | Full company                              | Piano dress rehearsal  |
| 13th August 2009 | Glyndebourne                 | Full company                              | sitz/stage and orchestra   |
| 14th August 2009 | Email                        | Jane Williams to Katie Tearle             | Suggests a number of replacement guitarists including Steve Smith  |
| 14th August 2009 | Email                        | Katie Tearle to Seve Smith                | Contracting him to play the Portuguese guitar part   |
| 14th August 2009 | Email                        | Steve Smith to Katie Tearle               | Happy to be involved but can we borrow a real Portuguese guitar? Happy to survive stage and orchestra by restringing guitar with appropriate metal strings |
| 15th August 2009 | Glyndebourne                 | Full company                              | stage and orchestra  |
| 17th August 2009 | Glyndebourne                 | Full company                              | Dress rehearsal  |
| 20th August 2009 | Jerwood Studio, Glyndebourne | Full company                              | Performance 1  |
| 23rd August 2009 | Jerwood Studio, Glyndebourne | Full company                              | Performance 2  |
| 25th August 2009 | Jerwood Studio, Glyndebourne | Full company                              | Performance 3  |
| 28th August 2009 | Jerwood Studio, Glyndebourne | Full company                              | Performance 4  |

**APPENDIX TWELVE: THE YELLOW SOFA, novel into libretto**

| <b>NOVEL <i>Alves e companhia</i></b> |  | <b>OPERA <i>The Yellow Sofa</i></b> |   |              |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---|--------------|--|
| <b>Chapter</b>                        | <b>Action</b>  | <b>Scene</b>                        | <b>Rough draft</b>  | <b>Scene</b> | <b>Final Libretto</b>  |
| <b>1</b>                              | Godofredo returns to his office; business with Ruço; exposition of Machado and Lulu through Godofredo's thoughts; Godofredo remembers wedding anniversary (9th); leaves early, buys bracelet, pies, cigars; returns home, creeps in to surprise Lulu;<br><br>discovers Lulu and Machado embracing on their 'Yellow damask sofa'  |                                     | Woman in yellow dress sings about Godofredo and how he bought his wife a yellow sofa; Godofredo returns home, thinking about trivial domesticities, to surprise wife;<br><br>discovers Machado and Lulu on sofa; when I return, one/both will be gone | <b>1</b>     | <b>Overture (mobile 1)</b> as audience enters; sequence of domestic harmony; clock ticks then stops; Lulu winds it up;   |
|                                       |  |                                     |   | <b>2</b>     | <b>Prologue (Amarela's fado):</b> Once in Lisbon, a song about Godofredo Alves   |
|                                       |  |                                     |   | <b>3</b>     | <b>A scene:</b> Godofredo and Machado at the office; Machado heads off, Godofredo remembers his wedding anniversary (9th May); flowers, cakes, a card and the bracelet; returns home to find Lulu and Machado on the yellow sofa |
|                                       |  |                                     |   | <b>4a</b>    | <b>Tableau 1:</b> Godofredo enters, discovers Lulu and Machado on the yellow sofa; "I'm going out again. When I return one of you will be gone"  |
| <b>2</b>                              | Machado flees, Lulu locks herself in her bedroom, Godofredo falls headlong; Godofredo almost breaks in, confronts her, Lulu tries to explain herself, Godofredo throws the bracelet at her; Margarida and cook lurking the whole time; Godofredo discovers letters in her drawer, writes to Neto, tells her to leave; pie and cheese arrive from Mata's as he leaves the house |                                     | Returns either to:<br>a) Lulu alone, a duo OR<br>b) Godofredo alone<br>Important idea of door as a device   | <b>4b</b>    | <b>Tableau 2:</b> Godofredo and Lulu sit on the sofa, attempting to understand each other  |
|                                       |  |                                     |   | <b>5</b>     | <b>Amarela's Fado (reprise)</b> - Godofredo is left alone on the Sofa when...  |



**APPENDIX TWELVE: THE YELLOW SOFA, novel into libretto**

| <b>NOVEL <i>Alves e companhia</i></b> |  | <b>OPERA <i>The Yellow Sofa</i></b> |  |              |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|--------------|--|
| <b>Chapter</b>                        | <b>Action</b>  | <b>Scene</b>                        | <b>Rough draft</b>   | <b>Scene</b> | <b>Final Libretto</b>  |
| <b>3</b>                              | Asks old Galician to deliver letter to Neto, sits, waits and watches its delivery; roams Lisbon in the evening; considers death - his own and Machado's; comes up with idea for suicide by lots; returns home, inspects Neto's house; Lulu gone, her debris and suitcase still there, as is Machado's port and cigar butt; demands dinner and shouts for Margarida who serves the pies and cheese; Godofredo revisits the suicide by lots idea; writes 'curt letter' to Machado, delivers it; returns to his dinner, the soup going cold; Neto is announced  |                                     | Not treated directly as action<br>The following elements are cut:<br>a) Old Galician<br>b) letter episode<br>c) business with pies/cheese/dinner | <b>(5)</b>   | Not treated directly as action<br>The following elements are cut:<br>a) Old Galician<br>b) letter episode<br>c) business with pies/cheese/dinner<br>Godofredo's reflections about death, suicide treated later (no. 8) |
| <b>4</b>                              | Neto: 'I see you've not lost your appetite', Godofredo stops eating; dialogue - starts innocuously, then accelerates; Neto moves from irony to outrage as Godofredo claims Lulu can leave in the street like a whore; Godofredo mentions letters; agreement - 30 milreis a month if she stays with Neto; coffee; Neto outlines seaside idea (spend the season at Ericeira) - fee goes up to 50 milreis; Neto leaves - better they are separated for a while; on the way insists that Margarida send over that 'silver sugar caster'; Neto returns home to Teresa and Joanna who are full of anticipation; seaside idea met with excitement, Neto begins to assemble the holiday accounts, Lulu is full of sadness, remorse and regret, isolated from the holiday fever |                                     | 1) Godofredo opens door again to discover Neto sitting on yellow sofa; the two men bargain: for an easy life?                                    | <b>6</b>     | <b>Another scene:</b> Neto and Godofredo discuss Lulu's fate: events/the letters etc; agree on trip to Sintra for the summer, bartering terms at 50 milreis a month  |
|                                       |  |                                     | 2) Interlude of father in law, two daughters and their maid; Lulu's turn to feel trapped in the choice she has made                              | <b>7</b>     | <b>Invocation:</b> Lulu, Teresa, Neto and their maid Margarida pack for their summer at Sintra<br><b>Aria:</b> Lulu expresses her regret, unhappiness and isolation  |

**APPENDIX TWELVE: THE YELLOW SOFA, novel into libretto**

| <b>NOVEL <i>Alves e companhia</i></b> |  | <b>OPERA <i>The Yellow Sofa</i></b> |  |              |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|--------------|--|
| <b>Chapter</b>                        | <b>Action</b>  | <b>Scene</b>                        | <b>Rough draft</b>   | <b>Scene</b> | <b>Final Libretto</b>  |
| <b>5</b>                              | <p>Godofredo wakes up to the debris of catastrophe, pangs for Lulu and sense of despair; death; maids are up, Godofredo returns to daily routine; thinks about his will, doorbell; breakfast, Margarida annoys him, looks for 'silver sugar caster';</p> <p>takes cab to office, tense; office is dead, wilted flowers; Machado; can't be friends, Godofredo's anger/sense of dishonour; Machado expects duel but Godofredo presents suicide by lots; Machado disdainful and appalled - 'ideas of a madman';</p> <p>Machado leaves Godofredo with 'the lamentable ruins of his grand idea'</p> |                                     | <p>1) Thwarted Godofredo, works himself up into operatic fury, duel becomes determination that either he or Machado will commit suicide</p> <p>2) Godofredo opens door on Machado (on the yellow sofa?); Machado fails to rise to the operatic - laconic? laid back? Ready enough for duel but in a way that scares Godofredo</p> <p>3) Interlude for the Yellow Sofa: a song of Lisbon? catastrophic place for humanity to live? ironic? devilish mischief?</p> | <b>8</b>     | <b>Dialogue-duet:</b> Amarela's song is reprised but brutally cut off by Godofredo, who discusses the prospect of a duel; Godofredo rises to the occasion, with a rather forced sense of himself |
|                                       |  |                                     |  | <b>9</b>     | <b>A Confrontation:</b> Machado appears, Godofredo confronts him, rejects duel and proposes drawing lots for suicide; Machado laughs it off (plus chorus)  |
|                                       |  |                                     |  | <b>10</b>    | <b>Interlude (mobile 2):</b> Godofredo is left alone on the yellow sofa as the clock ticks   |
|                                       |  |                                     |  | <b>11</b>    | <b>Fado (Amarela):</b> Sun sets on the ocean   |
|                                       |  |                                     |  | <b>12</b>    | <b>Tableau 3:</b> Ludovina alone   |

**APPENDIX TWELVE: THE YELLOW SOFA, novel into libretto**

| <b>NOVEL <i>Alves e companhia</i></b> |  | <b>OPERA <i>The Yellow Sofa</i></b> |  |              |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|--------------|---|
| <b>Chapter</b>                        | <b>Action</b>  | <b>Scene</b>                        | <b>Rough draft</b>   | <b>Scene</b> | <b>Final Libretto</b>   |
| <b>6</b>                              | Godofredo leaves office outraged at Machado's reaction, heads for his friend Carvalho's in Rossio; the well groomed Carvalho ushers him inside, is shocked by Machado/Lulu's behaviour, but no less shocked and evasive around Godofredo's demands for a 'dual to the death'; a distant piano breaks in with snatches from <i>Rigoletto</i> ; comic off-stage business with Carvalho's maid which takes him away leaving Godofredo to his thoughts; Carvalho uncomfortable and then annoyed when Godofredo insists they visit Medeiros for advice; carriage to Medeiros who is dishevelled and wallowing in bed after near miss with a husband he's cuckolded; Medeiros shocked at Godofredo's story but like Carvalho occupies ambiguous position: blood! but no dual; in the end the friends insist Godofredo leaves it to them and awaits instructions; Godofredo is bundled out, told to wait, put his affairs in order (will?); Godofredo despondent in cab |                                     | Godofredo opens door on his friends Carvalho, Medeiros - a bed, or maybe just the sofa; debate his case, weaving in good deal of banter about the women of Lisbon and which ones they've had | <b>13</b>    | <b>Trio:</b> Carvalho, Medeiros and Godofredo discuss what's to be done; Medeiros sings of his various conquests and they discuss the terms of a duel and decide to meet with Machado's second, Nunes Vidal; the friends reassure Godofredo: "Place your honour in our hands" |

**APPENDIX TWELVE: THE YELLOW SOFA, novel into libretto**

| <b>NOVEL <i>Alves e companhia</i></b> |  | <b>OPERA <i>The Yellow Sofa</i></b> |   |              |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---|--------------|--|
| <b>Chapter</b>                        | <b>Action</b>  | <b>Scene</b>                        | <b>Rough draft</b>  | <b>Scene</b> | <b>Final Libretto</b>  |
| <b>7</b>                              | Carvalho (now in a formal black suit) and Medeiros arrive to report their meeting with Machado's seconds, Nunes Vidal and Albert Cunha; Nunes - wants to avoid disaster; incident was 'mere flirtation' therefore no justification for duel with pistols; Godofredo outrage - but duel with swords agreed; final meeting (8pm) at Medeiros' house to settle everything; the three settle down for dinner, which proves full of anecdotes about infidelities and conquests; Godofredo lightens up |                                     | NOT TREATED   |              | NOT TREATED  |
|                                       | Carriage to Medeiros' house, Godofredo is secreted into his bedroom, eavesdropping in the dark; snatches of the meeting drift through to Godofredo; Godofredo's crisis - his fear of death, of wounding, of sickness; maybe the incident wasn't serious, just a flirtation;  |                                     | 1) Godofredo's nightmare - left in the dark with his fate/yellow sofa; here's his the conversation becoming jovial off-stage; | <b>14</b>    | <b>Storm (Nightmare):</b> Godofredo lurks on the yellow sofa, in a darkened room while his fate is decided offstage; fragments of his experience drift over his consciousness and torment him; he confronts the reality of his impending death |
|                                       | laughter - it's all settled, you're not going to fight; incident was trivial, nothing happened; pistols too serious, but swords not serious enough (Nunes' dilemma); best for things to stay as they are; Machado goes away 'to see his mother' but returns to office - wife is saved from disrepute, hard-working colleague saved, Godofredo saved from ridicule; Godofredo relieved; all three go for a walk and an ice cream at Martinho's  |                                     | 2) They enter to tell there is nothing to be done, time will heal all (sickly, sub-Mozartian tone of forgiveness)             | <b>15</b>    | <b>Finale?:</b> Carvalho and Medeiros return with Nunes, all shall be well - Let everything be as before; Medeiros: "Anyone for an ice cream?"   |
|                                       |  |                                     |   | <b>16</b>    | <b>Mobile 3:</b> Godofredo is left alone at home. The clock ticks.   |

**APPENDIX TWELVE: THE YELLOW SOFA, novel into libretto**

| <b>NOVEL <i>Alves e companhia</i></b> |  | <b>OPERA <i>The Yellow Sofa</i></b> |   |              |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---|--------------|--|
| <b>Chapter</b>                        | <b>Action</b>  | <b>Scene</b>                        | <b>Rough draft</b>  | <b>Scene</b> | <b>Final Libretto</b>  |
| <b>8</b>                              | Alves' frightful existence; Machado returns to office, new routine establishes itself; Godofredo's domestic life deteriorates as Margardia/Cook become careless; Godofredo misses Lulu - her piano playing ( <i>Souvenir of Andalusia</i> ); miserable evenings; Lulu et al return from Ericeira; Godofredo sees her, but hides, again and acknowledges her; Neto says they're going to Minho; Godofredo sees her a third time and they speak - chaos at home, how does the reading lamp work?; Teresa/Lulu realise that Lulu is once again his wife; the three return to the house to survey domestic devastation; Godofredo kisses her and they are reconciled |                                     | 1) Godofredo alone with the sofa<br>2) Song of time passing, not knowing how anything goes, hopeless maids<br>3) Even clock stops, sense of time passing has passed<br>4) Godofredo and Lulu meet as if for first time, she tells him how to wind clock and comes home to wind it   | <b>17</b>    | <b>Another Finale:</b> Amarela reprises the opening Fado; Godofredo and Lulu meet outside the opera; Godofredo can't wind up the clock - can she help him; |
|                                       |  |                                     |   | <b>18</b>    | <b>Epilogue (mobile 4):</b> suddenly they're back home, reconciled, domestic order returns;  |
|                                       |  |                                     | 5) Life runs smoothly again, clock ticks on, doors open and close, she sits on her yellow sofa<br>6) blurs back into Portuguese song we heard at the outset<br>Thoughts: has the whole thing gone backwards, have we arrived where we started, has knowledge been accrued? Is he destined to return again to a scene on the yellow sofa?<br>Mobius strip or Escher-like | <b>19</b>    | <b>Epilogue:</b> Amarela completes her <i>Fado</i>   |

**APPENDIX TWELVE: THE YELLOW SOFA, novel into libretto**

| <b>NOVEL <i>Alves e companhia</i></b> |  | <b>OPERA <i>The Yellow Sofa</i></b> |                    |              |                       |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Chapter</b>                        | <b>Action</b>  | <b>Scene</b>                        | <b>Rough draft</b> | <b>Scene</b> | <b>Final Libretto</b> |
| <b>9</b>                              | Alves and Lulu's second honeymoon in Sintra and then Lisbon; reconciliation with Machado; incident of Lulu's letter - Godofredo's rage/jealousy but the two are reconciled; Machado's sick mother draws them all closer; Machado's mother dies, Alves invites him for dinner; Machado sits on the 'famous yellow sofa'; Machado's marriages: to Cantanhede, to the widow with long eyelashes; Teresa marries; Godofredo/Machado households lives next door to each other and their lives grow together; final image of Godofredo imagining what might have happened if he'd really fought Machado, and "all because of a joke, Machado!" |                                     | NOT TREATED        |              | NOT TREATED           |

## **APPENDIX THIRTEEN:**

**THE YELLOW SOFA development pro**

**From:** Julian Philips  
**To:** Neil Bartlett  
**Subject:** Greetings  
**Date:** Sun, 1 Jun 2008 20:53:37 +0100

Dear Neil Bartlett,

Hello there! I think Michael Grandage has been in touch with you hence this email out of the blue. We've never met but I've read much of your work and would be very interested in exploring whether we might be able to work together.

To be specific - I have this strange but wonderful opportunity at Glyndebourne. Officially, I'm the "Composer in Residence" - a title that sounds rather grander than it is. But most important of all, this gives me the chance to make two pieces of work for the Glyndebourne context.

I've nearly finished the first which is a site specific chamber opera for three singers and four players which working with a writer friend, we made to work in three Glyndebourne spaces outside the main opera house.

The second project is rather more formally constituted - a new 45 minute piece for a core of singers from the Glyndebourne chorus plus small ensemble. The piece will be staged in Glyndebourne's Jerwood Rehearsal Studio in summer 2009 and should get about half a dozen performances. It's this project that I wondered whether you might be interested in working on. Your name came up when talking to Michael about writers and he felt strongly that we'd have lots of common ground. I know you're busy at the RSC at the moment, but is there any way we could at least have an exploratory chat? All in all, it's a little pressing, as I've dithered about how to proceed but at this stage, we'd be looking at trying to make a piece about a year from now.

Anyway - I'll be toing and froing to Glyndebourne in the coming months so it would be easy to meet up in Brighton or Lewes.

Look forward to being in touch.  
Many thanks

Julian  
Julian Philips



**From:** Neil Bartlett  
**Date:** 28 Jun 2008 10:15 BST  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Subject:** RE: Greetings

Julian

sorry to have been silent ; busy !!! But....had the pitch-meeting on which my conflicting project for next year depends yesterday, so should be able to let you know if I am available or not within the next couple of weeks.

Meanwhile, a jiffy-bag would be lovely....

x

Neil

**From:** Julian Philips  
**To:** Neil Bartlett  
**Subject:** Re: Greetings  
**Date:** Thu, 3 Jul 2008 11:42:06 +0100

Neil,

Feel it should be me apologising. I'm so sorry for the silence. On the final stages of finishing an opera so I've been working relentlessly with long days and short nights. Something I'm sure you know all about!

Belatedly, I should say what a complete delight it was to meet you and thank you for sparing the time. Tantalisingly, it made me sure that working with you would be an inspiring and developing experience and I'm crossing all available fingers and toes in the hope that it might work. Either way, your ideas about how you develop the concept of a piece in its infancy were incredibly interesting and helpful. Thank you.

Jiffy bag. Yes. I will get it done over the weekend. Feeling dithery about what to send you but will just send you a little pile of things to enjoy (or not...!)

In the meantime, do hope that the Wilde is going well. Am sure it is!

Will be in touch and once again, sorry for the silence. Am in the final act and the anticipation of finishing takes my breath away!!!!

J xxxxxx

**From:** Neil Bartlett  
**Date:** 13 July 2008 12:27:58 BST  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Subject:** RE: Greetings

Julian

I hope you got to the end; I know how that feels!

Sad news; my big commission for 2009 just got confirmed. I am now in Dublin, then straight onto being with the RSC until December, then have to write a draft scenario for the new piece by Christmas, then am working in Cape Town and briefly for Opera North in January, then have to have a script ready for rehearsals at the end of May. It's basically a spoken/a capella oratorio, about the secret life of a roomful of women, for a cast of five principals and a chorus of nineteen, so I have my work cut out for me. For the Manchester International Festival, so quite a big deal.

The feeling of excitement after our meeting was mutual. Therefore, to try and squeeze something in, and not be able to properly enjoy or explore, would be a big mistake.

I'm pissed; you wait all year for an interesting piece of work to come along, and then.....

Please pass on my apologies to Glyndebourne. I would KILL to work there, KILL - I can't believe our bad luck on this....

So, let's hope there is another occasion when we could talk about collaborating, and soon.

Please invite me to any chance I might have to come and hear work in progress at Glyndebourne, and I'll invite you to Stratford and Manchester in case you're anywhere near...

Sorry again

Neil

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 17 September 2008 09:20:58 BST  
**To:** Kemp Edward  
**Subject:** Greetings

Edward,

Hello there. Hope you're well. Hope Turandot and Tale of Two Cities have both gone off well. You must have been madly busy in the past few weeks! I've been submerged in my first opera Varjak Paw so similarly submerged.

Just wondering if we can get the ball rolling for next summer as it's getting quite urgent now. I have a some Eca de Quieros stories which I'd like to mail you. Where should I send them? Also have copies of various Calvino things which I'm going to read through. I have a month of writing leave in October so it's a good time to chew the cud as it were but I guess we'll need to be in touch via email.

Anyway, I go off on Friday, am back for a couple of days next week then away for a month. Back early November and around/free for the rest of the year.

In the meantime, any chance you email me some of your other libretti as I'd love to get a broader sense of your other libreti. Might also generate some ideas of course.

Hope your new term has kicked off well and look forward to speaking.

Best wishes

Julian

Julian Philips

**From:** Edward Kemp

**Date:** 17 September 2008 23:26:20 BST

**To:** Julian Philips

**Subject: Re: Greetings**

Yes - I've been thinking we should move this on. Probably best to mail the stories to RADA, 62-64 Gower Street, London WC1E 6ED. I do think there may be something in the Marquez - but it'd be good to read de Queiros and also know how you've got on with Italo.

Attached are some libretti.

AFTER FIGARO was a 10 minute piece written with Terry Davies for the bar of a Drill Hall prior to a performance by MTL of Figaro

ECHO & NARCISSUS was written with Stuart McRae for a ballet/opera collaboration (two dancers, two singers working seamlessly together)

HEROIC DEATH was the second of two libretti written for Alwynne Pritchard. This one went through two different versions (both performed) - this is the later more compact one

HUNGER was my first piece written with Alwynne - a piece (and novel) that remains close to my heart.

TRAVELS IN THE ARCTIC CIRCLE is my longest libretto to date (leaving aside the Rushdie last year which was really more like an oratorio than an opera) and one that lots of different composers seem to enjoy

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 1 October 2008  
**To:** Katie Tearle, Edward Kemp  
**Subject:** The Yellow Sofa

## **INITIAL IDEAS FOR THE YELLOW SOFA**

### **WHAT DO I LIKE ABOUT IT?**

I've loved this story for a while and had it at the back of my mind. Eça de Queiros is such an unusual and wonderful writer and his view of the world chimes very much with my own. Combined with my own personal experience with Portugal and Portuguese culture, this is material that I think could unlock something special.

I love the tone of it – a kind of witty domestic comedy bordering on farce that none the less has a profound human and touching message about accepting each other's mistakes. It's mixing of wit, irony and farce with an all-embracing humanity seems rather modern to me and I feel a strong connection to it. As my edition puts it "comedy is tempered by warm sympathy for human frailty and a poignant sense of the fragility of human happiness".

Of course in a sense, the story is a kind of send-up of romanticism and melodrama which takes one of the most central tropes of all romantic fiction – infidelity – and scrutinises it, pulling out a final twist which seems to celebrate the tranquillity and security of happy domesticity. Maybe a rather ordinary end-point, but I think with music it could be transfiguring and resonant. Shades here of Marriage of Figaro, Intermezzo, Capriccio etc.

### **WHY AN OPERA?**

In scrutinising romanticism/melodrama, Queiros is of course also by association scrutinising opera. All the references to music – Gounod's Faust, Verdi's Rigoletto, salon music, the waltz ("Souvenir of Andalusia") seem to heighten the action and point up its theatricality. It seems to me that the game Queiros is playing with romanticism maps wonderfully well onto a C21st century composer's relationship with opera, operatic cliché and the operatic repertory.

Alves is a rather ordinary, even stupid, official whose hum-drum life has contained few dramas. When he finds Malhado on the sofa, he in effect casts himself in a ridiculous operatic drama in which he has the central role. There is something fantastically self-indulgent about all this in the way opera has been/can be self-indulgent. He never stops to ask himself why or reflect on his own action/behaviour or see the world through the eyes and heart of Ludovina. Rather a crude analogy I guess, but I think his journey is a little Scrooge-like: he goes from being pompous, smug and rather insensitive to a more human and generous-spirited man. In a weird way, the incident on the Yellow Sofa is the making of him.

Because of the simplicity and sequential nature of the plot, I think this story would allow me to build character in a more substantial way than I have done up until now. Also, because the narrative is so clear and plays with the familiar, there is plenty of space for music; the score wouldn't be passified by the action but rather released by it.

The central love triangle of Alves, Lulu and Malhado are obviously at the heart of the piece though I think ultimately the focus is on husband and wife. Alves could blend tragic-comedy, satire and irony with poignancy and tenderness; his emotional journey is key. By contrast, Lulu is a little more distant in the story and I think we'd have to grapple with how to flesh her out more. Her journey centres on the unforeseen consequences of a single action, a realisation of how a moment of madness can spiral out of control, however much the flames are fuelled by C19th social hierarchies. Her dilemma/situation resonates with Madame Bovary or Madame de Tourvel in *Liaisons* and a whole line of operatic figures but there are gaps here, we'd need to fill, a context we'd need to find. To what extent do we draw out the sexual politics of Ludovina's position or do we just allow Queiros' irony to resonate: that Medeiros can relish in his sexual exploits, celebrate them in fact while Ludovina suffers for them. One way of emphasising this, might be to develop both Lulu and her sister Teresa and run that companionship/friendship alongside Alves and his band of merry men.

A few other operatic thoughts:

- the role of Malhado could play with the the conventions of the stock operatic love-sick tenor;
- maybe there's only one "letter" that could be a through-line from the Yellow Sofa, to Alves' disgust at reading them, to Cavalho's perusal etc etc; the concrete nature of this letter could have a musical analogy – ie an aria or song
- the instrumentation would be a kind of blend of salon music, grand opera and fado; it could include a grand piano (maybe even theatricalised), an assortment of C19th instruments but then expand to include a couple of Portuguese guitars
- We could embrace the cross-references to C19th opera, not just the literal Gounod/Verdi references, but also the mention of nights at the opera – maybe even one scene takes place in an opera box?
- I love all the off-stage stuff: arguments off, music heard off-stage, Alves fumbling in dark room while his affairs are debated next door; lots of musical possibilities here;
- Key for me to get in elements of the Fado tradition; not sure if this is a texture that characters reach for at their extreme moments, or if Machado is a fado character or if it's the Yellow Sofa that opens out that register (see below); maybe the a fado strand simply provides a context ie Lisbon

## **TREATMENT**

Can imagine a kind of very conventional treatment of this story – impeccable, conversational, witty in a familiar operatic sense. A kind of Strauss Capriccio meets Britten with a Latin accent.

BUT it is absolutely not what is intended. A few crucial ideas:

We theatricalise the sofa in some almost magic realist, surreal way. Man in yellow suit? This could generate at times a more dream-like feel to the piece. Maybe the Sofa is a kind of Greek Chorus, or a world-weary observer of human frailties, or the spirit of Lisbon? A fado singer?

Piece is as much about Lisbon as the characters it describes. So the colour/texture/feel of Lisbon would be fed in via the ensemble (Portuguese guitars etc) and perhaps even projections; Lisbon would in effect be a main character;

We drawn out the comedy theatrically to an almost farcical degree eg Staging the botched dual?

Really fleshing out Alves' friends as a kind of band of mechanicals (think Ariadne or Midsummer Night's Dream); I think they really provide the texture and wit that counterpoints the main narrative. The scene with Medeiros in bed with sheets on his head or gargling behind the curtain is a gift!

Alves' monologues. This would need some thought. Clearly our structure would be built around Alves' emotional trajectory and there is no getting away from the fact that his role would be quite a sing! But equally, less is more – I think it could be possible to distil the essence of this into two or three key moments of reflection. I should say, the space to be able to analyse and develop his character – in depth – really attracts me to this story.

Connected to (4) above. We should push out the extremes of the story so that Alves' fears of a slow lingering death and his shock at confronting his own mortality sooner than he expected should be pushed to a kind of nightmare; Story. I'm not sure we need all the tail end of the story – the stuff about Machado's mother's death, his various marriages etc. I think the moment of reconciliation between Lulu and Alves is the end-point of our piece and I'm not sure how much of Chapter 9 we really need. However, there is then a decision to be made about if/how we draw in Machado into the end of the piece. Not incorporating him demotes him to a stock operatic rake and weakens Quieros' message. Equally, I don't think his story post reconciliation is that interesting or relevant.

Characters. I'm marking them + if I think we could expand them and – if we could get rid

Godofredo da Conceição Alves

Ruço, his bookkeeper -

Malhado, his business partner

Ludovina (Lulu), his wife

Margarida, his maid +

Cook – (maybe we conflate maid and cook?)

The Yellow Damask Sofa +

Senhor Neto, Alves' father-in-law

Teresa, Alves' sister-in-law +  
Joanna, Neto's maid -  
Carvalho, Alves' friend  
Teles Medeiros, Alves' friend

**Bit parts**

Boy from Mata's with the pie  
Grey haired Galician

**Non-appearing characters**

Nunes Vidal – Malhado's second  
Albert Cunha – Malhado's second

Glyndebourne is talking about 5 principals and 3-5 subordinate roles which would mean:

**Principals**

Alves, Ludovina, Malhado, The Sofa, Teresa

**Subordinates**

Margarida, Neto, Carvalho, Medeiros,

**Doublings**

Maybe for office clerk, boy from pie shop, maids etc

The band needs to be 13 max.

JP 1st October 2008



**From:** Edward Kemp  
**Date:** 4 October 2008 12:33:55 BST  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Cc:** Tearle Katie  
**Subject:** Re: The Yellow Sofa

Apologies for delay in replying - the book only arrived recently and I wanted to read to the end before I responded.

So - in response to Julian's ideas paper and Katie's thoughts (and in no particular order) -

1. I like it very much and I think it could work very well - what it needs to make it work is Julian's passion and vision behind it and that's clearly there.
2. I think the length issue is manageable but it will mean the story will need honing to the things that are really necessary. J's absolutely right that the end is redundant once they're back together (or at the very least very hard to make dramatic)
3. Where the length may become a danger is accommodating all 'the other stuff' that Julian wants to do (actually the interesting stuff that will make the piece come alive) - Lisbon as character, Sofa as commentator etc, etc and I need to get inside these ideas a bit more to find out what 'they're really about' in order to ensure that they become a necessary part of telling the story - but that's just the collaborative process.
4. I'm loathe to do anything like bash out a scenario until Julian and I have met to talk over this - I think we need to map the piece together with Julian pushing for the meat of what he wants and me trying to create a narrative that's clear and has a satisfying shape ...
5. Which all relates to the central question of 'what is it really about?' - not the story (because that'll still be there after we've ransacked it) - but what is our piece really about, what is the story we want to tell - and most particularly Julian wants to tell. Lots of clues to this in the initial ideas paper - but I need to tease them out a bit more. Crudely speaking - there's only any point in writing up Lulu if our story demands it. There are the demands and expectations of the form - but these can always be manipulated and broken (I bet the original Don Giovanni was pretty pissed off that he didn't get a proper aria - unless he was a singer of remarkable selflessness or dramatic intelligence). If I have a 'form' question at all at the moment it is that the male voices seem pretty dominant - that might of course be the point. In which case this to me begins to make some use of the Yellow Sofa as a female voice - who because of the 'device' as the opportunity to comment in a way that it might be hard for Lulu to without stepping outside the frame of the story (which is itself a form question - is this a piece where people are wholly in the world of the piece and we are looking in, or more, well, Brechtian, Shakespearean, take your pick - ie all characters, some characters, one character - has a relationship with the audience; this can be a narrator (unreliable or not - unreliable/opinionated is usually more dramatic) or a character (eg Iago, Hamlet) who tells how things are going for them. Don't have any answers to any of this at present (the blissfully exciting stage at the beginning of a project when it can be anything and everything) - just throwing

out ideas.

6. Is the story saying that redemption/forgiveness is better than confrontation?
7. Is it saying that a man who has no passion in his relationship with his wife will not have the passion to see through his jealousy? (in which case it would be 'better' for him to go through with the duel)
8. Is it saying that through his (comic, inept and impotent) jealousy he finds a new kind of love with his wife (close to 6)
9. Do we believe when they are sitting together on the yellow sofa at the end (as it feels to me they must) - that everything will now be different? Or does Lulu/the sofa turn to 'wink' at the audience (metaphorically or literally) as if to say 'well, I got away with that - but I haven't learnt my lesson'; and if she did would we feel that she was a bitch or that she had simply treated him as he deserved and that will depend on whether we feel that he has learnt his lesson (whatever we feel that lesson is)
10. In boring (or not so) Aristotelian/How to write a screenplay terms - our central character is presumably Alves - what does he want? what's his aim? his goal? his need? (to have a contented home life, a wonderful relationship with his wife, happiness, success) what are the obstacles to his achieving that? (his own complacency? his wife's need to express her passion/individuality? his best friend's rakishness?) how does he overcome these obstacles (does he?) - does he get what he want?
11. In the context of the above - what impact does Lisbon have on all this - is it the sort of place that makes you complacent? makes you have romantic ideals of how your life might be but doesn't give you the energy/drive/sense of purpose to put the graft into achieve them (does it have the Deep South feel where everything's ever so slightly too much effort)? Is it a place of such licentiousness that it will be impossible for any relationship to be stable there (the way the Elizabethans/Jacobians viewed Italy - and to an extent Spain) Is it a place of stultifying bourgeois conventions? Is it a combination of these things - the place that everyone blames or celebrates for the things that happen in their lives (subconsciously or publicly)
12. Well, that's probably enough thoughts for now. We should meet.

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 12 October 2008 23:14:44 BST  
**To:** Edward Kemp  
**Cc:** Katie Tearle  
**Subject:** Re: The Yellow Sofa

Edward,

My turn to apologise. I fear Italian internet provision is not a straight forward thing and I've been without it for most of the week and unable to respond. It did flicker into life today but then crashed again and I'm typing this from the Civitella Office having charmed the administrator into letting me use her machine.

First thing to say is a big thank you for your wonderful response, which is rigorous, thought-provoking and genuinely exciting. As you said, it's at the anything-is-possible stage but still, it's a nice stage to be at. Below are a few knee-jerk responses whose brevity is entirely a consequence of the Civitella administrator (Tara) chafing at the bit to close the office.

First, there's a logistical question.

I'm back at the end of Oct and will be raring to go with meeting up etc. In the intervening weeks, I'd be happy for us to communicate via email and establish a dialogue on the thing - internet allowing. But crucial question is - do you think this could work? Are you interested in treating it? And if so, any chance we could cook up a delicious line or two for the Glyndebourne brochure. Katie is keen to put something in about the piece and her print deadline is the middle of this week (15th Oct??). At present there's a worthy paragraph which is more about Sussex University etc etc and what we need is something that might generate some audience interest. I don't think there's room for that much text, so we don't have to have nailed the thing completely but some lines about the world, flavour, character that really sells the idea would be great.

OK. Responses..

(Tara is now look increasingly impatient so what follows is a first blast; if they get the internet going again tomorrow, I will respond in more depth)

1. I like it very much and I think it could work very well - what it needs to make it work is Julian's passion and vision behind it and that's clearly there.

Phew. Glad you like it. As to the passion/vision thing, yes I do feel exited and connected to it but not in an inflexible way; very open to re-shape, change, re-think. It's the core emotions that matter most however we work them.

2. I think the length issue is manageable but it will mean the story will need honing to the things that are really necessary. J's

absolutely right that the end is redundant once they're back together (or at the very least very hard to make dramatic)

Agreed. Really important that we keep plot/detail to a minimum. Every stage work I've written thus far has had masses of plot!!!

3. Where the length may become a danger is accommodating all 'the other stuff' that Julian wants to do (actually the interesting stuff that will make the piece come alive) - Lisbon as character, Sofa as commentator etc, etc and I need to get inside these ideas a bit more to find out what 'they're really about' in order to ensure that they become a necessary part of telling the story - but that's just the collaborative process.

Again, agreed. At this point Lisbon feels like a context, a canvas. I think the idea of the sofa as commentator is more important and that's where the it feels the focus should go. Put another way, Lisbon is some kind of strange metaphor for emotional tangles of the characters. There is something fantastic, poetic about it.

[Btw as you suggested, I've just read Calvino's Invisible Cities which is astonishing and resonates intriguingly with this subject]

4. I'm loathe to do anything like bash out a scenario until Julian and I have met to talk over this - I think we need to map the piece together with Julian pushing for the meat of what he wants and me trying to create a narrative that's clear and has a satisfying shape ...

Yup. We need to meet as soon as I'm back. Am sure you're very busy in Nov and Dec but should we start thinking about when we can block out time? For now, I'm not against the idea of throwing some shapes around by email etc.

5. Which all relates to the central question of 'what is it really about?' - not the story (because that'll still be there after we've ransacked it) - but what is our piece really about, what is the story we want to tell - and most particularly Julian wants to tell. Lots of clues to this in the initial ideas paper - but I need to tease them out a bit more. Crudely speaking - there's only any point in writing up Lulu if our story demands it. There are the demands and expectations of the form - but these can always be manipulated and broken (I bet the original Don Giovanni was pretty pissed off that he didn't get a proper aria - unless he was a singer of remarkable selflessness or dramatic intelligence). If I have a 'form' question at all at the moment it is that the male voices seem pretty dominant - that might of course be the point. In which case this to me begins to make some use of the Yellow Sofa as a female voice - who because of the 'device' as the opportunity to comment in a way that it might be hard for Lulu to without stepping outside the frame of the story

(which is itself a form question - is this a piece where people are wholly in the world of the piece and we are looking in, or more, well, Brechtian, Shakespearean, take your pick - ie all characters, some characters, one character - has a relationship with the audience; this can be a narrator (unreliable or not - unreliable/opinionated is usually more dramatic) or a character (eg Iago, Hamlet) who tells how things are going for them. Don't have any answers to any of this at present (the blissfully exciting stage at the beginning of a project when it can be anything and everything) - just throwing out ideas.

LOVE the idea of the Sofa as a female voice as that could counterpoint wonderfully with all the men in the story. It also might allow us to leave Lulu as a rather enigmatic figure who the sofa empathises or even speaks for. I completely take your point that writing up a character for the sake of it is not necessarily the right thing. Also maybe the texture of this piece is that there's a pool of male voices into which one or two female voices break through. Could be theatrically and musically interesting. Put another way, maybe we don't attempt to balance the weight of male voices and that way the female voices - the sofa, or even Lulu - have this kind of oasis-in-the-desert quality.

There's another point. If the idea of working in Fado in some way is feasible then the female-sofa would be perfect. Many of the greatest fado singers are women (Amalia Rodriguez obviously) and there's a neat tie-in here in that much fado speaks intensely of domestic life.

As to audience etc, I think there is a big issue here about "frame". I see the book as almost placing the action in inverted commas or deliberately theatricalising it so as to be able to stand back and observe and comment. This is where Eca's kind of humane anti-romanticism kicks in. He releases the melodrama so as to be able to observe it but then to let it collapse and in the oddly bathetic ruins of the collapse one finds tenderness and genuine sentiment. So I think there have to be "levels" in the piece, or rather some character or characters have to step out of the frame and comment which means there's a discussion to be had about who that is. Maybe we could push this further and say that all our main characters have their own relationship to being both inside and then outside the story. Maybe Alves is locked inside the frame and then is "allowed" out at the end, maybe Lulu is permanently trapped inside the frame and maybe the sofa is only inside the frame as a concrete object but outside the frame as soul, emotion, humanity. Some of this could be comic, playful - maybe Medeiros should be free to collude with the audience - some of this could be more exposing.

6. Is the story saying that redemption/forgiveness is better than confrontation?

No, I don't think so. I think it's saying that life/emotion/relationships are far more complex and unexpected than you might think, that human nature is unpredictable, that happiness can be a fragile and delicate thing. Maybe I'm

projecting here but there feels like there could be a E M Forster-esque quality of "know thyself" in it. Alves at the start is smug, self-satisfied, comfortable; he has never really suffered or felt his experience in a very deep way. He's a then typical symbol of a buttoned up married man going through his life as if it was one long gentleman's club. He's forgotten Lulu, he is taking her for granted. If there is a moral, it's more about the importance of emotional fluency and of cherishing the ones you love.

7. Is it saying that a man who has no passion in his relationship with his wife will not have the passion to see through his jealousy? (in which case it would be 'better' for him to go through with the duel)

Sort of answered that above. I think Alves is shallow emotionally at the outset - he's never felt anything very deeply. He's a kind of Mr Nobody in a way. The whole revenge, passion, jealousy thing is whipped up because he suffers an emotional wound but has no means of processing it psychologically. As a consequence, the only thing he can turn to is the plot machinery of bad romantic melodrama (or in our case, maybe it's bad romantic opera). This all fails because it is not true. His friend Carvalho wants to sweep it all under the carpet asap, while Medeiros is shifty because Alves might as well be one of his victims. It's only when Alves reaches the depths of his unhappiness and loneliness that he realises how to make his own decision, informed by his own (true) feelings.

8. Is it saying that through his (comic, inept and impotent) jealousy he finds a new kind of love with his wife (close to 6)

Probably yes then, although it feels funny expressing it this way.

9. Do we believe when they are sitting together on the yellow sofa at the end (as it feels to me they must) - that everything will now be different? Or does Lulu/the sofa turn to 'wink' at the audience (metaphorically or literally) as if to say 'well, I got away with that - but I haven't learnt my lesson'; and if she did would we feel that she was a bitch or that she had simply treated him as he deserved and that will depend on whether we feel that he has learnt his lesson (whatever we feel that lesson is)

I don't like the idea of making Lulu a slapper, I guess because what I'd like to focus on at the end is the genuine sentiment, the touching sense of two people who love each other deeply. And yes, I think they have to come back to the Yellow Sofa. I think Margarida the maid, Malhado and Medeiros could inject the humour, irreverence, irony, cynicism. But this is an open question and contingent on what happens with the sofa in terms of the vanishing point of the piece. I realise one has to tread a delicate line if the piece is to end by celebrating intimate feelings in this way so apart from a textural sense of the end, I'm up for discussion...

10. In boring (or not so) Aristotelian/How to write a screenplay terms - our central character is presumably Alves - what does he want? what's his aim? his goal? his need? (to have a contented home life, a wonderful relationship with his wife, happiness, success) what are the obstacles to his achieving that? (his own complacency? his wife's need to express her passion/individuality? his best friend's rakishness?) how does he overcome these obstacles (does he?) - does he get what he want?

Reckon I've started responding to this one above. I think his journey is from being shallow Mr Nobody, smug, comfortable, pale to a man more rooted in his emotions, more aware of what's precious to him, more forgiving, more generous. I think interestingly, he's not a great man at the beginning or the end, but in a way that's what attracts me. His ordinariness is interesting in terms of what happens to him and creates a kind of violent contrast between his nature and the inflated action that seems to be heaped on him.

I think at the outset, he thinks he doesn't "need" or "want" for anything and then at the end he realises his need and want for Lulu. I think he's a changed man at the end but not because there's some kind of warped moral that says "have an affair and improve your relationship" but more one that emphasises the need for emotional fluency, or knowing yourself (as above)...

11. In the context of the above - what impact does Lisbon have on all this - is it the sort of place that makes you complacent? makes you have romantic ideals of how your life might be but doesn't give you the energy/drive/sense of purpose to put the graft into achieve them (does it have the Deep South feel where everything's everso slightly too much effort)? Is it a place of such licentiousness that it will be impossible for any relationship to be stable there (the way the Elizabethans/Jacobians viewed Italy - and to an extent Spain) Is it a place of stultifying bourgeois conventions? Is it a combination of these things - the place that everyone blames or celebrates for the things that happen in their lives (subconsciously or publicly)

Very, very interesting this one. On one level, I think Lisbon is a kind of metaphor for this tangled relationship. After all it's a city of winding, curving, confusing narrow streets of many, many quarters each with its own history. A city of helter skelter tram rides, of soulful fado singers, of the smell of smoked cod, of custard tarts, of the twang of the Portuguese guitar with its glittering silvery tones. So in a way, it's a place of confusion, disorientation, one where two people can lose themselves just as Alves and Lulu lose each other in the story. Equally, in a more fatalistic, the very confusion of Lisbon reflects a deeper more Portuguese sense, that life is experienced through the interlacing texture of its loves and sufferings and at the start of the story, Alves does not know this. He has not felt pain or suffered or learned to understand the fragility of life and happiness. Lisbon through Malhado and Lulu teach him that and I think this idea is

supported by the later sections of the story - all the stuff about Malhado's own rather unhappy personal life. Although we're obviously cutting this, it might be important to explore ways to reinforce a sense that in the closing moments of the story, Alves and Lulu are happy but that this happiness does not "solve" the tension between life's sadness and happiness...

Final thought. I think the idea of the frame but also the dislocation between the ordinariness of Alves/Lulu and the sensationalised melodrama of the action maps well onto some idea of high operatic and non (even anti) operatic music. Really keen to explore a way of using a kind of stylised operatic gesture for when the characters are furthest away from themselves and conversely, using a kind of more naturalistic, fado inspired singing for when they are close to themselves.

Well by this point, Tara has gone and I've to turn all the lights off etc etc, at least I think that's what she said in Italian!!!!

Sorrow to bombard you at the last minute but would be good to confirm whether you think this is workable and if yes, to cook up some text for Katie. We should probably then map out time to meet.

Thanks again

Julian x



**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 16 December 2008 13:31:05 GMT  
**To:** Kemp Edward  
**Subject:** Yellow Sofa

Ed,

Thanks so much for this first go, especially when you've been laid up with flu - do hope you're feeling a bit better!

First reaction is immensely positive! The essence feels exactly like the kind of piece I'd imagined in its fluidity and emerging ambiguity.

Quick fire gut reactions:

- 1) SHAPE - Brilliant, and in a way very Portuguese. I think the idea of making it a kind of strange circle where we're not sure if we're ending at the beginning or running backwards etc is really helpful. It allows us the sentiment of the end of the story but contextualises it in an ambiguous way which avoids the sentimental. Also the structure you suggest is profoundly musical.
- 2) THE DOOR - A neat device, though I don't know how we do it on a tiny production budget. But I do think the opening door is a good metaphor, connects to the sofa, but structurally is a such a great way of cutting from one scene to another. It saves me from having to "make" the transitions - always the worst corners in an operatic piece.
- 3) YELLOW SOFA. I think the opening Portuguese-into-English is a great device and could feed into the end as well. There is a big question, however, about whether the Sofa is an interweaving strand throughout - chorus? narrator? commentator? Instinctively, I think we want to avoid her being a kind of set piece character - ie topping/tailing the show and then having a song in the middle. Would be nice to think that we could weave her throughout like a thread. Also love the idea that we're not sure whether the Sofa is to be trusted, that there's even the possibility of a streak of the malicious in her.
- 4) SCENES. I think you've chosen exactly the scenes that are interesting:

Sofa  
Godofredo  
Discovery!  
Godofredo solo or G & L  
Godofredo + Father in law  
Godofredo (increasingly operatic)  
G + Machado  
Interlude (Sofa)  
Friends-G's nightmare-Friends  
Time passing-the clock stops  
The clock starts-reconciliation  
Sofa

There's a question here about structure versus texture. I like the idea of the piece enjoying its sequence of clearly demarcated scenes and that as a consequence, it's musically very tight, taut, not a note wasted. I guess there's just a question about the mechanics of that: do all these scenes cut across each other? are there any overlaps? juxtapositions? Would be nice to find some internal variety in the way in which the scenes succeed one another but also to think about the emotional curve of the piece. The riskiest quality of the story is in a way the fact that nothing happens (which rather attracts me). So I think we just have to think about the shape and curve. G's nightmare is clearly a crucial corner, if not a climax. Or do you see it differently?

5) CLOCK. I love the way you've pulled out the clock for time passing, ordinary life resuming. I can imagine that whole scene being about a clock slowing down and then stopping and in that "stopping" is the intimate, vulnerable moment where L restarts the clock and her marriage. Also it sets up a trio of important domestic objects: sofa, door, clock.

6) FADO. Will email you some lines of fado that I've dug up. Just wanted to make the point that of course, Fado is very much a music of the streets, of an urban working class. G + L and their family are most definitely upper middle class so it might be important to work in a kind of class tension between the sofa and the main characters. Would help to give the sofa an edge.

7) END. Once again, really like your ideas for the end - endless, Escher-like etc. This kind of transforming of the story in a more abstract, exploratory way saves us from the predictable or the worthy.

SO, how do we proceed from here? I could meet you this week if you liked for further discussion or we could bat things backwards and forwards by email. Feeling anxious about timescale here as my deadline is May! As discussed, quite happy for us to piece this together gradually but would be good to nail the outline/treatment and have a chunk to work on. Would definitely rather not start at the beginning but will probably be working on my own Fado material to limber up for the Sofa herself.

Other thing is that Glyndebourne need to know about voices asap so that they can think about casting, so this is a bit pressing. Fairly sure the band will be strings, piano and guitars (1 acoustic plus 1 Portuguese guitar).

That's it for now. Thanks again for the first go!

J x

**From:** Frederic Wake-Walker [mailto:wakewalker@gmail.com]

**Sent:** 28 December 2008 11:50

**To:** Katie Tearle

**Subject:** Yellow sofa

Hi Katie, Hope you're having a lovely Christmas. I've read the Yellow Sofa and think it's a great little piece that'll work very well dramatically. I presume Ed and Julian won't be at Glyndebourne on 8th but I do have a few ideas and responses to Ed's treatment. I go up to Glasgow on 18th Jan and it would be great to meet up with them before then if possible.

Look forward to seeing you soon.

Best,

Fr

eddie

**From:** Katie Tearle

**Date:** 5 January 2009 10:59 GMT

**To:** Frederic Wake-Walker

**Subject:** Re: Yellow sofa

Hello Freddie,

Happy New Year! Just back to work and looking at emails this morning. Think the best thing would for you to have an initial chat with Julian, as you have met each other. Have copied him into this reply and his mobile number is 07710 758745 Looking forward to seeing you later in the week.

Best,

Katie

**From:** Frederic Wake-Walker

**Date:** 5 January 2009 11:59:07 GMT

**To:** Katie Tearle

**Cc:** Julian Philips

**Subject:** Re: Yellow sofa

Thanks Katie. I get back from Brussels on Wednesday pm so will give you a call, Julian, on Wednesday evening maybe.

See you on Thursday, Katie.

All the best,  
Freddie

**From:** Edward Kemp

**Date:** 29 December 2008 12:36:57 GMT

**To:** Julian Philips

**Subject:** YS

Sorry not to have been in touch - been slightly waiting to see what your response was to any of the developments in the revised outline I sent. Anyway, been doing some more thinking and probably in a position to pin the structure down fairly tightly (from which writing the actual words is just a matter of the necessary inspiration and perspiration). Clearly the issue we need to address both for ourselves and Glyndebourne is make up of cast. I'm not sure that the 5 principals plus 3-5 subordinate is necessarily a useful way of us looking at the piece, since it seems to me that we may be lacking as many as 5 principals (the thing being quite episodic) but we probably do want all 10.

We know we want (and will see a lot of)

GODOFREDO

THE YELLOW SOFA/AMARELA

I think we'll probably want to have a fair degree of access to  
LULU

Then we have a gang of men

MACHADO

CAVALHO

MEDEIROS

NETO

This gets us to 7.

So the question is how to use the other 3.

We have talked about ...

G&L's MAID - probably useful for creation of domestic atmosphere, but not a big sing (indeed I think I'd need to try to find a nice moment for her to make it worthwhile at all)

TERESA - this seems like a really nice option, especially because we need to find some variation in texture and the combination of two women's voices (LULU and TERESA) with NETO feels like a nice change. Not sure on this scale we could run to their maid. But it may well be, especially if we locate the scene at G's house (while he's out and about in the streets) - which has all sorts of interesting potential anyway - that we can use G&A's MAID (and even AMARELA)

This would leave us a spare one to play with, who could be NUNES. So 6 M and 4F - how does that work for you? As to voice balance - SATB etc - I'll let you lead.

I have begun to feel a small amount of chorus-work - I wrote a chorus singing of Godofredo's name in the last draft and I think some sense of physical chorus-work might be a solution to the staging limitations - my feeling is always if one has bodies make use of them because they are cheaper, more flexible and

more movable than most forms of set. However it doesn't feel to me right (at present) that anyone should double - so that G&L's maid shouldn't suddenly pop up as Neto's maid or even as TERESA, and so the choral texture is a way of giving a feel of Lisbon the city (if we ever need to beyond anything AMARELA may tell us).

I am increasingly thinking that the best way to get the sense for the audience that the show has already started is to have an almost cyclical presentation of their domestic bliss - what G finds so satisfying and L stultifying - as the audience are coming in. This can involve LULU singing her waltz from time to time (for G's delight). The clock should be ticking. There needs to be a certain repetition of activity. The maid brings in cups and glasses of things, takes them away. LULU needs to wind the clock. It should be once we're ready to go (at the actual start time) that AMARELA (she doesn't have to be called that, but I felt I wanted to give her a bit of a name) starts to sing.

In terms of staging, I don't think the constant return to the door is hard to achieve - it's just a matter of creating a physical (and perhaps musical) 'device' that tells the story clearly to the audience. I do think, even if we go to other locations the yellow sofa (both as character and object) should always be present. So that if we went to G's office it would be a couple of desks (let's say) on either side of the yellow sofa. I think it needs this slight degree of expressionism - the sofa has to loom that large.

I think the sofa represents something slightly beyond the pale, a degree of risk, a desire for adventure. It should be one notable thing that G has ever done - something aspiring to his heroic name - buying this slightly too bright, too daring piece of furniture (like having a very sombre suit with a bright lining or a very prim woman wearing scarlet stockings or a flash of a garter - just noticed looking at the book today that Machado has blonde hair, which I didn't expect, but I suppose is probably a bit more uncommon and so perhaps a bit more dashing in Portugal than in UK, where I'd pictured him black-haired) Buying the yellow sofa was an aspiration for another kind of life - one where he and Lulu might suddenly have sex in the middle of the afternoon on the yellow sofa - an aspiration yet to be achieved (tho' I think that's what he's come home for at the beginning - inspired by Machado he's bunked off a bit early hoping that today might be the day) It does in a sense represent the stage, the place where G would be notable, notorious, noble. It is a tempting force - Lulu should feel that she was tempted by it (I suppose the question is, do they get rid of the yellow sofa at the end? No, I don't think so - because at the end I think G is still longing for the romp on the sofa- what the ending isn't is wild make up after break up sex - I think they'd both like that, but somehow they're just not that sort of people, they just can't live their lives with that degree of passion - I don't think this makes them any the better or worse than people who do.

We probably need to meet. I'm back in town tomorrow (Tues) probably - could almost certainly do something on Friday if that works for you at all.

Hope you had a good Christmas etc, Speak soon, Ed

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 9 January 2009 15:40:01 GMT  
**To:** Tearle Katie  
**Cc:** Kemp Edward  
**Subject:** The Yellow Sofa

Dear both,

Here's a go at voice types for TYS. Can you have a look through and ring any alarm bells that need ringing?

I think Ed won't get this until the weekend as he's down in Chichester today!

J xx

Julian Philips  
julianphilips@mac.com

#### **THE YELLOW SOFA – Voice types**

|                 |                              |               |
|-----------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| Amarela         | a yellow sofa                | mezzo         |
| Godofredo Alves | a small businessman          | high baritone |
| Ludovina (Lulu) | his wife                     | soprano       |
| Margarida       | their maid                   | soprano       |
| Machado         | Godofredo's business partner | tenor         |
| Neto            | Ludovina's father            | medium        |
| baritone        |                              |               |
| Teresa          | Ludovina's sister            | mezzo         |
| Medeiros)       | friends of Godofredo         | bass          |
| Carvalho )      |                              | low baritone  |
| Nunes Vidal     | Machado's second             | tenor         |

#### **AMARELA (the sofa)**

Fantastically sexy; a brilliant actress with a rich and smoky mezzo voice. The part is very theatrical and full of ambiguity – is she just sex, or actually highly malicious and dangerous? To quote Ed “she represents something slightly beyond the pale, a degree of risk, a desire for adventure”

Amarela does have a song in Portuguese and while she's not expected to transform herself from opera singer to *Fadista*, she is the one character who is closest to *Fado* – some of her music will be of the street, folky, dusky – and the singer will need to find a way of singing that at times suggests that kind of naturalistic sound and approach.

Voice – mezzo, very rich, complex sound. Ability to sing in a very naturalistic way.

Tragic-comic

**GODOFREDO ALVES (a businessman)**

At the centre of the story and carries the show. His narrative, his dilemma is the main thrust of the piece. His journey is from self-contented Mr Nobody, to stupefaction at his wife's affair, to a dark and harrowing existential crisis which should be the rather surprising core of the piece. At the end he becomes Mr Nobody again but with a sense that life will never quite be the same.

Voice – high baritone. Needs the range/versatility both vocally/theatrically to tell Godofredo's story. The climax of the opera is G's dark night of the soul which is a big monologue when G cowers in a darkened room wondering what his fate will be. Some of his vocal writing in this scene will be more expressionist and draw on extended vocal textures – whispers, shouts, Sprechstimme etc.

An almost tragic role inside a comedy.

**LUDOVINA (his wife)**

Beautiful, radiant, statuesque; living in a daydream. Her journey is from the sensuous to complete dejection back to a resigned acceptance of the domestic. Not sure the character is that intelligent. A simple soul.

Voice – soprano, very beautiful sound. She is associated with a Waltz-tune (Souvenir d'Andalucia) in the story. Her vocal style will remain aristocratic almost throughout, even in her dejection.

Again, a tragic role inside a comedy.

**MARGARIDA (their maid)**

Gossipy, indolent and a little bit spiteful – maybe even a tough, peasant girl. Totally unaware of how funny she is.

Voice – light, coloratura soprano. Most of her music is fast, rhythmic. Needs to be good with text.

A very comic character.

**MACHADO (Godofredo's business partner)**

A rather stylish and handsome young man, a hedonist with a love for fine things, including Godofredo's wife. He's not a rake like Medeiros but more of a romantic idealist who hasn't the self-control to keep his hands of things he finds beautiful.

Voice – A beautiful, lyric tenor voice. Aristocratic like Ludovina.

Not in himself comic, but his romantic fervour will probably seem funny.

**NETO (Ludovina's father)**

The hypocritical father of Lulu. Cultivates an heir of respectability, very much concerned with how things look. Gives the impression of being a decent man but he is in fact hypocritical and self-serving. Nonetheless, has a good sense of humour and a knowing twinkle in his eye.

Voice – Slightly heavier voice than Godofredo. Needs to feel/look/sound a good deal older and more senior. His vocal style will be slow and laborious throughout. Almost nothing he sings is quick.

Comic

**TERESA (Ludovina's sister)**

A very appealing character. A devoted sister to Lulu but less statuesque and more active. Has a quick intelligence and a zest for life.

Voice – high mezzo; needs to blend well with Ludovina but is probably midway between the sultry-sexy Amarela and the statuesque Ludovina. Her music is faster and wittier than both and the role needs a singer who is good with using text, has a good sense of comedy and theatrical intelligence.

Very comic.

**MEDEIROS (Godofredo's friend)**

A character role. A larger than life, grotesque, dishevelled womanizer. Ugly but somehow attractive with a high success rate among middle class married women in Lisbon. Probably very unkempt, rough and smelly but his shamelessness probably makes him rather appealing to the audience. One half of a double act with Carvalho.

Voice – a preposterous bass; lower the better. Has a set piece scene with Godofredo and Carvalho.

Very comic.

**CARVALHO (Godofredo's friend)**

The other half of the Medeiros-Carvalho double act but complete opposite. Very suave, stylish, well to do. Wears expensive suits, rather vain, preened. Very concerned with his outward appearance (unlike Medeiros) and very concerned about how Lisbon society views him. Rather shallow and self-serving.

Voice – Another baritone, midway between Godofredo and Medeiros.

Comic but probably not funny in himself, rather he's funny for his reactions. He's the side-kick or stooge for Medeiros.

**NUNES VIDAL (Machado's second)**

A fantastically elegant, polished, polite, impeccable young man who puts Godofredo and his friends to shame. A kind of extension to Machado.

Voice – a beautiful tenor voice, aristocratic

Probably not comic exactly. A kind of Deus Ex Machina towards the end of the piece. He proves to be the instrument of Godofredo's salvation from the duel.



**From:** Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Date:** 10 January 2009 15:50:33 GMT  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Subject:** Re: Yellow sofa

Julian, Just tried to call again but perhaps it's easier to communicate via email.

Thanks for the character descriptions. May I throw down some ideas/questions in response to it and Ed's first treatment?

All the supporting characters are great. I'm particularly glad the maid is in as she didn't feature in Ed's treatment. Those scenes when they change the subject whenever she enters are good and she will act as a good scene change device.

Three points that struck me from the character types that concern the piece as a whole. Godofredo being a Mr Nobody, Lulu's 'resignation' to returning to a life of domesticity and the sofa being an incredibly sexy Portuguese lady. Is the work taking sides and deriding Godofredo and his pathetic life? I wonder if there could be more ambiguity. Is the sofa the threateningly sexy 'other' or the one thing that experiences everything with Godofredo? Is there anything admirable and affectionate about his failure and return to normal life?

From Ed's treatment there was no mention of the serpent eating its tail that Godofredo buys Lulu and is a lovely symbol of the idea of returning.

I like Ed's idea of having a soliloquy between each scene and returning to the room with the sofa each time. Doors are not essential for this device and it would be preferable if there was no explicit mention or reliance on doors...

How much does the audience know about how Lulu is feeling? Is she not very intelligent or is it just that we don't learn much about her? It would be nice if at the end the audience is not sure if she wants to return until she offers to mend the clock.

What time period do you imagine it being? I know the book is second half of 19th century but there's just so much colour in the book and late Victorian doesn't say vibrant colour to me. I saw Regency or perhaps even 1970s...

Should there be an everyday scene or scenario that begins and ends the piece? I think it's important that the audience have made a connection with Godofredo before he finds Lulu on the sofa with Machado.

There are lots of mentions of silences in the book...

I'm off to Glasgow on 18 Jan til beginning of March so if we don't meet or speak next week then perhaps we can meet up in early March.  
All the best, Freddie

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 15 January 2009 21:47:04 GMT  
**To:** Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Cc:** Kemp Edward  
**Subject:** Re: Yellow sofa

Freddie,

Belatedly, thanks so much for this. I'm copying Edward Kemp in so that it can inform our ongoing collaboration.

1) Ambiguity. Yes - my sense is that we're not really taking sides and the piece will feel more ambiguous. I've a feeling my thumbnail character sketches - produced largely to help the Glyndebourne casting process - may have given you the wrong impression. Slightly exaggerated Godofredo's qualities for the sake of finding a suitable singer. As ever, I would imagine you will be able to invest him with the humanity he needs. Certainly don't want him to seem like a caricature.

2) Sofa is ambiguous. I don't think we should be sure whether we can trust her or not. After all, who knows how a sofa thinks?

3) Lulu. Threw that one in about her maybe not being that intelligent but expect Ed will have a way of navigating this. It's a good question though as to whether we just don't learn much about her OR she's quite shallow. Sort of see her as a slightly impenetrable, statuesque beauty.

4) Time period - 1880's. Think that's quite important. Not sure we should be updating it. All feels quite Chekovian to me. Ed?

5) Everyday scene/scenario at the beginning and end is exactly what's planned. The piece will have started when the audience trickle in and witness little domestic rituals amongst circulating characters.

6) Lots of silence in the book. A good and helpful note.

I know you're into rehearsals in Scotland now but we should still speak if that's helpful. Ed - do chip in. How is it going?

All the best

Julian

**From:** Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Date:** 19 January 2009 11:53:42 GMT  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Cc:** Kemp Edward  
**Subject:** Re: Yellow sofa

Julian, Good to read your responses.

I realise those thumbnails would never capture the full character and it is important to impress on the powers at Glyndebourne (ie Naylor) that the role of Godofredo in particular is going to be quite a demanding role. I got the impression when I was there that the Jerwood Project is cast after the covers for the main shows and it would be a shame not to have the pick of the chorus for the main roles at least. Also on a practical level, I was a bit worried about the amount of orchestral rehearsal they were planning. I don't know whether you would want/feel it's your place to apply pressure on that sort of thing. I'm going to talk to Leo McFall who's conducting it as well.

With Lulu, is it that Godofredo is not really concerned about her intellect? They don't connect on that sort of level. Their love is a domestic companionship that is summed up with him reading by the fire while she plays the piano?

I agree 1970s is not right. It was just more on a visual colour level. And of course the idea of a duel would be silly. Chekhov to me says containing emotions and it seems like this world is a bit more open, passionate and mediterranean... Hence a slightly earlier, more flamboyant regency world...

I'm in Scotland now but am planning to be in London weekend 31 Jan...

Maybe see you then or chat on the phone.

All the best,  
Freddie

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 20 January 2009 21:24:49 GMT  
**To:** Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Cc:** Kemp Edward  
**Subject:** Re: Yellow sofa

Freddie,

Thanks for this. Quick responses:

- 1) I haven't been party to any discussions about rehearsals so thanks for the alarm bell. I will find out the lie of the land via Katie.
- 2) Casting will be critical. These thumbnails have gone to Stephen Naylor but not sure they're on his radar yet. He always has rather firm and fixed views on singers which we may need to work round (!)
- 3) Lulu/Godofredo's relationship. I need to check in with Ed about this. It clearly needs some thought to find a balance between allowing them to function as a couple but also leaving space for that to evolve in the rehearsal room, however pressurised the rehearsal period.
- 4) I take your note about Chekov. Yes a bit too contained - I agree. This is definitely more consistently open/passionate rather than buttoned up and then explosive...
- 5) Ed - any thoughts on the whole setting? Still think we should stick with 1880s, no?

**From:** Edward Kemp  
**Date:** 20 January 2009 23:45:54 GMT  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Cc:** Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Subject:** Re: Yellow sofa

OK - trying to catch up with all Working back through the notes ...

1) I'll leave you all to sort out orchestral rehearsal - but my hunch is stylistically it will be something they'll need to get their heads around.

2) Yes - I think we need to know and clarity on what the terms of engagement are on casting? Who do we talk to about this? Do we have an advocate at Glyndebourne?

3) I find the questions about Lulu's intellect hard to answer - as I usually do about people in general. I don't think she's an intellectual, but nor is he. He's probably read more heavy-weight material than she has, but it's quite possible she's read more books in total. I think she's a drifter - I don't think she focuses easily, she's a bit of a dreamer, I don't think she thinks through the consequences of the actions - maybe she's been a bit spoilt. I think in lots of ways the challenge is to make them feel thoroughly ordinary - tho' of a particular class and time and place which is not ordinary to us. That's where G's 'nobody-ness' comes in - it's not really even meant in a pejorative sense (even by the sofa whose view it is, not mine - never confuse a character's view with the author's) - but in that sense that many of us have that we are 'nobodies' - that we have never done anything noble or notable or notifiable; how many of the human race this is true for is dependent on scale - on the mega-scale of history the number of noble and notable folk is very small as a proportion of us all - on the micro, everyday, people we might meet scale, we probably all know someone who is noble or notable in our lives (just wouldn't make it into the history books) Complexity is the key - and I think complexity, in this piece at least, comes from contrast and occasionally wrong-footing and creating uncertainty about what the real view is - ie something like life, where there is no author, just people getting on doing things, some of which surprise us in terms of what we thought about them. Whether or not the audience emerge thinking of G as a 'nobody' is up to them - tho' I would personally suggest that the very act of putting the frame of an opera around someone's life (however dull) makes them less of a nobody. Once I get around to write the libretto (getting there) these issues should be clearer. For now I would say, Julian's pen sketches are hugely helpful, but they shouldn't lead any of us into caricature.

Well, that answer seems to have gone on for a while

4) I think we should steer away from using Chekhov as a reference because he so debated over and arouses such differing views - I for example would strongly disagree that it has anything much to do with containing emotion (how can one do all that 'through tears' and switchback between joy and sorrow?) I would say

that Chekhov would be a useful reference if we - especially I - were capable of artists of achieving moments which are both squirmingly funny and comically painful in the same moment. However on the general note, I think (despite being an inveterate moderniser myself) that this really needs to have some foot in the 1880s. There is a degree of social realism about the absurdity of it which I think would be tipped too far into oddness if it moved too far into the twentieth century. However, oddly I find myself in agreement about the colours being 70s - I can't really explain that. Don't quite know about Regency however (altho' I might)

I think I probably am going to write a fair few stage directions about doors etc - but these are indications initially to Julian of the kinds of things that are going on - but there is no expectation that actual doors etc will appear - indeed I would be rather disappointed if they did I think - more something to give clarity to the story-telling. If it helps, I can't mentally see much more than a yellow sofa on stage.

Intending to get bracelet description in (it may be in already - I forget)

Struggling a bit with getting maid to actually say/sing anything of significance - tho' she is (as F says) very useful; will keep finding something useful for a singer to do

General note about maid's interruptions and silences - couldn't agree more - hugely interesting - but we do need to watch TIME; we're going to be up against it and as I said to Julian when we last met, we're going to have to really earn any interruption to forward motion.

OK - that's probably enough. Struggling to find a shape for the more setpiece scenes at present - starting to find some solutions; hope to have something to show for my efforts soon.

Best to you both

Ed:

**From:** Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Date:** 21 January 2009 20:52:09 GMT  
**To:** Edward Kemp  
**Cc:** Julian Philips  
**Subject:** Re: Yellow sofa

Guys, nice to hear from you both. I'm seeing Katie this weekend in Glasgow so will voice concerns about casting and rehearsals with her. I think attack on all fronts with this issue is best policy...

Does the maid have to sing anything at all?

I suppose the basic question about doors asks whether it's the same room that we go in and out of or is it various rooms?

Regency is just a bit more flamboyant in my mind. But I can see how people can be more hypocritical in 1880s...

Sadly, time is going to be against us. They have put the start time back but I don't think it buys us any more leeway.

Hear from you soon. F

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 22 January 2009 13:28:06 GMT  
**To:** Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Cc:** Edward Kemp  
**Subject:** Re: Yellow sofa

Dear both,

Thanks for all this. Feel completely in tune with how Ed's thoughts are developing and please don't take my character sketches too literally. They were intended to inform Glyndebourne's mysterious casting process, though I'm not clear anything has happened yet.

Schedule: going to talk to Katie as well (from experience at Glyndebourne, always stressful and never enough time for a project of this nature)

That's it - about to email Ed some stuff as well. Will copy you in Freddie.

Thanks

J

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 22 January 2009 13:28:03 GMT  
**To:** Kemp Edward , Kemp Edward  
**Cc:** Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Subject:** **Fado and Quatrains**

Ed,

Hope it's going ok - sorry you're under such pressure! Hope TYS feels an enriching escape from it rather than a burden...

I've been researching/thinking about scoring, style, vocal manner and imagining the main sequences in the piece. I definitely want the piece to take on the flavour/texture of *Fado*/Portuguese folk music but without descending into picture-postcard territory. It's the way this register is contextualised amongst other musical ways of speaking that will keep it fresh and intriguing. But this all focuses on Amarela - what's her music like and how does she vocalise?

I think only the sofa has an overt connection to Lisbon/Portugal and she's probably the only character that sings in Portuguese, no? There's then the unavoidable but rather interesting contradiction that *Fado* is a kind of street music informed by high art - opera colouring street song rather than street-song colouring opera (as in *Carmen*?). Symptomatic of this is the fact that a crucial colour of *Fado* is found in the rough, untrained, almost harsh voices that sing it. Simply transcribing this onto an operatic voice will kill the magic I think. *Fado* is often compositionally crude but in feeling and performance, immensely complex and rich. If we had complete control in a different context, one might even be trying to cast Amarela with a non-operatic singer whose voice was analagous to the *Fado* voice - jazz singer, cabaret singer?

Anyway, in the Glyndebourne context, we'll be hopefully getting a low mezzo with plenty of guts and maybe even the spirit/pluck to mould her voice to suit this role. Which leaves a question of her material and how that might play on the many readings of what she might symbolise.

She might be (all at the same time?!):

- the spirit of Lisbon
- the soul of Portugal
- a witch
- the devil, temptation
- a *Fadista*
- uncivilised nature trapped inside a civilized piece of furniture
- the raw emotion that G & L's society restrains
- a character's dangerous emotions
- a chorus

Either way, I'd like her to sing in Portuguese at times as the colour/texture of the



language will help build the role. Problem is that most *Fado* (words/music) has complicated origins that tangle up copyright and non-copyright material. This means we might be best taking on the colour and manner of the *Fado* in both a textual and musical sense rather than absorbing or borrowing specific songs.

One other resource I've discovered are Portuguese Quatrains of which there are thousands, all out of copyright, the best of which are striking and could be useful. I've typed up a selection - obviously they work miles better in Portuguese! - but wondered if they were helpful at all for Amarela? If we used them, it would give her ageless, folk origins. But this might not be quite what you want. Am attracted by their quality and the usefulness as non-copyright Portuguese lyrics but for now, am just throwing them into the mix for you to mull over. There's no direct connection between the quatrain tradition and Fado - the former is rural, the latter urban - but the *Saudade* flavour of both is striking and I'd have no problem moulding quatrain lyrics into a fado style.

Also attached are a selection of Lisbon Fado lyrics prefaced by some striking observations on Fado which are quite useful. One other lead - which might be purely musical - is a collection of Portuguese folk tunes which I'm tracking down.

That's it

J x

## **On SAUDADE:**

### **Aubrey Bell:**

The famous *saudade* of the Portuguese is a vague and constant desire for something that does not and probably cannot exist, for something other than the present, a turning towards the past or towards the future; not an active discontent or poignant sadness, but an indolent dreaming wistfulness.

## **On FADO:**

## **POSITIVE VIEWS**

### **Beckford:**

Those who have never heard this original sort of music, must and will remain ignorant of the most bewitching melodies that ever existed since the days of the Sybarites. They consist of languid interrupted measures, as if the breath was gone with excess of rapture, and the soul panting to meet the kindred soul of some beloved object. With a childish carelessness they steal into the heart, before it has time to arm itself against their enervating influence; you fancy you are swallowing milk, and are admitting the poison of voluptuousness into the closest recesses of your existence. At least, such beings as feel the power of harmonious sounds are doing so; I won't answer for heard-eared, phlegmatic northern animals.

### **Pinto de Carvalho:**

Both words and music reflect the abrupt turns of fickle Fortune, the evil destiny of the unfortunate, the irony of fate, the piercing pangs of love, the poignancy of absence or despair, the profound sobs of discouragement, the sorrows of *saudade*, the caprices of the heart, and those ineffable moments when the souls of lovers descend to their lips, and before flying back on high, hover for an instant in a sweet embrace.

### **Ventura de Abrantes:**

...the most Portuguese of all songs and the liturgy of the nation's soul

## **NEGATIVE VIEWS**

### **Pimentel:**

...deliquescent and immoral melodies...to be understood and felt only by those who vegetate in the mire of crapulence

### **Arroio:**

There is nothing in this order of things which can be compared with the *fado* as an expression of the lowest types of melodrama and of the most exaggeratedly bad taste

**José Maciel Ribeiro Fortes:**

... a song of rogues, a hymn to crime, an ode to vice, an encouragement to moral depravity... an unhealthy emanation from the centres of corruption, from the infamous habitations of the scum of society

**Pinto de Carvalho**

The *fadista* who played the role was the product of all the vices and the incarnation of everything despicable

**A FEW FADO LYRICS on Lisbon**

***Lisboa Antiga***

Lisbon, old city  
Vision of enchantment and beauty  
With her lovely smile,  
Clothed in dignity  
The white veil of *saudade* covers your face,  
Beautiful princess

*Refrain*

Look! It is the Lisbon of other eras,  
Of the five *réis*, the *esperas*  
And of the royal bullfights;  
The festivals, the age-old processions,  
The cries of the street vendors in the mornings  
That will never return again.

Lisbon, city of gold and silver  
I have never seen another more beautiful;  
Eternally playful and joyfully singing,  
You appear as a portrait  
In the crystalline blue of the Tagus

*Refrain*

***Ai, Mouraria***

Oh Mouraria of the old Palm Street  
Where one day I lost my soul  
As there passed by a certain *fadista*  
With dark skin, a small mouth, and mocking eyes

Oh Mouraria of the man who charmed me  
And lied to me, but whom I loved so much  
A love that the wind, like a lament, swept away  
That, still now, and every single day I carry with me

*Refrain*

Oh, Mouraria of the nightingales on the rooftops  
Of the pink dresses, of the traditional street vendors  
Oh, Mouraria of the processions passing by  
Of Severa, a yearning voice in the sobbing guitar

**Meu Bairro Alto**

On that narrow unpaved street  
I don't recall how many years have passed  
There in the heart of Bairro Alto  
Someone made a heart of wood,  
And now the poor, trembling heart  
Goes from hand to hand, sobbing:

*Refrain*

My Bairro Alto  
Of the noblest traditions,  
Of the colourful *fadistas*  
Of the bohemians of the past.

My Bairro Alto  
That saddens the hearts  
When the guitars cry  
With the sorrowful voice of the *fado*

The *fado* that is sung with feeling and expression,  
That has a guitar to weep,  
That brings to the voice a cry so pained.  
And in the air,  
The voice of a sobbing guitar.  
*Fado* is always the same  
It's always *Fado*  
That sets sad souls to dreaming.

*Refrain*

**Da Janela do meo Quarto**

From the window of my room I see the light of hers,  
When the moon comes to play on the rooftops of the alley  
Early in the morning I see the sun kiss the seven hills  
When it spreads on the wharf to spy on the *varinas*.

*Refrain*

From the window of my room I see the world  
I have the world of poetry to see  
I see the Alfama as it works hard, smiling and singing

I see the Tagus stretching below  
I see the patrol on their rounds running by  
I see the Cathedral where she always goes to pray, ardently  
In the late afternoon.

I see couples in love, souls full of illusions  
All of the magic of a *fado* and the cheerfulness of the vendors  
And at night, when the shadows dress the alleys in mourning  
From the window of my room, I see the light in her room.

*Refrain*

**Lisboa Não Sejas Francesca**

Don't flirt with the French  
Young Miss Lisbon,  
Portugal is tender sometimes,  
But certain things he does not forgive.  
Observe yourself well in the mirror  
And see the noble example you present  
Old and honourable Portugal,  
Be loyal to him  
Lest your father grieve.

*Refrain*

Lisbon, don't be French  
As you will surely  
Not be happy,  
Lisbon, what a wicked idea  
You vain *alfacinha*  
To marry Paris.  
Lisbon, you have your own lovers here  
Poor unfortunates,  
Who soulfully sing:  
"Lisbon, don't be French  
You are Portuguese  
You belong only to us"

We know you love beautiful uniforms  
Young Miss Lisbon,  
But be careful for whom you wait,  
A bold young lady does not please.  
There are handsome and valiant lieutenants  
Born and raised here,  
So act more decently,  
You capricious and naughty girl.

*Refrain*

### **Lisboa é sempre Lisboa**

Lisbon has the happy look of a *varina*  
And the coming and going of a song on each corner,  
At the markets, lively and playful, she causes uproar,  
Loses her foolish little head,  
Here and there she flirts and laughs without presumption  
She wears chintz, sings the *fado* and feels *saudade*.

#### *Refrain*

Lisbon is always Lisbon, of the lanes and alleys  
And the simple little house of Alfama and Madragoa.  
Of the lovers at the windows  
Of the marches that the people sing,  
The old Cathedral, the processions,  
The acts of faith, the street vendor's cries,  
Lisbon is always Lisbon.

In the morning she colourfully goes to work  
In the afternoon at tea-time she is full of life,  
But at night, with her half-closed eyes, she is exotic,  
Lisbon then only has the heart of a soul carried away  
Tied to the guitar, she sings until the dawn.

#### *Refrain*

### **Tamanquinhas**

On songs and *saudades*  
Does beautiful Lisbon live,  
She is wild and mischievous,  
But, after all, pure and good  
In her frivolities

This pretty Lisbon lives  
Differently from other cities,  
It's the Bairro Alto and Madragoa  
This Lisbon has both faults and good qualities

She is a city dweller in the Chiado  
She is a seamstress in her courtyard  
Who sings *fado* at the cafés,  
She is a vendor at the street market  
And the Tagus is her lover

She turns songs into street cries  
She loves the sun and the moon  
She goes devotedly to religious processions,  
And madly loves the street dancers  
She has jealousies and passions.

## **CHARMS, SPELLS etc**

With these two eyes I see thee,  
With thee five fingers I bind thee,  
I split thy heart  
And I cleave thy body in twain.

As I prick this lemon,  
So do I pierce thy heart,  
That thou mayst neither eat,  
Nor drink,  
Nor sleep,  
Nor rest  
Until thou has been brought to speak.

Go, lucky handkerchief  
To a sensitive heart,  
Go, carry my affections  
To her who holds me captive.

Fire in the rock-rose  
Health to my arm

Fire in the lavender  
Health to my breath.

Fire in the broom  
Health to my head.

Fire in the bela luz (herb)  
Health to my thighs.

In praise of St John  
May he give health to my heart.

St John comes and goes  
My mother must marry me soon.

St John of God beloved,  
St John of God adored,  
Reveal to me my fortune  
In this little glass.

I will tell you a tale  
To pass the evening,  
We will talk of other folk  
Since others will talk of us

**FOLK-SONGS (more to come)**  
**(melodies exist...)**

O winnower, sad winnower,  
A sad life will I lead thee.  
Neither will I wed with thee,  
Nor let thee marry.  
*Mas o ai la-le-lo-le-la.*  
Nor let thee marry.

It was you, it was you, the robber  
Who stole the keys of my heart.



## QUATRAINS

### LOVE

Ah me, how sad a fate  
Is this of loving,  
When there remains no hope  
And nothing left but sighs.

You call me your life,  
But I would be your soul.  
Life ends in death,  
The soul can never die.

He who loves but is not loved,  
How sad a life is his:  
'Tis having bread yet going hungry,  
'Tis being a son without a mother.

Song is for the sorrowful,  
Who can doubt it?  
How many times have I not sung  
When I would have wept.

All the sorrow in the world  
I would that it were mine,  
That I might see if gathered together  
It were more sorrowful than I.

O flowers in my garden,  
Wither at my command;  
It is not right he should have flowers  
Who has lost his love.

If you find me a lifeless corpse  
At the door of some wayside shrine,  
Touch me not with so much as your foot  
Lest I might return to life.

I weep not because you have left me  
For the garden has many more  
flowers;  
I weep because you will never meet  
One who will love you so well.

I want to see and yet not to see you,  
I want to love and yet not to love you,  
I want to find myself with you,  
Yet not to go to meet you.

Here you have my heart  
And the key to unlock it;  
I have no more to give you,  
And you no more to ask.

I closed my hand on a smile  
From your lovely lips;  
When I opened my hand  
I found it tinted with rose.

With sorrow I took up my pen,  
With the pen I set me to write;  
But the pen slipped out of my hand  
With sorrow that I could not see you.

To love you I lost my God;  
Through your love myself was lost;  
And now, behold me alone,  
Without God, without love, without you.

I slipped into marriage,  
I change my gold for copper;  
I bartered my youth  
For a coin which has no tender.

### PROVERBIAL PHILOSOPHY

No Saturday without sunshine,  
No lavender without flower,  
No married wife without jealousy,  
No single maid without love.

Spring comes in with flowers,  
They are pretty but never the same;  
Spring passes, and always returns,  
Only youth returns no more.

The book of life's experience  
Brings no profit to man;  
The moral is at the end  
And no one reads it so far.

As wind is to fire  
So is absence to love;  
If slight, it puts it out;  
If great, it fans it to flame.

I never saw a fig tree  
Bring forth figs at the roots;  
I never saw a bachelor lad  
Be faithful to his word.

## NATURE

There sinks the sun to rest,  
The sun sinks, the shadow stays;  
The sun departs in wonder  
At the richness of the shade.

O dove, swiftly flying,  
Before the falcon's claws:  
Even so to escape from love  
My heart has fled away.

The green weeds of the sea  
Thrust roots into the sand;  
I am faithful to all the world  
And all the world betrays me.

There is nought that smells sweeter  
Than the flower of lavender;  
There is no pleasure in this world  
Which does not end in pain.

Now snow is falling on the hills,  
The lily has lost its flower;  
Take no heed of me  
For I take none of you.

The olive tree on the mountain  
Is battered by the wind;  
My hope is ever still to spend  
The rest of my days with you.

The rascally, thieving blackbird  
Sang the whole night through;  
In the fresh hour of dawn  
He took to his wings and flew.

I am the sun and you are the moon;  
Which of us will be more constant?  
I, the sun, in pursuing you,  
Or you, the moon in fleeing me?

No sun like that of May,  
No moonlight like that of January,  
Nor carnation like that which is  
watered,  
Nor love like the first love of all.

The vine grows out of the earth,  
And out of the vine, the grape;  
Wives grow out of maidens  
And widows out of wives.

(extended with refrain phrases:)  
The olive tree in the mountains,  
The wind carries away its flower,  
*O ai o linda*  
There is none to carry me  
*O ai o linda*  
To the feet of my love.

(or extended into two quatrains:)

O peacock, pretty peacock,  
Fair feathers has the peacock;  
Never saw I eyes for loving  
Like those of my darling.

Like those of my darling,  
Like those of my beloved.  
O peacock, pretty peacock.  
O peacock, with patterned feathers.

**From:** Edward Kemp  
**Date:** 25 January 2009 22:11:35 GMT  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Cc:** Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Subject:** **Re: Fado and Quatrains**

Yes - sorry for silence - I'm making progress through the more 'constructed' bits and will hope to have something to show you soon. Agree entirely about the Amarela/Fado issues - and your description of her in all respects (and yes, one might in the 'real' world try to find a singer from a different tradition, tho' sometimes in my experience one can get as exciting results from singers 'crossing over' from the operatic side as vice versa - but they need to have the aptitude)

The quatrains are very interesting - do you have them in Portuguese? I think they'll be more usable if I can merge them in both languages - there is still a sound in my head where it somehow feels that she is singing simultaneously both in English and Portuguese.

We have our major Council meeting on Friday morning - so the situation is clearer now (which helps)

Best

Ed:

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 26 January 2009 21:28:39 GMT  
**To:** Edward Kemp  
**Subject:** **Re: Actually, there's probably enough new here to get your thoughts on**

Thanks Ed, whatever you've got is helpful. Doing lots of thinking this end.

Yes - those quatrains all exist in Portuguese. I won't email you them as it'll take me an age to type those up, but suffice to say, they're very appealing in Portuguese and have a strong "tang" of rhythm/sonority.

For Amarela, feel free to indicate where you see her slipping from one language to another; we can then translate whatever we need to at a later stage. Similarly, if you were to invent your own lyrics for her, I can probably get them translated too.

J xxx

**From:** Julian Philips

**Date:** 2 February 2009 15:40:28 GMT  
**To:** Edward Kemp  
**Subject:** Re: some more

Ed,

Thanks so much. Great to have more. Will feed through on this later in the week.

Hope you're surviving!

J

On 2 Feb 2009, at 00:40, Edward Kemp wrote:

It's the section on page 10 (in my copy - the Machado scene in any case) that's more worthwhile you looking at - much of the rest is still in working sketch phase - but this scenette has thrown up some interesting textural things; any sense of how the overall is feeling to you gratefully received. Hope with a following wind to get the Carvalho & M scene done in some form this week and then will feel like I have more of a grasp of the overall shape. Can't see any problem now with getting to breakdown for G using this kind of chorus/comment - but lots of fine tuning (and even some not so fine)

Ed:

<Draft 2.doc>

Julian Philips

**From:** Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Date:** 9 February 2009 17:51:26 GMT  
**To:** Edward Kemp  
**Cc:** Julian Philips  
**Subject:** Re: Fado and Quatrains

Hi guys, Hope it's going well. I've spoken to Naylor and flagged up concerns about rehearsals, etc. He's aware that whoever sings Godofredo needs to be around a lot and there is another orchestra rehearsal which could become a sitz...

I'm auditioning a Portuguese singer in March for something else and thought that if the idiosyncratic demands on the sofa become too much for a 'normal' Glyndebourne chorister we could ask for an outside exception. Attached is Catarina Sereno's CV. I'll let you know what she's like...

F

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 11 February 2009 15:57:51 GMT  
**To:** Edward Kemp , Edward Kemp  
**Subject:** Belatedly

Ed

Just to say apologies for silence; have been processing it and sketching. Really happy with it but have some thoughts/questions I need to share with you. If I put them in an email and send tonight, any chance we could speak tomorrow? Most of it relates to amarela and what the tone of her text/music is and then how to deal with the smaller characters (eg margarida).

Anyway will send later. Can you let me know when you'll have a moment to think/speak?!

J x x

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Julian Philips <[julianphilips@mac.com](mailto:julianphilips@mac.com)>

**Date:** 12 February 2009 12:59:11 GMT  
**To:** Kemp Edward Edward Kemp  
**Cc:** Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Subject:** Yellow Sofa

Ed,

Ok. Here goes. I've attached a word file of the text with my sectional divisions for now - the numbers helps my thinking, but you'll need it to make sense of what follows.

#### GENERAL OPERATIC FLAVOUR

I am approaching it as quite an intricate piece with little numbers, each with its own distinctive rationale (sometimes structural, sometimes tonal). This doesn't mean the end result will feel blocky (I hope), just that there's a taut framework beneath the work's rather dreamlike sequence. I should emphasise that I really love your impatient instincts with the drama - the way it cuts from one scene/situation to another is really liberating musically. Two other things. One - I'm really going for the chorus in it - they'll be a presence throughout, always heard (if not seen) and two, although the texture/flavour of Fado is informing the music, only Amarela is directly invested with it.

#### ONGOING QUESTIONS

- 1) Extent of Amarela's involvement and the general tone of her character
- 2) Second half of show (after Amarela's song to Lisbon)
- 3) How do we make Margarida a little more musically interesting
- 4) Does Lulu drop out of the piece in the second half of the show? I feel now that I'd rather she didn't
- 5) relates to above. Do we musically theatricalise a reconciliation between G and L and if not, is there somewhere of allowing them to remain vocally present in some way. A reconciliation scene can (and probably should) be rather understated and even embarrassed, but have a hunch we need something.
- 6) In terms of structure/shape, the only bit that's not clear is how we get from the Mozartian "Time will heal all" conclusion of the nightmare into G at home, reconciliation, domestic harmony. Obviously there's some time contraction here but wonder if we need a device to allow this to happen in a way that isn't going to seem awkwardly discontinuous. Does Amarela make this transition, narrating on some staged action and then we give G and L some kind of scene at the end, allowing for all the ambiguity we've talked about.
- 7) Amarela only really talks to G, in which case I think we just need to think that through so that it's clear. Does he only talk to her sometimes? How do we play scenes when she's there but he's not talking to her. Also, what's the dynamic of their interaction - is A planting ideas in his head, or observing, or throwing banana skins in his path. Does she care about him? Or despise him - ie all sofas hate the people that sit on them.

#### SPECIFICS

## 1. OVERTURE

Will be a little mobile of domestic sonorities: clock, birdsong, street song washing in from below, Lulu's Waltz. All rotating in an open structure creating a wash while the audience takes their seats.

## 2. PROLOGUE

Do we still want the idea of Amarela starting in Portuguese and morphing into English? And also, is her text her a kind of expectant accompanied recitative OR actually a Fado "once upon a time" song - ie a Fado about Godofredo. I'm attaching the text for Julia Florista, which is a very famous Fado story-telling song and it seems to me we could easily tweak this so that A's three stanzas worked a little more like this. But what do you think? This is quite pressing if we want some Portuguese as I'll need to get it translated.

## 3. ALLEGRO

This is great - a spiky allegro, bristling and perky with G's little moment about Lulu acting like a kind of a dream within it.

## 4a & 4b. CADENZA

4a: The chorus have sustained harmony that forms a kind of sensuous wash over which the love triangle deliver their text in a very understated way.

4b: Another strange mobile of inconsequential non-sequiturs going round in pointless circles. Can I have a few more pithy lines (Why? But -, I'm -, It's just -)

## 5. ?

Three options.

Option 1 - the music takes a lyrical breath here suggesting that there's more passion under this little taut sequence than you might have first thought.

Option 2 - a duet with G and A. This relates to the bigger, global question of how we establish and sustain their relationship. Are we taking away from their next duet if we have one here or alternatively, are we setting it up?

Option 3- nothing; go straight on.

## 6. DANCE

Like the idea that Neto's line "Well - why the song and dance?" is actually a description of the scene. Since presumably Neto and Godofredo are on the sofa, could we interweave Amarela into this even if she doesn't sing (or perhaps she does). This would allow me to contextualise the scene in a kind of A minor fado music (a kind of a Portuguese tango) as these two men dance around each other sorting the problem out. It could be very characterful and quite funny.

## 7. INVOCATION AND ARIA

This is a lush scene full of the longing for the sea. Neto/Teresa/Margarida form a vocal trio who vocalise their yearning for the seaside and the music has a great sense of expectancy. Lulu's beautiful aria sits in the middle of that and I'm imagining that the theatricality of this piece allows for her to be in her own world, maybe with the seaside trio even frozen for a moment while she reflects on her

situation.

Btw, one option for Margarida is that we give her some folksong material that she sings to herself (as she drags on a trunk etc etc). Not sure if this gets in the way, but would like us to be able to characterise her better if we can. She's curiously parallel to the sofa - a domestic servant, probably in the period a peasant girl from rural provinces around Lisbon.

#### 8. DUET

Important scene this but again it's all about exactly how G and A relate to each other. At the moment Amarela seems a bit sphinx like with G and I wonder if she's more mischievous/dangerous/provoking/Puck-ish. It's the hardest challenge of the piece really, and depends on the inner tensions in her character between Greek Chorus and devil and how we pace them into the Nightmare scene. Will she be part of the nightmare scene? Or just observing?

#### 9. CHORUS OF REVENGE

Great scene. It'll be a rather neo-classical number (almost French baroque) with the chorus and Amarela ratcheting up the tension as you suggest. The music is fast, urgent, building and building.

#### 10. FADO

In our bold dramaturgy, I like the idea of the revenge chorus crashing headlong into Amarela's fado as if all numbers 1-9 were setting up this moment. I think musically and theatrically it will feel quite unexpected and if I can get the music how I want it, a kind of coup de theatre. Textwise, I think it should relate to Lisbon and how that encircles G and L's lives. Does she ever sing about her status as sofa? Is she a kind of Ovidian spirit trapped inside a piece of furniture? Is this the content? And finally, is it all in English or will we need some of it in Portuguese.

#### 11. MELODRAMA

Obviously there's a chunk of this still to come, but like the feeling of it. On (my) page 17, presumably it's Medeiros and not Machado that sings "I was almost caught out yesterday"...

I see this scene as a kind of set piece for Carvalho, Medeiros, Neto even which sets up the nightmare scene. In which case, is it quite text heavy? Or will I just be reworking loops of dialogue? The whole feel could have a sense of the grotesque, the caricature no?

Other thought - could Medeiros' language be a bit less coherent, a bit stranger. Presumably he's nursing a hangover, and with all his gargling is not easy to follow. Would help me to build his material if his words were differentiated from the others.

#### 12. NIGHTMARE

I like the idea that this scene is analogous to a Rossinian storm sequence.



Maybe the chorus have quite a major role in it - the rest of the cast, minus Amarela, becoming the demons in his head. Other issue is to what extent Amarela is involved. Has she brought this all about somehow, and is therefore seeing it through to its last stage. Or has he transcended the sofa as it were as dark psychological forces are unleashed? And either way, how does it relate to what follows.

### 13. FINALE - 14. POSTLUDE (mobile)

I guess this is discussed above but not sure on how we get from the nightmare to the end and what the tone of this final stage is. Is the nightmare the end in a way and everything that follows in its shadow? Or does the piece kind of collapse and no's 13 and 14 are about putting it back together again. Maybe that putting-it-back-together literally reconstructs the overture-mobile once again with some piquant differences. Seems to hinge on what happens to G & L's relationship and how Amarela fits in. She started the whole piece of and it's an opera named after her, so a solution to this will presumably have her at the heart of it.

### BATHETIC CLIMAXES

In a way, this piece has a number of climaxes that then turn out to be false, so I think we need to be careful that the journey of the piece is not strangely unsatisfactory or frustrating. I like the idea of anti-climaxes and also that the piece is oddly disconcerting but it needs to work as a theatrical shape none the less. I think this means the nightmare is the real structural climax of the piece, the territory we didn't expect but we need to think how we pull back from that to make the end.

Ok. That's enough. Sorry for the long email. Weekend is good to speak - should I try you? Saturday afternoon or Sunday evening best.

Thanks

Julian

## Julia Florista

Julia the flower girl, an enchanting *fadista*,  
So says tradition  
In Lisbon she was a proud singer of our song  
A singular figure that lived the *fado* to the sound of the guitar  
She would sell her flowers, but she never sold her love.

With slippers on her feet, she walked with a commonplace air  
But if Julia walked by, Lisbon would stop to hear her sing of love  
In the air a street chant, in her mouth a song  
And gracefully held to her breast, a basket of flowers.

### *Refrain*

Julia the flower girl, time has implanted your  
Beautiful story in our memory  
Julia the flower girl, your voice echoes  
Through the haunting *fado* nights of our Lisbon.

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 14 February 2009 12:43:55 GMT  
**To:** Kemp Edward , Edward Kemp  
**Subject:** never rain when it pours

Ed,

Me again. Sorry. Couple of other things:

## 2. Prologue

I realise I'd like it if Amerela's text in the prologue was a kind of strange fado and as consequence I wondered if you'd consider tweaking the text to make a more regular, rhyming shape. I've mocked up a version below which doesn't make sense and lacks your style and wit but thought it would make it clear what I meant. Think of it in duple time, a kind of lilting 2/4, slow but sly. Also wonder whether Amarela can have a little refrain which is about her. For now I've put in some la la la's but maybe you might have some text ideas? Maybe there's other text that's useful - "once in Lisbon" places it and suggests a story about to unfold. As far as length, I don't think we need any more than what's below.

Once in Lisbon  
Lived a someone  
who was no-one  
Lavished on this son  
A name to conjure fame                      (this makes no sense but trying to use your text!)

Godofredo  
He'd never done  
Not one thing noble  
But to buy for his wife  
To buy her a yellow sofa

*Refrain*  
la la la la  
(or even using the previous two lines - "to buy her, to buy...a yellow sofa etc")

His business small  
His appetites,  
Oh they were tasteful  
blah blah blah his dreams  
blah blah were nothing extreme

Godofredo'd  
He'd never done  
Not one thing noble  
But to by for his wife  
To buy her a yellow sofa

*Refrain*

la la la la

(or even using the previous two lines - "to buy her, to buy...a yellow sofa etc")

3. Lulu's Valse d'Andalucia and her letter to Machado

I have a folktune (from Spain) that became a popular folk tune in Portugal which is perfect for Lulu's waltz especially as the text is all about running away with a lover! I think i'll rarely use it straight and mostly it will be placed in a weird harmonic contexts (think Ives). However, should it relate to the "Darling of my soul, such an afternoon!"? Other problem. This recurring text - which I know comes from Eca de Queiros - is hard to own musically, it feels rhythmically awkward, which is a problem particularly if other characters, including the chorus, are going to be singing it back. So either way, could you revisit it and perhaps think whether her waltz should be the material that comes back to contextualise these lines. In which case, we need to think 3/4, waltz and keep the text light.

That's it for now.

J x

**From:** Julian Philips

**Date:** 15 February 2009 13:21:22 GMT

**To:** Kemp Edward , Edward Kemp

**Subject:** My version

Ed,

here it is - don't understand why the last one didn't make sense.

Apologies

Julian

Julian Philips

**From:** Edward Kemp  
**Date:** 17 February 2009 19:49:12 GMT  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Subject:** opening no.

He's a rather more regular opening number - I wonder whether, in relation to Margarida issue - if we get this put into Portuguese, then this should be the folk song that Margarida sings as she passes around during the opening - that moves into English as show starts. I have an idea of the 'clock' that 'ticks' during the overture stopping - Lulu getting up to wind it, and then the piece begins. This is repeated at end, but now there is no Lulu to wind the clock. Left you phone message - I hope it was on the right number.

Once in Lisbon  
Lived a someone  
who was no-one  
But his parents gave their son  
A name to conjure fame

Godofredo  
He had never ever done  
One thing noble in his life  
Except to buy his wife  
To buy his wife a yellow sofa

*Refrain*  
To buy his wife, to buy his wife a yellow sofa

Small his business  
Neat his fancies  
As his office  
Even in his wildest dreams  
He wished for no extreme

Godofredo  
Who had never ever seemed  
(At all) notable in (his) life [not sure without melody what you'll need]  
Except he bought his wife  
He bought his wife that yellow sofa

*Refrain*  
Except he bought his wife  
He bought his wife that yellow sofa

**From:** Edward Kemp  
**Date:** 18 February 2009 22:30:44 GMT  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Subject:** bit more

Hope you got my messages of yesterday - been flat out with some flu-y thing today - but did some bits. Here's a tweaked opening no. - and also the beginnings of an end. Let me know what you think. Just read it through - and gaps an' all, but with your musical structure it's beginning to feel OK

Ed:

**From:** Edward Kemp  
**Date:** 21 February 2009 15:41:25 GMT  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Subject:** Thought you might like to have a look at this

AMARELA    Sun sets on the ocean  
              Mist rolls in from the sea  
              Like sadness  
              In Lisbon

              In windows the women  
              Are weaving and singing  
              From sadness  
              In Lisbon

              The city is crumbling  
              The people are dancing  
              For sadness  
              In Lisbon

              Down streets as wide  
              As a young girl's heart  
              The gentlemen prowl  
              In the evening air  
              And if you stroll with him  
              Lisbon girl  
              He'll show you the lights  
              He'll show you the lights  
              And you'll wake alone  
              In a sea of sheets  
              And know you're a woman  
              Of Lisbon  
              Of sadness  
              The city is crumbling  
              The people are dancing  
              For sadness  
              In Lisbon

**From:** Edward Kemp  
**Date:** 21 February 2009 18:39:16 GMT  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Subject:** Further

I've given the first half a fairly thorough going over - based on your notes and reading it through myself today. It may be filled out too much in places now - but while keeping with the abrupt dramaturgy I wanted to give a few plot hand-holds.

Ed:

**From:** Edward Kemp  
**Date:** 19 March 2009 01:01:05 GMT  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Subject:** YS

Been holding off sending this to you because it's still not complete - sc 11 taking longer than I expected - it's getting there, but not there yet and can't seem to get into 12 without it. But this at least will give you the heads up as to where I'm going. In Bern this weekend and the flights may give me time to complete and tidy; yes, April's good time to meet - looks like we'll be in Cornwall week before Easter.

Edx



**From:** David Pickard  
**Date:** 20 March 2009 13.51 GMT  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Cc:** Tearle Katie ,  
**Subject:** Re: Yellow Sofa

Julian – hope all is well with you. I just wondered whether you were any nearer finalising the orchestration for the Yellow Sofa this summer? Getting accurate costings and booking players is obviously rather held up without it!

I should say that I have got involved in this for slightly complicated reasons, and not because I was asked to give you a nudge. Though suppose I am.....

All the best

David

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 20 March 2009 16:02:30 GMT  
**To:** David Pickard  
**Cc:** Tearle Katie ,  
**Subject:** Re: Yellow Sofa

Dear David, Steven and Katie,

Please find attached the libretto for The Yellow Sofa as it stands. Also attached is the Yellow Sofa voice types list which I drew up some time back. There is one section at the end that Ed Kemp hasn't finished as yet.

#### SCORING

Katie mentioned 13 players but not sure if this number is supposed to include the keyboard part (Gareth).

Violin 1 - 3  
Violin 2 - 3  
Viola - 2  
Cello - 2  
Double bass - 1

Piano

Two guitars:  
Guitar - (Spanish acoustic)  
Portuguese Guitar

On the guitar front, I have a player I would like to work with - HUW DAVIES - and for the Portuguese guitar, I have a contact which I can forward to you.

I have been in touch with Leo and am sending him some extracts in the next week or so.

Finally, I will get in touch with Steven by phone in early April to discuss the singers and will email PDFs of the vocal score so that you can see what the piece is likely vocally. Would be good to get your insight on it at this developing stage.

Hope that's everything for now.

All the best

Julian

**From:** Steven Naylor  
**Date:** 22 March 2009 16:08:34 GMT  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Cc:** Katie Tearle  
**Subject:** RE: Yellow Sofa

Dear Julian

Thank you for this – I would prefer there to be one guitarist to keep costs down. Do you have the two guitar parts playing together or does this Portuguese guitar require a specialist player? If so, why cannot a classical guitarist play it also?

Best

Steven

Steven Naylor  
Director of Artistic Administration  
Glyndebourne Productions Ltd  
Tel: +44 (0)1273 812321

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 22 March 2009 17:24:56 GMT  
**To:** Steven Naylor  
**Cc:** Tearle Katie , Pickard David  
**Subject:** Re: Yellow Sofa

Steven,

Thanks for this. Appreciate the budget constraints.

Sadly, the two guitar parts are essential to the sound and concept of the piece. The Portuguese guitar itself is a distinctly different instrument - it's a double string guitar, smaller, with a completely different performance tradition. It's not inaccurate to say that no non-Portuguese guitarist ever plays it and it's used exclusively in fado. Rather than being a doubling part, it's distinctly separate and the two guitars are used throughout for Amarela (The Yellow Sofa character).

If you do want to economize on the budget, I'd rather lose one of the two cellos. This would be a shame, but I am genuinely happy to work within whatever inevitable financial constraints you may be under.

Let me know your thoughts.  
All the best, Julian

**From:** Edward Kemp  
**Date:** 22 March 2009 18:11:38 GMT  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Cc:** Katie Tearle  
**Subject:** **A first complete draft!**

Well this has something for every moment at least ... Give me a call when you've had a chance to read it. I'm away in Dublin for three days week after next and then away on holiday the week leading up to Easter, otherwise around.

Edx

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 29 March 2009 22:39:32 BST  
**To:** Edward Kemp  
**Subject:** **Re: A first complete draft!**

Ed,

Haven't disappeared but still processing. It's going to be great but just need to let it settle so I can be clear on what corners we still might have to talk through.

Would be good to meet up anyway when you're back from Cornwall.

Hope all well.

Love

J xxx

On 22 Mar 2009, at 18:11, Edward Kemp wrote:

<Draft 4.doc>

Julian Philips

**From:** Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Date:** 20 April 2009 22:05:43 BST  
**To:** Edward Kemp , Julian Philips  
**Subject:** yellow sofa

Ed and Julian,

Katie sent me a first complete draft a couple of weeks ago and it looks really great. There's so much character in such a small number of words. I'm meeting with various people at Glyndebourne on 30 April to make initial moves on the design as I'm then off again abroad soon after that.

I have a few stupid questions from reading the draft:

What is the current intention with the casting of Amarela? Can it be a Glyndebourne chorister or will it require someone more specialised?

'A clock ticks through it all' is that just the opening image or the whole opera?

'There is a yellow sofa' refers to a real yellow sofa as well or just Amarela?

Chorus: How many will there be? What do you see them as? The people of Lisbon? Servants? Is it they that pass the chocolate and flowers, etc. to Godofredo? Do you see them creating the drama? Props men?

During the scene when they're all discussing Godofredo's fate, and the girls are singing 'We're off to Sintra', is it only Godofredo on stage?

Let me know also if you have anything else particular to say about costumes and set at this stage.

All the best,  
Freddie

**From:** Edward Kemp  
**Date:** 21 April 2009 00:08:02 BST  
**To:** Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Cc:** Julian Philips  
**Subject:** Re: yellow sofa

Glad you like it. No questions are stupid at this stage.

Leave J to advise on Glyndebourne casting of Amarela - clearly it needs someone of fabulous vocal versatility who ideally is a terrific actress and ideally very sexy/sensual. So not asking for much there.

The clock ticking - which I'm imagining is in the score in some form - should run through the pre-show, stop for L to wind it - and then once wound, Amarela sings. It then returns whenever G is home alone contemplating the bleakness of his solitary existence. It stops again at the end - and M and G should look at it as neither has a clue how it's wound - and then it runs again at the end until it stops. Does that sort of make sense?

Yes - the relationship of Amarela to any real yellow sofa is one of those trials that I tend to set directors; I don't know what the solution is - that's the fun of it. I think there will need to be a yellow sofa - or something we can take to be that - I think to have Amarela tied to it (I mean that more metaphorically than literally) would be a shame - but I don't really know how one makes the relationship clear. So over to you. By which I mean, I don't have a magic solution up my sleeve (it's not a trick) - and I'm very happy to talk around options/ideas - but I don't think there is a definitive solution - just the one that works for the language of this production.

In a sense they are all the chorus - anyone who's not singing in character at that time can be chorus; if you like there's a gradual journey from chorus to character - so at first nearly all are undifferentiated chorus (and yes, in that sense are the people of Lisbon) As the piece goes on we come to know who specifically they are - so they've moved from being a chorus to an ensemble by our spending time with them. They have a relationship to Amarela - who is in one aspect the spirit of Lisbon and they are the people of the city - their relationship to G's story is complex (as is Amarela's) - they may at times be appear to be advancing it, but to what end?

As to who is on stage when, I don't know the answer really throughout the piece. I think in my hazy mental picture they might all be there all the time, but in the background (whatever that means in the staging) - merging with and emerging from the audience. In that sense it might feel sort of semi-staged - though that semi-staging would actually be complete. I think whatever the solutions are they need to be light and playful - I don't think too much 'stuff' will help this piece. So generally regarding costumes and props etc I'd say less is more.

Feel free to ask more - or call - or send images or whatever. Ed:

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 22 April 2009 16:31:23 BST  
**To:** Kemp Edward , Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Cc:** Tearle Katie  
**Subject:** Yellow Sofa

Dear both,

Thanks for Freddie's email and Ed's terrific reply. Thought I'd feed in some other brief thoughts though Ed's response says most of it, and it's entirely in tune with how the piece is developing musically.

#### "OVERTURE"

Freddie - would quite like to discuss this maybe by telephone. I have all the elements but would appreciate your input from a directorial point of view. Am going to touch base with Ed as well.

#### AMARELA

Am seeing Steven Naylor on Monday but my understanding is that it has to be someone from the chorus. It's definitely a low mezzo part and needs to be someone who's vocally game enough to invent a kind of special style for the role. I'm accepting it's an operatic voice rather than a fado voice but the singer will need to have a sense of the texture/character of Fado. However, I am in effect writing out all the vocal ornaments and rubato effects so in theory what we need is a great singer with a rich low mezzo voice, and a terrifically charismatic and sultry stage presence.

#### CLOCK

Can it just be metronome? An old fashioned triangular one which might sit on the piano. Lulu/Godo can then stop and start it as indicated in the libretto but it also provides a neat and useful "pun" as it were for the metre of the music. As Ed says, I don't think this piece should be proppy and the last thing we want is a clock on stage - especially as that would position it unhelpfully close to Ravel's L'Heure Espagnole. As the piece goes on, the "ticks" become motivic - heart beats, tension, a bomb about to explode.

#### YELLOW SOFA

I think we need one. It's an important visual image. In my mind, Amarela could be associated with the sofa simply by being dressed in the same yellow fabric but am open to whatever ideas develop.

#### CHORUS

Everything Ed says is in the piece, so nothing to add really. I think it's important to place this piece in its real context - the Jerwood Chorus Development Scheme. It's an opera for a small chorus, if you like, in which two or three characters are particularly prominent. I've questions for Ed about the extent to which Lulu is incorporated but apart from that, this strand runs throughout the

piece. Like Ed, I see them onstage throughout, and I think there could be a playful ambiguity in their role and the way they interact with the story. Something Ed said early on stuck out - that when you've no set in a black box, the "bodies" are the set and I think we should use them.

#### GODO'S FATE

The focus here is definitely Godo and Amarela with some of the other voices theatrically off-stage, some off them poetically in his head. As to the reality of this for this particular production, over to you, but we may need to investigate a literal off-stage for this piece - ie how we make it when there's no pros or wings etc. All the Cavalho/Medeiros/Nunes stuff is them "off-stage" plus a guitar.

#### SCENIC BREAKDOWN

Find attached an outline of the scenes in terms of who's on and off - it'll give you a sense of what the piece will be like to rehearse. Of course, there may be fine tunings to this but I've found it helpful at this stage.

#### NEW SCENIC DIVISIONS

I've edited the libretto so that it closely resembles how the music is shaping up. I've added two short text-less numbers that present Godo alone and Lulu alone at different points but will email Ed about this separately to get his thoughts. I've also changed some of the titles of the numbers.

#### PROGRESS

The piece isn't due for completion until the end of May, but I'm going to email chunks of it in the coming week (as PDFs). Any feedback/ideas/concerns would be gratefully received!

Thanks so much.

Julian

Julian Philips  
julianphilips@mac.com



| THE YELLOW SOFA – Scenic breakdown |                        |           |         |           |          |           |          |      |        |          |          |             |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|---------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|------|--------|----------|----------|-------------|
|                                    |                        | Duration  | AMARELA | GODOFREDO | LUDOVINA | MARGARIDA | MARCHADO | NETO | TERESA | MEDEIROS | CARVALHO | NUNES VIDAL |
| No. 1                              | Overture (Mobile 1)    | c.5       | -       | X         | X        | X         | -        | -    | (X)    | -        | -        | (X)         |
| No. 2                              | Prologue               | 3         | X       | -         | C        | C         | -        | C    | C      | C        | C        | C           |
| No. 3                              | Godofredo's office     | 5         | X       | X         | -        | -         | X        | -    | -      | -        | -        | -           |
| No. 4a)                            | Tableau 1              | 3         | X       | X         | X        | C         | X        | C    | C      | C        | C        | C           |
| No. 4b)                            | Tableau 2              |           | X       | X         | X        | -         | -        | -    | -      | -        | -        | -           |
| No. 5                              | Interlude              | 1.5       | X       | -         | ?        | X         | -        | -    | C      | -        | -        | -           |
| No. 6                              | Dance                  | 3         | X       | X         | -        | -         | -        | X    | -      | -        | -        | -           |
| No. 7                              | Invocation & aria      | 6         | -       | -         | X        | X         | -        | X    | X      | -        | -        | -           |
| No. 8                              | Dialogue-duet          | 2.5       | X       | X         | -        | -         | -        | -    | -      | -        | -        | -           |
| No. 9                              | Chorus of revenge      | 2         | X       | X         | ?        | C         | X        | C    | C      | C        | C        | C           |
| No. 10                             | Mobile 2               | 1.5       | -       | X         | -        | -         | -        | -    | (X)    | -        | -        | (X)         |
| No. 11                             | Fado                   | 3.5       | X       | -         | -        | -         | -        | -    | -      | -        | -        | -           |
| No. 12                             | Tableau 3              | 1         | -       | -         | X        | -         | -        | -    | -      | -        | -        | -           |
| No. 13                             | Trio                   | 4         | C       | X         | ?        | C         | C        | C    | C      | X        | X        | C           |
| No. 14                             | Nightmare              | 4         | X       | X         | C        | C         | C        | C    | C      | (X)      | (X)      | (X)         |
| No. 15                             | Finale 1               | 3         | -       | X         | -        | -         | -        | -    | -      | X        | X        | X           |
| No. 16                             | Finale 2 (Mobiles 3/4) | 3         | X       | X         | X        | -         | -        | -    | (X)?   | -        | -        | -           |
| No. 17                             | Epilogue               | 2         | X       | X         | X        | C?        | C?       | C?   | C?     | C?       | C?       | C?          |
| Total duration                     |                        | 53 approx |         |           |          |           |          |      |        |          |          |             |

**X**: on-stage in scene

**(X)**: singing off-stage

**C**: joins chorus

- : not in scene

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 22 April 2009 16:53:11 BST  
**To:** Kemp Edward  
**Cc:** Tearle Katie , Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Subject:** A few questions

Ed,

At the coalface as it were but have a few questions for you. Nothing major and am finding the libretto quite brilliant and a delight to work with.

1. OVERTURE

Quite like to discuss the logistics of this. I have to set down a set of performing instructions and would like your take on it before it's set. It's textless opera really but would appreciate a reaction in terms of pure theatre.

2. 4b - TABLEAU

Think I'll call these "tableaux" rather than cadenzas. My question is about the gap between tableau 1 (Godo discovers Lulu and Machado) and tableau 2 (Godo and Lulu awkwardly alone on the sofa). The only thing that separates them is the (musical) gesture of the door opening and closing. Do you think that it's Freddie's problem to convey the sense of "and later...", the sense of time elapsing between these two sofa encounters. Don't really want to have to waste time doing this musically and what's happening is a weird but sensuous glissando gesture upwards and then the next tableau. Presumably, we just establish the device of quite cutting from one moment to another?

3. No 5 isn't really an interlude, just a "once in Lisbon" reprise, probably sung by female voices, led by Margarida.

4. No 8. Could I have a different for Godo than "shut up"? Something that serves the same function but is a little more ambiguous or oblique - "I can't take any more" or "enough.." or something like that. The lines of dialogue that follow will indeed be spoken and then the music kicks back in as Godo pulls himself up to his full height...

5. No 9 - Chorus of revenge, or "a confrontation" as I'm now calling it. Is it confusing if Lulu sings in the chorus for this. There are a number of moments where I'm asking myself this question. To sum up: we establish the idea that the chorus are the "people of Lisbon" and then we discover the individuals as the piece unfolds, but should Godo and Lulu be apart from this? Would quite like her voice in the chorus for scene 9 BUT definitely NOT if this makes no dramaturgical sense.

6. I'm adding a "mobile" for Godofredo at the end of scene 9. Something that recaps the overture texture but with him alone on the sofa and the sounds of his domestic universe falling apart. Does this make sense?

7. I'm adding a number for Lulu alone after the Fado. In my head we just see

her alone in a space while her waltz tune (= the letter) plays like a musical box. This music that segues neatly into the next scene as Carvalho reads the letter.

8. I'm dividing the finale into two - a "Finale?" and "Another Finale". The first is bathetic and the second unsettling. No risks there then!!!

9. The final page is then an epilogue that balances the prologue.

#### TEXT

Could you bear to revisit two tiny bits of text, both for Amarela. I just need the rhythm to work with the same tune as "Once in Lisbon" etc. What's below is VERY CLUNKY thanks to my re-arrangement of text, so anything you can do to enhance would be great. Feel free to rethink as it were. Either way, Amarela pulls down the curtain on the piece by putting Godofredo back into song and closing the book so I think it's important that the symmetrical patterning of this fado is how we make an end.

eg

AMARELA

And so in Lisbon  
Nothing went on  
Nothing happened (urgh???)  
da da da da da  
son  
Summer came and went

And in the autumn da da da  
They met outside the opera...

and then:

So Godofredo  
Came and went  
And went and came  
And life ticked by  
son  
Only now and again

With his hand upon the door  
da da da da da da  
He remembered her  
his wife upon that yellow sofa

#### *Refrain*

Remembered her, remembered her  
His wife upon that yellow sofa

matching:

Once in Lisbon  
Lived a someone  
Who was noone  
Though his parents gave their

A name to conjure fame

He had never ever done  
One thing noble in his life...

Once in Lisbon  
Lived a someone  
Who was noone  
Though his parents gave their

A name to conjure fame

He had never ever done  
One thing noble in his life...  
Except to buy his wife  
To buy his wife a yellow sofa

#### *Refrain*

To buy his wife, to buy his wife  
To buy his wife a yellow sofa

That's it Ed. Thanks so much. Should we meet in early May so I can show you how it's going? You may even want to tweak text when you hear some of the notes!!!

Hope all is well with you.

All the best

Julian

**From:** Edward Kemp  
**Date:** 27 April 2009 23:28:50 BST  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Cc:** Tearle Katie , Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Subject: Re: A few questions**

REPLIES IN CAPS ...

On 22 Apr 2009, at 16:53, Julian Philips wrote:  
Ed,

At the coalface as it were but have a few questions for you. Nothing major and am finding the libretto quite brilliant and a delight to work with.

#### 1. OVERTURE

Quite like to discuss the logistics of this. I have to set down a set of performing instructions and would like your take on it before it's set. It's textless opera really but would appreciate a reaction in terms of pure theatre.

EITHER CALL - I'M AROUND AT PRESENT (IN SWEDEN FRI - MON) - OR  
SEND ME DETAILS

#### 2. 4b - TABLEAU

Think I'll call these "tableaux" rather than cadenzas. My question is about the gap between tableau 1 (Godo discovers Lulu and Machado) and tableau 2 (Godo and Lulu awkwardly alone on the sofa). The only thing that separates them is the (musical) gesture of the door opening and closing. Do you think that it's Freddie's problem to convey the sense of "and later...", the sense of time elapsing between these two sofa encounters. Don't really want to have to waste time doing this musically and what's happening is a weird but sensuous glissando gesture upwards and then the next tableau. Presumably, we just establish the device of quite cutting from one moment to another?

YES -THE PRODUCTION'S GOING TO NEED TO FIND A STYLE TO MAKE THE AUDIENCE FEEL AS SECURE ABOUT SPACE AND TIME AS THEY NEED TO BE AT ANY POINT. ALL THAT ONE MIGHT NEED IS A DEGREE OF FLEXIBILITY AS TO HOW QUICKLY ONE NEEDS TO GO ON; SOMETIMES A BREATHER, A MOMENT OF SILENCE IS ALL THAT'S NEEDED FOR EVERYONE TO TAKE STOCK BEFORE THE STORY MOVES ON. GENERALLY I THINK MOST CONTEMPORARY OPERA UNDERESTIMATES THE VALUE OF SILENCE AND SO EVEN VERY GOOD PIECES CAN BE LIKE A MEAL OF FANTASTIC DISHES WHICH ALL COME SLIGHTLY TOO QUICKLY WITHOUT TIME TO DIGEST THEM.

3. No 5 isn't really an interlude, just a "once in Lisbon" reprise, probably sung by female voices, led by Margarida.  
I'M SURE THAT'S FINE.

4. No 8. Could I have a different for Godo than "shut up"? Something that serves the same function but is a little more ambiguous or oblique - "I can't take

any more" or "enough.." or something like that. The lines of dialogue that follow will indeed be spoken and then the music kicks back in as Godo pulls himself up to his full height...

I'D ALMOST PREFER IT WASN'T WORDS AT ALL - A SORT OF 'BZZZT' SOUND OR 'TSST' (BZZZT MIGHT BE TOO MUCH LIKE A ZIP IT SOUND, WHICH WOULD OF COURSE BE ANACHRONISTIC) - A VOCAL NOISE MADE TO GET AMARELA TO DESIST.

5. No 9 - Chorus of revenge, or "a confrontation" as I'm now calling it. Is it confusing if Lulu sings in the chorus for this. There are a number of moments where I'm asking myself this question. To sum up: we establish the idea that the chorus are the "people of Lisbon" and then we discover the individuals as the piece unfolds, but should Godo and Lulu be apart from this? Would quite like her voice in the chorus for scene 9 BUT definitely NOT if this makes no dramaturgical sense.

YES - INTERESTING THIS. I THINK IT CAN BE MADE TO WORK THAT LULU IS PART OF THE CHORUS - AND TO AN EXTENT I THINK IT'S BETTER IF SHE IS - SO THAT THE WHOLE THING IS EFFECTIVELY SEEN ENTIRELY FROM GODO'S PERSPECTIVE; IT WILL NEED CAREFUL HANDLING - AND TO SOME EXTENT WILL REQUIRE THE SINGER'S BUY IN (IF SHE DOESN'T GET IT, IT MAY FEEL AWKWARD) - BUT IT SHOULD FEEL - AT LEAST SUBLIMINALLY IF NOT ACTUALLY - AS THO' ALL THE OTHER PEOPLE IN GODO'S LIFE (AND IN LISBON) ARE BUILDING UP TO DRIVE HIM INTO THIS (LIKE A WAVE THAT WASHES HIM UP AND THEN LEAVES HIM HIGH AND DRY) - SINCE LULU'S ACTIONS HAVE CAUSED THIS IT'S FINE THAT AT THIS POINT HE SHOULD FEEL THAT SHE'S A PART OF IT. I THINK THE POINT ABOUT THEM MOVE FROM CHORUS TO CHARACTER IS THAT THERE IS MORE AMBIGUITY ABOUT THE WAY THEY CAN BE USED BEFORE WE HAVE PINNED A PART ON THEM (OR SIMPLY THEY CAN BE USED MORE GENERALLY - THEREAFTER ONE HAS TO BE SENSITIVE BOTH IN SETTING AND STAGING TO THEIR CHARACTER JOURNEY - BUT EVEN THEN, THIS MAY BE SEEN FROM A SKEWED PERSPECTIVE - GODO'S)

6. I'm adding a "mobile" for Godofredo at the end of scene 9. Something that recaps the overture texture but with him alone on the sofa and the sounds of his domestic universe falling apart. Does this make sense?

I THINK WHATEVER GETS FROM THE COLLAPSE OF THE CONFRONTATION TO THE FADO IS RIGHT - THO' (AND THIS WITH NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE MUSIC AT ALL) THIS IS QUITE POSSIBLY A MOMENT WHERE LESS IS MORE.

7. I'm adding a number for Lulu alone after the Fado. In my head we just see her alone in a space while her waltz tune (= the letter) plays like a musical box. This music that segues neatly into the next scene as Carvalho reads the letter.

THAT SOUNDS VERY POIGNANT

8. I'm dividing the finale into two - a "Finale?" and "Another Finale". The first is bathetic and the second unsettling. No risks there then!!!

9. The final page is then an epilogue that balances the prologue.

#### TEXT

Could you bear to revisit two tiny bits of text, both for Amarela. I just need the rhythm to work with the same tune as "Once in Lisbon" etc. What's below is VERY CLUNKY thanks to my re-arrangement of text, so anything you can do to enhance would be great. Feel free to rethink as it were. Either way, Amarela pulls down the curtain on the piece by putting Godofredo back into song and closing the book so I think it's important that the symmetrical patterning of this fado is how we make an end.

eg

#### AMARELA

And so in Lisbon  
Nothing went on  
Nothing happened (urgh???)

da da da da da  
son  
Summer came and went

And in the autumn da da da  
They met outside the opera...

#### HOW ABOUT ...

And so in Lisbon  
Nothing went gone  
Nothing was done  
No blood was spilt, no passion spent  
The summer came and went  
[or The summer came, the summer went  
or The summer came and then it went]

And when the autumn rolled along  
They met outside the opera

and then:

matching:

Once in Lisbon  
Lived a someone

Who was noone

Though his parents gave their

A name to conjure fame

He had never ever done  
One thing noble in his life...

So Godofredo  
Came and went  
And went and came  
And life ticked by  
son  
Only now and again

Once in Lisbon  
Lived a someone  
Who was noone  
Though his parents gave their  
  
A name to conjure fame

He stopped - his hand upon the door -  
He thought what he had seen before  
[He] remembered her  
His wife upon that yellow sofa

With his hand upon the door  
da da da da da da  
He remembered her  
his wife upon that yellow sofa

He had never ever done  
One thing noble in his life...  
Except to buy his wife  
To buy his wife a yellow sofa

*Refrain*  
Remembered her, remembered her  
His wife upon that yellow sofa

*Refrain*  
To buy his wife, to buy his wife  
To buy his wife a yellow sofa

That's it Ed. Thanks so much. Should we meet in early May so I can show you how it's going? You may even want to tweak text when you hear some of the notes!!!

Yes - let's try to fix something up.

Hope all is well with you.

is there any indication of when rehearsals might be? I'd like to be about a bit - but i have to try to spend some time with my family this summer - and also we're moving house ...

All the best

Julian

Ed:

ps and yes, costume is the obvious way to link amarela and sofa

And yes, I think there will need to be a prop clock of some description - but I don't know that it has an actual tick - which I suppose immediately sets up a disjunction between what we see and what we hear - which is sort of interesting. Glad the stage has audience on three sides, orchestra on fourth - sounds very good.



**From:** Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Date:** 28 April 2009 08:37:40 BST  
**To:** Edward Kemp  
**Cc:** Julian Philips , Tearle Katie  
**Subject:** Re: A few questions

Rehearsals start 20 July. But there may be some music calls before then. I'm going to try and get a preliminary schedule when I'm at Glyndebourne on Thursday cos I'm still worried about the number of rehearsals.

I agree that Lulu should be part of the chorus. Another way of doing it is not that each character becomes more developed over the course of the show but that they maintain their character throughout switching from being completely individual to being subsumed within the ensemble. This will embody the playfulness of the piece and emphasise that it's all Godo's perspective. Have you seen Strehler's production of *Arlecchino servitore di due padroni*? I'm thinking more and more of this... But this kind of playful theatre seems more at home in a period earlier than 1880...

Speak soon.  
Freddie

**From:** Edward Kemp  
**Date:** 28 April 2009 09:29:45 BST  
**To:** Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Cc:** Julian Philips , Tearle Katie  
**Subject:** Re: A few questions

Don't know that specific Strehler production but I get the point - and it seems to me we can't as a theatrical culture be hamstrung by the prevailing taste of the time when a piece is set - or Julius Caesar could never have been written. As human beings we have always been playful and earnest - theatre is a mongrel form and has always mixed realism and stylization - each new piece makes a compact with its audience about the rules of engagement and then plays with them - often in the case of the most exciting work - flirting with them to breaking point

Let me know how much you'd like me to be in rehearsals - I'm usually a bit of help - but see my job as a librettist as a provoker of certain challenges which hopefully stimulate creativity in others - I don't have solutions - tho' I can sometimes help by providing some thoughts about where they might lie. My key interests are about lightness and playfulness and transparency - I also love abrupt but not random contrast and have no great faith in the English supposed theatrical virtue of consistency. But from everything you say, Fred, I feel we're in safe hands.

Edward

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 1 May 2009 15:50:22 BST  
**To:** Edward Kemp  
**Subject: Re: A few questions**

Ed,

Thanks for all this. I have everything I need now. The only outstanding issue relates to to what kind of instructions to lay out for the mobiles. I know what the musical strands are and each rotates with its own integrity, the conductor simply cueing the various elements. However, it's a bit chicken and egg as it all rather depends on exactly what the textless action is theatrically. I guess it's about what kind of parameters to set and how much to control it. So I think I'll email you a preliminary solution and then maybe we can discuss it telephonically or in person if we find some time to meet.

Making good headway and written about half of it, I'd say. Went to Glyndebourne this week and they've pretty much cast it. As it's a chorus development project, the options are quite clear and it was good to be there to talk Steven Naylor through who does what. We have a nice mix of more experienced singers in the main roles and then younger chorus members for the smaller roles. I meet them all on thursday so fingers crossed.

A few remaining reactions:

- 1) So refreshing to hear your point about the value of silence; I think it's a lesson I'm only just learning. Am very mindful of it and also a sense that the music has to breathe with its own integrity, even if this creates textless expanses.
- 2) Godo's "shut up". I take your point - any chance I could have a line anyway in case. Slightly worried that if Amarela and the guitars are singing away, he needs a bit more than noise to interrupt them otherwise it won't register. Also I like the idea of him breaking out of the frame as it were and I think we should go for it.
- 3) Really pleased you feel Lulu should be in the chorus throughout - I arrived at that realisation after I sent the email. It means that the interlude, for example, is now all four female voices singing in unison/close harmony, the mere texture of has an interesting gender perspective on the story.
- 4) The mobile before "Sun sets on the ocean". Agreed about time here. I think we need a bit of mobile-silence and then Amarela should push on. Not a place for the piece to hang about.
- 5) Glad you like the mobile for Lulu post Fado. It'll be like a weirdly distorted music box - brief, about 1-1.5 minute but will be quite striking I think.
- 6) Final text. Sorry it got scrambled in the email. So can I use:

And so in Lisbon  
Nothing went on  
Nothing was done

No passion spent  
The summer came and went

And when the autumn rolled along  
They met outside the opera

Followed later by:

So Godofredo came and went  
and went and came  
And life ticked by  
only now and again

with his hand upon the door  
he thought what he had seen before  
He remembered her  
His wife upon that yellow sofa

*Refrain*

Remembered her, remembered her  
His wife upon that yellow sofa.

7) Clock. Yes - I can see we need one. The "tick" can be separately synchronised - sometimes associated with the visual, sometimes not.

8) Rehearsals:

week of 13th July - music calls  
week of 20th July - production rehearsals  
week of 27th July - production rehearsals  
week of 3rd August - production rehearsals  
Sunday 9th August - orchestra rehearsal 1  
Tuesday 11th August - orchestra rehearsal 2  
12th August - piano dress  
13th August - sitz/stage and orchestra  
15th August - stage and orchestra  
17th August - dress rehearsal  
performances: 20th, 23rd, 25th and 28th August

That's it! Have fun in Sweden.

Julian xx

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 1 May 2009 3.55 PM  
**To:** Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Cc:** Edward Kemp  
**Subject:** Re: A few questions

Freddie,

How did you get on this week? Sorry we didn't coincide. I saw Steven and looks like the thing is cast. As the whole thing has to be cast from the chorus, when it came down to it there weren't that many options but from what Steven told me, I think we have a good cast. I know a few of them, which always helps. I have a working session with all of the cast this week (thursday) so that should give me a clearer sense of things.

My vocal score deadline is the 31st May but I will email you a few numbers before then.

A few other things:

- 1) Clock. Yup - obviously have one if you feel it's needed. Our exchange made me realise that the "ticks" as it were should come from the band but not be directly synchronised by whatever prop solution you arrive at.
- 2) I do need to talk to you about the "mobiles". It's a classic chicken and egg thing about what kind of parameters/instructions to lay out musically that will work theatrically. I'm going to discuss this with Ed and then make a suggestion which you can then visualise and react to.
- 3) Lulu is definitely in the chorus throughout - I think only Godofredo stands apart from it.

That's it for now. Will be in touch.

Julian

**From:** Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Date:** 3 May 2009 17:47:02 BST  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Cc:** Edward Kemp  
**Subject:** Re: A few questions

Julian, Just left a garbled message. Do give us a call if you want. My mobile is ...but perhaps emails will suffice...

Had a good time at Glyndebourne on Thursday. With regard props, costume, etc. they seem very positive to make things happen in spite of lack of funds.

Where I've got so far with regard design, therefore, is that I want to make the audience feel like they're in the room with the performers. To this end, door frames at each of the corners of the stage that could also be picture frames through which the audience enters and within which "off stage" singers can stand. I've asked for the general look of the room to be rather florid and faded to highlight both the warmth and sexuality of the environment and the deterioration of the once imperial Portugal while maintaining a very bourgeois atmosphere. I think the yellow sofa should be delicate in nature to match this world but should nevertheless dominate in a rather alluring, dangerous way.

What's needed therefore is a colour to offset the yellow. I think green is the best as it has a natural, safe quality but can be remarkably vibrant also. So we're looking into some kind of green floor cloth or carpet and ways of introducing it as the predominant colour in any other props or furniture. Hope that sounds OK, might sound rather basic and cartoony but I assure you it won't be.

With regard costumes, we're slightly at the mercy of what's in the stock but Pauline the costume lady goes to Portugal every year on her holiday so knows all about Fado! Amarela's dress will be linked to the sofa. The other complexity is finding subtle differences between the men's costumes...

With regard the beginning, should the focus be on Godofredo or the world in general? Given that the prologue introduces Godofredo, perhaps before that we should be establishing the world of Lisbon. Perhaps it would be nice to have the entire cast on stage giving stylised impressions of their characters/going about their daily routines. In the draft, Ed suggests the maid sings a Fado and Lulu sings a waltz. What if all the characters are singing periodically little bits of their part? As the audience enter, they would experience some of the energy of backstage before a show begins...

Then the question would be how does Amarela appear...

The thing I'm still concerned about is rehearsals. Bernard the company manager has told me when singers are available. There are eighteen 3 hour sessions plus 4 stage rehearsals (PD, Sitz, SO and General) at present, six of which are pretty useless because there are only two or three singers available and they're not in the same scene. So 12 useful sessions amounts to a week's

worth of rehearsals. I've told Bernard that really two weeks worth of rehearsal is the minimum I can imagine doing a show on, not to mention a new piece.

Naylor is reluctant to use any overtime but I shall be pushing very hard to reverse this. Any help from you would be good. I'll attach the schedule...

As for the cast, would be interested to hear how Thursday goes. I know some of them too and I think many of them will be good. Think Amarela is going to be a struggle.

I'm doing Erwartung at Snape this week but not rehearsing full on so do try and call if you want.

All the best,  
Freddie

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 30 May 2009 23:49:56 BST  
**To:** Kemp Edward  
**Subject:** THE YELLOW SOFA

Ed,

Here you go. Can you see what you think of the Overture we discussed. PDF attached.

Thanks so much

Julian

Julian Philips

# THE YELLOW SOFA

Music: Julian Philips

Libretto: Edward Kemp

after the novella, *Alves e Cia* (1887)

by Eça de Queirós (1845-1900)

**CAST**

AMARELA - A yellow sofa (low mezzo)  
 GODOFREDO ALES - a small businessman (high baritone)  
 LUDOVINA (LULU) - his wife (soprano)  
 MARGARIDA - their maid (mezzo)  
 MACHADO - Godofredo's business partner (tenor)  
 NETO - Ludovina's father (medium baritone)  
 TERESA - Ludovina's sister (soprano)  
 MEDEIROS - (bass) ) friends of Godofredo  
 CARVALHO - (low baritone) )  
 NUNES VIDAL - Machado's second (tenor)

**ORCHESTRA**

6 violons  
 2 violas  
 2 violoncelli  
 1 double bass

Piano

Guitar  
 Portuguese Guitar

First performed at Glyndebourne Festival Opera on the 20th August 2009, with the Britten Sinfonia conducted by Leo McFall, directed by Freddie Wake-Walker



# I. Overture (mobile I)

on stage: *GODOFREDO, LUDOVINA, MARGARIDA*

off stage: *NUNES*

The *Overture* presents a sequence of domestic harmony - the continuum which this chamber opera interrupts. It should run for approximately 5-6 minutes in duration, while the audience members enter the performance space and find their seats. Detailed instructions follow below, but the *Overture's* overriding quality should be ordinary, uneventful and low key leaving us with the impression that the sequence could go on in this way forever.

## THEATRICAL CONTENT

The comings and goings of *GODOFREDO*, his wife *LUDOVINA* and their maid, *MARGARIDA*. The movement style throughout should be gentle, slow, even listless; nothing should be projected out to the audience - this is the inner world of the opera which the observer is allowed to eavesdrop on.

### Entrances:

*GODOFREDO/LUDOVINA*: each enters the performing space (3 times) when the door motif (3a below) sounds in the lower strings. This motif is heard intermittently throughout but both *GODO/LULU* should pick just three statements to trigger their entrances.

*MARGARIDA*: a more constant presence, she spontaneously weaves her entrances around *GODO* and *LULU*.

### On-stage business:

*GODOFREDO/LUDOVINA*: Each entrance should have been motivated by a minor domestic concern, neither particularly urgent or pressing. If/when both on stage, *LULU* should notice *GODO*, but *GODO* should not notice *LULU*.

For three of *GODOFREDO's* entrances, he is held on stage by the clock chiming. This is triggered spontaneously by the pianist. For two of *LULU's* entrances, she should glide towards the piano, and lean wistfully on the end of it; this triggers the pianist to play a snatch of the waltz tune that is associated with her (see below). Neither the clock chime nor *Lulu's Waltz* can happen simultaneously; they must be events spaced out across the *Overture*.

*MARGARIDA*: is more animated than *GODO/LULU* but no more purposeful. She should definitely, even sulkily, acknowledge both *GODO* and *LULU*; only *LULU* notices her. When on stage, *MARGARIDA* should vocalise freely around the "Once in Lisbon" tune, singing to herself in an absent-minded, random way.

### Exits:

*GODOFREDO/LUDOVINA*: Only exit the stage when the door motif (3b below) sounds, cued by the conductor.

*MARGARIDA*: Comes and goes as she pleases.

All entrances & exits should be casual and ordinary.

## MUSICAL CONTENT

### Constant sounds:

1. CLOCK TICK-TOCK - metronome
2. AMBIENT TWITTERING - 6 violins
3. DOOR MOTIF - lower strings
4. 'ONCE IN LISBON' - vocalised freely, *MARGARIDA*

### Intermittent sounds:

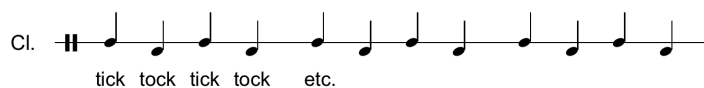
1. CLOCK CHIMES - 3 times, prepared piano
2. STREET CRY - sung 3 times, *NUNES* (off-stage)
3. LULU'S WALTZ - played twice, piano

NB There should always be space between the clock chimes and *LULU's* waltz.

## CONSTANT SOUNDS

### 1. Clock (metronome)

$\text{♩} = 60$



### 2. Ambient twittering (6 violins) - see full score

### 3. Door motif (lower strings, cued by conductor)

Play a) intermittently throughout the overture, always with space between; never close repetitions.  
 Play b) more rarely, to allow either *GODOFREDO* or *LUDOVINA* to exit the stage (conductor to cue).  
 For both a) & b), the speed should vary with each statement, ranging from  $\text{♩} = 40$  to  $\text{♩} = 80$

**a) OPEN**  
*gliss, flautando*


Pno.


**b) CLOSE**  
*gliss, flautando*


#### 4. 'Once in Lisbon' (MARGARIDA)


MARGARIDA should only sing isolated phrases or even fragments, and not the complete melody. The tune can be embellished or even altered ad lib, and sung in any key(s). This vocalisation should simply be one part of her stage presence.


**Sempre molto rubato**


Ma.  Em Lis - bo - a mo - ra - va um fil - ho de nin - guém

Ma.  po - rem re - ce - beu dos pais un no - me pa - ra mu - dar o fa - do

Ma.  Na - da de no - bre na vi - da tin - ha fei - -

Ma.  to\_\_\_\_ fo - ra'o fre - cer a mul - her um so - fá a - ma - re - lo

Ma.  o - fe - re - cer,\_\_\_\_ o - fe - re - cer,\_\_\_\_

Ma.  \_\_\_\_ a mul - her um so - fá a - - ma - re - lo

## INTERMITTENT SOUNDS

1. **Clock chime** (prepared piano) - play 3 times, but *only* when *GODOFREDO* is on stage.

Play this first and third:

$\text{♩} = 60$

*mf* mechanical

Pno.

Play this second:

$\text{♩} = 60$

*mf* mechanical

Pno.

2. **Street cry** (*NUNES*) - sing 3 times, all off-stage

1st time: heard as *p*, in the distance

2nd time: heard as *mf*, nearby

3rd time: heard as *p*, in the distance again

The melody must be sung each time at the pitch level indicated below.

Nun.

Oh pe - dra

### 3. LUDOVINA's Waltz - piano, play twice

This Waltz should *only* be played when *LUDOVINA* leans on the end of the piano; it should always be well separated from the clock chimes.

1st time: play bars 1-13 (with the repeat as required)

2nd time: play bars 13 (upbeat) to the end (plus the Da Capo as required)

**Wistful**  
♩ = c.100-110

Pno.

*pp*

*p dolce*

8<sup>va</sup>

5

5

Λ (sim.)

(8)

7

Pno.

12

(8)

Fine

8<sup>va</sup>

5

rit. . . . . Da capo  
al segno

(8)

17

Pno.

5

^ (sim.)

### ENDING THE OVERTURE

The *Overture* should last for 5-6 minutes; its precise duration will obviously vary from show to show, depending on the audience.

When the time comes to begin, the clock stops ticking; at this signal, all other musical elements stop.

SILENCE

*LUDOVINA* then gets up and winds up the clock.

Once she has wound it, the ***Prologue*** (no 2) begins. . .

**From:** Edward Kemp  
**Date:** 31 May 2009 00:04:54 BST  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Subject: Re: THE YELLOW SOFA**

Well - it makes me smile just reading it  
Well done

E

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 31 May 2009 09:19:35 BST  
**To:** Edward Kemp  
**Subject: Re: THE YELLOW SOFA**

Great!

That leaves two quick questions:

- 1) The Godo "Shut up" line - spoken - which you suggested he just makes a sound (psst!) for. Happy to put that in but feel we need a line just in case that doesn't read clearly against the music. He has to interrupt by speaking over guitars/Amarela/solo viola.
- 2) "The only colour is black" as per phone message. I guess I just wanted to talk through its implications.

Feel free to respond by email. Hope you're having a good weekend. My computer is very hot!

J xx

**From:** Edward Kemp  
**Date:** 31 May 2009 19:05:33 BST  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Subject: Re: THE YELLOW SOFA**

- 1) what's Portuguese for be quiet/ shut up - the equivalent of silenzio?
- 2) need to peruse libretto - but my gut instinct is that it adds rather than detracts - but goda may need to play a small reaction

Will try to call. Next two weeks largely horrible and we may be moving a week on Friday!

E

Edward Kemp

**From:** Edward Kemp  
**Date:** 1 June 2009 22:45:41 BST  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Subject: Re: THE YELLOW SOFA**

This may come too late, but ...

Yes, I think basta has what I was after with shut up, but is more fun

Looking at the Medeiros line in context I think it's OK. I think the fact that it's a duel being fought in Cape Verde deals with any potential racism in the lines as writ - for there to be a duel being fought it has to be a matter of honour (so this black woman must have some status - you wouldn't fight a duel over a slave/servant) and as we're in a Portuguese colony, it explains why there's colour issue at all. Yes, there's misogyny, but that's Medeiros - and I think it's fairly clear that the piece doesn't side with Medeiros' views on women, so why should one expect it to side with his views on anything else?

The casting of Lulu black seems to me simply to add quite an interesting extra layer - I don't think Medeiros is thinking about Lulu at the moment of utterance - he is so utterly obsessed with himself - there is potentially a nice moment after the line has been sung when some combination of M, C and/or G, realise what's been said - but then M moves the story onto the duel itself - perhaps knowing that he wants to get away from a bit of a gaffe . But it seems to me almost to rub in the point that it could really have been any one of these men who had Lulu.

It may, thinking about, require talking through this with singers and Freddie, to ensure that this doesn't feel like it's the point of the piece - the only danger of the casting - but if they can't play a moment like this with some taste and delicacy, then we're going to be in trouble in all sorts of places ...

E  
x



**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 4 June 2009 12:53:56 BST  
**To:** Ian Julier  
**Cc:** martyn.bennett, Katie Tearle  
**Subject:** THE YELLOW SOFA

Dear Ian,

Attached below are the 13 files ready to roll for The Yellow Sofa.

- 1) I'm calling them TYS (title) VS (vocal score) No x (no in opera) v1 (to allow for clarity later if there are any tweaks)
- 2) The font is ARIAL. I don't think Sibelius will automatically default to Times Roman when you open them all, but thought I should alert you just in case. The layout/look depends on the arial font and not times new roman.
- 3) I've pretty much used the Peters Edition guidelines for vocal score margins. I've checked all 13 files over and over again, and they're set correctly but Sibelius has a mind of its own on layout and very often - for no reason - it decides to change the margins. So to clarify:

A4 paper

Staff size 5.6

Page margins: top 15, left 13, right 18, bottom 15

Staff margins: full names 22, short names 24 with the "after first page" box unticked

I'm probably telling the proverbial Granny to suck her eggs, but probably an idea to have the "view page margins" switched on so that no crucial information disappears outside the printing area.

4) To come:

- a) Nightmare (yes it is!) - tutti
- b) Finale 1- Godofredo, Nunes, Carvalho, Medeiros
- c) Finale 2 - Godofredo, Ludovina, Amarela (plus a tiny bit of chorus for everyone else)
- d) Epilogue - Amarela

You now have the bulk of it and I'm trying to polish off the four numbers above asap. Important to say that it's pretty much recapitulatory so no horrible surprises to come. However, Nunes has a little bit of solo stuff as apart from choral bits, he hasn't had much yet. I know Adrian Ward (Nunes) was anxious about work load so he probably should now that he's a short 2.5 minute scene left to come (Finale 1).

I think that's it. Do call if there are any questions. I'm sure there will be!

All the best

Julian

**From:** Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Date:** 5 June 2009 03:09:00 BST  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Subject:** YS

Hi Julian, How are you getting on? Has the Yellow Sofa emerged?

Look forward to hearing from you.

All the best,  
Freddie

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 10 June 2009 14:25:15 BST  
**To:** Ian Julier  
**Subject:** Final bit of The Yellow Sofa

Ian,

Hope all is well. You must be almost rid of Fairy Queen so that'll be a relief.

I reckon the last instalment should be end of Monday, assuming I have a not too bad weekend of work. Am on the very last scene.

Hope that's ok and that there haven't been any teething problems in the meantime.

Will be in touch.

All the best

Julian

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 22 June 2009 01:53:15 BST  
**To:** Ian Julier  
**Cc:** martyn Bennett, James Halliday  
**Subject:** rest of Yellow Sofa - Sibelius files

Julian Philips

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 23 June 2009 10:53:44 BST  
**To:** Kemp Edward  
**Cc:** Edward Kemp  
**Subject:** The Yellow Sofa - Complete!

Ed,

Here it is! I've asked them to send you a complete vocal score but in the meantime, I thought you'd like to see this.

For the record, your libretto is the most brilliant thing I've worked on yet. I can't begin to tell you fantastic it is - how subtle, intriguing, theatrical and unbelievably liberating in its suggestive concision. You have this unique gift to set up theatrical-textual structures that release and inspire music. Simply amazing, really.

I hope you'll be pleased and hope more, that you might feel like working on something else in the future. I'd hate to think this was a one off!

Anyway, speak soon

J xxx

Julian Philips

**From:** Edward Kemp  
**Date:** 24 June 2009 08:51:26 BST  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Subject: Re: The Yellow Sofa - Complete!**

Julian

It looks terrific - well done! I can't wait to hear it. Proper return of compliments will need to wait till then (my score reading's not up to it) - but I'll say for now I've never known my words look so happy in a score, nor felt that both the shape of the vocal lines and the use of repetition and fragmentation made so much sense - all of which confirms that for me this has been a terrific collaboration - and the first with a 'serious' composer with a natural sense of theatre. Yes - let's find something else to do - and in the meantime can we try to get the ENO/young vic chaps along - it surely deserves a handful of early eves in Sussex  
Speak soon  
E

Edward Kemp

**From:** Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Date:** 30 June 2009 08:34:50 BST  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Subject: Re: Apologies**

Julian, Apologies from me for not responding sooner. The piece looks really great and I'm so excited about getting stuck into it. I just hope we can do it justice with our paltry resources...

When are you going to be around? Are there music rehearsals the week before I get going?

My only question dramatically is that there doesn't seem to be much time for them to wind the clock. I imagined that they were winding it while singing but at fig 151 she still hasn't come home...

But I'm looking forward to seeing you soon and bringing the Yellow Sofa alive!

All the best,  
Freddie

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 13 July 2009 15:16:31 BST

**To:** Ian Julier  
**Cc:** Martyn Bennett, James Halliday  
**Subject:** The Yellow Sofa Full Score

Ian,

Here's the whole thing bar one number (no 14) which I need to tweak with and send later. There's some gremlin in the file and it seems to be corrupted so I've to fiddle with it.

For now I'm attaching PDFs and then in another email the Sibelius files.

A few thoughts and do forgive the slightly bossy tone below - I'm a bit frazzled!

- 1) The Violins are organised as Vlns 1-3 and Vlns 4-6: in effect their vlns 1 and 2 but with numerical subdivisions. Please don't make up six violin parts - it will all work fine if you just extract all the music for Vlns 1-3 in one part and all the music for violins 4-6 in another. This will make sense when you see how I've done it.
- 2) Watch out for some hidden objects in the violins (esp. surrounding artificial harmonics). You can delete those if you like or just leave them alone but just be careful errors don't creep in on account of them.
- 3) For your info, the Portuguese guitar is written at sounding pitch so the part should look exactly the same as the line in the full score. Obviously the classical guitar sounds an octave lower but again, that's all sorted in the score.
- 4) When there are free bars or funny layout moments, can you try and preserve the spacing in the part. It's nice if an ad lib bar looks like it's duration - ie 9 seconds of ad lib stuff is quite a long time, so you can give it lots of space in the parts.
- 5) Cueing. Obviously as much as you've time for. I guess it's especially important in any soloistic moments when players could do with seeing a vocal stave. Also in the numbers for just guitars/bass and voice I think a vocal line will make things much easier.
- 6) For the mobiles, you just need to extract the relevant bits of music for the relevant players. I don't think they need the big sets of instructions, just the instructions that surround any individual player's role at any given point.
- 7) Can you keep an eye on attacas. All of the scenes run without a break and as it's small forces, it would be nice to avoid losing people for important moments because of a page turn. Think of the piece as chamber music rather than orchestral.

That'll do for now. Thanks for all your help. I will send through no 14 by tues am first thing at the latest. I've run out of brain power to sort it!

J

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 12 July 2009 10:31:25 BST  
**To:** Leo Mcfall, Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Cc:** Kemp Edward  
**Subject:** **The Yellow Sofa**

Dear both,

Hope all is well. Just checking in with both of you for the coming weeks.

This week coming - the music calls week - is the only one I'm not about for. It's the only week I could have off pretty much this year and anyway, as it's a kind of get-to-know-the-music week, from experience it's often better if I'm not the elephant in the room!

From then on, I'm around for as much as you need me, so I'll come along for the first week of rehearsals and then you should feel free to tell me how much you'd like me about. I'm very good at keeping out of the way, so I won't make a composer-pest of myself.

Leo - very happy to have a chat about the score over this weekend. Is there a number I can reach you on? Failing that, I'm back in the UK on the 17th July and we could fix up a time to meet.

Full score - is pretty much done and will be with the library tomorrow. I know they were going to make full score copies as a first priority.

Thanks a lot

Julian

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 12 July 2009 12:26:09 BST  
**To:** Edward Kemp , Edward Kemp  
**Subject:** Winding up the clock

Ed

Hello there. Hope all is well. Have you moved yet? Looking forward to seeing you in the coming month.

Freddie has raised an interesting issue re: the final duet. He's concerned that I haven't made any differentiation between when L is singing about winding up the clock versus when she's actually doing it. So as she's only singing about it I guess he's concerned directorially about how/when/if he gets her to do it.

To be honest the why's and wherefores about how they get home and when she does it didn't interest me. What did interest me was the fragility of their emotions, their vulnerabilities if you like and how the clock metaphor neatly represents this.

In a cinematic way, I was imagining that past and present happen at once. She sings to him about doing it "should I?" while it's actually happening. The time compression seems required musically but also theatrically - we don't want to clutter the piece just as it's broadening out into the deep emotions that lie underneath.

However it's a bit more complicated than that as I've chosen to repeat and extend out Ludovina's crucial line as a way of holding the musico-dramatic structure together. So what she actually sings across the shape is:

Shall I?  
Shall I come?  
Shall I come home?  
Shall I come home and show you?

The great thing about your text is that in a way analogous to poetry, a little of it goes a long way and I love the  
Play of ambiguities and meanings that surround this line.

But could you have a look and see what you think? I don't really feel like changing anything but if we all think this corner won't read clearly we could revisit the lines above and perhaps tweak the text so as to chart the move from present to future - shall to will to have or some such.

What do you think?

**From:** Edward Kemp  
**Date:** 14 July 2009 22:15:52 BST  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Subject:** Re: Winding up the clock

Sorry for silence - yes we've moved but having a prolonged battle with various phone and ISP companies - so email can only be reliably achieved on my phone which is tiresome

I think whether one needs the moment acted out depends how clear the clock tick appears in the music and how clearly its presence or absence reads. I agree with you it would be nice to achieve without the action - but simply at the moment when she decides to come home everything shifts gear musically

Truthfully it's a tricky one to discuss without music and singers and the only absolute is that the audience must be able to read that she did in fact go home and wind the clock

There's a rhythmic pattern here between intro and this part and that may both be a clue but also it would be nice if that parallel was made Helpful? see you next week - probably Friday

E

Edward Kemp

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 14 July 2009 12:05:43 BST  
**To:** Ian Julier  
**Cc:** Martyn Bennett, James Halliday  
**Subject:** Last file for Yellow Sofa

Dear Ian,

Here's a Sibelius file for no 14. I will send the PDF in a separate email as smaller emails seem to go quicker here.

Many thanks

Julian



**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 14 July 2009 12:22:09 BST  
**To:** Ian Julier  
**Cc:** Martyn Bennett, James Halliday  
**Subject:** Quick point about no 14

Me again,

Just to say, from fig 117 in no 14 there are in effect two tempi/barlines. The faster tempo for the three singers and guitar is expressed with fake barlines in Sibelius, which I've just ruled in as lines. The faster tempo is three times the slower speed.

This only effects the guitar part but it might be better to express that in the part re-written out in 4/4. Obviously it effects the bar numbers, but as the guitarist is offstage for this number that won't might too much.

Does that make sense?

J

**From:** Ian Julier  
**Date:** 14 July 2009 15:58:32 BST  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Cc:** Martyn Bennett, James Halliday  
**Subject:** RE: Quick point about no 14

Hello Julian,

Many thanks. We've got it all now and copies of the full score are winging their way to various interested parties as I mail you, including the two guitarists.

A couple of things – where is best to send you your copy and would you please enlighten me about the precise nature of the 'prepared' piano? I hadn't realized this was on the agenda and people will want to know what's involved.

Congratulations on reaching the final double bar – or are you contemplating 'Yet Another Finale'? Sorry – couldn't resist that.

I presume you're comfortable for Martyn and James to be in direct contact with you regarding the production of the parts? It's a big and rather complex task and I've already warned the Britten Sinfonia we'll be going up to the wire on completion.

Best, Ian

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 14 July 2009 17:59:51 BST  
**To:** Ian Julier  
**Subject:** Re: Quick point about no 14

Ian

Thank god I got there. And yes, I'm sure there will be many many jokes about "and yet another finale" but it seemed a useful device for pointing up the tragic-comic feel of the thing.

Yes - Martyn and James should be in touch direct

Score - don't send it. Will collect next week

Prepared piano - don't panic. It's nothing major. I just need some piano friendly insert which can be put into the piano at a few points to slightly distort the upper octave. I realise there will be a protocol for this which I thought I'd discuss with you when I'm down. At most it might be a light bit of metal that will cause no damage to the instrument. I'm talking to Guildhall's piano technician to make sure what the 100% safe options are. Obviously I'm aware that this will need formal approval from the powers that be your end.

Wish Matyn and James good luck; I know from bitter hours of experience what an immense task it is.

All the best

Julian

**From:** Frederic Wake-Walker  
**Date:** 16 July 2009 19:51:19 BST  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Subject:** Re: The Yellow Sofa

Julian, I'm going into Glyndebourne tomorrow to talk props, etc. so let's talk first thing tomorrow. If not, Saturday afternoon.

Rehearsal schedule for next week is:

Mon am - Leo might have a session with Bredin, Hendrick, Llewelyn  
Wed am - I was going to have an initial session with Bredin and Hendrick  
Thurs am - First tutti (ex Webb) talk through, sing through, intro, etc.  
Fri am - half session with Llewelyn  
Fri pm - Tutti start on some of the big scenes  
Sat am - session with Bredin

Obviously the two tutti scenes will be important but it would also be good for you to be around for the Fado stuff with Bredin.

Look forward to speaking. My mobile again is

Best,  
Freddie

**From:** Julian Philips  
**Date:** 17 July 2009 10:03:21 BST  
**To:** Ian Julier  
Martyn Bennett, Halliday James  
**Subject:** How's it going

Dear all

I hope it's not making everybody's life a misery!!! Anyway, do email any questions etc. I'm hoping that no news is good news.

Just thought of one thing. The Britten Sinfonia will all need practice mutes. Not the ordinary con sordino mutes, but practice mutes that make the sound almost inaudible. Just think they might need a heads up on that.

Anyway, let me know any questions/issues. I'll be around wens-fri next week.

All the best

Julian

**From:** Ian Julier  
**Date:** 17 July 2009 10:26:09 BST  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Cc:** Martyn Bennett, James Halliday  
**Subject:** RE: How's it going

Hello Julian,

All's fine – definitely not misery!

Full scores have been sent to all relevant folks, including the two guitarists – although one of them is in the process of moving, which adds a little wrinkle to things, but we'll sort it.

Martyn and James are both working on the parts – strings first and then guitars. There's an overlap at present covering Tristan orchestral rehearsals in London as well operating the supertitles for stage rehearsals of Elisir and Tristan, so there's only one of them here each day right now, but thereafter they will both focus on The Yellow Sofa while I carry on with what Vladimir needs on Tristan.

So, don't be concerned by any silences – it IS happening, we will get there and Martyn or James will call you if anything requires it for the parts, as indeed will I regarding anything else.

Best,  
Ian

**From:** Jane Williams  
**Sent:** 14 August 2009 11:34  
**To:** Katie Tearle  
**Subject:** Steve Smith guitar

Hello KatieSteve Smith's tel no is:  
Otherwise Antonis Hatzinikolaou is on the NMC Songbook CD, I don't have  
contact details but Hannah at NMC will have

Very good luck!  
xjane

Jane Williams  
Head of Artistic Planning / London Sinfonietta

**From:** Katie Tearle  
**Date:** 14 August 2009 16:00:55 BST  
**To:** Steve Smith  
**Cc:** Julian Philips  
**Subject:** **The Yellow Sofa**

Dear Steve,

Good to talk to you a minute ago! It would be great if you could arrange things  
to be part of The Yellow Sofa at Glyndebourne.

See below for a link to the part. The complication is that it was written for  
Portuguese guitar which obviously has a much higher range than the classical  
guitar - the Portuguese guitar is written at sounding pitch and not an octave  
higher. So a good deal of this part would in effect be down the octave. I'm going  
through the part now to find solutions but if you were up to the challenge there'd  
be a bit of cooking to do

Dates – all at Glyndebourne

Tomorrow (!) - stage/orchestra 10.30-13.30 (train from Victoria to Lewes  
around 8.45am then minibus from the front of the station upto Glyndebourne)

Monday - dress rehearsal 10-2

Performances: 20th, 23rd, 25th, 28th August in the afternoons (starting times  
vary between 3.30-4.30)

The piece last about an hour and 7 and the other players include Britten  
Sinfonia, Joao Loureiro (guitar) and Gareth Hancock (piano).

Both Julian Philips and Joao would be available on sunday and could work with

you on the part if that's helpful...

But do talk to him this evening, he's busy talking about the piece on In Tune from about 4.30pm – 6.00pm. His mobile number is

My mobile is

With very best wishes and hoping you can do it!

Katie

**From:** STEVE SMITH GUITARIST

**Sent:** 14 August 2009 16:33

**To:** Katie Tearle

**Subject:** RE: The Yellow Sofa

Hi Katie,

Thanks for this happy to talk about things!

Now I've had a look at the part I'd be very excited to get involved, albeit a terrific challenge at this point!

The part is obviously quite soloistic and idiomatic.

In fact the part really would have to be re-worked if it were to be played on the classical Spanish guitar as the tuning is totally different to the Portuguese guitar.

SO it remains to be decided whether to redo the part for Spanish or try to hold out for the Portuguese (obviously the preferred option)

No doubt when I speak to Julian later we can decide on which course would be best to take.

Could you in the meantime to help clarify, what the fee might be for this. Knowing would also help to mitigate for having to do a bit of juggling in other parts!

Hope we can make it work.

All best,

Steve

**From:** Katie Tearle  
**Date:** 14 August 2009 16:35:43 BST  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Subject:** FW: The Yellow Sofa

Can we get hold of a Portuguese guitar? I will find out about the fee and let him know, and maybe you can talk to him later. His mobile number is

Katie xx

**From:** Katie Tearle  
**Date:** 21 August 2009 12:20:37 BST  
**To:** Julian Philips, Edward Kemp

I think it is a small, perfectly formed masterpiece.  
Kx

**From:** Edward Kemp  
**Date:** 30 August 2009 22:01:47 BST  
**To:** Julian Philips  
**Subject:** Yellow Sofa

really sorry to miss Friday - I hope you got my message I was thinking of you all. Would really love to hear how it developed over the run. My friend, the composer Terry Davies, really enjoyed it.

Been thinking about how we ensure it has a future and I wonder whether through Katie we could be proactive in suggesting some pieces that might sit alongside it. My sense is that it will need to be something that appears audience-friendly (which the Yellow Sofa clearly is, but they won't know that until they hear it) - but which won't overpower ours. Some thoughts so far are Bernstein's Trouble in Tahiti, Heure Espagnole (which is almost too good a fit) and Granados' Goyescas. My guess is that it needs a reduced score - or something written for a chamber ensemble. Is there something by Purcell - Dido aside - or maybe that's a good idea. Anyway, I'm rambling. Any thoughts??

Hope all's well with you - and once again, it's been a fabulous collaboration and would love to see it, and our collaboration, have a future life.

Ed:

**APPENDIX FOURTEEN: *KNIGHT CREW* - A timeline, 2006-2010**

| <b>Date</b>        | <b>Where/What</b>                    | <b>Who</b>  | <b>What</b>   |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| Autumn 2006        | Glyndebourne Festival Opera          | Julian Philips, Nicky Singer, John Fulljames  | Pitch submitted for youth opera commission, 2010                        |
| Spring 2007        | Glyndebourne Festival Opera          | David Pickard   | Commission confirmed  |
| 13th July 2007     | Glyndebourne Festival Opera          | Julian Philips, Nicky Singer, John Fulljames, David Pickard, Katie Tearle & Glyndebourne Education Team | Detailed planning meeting   |
| 2007 onwards       | Email & London                       | Julian Philips, Nicky Singer, John Fulljames  | Detailed libretto work, regular email contact and meetings at Young Vic |
| 3rd December 2007  | Glyndebourne Festival Opera          | Julian Philips, Nicky Singer, John Fulljames, Katie Tearle & Glyndebourne Education Team                | Detailed planning meeting   |
| 1st March 2008     | The Vestry, The Union Chapel, London | Julian Philips, Nicky Singer, John Fulljames, Katie Tearle  | Creative Meeting  |
| 7th July 2008      | Drill Hall                           | Julian Philips, Nicky Singers, John Fulljames + singers   | Creative development day  |
| 25th Septmber 2008 | Jerwood Space                        | Julian Philips, Nicky Singer, Katie Tearle, David Pickard   | Planning meeting  |
| 27th March 2009    | Guildhall School of Music and Drama  | Julian Philips, Nicky Singer, John Fulljames, Katie Tearle, David Pickard,                              | Play through of excerpts from Act One                                   |



**APPENDIX FOURTEEN: KNIGHT CREW - A timeline, 2006-2010**

|                                    |                                     |   |   |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| 9th September 2009                 | East Sussex area                    | Gareth Malone, Karen Gillingham   | Open Workshops begin, running through to the 9th October 2009 450 young people attend |
| 8th, 9th, 21st & 23rd October 2009 | East Sussex area                    | Gareth Malone, Karen Gillingham   | Skills Workshops: 169 invited, 152 attended, 101 invited to audition                  |
| 21st, 27th & 28th October 2009     | East Sussex area                    | Gareth Malone, Karen Gillingham   | Auditions: 101 young people   |
| 9th November 2009                  | Rehearsal Studio, Glyndebourne      | Julian Philips, Nicky Singer, John Fulljames, Katie Tearle, Gareth Malone | Play through of excerpts from Act One   |
| Nov-09                             | Glyndebourne Festival Opera         | Julian Philips  | Delivery of Act One Vocal Score   |
| 22nd December 2010                 | Guildhall School of Music and Drama | Julian Philips, John Fulljames, Nick Collon, Katie Tearle                 | Play through of Act Two   |
| Jan-10                             | Glyndebourne Festival Opera         | Julian Philips  | Delivery of Act Two Vocal Score   |
| 11th January 2010                  | Glyndebourne Festival Opera         | Chorus  | Week 1: Chorus rehearsals   |
| 18th January 2010                  | Glyndebourne Festival Opera         | Full company  | Week 2: Full production rehearsals  |

**APPENDIX FOURTEEN: KNIGHT CREW - A timeline, 2006-2010**

|                    |                                      |                       |  |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 25th January 2010  | Glyndebourne Festival Opera          | Full company          | Week 3: Full production rehearsals               |
| 1st February 2010  | Glyndebourne Festival Opera          | Full company          | Week 4: Full production rehearsals               |
| 8th February 2010  | Glyndebourne Festival Opera          | Full company          | Week 5: Full production rehearsals               |
| 14th February 2010 | Blatchington Mill School             | Knight Crew Orchestra | Full orchestral rehearsal                        |
| 15th February 2010 | Glyndebourne Festival Opera          | Full company          | Week 6 of rehearsals                             |
| 21st February 2010 | The Pit, Glyndebourne Festival Opera | Knight Crew Orchestra | Full orchestral rehearsal                        |
| 22nd February 2010 | Main stage, Glyndebourne             | Full company          | Stage and piano rehearsal                        |
| 23rd February 2010 | Main stage, Glyndebourne             | Full company          | Stage and piano rehearsal                        |
| 24th February 2010 | Main stage, Glyndebourne             | Full company          | Stage and piano rehearsal      Evening Sixtprobe |
| 25th February      | Main stage, Glyndebourne             | Full company          | Stage and piano rehearsal                        |

**APPENDIX FOURTEEN: KNIGHT CREW - A timeline, 2006-2010**

|                    |                          |              |                                   |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| 26th February 2010 | Main stage, Glyndebourne | Full company | Piano Dress                       |
| 27th February 2010 | Main stage, Glyndebourne | Full company | Stage and Orchestra               |
| 1st March 2010     | Main stage, Glyndebourne | Full company | Stage and Orchestra               |
| 2nd March 2010     | Main stage, Glyndebourne | Full company | Final rehearsal (dress rehearsal) |
| 3rd March 2010     | Main stage, Glyndebourne | Full company | Schools' Matinée                  |
| 4th March 2010     | Main stage, Glyndebourne | Full company | Knight Crew Performance 1         |
| 5th March 2010     | Main stage, Glyndebourne | Full company | Knight Crew Performance 2         |
| 6th March 2010     | Main stage, Glyndebourne | Full company | 1                                 |

## **APPENDIX FIFTEEN: Discrepancies between scores and recordings**

### ***FOLLOWERS, THE YELLOW SOFA***

The supporting DVD material offers archive recordings of Glyndebourne performances in the period this composer residency (2006-9). The August 2011 DVD recording of *Followers* is also submitted, shot with one camera at the final dress rehearsal. While inevitably, some corners of both piece go a little astray in performance, none the less in principle, the recordings match the submitted scores.

### ***KNIGHT CREW***

In the case of *Knight Crew*, some minor revisions were actioned during the rehearsals and performances in March 2010, either as a consequence of the need to ensure the musical material was viable for the young players participating or as a result of issues around clarity or audibility of text. These changes are not accounted for in the score, and the main discrepancies are detailed below. They relate predominantly to Act 1:

#### **Act One**

Much of the brake drum material is omitted as its high volume caused difficulties for the wind players.

1. Prologue, bars 46 and 48: trumpet 3 material omitted.
2. Scene 1, bars 246-272: some of trumpet 1 & 2 patterns omitted.
3. Scene 2: some of the guitar chords revoiced; bar 110: the trumpet 2 lower octave is omitted.
4. Scene 3, bars 315 & 317: trumpet 1 is an octave lower.
5. Scene 11, bar 1: the grace note chord is omitted in the violin 1 part; bar 9-11: horn 2 & 4 material is omitted; bar 95-6 trumpets 3-4 omitted.
6. Scene 12, bar 131: the tuba material is played by the first trombone.

#### **Act Two**

Minor changes relate chiefly to the finessing of dynamics, particularly in the brass.

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