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Healing Music and its Literary Representation in the Early Modern Period

Barbara Cecily Kennedy

Submitted for the qualification of Doctor of Philosophy
in English Literature

University of Sussex

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WORK NOT SUBMITTED ELSEWHERE FOR EXAMINATION

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

Signature.....

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This is in memory of my parents.

University of Sussex

Barbara Cecily Kennedy

Submitted for the examination for Doctor of Philosophy

Healing Music and its Literary Representation in the Early Modern Period

Summary

This interdisciplinary thesis explores how music is used in the art of healing in two distinct ways in the early modern period: namely, through the use of performed music accompanying the healing process itself, and as ‘speculative music’, the latter providing a philosophical model for understanding the interplay of music with body, mind and soul. Redefining an existing enquiry in a specific way, my research seeks to enhance an understanding of the construction of a therapeutic modality that revitalizes the ancient belief in the healing powers of music, manifest since antiquity through the classical legends of Orpheus and Pythagoras. The Pythagorean hypothesis – that earthly music reflected the celestial harmony of the spheres – was believed to govern the internal music of the human body, giving credence to the notion of the harmonious balancing of the four bodily humours.

Tracing the tradition of healing music from antiquity, I argue that Marsilio Ficino’s paradigmatic magico-musical philosophy refashions the Pythagorean and Neoplatonic explanations of music’s curative potentiality, offering a new interpretation of music’s effective power to heal the rift between body and soul. I examine how this Ficinian interpretation is discernible in the work of Robert Fludd, Michael Maier, William Shakespeare, Robert Burton and Thomas Campion. I analyse their observations of the body’s physical and emotional response to music’s healing power. Drawing on early modern models that appropriate the rhetoric of the music of the spheres, I argue that a cultural moment is established in which the motifs and tropes of Neoplatonic love and the healing power of music culminate in allegories of philosophical contemplation and spiritual fulfilment in the Jacobean court masques.

In conclusion, my thesis’s examination of music as a healing modality provides a historical framework to support the contemporary use of music as a recognized therapeutic intervention.

Notes on the text and abbreviations

The Early English Books online texts cited were all accessed through the University of Sussex Library Website. The Unique Resource Locator for all is identical, apart from the individual EEBO citation number, and for the sake of brevity I have simply cited this number in the footnotes. The full address is:

http://gateway.proquest.com/exproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx-ver+Z39.88-203&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation

I have retained the original spellings from primary texts as far as possible, including unmodified i/j and u/v spellings, with the exception of the long 's', and have expanded contractions where necessary.

Dates are given New Style (i.e. with each year assumed to begin on 1st January rather than 25th March).

All online journal articles cited were accessed through the University of Sussex Library website. I have cited the database on which they are held, the URL (unique resource locator) or DOI (digital object identifier), and the date accessed.

STC refers to the Short Title Catalogue

Wing refers to the Wing Catalogue

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INTRODUCTION

‘Music was given to us by God to subdue the body, temper the mind and render Him praise’.¹

Music is used in the art of healing in two distinct ways. As performed music it accompanies the healing process itself, and as ‘speculative music’ it provides a philosophical model for understanding the interplay of music with the body, mind and soul.² As Gioseffo Zarlino asks, ‘If the doctor does not understand music how will he mix in due proportion hot things with cold, according to their states? And how will he understand perfectly people’s pulses which the wisest Herophilus orders according to musical proportions?’³

The widespread belief in the efficacy of music therapy in the early modern period forms the central proposition that shapes this study, for it is a distinct cultural moment that is significant in terms of the crystallization of harmony. The duality inherent in music’s nature, conveyed as the ordered production of sound, and expressed as a powerful numerical art employed like natural magic is grounded in the early modern conception of cosmic harmony.⁴

¹ Marsilio Ficino, Letter 92, vol. 1, p. 143, ‘On Music’ to Antonio Canigiani, *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*, trans. Language Department, School of Economic Science, 8 vols.(London: Shephard-Walwyn Publishers, 1975-). All references to the *Letters* are to these editions.

² Penelope Gouk, ‘Music, Melancholy, and Medical Spirits in Early Modern Thought’, in Peregrine Horden (ed.) *Music as Medicine: The History of Music Therapy since Antiquity* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2000), p. 173.

³ Gioseffo Zarlino, ‘On the Praises of Music’, Book 1 from *Istitutioni harmoniche* in Leo Treitler (ed.) Strunk’s *Source Readings in Music History* (New York and London: W.W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), p. 296. All citations are to this edition.

⁴ Linda Phyllis Austern, “‘Art to Enchant’: Musical Magic and Its Practitioners in English Renaissance Drama,’ *Journal of the Royal Music Association*, Vol.115, No. 2 (1990), pp. 191-206, p. 191.

The essence of the belief in cosmic harmony was wholeness, governed by the laws of nature often depicted as stringed instruments with their Apollonian associations symbolizing reason and order. Thus the rhetoric of cosmic harmony encompassing a spiritual and political theory of order was defined through the Great Chain of Being. This metaphor – used to describe the unity of God’s creation of an ordered universe – was imagined as a fixed hierarchy extending from God to the meanest of inanimate objects.⁵ Discord in man and his society resulted from the failure to sustain a proper order, as each planet had its own orbit, so each man had his due position in the chain that unites all creation.⁶

As part of this hierarchical order, celestial harmony was equated to health because the world was part of an ordered and harmonic cosmos. This belief was reflected in Galenic medicine where the four humours – phlegm, choler, blood and black bile – while subject to the influences of the four elements and the planets, also denoted certain emotional characteristics. The internal music of the human body – *musica humana* – represented the relationship between the body and soul, mimicking the cosmic music and giving rise to the notion of ‘temperament’ – the harmonious or inharmonious ‘tuning’ of the four humours.

Early modern medicine thought that the soul, as both spirit (*anima*) and a physical substance, dispersed throughout the body in the form of vital spirits. John Case, in his *Apologia Musices* (1588), argues that the spirits – ‘the instruments of sensation and motion’ – fly into ‘the several regions of the body’ when they hear music and, retaining ‘the same movement they received from the mind’, in ‘an instant convey it into the fibers and several

⁵ E.M.W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, Reissue in Pelican Books, 1972), p. 33.

⁶ Tillyard argues that Shakespeare placed man in the traditional cosmic setting between the angels and beasts, *The Elizabethan World Picture*, p. 11.

parts of the body.’⁷ This echoes an earlier defence in *The Praise of Musicke* (1586) where the author suggests that music exacerbates the predisposed condition within ourselves: ‘The same musicke’, Case writes, ‘which mollifieth some men, moueth some other nothing at all: so that the fault is not in musicke, which of it selfe is good: but in the corrupt nature, & euil disposition of light persons, which of themselues are prone to wantonnes’.⁸ Thus music was considered to have the power to excite the passions as sound was believed to have a more direct access to the internal spirits. It has been argued that since music primarily belonged to the air, the printed score served no other purpose than to guide the performers on how to hear and adapt their bodies to produce the required sounds.⁹ Indeed, the way the voice was shaped and sounded was considered to be determined by the four humours.¹⁰

Man, like the heavens, was conceived as a stringed instrument and therefore subject to spiritual and medical harmonious tuning, an idea that is encapsulated on the title-page of Robert Fludd’s *Utriusque Cosmi, Maioris scilicet et Minoris, metaphysica, physica, atque technica historia* (1617-1621), a text which depicts man, perfectly proportioned in equilibrium or harmony with nature.¹¹ Thus the overall balance of the humours was held to

⁷ John Case, *Apologia Musices tam Vocalis Quam Instrumentalis et Mixtae* (1588), (ed.) and trans. Dana Sutton, The University of California, Irvine, <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/music.trans.html>. Posted 07 July, 2003, Last modified 29 October 2003, p.35 of 41, [accessed 07.11.2011](#). All citations are to this edition.

⁸ Anon (?John Case), (1586) *The praise of musicke*, Oxford. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.proxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 99850231, [accessed 07 November 2011](#), p. 58. While eebo attributes this work to John Case, recent scholarship debates this attribution, for example, Dana Sutton, ‘Introduction’, <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/music3/intro.html>, p. 1 of 17, [accessed 08.11.2011](#).

⁹ Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 112.

¹⁰ Smith, *The Acoustic World*, pp. 99-100.

¹¹ This exposition of the metaphysics of the microcosm was published in Oppenheim by Johann Theodore de Bry, in five parts from 1617-1621 and will be referred to in the text in the abbreviated form, *Utriusque Cosmi Historia*.

be responsible for the psychological as well as physical wellbeing of each individual.¹² The ideal person combined all the humors in a harmonious balance, a concept that has resonances in the modern understanding of physiological homeostasis – the maintenance of a stable equilibrium.¹³ Implicit in this belief is the view that music could potentially prolong life since the body worked in harmony under the influence of good music.¹⁴ Music was seen as the key to harmonizing the contradictory aspects of the personality; able to manipulate human behavior and forming an important aspect of the cosmological scheme.¹⁵

How hearing or listening to music impacts on the senses, and by implication the body, is an ongoing question of enquiry in this era. Philosophers, musicians, theologians, physicians and writers wrestled with the ambivalent nature of music: the euphonic mathematics – based on the ratios and proportions of musical intervals – that were believed to replicate the harmony and beauty of the cosmic order, versus the potentially powerful sensual and physiological effects the musical experience could offer. The resonances of the power of music, and how it elicits an emotional response were a matter of concern for many early modern authors who had inherited from the ancient world the concept of music's ethical power to affect the soul and the harmony of the cosmos.¹⁶

Contemporaneous philosophical, medical and literary texts endeavoured to describe and prescribe the affective power of music. The aim of this study is to explore healing music

¹² Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 106.

¹³ Homeostasis is defined as the relatively stable state of equilibrium or a tendency towards such a state between the different but interdependent elements or groups of elements of an organism, population or group. Arthur C. Guyton, *Human Physiology and Mechanisms of Disease*, 4th edition (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Company, 1987), p. 3.

¹⁴ Christopher Marsh, *Music and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 65.

¹⁵ Catherine M. Dunn, 'The Function of Music in Shakespeare's Romances', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (Autumn, 1969), pp. 391-405, p. 392.

¹⁶ Gary Tomlinson, *Music in Renaissance Magic* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press 1993), p. 67.

and its literary representation in the early modern period. I achieve this objective through the examination of selected medical and philosophical texts from the fifteenth to the early seventeenth century. In addition it analyses the dramatization of the ideas about the nature of music as an effective emotional and physical experience.

As this thesis will demonstrate, the relationship between music and healing is neither a peripheral nor an isolated belief, but one that is foregrounded in canonical early modern texts: Francis Bacon writing that ‘the composition of man’s body hath made it an instrument easy to distemper’, extends this image of the ‘musical body’ to argue that ‘the poets did well to conjoin Music and Medicine in Apollo: because the office of medicine is but to tune this curious harp of man’s body and to reduce it to harmony’.¹⁷ Likewise, Edmund Spenser negotiates musical healing in the *Faerie Queene*. A most ‘heavenly melody’ he writes, is played ‘all the while’ and ‘about the bed’ during the treatment of Redcrosse’s wounds, for the ‘sweet musicke did diuide, /Him to beguile of grieve and agony’.¹⁸ This example of music accompanying the curative process acts as a catalyst for Spenser’s metaphysical employment of speculative music which accompanies the marriage of Redcrosse and Una at the end of Book One. The music, which ‘no creature’ knows from ‘whence that heuently sweet proceeded’, symbolizes the moral and spiritual harmony of the union, reflecting the harmony between God and man.¹⁹ Man’s redemption, Spenser suggests, is closely affiliated to the divine music, the music of the spheres, for it makes

¹⁷ Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* in (ed.) John M. Robertson, *The Philosophical Works of Francis Bacon*. Reprinted from the texts and translations, with the notes and prefaces, of Ellis and Spedding (London: George Routledge and Sons Limited, 1905), p. 104. All citations are to this edition.

¹⁸ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Book 1, Canto 5, Stanza 17, Lines 6-8, A.C. Hamilton (ed.), Hiroshi Yamashita and Toshiyuki Suzuki (Text eds.) 2nd edition (Harlow and London: Longman, An imprint of Pearson Education Limited, 2001). All citations are to this edition.

¹⁹ Robin Headlam Wells, *Elizabethan Mythologies: Studies in Poetry, Drama and Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 29; Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Book 1, Canto 12. Stanza 39, p.154.

‘each one’ inwardly ‘reft of his senses meet, /And rauished with rare impression in his sprite’.²⁰

The early modern certainty in music’s therapeutic properties is discernable not only in philosophical literature and canonical poetry but is also evident in commonplace texts.

Dionys Fitzherbert, for example, documenting the spiritual and mental crises she suffered, writes in her autobiographical narrative how, ‘my brother when we came to our inn sent for music, and whatsoever he could devise to cause me to show some cheerfulness’.²¹

This episode from Fitzherbert’s manuscript attests to the early modern belief in the use of music to alleviate melancholy. In the *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) Robert Burton writes that music has the power to ‘revive the languishing soul, affecting not only the ears, but the very arteries, the vital and animal spirits’.²² The harmony or regularity of music, Burton suggests, alleviates dissonance or imbalance of the body or mind, for as a non-verbal mode of emotional expression, music can potentially exercise a beneficial influence on the listener.

The relationship between music and medicine in this period includes a dimension of moral philosophy, for musical harmony or speculative music underpins fundamental principles such as the correspondence between macrocosm (universe) and microcosm (man), the doctrine of sympathy, and the belief in the world soul or *spiritus* mediating between matter and intellect. Evidence of this may be found in seminal early modern texts

²⁰ Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Book 1, Canto 12. Stanza 39, p. 154.

²¹ Katherine Hodgkin, *Women, Madness and Sin in Early Modern England: The Autobiographical Writings of Dionys Fitzherbert* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010), p. 203.

²² Robert Burton, (1621) *The anatomy of Melancholy vvhat it is. VVith all the kindes, causes, symptomes, prognostickes, and seuerall cures of it. In three maine partitions with their seuerall sections, members, and subsections. Philosophically, medicinally, historically, opened and cut vp. By Democritus Iunior. With a satyricall preface, conducting to the following discourse.* Oxford. British Library. http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/Early_English_Books_online_eebo_citation:99857424_part.2_sect.2_member_6_subsection_3_A.a.3.v._accessed_5.04.2010. All citations are to this edition.

such as Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* and, in particular Robert Fludd's *Utriusque Cosmi, Historia, which* I discuss in chapter 4.

The Definition of Music

The use of music in medicine is as old as music itself.²³ The symbiotic relationship between music and medicine has informed Western literature stretching back to Homer who writes how the singing incantations of the sons of Autolykos 'stayed the black blood' of 'stately godlike Odysseus'.²⁴ This episode intriguingly anticipates Spenser's healing music in the *Faerie Queene* suggesting that the Homeric sources for his epic poem do not simply allude to heroic tales and mythology but also include a believable medical discourse that demonstrates one of the fundamental endeavors of mankind, for – as the neuroscientist Professor Daniel J. Levitin writes – music is unusual among all human activities 'for both its ubiquity and its antiquity'.²⁵

Imposing a single definition on music requires a comprehensive explanation that incorporates the denotative and connotative meanings of the word within the diversity of cultural interpretations: different societies, subcultures, historical periods and individuals may differ sharply on what constitutes music, its characteristics and essentials. Hence to ask what music is implies a question about our evolution since recent findings show that music listening, performance and composition engage the whole brain, involving every

²³ Irving M. Pallin and Albert E. Chiron, 'Indication for Music in Anaesthesia', *Current Researches in Anaesthesia and Analgesia*, 29 (4), Jul-Aug 1950, pp. 195-203.

²⁴ *The Odyssey of Homer*, trans. Richmond Latimore (New York: HarperPerennial, 1991), p. 295.

²⁵ Daniel J. Levitin, *This Is Your Brain on Music, The Science of a Human Obsession* (New York: Dutton, a member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 2006), p. 5.

neural subsystem and not merely the right cerebral hemisphere as previously thought.²⁶

Music is, the musicologist Hildemarie Streich suggests, a complex manifestation in which the antithetical aspects result from the dynamic interplay of opposing forces that has the function of ‘compensatory fulfillment, complimentary adjustment, stimulation and promotion of development’.²⁷ Derived from the classical Greek *mousikē*, music originally referred to works of all, or any, of the nine Muses and could, therefore, be described as the quintessence of the arts and sciences, emanating from a divine source.²⁸ The multiple perspectives that characterize music either attempt to define all salient traits of music or, taking the definition itself for granted, describe music in terms of etymology, classification and explanations. The OED, for example, defines music as:

one of the fine arts which is concerned with the combination of sounds with a view to beauty of form and the experience of emotion; also, the science of the laws of principles (of melody, harmony, rhythm, etc.) by which this art is regulated.²⁹

This definition recognizes the shifting boundaries of music’s definition implying not only a creative component but also knowledge based on rational principles that simultaneously serves an aesthetic and communicative function. As an amalgamation of specifically organized sound sequences, music continues to illuminate the boundaries of scientific enquiry for, as Brian Greene, Professor of Physics and Mathematics at Columbia and Cornell Universities, explains in his description of superstring theory, which explains all

²⁶ Levitin, *This Is Your Brain on Music*, p. 9. Ruth Kratz, for example, suggests that music and pictures are processed on the right side of the brain which is more concerned with emotional rather than rational responses, since music and emotions are isomorphic; Ruth Kratz, *The Powers of Music, Aesthetic Theory And The Invention of Opera* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1994), p. 37.

²⁷ Hildemarie Streich, ‘Introduction’, in Michael Maier, *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition of the Fugues, Emblems and Epigrams*, trans. From the Latin by Joscelyn Godwin (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Phanes Press, 1989), All citations are to this edition, p. 21.

²⁸ <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/40476>, pp. 1-2 of 20, accessed 28.10.2011; Streich, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 22.

²⁹ <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/40476>, p. 2 of 20, accessed 28.10.2011.

physical phenomena, the resonant vibrational patterns of ‘fundamental strings’ are best understood as a musical analogy. He writes:

Music has long since provided the metaphors of choice for those puzzling over questions of cosmic concern. From the ancient Pythagorean “music of the spheres” to the “harmonies of nature” that have guided inquiry through the ages, we have collectively sought the song of nature in the gentle wanderings of celestial bodies and the riotous fulminations of subatomic particles. With the discovery of superstring theory, musical metaphors take on a startling reality, for the theory suggests that the microscopic landscape is suffused with tiny strings whose vibration patterns orchestrate the evolution of the cosmos. The winds of change, according to superstring theory, gust through an Aeolian universe.³⁰

Relating to the rational and the emotional, music may be said to serve as a mediator in human relationships because it can, Streich avers, remove disturbances of relationships, allowing them to become more genial and productive.³¹ As mediator therefore, the function of music can be interpreted as a therapeutic modality, potentially engaging with all human activities of living.

In the early modern period one of the great debates centred on the benevolent or corruptive power of music.³² This ambiguity clearly created a cultural anxiety for between 1560 and 1660 a succession of writers warn that music – particularly secular music - could corrupt and destroy the minds of listeners.³³ On the other hand there was the direct association of Christ the Physician with the therapeutic powers of music. Music came to symbolize Christ’s commandments and the lyre the cross and its curative power.³⁴ One of Ficino’s letters, for example, honoring the poet Dante, questions this sound ‘so fresh and so sweet, that is filling our ears?’ It is, he answers, the ‘sound of the nine Spheres and their

³⁰ Brian R. Greene, *The Elegant Universe* (London: Vintage Books, 1999), p. 135.

³¹ Streich, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 20.

³² Marsh, *Music and Society in Early Modern England*, p. 32.

³³ Marsh, *Music and Society in Early Modern England*, p. 32.

³⁴ F. David Hoeniger, *Medicine and Shakespeare in the English Renaissance* (London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1992), p. 265.

Muses'; the music of the spheres –audible to Dante – in his journey to the Empyrean heaven composed of light, love, goodness and ecstasy. This is restorative music that Ficino associates with the angelic song heralding the birth of Christ (Letter 49, vol. 5, p. 80).

However it was viewed, the ability of music to generate or influence an emotional response in the listener appears to have been an accepted tenet. Christopher Marsh has categorized the beneficial effects of music upon the passions into five groups³⁵. First, that music brought sensations of pleasure.³⁶ Music, Sir Philip Sidney writes in *The Defence of Poetry* (1595), is 'the most divine striker of the senses', for 'you cannot hear the planet-like musicke of poetry, if you have so earth-creeping a mind that it cannot lift itself up to look to the sky of poetry'.³⁷ For Sidney, music was the art bearing the closest relationship to poetry, thus poetry becomes therapeutic because it conveys the 'planet-like music' that could be used to induce *musica humana*, that is, the proper ordering of the soul leading to 'the knowledge of a man's self'.³⁸

Marsh's second category is music's power to calm the mind; to harmonize, compose, settle and quell turbulent emotions, 'Killing care' as the gentlewoman sings in *All is True*.³⁹ Thirdly, music settled turbulent passions; it revived and animated emotions, it generated happiness. Music, Robert Burton writes, 'expels care, alters the grieved minds, and easeth in an instant'.⁴⁰ In the fourth category, music is described as the vehicle to transport or divert emotions from one place to another, having the ability to distract the listener away from troubling thoughts; while the last category described the power of music in sexual

³⁵ Marsh, *Music and Society in Early Modern England*, pp. 53-56.

³⁶ John H. Long, *Shakespeare's Use of Music: The Final Comedies* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1961), p. 130.

³⁷ Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poetry* (ed.) J. A. Van Dorsten (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 75. All citations are to this edition.

³⁸ Sidney, *The Defence of Poetry*, p. 29.

³⁹ William Shakespeare, *All is True* (3.1.13), in *The Norton Shakespeare*, p. 3155.

⁴⁰ Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Part. 2, Sec. 2, Memb. 6, subs. 3, p. 372, [accessed 10.10.2010](#).

and/or spiritual overtones. The belief in the power of music to arouse the listener to ecstasy is revealed in John Case's *Praise of Musicke* where he writes that 'the Platonicks and Pythagorians think al [...] soules of men are the recordation of that celestial Musicke...that no man can be found so harde harted which is not exceedingly allured with the sweetness thereof'.⁴¹ Thus music's power to influence the emotions was extended to the physical body; since music could restore the mind it had soothing beneficial healing powers on the body.

Speculative Music

This philosophical belief, concerned with the theoretical nature and function of music, draws largely on the metaphysical speculations of universal harmony or proportion, for the movement of the stars and planets, like music, was believed to be ordered harmoniously in numerical ratios.⁴² It is defined as the theory of cosmic harmonics: of visualising the cosmos in musical terms, or conversely, seeing music in cosmic terms. As such, it is the philosophical nature of music, since it is the understanding of the fundamental principles of music theory that unites the numerical basis of harmony to all macrocosmic and microcosmic manifestations: the motions of the planets to the dispositions of the four humours and the sounding harmony of body and soul.⁴³ In other words, the world perceived through mathematical formulae is illuminated through speculative music because

⁴¹ Case, *The praise of musicke*, <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 99850231, accessed 07 November 2011, p. 40.

⁴² Gretchen Ludke Finney, *Musical backgrounds for English Literature: 1580-1650* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1961), p. ix.

⁴³ Thomas Christensen, (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 3.

it provides the means for us to comprehend the external cosmos: it is a doorway to understanding the universe.⁴⁴

Thomas Morley's definition of speculative music – which reflects the Pythagorean tradition – stated that earthly music mirrored the celestial harmony of the spheres. The whole cosmos, he writes in *A Plaine and Easie Introduction of Practicall Musicke* (1597), operates according to musical law, for:

Speculative is that kind of musicke which by Mathematicall helps, seeketh out causes, properties, and natures of soundes by themselves, and compared with others, proceeding no further, but content with onlie contemplation of that Art. Practical is that which teacheth al that may be knowne in songs, eyther for the understanding of other mens or the making of ones owne.⁴⁵

Speculative music is, therefore, a substantial philosophy deeply steeped in the ancient Pythagorean tradition of cosmic harmony, and analogized as the music of the spheres. Since the cosmos works within musical law there is the suggestion that beneath the changeable qualities of music lies an essential immutability, drawing man towards God, or becoming one with harmony.⁴⁶ Because men's souls and the universe are similarly harmonious, music can reveal God because it reflects the divine harmony and thus has the power to attract and refine the soul. As Robin Headlam Wells points out, this does not mean that man can literally choose his own metaphysical nature, but rather, given his

⁴⁴ Joscelyn Godwin, 'The revival of Speculative Music', *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Jul., 1982), pp. 373-389, p. 383.

⁴⁵ Thomas Morley, (1597) *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke, set downe in forme of a dialogue deuided into three partes, the first teacheth to sing with all things necessary for the knowledge of pricksong. The second treateth of descante and to sing in one vpon a plainsong or ground, with other things necessary for a descanter. The third and last part entreateth of composition of three, foure, flue or more parts with many profitable rules to that effect. With new songs of 2.3.4.and .5 [sic] parts*. London. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 99847107, The Annotations, f.1.r-v, accessed 22.10. 2009.

⁴⁶ Finney, *Musical backgrounds*, Preface, p. x.

divided nature, fallen man is capable of developing either his rational or bestial being.⁴⁷

The notion of a divinely ordered universe is, S. K. Heninger asserts, one of mankind's most ancient propositions stemming from Biblical and pagan sources.⁴⁸ While the Book of Wisdom apportioned all God's Creation to a mathematical universe subject to harmonic ratios, the Pythagorean tradition likewise believed in this model since numerical proportions, the key to the cosmos, structured everything from the positions of the heavens to musical notes.⁴⁹

Celestial harmony – often depicted as a stringed instrument because of the implied Apollonian symbolism of reason and order – is the reconciliation of opposites since music is the model of all harmony, the 'diapason closing full in man'.⁵⁰ This imagery of harmoniously tuned musical strings is one which is frequently employed by dramatists such as Shakespeare, because it gauges the body's health by providing a metaphor to guide the narrative of the plays. Unbroken, it represents harmony, such that the body and mind could create 'perfect music'; broken, it describes imperfection and discord, the 'untuned and jarring senses'.⁵¹ 'Untune that string, /And hark what discord follows' (1.3.109-110) Ulysses declares in *Troilus and Cressida*.⁵²

These musical metaphors stretch beyond the poetic imagination, suggesting that humanity responds to sounds because of their powerful effect upon the physical and emotional body, which itself is commonly represented as a musical instrument in this

⁴⁷ Headlam Wells, *Elizabethan Mythologies*, p. 14.

⁴⁸ S. K. Heninger, *Touces of Sweet Harmony: Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics* (California: The Huntington Library, 1974), p. xii.

⁴⁹ David Norbrook, 'Introduction', in H. R. Woudhuysen (ed.) *The Penguin Book of Renaissance Verse* (London: Penguin Books Ltd. 1993), p. 11.

⁵⁰ John Dryden, 'A Song for St. Cecilia's Day' in *Dryden Poetry, Prose and Plays* selected by Douglas Grant (Soho Square, London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1964), p. 273. All citations are to this edition.

⁵¹ Shakespeare, *King Lear* (4.7.16), in *The Norton Shakespeare*, p. 2541.

⁵² Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, p. 1847.

period, a trope that resonates with authenticity since the heart, the ‘centre’ of the body, may be described as a rhythmic instrument.⁵³ Thus the analogous relationship between macrocosm and microcosm informs the Galenic model of humoral balance based on the doctrine of contraries.⁵⁴ Because the cosmos is reflected in human nature, the music of the spheres represents, this thesis argues, the most potent signifier of cosmic harmony.

The conceptualization of the divine mathematics reflecting harmonic proportions is not confined to the intellectual elite but has a decisive influence on early modern society as a whole, echoed in literary writings across a broad spectrum of interests. At the beginning of this age the Aristotelian world-view was the dominant cosmological belief.⁵⁵ By the seventeenth century, however, this view was increasingly challenged as man’s ideas of nature and society changed; this intellectual transformation also influenced how the cosmos was perceived.⁵⁶ Johannes Kepler, believing that God created heavenly harmony, based his three laws of planetary motion on the ratios of musical harmonies since they had been measured by the Creator in harmonic proportions.⁵⁷ In *Harmonices mundi* (1619), he argues that divine geometry is the foundation of music, for it is, Kepler writes, ‘a reflection from the mind of God’ whose divine sound filled the world.⁵⁸ While sensual music perceived by the human ear cannot hear this divine harmony, he argues that the spiritual ear and eyes can recognize and comprehend its exquisiteness, an argument, which, he suggests, derives from

⁵³ Julie Ann Cunningham, ‘Music of the Spheres’, downloaded from <http://www.fountainmagazine.com/print.php?ARTICLEID=1150&ISSUE=76>, p. 1 of 4, accessed 15.10.2011.

⁵⁴ Headlam Wells, *Elizabethan Mythologies*, p.16; Dryden is comparing the notes of the octave to the ascending scale of created beings as both are the result of harmony in the Great Chain of Being.

⁵⁵ Hugh Lawson-Tancred, ‘Introduction’ in Aristotle *De Anima (On the Soul)*, (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1986), p. 69.

⁵⁶ Charles Webster, *The Intellectual Revolution of the Seventeenth Century* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 1.

⁵⁷ Johannes Kepler, *The Harmony of the World* trans. into English with an Introduction and Notes by E.J. Aiton, A.M. Duncan, J.V. Field (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1997), p. 2; Max Casper, *Kepler*, trans. and (ed.) C. Doris Hellman (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1993), p. 377.

⁵⁸ Casper, *Kepler*, p. 380.

ancient sources such as Ptolemy – who, likewise, had been occupied with a similar contemplation of heavenly harmony.⁵⁹ ‘In earthly music’ Kepler writes, ‘heavenly music is only mirroring itself. When humans make music, they do so by virtue of the harmonies rooted in the soul only in imitation of this heavenly music.’⁶⁰

Kepler, believing that the world was created according to an archetypal plan in the intellect of God, describes Plato’s *Timaeus* as a commentary on the book of Genesis since Plato imagines the world as a visible image of God, ‘a visible living thing containing visible ones, perceptible God, image of the intelligible Living Thing’.⁶¹ The harmony between the sun, the fixed spheres and intervening space, Kepler argues, is analogous to the Trinitarian doctrine with God the father as the centre point, God the son as the surface, and the Holy Spirit as the space between.⁶² Thus the celestial music imitates the perfect proportion and unity of the Godhead, a metaphysical belief he shares with other early modern intellectuals such as Robert Fludd, for the universal efficacy and beauty of numbers, based upon a Biblical authority, connects the universe in a harmonious way through the spirit of God.⁶³

Since *Harmonice mundi* presents a system of mathematical measurements which are speculative, modern criticism argues that Kepler’s work had little influence on his contemporaries due to a growing trend away from metaphysical speculation towards a more

⁵⁹ Casper, *Kepler*, p. 269.

⁶⁰ Casper, *Kepler*, p. 284.

⁶¹ Plato, *Timaeus*, 92c, in John M. Cooper (ed.) *Plato Complete Works* (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), p. 1291. All citations are to this edition; Aiton, Duncan and Field, ‘Introduction’, *The Harmony of the World*, p. xiii.

⁶² Casper, *Kepler*, p. 272.

⁶³ Robert Fludd, (1659) *Mosaicall philosophy grounded upon the essentiall truth, or eternal sapience/written first in Latin and afterwards thus rendred into English by Robert Fludd, Esq.*, London: Printed for Humphrey Moseley. Bib name/number: Wing / F1391, No. pages:[6], 300 68 p.: First English edition of: *Philosophia Mosaicall*, Copy from: Harvard University Library.
<http://chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>. Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 12251507, accessed 16.03.2012, p. 48.

mechanical natural philosophy, as a result of the rise of experimental science as advocated by men such as Sir Francis Bacon.⁶⁴ However, I argue that Bacon does not completely disregard the idea of speculative music for, as *Sylva Sylvarum* (1627) demonstrates, he attempts to ‘join the contemplative and active part’ (of music) ‘together’, since ‘the heavens turn about in a most rapid motion, without noise to us perceived; though in some dreams they have been said to make an excellent music’.⁶⁵ Likewise, in *The Advancement of Learning* (1622), Bacon describes Pan’s pipes as a signifier of cosmic harmony, explaining:

For the pipe of seven reeds plainly denotes the consent and harmony of things, or concord mixed with discord (which is caused by the motion of the seven planets)...And if there be any lesser planets which are not visible, or any greater change in the heaven (as in some superlunary comets), it seems they are as pipes either entirely mute or vocal only for a season; inasmuch as their influences either do not approach so low as ourselves, or do not interrupt the harmony of the seven pipes of Pan.⁶⁶

This Baconian image vividly recalls Robert Fludd’s model of universal harmony – the Divine Monochord.⁶⁷ Therefore, it may be argued that Bacon’s parable of the universe according to the Fable of Pan, resonant with Pythagorean imagery, is analogous with Fludd’s harmonic vision. The Baconian pipes and the Fluddian monochord present a contemplative metaphor since the image of the instrument, musician and music, echoes Trinitarian divine proportions. While the appeal of Kepler’s Neoplatonic world harmony may not have been fully understood or appreciated by many of his colleagues, nowadays

⁶⁴ Aiton, Duncan and Field in, *The Harmony of the World*, p. viii.

⁶⁵ Francis Bacon, *Sylva Sylvarum or A Natural History in Ten Centuries* published after the author’s death by William Rawley, Doctor of Divinity, late his Lordship’s chaplain (London: Printed by J.H for William Lee at the Turk’s Head in Fleet Street, 1627), reprinted in the *Collected Works of Francis Bacon Vol. 11, Part 11*, Philosophical Works (Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1996), p. 390.

⁶⁶ John M. Robertson, *The Philosophical Works of Francis Bacon*. Reprinted from the texts and translations, with the notes and prefaces, of Ellis and Spedding (London: George Routledge and Sons Limited, 1905), p. 445.

⁶⁷ Emanuel Winternitz, *Musical Instruments and Their Symbolism in Western Art; Studies in Musical Iconology* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 70.

his work is regarded as containing an essential truth since modern astronomers attribute the structure of planetary systems to the principles of dynamic resonance.⁶⁸

The Keplerian scholars, Duncan and Field, suggest that the idea of heavenly harmony is used by writers such as Dante and Shakespeare merely as a literary conceit. I argue that that this negates the remarkable impact that this powerfully complex metaphor had on the literary, social, economic and political life of early modern England and Europe, denying the far-reaching influences that this philosophic model exerted on early modern culture.⁶⁹ Their belief in a musical universe is made palpable to our senses through, for example, the Spenserian vision of a 'Christall firmament' whereby the reader experiences a beatific vision, or the Ficinian aspiration of divine perfection – the divine *furor* – made possible by the release of the soul from the corporeal body through purification and contemplation of the universal order revealed in nature. This is possible, Ficino suggests, by using music to attract the cosmic spirit since, he believed, a sympathetic relationship existed between the cosmic spirit and the human soul, which was reflected in the playing of music.⁷⁰ (*De Vita*, p. 357). Thus, we are able to 'behold the heavens great *Hierarchie*, /The Starres pure light, the Spheres swift movement'.⁷¹ This revelation is not limited to mysticism or religion, Heninger argues, but can also be gained through scientific study and the study of nature, and since science and religion co-exist in Pythagoreanism, this provides a model of reassurance for early modern intellectuals.⁷² This doctrine in turn informs the standard by

⁶⁸ Aiton, Duncan and Field in, *The Harmony of the World*, p. viii.

⁶⁹ Aiton, Duncan and Field in, *The Harmony of the World*, p. viii.

⁷⁰ Marsilio Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, trans. Carol V. Kaske and John R Clark (Tempe, Arizona: Centre for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies in conjunction with the Renaissance Society of America, 2002), p. 357. All citations are to this edition and are cited in the text and footnotes as *De Vita*.

⁷¹ Edmund Spenser, "The Teares of the Muses", William A. Oram (ed.) *The Yale Edition Of The Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 288.

⁷² Heninger, *Sweet Harmony*, p. 22.

which beauty is recognized, that is, beauty that is determined by the Platonic notion of love that encompasses beauty and goodness.⁷³

Music and Neoplatonism

In this study the word Neoplatonism is used to define the philosophical and religious system of metaphysical speculation to reach a personal understanding of higher realities, that is, the possibility of union with a supreme being from which all reality is derived.⁷⁴ This movement – that rose in the third century A.D. – included important thinkers such as Plotinus, Iamblichus, Proclus and pseudo-Dionysius who regarded themselves as followers and developers of Platonic thought.⁷⁵ I acknowledge that the term Neoplatonism was developed in the eighteenth century to distinguish between Platonism and the body of philosophical material that developed around Platonic writings.⁷⁶ I also recognize the argument forwarded by Schmitt and Skinner that the later *platonici* represented a heretical current in early modern Christianized Platonism.⁷⁷ However, for the purpose of this thesis the term Neoplatonism is employed to reflect early modern thinking that recognised no deep divide between the teachings of Plato and those of the Neoplatonists.⁷⁸ F. David Hoeniger suggests that it was from the Neoplatonic interpretation of the Pythagorean world

⁷³ Heninger, *Sweet Harmony*, p. 5; Marsilio Ficino, *Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love*, trans. Sears Jayne (Dallas, Texas: Spring Publications Inc., 1985), p. 83. All citations are to this edition and referred to as *Commentary* in the texts and footnotes hereafter.

⁷⁴ <http://www.oed.com.ezprozy.sussex.ac.uk/view/entry/123038>, accessed 15.08.2013.

⁷⁵ Charles B. Schmitt and Quentin Skinner (eds.) *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 567.

⁷⁶ <http://www.oed.com.ezprozy.sussex.ac.uk/view/entry/123038>, accessed 15.08.2013.

⁷⁷ Schmitt and Skinner, *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, p. 577.

⁷⁸ Brian P. Copenhaver & Charles B. Schmitt, *Renaissance Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 15.

view that the therapeutic effects of music were handed down to early Christian, medieval and Renaissance writers.⁷⁹

Arguably the most influential writer of the Platonist revival, Marsilio Ficino – priest-physician-philosopher and musician – is seen as the man most responsible for inspiring the revival of Platonism in the Renaissance, not merely as an intellectual exercise but as the key to understanding the nature of the human soul and of the universe.⁸⁰ As modern scholarship – notably by Frances Yates and D.P. Walker – demonstrates, Ficino’s unique philosophy is a refashioning of Platonism, Neoplatonism and Christian authority blended with Hermetic philosophy and Jewish Cabala. His philosophy influenced how man viewed himself in terms of his relationship to the universe, while simultaneously providing classical legitimation for his work.⁸¹ Importantly for this thesis, Ficino imagined the world as a perfectly harmonious heavenly melody and his theories of poetry, music and the visual arts were taken up and developed by many critics.⁸²

Charles Webster argues that historians of science have employed ‘restrictive history’ by rigorously excluding references to Hermeticism, Neoplatonism or any other major religious, political, economic and technological movements, thereby predetermining the scope of evidence required for the explanation of scientific change.⁸³ This ‘restrictive history’ crudely isolates itself from the intellectual and philosophical strands that co-exist with these new scientific discoveries for, as the philosopher Stephen Toulmin suggests, the

⁷⁹ F. Hoeniger, *Medicine and Shakespeare*, p. 263.

⁸⁰ Christiane L. Joost-Gaugier, *Pythagoras and Renaissance Europe: Finding Heaven* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 27.

⁸¹ Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964, Routledge Classics 2002), p. 409; D. P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic: From Ficino to Campanella* (London: Warburg Institute, 1958), pp. 36-44; Ruth, Katz, *The Powers of Music, Aesthetic Theory And The Invention Of Opera* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1994), p. 85.

⁸² Ficino, Preface, *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 17.

⁸³ Webster, *The Intellectual Revolution*, p. 13.

different strands and variations of the thoughts and art of this period, like the ideas of any age, form a highly intricate web.⁸⁴

No single philosophy provided the dominant hegemony in this period, for the revival in Neoplatonism did not dislodge Aristotelianism, although aspects of Neoplatonism were assimilated by known Aristotelians – such as the physician and philosopher, John Case.⁸⁵ Case, defending the role of instrumental music – particularly the organ – in church services against ‘many men wielding a censorious pen’ in *Apologia Musices tam Vocalis Instrumentalis et Mixtae* (1588), uses the Neoplatonic argument to prove that music has the unique ability to elevate the listener’s mind to higher things. Citing Ficino to substantiate his argument he writes:

Indeed (which is strange yet true), the song that has made its entrance strikes the heart and so insinuates itself into the mind’s secret places and hidden recesses that it forms and creates new humours of the body, new affections of the mind, new manners and actions, and an entire new man, sometimes gradually, but not seldom of a sudden. *Marsilius Ficinus* expresses this thing finely.⁸⁶

Case’s *Apologia* demonstrably provides an example of the revitalization and continuation of the Ficinian tradition that harmonized Neoplatonism with Western Christianity.⁸⁷ This model, looking to Plato as the heir of a philosophical tradition that includes, amongst others, Hermes Trismegistus and Orpheus, propagates a belief in an

⁸⁴ Frances A. Yates, *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age* (Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge Classics, 2001), p. 18; Stephen Toulmin in Hedley Howell Rhys (ed.) *Seventeenth Century Science and the Arts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 3.

⁸⁵ <http://www.oxfordnb.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/articles/4/4853>, accessed 11.11.2011.

⁸⁶ Case, *Apologia Musices*, <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/music/trans.html>, page 12 of 41, accessed 10.11.2011.

⁸⁷ Frances A. Yates, *The French Academies of the Sixteenth Century* (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1947, reprint, Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus-Thomson Organisation Ltd., 1968), p. 124.

ancient wisdom said to have been handed down from Adam.⁸⁸ This tradition is, Sarah Hutton suggests, not strictly derived from the Platonic canon but incorporates elements of intellectual thought, in an eclectic, coherent whole that diffuses into England through direct contact and through intellectual exchanges, finding particular expression in the humanist university colleges.⁸⁹

This revival in Neoplatonism impacts on the cultural understanding of speculative music since Pythagorean metaphysics, grounded in the correspondences between harmonic intervals and mathematical proportions, moves from the speculative realms of music theory to include a sensual dimension – a new song – despite the rise of the Cartesian mechanical philosophy that demanded demonstrable proof in the seventeenth century. Scholars such as Keith Thomas argue that it was the rise in this new philosophy that led to the eventual collapse of scholastic Aristotelianism and the microcosmic theory of Neoplatonism.⁹⁰ I argue that Neoplatonism, or indeed, speculative music, does not become extinct as Thomas suggests, but rather responds through adaptation and modification to the new philosophy. Thus, when Dryden writes towards the end of the seventeenth century, ‘The spheres began to move, /And sung the great Creators’ praise’, readers could engage with the poetic referential to a harmoniously ordered universe, and the extended metaphorical claim that the angelic song initiates the motions of the spheres of which the resultant music is a paean by nature to God the Creator.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Anna Baldwin and Sarah Hutton, *Platonism and the English Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 67.

⁸⁹ Baldwin and Hutton, *Platonism and the English Imagination*, pp. 70-71.

⁹⁰ Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London, Penguin Books Ltd. 1991), pp. 769-770.

⁹¹ Dryden, ‘A Song for St. Cecilia’s Day’, in *Dryden Poetry, Prose and Plays*, p. 275.

Natural Magic and Alchemy

The early modern world view of the macrocosm and microcosm and its complex system of correspondences and sympathies that connect them, often led to natural magic and alchemy being linked together.⁹² The difficulties that arise in modern criticism of the occult or natural magic are due to perceptions on how the terms occult and natural magic are determined in societies that are immeasurably separated, historically and culturally. While occult is defined as the doctrine to conceal or keep secret as opposed to that which can readily be comprehended, it is now generally read as intrinsically relating to perceived marginalized practices such as fortune-telling, astrology, witchcraft or Satanism, although ironically in modern medicine it retains its seventeenth-century sense of hidden (disease).⁹³

This was not the case in the early modern period where magic and the occult held a plurality of meanings, and magic was acknowledged as a secret art which caused particular effects on people or things.⁹⁴ Magic was broadly classified as either natural or demonic – the latter relying on supernatural intervention to produce particular effects leading to unorthodox dangerous practices. The obverse of this – natural or spiritual magic – claimed to avoid such practices depending rather on the ancient tradition of the *prisca theologia*: the ancient knowledge that God had revealed to Adam about the process of Creation and transmitted through a select group of initiates that included Hermes Trismegistus, Moses

⁹² Stanton J. Linden, *Darke Hieroglyphicks Alchemy in English Literature from Chaucer to the Restoration* (Kentucky, U.S.A: Kentucky University Press, 1996), p. 20.

⁹³ OED, <http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/cgi/entry/130169>, accessed 23.01.2012; Penelope Gouk, *Music, Science and Natural Magic in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 11.

⁹⁴ Gouk, *Music, Science and Natural Magic*, p. 11.

Orpheus, Pythagoras, Abraham, and other magi.⁹⁵ Thus natural magic or natural philosophy was a component of Hermetic physic and the cosmology that linked microcosm to macrocosm. It is this relationship, this thesis argues, that enables Ficino successfully to formulate a medical model whereby music is an integral part of the healing process.⁹⁶

Music itself may be defined as magical as it has the potential to transform and change both itself and the human condition: that is, it contains the ability to affect or change our emotions. The relationship between music, magic and healing is an ancient one. The classics scholar, Martin West, suggests that one potential source for the belief in music's healing powers derives from the primitive belief that the music produced by instruments, created from the skins and bones of dead animals, was magical since the latter 'harnessed' the voice of the dead creatures. Traces of this primordial belief persist to modernity, from the ancient Homeric Hymn where Hermes tells the tortoise that his singing will be 'most beautiful' if he dies – referring to musical instruments made out of tortoise shell – to, for example, the singing bones of Gustav Mahler's *Das Klagende Lied* (1880).⁹⁷

Occult forces are an accepted tenet in natural magic because they refer to anything that cannot be explained in elemental terms. While it is now recognised that magic had an important sphere of influence in the construction of early modern experimental science, it was an early modern assumption that these occult forces could be harnessed by the magician to manipulate change, or the emotions, through the imagination.⁹⁸ This is, Ioan P. Couliano argues, a spiritual manipulation that blurs the boundaries between the magician

⁹⁵ Gouk, *Music, Science and Natural Magic*, p. 12; D. P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic: From Ficino to Campanella* (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1958, Kraus Reprint 1969, Reprint of the 1969 ed. Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), pp. 75-84.

⁹⁶ Lauren Kassell, *Medicine and Magic in Elizabethan London: Simon Forman: Astrologer, Alchemist, & Physician* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 209-210.

⁹⁷ Martin West, 'Music Therapy in Antiquity', in *Music as Medicine*, pp. 52-53; Michael Crudden (trans.) *The Homeric Hymns* Oxford World Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 44.

⁹⁸ Gouk, *Music, Science and Natural Magic*, p. 13.

and the physician, since early modern medical practitioners and musicians were among those who used empirical techniques to affect change in people by occult means.⁹⁹

Brian Vickers argues that the hypothesis which proposes that it was the occult tradition that made the scientific revolution possible was not made by historians of mathematical-experimental sciences, but rather by scholars of Renaissance Neoplatonism, who, Vickers asserts, are biased towards magical or occult interpretations.¹⁰⁰ Vickers suggests that the arcane nature of the occult tradition obscures new kinds of knowledge for it does not recognise the distinction between language and reality.¹⁰¹ The semantics that relate to the analogy-identity debate have important implications for Ficinian healing music since Vickers suggests that Ficino's claim of musical healing is actually a reification of the cosmic spirit in an occult tradition that moves from analogy to assertion.¹⁰² I argue that Vickers' interpretation is flawed since Ficino's essential belief in the healing power of music is corroborated both in contemporary accounts and in medicine today. Vickers' hypothesis that the occult tradition runs in tandem with a nonoccult mentality is erroneous since this distinction was not apparent in the early modern period and, is rather an imposition of modern signifiers.

John Read argues that music had been long considered an important part of the alchemical interpretation of the universe because it sees a mystical relationship between numbers that derive from Pythagorean cosmology and cabbalism.¹⁰³ This relationship, derived from the Pythagorean belief in the harmonious correspondences between the notes

⁹⁹ Ioan P. Couliano, *Eros and Magic in the Renaissance* (trans.), Margaret Cook (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 103-104; Gouk, *Music, Science and Natural Magic*, p. 13.

¹⁰⁰ Brian Vickers, (ed.) 'Introduction', *Occult & Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 3.

¹⁰¹ Vickers, *Occult & Scientific Mentalities*, p. 95.

¹⁰² Vickers, *Occult & Scientific Mentalities*, p. 118.

¹⁰³ John Read, *Prelude to Chemistry* (London: G. Bell and Sons Ltd., 1939) p. 247.

of the musical scale, is one that finds repeated expression in alchemical literature.¹⁰⁴ Since ancient times, music had been closely associated with rituals and ceremonies of religion and magic.¹⁰⁵ It is not surprising Read points out, that some alchemists considered music to be an important part of their alchemical operations because it was considered to have a beneficial effect upon the Great Work of alchemy.¹⁰⁶

Alchemy claimed to ‘penetrate the mystery of life through a doctrine of solar and astral influence; a ‘chemical’ interpretation of Greek and Egyptian mythology; a ‘medicine of piety’; and a Hermetic theory of correspondence, in which the alchemist’s spiritual life mirrors the laboratory process.’¹⁰⁷ Stanton J. Linden argues that although the language of exoteric (practical) alchemy may be used to express philosophical, theological and mystical aspirations, there are distinguishing key elements between exoteric and esoteric alchemy, that concentrate on inner spiritual and philosophical values.¹⁰⁸ That is not to say that these two types of alchemy were diametrically opposed to each other; on the contrary they were often inextricably mixed, as is evident in the work of Michael Maier.¹⁰⁹

For the ‘true’ esoteric adept, the philosopher’s stone, believed to have been taken from Paradise by Adam, was allied to the idea of imperfect man’s search for perfection. The belief in the existence of such a stone was interwoven with a profound belief in magic that was cherished by the Neoplatonists in keeping with the early theories on the constitution of matter and the regeneration of man.¹¹⁰ These alchemists believed that metals ‘grew’ in the earth and during this process of growth, a base metal might change slowly

¹⁰⁴ John Read, *Through Alchemy to Chemistry*, (London: G. Bell and Sons Ltd., 1957), p. 71.

¹⁰⁵ Read, *Prelude to Chemistry*, p. 249.

¹⁰⁶ Read, *Through Alchemy to Chemistry*, p. 11; Read, *Prelude to Chemistry*, p. 247.

¹⁰⁷ Hereward Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix: spiritual alchemy and Rosicrucianism in the work of Count Michael Maier (1569-1622)* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co., 2003), p. 34.

¹⁰⁸ Linden, *Darke Hieroglyphicks*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁹ Linden, *Darke Hieroglyphicks*, p. 8.

¹¹⁰ Read, *Prelude to Chemistry*, p. 119.

into the perfection of gold.¹¹¹ This transmutation of metals - the alchemical experimental work - was also symbolic of the transformation of sinful man who through the devotional system of spiritual alchemy and prayer would submit to the will of God.¹¹² Through this analogy, alchemists assigned a body, soul and spirit to metals, applying the principles of growth and reproduction of animal and plant life to mineral life. The process of purifying base metal was analogous with purifying man's body and soul: corrupt thoughts and impure habits had to be resolved so that the soul could regain its original pure state, undisturbed by earthly desires.¹¹³ As a consequence of the belief in the unity of all things, alchemists came to regard the 'medicine of the metals' as the medicine of mankind.¹¹⁴

Through prayer and meditation, the philosophical alchemist prepared his soul to receive enlightenment in his search for the Philosophic Child. The act of meditation was the practice of profound spiritual reflection. This private devotional exercise consisted of the continuous application of the mind to contemplation to a particular truth, text or mystery.¹¹⁵ With the accomplishment of the process of refinement, the divine spirit illuminates the soul, thereby creating the possibility of a more spiritual state of being.¹¹⁶ For the spiritual adept, the search for the Philosopher's Stone was allied to the idea of imperfect man's

¹¹¹ Plato reminds us in *Menexenus*: 238a that 'the earth does not mimic woman in conceiving and generating, but woman, earth' in, *Plato Complete Works*, p. 954; Mircea Eliade suggests that 'if streams and galleries of mines, and caves are compared to the vagina of the Earth-Mother, everything that lies in the belly of the earth is alive, albeit in the state of gestation. In other words, the ores extracted from the mines are in some way embryos: they grow slowly as though in obedience to some temporal rhythm other than that of vegetable and animal organism. Mircea Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible The Origins and Structures of Alchemy*, trans. Stephen Corrin (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row Publishers, 1971), p. 42.

¹¹² Peter Forshaw, 'Subliming Spirits: Physical-Chemistry and Theo-Alchemy in the Works of Heinrich Khunrath (1560-1605)' in *Mystical Metal of Gold, Essays on Alchemy and Renaissance Culture* (ed.) Stanton J. Linden (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 2007), p. 262.

¹¹³ Lyndy Abraham, *A Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) pp. 154-155.

¹¹⁴ Read, *Prelude to Chemistry*, p. 130.

¹¹⁵ OED, <http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/cgi/entry/115756>, accessed 06.10.2011.

¹¹⁶ Abraham, *Dictionary*, pp. 154-155.

search for perfection. One of the ways in which this could be achieved was through music; its harmonizing balance had the power to draw out the soul.¹¹⁷ While the Philosopher's Stone was often viewed as the panacea for all human ills, capable of restoring youthfulness and prolonging life, it also represented the ability to perfect the imperfect, to 'transform the earthly man into an illuminated philosopher'.¹¹⁸

The search for the stone was not merely a gold-seeking quest for the philosophical alchemist but rather a profound philosophical system in which the world-view was centred upon a positive metamorphosis. This searching of the *lapis philosophorum* was inextricable linked to the finding of an inner spiritual gold for the highest Wisdom is the 'breth of the power of God (Wisdom 7:25).¹¹⁹ The true alchemist, Hildemarie Streich argues, was concerned with a spiritual desire that corresponds with the transmutation process.¹²⁰ Certain features appear to share a commonality for the philosophical alchemist, whose work was immersed in the study of nature: a profound faith in God combined with wide book learning and the conduct of long and complex experiments based on a tradition that had evolved over approximately two thousand years. Based upon the idea of the universe striving towards unity and perfection, the philosophical alchemist was supposed to be a devout man with extraordinary spiritual discipline.¹²¹

Lyndy Abraham writes that alchemy operated at a physical and metaphysical level, arguing that the philosophical alchemist was not only concerned with the transmutation of base metals into gold but, more importantly, with transforming the earthly man into an

¹¹⁷ Streich, in *Atlanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 79.

¹¹⁸ Abraham, *Dictionary*, p. 145.

¹¹⁹ *The Geneva Bible, A Facsimile of the 1560 edition*, (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2007, originally published by the University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), f. 420.

¹²⁰ Streich, in *Atlanta Fugiens, An Edition* p. 79.

¹²¹ Katherine Eisaman Maus suggests that this process is one that the alchemist may hasten but not originate, 'Introduction', *The Alchemist* in David Bevington (ed.) *English Renaissance Drama, A Norton Anthology* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002), p. 862.

illuminated philosopher.¹²² The process of purifying base metal was analogous with purifying man's body and soul: corrupt thoughts and impure habits had to be resolved so that the soul could regain its original pure state, undisturbed by earthly desires.¹²³ Likewise, Titus Burckhardt suggests that the metallurgical symbol is not 'an approximate description of the inward processes' but a 'kind of revelation'. Alchemy, he argues, is not void of spiritual insight because its contemplative nature resides in the analogy between the mineral realm and that of the soul.¹²⁴

The alchemy of the philosophical alchemist, with its foundations immersed in the study of nature, was based upon the idea of the universe striving towards unity and perfection. Michael Maier's 'emblematic treatise', *Atalanta Fugiens*, that I examine in chapter 3, is established within this tradition since its purpose is to aid the reader in contemplating the harmony of Creation and the tuning of the soul to God's Divine Will.¹²⁵

Alchemy – as the imitator of nature and therefore key to divine knowledge – harnessed a power that gave mankind the potential to change the world tainted by the Biblical Fall and thus redeem itself. It provided a spiritual discourse and, in a climate of religious and political anxiety, offered the key to reconciliation and reform. Since man and the universe – microcosm and macrocosm – are constructed of the same harmonic proportions, the Ficinian cosmic spirit or quintessence is permeated with astrological influence which nourishes and purifies man's own spirit.¹²⁶ It is the influx of the divine

¹²² Streich, in *Atlanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 79.

¹²³ Abraham, *Dictionary*, pp. 154-155.

¹²⁴ Titus Burckhardt, *Alchemy* (trans.) William Stoddart, 2nd impression (Longmead, Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element Books Ltd, 1987), p.27.

¹²⁵ Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 104.

¹²⁶ D.P. Walker, 'Ficino's "Spiritus" and Music', *Extrait Des Annales Musicologiques*, Tome 1, Societe De Musique D' Autrefois (Paris, 1953), pp. 131-150, p. 140.

spirit, not the withdrawal of man's soul, which makes him celestial.¹²⁷ Just as each planet bears the characteristics of the god it was named after, so too, does each planet 'sound' the music that possesses those characteristics, that is, music reflects the specific mood or emotion of each planet.

This idea resonates in seventeenth-century writing, for example, the poet Edward Benlowes, in 'A Poetic Descant upon a Private Musick-meeting', describes each instrument as a planet, possessing the same power to influence mankind or move emotions. 'Musick' he writes, 'thy Med'cines can our Griefs allaie'.¹²⁸ Likewise, metals were also connected with specific planets and therefore closely associated with planetary music, as demonstrated in Robert Fludd's diagram of the universal monochord that I discuss in chapter 4.¹²⁹ Their combination was often allegorized as musical notes, or the metals were personified holding musical instruments thereby creating a 'chymic choir' as depicted in the title-page of the *Musaeum Hermeticum* (1625).¹³⁰ 'Joyne your elements Musically', the alchemical poet Thomas Norton writes, suggesting that the elements have to be combined accurately to echo an arithmetical and musical harmony, 'Much like proportions be in Alkimy'.¹³¹

The Ficinian spirit-theory of music, which I examine in chapter 2, posited the belief in a universe animated by a musical spirit; it is the breath of a musically proportioned cosmos that could revive man's spirits.¹³² An infusion of this celestial spirit into the soul could revive and reanimate as Orpheus proved. Ovid's myth relates how when Orpheus

¹²⁷ Finney, *Musical Backgrounds*, p. 186.

¹²⁸ Edward Benlowes, *A poetick descant upon a private musick-meeting*. 1649. British Library. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books online, eebo citation: 99869869, accessed 16.04.2011

¹²⁹ Joscelyn Godwin, *Robert Fludd, Hermetic Philosopher and Surveyor of Two Worlds* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1979), reprint (Boston: Massachusetts: Phanes Press, 2005), p. 45.

¹³⁰ Read, *Prelude to Chemistry*, Plate 31.

¹³¹ Ashmole, *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, chapter 5, p. 60, K2v, accessed 09.08.2011.

¹³² Chapter 2, pp. 72-85.

descended to Hades, his sad singing was so overwhelmingly powerful that ‘The Furies’ cheeks, it is said, were wet with tears/ And Hades’ queen and he whose sceptre rules/ The Underworld could not deny the prayer’.¹³³ ‘There is nothing, Henry Reynolds wrote in *Mythomystes*, ‘of greater efficacy than the hymnes of Orpheus in naturall Magick, if the fitting musick, intention of the minde, and other circumstances which are knowne to the wise, bee considered and applied’.¹³⁴ Ficino’s attribution of the power of music in aiding the refinement of the soul may have influenced Maier’s inclusion of the fugues in *Atalanta Fugiens*. For Maier, the fugues represent ‘the order and perfection of the inaudible harmonies of heaven’ and form a central component in his spiritual alchemy.¹³⁵

Some alchemists called the Ficinian world spirit the ‘quintessence’ or fifth element because it was the product of reconciling the four elements of which the universe was composed into one harmonious and perfect unity.¹³⁶ Penelope Gouk argues that while the links between musical modes, bodily temperaments and planetary harmonies had already been described by the musical theorist, Bartolomeo Ramis de Pareia in his *Musica Practica* (1482), it was primarily through Ficino’s *De Vita* that these ideas became ‘the *locus classicus* for sixteenth- and seventeenth -century discussions of music’s effects’.¹³⁷ Certainly Ficinian influence – in particular his theory on music and *spiritus* – is discernible in the 1650 English translation of Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa’s *De Occulta Philosophia*.¹³⁸

¹³³ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, X. 560-706, trans. A.D. Melville (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 226.

¹³⁴ Henry Reynolds, ‘Mythomystes’, in J.E. Spingarn *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, Volume I (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1908), p.166.

¹³⁵ Linda Phyllis Austern, ‘Nature, Culture, Myth, and the Musician in Early Modern England’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Spring, 1998), pp. 1-47, p. 2.

¹³⁶ Abraham, *Dictionary*, p. 75.

¹³⁷ Penelope Gouk, ‘The role of harmonics in the scientific revolution’, in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, p. 226; Chapter 2, pp. 109-115.

¹³⁸ Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, pp. 112-113 and pp. 119-126.

Although he does not name Ficino, Agrippa's work clearly derives from this source. 'The aerious spirit', Agrippa writes, 'is the bond between body and soul' that 'moveth the affection of the hearer'.¹³⁹ In his explanations of how the power of music affects the mind, Agrippa argues that 'so great is the power of Musick', that it 'pacifieth the angry, cheareth up those that are sad and heavy, pacifieth enemies, moderates the rage of mad men, chaseth away vain imagination'. Citing the ancient authority of Democritus and Theophrastus, music can, Agrippa asserts, cure or cause 'some diseases of the body, and minde'.¹⁴⁰

According to John Read, the connection between music and alchemy is derived from the Pythagorean ideas of harmonious correspondences between the notes of the musical scale and the extension of this idea to the music of the spheres.¹⁴¹ These Pythagorean ideas – closely associated with music – find repeated expression in alchemical literature of the early modern period.¹⁴² Alchemical techniques and processes were often utilized by physicians and apothecaries while alchemists often referred to themselves as physicians, restoring health to 'diseased' base metals.¹⁴³ Thus a close association links medicine, alchemy and music as demonstrated in the work of Michael Maier. Penelope Gouk argues that the existence of such a relationship is not in doubt and she makes a comparable linkage

¹³⁹ Henry Cornelius Agrippa, (1650) *Three books of occult philosophy, written by Henry Cornelius Agrippa, of Nettesheim, counsellor to Charles the Fifth, Emperor of Germany: and judge of the Prerogative Court. Tranlated out of the Latin into the English tongue, by J.F.*, London: Printed by R.W. for Gregory Moule, and are to be sold at the sign of the three Bibles neer the west-end of Pauls, 1651. [i.e.1650]. Harvard University Library. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books online, eebo citation: 99858916, Book II, Chapter XXV, p.257. Sr, accessed 14.05.2010.

¹⁴⁰ Agrippa, *De Occulta Philosophia*, Book II, Chapter XXIV, p. 256.

¹⁴¹ Read, *Prelude to Chemistry*, pp. 247-248.

¹⁴² Read, *Prelude to Chemistry*, p. 249.

¹⁴³ Linden, *Darke Hieroglyphicks*, p. 11.

between the alchemical and musical principles found in *Atalanta Fugiens* and Fludd's *Utriusque Cosmi Historia*, which I examine in chapters 3 and 4.¹⁴⁴

The early modern critical field

By the seventeenth century, the conceptualization of music was changing as a result of the new kinds of music being performed using new techniques and new instruments. The way people were thinking about music, what its purpose was, or ought to be, and how it affected people in this period has proved elusive as a subject of research and debate. This is, Penelope Gouk suggests, not due to the lack of source material but rather to the way particular academic disciplines have been traditionally constructed in a manner that favours the specialization and compartmentalization of knowledge, leading to fragmentation between the specialist disciplines that limit the interchange of knowledge.¹⁴⁵

Since music today is regarded as an art rather than a science, its role as a healing modality in the early modern period has often been overlooked by musicologists and medical historians, yet in that period many of those who wrote about music were part of the emerging scientific community and this necessitates an intellectual exchange between specialities in order to grasp what exactly defined musical thought in this period.¹⁴⁶ This echoes the plea of John S. Mebane who, a decade earlier, had called for the forging of an interrelationship between literature, history, and philosophy in order to construct a more

¹⁴⁴ Penelope Gouk, 'Harmony, Health, and Healing: Music's Role in Early Modern Paracelsian Thought' in Margaret Pelling and Scott Mandelbrote (eds.) *The Practice of Reform in Health, Medicine, and Science, 1500-2000* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005) p. 24.

¹⁴⁵ Gouk, *Music, Science and Natural Magic*, p. 3.

¹⁴⁶ Gouk, *Music, Science and Natural Magic*, p. 4.

‘illuminating historical context’ than previously provided.¹⁴⁷

The current interdisciplinary trend in academia allows greater accessibility of specialized knowledge because it dissolves barriers, establishing a coherent fluency within the interdisciplinary dialogue. This thesis has developed out of this discourse because it explores the dynamic interface between music and medicine. No prior book-length study exists that offers a detailed analysis of how this relationship is presented in early modern literature, although a substantial number of works examine facets of this relationship; for example, Armen Carapetyan’s chapter, ‘Music and Medicine in the Renaissance and in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’ in Dorothy Schullian and Max Schoen’s *Music and Medicine*; D. P. Walker’s *Spiritual and Demonic Magic* and S.K. Heninger’s *Touches of Sweet Harmony*. All these works, although still highly influential, have been in the public realm for the past forty to sixty years. F. David Hoeniger’s *Medicine and Shakespeare in the English Renaissance*, in which he examines music therapy in *King Lear* and other plays, and John S. Mebane’s *Renaissance Magic and the Return of the Golden Age*, in which he discusses the magical power of music in Ficino’s work, have both been published for more than twenty years. More recently, scholarship in this area includes Margaret Healy’s sympathetic exploration of harmonious music in the transforming creative imagination.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ John S. Mebane, *Renaissance Magic and the Return of the Golden Age: The Occult Tradition and Marlowe, Jonson, and Shakespeare* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), p. xi.

¹⁴⁸ Armen Carapetyan, ‘Music and Medicine in the Renaissance and in the 17th and 18th Centuries’ in Dorothy Schullian and Max Schoen (eds.) *Music and Medicine* (New York: Henry Schuman, 1948), pp. 117-157; Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, pp. 4-6, 78-79 and 199-200; Heninger, *Touches of Sweet Harmony*, p. 46; Hoeniger, *Medicine and Shakespeare in the English Renaissance*, pp. 261-272; Mebane, *Renaissance Magic*, p. 31; Margaret Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy and the Creative Imagination: The Sonnets and A Lover’s Complaint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 91-92. All citations are to these editions.

Broadly speaking, medical histories do not often include music remedies although Douglas Guthrie's seminal text *A History of Medicine*, is an exception. Although he omits the role of music in the ancient Greek healing *Asklepieia*, he signals the value music held in Islamic medicine in his description of the soft music played to lull patients to sleep in the Mansur hospital in Cairo, and his discussion of the Persian physician and philosopher Avicenna, whose influential Canon includes the significance of therapeutic music.¹⁴⁹ Guthrie's discussion of Renaissance medicine focuses on specific physicians rather than remedies and, while he acknowledges the Paracelsian belief in philosophy being the gate to medicine, his exclusion of the application of speculative or practical music theory in medicine is, I argue, a missed opportunity especially since he recognizes the Paracelsian principle of a contemplative or spiritual side of healing.¹⁵⁰

Current studies investigating the relationship between music and medicine tend to focus either on the historical perspective or examine this relationship in the light of developing musical therapies such as Randall McClellan's, *The Healing Forces of Music: History, Theory, and Practice*, which concentrates on the evolving branches of radionics and cymatics based on the principles of harmonic motion.¹⁵¹ Peregrine Horden's, *Music as Medicine: The History of Music Therapy since Antiquity*, is a scholarly collection of essays that historically examines the therapy and practice of music therapy. However, I argue that Horden's definition of music therapy is too loose, resulting in the therapeutic application of music being obscured by the prominent position that the Platonic-Aristotelian philosophical debate is given within the book.

¹⁴⁹ Douglas Guthrie, *A History of Medicine* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1945), pp. 92-96.

¹⁵⁰ Guthrie, *A History of Medicine*, pp. 159-160.

¹⁵¹ Randall McClellan, *The Healing Forces of Music: History, Theory, and Practice* (Lincoln, NE: toExcel, 2000), pp. 49-52.

While Horden correctly identifies a therapeutic healing modality centred on the revival in Platonism and its application to the human condition, he is selective as to whom this pertains; that is, the privileged ‘educated Europeans’.¹⁵² He does not engage with the ramifications this revival has on early modern society as a whole. This thesis argues that the rhetoric of cosmic harmony – governed by the laws of nature – encompassed a political and spiritual theory of order as defined through the Great Chain of Being.¹⁵³ As an integral part of this hierarchical order, celestial harmony was equated to health, and music was an emblematic model for the correspondence between the microcosm and macrocosm. Therefore, the ideal person combined all the humours, that is phlegm, choler, blood and black bile, in a harmonious balance, thus the internal music of the human body - *musica humana* - represented the relationship between the body and soul, mimicking the cosmic music and giving rise to the notion of ‘temperament’ – the harmonious or inharmonious ‘tuning’ of the humours.

Discord in man and his society resulted from the failure to sustain a proper order: as each planet had its own orbit, so each man had his due position in the chain that unites all creation.¹⁵⁴ Tillyard’s model of the Great Chain of Being was dismissed by the Cultural Materialists and New Historicists of the 1980s, since he had, as John Drakakis argues, projected his own idea of order and hierarchy on early modern culture. However, while Tillyard is problematic, more recent eco-studies such as Gabriel Egan’s ‘Gaia and the Great Chain of Being’ have helped rehabilitate Tillyard’s ‘world picture’ arguing that the preponderance of macrocosmic/microcosmic correspondences are useful for

¹⁵² Horden, *Music as Medicine*, p. 147.

¹⁵³ Tillyard describes the chain as a metaphor to express the unity of God’s creation; an ordered universe arranged in a fixed system of hierarchies extending from God to the meanest of inanimate objects, *The Elizabethan World Picture*, p. 33.

¹⁵⁴ Tillyard argues that Shakespeare placed man in the traditional cosmic setting between the angels and beasts, Preface, *The Elizabethan World Picture*, p. 11.

conceptualizing the complexity of life on earth.¹⁵⁵ This proposal echoes the sentiments of Sir Thomas Browne who wrote, ‘to call our selves a Microcosme, or little world, I thought it onely a pleasant trope of Rhetorick, till my neare judgement and second thoughts told me there was a reall truth therein,’ that is ‘we live the life of plants, the life of animals, the life of men, and at last the life of spirits...for though there bee but one [world] to sense, there are two to reason: the one visible, the other invisible.’¹⁵⁶

The most compelling argument in Horden’s collection of essays is Penelope Gouk’s essay, ‘Music, Melancholy, and Medical Spirits in early Modern Thought’ which suggests that the role music plays in medicine of the period may be interpreted as a model of occult phenomena within the context of natural magic that was conceptualized as the action of ‘spirits’, or through the analogy of musical strings and their vibration.¹⁵⁷ In this period, these phenomena were spoken of in terms of ‘sympathy’, defined by Gouk as ‘the interaction and affinity of different parts of the cosmos’, acknowledging that the power of music to affect the emotions and soul can be explained in terms of this universal sympathy.¹⁵⁸ Therefore, while music was concerned with the ordered production of sound by the human voice or instruments, it was also believed to be a powerful numerical art, employed like natural magic in deciphering the arcane mysteries of Creation.¹⁵⁹

This perceived duality informs and references music’s healing power. Ficino’s interpretation, for example, while adhering to the authoritative biblical view of a divine

¹⁵⁵ John Drakakis (ed.) *Alternative Shakespeares* (London and New York: Routledge Taylor& Francis Group, 1985), 2nd edition 2002, pp. 14-15; Gabriel Egan, ‘Gaia and the Great Chain of Being’ in Lynne Bruckner and Dan Brayton (eds.) *Ecocritical Shakespeare*, (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011), p. 63.

¹⁵⁶ Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici* (1634), part 1, chapter 34 in C.A. Patrides (ed.) *Sir Thomas Browne The Major Works* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1977), pp. 103-4.

¹⁵⁷ Gouk, in *Music as Medicine*, p. 173.

¹⁵⁸ Gouk, in *Music as Medicine*, p. 175.

¹⁵⁹ Austern, “Art to Enchant”, p. 191.

design – for from ‘the moste High cometh healing’ (Eccl. 38: 2) – also demonstrates his understanding of a mathematically proportioned universe. This is expressed in the metaphysical terms of a macrocosmic-microcosmic sympathy, which Ficino presents as a rationalized version of the Pythagorean doctrine of the music of the spheres.¹⁶⁰ Thus ‘the universal soul and body, as well as each living being’, Ficino writes, ‘conform to musical proportion’ for ‘God has ordered everything according to number, weight and measure’.¹⁶¹

The musicologist, Bruce Pattison, argues that by the sixteenth century English music was moving away from the medieval mathematical effects of harmony and counterpoint because of the inclusion of emotional expression and intensity to the sung text.¹⁶² I acknowledge this shift suggesting that early modern poets and musicians such as Thomas Campion successfully found new ways to stylise poetry through equating poetic and musical rhythm, by matching the emotional intensity of the words to a musical equivalent.¹⁶³ This search for a new metrical verse, that allows ‘English words to dance in a lost harmony’, looked to the metrical forms of classical poetry since, as David Norbrook argues, Greek verse, in particular, was believed to be based on the principle of musical proportion, allowing the ancient poets to match words to their sensual properties.¹⁶⁴

The developing relationship between Renaissance poetry and music has been the focus of critical attention, with authoritative texts of the 1960s laying the foundation in this field, such as Gretchen Ludke Finney’s *Musical Backgrounds for English Literature* which argues that, as a philosophical model and literary metaphor, speculative music persists even

¹⁶⁰ Kaske and Clark, ‘Introduction’, in *De Vita*, p. 40.

¹⁶¹ Ficino, Letter 92, ‘On Music’, *Letters*, vol.1, p. 143.

¹⁶² Bruce Pattison, *Music and Poetry of the English Renaissance* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1948), pp. 100-101.

¹⁶³ Catherine Ing, *Elizabethan Lyrics A study in the development of English metres and their relation to poetic effect* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1968), p.13.

¹⁶⁴ Norbrook, ‘Introduction’, in *The Penguin Book of Renaissance Verse*, p. 10.

with the advancement of science. While the central theme of John Hollander's important study, *The Untuning of the Sky*, is the idea of the music of the spheres, he ultimately suggests that scientific statements about world harmony had turned into metaphor by the seventeenth century.¹⁶⁵ More recent studies, such as David Lindley's *Shakespeare and Music*, argue that it is difficult to ascertain if Shakespeare and his colleagues treated the musical analogy as a reference to myth or as a statement of fact.¹⁶⁶

Lindley's detailed chapter on 'Music Therapy' provides a useful introduction to the classical, Neoplatonic, and humoral theories that shaped contemporary understandings of music. Here, Lindley turns to the mathematical and philosophical ideas of cosmic harmony that shaped contemporary understandings of music as explicated in a reading of Lorenzo's speech from *The Merchant of Venice* (5.1.52-87), which Lindley identifies as the "expression of [the] period's conventional theories about the nature and power of music."¹⁶⁷ Drawing on the concept of health as a rebalancing of the humours, music can, Lindley argues, 'confirm a state of mind or modify it' for since the mind and body were connected in Renaissance physiology music could be used as a cure for disease, especially diseases of the mind.¹⁶⁸ This image of music as therapeutically harmonizing the disordered mind is, he suggests, a staple image in poetry and drama.¹⁶⁹

Although speculating on the number of physicians using musical therapy in their practice in this period, Lindley does not satisfactorily explain music's efficacious power. This thesis contends that music is employed not only as a metaphorical conceit in the poetry and drama of this period as Lindley suggests, but also used as a therapeutic

¹⁶⁵ John Hollander, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500-1700* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961; New York: 1970).

¹⁶⁶ David Lindley, *Shakespeare and Music* (London: Thomson Learning, 2006), p. 21.

¹⁶⁷ Lindley, *Shakespeare and Music*, p. 14.

¹⁶⁸ Lindley, *Shakespeare and Music*, p. 31.

¹⁶⁹ Lindley, *Shakespeare and Music*, p. 31.

modality. By selecting a number of writers affiliated to medicine who support the argument for healing music, the thesis demonstrates that this belief is a vibrant construct that dynamically engages with early modern medicine.

Methodology

The methodology adopted for the purpose of this thesis is comparative or interdisciplinary, historicized and intertextual. The study references the fields of medicine, music, philosophy, alchemy, history and literary material in order to examine the role of healing music as a philosophical and cultural practice. These texts contain examples of musical healing providing an insight into the cultural, intellectual and medical milieu of early modern society. As I have previously suggested, allusions to the use of music therapy are made frequently among medical writers, poets, musicians and playwrights in the early modern period.

My thesis forms part of the body of contemporary research in the interdisciplinary study of music, medicine and how it is imagined to affect the early modern body and soul.¹⁷⁰ I investigate a variety of early modern texts rather than focusing on a single generic category while specific attention is given to the belief in the healing powers of speculative music – which provides a philosophical model for understanding the interplay between body, mind and spirit – musical healing is also considered in terms of the Ficinian model and its far-reaching consequences. The trajectory of this study analyses the discernable

¹⁷⁰ Recent research includes Gouk, 'Harmony, Health, and Healing: Music's Role in Early Modern Paracelsian Thought', in *The Practice of Reform in Health, Medicine, and Science*, pp. 23-42; Marsh, *Music and Society in Early Modern England*.

influence of Ficino's therapeutic music on other writers and physicians of the early modern period.

My research encompasses a range of primary philosophical, medical, alchemical and dramatic materials which support the interdisciplinary approach of the study. These texts provide examples of musical healing, opening a window onto the cultural, intellectual and medical milieu of early modern society, while simultaneously establishing a convincing historical precedent for contemporary music therapy. The study references the fields of medicine and music, in addition to those of literary criticism and cultural studies in order to examine healing music as a cultural practice. These include Marsilio Ficino's music-spirit theory discernable in his *Letters*, *Platonic Theology*, *De Vita Triplica* and *Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love*. Michael Maier's *Atalanta Fugiens* and Robert Fludd's *Mosaicall Philosophy* and *Utriusque Cosmi Historia* provide material for the examination of the continuation of the tradition of speculative music and Ficinian influence.

In terms of the selected literary works for the purpose of the study, I use a range of dramatic forms that comprise play texts, masques and lyrical ayres, which collectively show the negotiation of therapeutic speculative music across generic boundaries. The literary range includes Shakespeare's *Pericles* and Marlowe's *New Inn*. The role of healing music is examined in the revels culture through the court masques of Thomas Campion, in particular, *Lords Hayes Maske*, *The Lords Maske* and *The Description of a Maske: Presented in the banqueting roome at Whitehall, on Saint Stephen's Night (The Somerset Masque)*. I also investigate Campion's lyrical ayres and musico-poetic aesthetics with their references to healing song and universal harmony.

Content and structure

Central to this study is Ficino's medico-musical theory, which, as I shall show, was deeply informed by Pythagorean ideas. In the Pythagorean tuning system, the distinguishing hallmark is a doctrine of the mathematical structure of physical reality, and of the soul that comprehends this reality; in this schema, music is perceived as an expression of human creativity – relating to the experience of human emotion – while simultaneously supporting a mathematical understanding of the cosmos. Chapter 1 examines how the Pythagoreans interpreted the movements of the universe using musical analogies as a means to comprehend these movements mathematically: all relevant ratios could be expressed numerically since the motions of the heavens were harmonious.¹⁷¹ This has, this study argues, important implications in the late fifteenth-century revival by Ficino, whose refashioning of ancient philosophical truths provides a framework for his medico-musical healing, since the soul, he writes, is the source of the corporeal humours, the harmony of the bodily functions.¹⁷² I argue that this is an important area of research that, until recently, modern criticism has tended to dismiss, despite the Neoplatonic revival and reaffirmation of cosmic harmony in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.¹⁷³ This is due in part, I suggest, to the interrelationship between music and the realm of natural magic that was widely disseminated through Ficino's musico-magical doctrine, evident in his *Letters* and in

¹⁷¹ J.A Phillip, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism* (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1996), p. 10 and p. 129, n.3; Walter Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 375.

¹⁷² Marsilio Ficino, *Platonic Theology Vol. I-VI*, trans. by Michael J.B. Allen with John Warden, Latin Text (ed.) James Hankins with William Bowen, The I TATTI Renaissance Library (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press 2001). All citations are to these editions, Vol. 2, *Book VII: XIII*, p. 257.

¹⁷³ This point is argued by Headlam Wells, *Elizabethan Mythologies*, p. 123 and Sarah Hutton, 'Introduction to the Renaissance and seventeenth century', in Baldwin and Hutton, *Platonism and the English Imagination*, p. 67.

particular his *Three Books on Life* that I examine in chapter 2. I argue that Ficino offers *De Vita* as a new interpretation in the art of healing, for the role of music is to heal the rift between body and soul, thus achieving a harmonious union with God. I examine how his magico-musical medicine illuminates his explanations of the healing power of music, and how the divine image in man can be regenerated to a prelapsarian state of purity.

While I refer to John Case's *Apologia musices* (1588) which references Ficino's work on the nature of music's effects on the mind, I have chosen to demonstrate how Ficino's musico-magical doctrine is discernable in the distinct and highly individualistic texts of the Paracelsian physicians, Michael Maier and Robert Fludd.¹⁷⁴ In chapter 3 I examine the work of Michael Maier, whose emblematic book, *Atalanta Fugiens*, contains musical and pictorial alchemical imagery. Maier was, Margaret Healy argues, a 'physician of soul' like Ficino whose alchemical soul work is aided by the fifty three-voiced fugues in maintaining a mood suitable for contemplation and balancing of the humours.¹⁷⁵ The alchemical fugues are, I suggest, a vehicle to the universal truths as well as an allegory of progressive spiritual fulfillment, and Maier's Hermetic roots may be traced to the Ficinian belief in the power of music to refine the soul.¹⁷⁶

Recent studies have included a wide-ranging analysis of Robert Fludd's *Utriusque Cosmi Historia*. Chapter 4 responds to these recent studies in developing an increased awareness and understanding of this remarkable work. While Fludd and Maier have often been linked together through their alleged Rosicrucian connection, my thesis shifts the focus to their shared interest in the role music could play in medicine – a commonality

¹⁷⁴ Peter Hauge, 'The Temple of Music' by Robert Fludd (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011), p. 8.

¹⁷⁵ Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy and the Creative Imagination*, p. 39 and p. 34.

¹⁷⁶ Austern, 'Art to Enchant', p. 191.

that Gouk expresses.¹⁷⁷ It has been suggested that Maier and Fludd were acquainted – Margaret Healy suggests that they were friends – while Frances Yates asserts that Maier was almost certainly in contact with Fludd when he visited England after the death of Rudolph in 1612.¹⁷⁸ This study demonstrates the validity of the therapeutic music used by these philosophic physicians who were at the forefront of the intellectual milieu of this period. Chapter 4 contends that since knowledge of the microcosm would lead to greater understanding of the Creator, medicine was the most perfect science of all for Fludd, who believes that music has a powerful physiological effect on man because his soul remembers the divine harmony it once heard.

In contrast, the work of F. David Hoeniger showed no instances of music therapy being used by Elizabethan physicians, while evidence from the Continent is scanty.¹⁷⁹ Although Munks Roll, which is held by the Royal College of Physicians and details the biographies of its fellows since its inception, lists 738 entries between 1518 and 1700, Christopher Marsh suggests that it is difficult to determine whether English doctors of the period made systematic use of music in treating their patients.¹⁸⁰ While he acknowledges that, given the enthusiasm surrounding this subject, it would have been surprising if early modern medical practitioners had not experimented with musical cures, he considers the evidence at best suggestive.¹⁸¹ The barber-surgeons, he argues, were more strongly

¹⁷⁷ Gouk, 'Harmony, Health, and Healing: Music's Role in Early Modern Paracelsian Thought' in, *The Practice of Reform in Health, Medicine, and Science*, p. 24.

¹⁷⁸ Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy and the Creative Imagination*, p. 39; Frances A. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London and New York: Ark Paperbacks, 1972), p. 80.

¹⁷⁹ Hoeniger, *Medicine and Shakespeare*, p. 267.

¹⁸⁰ [http://munksroll.rcplondon.ac.uk/biography/volume 1](http://munksroll.rcplondon.ac.uk/biography/volume%201), accessed 15.08.2013.

¹⁸¹ Marsh, *Music and Society*, p. 67.

associated with music, possibly as a distraction while teeth were being pulled, or used as pain relief.¹⁸²

My interpretation posits that the perceived efficacy of musical therapy is certainly present in the early modern period, as demonstrated in the material I have selected. While my understanding offers a different perspective from other studies in terms of interpretation, I argue that my findings of an early modern belief in the affective power of music appear not only in texts as the trope of the music of the spheres, but as persuasive phenomena with which these texts engage. Within this context, chapter 5, focusing on Shakespeare's *Pericles* and Jonson's *New Inn*, builds on and broadens the discussion in chapters 2, 3 and 4, through analyzing significant fictional representations of music as a healing metaphor. Christopher Marsh writes that 'Shakespeare's world was full of meaningful music' and in this chapter I argue that the use of music as a healing metaphor in *Pericles* resonates with a Ficinian interpretation both as a therapeutic cure and as an expression of Neoplatonic world harmony.¹⁸³ Since music was recognized as both the cause and cure of melancholy and madness, I explore the early modern concept of melancholy in *Pericles* where the cohesive harmony that Shakespeare strives to achieve through music, is juxtaposed with the melancholy to which Pericles succumbs. I suggest that Shakespeare's musical resolution would have been acceptable to an early modern audience since the power of music to heal was a believable tenet, as demonstrated in contemporaneous medical texts such as Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Ficino's unique version of idealized Platonic love and beauty is, this chapter argues, evident in the poetry, masques and plays of early modern English literature. Indeed, the analysis of the

¹⁸² Marsh, *Music and Society*, p. 68.

¹⁸³ Marsh, *Music and Society*, p. 70; Long, *Shakespeare's use of Music: The Final Comedies*, p. 25.

plays in this chapter supplies evidence of the distinctive dissemination, importance and development of Ficinian philosophy in England through the dramatic medium.

Chapter 6 examines the masques and lyric poetry of Thomas Campion who acknowledges that music is love because love is harmony and harmony is music—a key Ficinian idea or proposition. Fludd and Campion were the first to write their melody with the harmony below, that is, they both describe theoretical counterpoint or harmonizing. These ideas, serving to identify Neoplatonic influence, have, I suggest, particular significance for Campion as physician, poet and musician. Campion, influenced by Ficino's magico-musical medicine, portrays music as a dynamic healing motif in his lyric poetry demonstrating a profound and convincing understanding of the emotional impact and comfort their music offers. In his Latin poetry, Campion identifies himself with Apollo, the god of music and healing, and therefore his images of healing by beauty and love are revealing, since they proclaim God as the Divine physician, healing the physical and spiritual needs of mankind.

At the turn of the seventeenth century, the masque, with its combination of song, dance and music became prominent in court. The chapter also examines Campion's masques as he is the only physician from this period to write this specific type of court entertainment. Within the masques Campion's medical imagery lends, I argue, potency to the ancient belief that music's harmonious nature was powerful enough to elevate and restore the divine nature of the soul. I argue that his appeal to Neoplatonic ethics – a particular feature of masque culture – signifies his ability to negotiate the problematic questions and political intrigue that surrounded the marriage of Frances Howard and Robert

Carr.¹⁸⁴ I examine Campion's *Third and Fourth Booke of Ayres* dedicated to Sir Thomas Monson who had been implicated in the Overbury murder and imprisoned, demonstrating how Campion intends this book as an aide to recovery and social health.

My investigation is thus focused on the perceived efficacy of musical therapy and its use as a medical and cultural practice in the early modern period I examine philosophical, alchemical and medical writings, together with early modern dramatic and literary texts, in an attempt to recover an interdisciplinary context enabling or facilitating an enriched understanding musical healing and its literary representation in the period.

¹⁸⁴ David Lindley, *Thomas Campion Medieval and Renaissance Authors 7* (Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1986) pp. 216-217.

Chapter 1

The Cosmic Blacksmith: The Pythagorean Tradition in Healing Music

‘There is geometry in the humming of the strings. There is music in the spacings of the spheres’.
Pythagoras 5th century B.C.¹

Introduction

The idea of a musically empowered universe was, Tom Dixon argues, part of the ‘common currency’ of the early modern period.² The discovery of the mathematical basis of musical intervals led to the conviction that number and ratios were at the heart of everything. Music was believed to be a vehicle to the universal truths as well as an allegory of progressive spiritual fulfillment.³ This musical model – a syncretic mixture of classical and Christian sources – developed by the French and Italian and indebted to the work of Marsilio Ficino – foregrounds music as the structural principle in the sympathetic correspondences of the macrocosm-microcosm.⁴ The classical source of this belief in a divinely ordered universe emanated, it is thought, from the Pythagorean School as early as the sixth century B.C.⁵ In this chapter I examine this philosophical tradition and trace these ancient writings to their re-emergence in Western Europe, due possibly to the conquest of Constantinople in 1453,

¹ Guy Murchie, *Music of the Spheres* (Sigma Books Limited, 1961), motto page.

² Tom Dixon, “‘Meditation is the Musick of Souls’: the Silent Music of Peter Sterry (1613-1672)”, in Nicky Losseff and Jenny Doctor (eds.) *Silence, Music, Silent Music* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), p. 190.

³ Austern, ‘Art to Enchant’, p. 191.

⁴ Dixon, ‘Meditation is the Musick of Souls’, p. 190.

⁵ Heninger, *Sweet Harmony*, p. xii.

when Byzantine scholars returned to Europe.⁶ It is here that Marsilio Ficino, under the patronage of Cosimo de' Medici, began to translate the classical Greek texts, particularly those of Plato, reformulating and developing the Neoplatonic explanations for the healing power of music.⁷ Synthesizing Platonic and Christian teachings to formulate a unique brand of Platonic theology, Ficino places man at the centre of his musico-medical doctrine, or natural magic. Ficino identifies with Pythagoras, the musical healer for, as Iamblichus writes, Pythagoras 'thought that music greatly contributed to health, if used in a proper manner'.⁸ Iamblichus explains how Pythagoras attempers the irrational passions of the soul through appropriate music, producing 'the most beneficial correction of human manners and lives' for his disciples:

For when they went to bed they purified the reasoning power from the perturbations and noises to which it had been exposed during the day, by certain odes and peculiar songs, and by this means procured for themselves tranquil sleep, and few and good dreams. But when they rose from bed, they again liberated themselves from the torpor and heaviness of sleep, by songs of another kind. Sometimes, also, by musical sounds alone, unaccompanied with words, they healed the passions of the soul and certain diseases, enchanting, as they say, in reality.⁹

Pythagoras owed the efficacy of his music therapy to his judicious arrangement of apposite melodies. As Martin West notes, his use of incantations and paeans as well as pure music for healing the sick, clearly highlights the potency of music itself.¹⁰ While appropriately used music contributed to health, Iamblichus writes that Pythagoras also used music in the place of medicine – which he called purification – for he had devised certain melodies

⁶ Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Early Modern Europe, 1450-1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 127.

⁷ Ficino, *Letters*, 'Introduction', vol. 1, p. 21.

⁸ Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras, or Pythagoric Life*, trans. Thomas Taylor (Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions International, Ltd., 1986, reprinted from the edition of 1818), p. 88. All citations are to this edition.

⁹ Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras*, p. 61.

¹⁰ M.L. West, *Ancient Greek Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 33.

against aberrations of the soul.¹¹ The earliest Pythagorean source, Aristoxenus, also makes this claim, stating that the Pythagoreans ‘used music for purifying the body, music for purifying the soul’.¹² Importantly for the Pythagoreans, the adaptation or purification of souls – envisaged as ethereal, aerial or terrestrial – was procured through music, for Pythagoras, ‘divinely healed and purified the soul, resuscitated and saved its divine part’.¹³ Thus Pythagorean music was believed to hold magical powers and deemed suitable for purifying the soul.¹⁴ This association implies that Pythagorean music could unite the most discordant and incongruous elements into pure harmony, restoring tranquility. It is this model, I argue, that informs Ficino’s musico-medical theory, for Pythagorean teachings offered the hope of divine perfection from the contemplation of the universal order; the paeans Pythagoras was believed to have sung on his lyre created an intimate connection with the healing powers of the mythological Arion, Amphion and Orpheus.

Examining music’s divine origin, in his *Apologia Musices*, John Case cites the Pythagorean principle of the ‘sweet concord in the power, number, movement, ordering, figure and beauty’ of music, arguing that ‘if there be a union and harmony’ in music as Plato believed, then ‘no man can dream that music (which teaches this natural concord of the world) took its origin from any mortal’.¹⁵

Case sets out his defence for the legitimate role of music in church, with an insistence on music’s divinity since, he argues, music has ‘God for a father and Nature for a

¹¹ Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras*, p. 59.

¹² West, *Ancient Greek Music*, p. 56.

¹³ Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras*, pp. 35-37; Taylor explains the Pythagorean belief in the soul’s three vehicles as following: the first, which is luminous and celestial, is connate with the essence of the soul, and in which alone it resides in a state of bliss in the stars. In the second, it suffers the punishment of its sins after death, And from the third it becomes an inhabitant of the earth. Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras*, p. 33, n. 1.

¹⁴ West, in *Music as Medicine*, p. 54.

¹⁵ Case, *Apologia Musices*, <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/music/trans.html>, page 4 of 40, accessed 10.11.2011.

mother'.¹⁶ Music, Case writes, can be defined as a 'numeric and harmonic proportion of all things' since 'all concord and harmony consists of number' and therefore 'pertains to all things'.¹⁷ He buttresses this argument by citing the Pythagorean tradition that believes in the presence of a 'melodic modulation and harmony in all the effects of Nature', for, Case argues 'bees have their buzz, birds their song, metals their ring, the elements and heaven's bodies have in a manner their voice'.¹⁸ Thus the 'machinery of the universe' cannot 'endure without music' and the 'learned man',

even if he should not hear Pythagoras' sounds, even if he should not perceive the voices resounding in heaven, Apollo's lyres, trumpets and instruments, he should be too much the slave to his ears if he should imagine that there is not insensible sound or harmony.¹⁹

This excerpt from *Apologia Musices* illuminates the early modern significance of universal harmony, that is, the music of the spheres: a complex and ancient tradition, representing the divine plan that informs and binds our universe together.²⁰ While modern scholarship now attributes this doctrine to a Pythagorean school rather than to one individual, by the time of Plato and Aristotle, the notion of the music of the spheres had been fully formulated as a fundamental scientific Pythagorean principle, uniting the disciplines of music and harmony through the coherence of number and sound.²¹ It is now believed that it was Alcmæon of

¹⁶ Case, *Apologia Musices*, <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/music/trans.html>, page 3 of 40, [accessed 10.11.2011](#).

¹⁷ Case, *Apologia Musices*, <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/music/trans.html>, page 6 of 40, [accessed 10.11.2011](#).

¹⁸ Case, *Apologia Musices*, <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/music/trans.html>, page 6 of 40, [accessed 10.11.2011](#).

¹⁹ Case, *Apologia Musices*, <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/music/trans.html>, page 7 of 40, [accessed 10.11.2011](#).

²⁰ Heninger, *Sweet Harmony*, p. 179.

²¹ Heninger, *Sweet Harmony*, p. 179.

Croton, rather than Pythagoras himself, who argued that health was dependent upon harmony, while disease was a discord or disharmony of the elements composing the body.²²

Although Aristotle denies the existence of celestial music in *De Caelo*, arguing that, ‘the theory that music is produced by their movements, because the sounds they make are harmonious, although ingeniously and brilliantly formulated by its authors, does not contain the truth’, he nevertheless presents a detailed description of the Pythagorean harmony of the spheres.²³ Some thinkers he writes, postulate a harmony for the moving bodies since:

That bodies so great must inevitably produce sound by their movement: even bodies on the earth do so, although they are neither so great in bulk nor moving at so high a speed, and as for the sun and moon, and the stars, so many in number and enormous in size, all moving at a tremendous speed, it is incredible that they should fail to produce a noise of surpassing loudness. Taking this as their hypothesis, and also that the speeds of the stars, judged by their distances, are in the ratios of the musical consonances, they affirm that the sound of the stars as they revolve is concordant.²⁴

According to the theory, the moving bodies in the heavens were separated by proportionate intervals; thus some planets move faster, producing higher notes, while other slower planets produced low notes yielding a concord of celestial sound in their revolutions. Aristotle then proceeds to explain why the music of the spheres is inaudible to mankind, stating, ‘they account for it by saying that the sound is with us right from birth and has thus no contrasting silence to show it up.’²⁵ This has important implications for early modern writers, since the belief in an inaudible celestial music, is bound up in the development of the Christian notion of the existence of prelapsarian music combined with the Platonic idea

²² Guthrie, *A History of Medicine*, p. 49.

²³ Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, trans. W. K. C. Guthrie, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006), 290b, p. 193. All citations are to this edition.

²⁴ Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, 290b, p. 193.

²⁵ Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, 290b, p. 193.

that ‘internal singing’, that is, the ordering of the soul, is more valuable than audible singing.²⁶

The musical representation of purity and immortality suggests a time when our souls were originally in tune.²⁷ Robin Headlam Wells argues that it was a commonplace Renaissance belief that by ‘harmonizing the discordant spirit, music can go some way towards repairing defects of the Biblical Fall’.²⁸ It is a potent image, that writers such as Shakespeare use repeatedly, as an indication of spiritual rebirth, since music represents ‘an image of concord, proportion and unity...instrumenting the harmoniousness of the divine creator’.²⁹

In contrast, the idea of a universe constantly in motion, is one that Plato maintains in his differing accounts of the cosmos in *Phaedrus* and the *Republic*.³⁰ Describing the harmony of the spheres as ‘the moving of the heavens around what we call the ‘poles’ or the harmonious moving together in music’, he argues that ‘those who are clever in astronomy and music say, all these things move together simultaneously by a kind of harmony’.³¹

In the *Republic* he explicitly links music to the motions of the spheres where, in the myth of Er – a tale of astral immortality – Plato describes eight celestial spheres spinning around the spindle of Necessity. On each sphere sits a siren ‘uttering a single sound, one single note’ forming a single harmony.³² Singing of the past, present and future to the

²⁶ Lawrence J. Ross, ‘Shakespeare’s “Dull Clown” and Symbolic Music,’ *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 17 No. 2 (Spring, 1966), pp. 107 -128, p. 118.

²⁷ Ross, ‘Shakespeare’s “Dull Clown”’, p. 118.

²⁸ Headlam Wells, *Elizabethan Mythologies*, p. 11.

²⁹ Ross, ‘Shakespeare’s “Dull Clown”’, p. 108.

³⁰ Plato, *Phaedrus*, 247c, p. 525; Plato, *Republic X*, 614b-621d, pp. 1220-1223, in *Complete Works*.

³¹ Plato, *Cratylus* 405c, in *Complete Works*, p. 123; Plato also makes reference to the music of the spheres in *Timaeus* 36d, p. 1240 and *Republic VII*, 530d, p. 1146, in *Complete Works*.

³² Plato, *Republic X*, 617b, in *Complete Works*, p. 1220.

music of the sirens are the daughters of Necessity; the three enthroned Fates – Clotho, Atropos and Lachesis – which determine the next life cycle of the traveling ephemeral souls.

By the time of the early modern era, sirens were traditionally interpreted as figures representing heretical doctrines.³³ However, Ficino extrapolates this suggestion of unorthodoxy from the Platonic myth by focusing on the regeneration of the soul. This ‘rediscovery’ of the immortality and divinity of the soul – a tenet Ficino believed to be the basis of ‘the dignity of man’ – was to play an important role in the revival of religion in the sixteenth century.³⁴ The idea of the soul’s desire to return to its divine source – central to Ficinian scholarship – became a core tenet of Christian thought, through the passing of a decree by the Lateran Council in 1512, enshrining it in the Roman Catholic canon.³⁵ The implications of this belief reverberated throughout early modern theological philosophy, for the persuasiveness of this doctrine led to a recontextualization and reinterpretation of the individual soul, placing the emphasis on a personal relationship with God; a devotional ideology which would become characteristic of Protestant and Roman Catholic reformers alike.³⁶

The music of the spheres is, therefore, not merely a literary topos but, uniting the disciplines of music and astronomy, constitutes an important philosophical and creative framework in Neoplatonic thought that informs the intellectual and cultural milieu of this era.³⁷ I argue that this famous image provides a powerful construct expressing a cosmic concept of order; a divine plan that informs the early modern belief in the aesthetic ideal of

³³ Headlam Wells, *Elizabethan Mythologies*, p. 10.

³⁴ ‘Introduction’, in *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 23.

³⁵ ‘Introduction’, in *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 20 and p. 23.

³⁶ ‘Introduction’, in *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 23.

³⁷ Phillip, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism*, p. 45.

beauty that triggers the senses. It forms part of a continuing tradition that is hauntingly persistent for, as Heninger points out, ‘no other statement of cosmos conveyed its order and beauty with such imaginative completeness’.³⁸ It provides the perfect template, Heninger continues, for it ‘encompasses the full range of Pythagorean reality, from the highest celestial abstraction to the most affective of human experiences’.³⁹

The Pythagorean Tuning System

Renaissance scholars were fascinated by Pythagoras, for he had come to be regarded as the epitome of scientific investigation, a prophet for Christianity and an authority on morality and the social good.⁴⁰ As Thomas Roche points out, since Plato in the *Timaeus* and Boethius in his tractates were the main source of Pythagorean ideas, ‘his currency in the Renaissance cannot be doubted’.⁴¹ The early modern understanding of Pythagoreanism is based on a hybrid tradition that evolved after Pythagoras’ death – believed to be approximately 570-400B.C. – continuing to develop until the fifth century A.D.⁴² While modern scholars have been meticulous in trying to separate out and draw distinctions between the figure of Pythagoras, and Neopythagoreanism, with its late classical forgeries, the tenets which the early modern period ascribed to Pythagoreanism were accepted with syncretistic zeal and even elaborated on. Trying to unravel the threads of this syncretic knot that constituted the early modern understanding and elaboration of Pythagoreanism is

³⁸ Heninger, *Sweet Harmony*, p. 179.

³⁹ Heninger, *Sweet Harmony*, p. 179.

⁴⁰ Joost-Gaugier, *Pythagoras and Renaissance Europe*, p. 1.

⁴¹ Thomas P. Roche, Jr., ‘Recent Studies in the English Renaissance’, *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, Vol. 16, No. 1, The English Renaissance (Winter, 1976), pp. 157-175, p. 157.

⁴² Phillip, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism*, p. 8.

a hazardous enterprise since hybridity and syncretism are integral fixtures of Renaissance philosophy.

Since no extant writings by Pythagoras survive, there emerges from this thousand year timeframe, an elusive historical figure whose oral teachings coalesce with successive doctrinal caveats to inform the philosophical model that underpins Renaissance Neoplatonism.⁴³

Experimentation with musical ratios led Pythagoras to an understanding of numerical ratios and explains why music held a dominating and mysterious position in his beliefs.⁴⁴ Legend tells how he discovered the nature of the numerical ratios of the fundamental musical consonances while listening to the blows made by a blacksmith's hammer. Although the historian J.A. Philip argues that there is no real evidence proving Pythagoras' 'discovery', William Harris Stahl points out that Pythagoras' findings are recounted in much the same manner by classical writers such as Nichomachus, Iamblichus and Boethius.⁴⁵ Iamblichus' reconstruction of the Pythagorean myth tells how Pythagoras recognized the harmony of the diapason, the diapente and the diatessaron at the sound of the hammer on the anvil. This incidence, Iamblichus explains, led Pythagoras to conclude that sound differences were made from the magnitude of the hammers.⁴⁶

Discovering that the only difference between the hammers was their weight, Pythagoras found that their weights were related in the ratio 4:3, 3:2 and 2:1 and, to prove

⁴³ Phillip, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism*, p. 17.

⁴⁴ W.K. C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and the Greek Religion: A study of Orphic Movement* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 2nd edition 1952), p. 220.

⁴⁵ Phillip, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism*, p. 125; Macrobius' *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, trans. William Harris Stahl (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952, 1990), p. 19.

⁴⁶ Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras*, p. 62. The diapason is a term used by Greek theorists to designate an octave, either the interval or the scale. The diapente and diatessaron refer to the ancient Greek names for the interval of the fifth and fourth intervals respectively. In musical terms these intervals are the distance measured in whole-tones and semitones from one extreme to the other in a scale, including the bottom and top notes.

his hypothesis, he allegedly hung weights corresponding to these hammers from equally long strings and found that the same intervals were produced.⁴⁷ From this he ascertained that the sympathetic relationship, that we now term the octave, comes from exactly doubling or halving the string length, that is, in a 1:2 proportion, while the harmonious fifth – the interval between any two notes that are four diatonic scale degrees apart (such as C-G, D-A), which is the sum of three whole tones and a diatonic semitone – has a 2:3 ratio and the fourth 3:4.⁴⁸ While this attribution is now considered a constructed fiction, it illustrates the Pythagorean understanding of the sympathetic frequencies and harmony of the universe, encompassed in the metaphysical expression of the music of the spheres: where the movements of the celestial bodies – the sun, the moon and planets – produce a celestial music that provides a new basis for theorizing about the effects of music on the soul.⁴⁹

The musical intervals Pythagoras discovered in his experiments with the harmonics of vibrating strings were, he determined, similar to the intervals of the planets thought to revolve around the earth in spheres.⁵⁰ Thus their wandering movements could be explained in terms of universal harmony for, according to Hippolytos (400B.C.), ‘Pythagoras maintained that the universe sings and is constructed in accordance with harmony; and he was the first to reduce the motions of the seven heavenly bodies to rhythm and song’.⁵¹ Just as Pythagoras perceived the heavens as a tuned stringed instrument, so man could acquire an analogous harmonious tuning, spiritually as well as medically.⁵² Discussing

⁴⁷ Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, p. 381.

⁴⁸ Murchie, *Music of the Spheres*, p. 361.

⁴⁹ West, in *Music as Medicine*, p. 56.

⁵⁰ Musical intervals are defined as the distance measured in whole-tones and semitones in a musical scale, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/09616>, accessed 28.03.2012.

⁵¹ Murchie, *Music of the Spheres*, p. 67.

⁵² Lawrence J. Ross, ‘Shakespeare’s “Dull” Clown’, p. 109.

harmony in a letter to the philosopher and musician Benivieni, Ficino recalls ‘the manner of the Pythagoreans who affirm a celestial harmony’ derived from a ‘celestial power’.⁵³ It is this harmony that transforms the world into the image of a harmonious heavenly melody.⁵⁴

Throughout the history of western music, the ratios of the fifth, fourth and the octave have maintained the status of perfect consonance.⁵⁵ Greek theorists describe the musical octave – either the interval or the scale – as the diapason, while the terms diapente and diatessaron specifically refer to the fifth and fourth intervals respectively.⁵⁶ These ancient intervals and ratios have important implications for harmony and modulation and are, I argue, fundamental for the understanding of early modern constructs of harmony, as seen, for example, in William Baldwin’s *A Maruelous hystory intitulede, beware the cat, Conteyning diuers woundefull and incredible matters. Very plesant and mery to read* (1570).⁵⁷

In the second part of this satirical prose fiction, Streamer, the principal narrator’s description of the cat’s singing implies discordance, since he recalls, they ‘observed no musical chords, neither diatesseron, diapente, nor diapason’.⁵⁸ Streamer’s contrast of the cat’s discordance with a highly resonant Christian image of harmony is achieved through his evocation of the second century Christian apologist, Tatian, whose *Diatessaron* is a

⁵³ Ficino, *Letters*, Letter 76, vol. vii, p. 86.

⁵⁴ Schmitt and Skinner, *Renaissance Philosophy*, p. 68.

⁵⁵ <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/09616>, accessed 28.03.2012.

⁵⁶ <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/07720>.
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/07721>.
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/07726>, accessed 28.03.2012.

⁵⁷ William Baldwin, (1584) *A Maruelous hystory intitulede, beware the cat, Conteyning diuers woundefull and incredible matters. Very plesant and mery to read*. [Imprinted at London: At the long shop adioyning vnto Saint Mildreds Church in the pultrie by Edward Alde]. British Library.
<http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 99847961, accessed 28.03.2012. All citations are to this edition.

⁵⁸ Baldwin, *A Maruelous hystory intitulede, beware the cat*, p. Cv, accessed 28.03.2012.

study of harmony through the unification of the four gospels into a single narrative that resolves contradictions.⁵⁹

Andrew Hadfield, acknowledging the challenges of Baldwin's elaborate anti-Catholic text, interprets the cacophony as representational of the multitudinous voices submerged beneath a united England that only become apparent when they pose a threat to authority.⁶⁰ He argues that Grimalkin's story serves as a warning of the potential dangers Ireland – a superstitious and divided land – poses to England in light of the establishment of a homogeneous rule of law with the declaration of Henry VIII as King of Ireland in 1541.⁶¹ While Baldwin exploits these uncertainties, his exposure of the dark and subversive world of the cats simultaneously illuminates their shift away from the purity of early Christianity, setting their 'disordered and monstrous' sound in opposition to 'the harmony of the moving of the spheres, which noise excelled all other'.⁶² Baldwin's narrative provides a sense of alienation and otherness that informs the multi-layered nature of this text. Looking to the past for legitimation, his juxtaposition of voices against Tatian's religious and musical imagery, suggests that contradictions can be harmoniously reconciled through religious and political unity.

Pythagorean Cosmology and the Music of the Spheres

The Pythagoreans, Thomas J. Mathiesen notes, were 'particularly interested in the paradigmatic and mimetic characteristics of music, which they saw as underlying its power

⁵⁹ OED, <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/52106>, accessed 28.03.2012.

⁶⁰ Andrew Hadfield, *Literature, Travel, and Colonial Writings in the English Renaissance 1545-1625* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 144.

⁶¹ Hadfield, *Literature, Travel, and Colonial Writings*, p. 144.

⁶² Baldwin, *A Maruelous hystory intituled, beware the cat*, no page number, document image 24 of 43, accessed 28.03.2012.

in human life'.⁶³ They perceived the whole cosmos as a musical instrument with each component tuned harmoniously in a similar fashion to numerical ratios. Their concept of health, therefore, is intrinsic in the fabric of the music of the spheres, since the health of the body and soul could be explained as 'dependent on the proper 'attunement' ultimately reducible to numbers'.⁶⁴

Martin West suggests that the Greeks were familiar with the idea that music can alter the disposition of those who hear it: they recognized the powerful effect music had on the emotions.⁶⁵ This point is illuminated in the bucolic poem, *Cyclops (Theocritus II)* where the power of song, the poet Theocritus tells his medical friend, Nicias, is therapeutic since 'There's no drug' to 'cure desire; no/ Hot compress, powder, ointment, or suspension/ Except for song: a sweet alleviation.' In the poem the Cyclops, Polyphemus, 'melting with desire' for the sea-nymph, Galatea, cannot suppress the urge to sing, for, wounded with Aphrodite's' arrow, he needs to sing to her. His song, we are told, becomes his 'medicine', the vehicle that 'shepherded the ill/ Of his desire...the Muses' salve'.⁶⁶

The ancient Greeks believed that music and medicine had a natural affinity, as they were both linked to Apollo, the god of light, healing and music and, according to Pindar's third *Pythian Ode*, his son, Aesculapius the god of medicine.⁶⁷ Healing music, their physicians held, could cure insanity and restore deafness by musical incantations, opening up the spirit again to the influence of harmony. ⁶⁸ *Asclepieia* or healing centres, dedicated to Aesculapius, were established early throughout the Greek world; the most notable at

⁶³ Thomas J Mathiesen, 'Greek Music Theory', in *The Cambridge History of Western Music*, p. 114.

⁶⁴ West, *Ancient Greek Music*, p. 234.

⁶⁵ West, *Ancient Greek Music*, p. 31.

⁶⁶ Diana Arnson Svarlien, 'Cyclops (Theocritus 11),' *Arion*, Third Series, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Spring-Summer, 1997), pp. 161-163.

⁶⁷ As quoted in Guenter B. Risse, *Mending Bodies, Saving Souls: A History of Hospitals* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 21.

⁶⁸ Hoeniger, *Medicine and Shakespeare*, p. 263.

Epidaurus around the fifth century B.C. functioning not only as refuge for the sick, but also as a shelter for the healthy.⁶⁹ These temples, believed to have access to the divine world through oracles, prophecy and divination, created a 'reassuring channel of communication' used in times of personal or communal difficulties.⁷⁰

In addition to sacrifices and festivals, visitors to the *Asklepieia* undertook a process of preparation in order to ensure *katharoes*, that is, a ritual of moral and physical purity before approaching the divine.⁷¹ Part of that preparation was the singing of special hymns, or paeans, that were sung in praise of the divinity by supplicants or a temple choir. This form of holy song was performed as a measure against sickness, and was especially associated with the idea of purification.⁷² According to Galen, Asclepius asked supplicants to compose odes, comic skits, or songs designed to correct the *ametria* or imbalance of their emotions.⁷³ While West argues that paeans were not supposed to exercise a direct effect on the sufferers, rather working through an appeasement of the god which was causing the affliction, Risse suggests that perhaps the overall goal of visiting the *Asklepieia* was to forge a state of Aristotelian catharsis, whereby rituals containing melodies would cure anxiety and depression.⁷⁴

It was from the temple at Epidaurus that the cult of Asclepius spread throughout the Classical world, arriving in Rome in approximately 293 B.C., establishing a continuing tradition that was often recalled in the early modern period by poets and writers of music as well as medicine.⁷⁵ West argues that by the Roman period, evidence for the use of music

⁶⁹ Risse, *Mending Bodies, Saving Souls*, p. 21.

⁷⁰ Risse, *Mending Bodies, Saving Souls*, p. 24.

⁷¹ Risse, *Mending Bodies, Saving Souls*, p. 28.

⁷² West, in *Music as Medicine*, p. 54.

⁷³ Risse, *Mending Bodies, Saving Souls*, p. 31.

⁷⁴ West, in *Music as Medicine*, p. 55; Risse, *Mending Bodies, Saving Souls*, p. 30.

⁷⁵ Risse, *Mending Bodies, Saving Souls*, p. 22; Hoeinger, *Shakespeare and Medicine*, p. 264.

therapy had become largely anecdotal.⁷⁶ However, a formidable list of physicians who continued to use music therapy in their medical practice suggests otherwise. These include Asclepiades of Bithynia and Archigenes of Syria, who used musical therapy for the mentally ill; Celsus, who treated *tristes cogitationes* (possibly depression) with the use of cymbals, and Rufus of Ephesus, who recommended music, together with diluted wine, listening to poetry, and walking in gardens, for the relief of lovesickness. Cicero also recommends music therapy, writing how the blind Stoic, Diodotus, made use of lyre music in the Pythagorean manner to relax his mind, while the seventh book of Varro's lost *Disciplinae*, reproduced the Greek stories about Thaletas overcoming the plague in Sparta with his paeans.⁷⁷ In addition, Herophilus demonstrated how the principles of music had deeply penetrated medicine through his analysis of the nature of the pulse in relation to rhythmicity.⁷⁸

Both Apollo and Aesculapius were important deities for the Pythagoreans, who developed a form of musical therapy for, as Iamblichus writes, Pythagoras 'thought that music greatly contributed to health, if used in a proper manner'.⁷⁹ He tells how Pythagoras attempers the irrational passions of the soul through appropriate music, producing 'the most beneficial correction of human manners and lives' for his disciples:

For when they went to bed they purified the reasoning power from the perturbations and noises to which it had been exposed during the day, by certain odes and peculiar songs, and by this means procured for themselves tranquil sleep, and few and good dreams. But when they rose from bed, they again liberated themselves from the torpor and heaviness of sleep, by songs of another kind. Sometimes, also, by musical sounds alone, unaccompanied with words, they healed the passions of the soul and certain diseases, enchanting, as they say, in reality.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ West, in *Music as Medicine*, p. 61.

⁷⁷ West, in *Music as Medicine*, pp. 61-62; Hoeinger, *Shakespeare and Medicine*, p. 264.

⁷⁸ Schullian and Schoen, *Music and Medicine*, p. 68.

⁷⁹ Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras*, p. 88.

⁸⁰ Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras*, p. 61.

Pythagoras owed the efficacy of his music therapy to his judicious arrangement of apposite melodies. As West notes, his use of incantations and paeans as well as pure music for healing the sick, clearly highlights the potency of music itself.⁸¹ The monophonic paeans he sang, on his lyre created an intimate connection with the healing powers of the mythological Arion, Amphion and Orpheus.⁸² Thus Pythagorean music was believed to hold magical powers and deemed suitable for purifying the soul.⁸³ This is, I argue, the most fundamental tenet of Pythagorean medicine, for his teachings offered the hope of divine perfection effected from the contemplation of the universal order revealed in nature: it implies that Pythagorean music could unite the most discordant and incongruous elements into pure harmony, restoring tranquility.

W.K.C. Guthrie's examination of the Orphico-Pythagorean relationship demonstrates the problems of trying to separate out the mythological and philosophical components that bind the two: not least since Pythagoras composed songs under the name of Orpheus.⁸⁴ While Orphic and Pythagorean cosmology differs in terms of mysticism versus a rational, mathematical explanation, the Pythagorean cosmology is permeated with moral dualism - a mixture, for example of the principles of limit and light with the unlimited and darkness - and this forms the basis of the Orphic religion.⁸⁵ The continuing complexity of this relationship is borne out, for example, in Henry Reynolds' *Mythomystes* (1632) where he writes that Pythagoras has 'the theology of *Orpheus* as his copy and patterne, by which

⁸¹ West, *Ancient Greek Music*, p. 33.

⁸² Monophonic music was composed on a single melodic line. The language sung to such music was organized by the quantity of vowels, Smith, *The Acoustic World*, p. 296.

⁸³ West, in *Music as Medicine*, p. 54.

⁸⁴ Guthrie, *Orpheus and the Greek Religion*, p. 217.

⁸⁵ Guthrie, *Orpheus and the Greek Religion*, pp. 218-219.

hee formed and fashioned his philosophy'.⁸⁶ As Margaret Healy demonstrates, this poetic treatise, tracing a line of intellectual contemplation on 'the knowledge of the wise and hidden wayes & workings of our great Gods hand-maid, Nature', from the 'Auncients Poets' (p.169) to the Renaissance, places Pythagoras, along side Orpheus, Zoroaster, Hermes Trismegistus and Plato at the heart of the *Theologia Philosophica* (p. 164).⁸⁷ Nature and spiritual regeneration is, *Mythomystes* suggests, framed upon the mathematical basis of Pythagorean geometry associated with the harmony and perfection that gave rise to the music of the spheres.⁸⁸

This celestial music is, I argue, not simply a metaphor, since the soul's striving to imitate the order and harmony of the universe underpinned the Pythagorean belief in the use of therapeutic music. The idea that certain melodies and rhythms exercised a healing, purifying effect on human actions and passions by restoring harmony as medicine has important implications for early modern literature for, as I shall demonstrate in chapter 3, this ancient belief gives a classical authority to writers such as Shakespeare, providing a dramatic paradigm of spiritual and physical healing, as seen, for example, in the discourse between Lorenzo and Jessica in Act 5 of *The Merchant of Venice* (5.1.53-67).⁸⁹

In *The Metaphysics* Aristotle tells us that one of the fundamental principles of Pythagorean cosmology is the doctrine that held numbers to be the primary constituents of the world, since 'the principles of mathematical entities were the principles of all entities'.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Henry Reynolds, 'Mythomystes' (1632), in J.E. Spingarn (ed.) *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1957), p. 153. All citations are to this edition.

⁸⁷ Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy*, pp. 53-54.

⁸⁸ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent philosophers*, Books VI-X, Vol. II, trans. R.D. Hicks, LOEB Classical Library (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1925, 2005), p. 331.

⁸⁹ Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, p. 1139.

⁹⁰ Aristotle, *The Metaphysics* Penguin Classics, trans. Hugh Lawson-Tancred (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2004), p. 19.

The universe could, therefore, be interpreted and understood in terms of mathematical relationships and harmonic proportions, for the Pythagoreans saw the world not as a *creatio ex nihilo* but as an evolution from some indeterminate state to its present form.⁹¹ Their cosmology envisaged a universe developed by the generation of numbers from the initial One – the Monad – which “breathed in” a piece of infinity thereby dividing itself into two.⁹² Further generation created the members of the divine order, that is, the order of the gods (divine number), the intelligible (ideal numbers), the intellectual level followed by mathematical reality to which the soul is proximate and finally the multiplicity of enmattered forms (physical numbers) which organize the material world.⁹³

Aristotle proceeds to explain the fundamental principles of the Pythagorean One-universe and number-sensibles, stating that one of their primary doctrines held numbers to be the primary constituents of the world, since ‘the principles of mathematical entities were the principles of all entities’.⁹⁴ Deriving their number theory from their cosmology, the Pythagoreans believed that numbers were living symbols, references to greater universal truths since their mathematics acted as an intermediary, purifying the soul for higher vision.⁹⁵ As the ‘ultimate constituents of reality’ their veneration of the power of number in ordering the world was represented in the mystical *tetractys*.⁹⁶ Closely connected to Delphi, ‘the seat of the highest and most secret wisdom’, and described as holding the secret of the world, the *tetractys* was a central doctrine of Pythagorean cosmology.⁹⁷ Representing the sum of the first four numbers (1+2+3+4=10), it was regarded by the

⁹¹ Philip, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism*, p. 60.

⁹² West, in *Music and Medicine*, p. 64.

⁹³ Dominic J. O’ Meara, *Pythagoras Revived: Mathematics and Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 117.

⁹⁴ Aristotle, *The Metaphysics*, p.19.

⁹⁵ O’ Meara, *Pythagoras*, p. 90.

⁹⁶ Heninger, *Sweet Harmony*, p. 71.

⁹⁷ Burkert, *Lore and Science*, p. 187.

Pythagoreans as the source of all things for it described the finite universe.⁹⁸ Because it includes all its preceding numbers, the *tetractys* is an expression of the creative process, since it can be repeated indefinitely and reproduced an infinite number of times, making the finite the metaphor for infinity.⁹⁹ Represented geometrically as a square – a finite figure with four sides – the *tetractys* also suggests harmonic ratios, since the four numbers contain the basic intervals – the fourth, fifth, octave and double octave.¹⁰⁰ Thus, Iamblichus, anticipating the Myth of Er, describes the *tetractys* as ‘the harmony in which the Sirens sing’.¹⁰¹ The complexity of this metaphor is illustrated in Michael Maier’s emblem 21 of *Atalanta Fugiens* (1617) where the squaring of the circle encapsulates the reduction of the infinite to the finite, which is, transmuting the divine to the physical, suggesting a unified cosmos.¹⁰²

The Pythagorean interest in the nature of numbers is reflected in the metaphysical speculations of the early modern period: their emphasis on number is evident, for example, in alchemical tracts as well as discernable in the works of men such as Kepler and Copernicus. Alchemical theory, in particular, consisted of ideas from the writings of Pythagoreans, Plato and Aristotle, for the mathematical and geometrical conceptions exemplify the Pythagorean emphasis on number.¹⁰³ John Read suggests that alchemy derived its mystical relationship with numbers partly from Pythagorean doctrines, especially the tetractinal concept as the number ten was assigned to the Philosopher’s Stone.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ OED, <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/199828>, accessed 20.05.2012.

⁹⁹ Heninger, *Sweet Harmony*, p. 206.

¹⁰⁰ Burkert, *Lore and Science* Press, p. 72.

¹⁰¹ Iamblichus as quoted in Burkert, *Lore and Science*, p. 187.

¹⁰² Maier, *Atalanta Fugiens*, p. 147; Heninger, *Sweet Harmony*, p. 111.

¹⁰³ Read, *Prelude to Chemistry*, p. 249.

¹⁰⁴ Read, *Prelude to Chemistry*, p. 248.

Stemming from the close association between Pythagorean number and music, a tradition existed in alchemical and medical literature that believed musical harmonies could purge and purify the passions of the soul.¹⁰⁵ It is this belief that underpins the notion of divine contemplation and meditation in philosophical alchemy, as highlighted in Norton's *Ordinall* of 1477, where he attaches a Pythagorean interpretation of music to the laboratory operations of alchemy. Norton's use of the terms diapason, diatesseron and diapente recalls the musical intervals of the octave, a fourth and a fifth respectively 'which in Musick be / With their proporcions causen Harmony', suggesting the significance of an inner spiritual harmony in order to undertake The Great Work.¹⁰⁶ This particular strand of Pythagoreanism finds repeated expression in alchemical literature, as found, for example in an illustration from Heinrich Khunrath's *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae* (1609) where the praying figure contemplates the pentagram – the badge of the Pythagorean Brotherhood, while the motto, foregrounded and central to the picture reads 'sacred music disperses sadness and malignant spirits.'¹⁰⁷

The Pythagorean fascination with number underscores their perception of the ratios of fourth, fifth and octave to which they attributed mystical significance, and which could therefore, be extended beyond music into understanding and interpreting their cosmology.¹⁰⁸ This long tradition of calculating ratios for the various intervals in each type of scale provides, Martin West argues, a new basis for theorizing about the effects of music

¹⁰⁵ Hoeniger, *Medicine and Shakespeare*, p. 263.

¹⁰⁶ Ashmole, Elias, (1652) *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum. Containing severall poetickall pieces of four famous English philosophers, who have written the Hermetique mysteries in their owne ancient language. / Faithfully collected into one volume, with annotations thereon, by Elias Ashmole, Esq. Qui est Mercuriophilus Anglicus. The first part.* <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books online, eebo citation: 99865134, Chapter 5, p. 60, k2v, accessed 09.08.2011. All citations are to this edition.

¹⁰⁷ Read, *Prelude to Chemistry*, p. 252.

¹⁰⁸ West, *Ancient Greek Music*, p. 235.

on the soul and therefore can be harnessed for healing.¹⁰⁹ The Pythagorean discovery of the mathematical basis of musical intervals led to the conviction that number is ‘a living, qualitative reality which must be approached in an experimental manner...number is not something to be used; rather, its nature is to be discovered’.¹¹⁰

Aristotle writing in *The Metaphysics* states that the Pythagoreans, conceiving the heavens as a harmony and a number, speculated that just as numbers hold the principle of odd and even, so too did the cosmos contain the principles of opposite entities¹¹¹ Originating from this hypothesis emerges the Table of Opposites, where opposing pairs were added to the primary opposition of Limit/Unlimited, which characterizes our world as inherent in the One.¹¹² It is the reconciliation of these principles that leads to universal harmony, and order and contemplation of this harmony, leads to a similar harmony in the soul.

This model was assimilated into Pythagorean medicine as the principle of *contraria contraries curantur* (opposites are healed by opposites), were, according to Iamblichus, harmonic melodies where played to dispel emotional disturbances, restoring ‘balance’ in the patient, just as if the music had been tempered with health-giving medicines.¹¹³ It is from this account that Peregrine Horden incorrectly identifies the Pythagoreans as the first group to have ‘used music systematically as a vehicle for therapy, for bodily as well as psychological ailments, for as my Introduction demonstrates, some of the oldest fables tell

¹⁰⁹ West, in *Music as Medicine*, p. 56.

¹¹⁰ Kenneth Sylvan Gutheris, (ed.) *The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library: An Anthology of Ancient Writings which relate of Pythagoras and Pythagorean Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Phanes Press, 1987), p. 21.

¹¹¹ Aristotle, *The Metaphysics*, p. 21.

¹¹² Philip, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism*, p. 52.

¹¹³ Schullian and Schoen, *Music and Medicine*, p. 71.

us about the power of healing music.¹¹⁴

Historical tracts reveal how the ancient Egyptians called music psychic for the soul, and had faith in its remedial virtues, while the Persians are believed to have cured various maladies by the sound of the lute.¹¹⁵ The Pythagorean doctrine of assuaging the passions of the human soul, through the emotional effect of music, is most likely based on an older tradition since the Greeks adopted Egyptian, Lydian and Phoenician traditions in their music theory.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, classical sources suggest that Pythagoras and his disciples believed that good health could be maintained if music was an inherent part of daily living, since they conceived man's soul as a harmony. Consequently they considered order and proportion as necessary for the soul's virtue and devoted themselves to music for, virtue is harmony and health.¹¹⁷

It was their conviction of the relationship between the harmony of the universe and the soul of man that provided a therapeutic modality. This conviction is present in the roots of early modern beliefs about health and disease, for it seeks to maintain a harmonious balance – considered a preliminary condition for life and health –between body, soul and spirit, through music.¹¹⁸ Since the task of music is the balancing of this harmony, Jocelyn Godwin suggests that the cathartic and harmonizing power of music shares a commonality with other healing arts since it strives for humoral equilibrium.¹¹⁹ Referenced in my Introduction, this Galenic model – that dominated medical practice for centuries– derived in part from Empedocles of Agrigento's hypothesis of a universe composed of the four

¹¹⁴ Horden, *Music as Medicine*, p. 45.

¹¹⁵ Pallin and Chiron, 'Indication for Music in Anaesthesia', p. 195.

¹¹⁶ Emil Naumann, *The History of Music*, Vol. 1, trans. F. Praeger (London, Paris & Melbourne: Cassell & Company, Limited, 1880), p. 2.

¹¹⁷ Schullian and Schoen, *Music and Medicine*, p. 56.

¹¹⁸ Margaret Healy, *Fictions of disease in Early Modern England: Bodies, Plagues and Politics* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), p. 19.

¹¹⁹ Godwin, in *Atalanta Fugiens*, p. 22.

elements of fire, air, earth and water, as well as the Pythagorean stress on the number four and the theory of reconciling opposites.¹²⁰ According to this model, disorder in the mind and body had ramifications for man and the elements, since they were all inextricably linked in the macrocosm-microcosm analogy.¹²¹ Given that illness implied a moral consideration in the early modern period, the Pythagorean model provided a classical authority for understanding and treating bodily disorders.¹²² Just as medicine derived the four elements of the body (microcosm) from the four cosmic elements that constituted the world (macrocosm), so too, did music bring different elements together in harmony, whether in the cosmos or in the human body.¹²³

Modes of Musical Representation

Martin West suggests that it is debatable whether music exercised any effect on the emotions in antiquity.¹²⁴ I argue that overall, the classical writers appear to believe in the efficacy of the various musical modes and musical rhythms, not merely as ancillary devices for incantations, but by containing a healing power within themselves. One of the determining factors in classical music therapy was the type of musical instrument played, for the principal instruments, the lyre and the aulos – a pipe with finger holes and a reed mouthpiece, were differentiated in terms of their psychological or therapeutic effects.¹²⁵

According to Iamblichus, Pythagoras preferred the lyre to the pipes: instruments ‘calculated to incite insolence’, although their music was believed by some to be effective in treating

¹²⁰ Introduction, p. 2; Guthrie, *A History of Medicine*, p. 50.

¹²¹ Healy, *Fictions of disease*, p. 20.

¹²² Healy, *Fictions of disease*, p. 22.

¹²³ Schullian and Schoen, *Music and Medicine*, p. 122.

¹²⁴ West, in *Music as Medicine*, p. 59.

¹²⁵ West, *Ancient Greek Music*, p. 81; West, in *Music as Medicine*, p. 59.

certain afflictions.¹²⁶

From the second half of the fifth century, theorists began to discuss the effect different kinds of music had on the emotions, with Damon's essay describing six different musical modes – specifying the notes and intervals in each – that were connected with different ethical qualities.¹²⁷ In an effort to ensure that the youth receive the 'right' kind of influences, he argues for a state regulation of music in education for, Damon writes, song and dance set up particular commotions in the soul, laying down patterns that could shape the unformed character.¹²⁸ Pythagoras likewise strove for ethical perfection in music since he believed order and proportion to be the essence of life. It was his belief that if one employed music in daily life according to a prescribed manner, it would make a beneficial contribution to one's health.¹²⁹

Plato and Aristotle, aware of the power of music to alter the human condition, were both clearly influenced by Damon's ethical musical theories, as demonstrated in *Republic* and *Laws* and *The Politics*.¹³⁰ Plato, however, only approves of the Dorian and the Phrygian modes that were generally agreed to be markedly distinct in character.¹³¹ The Dorian mode, linked with lyre-playing, was considered dignified and manly, and was associated with processional, paeans, songs of love and tragic laments.¹³² Plato commends the man who renders 'his own life harmonious by fitting his deeds to his words in a truly Dorian

¹²⁶ Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras*, p. 60, West, *Ancient Greek Music*, p. 33.

¹²⁷ West, *Ancient Greek Music*, pp. 246-249.

¹²⁸ West, *Ancient Greek Music*, p. 247.

¹²⁹ Schullian and Schoen, *Music and Medicine*, p. 56.

¹³⁰ Plato, *Republic*, Book III, 398a-412a; *Laws*, Book II, 652a-674c, pp. 1344-1364 and Book III, 700 a-c, pp. 1388-1389, in *Complete Works*; Aristotle, *The Politics* trans. T.A. Sinclair (London and New York: Guild Publishing, 1962, 1990), Book VIII, 1339a11 -1342b17, pp. 460-476. All citations are to this edition.

¹³¹ Plato, *Republic III*, 399a, in *Complete Works*, p. 1036.

¹³² West, *Ancient Greek Music*, p. 179.

mode'.¹³³ It has, Aristotle argues an 'ethical value, which should be used in education since music 'promotes civilized pursuits, by way of relaxation and relief after tension'.¹³⁴

Conversely the Phrygian mode, associated with the aulos, was used for a range of moods, from wild excitement to religious frenzy.¹³⁵ While Plato appears to ignore this aspect of Phrygian music, Aristotle writes:

It is to be regretted that Socrates in the *Republic* singled out the Phrygian mode to be added to the Dorian – and this in spite of having rejected altogether, from among the instruments, the use of the pipes. Yet among the modes the Phrygian has exactly the same effect as the pipes among instruments: both are orgiastic and emotional, for all Bacchus frenzy and all similar agitation are associated with the pipes more than with other instruments¹³⁶

Pythagoras considered Phrygian music to be loutish and vulgar, notorious for inflaming the passions, although a number of classical authors describe its medical uses: Aristoxenus used the aulos to cure a man who could not stand the sound of a trumpet, while according to Theophrastus; sufferers from sciatica could be cured if the aulos was played over the affected part. Theophrastus also writes that fainting, panic attacks and epilepsy could be alleviated by the sound of the aulos and Bolus of Mendes also lists a number of ailments that could be cured by aulos-playing, including snakebites.¹³⁷

Although this latter cure is suggestive of the Orphic attempt to rescue Eurydice – who died from snakebite - from Hades, it is the enchanting strains of Orpheus' lyre that charms the monsters and gods of the underworld and not the music of the aulos.¹³⁸ However, although the lyre was sacred to Apollo and represented harmony, the dual nature of its

¹³³ Plato, *Laches*, 188d, in *Complete Works* p. 674.

¹³⁴ Aristotle, *The Politics*, Book VIII, 1341b32, p. 473.

¹³⁵ West, *Ancient Greek Music*, p. 180.

¹³⁶ Aristotle, *The Politics*, Book VIII, 1342a28 p. 475.

¹³⁷ West, in *Music as Medicine*, pp. 60-61.

¹³⁸ Emmet Robbins, 'Famous Orpheus' in John Warden (ed.) *Orpheus, The Metamorphoses of a Myth* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1982), p. 17.

original creator, Mercury, becomes inherent in the instrument itself.¹³⁹ Therefore, while Orphic music was believed to be calm and soothing, used to tame the irrational forces of nature, the lyre's Mercurial aspect suggests a potentially dissembling nature in the instrument itself, as evidenced in the tragedy of Orpheus: as the enchanted singer who can control the irrational forces of nature, he cannot escape his or Eurydice's fate.

Apollo, however, adds a further two strings to the lyre Mercury gives him, and it was this seven string lyre that Apollo presented to Orpheus, representing the harmony of the spheres since the seven strings are analogous with the seven planets, symbolizing the universe and the human soul.¹⁴⁰ Thus musicality – the philosophical foundation of the Orphic myth – generates, Wilfrid Mellers suggests, equilibrium since man is given the potential to regain his spirituality through the utterance of sound.¹⁴¹ The lyre, therefore, may be said to contain a protean magic, since its music has the power to purify the soul in its ascent from the lower to the upper world.¹⁴²

The Pythagorean Tradition

The influence of Pythagorean musical healing is not only implicit in Plato's myth of Er, but also evident in his other major works. In the *Symposium*, for example, his consideration of the 'two species of love' is likened to the 'radical dissimilarity between healthy and diseased constitutions' (186b, p. 470). 'Medicine', Plato tells us, is 'simply the science of the effects of Love on repletion and depletion of the body' and the task of the physician is

¹³⁹ Wilfrid Mellers, *The masks of Orpheus: Seven stages in the story of European music* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), p. 2.

¹⁴⁰ Warden, in *Orpheus: The Metamorphoses of a Myth*, p. 93.

¹⁴¹ Mellers, *The masks of Orpheus*, p. 2.

¹⁴² West, in *Music as Medicine*, p. 60.

‘to effect reconciliation and establish mutual love between the most basic bodily elements’ (186d, p. 470). Citing Asclepius as the first physician to reconcile ‘concord and love’, Plato demonstrates how the principals of music may be applied to medicine since ‘music, like medicine, creates agreement by producing concord and love between these various opposites’ (187c, p. 471).

In *Phaedo*, Plato again stresses the importance of achieving a harmonious relationship between the body and soul, suggesting any disorder in the soul may respond to a correctly tuned instrument:

One might make the same argument about harmony, lyre and strings, that a harmony is something invisible, without body, beautiful and divine in the attuned lyre, whereas the lyre itself and its strings are physical, bodily, composite, earthy and akin to what is mortal. (86a. p.75)

If the lyre strings are broken, Plato tells us, then the harmony that is akin to the divine and immortal is destroyed as well. This metaphorical imagery of a well-tuned instrument conceptualizes the relationship between the body and soul of the well-tempered man and is one that is repeatedly replicated in early modern literature.¹⁴³ John Donne’s meditation in his *Hymn to God My God, in My Sickness*, likens himself to an instrument that needs to be more finely tuned, for ‘Since I am coming to that holy room’ he shall be ‘made thy music’ and therefore, he must ‘tune the instrument here at the door’ of resurrection.¹⁴⁴

The belief in the body requiring ‘tuning’ to achieve a perfect harmony is one that

¹⁴³ West, in *Music and Medicine*, p. 64.

¹⁴⁴ John Donne, ‘Hymn to God My God, in My Sickness’ in *Donne, Selected Poetry* (ed.) John Hayward (Penguin Books Ltd., 1950), p. 177.

Aristotle, who inherited the Pythagorean theory of music, also ascribes to, for:

music has indeed the power to induce a certain character of soul...there seems to be a certain affinity between us and music's harmonies and rhythms; so that many experts say that the soul is a harmony, others that it has harmony.¹⁴⁵

Just as the Pythagorean mathematical universe was composed of harmonic relationships that were reflected in man, so Plato likewise conceptualized the soul in terms of revolutions analogous to the heavenly bodies. Since music, the soul, and the universe were governed by the same principles of mathematical order and proportion, the human response to music, and how it affected moods, had a rational explanation, for 'as the eyes fasten on astronomical motions', Plato argues, 'so the ears fasten on harmonic ones'.¹⁴⁶ Thus the musical scale provided the paradigm of a proportional relationship that was matched at the cosmic level by the ordered rotations of the seven planetary spheres.¹⁴⁷

Plato's treatment of music was especially influenced by the Pythagorean tradition in *Timaeus*, where he presents a detailed model of the soul of the universe. Based on a series of characteristic Pythagorean ratios, this model is known as the Platonic lambda – the geometrical expression of harmonic proportions -where the meaning of numbers engage with each other in a complex dimension. From the monad, that is one, proceeds two, the first even number, which is then multiplied in geometric progression to produce the numbers four and eight. In the other direction, the monad proceeds to three, which is also multiplied to produce the number nine and twenty-seven.¹⁴⁸

Emerging from this sophisticated concept is the world soul, the 'most excellent of all

¹⁴⁵ Aristotle, *The Politics*, 1340b10, pp. 466-467.

¹⁴⁶ Plato, *Republic*, VII, 530d, in *Complete Works*, p. 1146.

¹⁴⁷ West, in *Music and Medicine*, pp. 64-65.

¹⁴⁸ Heninger, *Sweet Harmony*, p. 210.

that is intelligible and eternal'.¹⁴⁹ While Plato describes how god fashioned the world soul in *Timaeus*, since he sees god as working through the numerical proportions and harmonic ratios, it is Macrobius (circa 400A.D.) in his *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* (? 395-410 A.D.) who explains the complexity of Plato's lambda.¹⁵⁰ Imitating Plato's Vision of Er, the *Commentary* is chiefly concerned with the Pythagorean numerical ratios of the chords in the harmony of the spheres, for the divine Creator used these ratios in weaving the fabric of the world soul. It is understandable, he reasons, to assume that harmonious sounds come from the rotations of the heavenly spheres, for 'sound has to come from motion, and Reason, which is present in the divine, is responsible for the sounds being melodious' (Book 2, ch.1 [7] p.186). Drawing on the analogy of the seven planets, Macrobius explicates the number seven – the amount of numbers that construct the Platonic lambda – as the number from which the world soul is created (Book 1, ch.V1 [45] p.109).

Explaining how harmony may be traced to the world soul, Macrobius argues that 'every soul in this world is allured by musical sounds', for the soul, 'carries with it into the body a memory of the music which it knew in the sky'. Thus, 'every disposition of the soul is controlled by song', since music 'releases or recalls cares, it excites wrath and counsels mercy, it even heals the ills of the body, whence the statements that gifted men "sing out remedies" for the ailing' (Book 2, ch. III [7-9] p.195). It is evident from Macrobius' Neoplatonic text that the Pythagorean belief in the power of music to soothe, or even heal persists, since music is capable of increasing or diminishing the passions of the soul, thereby affecting its harmony. Representing the comprehensiveness of the natural order, music reconciles the opposites, bringing order out of chaos and generating unity through

¹⁴⁹ Plato, *Timaeus* 37a, p. 1240, in *Complete Works*, the proportions of the lambda are given between 34b-37d, pp. 1237-1241.

¹⁵⁰ Macrobius, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, p. 5.

divine geometry.

Aristotle continued developing the Pythagorean medico-musical tradition, arguing that music can not only stir up emotions, but can also purify these emotions with harmony. For Aristotle music had three functions; ‘to assist education’, for use in ‘cathartic purposes’ and ‘to promote civilized pursuits, by way of relaxation and relief after tension’.¹⁵¹ This suggests that Aristotle believed music should not be used always in the same manner, but selected according to the occasion. Since the soul rules the body, and music is similar to the soul, he argues, harmonies and melodies must affect the body and soul.¹⁵²

The Pythagorean belief in the harmony of the universe passed from late antiquity to the Church fathers where the legacies of the classical civilizations were transformed into a Christian cultural hierarchy: David, for example, becomes the new Orpheus, the symbol of human harmony.¹⁵³ Evidence of Augustinian thought is discernible in Boethius’ *De institutione musica*; however, it is Plato’s influence that has the most noticeable impact in this important book, written approximately around the middle of the first decade of the sixth century.¹⁵⁴ Although by the mid-sixteenth century he was often dismissed as lacking in relevance to early modern music theory, Boethius’ transmission of Greek music theory played an important role in the theoretical debates of this period, for *De institutione musica* formed the foundation of Western music theory.¹⁵⁵ Setting out the Platonic ideas of arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy, Boethius’ prime objective is the explanation of music principles through the Pythagorean understanding of number and proportion, for he

¹⁵¹ Aristotle, *The Politics*, 1341b32, p. 473.

¹⁵² Aristotle, *The Politics*, 1254b2, p. 68, 1339b42, p. 465, 1340a18, p. 465.

¹⁵³ Yates, *The French Academies*, p. 38.

¹⁵⁴ Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, *Fundamental of Music*, trans. Calvin M. Bower, (ed.) Claude V. Palisca (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1989), p. xix.

¹⁵⁵ Palisca, ‘Preface’, in *Fundamentals of Music*, pp. xiii-xiv.

writes, ‘music is so naturally united with us that we cannot be free from it even if we so desired’ (p.8).

Boethius developed a three-tiered cosmic model using the Pythagorean analogy of the sounding intervals of the octave, where the movements of the spheres, (*musica universalis* or *musica mundana*), the internal music of the human body (*musica humana*) and the audible sounds of music (*musica instrumentalis*) are all expressions of a divine intelligence manifesting through the various dimensions of creation.¹⁵⁶ Following Pythagorean doctrine, Boethius believed that the celestial music was inaudible to the human ear (p. 9) and yet he argues for its existence for, as he writes, it is ‘impossible that such extremely fast motion of such large bodies should produce absolutely no sound’ (p.9).

Referencing the Platonic metaphor of the body as a well-tuned lyre in *Phaedo*, Boethius suggests that ‘whoever penetrates into his own self perceives human music’ for he asks, ‘what unites the incorporeal nature of reason with the body if not a certain harmony’, one consonance that ‘unites the parts of the soul’ holding the body together in an ‘established order’ (p. 10). Music, he argues, has therapeutic qualities, for the body and soul are in accord and, recounting the Pythagorean tales of musically therapeutic interventions, Boethius cites similar examples of musical healing, such as that of Terpander and Arion of Methyma which saved the citizens of Lesbos and Ionia from serious illness through song (p. 6). ‘It is common knowledge’, Boethius writes, ‘that song has many times calmed rages, and that it has often worked great wonders on the affections of bodies or minds’ (p. 5). He does this to highlight the relationship between the body and the order of the soul, which explains why certain melodies will delight the ear, while others increase the

¹⁵⁶ Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music*, pp. 9-10; Thomas Christensen, ‘Introduction’, in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, p. 3.

disturbed states of mind (p. 7). The soul, however, is not only concordant with itself, but, because it is attuned to the Platonic *anima mundi* (the soul of the universe), it is conjoined with universal harmony, and all ages of mankind therefore, respond to music's soothing strains, for carefully chosen music will inculcate the 'proper' morals on heart and mind.¹⁵⁷

The belief that *musica mundana* was reflected in the human body as *musica humana* provided the basis for the revitalization of the ancient Greek Neoplatonic theory of macrocosm-microcosm in the early modern period for, as Godwin argues, 'nothing unites the parts of man, his body and soul, as does music, which is a conjunction of the rational and irrational.'¹⁵⁸ Because man was believed to be the ontological link between the harmonious unity of the macrocosm and microcosm, the notion of man as, 'a little world made cunningly' became commonplace in the Renaissance. Heninger argues, as demonstrated for example, in the poetry of Donne and the Mathematical Preface of John Dee's Euclid's *Elements of Geometry* where he defines Anthropographie as that:

Which describeth the Nu~ber, Measure, Waight, Figure, Situation, and colour of euery diuers thing contained in the perfect body of [...]AN: and geueth certaine knowledge of the Figure, Symmetri, Waight, Characterization, & due Locall motion of any p rcell of the sayd body assigned: and of numbers to the said p rcell appertaining.¹⁵⁹

Pico's plea to recall the Delphic precept to 'know thyself', 'invites and exhorts us', he

¹⁵⁷ Schullian and Schoen, *Music and Medicine*, p. 69.

¹⁵⁸ Godwin, in *Atalanta Fugiens*, p. 30.

¹⁵⁹ John Donne, 'Holy Sonnets V' in, *Donne, Selected Poetry*, p. 167; John Dee, (1570) *Mathematicall Praeface: annexed to Euclide (now first) published in our Englishe tounge. An. 1570. Febr. 3 in The elements of geometrie of the most auncient philosopher Euclide of Megara. Faithfully (now first) translated into the English tounge, by H. Billingsley, citizen of London. Whereunto are annexed certain scholies, annotations, and inuentions, ov the best mathematicians, both of time past, and in this our age. With a very fruitfull praeface made by M. I. Dee, specifying the chiefe mathematicall scie[n]ces, what they are, and whereunto commodious: where, also, are disclosed certaine new secrets mathematicall and mechanicall, vntill these our daies, greatly missed. Imprinted at London: by Iohn Daye, [1570 (3 Feb.)]* Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 99842412, np. document image 30 of 494, accessed 29.05. 2012; Heninger, *Sweet Harmony*, p. 189.

writes, 'to the study of the whole nature of which the nature of man is the connecting link'.¹⁶⁰ Thus the idea of knowing oneself becomes synonymous with knowing the world, and this explains Paracelsus' call for physicians to be experts in cosmology, since the relationship between macrocosm and microcosm constituted the basis of all medical knowledge.¹⁶¹

Evidence suggests that with the acquisition of the classical Greek medical works, Islamic medicine incorporated the use of music into its medical regimens. The treatment of man's body and soul, as an indivisible unity, was fundamental in their medicine, and they considered it the physician's task to restore the patient's harmonious equilibrium.¹⁶² While the physician Ibn 'Aqnin's discourse on the efficacy of music to alleviate mental illness in *Tibb Al-Nufus* (Hygiene of Souls), suggests that music may have been used in hospitals, similar to the Greek *Asclepieia*, the musician-physician, Ya 'qub ibn ishaq al-Kindi, believed that music was a decisive factor in the spiritual and philosophical equilibrium of man, for musical harmony explained the order and beauty of nature. This is the reason, he argues, why the correct use of music, at an appropriate time, has a healing influence on the body.¹⁶³

The transition of the Pythagorean tradition back to Western Europe led to the resurgence of a legacy which understood the rational universe in musical terms and aimed, in Ficinian terms, to 'raise the mind to the highest consideration and to God'.¹⁶⁴ Ficino's

¹⁶⁰ Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (1486), A Gateway Edition trans. A. Robert Caponigri (Los Angeles, Chicago and New York: Gateway Editions, Inc., 1956), p. 15. All citations are to this edition.

¹⁶¹ Don Parry Norford, 'Microcosm and Macrocosm in Seventeenth-Century Literature', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (Jul-Sept. 1977), pp. 409-428, p. 410.

¹⁶² Amnon Shiloah, 'Jewish and Muslim traditions of Music Therapy', in *Music and Medicine*, p. 81.

¹⁶³ Amnon Shiloah, in *Music and Medicine*, pp. 79-81.

¹⁶⁴ Angela Voss, 'Orpheus Redivivus: the Musical Magic of Marsilio Ficino' in Michael J.B. Allen and Valery Rees with Martin Davies, (eds.), in *Marsilio Ficino: His Theology, His Philosophy, His Legacy* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2002), p. 234.

medico-musical model, adapted to the harmonious alignment of body and soul, is a central link for this legacy; it provides the connection between the selected texts of this study.

This certainty in the power of healing music, based on the belief that cosmic harmony could be harnessed if the correct proportions could be found, extended into the seventeenth century.¹⁶⁵ Despite the development of polyphonous music in the late sixteenth century, Campion attempts to emulate the ancient music by matching the rhythm of the melody to the metre of the words of his ayres as I demonstrate in chapter 6. Bruce Smith suggests that Campion's collection of songs make the descriptions of cosmic music more than a metaphor since the songs are, according to the title page of *A Booke of Ayres* (1601), 'Set foorth to be song to the Lute, Orpherian, and Base Violl', that casts the singer into the role of Orpheus.¹⁶⁶ Campion's attempts were successful; one of his contemporaries, John Davies of Hereford, composed a sonnet entitled, 'To the most judicious and excellent Lyrick-Poet, Doctor Campion' (1611), in which he praises Campion, the 'rare doctor' who cures the body and the mind with his lyric poetry:

Never did Lyricks more than Happie straines
(Strained out of Arte by Nature, so, with ease,)
So purely hitt the moods and various vaines
Of musick and her hearers, as do these,
So canst cure the body and the minde
(Rare doctor) with thy two-folded soundest arte:
Hippocrates hath taught thee the one kinde;
Apollo and the Muse the other part:
And both so well, that thou with both dost please:
The Minde with pleasure, and the corps with ease.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Smith, *The Acoustic World*, p. 295.

¹⁶⁶ Thomas Campion, *A Booke of Ayres* (1601), in Percival Vivian, (ed.), *The Works of Thomas Campion*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), pp. 1-18. All citations are to this edition; Smith, *The Acoustic World*, p. 296.

¹⁶⁷ John Davies (1565?-1618) *The scourge of folly*. At London: Printed by E [dward]: A [llde]: for Richard Redmer sould at his shop at ye west gate of Paules, [1611]. British Library. STC (2nd ed.), <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.proxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 99845014, accessed 28.03.2012.

Music's healing powers were increasingly being explored by musical humanists such as Marin Mersenne and Pontus de Tyard, and by composers and poets who were striving to imitate the supernatural effects of music from ancient mythology.¹⁶⁸ They were searching for answers as to why the music of their period failed to reproduce the magical powers that music evoked in legends of, for example, Orpheus; and those of Arion whose songs charmed dolphins; and of Amphion who built the city walls of Thebes with music.¹⁶⁹ Scholars such as Gioseffe Zarlino, who explored the power of music in classical myths in his *Istitutioni harmoniche* (1558), and Baïf's *Académie de poésie et de musique* (1570), which – preceding Campion – aimed to re-establish in poetry and music the numerical harmony of the *musica mundana*, led the way in the development of a new philosophy of music.¹⁷⁰ This shift in thinking is discernable in wider cultural trends where music's healing properties and its link to the celestial harmony becomes a dominant trope in the literature of this period.¹⁷¹

Although it is not difficult to find seventeenth-century writers who satirized the audible existence of cosmic harmony, the distinctive Pythagorean tenet – that earthly music reflects the celestial harmony of the spheres – is reaffirmed by the literary responses in the plays of Shakespeare and Jonson as I argue in chapter 5.¹⁷² While we cannot determine how much Shakespeare believed in a musical cosmology, his work abounds with musical allusion, not merely as a dramatic or theatrical device but as a reference to this metaphysical dimension. It was, John H. Long argues, not an isolated phenomenon on Shakespeare's part but part of the milieu of his age, for this was a conventional way of

¹⁶⁸ Gouk, in *Music as Medicine*, p. 179.

¹⁶⁹ Hollander, *The Untuning of the Sky*, p. 14.

¹⁷⁰ Yates, *The French Academies*, p. 50.

¹⁷¹ Gouk, 'The role of harmonics in the scientific revolution', in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, p. 228.

¹⁷² Dixon, 'Meditation is the Musick of Souls', p. 190.

bridging the arts and natural philosophy.¹⁷³ Likewise, Ben Jonson illustrates harmonious resolution - based on a Platonic interpretation of love – in his play, *The New Inn* (1629), through the Lovers acquiring an insightful understanding of themselves and each other in the final Act.¹⁷⁴

This chapter has traced the development of the Pythagorean musical model of harmony and its subsequent intellectual treatment by Aristotle, Plato and Boethius. It explains the Pythagorean tuning system of ratios and proportions and how this is used to formulate a vision of a harmonious cosmos and man. It is this interpretation that informs the definition of health in its physicality but also its spiritual dimension. I have demonstrated the different musical modes that could arouse or calm the emotions. Chapter 2 examines a number of Ficino's writings, as his theory provides a clear explanation of music's therapeutic properties. His views provide the underlying framework for the work of Michael Maier, Robert Fludd and Thomas Campion, and their particular engagement and development of Ficino's therapeutic paradigm points to the early modern conviction in the physical power of music to penetrate the physical body and to work its physiological effects.

¹⁷³ John H. Long, *Shakespeare's Use of Music: A Study of the Music and its Performance in the Original Production of Seven Comedies* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1955), p. 187.

¹⁷⁴ Ben Jonson, *The Devil is an Ass and other plays*, Oxford World Classics Series (ed.) Michael Cordner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). All citations are to this edition.

Chapter 2

‘Through the lyre and song’: Marsilio Ficino’s Therapeutic Music¹

Introduction

As my introduction argues, Ficino’s belief in the healing powers of music is preeminent in his musico-magical doctrine, what is, Gary Tomlinson suggests, ‘one of the most comprehensively “musicalized” occult philosophies that the western world has created’.² This model’s revival of the philosophical tradition that includes, amongst others, Hermes Trismegistus, Pythagoras and Orpheus, propagates a belief in an ancient wisdom said to have been handed down from Adam.³ Drawing on various elements of intellectual thought within this tradition, and moulding them into a coherent whole, Ficino’s doctrine is, as Sarah Hutton points out, not strictly derived from the Platonic canon: the Aristotelian theory of emotional purgation, for example, plays an important role in Ficino’s musical aesthetics.⁴

Nevertheless, Ficino’s musico-magical doctrine has important implications: the conceptualization of music as universal harmony is intrinsic to Ficinian intellectual knowledge in that it gives a particular meaning to his medical writings – as demonstrated in his medical treatise, *De Triplica Vita* (1489).

For Ficino, who undertook ‘the medicine salutary to souls under Plato,’ music is an essential component of his natural magic, for he believed the role of music was to achieve

¹ Ficino, *Letters*, Vol. 8, Appendix A, p. 36.

² Tomlinson, *Music in Renaissance Magic*, p. xiv; Introduction, p. 17, p. 19 and pp. 29-30.

³ Baldwin and Hutton, *Platonism and the English Imagination*, p. 67.

⁴ Baldwin and Hutton, *Platonism and the English Imagination*, pp. 70-71.

a harmonious union with God by healing the rift between body and soul.⁵ He argued that the images of music's divine nature –the music of the mind of God and the music of the spheres-are reflected in the human soul. This reflection or 'music of the soul' is spread in the body 'by steps to all the limbs' and it is this music, Ficino suggests, that 'orators, poets, painters, sculptors and architects seek to imitate in their work' (Letter 92, vol. 1, p. 143). In his *De Rationibus musicae* Ficino assures the 'master musician' Domenico Benivieni that it is Hermes Trismegistus who declares 'true music', which is the harmony and motions of the mind that 'modulates notes' and sounds 'to charm our eyes' and has been 'assigned to us by God' so that we may imitate him in our reflections and honour his name in hymns and sounds (Letter 76, vol. 7, p. 82).

Although *De Vita* is Ficino's seminal work for discussing the power of music to preserve the health of the spirit, other works, in particular his *Platonic Theology*, *Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love* (1469) and more transparently, his collection of *Letters* likewise provide key textual evidence of this theory. In an important letter on music, addressed to Antonio Canigiani, Ficino writes that, it is hardly surprising that 'the soul and body are in harmony with each other by a natural proportion', for as 'Plato and Aristotle' taught, 'serious music maintains and restores this harmony to the parts of the soul while medicine restores harmony to the parts of the body', since 'the body and soul correspond with each other' (Letter 92, vol.1, p.142).

Thus Ficino makes it explicitly clear that his healing music emulates an ancient tradition of musical healing – derived from Apollo – and maintains a presence in medical practice, for music follows critical human events from conception to death and thus may be

⁵ Poem by Marsilio Ficino the Florentine of his Book "On Life" To the Magnanimous Lorenzo De' Medici Preserver of his Country, in *De Vita*, p. 103.

said to affect the very workings of life itself.⁶ Specific medical music was composed for wedding chambers to ensure consummation at the astrologically auspicious moment, while health spas played music to increase the efficacy of hydrotherapy.⁷ Banquet music was prescribed to aid digestion since the consumption of food was thought to stimulate humoral function. In addition music was played as an antidote to certain poisons, and was also believed to act as a stimulus in wound healing, thereby forming an important part of surgical care, as well as being used as an accompaniment to blood-letting.⁸ Following Avicenna and Galen – whose sixteen books on pulse distinguish twenty-seven separate varieties of the human pulse – medical theorists utilized musical ideals and performance in the diagnosis, prognosis and treatment of disease and death. In *The Conciliator* (1472), the physician Peter of Abano insisted that medical practitioners should not only know music theory but feel it in the pulse, for the pulse was believed to demonstrate the very nature of music.⁹

Significantly, music was used in the maintenance of public health: sufferers of contagious diseases, such as leprosy, were required by law to blow horns or sound clappers to warn of their approach, while outbreaks of epidemics, such as syphilis, was explained as a discord in the heavenly music – the disjuncture among the heavenly bodies.¹⁰ The microcosm reflected the created universe, the macrocosm, so the Boethian *musica humana* reflected the heavenly harmonies of the divinely ordered universe, for the rhythms of the human body echoed the music of the spheres. Ficinian medicine, based in this fundamental

⁶ Madeleine Pelner Cosman, 'Machaut's Medical Musical World' in *Machaut's World: Science and Art in the Fourteenth Century*, (eds.) Madeleine Pelner Cosman and Bruce Chandler Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, Vol. 314 (New York: 1978), p. 3.

⁷ Pelner Cosman, *Machaut's World*, p. 22 and p. 10.

⁸ Pelner Cosman, *Machaut's World*, p. 6.

⁹ Pelner Cosman, *Machaut's World*, p. 23 and p. 27.

¹⁰ Pelner Cosman, *Machaut's World*, p. 6.

precept, provides explanatory evidence and affirmation of the harmonic order of God's creation.

Ficino's Music-Spirit Theory

As a doctor and musician, Ficino's main aim was to arouse devotion, to compose an 'ordered song which is inside and outside the body'.¹¹ It is this principle that shapes his magico-musical philosophy which aimed to restore health after temporary insanity, and to act as a preventive for warding off disease.¹² However, because Ficino's holistic approach to healing revealed a new approach; modern scholarship suggests the need for a reinterpretation of music's role in Ficinian philosophy, due to its complexity and importance.¹³

Ficino's spirit-theory of music, posited the belief in a universe animated by a musical spirit; it is the breath of a musically proportioned cosmos that could revive man's spirits. An infusion of this celestial spirit into the soul could revive and reanimate as Orpheus proved. Ovid's myth relates how when Orpheus descended to Hades, his sad singing was so overwhelmingly powerful that 'The Furies' cheeks, it is said, were wet with tears/ And Hades' queen and he whose sceptre rules/ The Underworld could not deny the prayer.¹⁴ 'There is nothing' Henry Reynolds wrote in *Mythomystes* 'of greater efficacy than the

¹¹ Ficino, *Letters*, Vol.1, 'Introduction', p. 20; Ficino, *Platonic Theology*, 'Introduction', Vol. 1, p. x.

¹² Hoeniger, *Medicine and Shakespeare*, p. 266.

¹³ Angela Voss, 'Marsilio Ficino, the Second Orpheus', in *Music as Medicine*, p. 154.

¹⁴ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, X. 560-706, trans. A.D. Melville (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 226.

hymnes of Orpheus in naturall Magick, if the fitting musick, intention of the minde, and other circumstances which are knowne to the wise, bee considered and applied'.¹⁵

Ficino believed that everything in the world was animated by spirit, and since the universe was harmonious and mathematically ordered, music could transmit the celestial spirit. Ficino formulated his widely accepted music-spirit theory based on Pythagorean, Hermetic and Platonic music theory that utilized music for medical, magical or theurgic means that ultimately converge to purify body, *spiritus* and soul, for a life of contemplation will achieve knowledge and union with God.¹⁶

Ficino defines *spiritus* as 'the instrument of God Himself 'since it is 'the divine influence flowing from God, penetrating the Heavens, descending through the elements and halting in inferior matter'.¹⁷ It is the link between music and man, distributing its effects to both body and soul.¹⁸ Spirit, in the Galenic sense, was believed to be 'a most subtle vapour' that is, Robert Burton explains:

expressed from the blood and the instrument of the soul, to perform all his actions; a common tie or medium betwixt the body and the soul, as some will have it; or, as Paracelsus, a fourth soul of itself. ... Of these spirits there be three kinds, according to the principle parts, brain, heart, liver; natural, vital, animal.¹⁹

The 'natural' spirits aided physiological growth and reproduction; the 'vital' spirits sustained life-giving virtues, and the 'animal' spirits gave the soul the capabilities of sense and motion.²⁰ Although Ficino describes this threefold distinction of spirit, he concentrates

¹⁵ Reynolds, 'Mythomystes', in *Critical Essays*, p. 166.

¹⁶ Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, pp. 3-11; D.P. Walker, 'Ficino's "Spiritus" and Music,' *Extrait Des Annales Musicologiques*, Tome 1, Societe De Musique D' Autrefois (Paris, 1953), p. 132.

¹⁷ Ficino, *Platonic Theology Vol. 3, Book X: VII*, p. 173.

¹⁸ Joscelyn Godwin, *Harmonies of Heaven and Earth. Mysticism in Music from Antiquity to the Avant-Garde* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1987), p. 18.

¹⁹ Burton, *The anatomy of Melancholy*, part.1, sect. 1, member 2, subsection 2, B3r and B3v., accessed 15.02.2010.

²⁰ Finney, *Musical Backgrounds*, p.103.

on broadening the meaning of spirit from a medical to a cosmic one, thus his theory on *spiritus* is that it links mind and soul to body, and the soul to the Platonic *anima mundi* – the spirit that animated the whole universe.²¹

Ficino's likens the *spiritus* to an 'instrument' with which 'the priests of the Muses' are able to 'measure and grasp the whole world' and through which the 'natural, vital, and animal spirits' are themselves 'conceived, born and nourished' (*De Vita*, p. 111). 'Blood subserves the spirit; the spirit, the senses; and finally, the senses, reason', Ficino explains, because the spirit 'flies to the brain' after being 'generated by the heat of the heart out of the more subtle blood', from where the soul 'uses it continually for the exercise of the interior as well as the exterior senses' (*De Vita*, p. 111). This is particularly pertinent for scholars, he argues, because their 'repeated movements of inquiry' continually move and disperse the spirits that then have to be 'restored out of the more subtle blood'. When the 'more subtle and clear parts of the blood frequently get used up, the rest of the blood is necessarily rendered dense, dry and black.' This is why, he suggest, learned people are, or become, melancholic (*De Vita*, p. 115). To preserve the health of the spirit, avoid melancholy and prolong life, Ficino advises the use of wine and good food, odours and pure air, and music. However, it is music, Ficino points out, which has a stronger effect than anything transmitted through the other senses, since its medium, air, is akin to the *spiritus* (Ficino, *De Vita*: p. 363). He explains how air is 'poured around us with a sort of immeasurable amplitude, and with its perpetual motion penetrating us on all sides, reduces us wonderfully to its quality – especially our spirit' (*De Vita*, p. 223). Thus the body is set in motion by the airy nature for it 'flourishes in the heart, into whose chambers it [the air]

²¹ Finney, *Musical Backgrounds*, p.103; Penelope Gouk, 'Introduction' in, D.P. Walker, *Music, Spirit and Language in the Renaissance* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1985), p. ix.

flows now steadily (*De Vita*, p. 223). Immediately the spirit is affected and through the vital spirit, ‘the matter and origin of the animal spirit’, the airy bond of body and soul is created with ‘pure and luminous air, odours, and music’ (*De Vita*, p. 223).

Ficino suggests that it is music, most of all that provides an elixir for the soul, for he asks, ‘if vapours exhaling from a merely vegetable life are greatly beneficial to your life, how much more beneficial do you think will be songs which are made of air to a spirit wholly aerial?’ (*De Vita*, p. 213). These songs are harmonic, he explains to ‘a spirit which is harmonic, warm and still living’. Thus Ficino’s medicine blurs the boundaries of the Galenic model, for it draws on a more ancient source linked to musical healing: he offers health through ‘the lyre which I made’ and a ‘Phoebean song’ – that inherits the healing music of Apollo – for Ficino writes, when ‘you temper the strings and the sounds in the lyre and the tones in your voice, consider your spirit to be tempered similarly within’ (*De Vita*, p.215). The point Ficino is emphasising is that music has a more powerful effect because its medium, air, is similar to that of the human spirit.²² Music can transmit a therapeutic quality for, as Ficino writes, ‘it is easy to care for the harmony of both body and soul in the same man. Hence Chiron practiced both arts, while the prophet David is said to have soothed the soul as well as the body of the mad Saul with his lyre’ (Letter 92, vol.1, p.142).

Since the ‘beauty of the body’ lies in light – in ‘harmonious number and measure’ (Letter 47, vol. 1, p. 91) – Ficino’s belief in music’s healing power, lies in the authority of lyre-playing for, he writes, ‘when you sing to the lyre’, you sing in harmony, for nothing is in better proportion than music which is well-tempered (Letter 11, vol. 4, p. 16). Thus the lyre is a physical representation of the music of the spheres for ‘all harmony derives its

²² Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, p. 7.

force from the lyre' (*Theology*, vol. 2, p. 249). As such, it represents the divine love that illuminates Ficino's work. In particular, Ficino emphasises the importance of lyre-playing and song in *De Vita*, for both bring health and long life. This is an idea, I shall argue, that has an authoritative and significant influence on early modern literature since it foregrounds the maintenance of the health of the *spiritus* through the therapeutic power of music. His suggestion that music had the most powerful effect on the senses, linking body to soul and mind to intellect, expressed the mystic relationship between man and the cosmos. It is an idea that Shakespeare gives eloquent expression to in his plays and poetry, as I shall demonstrate in Chapter 6, in particular examining how these ideas are articulated in *Pericles*.

D.P. Walker notes that Ficino's concept of spirit often equates to human physiological sensations, which is why the 'lower' senses – taste, smell and touch – are inferior to sight and hearing as they cannot transmit an intellectual content.²³ Music appeals to our senses because of the nature of its sounding text, but more importantly for Ficino, when 'the airy spirit of the ear is struck by sound, the soul, which was silently giving life to the body of the ears before it was struck, now does so the more attentively'.²⁴ Sound – and by implication, music – powerfully affects the immortal soul, and D. P. Walker cites this as one reason why Ficino considers hearing more important than the sight.²⁵

Ficino is engaging, I suggest, in the long-standing philosophical comparison between these two senses.²⁶ Plato argues that sight provides 'a source of supreme benefit to us', for the god who invented sight 'gave it to us so that we might observe the orbits of intelligence

²³ Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, p. 7.

²⁴ Ficino, *Platonic Theology*, Vol. 2, Book VII: VI, p. 241.

²⁵ Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, p. 7.

²⁶ Jill Charles Burnett, Michael Fend and Penelope Gouk, (eds.) *The Second Sense: Studies in Hearing and Musical Judgement from Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century* (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1991), p. 71.

in the universe and apply them to the revolutions of our own understanding'.²⁷ Aristotle, in the opening lines of *The Metaphysics*, establishes that the most delightful of the senses is sight since it 'especially produces cognition in us and reveals many distinguishing features of things'.²⁸ However, while Aristotle argues that in itself vision is the higher sense, hearing is more important since it contributes more to knowledge than sight, since all learning is based on speech.²⁹

I would argue that Ficino follows the Aristotelian argument in assigning hearing a higher importance than vision, rejecting the Platonic assertion, because he needs to validate his music-spirit theory, and Aristotle's influential statements on knowledge and hearing enable this. Ficino's adaptation of the hierarchy of senses has important ramifications for other early modern scholars: in his *Liber de sensibus* (1510) Charles de Bovelles (1479-1567), who studied with Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, endeavoured to prove that hearing is the highest sense.³⁰ Likewise, the physician and musician, Girolamo Cardano (1501-1576) believed that music originates from the same source that governs the ontological principles that regulate the order and process through which a primordial unity gives harmony to the created world. As such, unheard music plays to the mind, heard music to corporeality and thus inherent in music is a Janus-like quality that can move the listener's mind in opposite directions.³¹ While not highly influential in themselves, these tracts – replicating the

²⁷ Plato, *Timaeus* 47b-c, in *Complete Works*, p. 1250.

²⁸ Aristotle, *The Metaphysics*, 980a, p. 4.

²⁹ Thomas Frangenberg, 'Auditus visu prestantior: Comparisons of Hearing and Vision in Charles de Bovelle's *Liber de sensibus*', in *The Second Sense*, p. 72.

³⁰ Frangenberg, *The Second Sense*, p. 74.

³¹ Guido Giglioni, 'Bolognan boys are beautiful, tasteful and mostly fine musicians', *The Sciences of Homosexuality in early Modern Europe*, (eds.) Kenneth Borris and George Rousseau (New York and London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 209-210.

Ficinian sense theory – add to the growing change in the way music was perceived, classified and studied in the early modern period.³²

Although Ficino locates sight as the highest physical sense in the body in his *Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love* (1474), this does not contradict his earlier premise on hearing, for, demonstrating his adaptation of the Aristotelian theory of sensation whereby each sense is assigned the element that most reflects its quality, he explains that sight is less powerful than hearing.³³ Following Aristotle, he assigns fire to sight – since ‘the eye-jelly is made of water’ that is potentially luminous – air to hearing, for ‘air is one nature with the hearing organ’.³⁴

It is this air that Ficino identifies with *spiritus*, since ‘the air in the ears is always moving with a certain proper movement of its own, while the sound is the movement of other air not of the internal air itself’.³⁵ Thus sound combines with *spiritus* and is conveyed to the soul, and because sound moves and also transmits movement, Ficino believes that sound affects the spirit more powerfully than the static images of sight.³⁶ This adds an ethical dimension to music since movements and actions were believed to have the same nature and therefore contain a moral character. By affecting the *spiritus*, Ficino suggests, hearing links body and soul and since ‘sound is a sort of living creature’ it must, therefore, have the most powerful effect upon the hearer’s spirit.³⁷

Thus the music-spirit theory that D.P. Walker identified, becomes the starting point of Ficino’s musical healing for, as he explains, ‘song is the most powerful imitator of all

³² Ann E. Moyer, *Musica Scientia: Musical Scholarship in the Italian Renaissance* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992, p. 168.

³³ Ficino, *Commentary on Plato's Symposium*, p. 85.

³⁴ Aristotle, *De Anima*, 425a, p. 190 and 420a, p. 177.

³⁵ Aristotle, *De Anima*, 420a, p. 177.

³⁶ Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, p. 8.

³⁷ Ficino, *Platonic Theology*, Vol. 3, Book X: VII, p. 177; Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, p. 10.

things'. By imitating the 'passions of the soul' it represents people's 'actions as well as their characters', acting them out so forcibly that it provokes 'the singer and the audience to imitate and act out the same things'. He continues that the same power, 'when it imitates the celestials', also 'wonderfully arouses our spirit upwards' to that celestial influence', for song is 'altogether purer and more similar to the heavens than is the matter of medicine' (*De Vita*, p. 359).

Ficino uses music therapeutically as a reinforcement of the philosophical aspect of his medicine because it communicates human passions, connecting hearts and minds.³⁸

Although D. P. Walker does not make it explicitly clear, Ficino's music-spirit theory involves both music and words, since Ficino does not appear to differentiate or separate one from the other. While he cautions against incantations – the use of a formula of words spoken or chanted to produce a magical effect- he advocates the use of song for 'the wondrous things that are brought about by song' (*De Vita*, p. 355).³⁹ Citing the Pythagorean practice of performing 'wonders by words, songs and sounds in the Phoebean and Orphic manner', Ficino suggests that certain words have 'a specific and great power' when used with song: 'the Hebrew doctors of old practised this more than anyone else' he writes, lending Old Testament authority to his argument, continuing, 'all poets sing of the wondrous things that are brought about by song' (*De Vita*, p. 355).

In this way he pointed to the significance of song to mental and physical well-being that simultaneously expressed the resonance of the rhythmic order of life. This explains why Ficino believed his own hymn-singing to be effective. In a letter to Antonio Canigiani he describes how music and singing start from the mind – the 'impulse of fantasy' – and the

³⁸ Katz, *The Powers of Music*, p. 85.

³⁹ OED, <http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/cgi/entry/93298>, accessed 21.06.2012.

‘desire of the heart’ of the player transform into the disturbance of the air, vibrating the ‘airy spirit’ [*spiritus*] of the listener which is the link between body and soul’ (Letter 92, vol.1, p.142). Thus the aim of the Orphic hymns is to bring the *spiritus* of man into accord with the *spiritus mundi*– the world spirit, or to make man more accessible to the influences of a particular astral body through love and the use of music: the accommodation of ‘our songs to the stars’ (*De Vita*, p. 357).

Ficino’s evident and important distinction between incantation and song demonstrates his conviction that the powerful effect music could have on the emotions had the potential to elevate the soul to ecstasy: where heaven is brought to man, who becomes ‘celestial’ through the divine spirit.⁴⁰ If the spirit is divine, so too is it’s harmony, drawing the soul from the body as if in an ecstasy.⁴¹ Singing therefore played a dual role: its harmony drew on the soul while the spirit that it carried restored life.⁴²

The idea that man could be infused with the divine spirit through song, has a continuing and profound impact on early modern writers: Sir Philip Sidney’s exploration of love in *Astrophil and Stella* (1591) compares ‘Stella’s image’ within the mind and soul of the poet, as one that, ‘not only shines but sings’.⁴³ Her song, this suggests, not only reflects her celestial name, but is celestial within itself, that is, it is the music of the spheres. As such, Stella’s ‘sweet voice’ has the power to command the poet’s soul: just as the Orphic music had enchanted nature, so too, the poet tells us, the insensate stones and trees are powerless against the enchantment of Stella’s voice.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Katz, *The Powers of Music*, p. 109.

⁴¹ Finney, *Musical Backgrounds*, p.124.

⁴² Finney, *Musical Backgrounds*, p.124.

⁴³ Sir Philip Sidney, *Defence of Poesie, Astrophil and Stella and other writings*, The Everyman Library (ed.) Elizabeth Porges Watson (London and Vermont: J.M. Dent, Orion Publishing Group, 1997), ‘*Astrophil and Stella*’, Sonnet 38, p. 38.

⁴⁴ Sidney, *Defence of Poesie*, sonnet 36, p. 37.

Ficino composed and sang his Orphic hymns in order to transmit the celestial spirit, the 'souls of the spheres' (*De Vita*, p. 389), to man: by altering his temperament through governing his emotions, he could be revived by breathing in this spirit.⁴⁵ He points out that Hermes Trismegistus and Plotinus believe that everything can be easily accomplished by the 'intermediation of the *Anima Mundi*' (*De Vita*, p. 391) since the world spirit 'moves the form of natural things' by the will of the Divine (*De Vita*, p. 391). This doctrine, suggesting a musically-imbued world spirit, appears to have become an accepted tenet of many sixteenth-century Neoplatonists.⁴⁶ Pico della Mirandola, for example, postulates that man may be made celestial through the world spirit, for as Henry Reynolds quotes in *Mythomystes*, Mirandola argues that 'there is nothing of greater efficacy then the hymnes of *Orpheus* in naturall Magick, if the fitting musick, intention of the minde, and other circumstances which are knowne to the wise, bee considered and applyed'.⁴⁷

Ficino derives the idea of an ethereal spirit, the breath of life, diffused through nature from Plato where the 'eternal god' creates the world and 'in the centre he sets a soul, which he extended throughout the whole body, and with which he then covered the body outside'.⁴⁸ For Plato, music is the vehicle for the world spirit that strives for universal harmony, in which the movements are 'akin to the orbits within our souls, is a gift of the Muses'.⁴⁹ The union of world spirit to music to produce harmony is one that is developed by Ficino in *De Vita* to prove that audible music (*musica instrumentalis*) is an image of

⁴⁵ Katz, *The Powers of Music*, p. 108.

⁴⁶ Finney, *Musical Backgrounds*, p. 111.

⁴⁷ Reynolds, *Mythomystes*, in *Critical Essays*, p. 166.

⁴⁸ Plato, *Timaeus*, 44d, in *Complete Works*, p. 1238.

⁴⁹ Plato, *Timaeus*, 47d, in *Complete Works*, p. 1250.

higher kinds of harmony within the cosmic order.⁵⁰ Because the world spirit ‘generates everything’ (*De Vita*, p. 257), the world both lives and breathes, making it possible for us to draw on its spirit. ‘You will gain natural benefits’, Ficino assures us, ‘not only from the world’s body but from its soul, and even from the stars and the daemons’ (*De Vita*, p. 259).

Since the purified world spirit goes forth in a heavenly way, becoming one with the cosmos, Ficino suggests several ways that we may infuse our own spirit with the world spirit but above all, it is music he declares, that is most useful in obtaining the celestial spirit (*De Vita*, p. 255). This philosophical concept again derives from *Timaeus* where Plato argues that the universe and man are created from the same harmonic proportions. Having the same harmonic proportions as a heavenly body will make your *spiritus* similarly proportioned and invoke the required celestial *spiritus*, thus the music of the spheres, a living *spiritus*, is reflected in man’s body, spirit and soul binding us to the cosmos and our humours simultaneously.⁵¹

Holding the Galenic view that the bodily humours were associated with the *spiritus naturalis*, *spiritus vitalis* and *spiritus animalis*, Ficino argued that the quality of air was vital because, ‘Galen himself following Hippocrates thinks the spirit is nourished not only by odor but by air’ (*De Vita*, p. 223).⁵² He believed that air affects our vital spirit, which in turn affects the animal spirit, and thus air has a living essential component. Because air is associated with *pneuma* (breath), it is closely aligned to music, since human breath is required to produce a sound either vocally or instrumentally. Ficino, recognizing this

⁵⁰ Walker, ‘Ficino’s “Spiritus” and Music’, in *Annales Musicologiques*, p. 140. Walker argues that Ficino offers an explanation of music which took into account the similarity between air moved by music and the motion of the human spirit, but also linked these to the *spiritus mundi* which served as a channel of influence between heavenly bodies and the sublunar world.

⁵¹ Walker, ‘Ficino’s “Spiritus” and Music’, *Annales Musicologiques*, p. 141.

⁵² Ficino, *Letters*, Vol. 2, p. 95. The breath or *pneuma* was thought to enter through the left side of the heart where it was converted into natural, vital and psychic force. The *pneuma* then went to the brain whence it was distributed throughout the nervous system.

critical association considers music a poultice, one of the ‘principle fomentations of the animal spirit’ (*De Vita*, p. 223). Thus the soul invigorates us: it ‘quickens us with life’ as the spirit ‘preserves complete harmony with the soul’ (*De Vita*, p. 225). Fundamental to this Hermetic philosophy is the idea of *pneuma*, the ‘Life-breathing Zephyr’ which pervades the universe giving life and motion to everything and on which Ficino based his Music-Spirit theory.⁵³ Pivotal to this model was the belief in the efficacy of music to alter human temperament and govern emotions because it imitated the mathematical proportions of an ordered universe.⁵⁴ Thus music could potentially refine the soul to ecstasy, or in Ficinian terms, the divine frenzy. These ideas were not merely confined to the realms of Humanist philosophy for they appear to have reached a wider audience. The popular emblemist, Francis Quarles, for example, in ‘An Elegie’ to John Wheeler describes how ‘Mvsick, the language of th’eternall Quire/Breath’d in his soule celestiaall straynes’ which ‘ravisht’ his ‘brynes’, making him ‘ripe for heav’n’.⁵⁵

Because man and the universe – microcosm and macrocosm – are constructed of the same harmonic proportions, the Ficinian cosmic spirit or quintessence is permeated with astrological influence which nourishes and purifies man’s own spirit.⁵⁶ It is the influx of the divine spirit, not the withdrawal of man’s soul that makes him celestial.⁵⁷ Just as each planet bears the characteristics of the god it was named after, so too, does each planet ‘sound’ the music that possesses those characteristics, that is, music reflects the specific

⁵³ Francis Quarles, *An Elegie vpon my deare brother, the Ionathan of my heart, Mr. Iohn Wheeler, sonne to Sir Edmond Wheeler of Riding Court neare Windsor, in the Country of Buckingham, deceased* London 1637. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.exproxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 99850669, verse 8, p. 3v, accessed 16.04.2011. All citations are to this edition; chapter 3, pp. 178-179.

⁵⁴ Finney, *Musical Backgrounds*, p. 185; chapter 2, pp. 114-115.

⁵⁵ Quarles, *An Elegie*, verse 12, p. 6v, accessed 16.04.2011.

⁵⁶ Walker, Ficino’s “Spiritus” and Music, in *Annales Musicologiques*, p. 140.

⁵⁷ Finney, *Musical Backgrounds*, p. 186.

mood or emotion of each planet. This is the reason why many people believed that the spirit of a singer reflected the cosmic spirit, since their music contained ‘movement’, corresponding to the movements of the celestial bodies, and consequentially carried universal and personal qualities.⁵⁸

This idea powerfully resonates in the early modern period; in the seventeenth century for example, the poet Edward Benlowes in ‘A Poetic Descant upon a Private Musick-meeting’ describes each instrument as a planet, possessing the same power to influence mankind or move emotions. ‘Musick’ he writes, ‘thy Med’cines can our Grieffs allaie’.⁵⁹ Likewise, metals were also connected with specific planets and therefore closely associated with planetary music, as demonstrated in Robert Fludd’s diagram of the universal monochord.⁶⁰ Their combination was often allegorized as musical notes, or the metals were personified holding musical instruments thereby creating a ‘chymic choir’ as depicted in the title-page of the *Musaeum Hermeticum* (1625).⁶¹ ‘Joyne your elements Musically’, the alchemical poet Thomas Norton writes, suggesting that the elements have to be combined accurately to echo an arithmetical and musical harmony, ‘Much like proportions be in Alkimy’.⁶²

This imagined relationship between the soul and world spirit forms, I argue, part of an ongoing philosophical enquiry into the meaning of the emotive power of music, song and voice. Defining voice in Aristotelian terms – where the voice is imagined as a living entity, ‘a kind of sound of an ensouled thing’, since ‘none of the things without soul give voice’ –

⁵⁸ Finney, *Musical Backgrounds*, p. 119.

⁵⁹ Edward Benlowes, *A poetick descant upon a private musick-meeting*. 1649. British Library. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books online, eebo citation: 99869869, accessed 16.04.2011

⁶⁰ Joscelyn Godwin, *Robert Fludd, Hermetic Philosopher and Surveyor of Two Worlds* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1979), reprint (Boston: Massachusetts: Phanes Press, 2005), p. 45.

⁶¹ Read, *Prelude to Chemistry*, Plate 31.

⁶² Ashmole, *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, chapter 5, p. 60, K2v, accessed 09.08.2011.

Ficino adds the idea that there is an issue of spirits when the voice ‘sounds’ (Letter 92, vol.1, p.142).⁶³ This provides an explanatory contextualization of the emotive range of the human voice that is manifest, for example, through singing speaking, crying and laughing.

Thus song is literally contagious in the sense of being communicated from one to another.⁶⁴ The ‘soul of the universe’ is everywhere since the ‘little body of each living thing is a piece of the World Body’ (*Commentary*, p. 109). The ‘heavenly creatures’, the daemons and angels –the ‘souls of the spheres and stars’– are endowed with ‘great power by the supreme God’, for they ‘move the spheres of the universe’ (*Commentary*, p. 109). Drawing on Plato’s myth of Er, Ficino suggests that he too sees the proportioned universe, its creatures, and the breath of the world spirit itself, as musical, for he likens air to an animal, ‘still breathing and somehow living’, that ‘possesses motion and displays passion’(*De Vita*, p. 359).

Since the world spirit is musical, and music imitates the proportions of the universe, song must, Ficino argues, reflect the moods and sounds of the heavenly bodies: that planetary music that transmitted celestial spirit and stellar influence to man. ‘Song’, he writes, ‘which is full of spirit and meaning’, is ‘cast into the singer and from him into the nearby listener’ (*De Vita*, p. 359); for he declares, ‘when you lay claim to the power of Jupiter, Venus, and Mercury’ (*De Vita*, p. 361), you become ‘Phoebean from Phoebean song and notes’ (*De Vita*, p. 36). It is through ‘exposing our soul and our body to such occult forces’, he asserts, that our spirit is ‘harmonically composed’ (*De Vita*, p. 365).

Ficino’s animation of breath as a living and musical spirit provides future writers with an authoritative metaphysical tool as it subverts the Neoplatonic orthodoxy of the spirit

⁶³ Aristotle, *De Anima*, II, 9, 420b, pp. 178-179.

⁶⁴ Finney makes the connection between contagion and giving life suggesting that life itself is given to music, Finney, *Musical Backgrounds*, p. 121.

shining pre-eminently through the eye.⁶⁵ By the seventeenth century it was imagined that the spirit could also be transmitted in the voice by musicalness as well as through optical brightness, thus Sidney's 'soule-inuading voyce', whose 'verie essence' make the angels rejoice holds a particular Ficinian resonance.⁶⁶ In common with other early modern writers, Jerome Cardan (1501-1576) stresses imitation of the human voice as a necessary goal for instrumentalists that involved the quality of the vocal sound and the mood of the song. In his *De Musica* (c.1561) he advocates the use of relaxed sounds for laments, strong sounds in exciting music and a smooth, connected sound in serious music.⁶⁷

Commenting on the power of music in his *De Occulta Philosophia* (1650), Henry Cornelius Agrippa appropriates the Ficinian notion of sound as breath, while Shakespeare centrally locates it in *Pericles* as discussed in chapter 5.⁶⁸ The Ficinian voice is also discernible in 'The Song of Corinna', where George Chapman suggests that the 'sweet tunes' that are 'first conceived' in Julia's 'mental womb' are 'nourish'd with her souls discursive fire'. Growing 'into the power of her thought' this 'brave issue' is given 'strong imagination' and blessed with Julia's kisses they 'fly' from her voice.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Finney, *Musical Backgrounds*, p. 123.

⁶⁶ Sir Philip Sidney, *Syr. P.S.* (1591) *His Astrophel and Stella Wherein the excellence of sweete poesie is concluded. To the end of which are added, sundry other rare sonnets of diuers noble men and gentlemen.* At London: Printed [by John Charlewood] for Thomas Newman. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 99838194, the seventh sonnet, p. 56, accessed 22.06.2012; Finney, *Musical Backgrounds*, p. 123.

⁶⁷ Clement. A. Miller, 'Jerome Cardan on the Recorder', *American Recorder* Vol.12, pt. 4 (1973), pp. 123-125.

⁶⁸ Henry Cornelius Agrippa (1650) *Three books of occult philosophy*, written by Henry Cornelius Agrippa, of Nettesheim, counsellor to Charles the Fifth, Emperor of Germany: and judge of the Prerogative Court. Translated out of the Latin into the English tongue, by J.F. London: Printed by R.W. for Gregory Moule, and are to be sold at the sign of the three Bibles neer the west-end of Pauls, [i.e.1651]. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 99858916, Book II, p. 258 and p. 256, accessed 19.06.2012.

⁶⁹ George Chapman, (1639) *Ovid's Banquet of sense With a coronet for his mistresse philosohy: and his amorous zodiack.* London: Printed by B. A [Isop] and T. F[Fawcet] and are to be sold by R. Horseman, at his shop on the Strand neere unto Yorke House. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 99843409, pp. 10-11, accessed 19.06.2012.

Ficino's Natural Magic

A tangible relationship exists between music and natural magic in Ficino's musico-magical doctrine that enables him to formulate a successful medical model with music at the heart of the healing process itself. Since magic describes the use of agents 'from above or outside of ordinary existence' for 'materialist ends', it has been argued that Ficino's therapies can only be classed as magical in Book 3 of *De Vita*.⁷⁰ It is here that he defends his use of natural magic and astrology by arguing that the heavenly bodies are animated with the same *spiritus* that encompasses mankind thereby avoiding accusations of determinism and idolatry.⁷¹

Although Ficino does not make it explicitly clear, his natural magic comprises the use of talismans and astrological music, accompanied by Orphic words, to capture the celestial spirit since man and the universe are constructed in the same harmonic proportions. 'When one lute sounds', he asks, 'does not another echo it?' Since music has movement it can be made to correspond with the motions of the celestial bodies for, as he argues, if similar figures, are placed opposite, then the 'strings in it are similarly placed and tuned' (*De Vita*, p. 331). Through music, the human spirit can be reinvigorated by the cosmic spirit and this affiliation between the imagination and the harmonies of the heavenly bodies can, Ficino suggests, obtain the gifts of the planetary spirits and ultimately of God himself.⁷² Though he uses musical metaphors to foreground his microcosmic and macrocosmic analogies, Ficino's natural magic also implies the use of music to bind sympathetic correspondences

⁷⁰ Kaske and Clarke, 'Introduction' in *De Vita*, p. 45.

⁷¹ Kaske and Clarke, 'Introduction' in *De Vita*, p. 4.

⁷² Angela Voss, *Marsilio Ficino*, Western Esoteric Masters Series (Berkeley, California: North Atlantic Books, 2006), p. 41.

in his Neoplatonic cosmos: a model he frequently repeats in *De Vita*, since the ‘harmonic plan’ of the heavens moves and brings everything about by ‘harmonic sounds and motions’. It is logical, Ficino argues, that human beings receive celestial things through ‘harmony alone’.⁷³

Ficino’s concept of harmony follows an ancient Neoplatonic tradition that considers the harmony embodied in music as representative of the structural principle that was manifested throughout the universe unceasingly, giving cosmological significance to the Boethian *musica instrumentalis*.⁷⁴ In this model, revealed in his letter, ‘On divine frenzy’ to Peregrino Agli, Ficino defines divine music as twofold, ‘One kind, they say, exists entirely in the eternal mind of God. The second is in the motions and order of the heavens, by which the heavenly spheres and their orbits make a marvelous harmony’ (Letter 7, vol. 1, p. 45). True music, Ficino explains, originates in God’s mind, revealed in the motion of the spheres and manifest through the hierarchy of souls, for driven with the desire to regain the pure state of his soul, man imitates this ‘divine and heavenly harmony’ through song and poetry (Letter 7, vol. 1, p. 46). Here Ficino makes it explicitly clear that a difference exists between the *musica divina* (music in the mind of God) and the cosmic harmony of the spheres. Ficino believes a link exists between the *musica divina* and *musica humana* – the music of human life made through the mediation of through Christ, the chief musician. It is this link that privileges and informs the Christian context of the work of Maier, Fludd and Cambridge Platonists such as Peter Sterry.⁷⁵

⁷³ *De Vita* III, xii, p. 301 and *De Vita* III, xxii, p. 363.

⁷⁴ William R. Bowen, ‘Ficino’s Analysis of Musical Harmonia’ in *Ficino and Renaissance Neoplatonism* (eds.) Konrad Eisenblichler and Olga Zorzi Pugliese University of Toronto Italian Studies 1(Ottawa, Canada: Dovehouse Editions, 1986), p. 18.

⁷⁵ Dixon, ‘Meditation is the Musick of Souls’, p. 191.

Ficino's Orphic hymns may then be interpreted as a bridge between the imagination and the harmonies of the heavenly bodies and within this context the influence of the stars and planets are analogous to the effects of overpowering music.⁷⁶ The natural magic in his Orphic hymns enables spiritual understanding leading to harmonization of the soul, since it is, as Pico della Mirandola affirms, the 'highest realization of natural philosophy', the 'medicine of the soul' that 'embraces the most profound contemplation of the deepest secrets of things and finally the knowledge of the whole of nature.'⁷⁷ Nothing, he tells us, impels us so assiduously to the worship of God than this natural magic which compels us to burst into song.⁷⁸

There appears to be little doubt that Ficino performed astrological music: Cosimo de' Medici implores Ficino to visit him at his estate in Careggi 'as soon as possible' and bring his Orphic lyre with him so that he might 'cultivate his mind' and discover the true road to happiness (Letter 1, Vol.1, p.32).⁷⁹ Ficino's Orphic music, de' Medici suggests, allows the listener to align their soul with the soul of the world. De' Medici's comparison of Ficino with Orpheus is neither an isolated nor unique reference. The identification of Marsilio Ficino with Orpheus was recorded by his friend, Naldo Naldi in a poem that traced the journey of Orpheus' soul from Homer to Ficino⁸⁰ Each recipient of the soul received some aspect of Orpheus' gifts and Naldi writes that 'Marsilius ...soothes the unyielding oaks with his lyre and his song and softens once more the hearts of wild beasts'.⁸¹

This is not simply a literary conceit flattering Ficino: an Orphic spirit permeates his writings and hymns, and this locates Ficino within a central position in the *prisca theologia*

⁷⁶ Voss, *Marsilio Ficino*, p. 41.

⁷⁷ Mirandola, *Oration*, pp. 29-31.

⁷⁸ Mirandola, *Oration*, p. 32.

⁷⁹ Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, p. 19.

⁸⁰ John Warden, *Orpheus: The Metamorphoses of a Myth*, p. 86

⁸¹ Warden, *Orpheus: The Metamorphoses of a Myth*, p. 86.

since Orpheus –possessed of the divine *furor* – was believed to be the first poet to celebrate the mysterious principles underlying the universe.⁸² Ficino's identification with Orpheus was such that an image of Orpheus was painted on his lyre, and therefore Ficinian singing appealed to both the visual and auditory senses, providing an ideological construct in his belief in the power of music to heal body and soul, leading mankind back to the higher spiritual realms.⁸³

In his *Apologia*, Ficino differentiates between two kinds of magic. The first is practiced by 'those who unite themselves to daemons by a specific religious rite' while the other kind is practiced by 'those who seasonably subject natural materials to natural causes to be formed in a wondrous way' (*De Vita*, p. 399).⁸⁴ Ficino further classifies the latter kind of magic into 'inquisitive' that must be 'avoided as vain and harmful to health', while the second 'necessary' type of magic 'joins medicine with astrology' and therefore, he argues, 'must be kept' (*De Vita*, p. 399) since 'medicine is quite often useless and often harmful without the help of the heavens' (*De Vita*, p. 398). The 'sacred Scriptures', he tells us, 'commands us to honor such a doctor' since he was created by God and 'Christ, the giver of life, who commanded his disciples to cure the sick in the whole world' will 'enjoin' physicians to apply a 'seasonable breath of heaven', the 'life of all' to sick people who are not healed by words, herbs or stones. God's authority amplifies Ficino's theurgic practice since it is 'God Himself' who 'permits priests to drive out diseases' with 'medicines which are strengthened by the heavens', and this affirms Ficino's assertion of the legitimacy of natural magic that 'seeks to obtain the services of the celestial for the prosperous health of

⁸² Warden, *Orpheus: The Metamorphoses of a Myth*, p. 93.

⁸³ Warden, *Orpheus: The Metamorphoses of a Myth*, p. 87.

⁸⁴ Ficino, 'An Apologia Dealing with Medicine, Astrology, the Life of the World, and the Magi Who Greeted the Christ Child at His Birth, in *De Vita*, pp. 395-401.

our bodies' (*De Vita*, p. 397). Thus words and songs could invoke heavenly powers for natural magic was not a perversion of religion, Lauren Kassel argues, but a perfection of it.⁸⁵

D.P Walker suggests that Ficino's natural magic stemmed from a wide variety of sources, the most important, he suggests, being the liturgy of the Roman Catholic mass with its music, words, candles and lights centred on the miraculous narrative of transubstantiation, although Ficino himself does not acknowledge this influence.⁸⁶ Other sources of Ficinian natural magic were the Neoplatonic texts of Proclus, Plotinus, Iamblichus and the *Hermetica*, especially the *Asclepius* – believed to be the work of Hermes Trismegistus - which Ficino translated – and whose sympathetic, astrological magic and Orphic practices characterize Ficino's the natural magic.⁸⁷

However, Ficino reveals a sense of uneasiness in including the pagan daemons of Trismegistus, since it potentially exposes his writing to accusations of heresy. He therefore defends his natural magic by avowing that his astrological songs are not incantations for, he writes, 'Psellus the Platonist disapproves of incantations and makes fun of them' (*De Vita*, p. 307). Ficino also frequently references Thomas Aquinas and Augustine to defend his position: Aquinas, Ficino informs us, argues that by 'celestial powers' some men, such as 'physicians in healing' are made successful in the execution of their arts (*De Vita*, p. 281) for 'the celestials' contribute to good health provided that when 'seeking the health of our bodies, we do not throw overboard the salvation of our souls' (*De Vita*, p. 281).

⁸⁵ Kassel, *Medicine & Magic*, p. 9.

⁸⁶ Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, p. 36.

⁸⁷ Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, p. 37.

The Platonic Theology

Ficino's *Platonic Theology* provides a theoretical basis for an understanding of his hypothesis that integrates music, mathematics, philosophy and theology to demonstrate the unity of the immortal soul. In this complex and densely referenced work – that absorbs a vast array of ancient, medieval and Christian ideas- Ficino creates a comprehensive system of Christianized Platonism that is concerned with the nature, and therefore health, of the soul.⁸⁸ Because he reconstructs and amalgamates these various strands to create this unique brand of Platonism, Ficino's *Platonic Theology* in particular, often presents a challenge in the identification and interpretation of the fundamental principles of his philosophy. His engagement with and speculation upon the soul is, I argue, an attempt to understand and define man's position in the universe.

In this philosophical masterpiece, Ficino presents a metaphysical model which engages notions of mind, body, soul and spirit, focusing on the nature of the human soul and its central place in the hierarchy of God's Creation, that is, a creation Ficino perceives in Augustinian terms as a rational cosmos.⁸⁹ His intention, Ficino tells us, is to present a work that observes and contemplates the mind of the Creator (*Theology*, vol. 1, p. 11). By transcending the senses, he offers the promise of spiritual happiness, for 'one must purify the soul until its eye becomes unclouded and it can see the divine light and worship God' (*Theology*, vol. 1, p. 9).

⁸⁸ Paul Oskar Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino* trans. Virginia Conant (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), p. viii.

⁸⁹ Ficino, 'The Proem to the Platonic Theology Concerning the Immortality of the Souls' in *Platonic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 11.

Described as a study of theological metaphysics, the central premise of the *Platonic Theology* (1482) is the immortality of the soul, that is, the divine element in each soul which Ficino believed made all humans potentially Christ-like and which causes the soul continually to strive to ascend to God.⁹⁰ Invoking an ancient tradition that Ficino believed stretched beyond Orpheus to Hermes Trismegistus, the *Platonic Theology* resurrected and indirectly promoted ideas that would have a profound impact in early modern intellectual consciousness. These included the power of the magus over nature – due to sympathetic forces– in the search for the secrets of macrocosmic transformation, for ‘soul relates to nature as nature to body’ (*Theology*, vol. 1, p. 287), and the search of the poetic, amatory and prophetic ascent of the soul into the realm of Knowledge and Love since the soul, ‘moves the body through desire’ (*Theology*, vol. 1, p. 297). This, in Ficinian terms, is the illumination of the soul’s interiority through faith, belief and intellect for he considers man’s soul to be ‘like a mirror in which the image of the divine countenance is readily reflected’ (*Theology*, vol. 1, p. 9).⁹¹

From Proclus, Ficino adapted a pentadic structure creating a five-substance hierarchy –the One, Mind, Soul, Quality and Body to highlight the soul’s metaphysical centrality, ‘the central link in the cosmic chain’, weaving into this model the doctrines of Plotinus, Plato and the pre-platonic sages.⁹² Ficino argues that the key to understanding the nature of the human soul is to be found in his ‘beloved’ Plato, who considers man’s soul to be ‘like a mirror in which the image of the divine countenance is readily reflected’ (*Theology*, vol.1, p. 9). Seeking to demonstrate the harmonious bond between the human soul and the world soul – the mediator of heaven and earth - Ficino proposes a ‘unitary theological tradition’,

⁹⁰ Allen and Warden, ‘Introduction’, in *Platonic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. x.

⁹¹ Allen and Warden, ‘Introduction’, in *Platonic Theology*, Vol.1, p. x.

⁹² Allen and Warden, ‘Introduction’, in *Platonic Theology*, Vol.1, p. xv.

that is, the commonality shared by Christian and Platonic theologies.⁹³ Through his fascination with music, harmonic theory, natural magic and astrology, Ficino devised complex and convoluted ways to understand his hierarchy through the musical analogy of an ‘ordered song which is both inside and outside of the soul’ since the divine music pervades the universe and therefore man’s soul.⁹⁴

The Ficinian perception of soul is a highly evolved scholastic conceptualization of a spiritual affirmation that death is not the termination of consciousness, for the power of the human soul lies in its divine, and therefore, immortal nature.⁹⁵ Ficino explains this as our souls ‘longing with desire for our heavenly home’. This is achieved, he argues, by the soul’s casting of the ‘bonds of our terrestrial chains’ so that ‘uplifted on Platonic wings and with God as our guide’ we may fly to ‘our ethereal abode’ (*Theology*, vol. 1, p. 15). Differentiating between the rational soul – the third essence which gives light and ‘life to the body’, that is ‘the power of moving’ (*Theology*, vol. 1, p. 243) – and the irrational soul that accompanies it as ‘the shadow accompanies the body’ (*Theology*, vol. 1, p. 53), Ficino believes that the function of the soul is to ‘provide vital motion, since the soul itself is a kind of life’ (*Theology*, vol. 1, p. 87). Although the soul gives life to the body, it is ‘separate from matter’ and the ‘passivity of the body’, for it is ‘moveable’ (*Theology*, vol. 1, p. 217). Since God is an ‘unmoving unity’, Ficino places soul between God and body, between the eternal and temporal, a bond as it were, linking the two (*Theology*, vol. 1, p. 233).

Divine unity is achieved by the soul’s love of God and its continual striving to return to Him, a route Ficino describes as circular, since God himself is one circle, he is, in

⁹³ Allen and Warden, ‘Introduction’, in *Platonic Theology*, Vol.1, p. viii.

⁹⁴ Allen and Warden, ‘Introduction’, in *Platonic Theology*, Vol.1, p. x.

⁹⁵ Allen and Warden, ‘Introduction’, in *Platonic Theology*, Vol.1, p. ix.

Ficino's words, 'Himself like a circle and in Himself insofar as He does not have His beginning or ending outside Himself; but beginning in Himself, he ends in Himself' (*Theology*, vol. 1. p. 309). For Ficino, the circle is the most divine geometrical figure, representing the cycle of life itself, for as he writes, 'we know that all mathematical figures, which participate in inequality, are led back to the figure of the circle, which is the most equal of all figures' (*Theology*, vol. 1, p. 39).

Importantly, Ficino links his divine mathematics to musical proportions providing an explanatory justification as why the celestial spheres rotate in a circular motion. Thus the circle is linked to the diapason - denoting the interval of the octave where the last note returns to the first - and because 'the figure of the circle is led back to the indivisible centre, which is the beginning of all equality,' divine unity is achieved in an eternal process through music as a mathematical proportion and harmony (*Theology*, vol. 1. p. 39). The motion and divine music of the spheres affects mankind directly, Ficino argues, since the soul's function is to provide motion (*Theology*, vol. 1. p.87), since is itself a 'triple circle' which gazes 'back at God', 'contemplates itself', and descends and ascends from 'effects to their causes' (*Theology*, vol. 1. p. 309). This soul is tempered with the divine music of the celestial lyre as it descends through the eight celestial spheres. Because Ficino perceives the soul as the cosmos in miniature, he attaches the utmost significance to his Orphic hymns, since they lead to an internal spiritual contemplation in search of the harmony of the cosmos: 'you tune the whole sphere with the sound of your lyre' (*Theology*, vol. 1. p. 157).⁹⁶

Following what he believed to be the teachings of Hermes Trismegistus, Ficino further divides the rational soul into three levels: the world soul, the souls of the spheres

⁹⁶ Warden, *Orpheus: The Metamorphoses of a Myth*, p. 90.

and the souls of the living creatures contained within the individual spheres. Since all living things are influenced by the celestial souls, the spiritual and life-giving seeds are present everywhere (*Theology*, vol. 1. p. 257), presiding over our souls and their tempestuous emotions (*Theology*, vol. 1. p. 259). Thus there is an insistence on the unity of the cosmos, and Ficino upholds Orpheus, the bringer of truth and love, as the *theologus poeta* who celebrates the mysteries that underline the universe.⁹⁷

In a key letter to his fellow priest, Sebastiano Foresi, Ficino writes that ‘a man is not harmoniously formed who does not delight in harmony’ (Letter 21, vol. 5, p. 37). God, who ‘forms all things according to number, weight, and measure’, rejoices in harmony. Ficino argues, insisting, ‘that all individual parts should sing harmoniously to themselves and to the whole universe’ (Letter 21, vol. 5, pp. 37-38). Because the universe ‘resounds’ with harmony, Ficino links his synthesis of the *prisca theologia* and Christian doctrine to the divine music which is created by God to ‘make a harmony and melody beyond compare’ (Letter 21, vol. 5, p. 38).

Ficino notes that ‘gifted’ people are moved by the power of music, while people who are unmoved, he condemns as lacking in intelligence and judgement. He cites two reasons for these differences namely, physical and mathematical. When the middle part of the brain, he explains, which acts in some way as a stimulus or instrument to the faculty of judgement, ‘is not in harmony, it does not respond at all to the universal harmony’. Conversely, when it is harmonious, ‘it is wonderfully moved by the universal harmony’. His mathematical reason is that Mercury, ‘the bestower of intelligence as well as the maker of the lyre’, grants these gifts on the man whom he favours (Letter 21, vol. 5, p. 38).

⁹⁷ Warden, *Orpheus: The Metamorphoses of a Myth*, p. 93.

Ficino combines harmony with the Platonic *lambda*, described in chapter 1, to illustrate how the soul's parts and powers are designated by numbers.⁹⁸ Since he considers the soul – 'like mathematical objects' – to 'occupy the middle position between the natural and the divine forms', he recounts how the Pythagoreans used mathematical figures and numbers in 'figuring forth the soul' (*Theology*, vol. 6, p. 21). To substantiate his assertion, Ficino presents further explanatory detail on how 'the Pythagoreans establish the number one (representing unity) in the apex of their geometrical triangle, and from this one 'three numbers descend on each side. It is from these numbers that 'all the soul's parts, powers, and offices were designated by the Pythagoreans' (*Theology*, vol. 6, p. 21). Since musical tones numerically defined measurements and proportion in the cosmos, this formula, Ficino suggests, could provide one way of representing *musica mundana* – the divine music that maintains the harmony of nature. Thus a sense of the Platonic *furor* touches this letter for the hymns of Orpheus become an ecstatic means of expression in the soul's quest for unity with God.

As I have discussed in chapter 1, the music of the spheres conceives music as a mathematical concept and a basis for universal order.⁹⁹ The planets, created by God, were thought to revolve around the earth in their proper spheres in proportional relations that were reflected in the whole-number relations of the pure musical intervals: they moved at various speeds and the space between the planets was likened to the intervals between the strings of musical instruments.

This harmony of nature implies that the soul 'being numbered' is 'the principle of ordered motion' and therefore 'concordant to the maximum degree', which in turn

⁹⁸ Chapter 1, p. 74.

⁹⁹ Chapter 1, p. 50.

continually depends on the concord of celestial and elemental bodies alike (*Theology*, vol. 6, p. 21). Therefore, Ficino argues, *musica instrumentalis* reflects the divine music of God for ‘from the harmony in a musician’s mind there arises the harmony heard both in vocal and instrumental music’ alike (*Theology*, vol. 6, p. 21). This argument resonates with the Augustinian aesthetic principles of unity, where order and number leads back to the One, that is, numbers constitute a route to the Godhead (*De Musica*, p. 375). Numbers are important, St Augustine believes, because God created the universe – and the soul – with number and therefore, the principle of number is eternal with a mysterious regenerative effect.¹⁰⁰ The Book of Wisdom decrees that ‘thou hast ordered all things in measure, number and weight’ and this idea is continued into the New Testament as evidenced in the Pauline letters.¹⁰¹ When we contemplate God’s creation, St Paul writes, we shall ascend ‘from the inuifible things of him, that is, his eternal power and Godhead, are fene by the creation of the worlde’ (Romans 1:20).

The philosophical meaning of number also concerned Plato, whose universe likewise was created by number in *Timaeus*.¹⁰² Ficino and Augustine both emphasize the importance of numbers because the soul and numerically proportioned universe are inextricably linked. God, Plato tells us, ‘put intelligence in soul, and soul in body, and so he constructed the universe’.¹⁰³ This Platonic doctrine informs the Ficinian philosophy of number generating goodness and truth. Ficino develops this model by shifting the emphasis to a more musical interpretation of the universe: Orpheus and his lyre establish another layer of meaning

¹⁰⁰ Røstvig, *Configurations, A Topomorphical Approach to Renaissance Poetry*, p. x.

¹⁰¹ *The Geneva Bible*, f. 421.

¹⁰² Plato, *Timaeus*, 31-32b, in *Complete Works*, p. 1237.

¹⁰³ Plato, *Timaeus*, 30b, in *Complete Works*, p. 1236.

because music, evolving from the context of numbers, proportions, ratios and harmony, seeks now to also heal body and soul.

Ficino's use of Pythagorean numerology to clarify how the soul 'extends itself with greatest ease through the length, breadth, and depth of the body' is defined in terms of harmony and number to demonstrate that the soul is 'harmoniously compounded, and that it disposes and moves all things harmoniously' (*Theology*, vol. 6, p. 23).

Ficino deems it 'absolutely necessary' that the Pythagorean ratios and proportions, that I have discussed in chapter 1, come from the numbers that are described in figuring the soul'. Since, he argues, these numbers signify the 'soul's natural composition and its natural motion and action alike' they are 'the most harmonious' of all (*Theology*, vol. 6, p. 25). Since harmony is a 'rational principle' consisting in the 'concord of many (sounds)', it cannot, Ficino argues, inherently compose itself. (*Theology*, vol. 2, pp. 255-257). Just like a lyre, Ficino insists, 'harmony does not move the strings itself, but emerges only when the strings have been set in motion from elsewhere' (*Theology*, vol. 2 p. 249). Therefore, Ficino suggests, 'some greater power lies hidden within the harmony of the humours which tempers the corporeal harmony' in its own way restoring the body to 'a certain harmony which differs from that of other bodies' and is, he asserts, 'the harmony of life, and it is begotten by the life-giving spirit hidden within' (*Theology*, vol. 2 p. 251).

Ficino clearly conceptualizes the human body in harmonious terms since he defines health and physiological functionality as, 'a harmony of the body's humours, strength and harmony of its bones and muscles, beauty a kind of harmony of its parts and colors' (*Theology*, vol. 2. p. 255). He visualizes the corporeal body, I argue, through the metaphor of musical balance and proportion, while simultaneously acknowledging the vital role soul

plays in this model. While the 'humours are entirely corporeal,' he argues, the soul remains their source (*Theology*, vol. 2. p. 257).

Just as an imbalance of the humours leads to disease, 'harmony, so long as it remains harmony, admits no dissonance' (*Theology*, vol. 2. p. 259). However, while the soul is 'everywhere in harmony', the two are separate entities that compliment each other (*Theology*, vol. 2. p. 259). Because the soul is beyond the body 'it is perfectly possible', Ficino observes, for 'parts of the rational soul and the body to be in considerable discord and yet for the soul to remain a true living soul' (*Theology*, vol. 2. p. 261). Harmony, Ficino suggests, cannot endure this discord for the 'soul of the wicked man is by no means in harmony with itself' (*Theology*, vol. 2. p. 257). In contrast, the soul of the 'upright man' is more 'in tune' and thus would make his soul 'livelier, bolder, and stronger than that of a thief' (*Theology*, vol. 2. p. 250). While Ficino appears to struggle with the characteristics that define soul and harmony, his overall dialectics suggest that while harmony is part of soul, the immortal aspect of soul moves beyond the corporeal balancing of the humours.

The soul, however, is not disengaged from harmony and Ficino evidences this by turning to the Augustinian assertion that harmony and beauty are interchangeable because they are a reflection of the divine unity. 'Happy indeed are those whom the universe's beauty, that is, the splendor of the good itself, transform by love into the good itself', he writes, for by 'transforming them into the good, this beauty reforms them equally into the one, and in the one unites them to the good itself' (*Theology*, Vol. 4, p. 41) and it is this theme of love, beauty and harmony that Ficino returns to in his *Commentary on Plato's Symposium* since the one, true God is, Ficino believes, 'unity, truth and goodness' (*Theology*, vol.1, pp. 93-97).

Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love

Following the ancient Neoplatonists, Ficino paired his Commentaries on love (*Symposium*) and Beauty (*Phaedrus*); Socrates' mythical hymn (243b-257a), a palinode to the god of Love.¹⁰⁴ Here love is described in terms that are not sexual but rather as cathartic and its mythical nature is concerned with the degrees of divine inspiration or frenzy.¹⁰⁵ Beauty, Ficino observes, is perceived through our three cognitive powers: intelligence, sight and hearing and through this man is able to rise through ecstasy to knowledge of God.¹⁰⁶ Song for Ficino is the 'contemplation and praise of things divine'. While he acknowledges the man's soul can be lured and trapped by Sirens' song, he argues that the soul can reach apotheosis through 'harmonious contemplation'.¹⁰⁷ Thus music is a key to healing, of attaining a deeper spirituality with the surrounding cosmos; it provides the model for the spiritual regeneration of man – an idea Michael Maier and Robert Fludd explore in their examination of God in nature.

The association of love and beauty as harmony forms the central theme of Ficino's *Commentary*. Here Ficino adapts Augustine's doctrine on love and beauty by adding Plato's creation myth from *Timaeus*. Motivated by love, the god 'wanted everything to be good and nothing to be bad' so he took, Plato writes, 'all that was visible – not at rest but in discordant and disorderly motion - and brought it from a state of disorder to one of order'.¹⁰⁸ Thus out of chaos, the god created harmony, making it 'a symphony of

¹⁰⁴ Marsilio Ficino, *Commentaries on Plato*, Vol.1, *Phaedrus and Ion*, trans and (ed.) Michael J.B. Allen, The I Tatti Renaissance Library (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 2008), 'Introduction', p. ix.

¹⁰⁵ Ficino, *Commentaries on Plato*, Vol.1, *Phaedrus and Ion*, 'Introduction', p. xii and p. ix.

¹⁰⁶ Ficino, *Commentaries on Plato*, Vol.1, *Phaedrus and Ion*, 'Introduction', p. xii and p. xviii.

¹⁰⁷ Ficino, *Commentaries on Plato*, Vol.1, *Phaedrus and Ion*, p. 171.

¹⁰⁸ Plato, *Timaeus*, 30, in *Complete Works*, p. 1236.

proportion' from which, in turn, Love is born.¹⁰⁹ Through this metaphysical interpretation music, Ficino suggests that unity is achieved through love, the focal concern in his *Commentary*.

The main argument in this treatise centres on the soul's desire to return to its source (God) which Ficino calls heavenly love and differentiates from earthly or physical (human) love.¹¹⁰ As his *Platonic Theology* states, Ficino's imagined universe is a cosmos emanating from God through a hierarchy, down to the physical world. However, his theory on love allows human love to exist on a plane below divine love: since all human love is a desire to return to God, the lover, Ficino argues, seeks the divine in his beloved. Love then, always has a religious connotation, for human love is a preparatory shadow for divine love. Even profane love has a place in this cosmic scheme.¹¹¹

Ficino begins his *Commentary* by defining the causes, nature and effects of love. Although the setting of the book is a banquet held to celebrate the birthday and anniversary of Plato (*Commentary*, p. 35), it is a fiction created by Ficino to illustrate his own definition of love; that is, 'the desire for beauty', for this is, he tell us, 'the definition of love among all philosophers' (*Commentary*, p. 40). Beauty, in turn, is defined as a 'certain grace which most often originates above all in a harmony of several things' (*Commentary*, p. 40). Ficino sees beauty as threefold: 'for from the harmony of several virtues in souls there is a grace; from the harmony of several colors and lines in bodies a grace arises; likewise there is a very great grace in sounds from the harmony of several tones' (*Commentary*, p. 41). For Ficino this divine beauty generates love because 'inasmuch as it begins in God and attracts

¹⁰⁹ Plato, *Timaeus*, 32c, in *Complete Works*, p. 1237.

¹¹⁰ Ficino, *Commentary*, 'Introduction', p. 7.

¹¹¹ Yates, *The French Academies*, p. 5.

to Him, it is called Beauty; inasmuch as emanating to the World it captivates it, it is called Love' (*Commentary*, p. 46).

Ficinian love – radiating from God – reaches the physical earth in a circular pattern and Ficino substantiates this claim by quoting the hymn of Hierotheus and Dionysus the Areopagite: 'Love is a good circle which always revolves from the Good to the Good' (*Commentary*, p. 46). Love has to move in a circular pattern as Ficino conceives the cosmos as a concentric circle – a doctrinal assertion he sources from Proclus, pseudo-Dionysus and Dante.¹¹² Likewise Beauty must also be perceived for 'the single centre of all is God,' around whom the four circles of the Mind, the Soul, Nature and Matter move in accordance to their specific properties (*Commentary*, p. 47). From this point, Ficino argues, 'many lines, which are divisible and mobile, are drawn out to the circumference' (*Commentary*, p. 47).

By analysing the meaning of numbers in relation to each other and observing the implication of music-number relationships, Ficino develops the Augustinian 'ordered patterns' of the universe. In speech III, he considers how the four bodily humours maintain a healthy balance, how they 'may become and remain mutual friends' (*Commentary*, p. 66). He offers a music analogy to explain how this equilibrium is maintained, likening the relationship between the humours to the intervals in the musical scale: he asserts that the intervals of thirds, fourths, fifths, sixths, and octaves are more euphonious than those of the seconds or sevenths (*Commentary*, p. 66). The physical existence of these music-number relationships enable musicians to create concordant music, Ficino argues, for by

¹¹² Jayne, 'Introduction', in *Commentary*, p. 11.

understanding established intervals and modes, discordant and harmonious tones they are able to compose the ‘sweetness of harmony’ (*Commentary*, p. 66).

Just as Ficino differentiates between two kinds of love so he also maintains there are two kinds of musical melody. One kind he describes as is ‘ponderous and steady’, the other is ‘delicate and playful’ (*Commentary*, p. 67). Citing Plato, who ‘judges the former to be beneficial to us and the latter harmful’, to validate this assertion, Ficino advocates the suppression of the appetite of people that love the second kind of music, since ‘the love of the former is heavenly; of the latter, vulgar’ (*Commentary*, p. 67). This is not to say that Ficino always denigrates this type of music but rather highlights, I argue, its inappropriate attunement of the soul within his philosophical constructs. His conceptualization of harmony derives from the Pythagorean harmony of the spheres, a living paradigm connected to his soul theology since, he believes, the human soul during its life in the human body, imitates the music of the spheres. He asserts:

We think that from the swift and orderly revolution of the heavens originates musical harmony; that eight tones are produced by the motion of the eight spheres, and a ninth, a kind of harmony, is produced from their musical harmony, the nine Muses. Our soul was endowed from the beginning with the Reason of this music, for the celestial harmony is rightly called innate in anything whose origins are celestial. Which it later imitates on various instruments and in songs. And this gift likewise was given us through the love of divine providence. (*Commentary*, p. 102)

Music in the *Commentary* is I argue, not merely a representation of metaphysical truths, but an important bond between the human body soul and the universe. Ficino’s understanding of divine love incorporates Christ as the beloved, the conduit to higher spiritual realms, where Christ as God is the One—eternal unity, goodness and truth. However his attitude to earthly love is more complex and contradictory. Commenting on earthly love – or love for the use of procreation– Ficino juxtaposes different voices and thus his views on human love

are obfuscated. One of the ways he presents human love is as part of a natural cosmic process that all creatures share, and as part of this cosmos, individual will is not free.¹¹³ In contrast, Ficino also endorses the view that since the soul begins in heaven, falls into the body and then reascends to heaven, the individual soul is free to choose between earthly and divine love, while at other times he references Aquinas' theory of choice between love of self and love of God.¹¹⁴ By presenting these multiple voices, Ficino presents the different views on human love without judgement value.

In Speech VII, juxtaposing the 'soothing words of Socrates and melody of the excellent musicians Marsyas and Olympius', are questions regarding the nature of sexual madness (*Commentary*, p. 157). While Ficino suggests music as a cure, his view on same sex relationships is contradictory: while he modifies the Platonic Alcibiades, he describes how 'the sight of a young man bewitches an older man' (*Commentary*, p. 161). This represents a homoerotic element discernable in Ficinian discourse. Although the Translators of Ficino's letters insist that both Ficino and Giovanni Corsi, a fellow philosopher, led celibate and ascetic lives, his letters suggest a male-centred world of 'beloved fellow philosophers and 'unique friends'.

In speech VII, Ficino's sexual ambiguity again presents itself when he repeats, and gives credence to the superstition, that 'women, when the menstrual blood flows down, often soil a mirror with bloody drops by their own gaze' (*Commentary*, p. 160). He links the imagery of women and menstruation to infection, sickness and bewitchment by recalling how 'the sight of a stinking old man or a woman suffering her period bewitches a boy' (*Commentary*, p. 160). Ficino's ambivalent attitude to physical love extends beyond

¹¹³ Jayne, 'Introduction', in *Commentary*, p. 7.

¹¹⁴ Jayne, 'Introduction', in *Commentary*, pp. 15-16.

his *Commentary* to other works such as in *De Vita*, where he asserts that coitus is one of the principal enemies of students; ‘The first of these monsters is the coitus of Venus, for even if it is only a little excessive, it suddenly exhausts the spirits. It weakens the brain and attacks the stomach and the heart’ (*De Vita*, p. 12). Thus, I argue, Ficino fails to present and analyse the different kinds of earthly love objectively, since he chooses not to resolve their conflicting natures or, indeed, his ambivalent attitude towards his own sexual nature.

While Ficinian love does not subscribe to the Petrarchan ideal of feminine love, Ficino does describe three kinds of human love: the love of a woman for a man; the love of a man for a woman and the love of a man for a man (*Commentary*, p. 42). In his first example he cites Alcestis who is ‘willing to die for her husband’ (*Commentary*, p. 42), suggesting, I argue, that female love contains a self-destructive element. He then cites the love Orpheus had for Eurydice, which again contains the spectre of the dead feminine. However, Ficino’s third example, that of the love of Patroclus for Achilles, demonstrates, he argues, that ‘nothing renders men braver than love’ (*Commentary*, p. 42).

Alongside this classification on physical love, Ficino voices his anxiety about vulnerability as well as the physical effects of unrequited love. In Speech VI, he writes how the ancient physicians observed that, ‘love was a passion very close to the disease of melancholy’ (*Commentary*, p. 122). He argues there are those ‘by nature more susceptible to love,’ people in whom bile (choler) and black bile (melancholy) dominates the other humours (*Commentary*, p. 122).

Love affects each emotional type differently he believes: ‘choleric are burned up by the heat of the bile’ and thus, ‘because of the force of the fiery humour, are carried into love headlong’. The melancholy is ‘gnawed away by the sharpness of the black bile’, and therefore they ‘love more slowly due to the sluggishness of the earthy humor’. Because bile

is hot and dry, black bile dry and cold, Ficino argues that melancholics are ‘considered arid or dry, in the likeness of the earth’ and the choleric ‘squalid and pale, in the likeness of fire.’ Therefore, Love must be ‘dry and squalid; since it reflects the consuming nature of these emotional types. However, because a ‘nagging humour always torments both and drives them to seek some strong and continuous relief from the continuous annoyance of their humors’, Ficino maintains that music, through ‘the pleasures of song and beauty,’ provides “the only remedy and solace” of this ‘nagging humor.’ Music and song appease the restless soul, calming the body’s agitation for, as he asks, what is more appropriate to the spirits of the human body than the voices and figures of men? (*Commentary*, p. 122).

Ficino’s physiological reasons for the cause and cure of human love are due, he tells us, to the ‘six powers of the soul’ pertaining to: cognition, reason, sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch (*Commentary*, p. 85).¹¹⁵ Basing his argument on the proximity of each sense to the physical body, he maintains that hearing, along with reason and sight ‘pertains to the spirit and not the body’, for the eyes and ears contribute towards the search for truth, which Ficino believes is ‘the food of the soul’ (*Commentary*, p. 86). Since love and truth are identical and pertain to knowledge, shapes and a harmony of sounds, they are valued by the soul for their inherent grace, which the soul seizes and embraces, and is rightly called beauty (*Commentary*, p. 86). Orpheus, Ficino writes, names these graces as *Aglaia*/ Splendour, *Thalia*/ Viridity and *Euphrosyne*/ Abundant Joy (*Commentary*, p. 86). It is this ‘pure, powerful and perpetual pleasure, which we experience in musical melody’, Ficino

¹¹⁵ Ficino states that there are six powers of the soul: reason and the five senses and draws a parallel between the five senses, the four elements and the vapors. He then eliminates the three most corporeal senses on the ground that they service the body only. In this way he leaves only reason, sight and hearing as eligible for perception of spiritual things, *Commentary*, p. 102.

tells us, which Orpheus describes as joy, which again suggests Ficino's preference for playing Orphic hymns.

As I previously demonstrated, the spirit of Orpheus permeates the writings of Ficino adding a distinctive aspect to his philosophy because the Orphic myth attaches a psychological dimension to Ficino's musical healing. The Orphic tradition – stretching beyond Moses to the Egyptians and Chaldeans – is apparent in Ficino's discussion on the origin of love, for he relates how Orpheus 'sang about the beginnings of things, following the theology of Hermes Trismegistus' in the *Argonautica* (*Commentary*, p. 37).¹¹⁶ Praising love, Orpheus declares, 'Love is the oldest, perfect in himself, and best counseled' (*Commentary*, p. 38). Thus love arises from out of chaos, and from the 'birth of love', creation is harmoniously formed (*Commentary*, p. 39).

Although Ficino was aware that the use of Orphic texts could potentially expose him to charges of heresy, it is through the Orphic model that he explains the Platonic *furor* or divine frenzy for, he expounds, 'Orpheus was seized by all of these madnesses' (*Commentary*, p. 171). Ficino, who aroused devotion with his singing of the Orphic hymns, describes the divine *furor* as: Love, poetry, the mysteries and prophecy, arguing that man, driven by the divine madness, rises beyond his nature and 'passes into a god' (*Commentary*, p. 168). Ficino believes the divine frenzy as providing an ascent back to God but rising above all of these madnesses is love because it is 'the most powerful and most excellent of all' as it can render men blind (*Commentary*, p. 171).

¹¹⁶ *The Argonautica* is a poem of the late fourth century A.D., based largely on the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes, D.P. Walker, *The Ancient Theology: Studies in Christian Platonism from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (London: Gerald Duckworth & co., 1972). p. 15.

Paradoxically this is a positive blindness, necessary for men to regain their spiritual sight – to allow light into their souls – and it is reached not through rationality, but rather through ‘powerful emotion and burning desire’ (Letter 7, vol. 1. p. 42). The soul, fired by memory, desires to return again to the “contemplation of divine beauty” (Letter 7, vol. 1. p. 44) and ‘this first attempt at flight Plato calls divine ecstasy and frenzy’ (Letter 7, vol. 1. p. 45).

The theory of divine madness which Ficino incorporates into his *Commentary* had been developed almost twenty years before the Italian translation of this work had been completed. Correspondence dating back to 1457 already demonstrates his keen interest in this subject: his entire letter to Peregrino Agli is dedicated to the divine frenzy, where Ficino also contextualizes music’s role within the Platonic *furor*. To ‘see’ the Platonic *furor*, one must have two areas of vision – the physical eyes to behold beauty and the eyes of the mind to comprehend divine beauty, writes. In addition, the soul receives ‘the sweetest harmonies and numbers through the ears’ which reminds the soul of the divine music of the heavens (Letter 7, vol. 1. p. 45). As I foregrounded earlier in this chapter, this divine music has a two-fold nature, where the soul, realising it is bound in a corporeal body and unable to reach the divine music, ‘strives wholeheartedly to imitate it’ in order to re-create the celestial harmony, since it cannot enjoy its possession on earth (Letter 7, vol. 1. p. 46).

Love, however, not only inspires the Platonic *furor* but is, according to Ficino, a magician since ‘the whole power of magic consists in love’ (*Commentary*, p. 127). Defining magic as ‘the attractions of one thing by another because of a certain affinity of nature’ (*Commentary*, p. 127), Ficino argues that because all parts of the world derive from one single author – God – a common relationship is formed amongst all things and from

this is born a ‘common love’ which he describes as ‘true magic’ (*Commentary*, p. 127). Furthermore, all works of magic are, therefore, ‘works of nature’ (*Commentary*, p. 127). Crucially it is imperative that Ficino makes this point unambiguous since it provides an explanation on how creation is brought into being and sustained by the love of God, thereby disassociating Ficino’s natural magic from the demonic, black arts. The work of love, Ficino writes, is fulfilled by ‘bewitchments, incantations, and enchantments’ (*Commentary*, p. 128). Placing a remarkable belief in music’s healing powers, he suggests that ‘men charm and win men over to themselves through the powers of eloquence and the measure of songs, as if by certain incantation’ - a theme he explores in depth in *De Vita* (*Commentary*, p. 127).

As I suggest in my Introduction, Ficino’s theory on divine love had a profound impact in early modern literature.¹¹⁷ While the influence of Ficinian divine love has been widely acknowledged in Baldesar Castiglione’s *The Courtier*, Margaret Healy demonstrates that Shakespeare’s Sonnets, Spenser’s *Hymns*, Chapman’s prefaces to his translations of the Greek myths, late Elizabethan court entertainments and the marginalia to Gabriel Harvey’s treatise on divine madness are all indebted to Ficino’s treatise on love.¹¹⁸ Likewise Jonson’s *New Inn*, which I examine in chapter 5, evokes the Platonic *furor*, while the poetry and masques of Thomas Campion demonstrate, I argue in chapter 6, how the transforming power of love and its transcendent spirituality is illuminated through musical healing.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Introduction, p. 17.

¹¹⁸ Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy*, p. 26.

¹¹⁹ Chapter 5, pp. 286-287; Chapter 6, pp. 328-331.

De Vita Triplica

James J. Bono argues that *De Vita* constitutes an important contribution to Renaissance medicine and philosophy since much of what Ficino writes on represents standard medical knowledge of the early modern period.¹²⁰ However while Galenic therapies underline the first two books of *De Vita*, Ficino's astral magic – the power of the planets over human will, and the legitimacy of natural magic – in Book Three, 'On Obtaining Life from the Heavens' was particularly problematic leading to censure from the Roman Catholic authorities.¹²¹

Anticipating the possibility of disapproval, Ficino wrote a prefatory 'Address to the Reader' at the beginning of Book Three, where he clarifies the intention of the book stating that, 'the whole forms an epitome of Medicine which will assist your life as much as possible, that it may be both healthy and long; and it employs at every point the resources of doctors, aided by the heavens' (*De Vita*, p. 239). This book, Ficino claims, offers 'life-giving' medicines, 'according to the differing mental capacities and natures of men' (*De Vita*, p. 239). Music, as I shall argue, is one way though which he promises health. Importantly he exhorts the reader to 'dismiss' the astronomical images – invented for the 'health of men' - if they do not approve of them (*De Vita*, p. 239). This is, I suggest, a Ficinian ploy to eschew accusations of idolatry while still advocating medicines that 'have been strengthened by some sort of heavenly aid' (*De Vita*, p. 241).

¹²⁰ James J. Bono, *The Word of God and the Languages of Man: Interpreting Nature in Early Modern Science and Medicine*. Volume 1 Ficino to Descartes (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), pp. 33-34.

¹²¹ Kaske and Clark 'Introduction', in *De Vita*, p. 18.

In addition to this foreword, Ficino includes a postscript containing an ‘Apology’ – again written to deflect his critics – where he explains that *De Vita*’s purpose is to heal by ‘natural magic’, through which ‘natural things’ seek to obtain the ‘services of the celestials for the prosperous health of our bodies’ (*De Vita*, p. 297). In his *Apologia*, Ficino poses the question of why a Christian uses magic or images. ‘Ancient priests’, he answers, ‘were doctors as well as astronomers’ who desired to see that ‘men have a sound mind in a sound body’ (*De Vita*, p. 297). Ficino’s descriptive language in ‘*mens sana in corpore sano*’ suggests that musical sound forms a primary constituent in his model of health. As a restorative, healing therapy, music was, Ficino argued, necessary for the ‘prosperous health of our bodies’ (*De Vita*, p. 397).

For Ficino, who practiced ‘medicine salutary to souls’ (*De Vita*, p. 103) music was, therefore, an essential component of his natural magic. In his dedicatory letter to Lorenzo Medici, Ficino describes himself as, ‘Galen, doctor of bodies, Plato, doctor of soul (*De Vita*, p. 103). He perceived himself, I suggest, as the amalgamation of these two, offering *De Vita* as a new way forward in the art of healing.

In Book One, ‘On a Healthy Life’, Ficino identifies music as a cure for melancholy in but it needs to be appropriate, ‘low songs and sounds’ (*De Vita*, p. 157) to take away the sleeplessness he associates with melancholy, for ‘Hermes Trismegistus, Pythagoras and Plato tell us to calm and to cheer the dissonant and the sorrowful mind with constant and harmonious lyre and song’ (*De Vita*, p. 135). Ficino tempers his Hermetic theology with biblical authority by also including the example of the ‘sacred poet’ David, who ‘used to free Saul from madness with psaltery and psalms’, proving ‘how much the sweetness of the lyre and song avail against the bitterness of black bile’ (*De Vita*, p. 135).

Melancholic by nature himself, Ficino, who was born under the sign of Saturn, followed the Neoplatonic belief that melancholy was a natural condition of the soul, a cry for escape in its desire to leave the body. He cites three reasons – celestial, natural and human – why learned people, in particular, were susceptible to melancholy (*De Vita*, p. 113). Since *musica humana* imitates the celestial music that achieves a harmonious union with God it must, Ficino argues, have therapeutic properties. In his dedication to Lorenzo Medici, Ficino makes this point clear, for he writes, ‘Phoebus is the discoverer of medicine and the master of poesy, and he gives us of his life not only by herbs but through the lute and music’ (*De Vita*, p. 105). Likewise Venus, goddess of love, Ficino writes, gives birth equally, according to astrologers, ‘to the musician and the doctor’ suggesting that Ficino’s interpretation of divine love does not differentiate between music and health (*De Vita*, p. 105).

Ficino refashioned the pseudo- Aristotelian idea of the ‘melancholy man of genius.’¹²² One reason, Ficino argues, why nobody is more melancholy than thinkers is that it is ‘celestial, (*De Vita*, 113) and under the influence of Saturn and Mercury, man was capable of spiritual union with the *spiritus mundi* by cultivating a state of ‘inspired melancholy’, because tempered with other humours, melancholy was considered conducive to profound contemplation.¹²³ Ficino explains this melancholic humour as ‘the third kind of emptying’ that separates the soul from external affairs so that the soul is emptied in the waking man as it is customarily emptied at times in the sleeping’.

When melancholics are seized by the divinity, Ficino writes, ‘they become more excited than do the other types, and if they catch fire, they burn more fervently than rare

¹²² Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy, Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion and Art* (Cambridge: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd. 1964), p. 255.

¹²³ Headlam Wells, *Elizabethan Mythologies*, p. 192.

bodies'.¹²⁴ Thus, he suggests the melancholic thinker is filled with the *divine furor*, where the soul is reminded of the echoes of the divine music that is the eternal mind of God and the harmony of the motions of the heavenly spheres (Letter 7, vol. 1, p. 45). The nature of melancholy is deeply personal to Ficino; writing in *De Vita* he reveals how he 'frequently prove in myself how much the sweetness of the lyre and song avail against the bitterness of black bile' (*De Vita*, 135). The power of music over the body was more than an uplifting physical experience; it offers Ficino an intellectual and spiritual edification. While music provides a connection to the material world it also imparts a spiritual connection to the divine will of God. Ficino believed music to be the key to a spiritual ascent. Healing music could open our spirits again to the influence of harmony because, according to Ficino, the material of harmony is purer and therefore able to carry away certain diseases of the body and soul (*De Vita*, 361).

Ficino's personal affliction of melancholy suggests the reason why he pays special attention to the problem of melancholy in scholars in Book 1. Scholars devoted to the study of philosophy are most bothered by an excess of black bile, he argues, because they 'recall their mind from the body and corporeal things and apply it to incorporeal things' (*De Vita*, p. 115). He warns learned people about the 'folly' (*De Vita*, p. 113) of neglecting the spirit since it shapes his premise that heaven was 'constructed according to a harmonic plan' (*De Vita*, p. 363). The spirit that 'nourishes within', he writes, 'is a very tenuous body, as if now it were soul and not body, and now body and not soul', and is, he suggests, 'is by its own nature 'moist and life-giving' (*De Vita*, p. 257). This syncretistic blend of Augustinian and Neoplatonic philosophy suggests that since the heavens 'move harmonically and bring

¹²⁴ Ficino, *Platonic Theology*, Vol. 4, Book XIII: II, p. 163.

everything about by harmonic sounds and motions', the spirit can obtain 'the occult forces of the stars through a similar harmony of its own' (*De Vita*, p. 363).

One of the ways harmony can achieve this, Ficino suggests, is by imitating the Pythagorean musical songs and sounds (*De Vita*, p. 355). In order to be in harmony with God and creation, Ficino is stating, man has to have harmony in his soul: a divine song that resonates with the Platonic Myth of Er since, he asserts, harmony is drawn with 'words, songs and sounds' (*De Vita*, p. 357). As I argue, Ficinian spirit pervades his vision of harmony and has the power – through song – to cure 'certain diseases, both mental and physical' since it is, 'the mean between body and soul' (*De Vita*, p. 361). Musical harmony, he suggests, links body and soul, God and creation, establishing a relationship of proportion and equilibrium; ^{it} is the musician's duty, Ficino writes, to 'portray beauty of song in sound, and the fineness of speech in song' (Letter 53, vol. 2, p. 66).

Although Ficino maintains that 'all music proceeds from Apollo', because there is 'a wondrous power in an aroused and singing spirit', he is very specific in his attribution of different songs to the gods and the qualities they display' (*De Vita*, p. 361). Man in turn, Ficino argues, is subject to the various influences of the four planets named after Jupiter, Mercury, Venus and Apollo [the sun], for the 'other three planets have voices but not songs' (*De Vita*, p. 361). He admonishes the reader to keep these differences in mind as he lists the different types of music attributed to each god for 'you will win over one of these four to yourself by using their songs, especially if you supply musical notes that fit their songs' (*De Vita*, p. 361).

This suggests that Ficino believes that it is the music more than the words of the songs that appeals to the gods, and this is sustained by his assertion that the gods answer 'like a string in a lute trembling to the vibration of another which has been similarly

tuned' (*De Vita*, p. 361). This sympathetic response illuminates the Ficinian vindication for natural magic: his songs contain a 'Phoebean and medical power' that he equates to the emotion and force of prayer (*De Vita*, p. 363).

In Book Two Ficino focuses on ways to prolong one's life through the vigorous refreshing of the spirit and one method of achieving this is through music. Ficino recommends that in order to 'refresh their spirits' and avoid fatigue of body and mind, people should 'take up music again, if perchance they have neglected it, which should never happen' (*De Vita*, p. 189). If the spirit is refreshed, he argues, it becomes temperate and conforms to the heavens. Longevity, Ficino deems, is a gift of the gods, particularly Apollo, Mercury and Bacchus: all gods associated with music. In his address to the elderly, Mercury advises human life to be kept 'in a certain proportion of soul to body' (*De Vita*, p. 213) and, to augment this he presents them with a lyre made in conjunction with 'a Phoebean song' and 'a pledge of long life' (*De Vita*, p. 215). This is achievable, he advises them, for when you 'temper the strings and the sounds in the lyre and the tones in your voice, consider your spirit to be tempered similarly within' (*De Vita*, p. 215).

Ficino moves from this parabolic narration to the last chapter of Book two to prove that Phoebus and Bacchus likewise, bestow the gift of prolonged life for they 'alone have youth eternal' (*De Vita*, p. 233). He likens these two brother-gods to light and eternity, describing Phoebus as 'the whole of the sphere' and Bacchus as 'the sphere itself' (*De Vita*, p. 233), signifying the perfect, eternal spiritual realm.¹²⁵ To this imagery Ficino adds three gifts to preserve youth: daylight, herbs and 'the lyre and perennial song' (*De Vita*, p. 235) for just as the Phoebean sun brings life in Spring with the 'singing the song of the birds'

¹²⁵ Abraham, *Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, p.41

and lyre tempering the weather, so does music also balance the humours, staving off old age and ‘untimely death’ (*De Vita*, p. 235).

The third book of *De Vita* contains the culmination of Ficino’s musical theory – the intellectual philosophy underpinning the physical healing powers of music – suggesting that music has the power to influence souls.¹²⁶ As D. P. Walker points out, Ficino was not only using music for aesthetic or philosophical purposes but, as a musician and physician, uses music as a means to medical, magical or theurgic ends, through which the body, *spiritus* and soul are purified for a life with God.¹²⁷

Ficino presents his astrological music as part of his natural magic and not as some kind of magical incantation.¹²⁸ Although, as I argue, he implies the supremacy of music over words in his astrological songs, at this point he claims that ‘certain words pronounced with quite a strong emotion’ have a great power around images (*De Vita*, p. 355). This creates an uncertainty and hesitancy in Ficino’s argument, suggesting that he himself is unsure of the correct order of importance. He does, however, present three rules for composing astrological music, for ‘accommodating our songs to the stars’ (*De Vita*, p. 357).

By discovering what power and effect each star has, we can then, Ficino writes, insert the correct meaning into the words of the astrological songs. The second rule, he tells us, is to note ‘what special star rules what place or person and then to observe what sorts of tones and songs these regions and persons generally use’ (*De Vita*, p. 359) so that similar words can be applied to the songs. Finally he advises the observation of the ‘daily positions and aspects of the stars’ to discover what ‘songs, motions, dances, moral behaviour, and

¹²⁶ Walker, ‘Ficino’s “Spiritus” and Music’, in *Annales Musicologiques*, p. 132.

¹²⁷ Walker, ‘Ficino’s “Spiritus” and Music’, in *Annales Musicologiques*, p. 132.

¹²⁸ Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, p. 25.

actions' people are incited by so that they may be imitated in the songs that 'aim to please that particular part of heaven that resembles them' (*De Vita*, p. 359).

In presenting these rules, Ficino is clearly promoting the effectiveness of planetary music to imitate, and therefore influence, our emotions by explaining how 'harmonious music through its numbers and proportions has a wonderful power to calm, move, and influence our spirit, mind, and body'. Defining proportions as 'almost figures' constituted out of numbers and made 'out of points and lines' in motion, Ficino insists that by their 'harmonious rays and motions', efficacious celestial figures penetrate everything, influencing our spirit 'secretly just as overpowering music generally does openly' (*De Vita*, p. 331).

The ultimate purpose of Ficino's music and rules for planetary music was to lead us back to the One (unity), and music provides the vital link in leading us back to higher spiritual realms. Through Neoplatonic explanations that demonstrate music's power to heal the body and soul, Ficino provides a philosophical framework within *De Vita* that elucidates the soul's pathway to the divine physician.

The Letters of Marsilio Ficino

Ficino began to collect his letters in the 1470s and gradually arranged them in twelve books which were published in 1495. It is this volume of work that covers the time frame of the three other works cited in this chapter, and thus the collection of letters gives a clear perception of Ficino's developing musical theory. Ficino's ideas appear more accessible in his letters due to the informality of language he uses as opposed to the metaphysical constructions of his religious and philosophical writings. However, the letters are not

entirely of a personal nature but have a dual aspect: they fulfill a didactic role in that they were written for the individual but also for the benefit of society.¹²⁹

The letters occupy a central position in Ficino's collected works: while containing a historical and literary dimension, they are also imbued with conscious moral and philosophical teaching. The doctrine of Platonic love permeates the letters because Platonism contains the idea of the soul's immortality, which is, Ficino argues, 'divine by nature; and whenever they return to themselves, they realize this divinity' (Letter 9, vol. 1, p. 50).

Textual evidence indicates that music is a subject Ficino returns to continually throughout the *Letters*, both in metaphorical and philosophical terms. In one of his first letters entitled, 'Medicine heals the body, music the spirit, and theology the soul', Ficino counsels Francesco Musano whom, the letter suggests, he cures of tertian fever with medicine and 'the sound of the lyre and the singing of hymns'. Musano should not be surprised at this combination, Ficino suggests for, 'in nature a union is made from body, soul and spirit' (Letter 5, vol. 1, pp. 39-40). Ficino justifies this by citing the example of the Egyptian priests who believed medicine, music and the mysteries were 'one and the same study'. He points out that while the body 'is indeed healed by the remedies of medicine', the spirit, 'which is the airy vapour of our blood and the link between body and soul, is tempered and nourished by airy smells, by sounds, and by song'. It is this spirit that is crucial to Ficino, because it connects man to nature – where a 'union is made from soul, body and spirit' – and ultimately to God (Letter 5, vol. 1, p. 40).

In an important letter Ficino raises the relationship between medicine and music – Letter 92, *De musica* – where he is responding to Canigiani's questions regarding the link

¹²⁹ Ficino, *Letters*, 'Introduction', Vol. 2, p. xviii.

between the two arts. Addressing how the ‘body and soul are in harmony with each other by a natural proportion’ (Letter 92, vol. 1, p. 142), Ficino acknowledges a debt to the Augustinian belief of rationality, proportion and ordered pattern by asserting that ‘serious music maintains and restores this harmony to the parts of the soul’ (Letter 92, vol. 1, p. 142). In conjunction with Augustinian theology, Ficino also considers the Platonic viewpoint, arguing that the followers of Plato ascribe medicine and music ‘to one God, Apollo, whom the ancient theologians thought was the inventor of medicine and lord of the sounding lyre’ (Letter 92, vol. 1, p. 142), demonstrating his successful synthesis of classical and Christian belief.

Highlighting the dual, medical and musical aspects of Apollo’s nature, Ficino presents a strong case for the ability of music to restore health and ward off disease. The Orphic hymns suggest, Ficino posits, that through vital rays, Apollo ‘bestows health and life on all and drives away disease’ (Letter 92, vol. 1, p. 142). Furthermore, he argues, Apollo regulates everything by the power and vibration of his sounding strings, and just as he regulates the seasons, so too does he regulate the harmonious relationship between body and soul with his music (Letter 92, vol. 1, p. 142).

Ficino then turns to the relationship between the body and soul in health and illness, for he tells us that ‘the harmonious cycles of fevers and humours and the movements of the pulse itself also seem to imitate this harmony’ (Letter 92, vol. 1, p. 142). He defends this argument by citing Plato and Aristotle’s assertion that ‘serious music maintains and restores this harmony to the parts of the soul, while medicine restores harmony to the parts of the body’ (Letter 92, vol. 1, p. 142). As he frequently does, Ficino alludes to the soothing effect that the Biblical David’s lyre had on Saul’s madness, adding that Democritus and Theophrastus also maintain that music can cure other disease of the body

and soul. Orpheus, Pythagoras, Empedocles and Asclepiades, Ficino adds, ‘proved this practice’, for:

sound and song arise from consideration in the mind, the impulse of fantasy and the desire of the heart, and in disturbing the air and lending measure to it they vibrate the airy spirit of the listener, which is the link between body and soul. Thus sound and song easily arouse the fantasy, affect the heart and reach the inmost recesses of the mind; they still, and also set in motion, the humours and the limbs of the body. (Letter 92, vol. 1, p. 142)

Summarizing this interface between music and how it works on the body, Ficino explains a cascading hierarchy of healing music: the ‘first music takes place in reason’, he writes, followed by ‘the second in fantasy and the third in words; thence follows song and after that the movement of the fingers in sound’ (Letter 92, vol. 1, p. 143). Proving there is a ‘strong communication between the music of the soul and of the body’ is not difficult, Ficino insinuates since both are made by God and both given the gift of divine music (Letter 92, vol. 1, p. 143).

Before ending the letter, Ficino recommends, ‘solemn and calming music as the most wholesome medicine for spirit, soul and body’ (Letter 92, vol. 1, p. 143). Returning to the biblical notion of number, weight and measure encapsulating cosmic harmony and proportion, he reiterates his belief that ‘the universal soul and body, as well as each living being, conform to musical proportion.’¹³⁰ Quoting Plato to demonstrate the special concern music holds for those men of knowledge who worship the Muses, Ficino argues that the Muses engender music, because music was named after them.¹³¹ Plato, he writes, criticizes

¹³⁰ Introduction, p. 37.

¹³¹ Plato, *Alcibiades*, 108c, in *Complete Works*, p. 563.

‘plaintive and light music’ since it can lead the spirit to ‘lechery and bad temper’ (Letter 92, vol. 1, p. 143).

Ficino finishes the letter on a personal note, telling Canigiani how, after his studies, he resorts to ‘the solemn sound of the lyre and to singing, to avoid other sensual pleasures entirely’. Ficino remains silent on what exactly these other sensual pleasures are, focusing rather on how he is able to ‘banish vexations of both soul and body’ by raising his mind to ‘the highest considerations and to God’. He can achieve this through ‘the authority of Mercurius and Plato, who say that music was given to us by God to subdue the body, temper the mind and render Him praise’, for he believes, ‘David and Pythagoras’ taught and practiced this above all else (Letter 92, vol. 1, pp.143-144). It is these ancient voices that lend such a profound authority to Ficino’s musical philosophy that provides the vital link between man, soul, the cosmos and God, the ultimate healer of men.

The idea of God as the ultimate healer is one that Ficino explores elsewhere in his works, for as he states, ‘nowhere is there found a medicine adequate for earthly diseases, except divine love and worship’ (Letter 4, vol. 3, p. 7). Conceiving God as the divine physician to cure the ills of the soul, the idea that God rejoices in harmony ‘to such an extent that he seems to have created the world for this reason’, is one, I argue, that continually preoccupies Ficino (Letter 21, vol. 5, p. 38). In a letter entitled ‘The Principles of Music’ (Letter 76, vol. 7, pp. 82-87), Ficino presents the theoretical and philosophical aspect of music in relation to philosophical harmony.

In this letter Ficino uses highly technical musical terminology to express his argument, that there is a relationship between musical scales and the intervals and

proportions that Plato believed God used to create the body and the soul in *Timaeus*.¹³² The Platonic idea that ‘true music is nothing other than harmony of the mind’ is realized in terms of the principle ratio 2:1 which produces the diapason, ‘the perfect consonance of the octave’ (Letter 76, vol. 7, p. 82). Ficino assigns a musical ratio to each muse or classical divinity to illustrate how perfect harmony is achieved through these perfect ratios. He explains his belief through the metaphor of the musical octave. The categorization of the eight musical notes from the lowest to the highest signals this harmony as the eighth note of one octave becomes the first note of the following octave. It is the repetition of the complete octave ‘pleasingly ordered in four stages... the still state, the fall, the arising, and the return’ (Letter 76, vol. 7, p. 83) which restores ‘the chorus of the nine muses’ (Letter 76, vol. 7, p. 83). While this numerical interpretation implies the human emotional response to the cadences of musical notes and silences, it simultaneously also refers to Macrobius’ *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* and the Platonic *furor*, since Ficino regards the notion that reality is beyond the senses, and beyond that part of the mind which deals with sensory perception as an essential part of the ancient theology. It was the reflections of the sensory world in this real one that reminded the soul of its spiritual homeland and a desire to return there.¹³³ From the octave a continuous circle is formed that is eternal and unceasing. While the proportions derive from Plato’s *Timaeus*, the musical scale Ficino advocates – called the ‘Just’ or ‘Natural’ scale – appears to be unique.¹³⁴

Ficino then addresses the universal causes of harmony identifying three key areas; universal, physical and astronomical. He begins his discussion by arguing that musicians

¹³² Ficino, *Letters*, Vol. 7, p. xxv, where *Timaeus* 31-7 is cited as the source.

¹³³ Ficino, *Letters*, Vol. 7, p. xxi-xxii.

¹³⁴ This scale, that contains no sharps or flats is quite unlike the work of contemporary theorists such as Bartolome Ramos de Pereia or Caffurius and Ficino’s description of the qualities of the different notes (for example, falling away, rising) is also apparently original, Ficino, *Letters*, Vol. 7, p. 137.

use ratios as the foundations for building a ‘house of music’ (Letter 76, vol. 7, p. 84). Building on this metaphor, Ficino explains that harmony is achieved when the tension of strings from two lyres is equal and unity is achieved. Unity, therefore, consists of perfect attunement. Conversely, ‘if one of the strings be tensioned more than the other, there will be a departure from the one’ (Letter 76, vol. 7, p. 84). Ficino clarifies this analogy by explaining how disharmony occurs when the tension of the lyre strings becomes more unequal, and ‘the ears are brutally offended in that sound because of its excessive distance from the one’. However, he adds, if the musician adds tension to ‘one of the two strings above the other by a fourth part, this is the point where the ear is in some way delighted’ (Letter 76, vol. 7, p. 84). Ficino argues that musical unity is only be achieved by the addition of a third part since, ‘the number three is considered by many to be indivisible, all-embracing, and the most perfect of all, in which respects it corresponds most closely with unity’ (Letter 76, vol. 7, p. 84).¹³⁵

Ficino validates the relationship between ratios and harmony in this section of the letter, using the Pythagorean, and therefore Platonic, number system. While he identifies that the correct tension of the lyre strings will produce a superior harmony, he also realizes that music needs to be heard in order to produce any effect: it must be harmonious to the hearer. It is the duality – in the production and hearing of music – that the power of music is most prominent, for it is through this, Ficino argues, cosmic unity is achieved. Hearing, he insists, contains ‘a multitude of natural parts which blend full together into one form’, so that it ‘readily welcomes a number of notes when they are brought perfectly into one note and into harmony’ (Letter 76, vol. 7, p. 85).

¹³⁵ While Ficino’s suggestions about tension is not supported by modern physics, his remarks on frequency remain entirely valid. Ficino, *Letters*, Vol. 7, p. 138.

Defining hearing's relationship to music, Ficino uses the Platonic explanation where 'one measure of earth; also one of water, but with the third more; one and a half measures of fire; and lastly, two of air' is located in hearing (Letter 76, vol. 7, p. 86). In the context of music and harmony, Ficino gives hearing primacy over the other senses, maintaining that the spirit in man can be moved more strongly through the sense of hearing than by any of the other senses, as I have previously argued.

In the final section of this letter, Ficino discusses the astronomical causes of harmony. Citing Iamblichus in his opening sentence, Ficino claims an older, greater authority: 'There are those who trace such things back to a loftier plane and, in the manner of the Pythagoreans who affirm a celestial harmony, derive the principles of harmony from some celestial power or some celestial correspondence' (Letter 76, vol. 7, p. 86). While Ficino argues that he is merely alluding to this viewpoint, his inclusion of Pythagorean harmony and sympathy in this important letter suggests, I wish to argue, a rhetorical denial, meant, to deflect accusations of astrological magic.

Ficino then proceeds to assign the notes of the octave to the twelve celestial (zodiacal) signs, which he numbers rather than names. Discussing how each combination of music and planet is either dissonant or harmonious, he also includes the qualities the ancient theologians assigned to each combination, such as 'the frail consonance' of the sixth note, and the 'vigorous, even violent tone of the seventh note' (Letter 76, vol. 7, pp. 86-87). However, at the end of the letter Ficino tries to distance himself again from astrological speculation by stressing how each combination of planet and note has different meanings for astrologers and musicians. Using the tenth constellation as an example, Ficino argues that 'it displays ambition, which astrologers see as the foundation of human discord and which musicians see as the moderate and seemingly human discord of the fourth note'

(Letter 76, vol. 7, p. 87). Thus musicians, he suggests – and he includes himself in this category – interpret celestial influence according to the principles of music only, as I have demonstrated, but this is not in keeping with his astrological music in *De Vita*. This letter may be interpreted as an attempt by Ficino to legitimize his astrological music within the confines of his religion, through his particular syncretic philosophy augmented by the Augustinian and Pythagorean principles of proportion, and imbued with Plato's divine love.

These letters specifically discuss the Ficinian ideas harmony, music and unity with the Creator. For Ficino this encapsulates his fundamental philosophy – enshrined in Plato – that the most important knowledge for mankind is the knowledge of the immortal aspect of each human soul, and its contemplation and longing for the Divine. Ficino believed that the whole of creation was a product of love and this love extends to humanity for it is the principal means by which man can discover his own divine nature and that the universe and man are constructed of the same harmonic proportion. It is God who gives man the gift of divine music – harmony – and this is mirrored in the music of man's body (*musica humana*) and instruments (*musical instrumentalis*). This in turn reflects the numerical proportions of the heavens (*musica mundana*) so that harmonious accord is achieved so that man may worship God.

The dissemination of the Ficinian Model

Importantly, the network Ficino created through his *Letters* disseminated his philosophical beliefs throughout Europe and England, for he corresponded with learned men such as John Colet, the Dean of St Paul's and friend of Thomas More, de Ganay in France, Reuchlin in

Germany and King Matthias of Hungary.¹³⁶ These *Letters*, Margaret Healy argues, offer an ‘accessible rendering’ of Ficino’s philosophy and, as Jayne Sears notes, were ‘relatively popular’ in sixteenth-century England.¹³⁷ Likewise, in England, Ficino’s influence is discernable in the humanist colleges which had already been exposed to the Christian Neoplatonism of authors such as St Augustine and Boethius: Corpus Christi College in Oxford, for example, held copies of Platonic texts in its library, while the Cambridge Platonists of the mid-seventeenth century adapted Renaissance Platonism to the scientific and philosophical challenges of the period.¹³⁸

In secular literature, music theory, and in the arts, Ficino’s influence has been extensively documented.¹³⁹ The single most inspirational aspect of his Neoplatonism is his doctrine on Platonic love that he developed in his *Commentary on Plato’s Symposium*.¹⁴⁰ Appropriating Ficino’s idea of Platonic love, Baldesar Castiglione appropriates it into a transformed ideal of courtly love in *IL Cortegiano* (1528) that was translated into English by Thomas Hoby as *The Courtyer* (1561).¹⁴¹ In turn, some of the love debates in Ben Jonson’s *The New Inn*, which I examine in chapter 6, resemble Book IV of Castiglione’s *IL Cortegiano*.¹⁴²

It has been suggested that the greatest proportion of Ficinian influence reached England via France, notably through the translated works of the French Academicians such

¹³⁶ Ficino, *Letters*, Vol. 1, ‘Introduction’, p. 23.

¹³⁷ Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy*, p. 27; Sears Jayne, *John Colet and Marsilio Ficino* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 5.

¹³⁸ Baldwin and Hutton, *Platonism and the English Imagination*, pp. 71-73.

¹³⁹ James Hankins, ‘The myth of the Platonic Academy of Florence’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 44:3 (Autumn, 1991), pp. 429-475, pp. 429-430.

¹⁴⁰ Baldwin and Hutton, *Platonism and the English Imagination*, p. 71.

¹⁴¹ Peter Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier: The European Reception of Castiglione’s Cortegiano* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995, reprinted 2005, 2007), Appendix 1: Editions of the Courtier 1528-1850, pp. 158-162.

¹⁴² Julie Sanders, ‘“The Day’s Sports Devised in the Inn”: Jonson’s “The New Inn” and Theatrical Politics’, *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 91, No. 3 (Jul., 1996), pp. 545-560, p. 559.

as Symphorien Champier and Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, whose important works on music and mathematics are largely based on Boethius.¹⁴³ Sir Philip Sidney, for example, translated and published Phillipe du Plessis Mornay's *De la verité de la Religion Chrestienne* (1581) as *A Worke concerning the trewness of the Christian Religion* (1587).¹⁴⁴ His triumph, *The Fortress of Perfect Beauty* (1581) – written to celebrate the proposed marriage between Elizabeth and the Duc d'Anjou, where Elizabeth is celebrated as the goddess of natural and celestial beauty– is influenced by Guy Le Fevre de la Boderie's French translation of Ficino's *De Amore*.¹⁴⁵ Other sources that may be responsible for the popularity of *De Amore* include the translated edition of Pierre de la Primaudaye's *The French Academie; fully finished in foure books*, and his *French Academy* was published by 'T.B', London, 1618 and which, Frances Yates argues, did more to spread the knowledge of the French Academies than any other book.¹⁴⁶

While Sears Jayne carefully distinguishes the difference between Renaissance and modern interpretations of Platonism, he suggests that the popularity of Platonism in early modern literature is a distinct literary phenomenon separate from Neoplatonic metaphysics since Ficino was a scholar not a literary man.¹⁴⁷ Although there was no formal Platonic school in England, this argument imposes a modern interpretation of strictly defined boundaries that appears to ignore the monument of humanistic literature that is Ficino's

¹⁴³ Sears Jayne, 'Ficino and the Platonism of the English Renaissance', *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Summer, 1952), pp. 214-238, p. 232; Joost-Gaugier, *Pythagoras and Renaissance Europe*, p. 41.

¹⁴⁴ Baldwin and Hutton, *Platonism and the English Imagination*, p. 71.

¹⁴⁵ Norman Council, "'O Dea Certe": The Allegory of "The Fortress of Beauty"', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Aug., 1976), pp. 329-342, pp. 329-330; Jayne, 'Introduction', in *Commentary* p. 22.

¹⁴⁶ Baldwin and Hutton, *Platonism and the English Imagination*, p. 71; Yates, *The French Academies*, p. 124.

¹⁴⁷ Jayne, 'Ficino and the Platonism of the English Renaissance', pp. 214-215.

Letters, which are now regarded as a significant collection of historical documents.¹⁴⁸

Collected and edited by himself, Ficino's *Epistolae* (1495) are, William Fulwood writes in *The Enimie of Idlennesse* (1586), an example of 'good epistolary form'.¹⁴⁹ Jayne however discerns strands of Ficinian influence in the works of English authors such as Colet, Spenser, Raleigh, Bacon and Chapman, while Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* follows Ficino's musical remedy for melancholy.

Penelope Gouk argues that while the links between musical modes, bodily temperaments and planetary harmonies had already been described by the musical theorist, Bartolomeo Ramis de Pareia in his *Musica Practica* (1482), it was primarily through Marsilio Ficino's *De Vita* that these ideas became 'the *locus classicus* for sixteenth- and seventeenth -century discussions of music's effects'.¹⁵⁰ It was Ficino understands on how the soul could be purified through the efficacy of Orphic hymns that was to have a continuing influence throughout early modern Europe. His theory of music and *spiritus* influences, for example, the *De Harmonia Mundi Totius* (1525) of the Venetian Franciscan, Francesco Giorgi; the works of the French Academies and in the 1650 English translation of Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa's *De Occulta Philosophia*.¹⁵¹

Although he does not name Ficino, Agrippa's work clearly derives from this source, 'The aerious spirit', Agrippa writes, 'is the bond between body and soul' that 'moveth the

¹⁴⁸ Joost-Gaugier, *Pythagoras and Renaissance Europe*, p. 28.

¹⁴⁹ William, Fulwood (1586) *The enimie of idlennesse teaching a perfect platforme how to indite epistles and letters of all sortes: as well by answere as otherwise: no lesse profitable and pleasaunt. The whole diuided into foure books: and now newly published and augmented, by W.F.. The contentes appeare at the latter end thereof. At London: Printed by Henrie Middleton, dwelling in Fleetstreet, at the signe of the Falcon.* Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 99841319, p. 167, L4r, accessed 08.07.2012.

¹⁵⁰ Penelope Gouk, 'The role of harmonics in the scientific revolution' in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, p. 226; Chapter 2, pp. 109-115.

¹⁵¹ Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, pp. 112-113 and pp. 119-126.

affection of the hearer'.¹⁵² In his explanations of how the power of music affects the mind, Agrippa argues that 'so great is the power of Musick', that it 'pacifieth the angry, cheareth up those that are sad and heavy, pacifieth enemies, moderates the rage of mad men, chaseth away vain imagination'. Citing the ancient authority of Democritus and Theophrastus, music can, Agrippa asserts, cure or cause 'some diseases of the body, and minde'.¹⁵³ As I have suggested in my Introduction, Gioseffo Zarlino posited a similar viewpoint in his *Istitutioni harmoniche* (1558) where he likens the art of medicine with the harmony of the music of the spheres, since 'medicine does not stand far from these subjects'.¹⁵⁴

Pivotal to this study is Ficino's music-medical theory and his conceptualization of music as cosmic harmony in *De Triplica Vita*. Underpinning this theory is Ficino's musico-magical doctrine, where the relationship that exists between music and natural magic enables him to formulate a successful medical model with music at the heart of the healing process. The natural magic in Ficino's Orphic hymns enables spiritual understanding, leading to harmonization of the soul, for it implies the use of music to bind sympathetic correspondences in his Neoplatonic cosmos. It is the enduring legacy of this comprehensive model that illuminates the work of Maier and Fludd. Since Ficino's music-spirit theory involves both music and words, song must, Ficino argues, reflect planetary music which transmitted celestial spirit and stellar influence to man. As I shall demonstrate

¹⁵² Henry Cornelius Agrippa, (1650) *Three books of occult philosophy, written by Henry Cornelius Agrippa, of Nettesheim, counsellor to Charles the Fifth, Emperor of Germany: and judge of the Prerogative Court. Tranlated out of the Latin into the English tongue, by J.F.*, London: Printed by R.W. for Gregory Moule, and are to be sold at the sign of the three Bibles neer the west-end of Pauls, 1651. [i.e.1650]. Harvard University Library. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/proxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books online, eebo citation: 99858916, Book II, Chapter XXV, p.257. Sr, accessed 14.05.2010.

¹⁵³ Agrippa, *De Occulta Philosophia*, Book II, Chapter XXIV, p. 256.

¹⁵⁴ Zarlino, *Istitutioni harmoniche*, in *Source Readings*, pp. 293-299; Introduction, p. 1.

in the following chapter, this idea has a particular resonance in *Atalanta Fugiens* where Maier spiritually contemplates the secrets of nature by joining music and words to alchemical imagery. In Maier, music aids contemplation, I argue, since song provides a vehicle to express emotion.

Ficino makes it clear that his healing music emulates from an ancient Pythagorean tradition of musical healing that forms an essential component of his natural magic for, he believed, music could help one achieve a harmonious union with God.¹⁵⁵ Thus the images of music's divine nature (God) and the music of the spheres (universe) could be reflected in the human soul. James Bono suggests that individuality and the particularity of material things could give way to a deeper spiritual meaning for a holistic universe resonating with hidden powers could be tapped into by spiritual alchemy and medicine.¹⁵⁶ The key to healing was embedded in nature, which Fludd explores through the metaphor of the divine monochord in chapter 5. Here the harmony between body and soul is represented as a musical instrument; the body is an instrument to be 'played' by the soul, which shows how the relationship between God and man is mediated by spirit and musical ratios – a central principle of Paracelsian magical doctrine.¹⁵⁷

In his *Platonic Theology* Ficino creates a comprehensive system of Christianized Platonism that is concerned with the nature, and therefore, health of the soul.¹⁵⁸ Ficino conceptualizes the human body in harmonious terms since his definition of health is 'a harmony of the body's humours' (*Theology*, vol. 2. p. 255). The body is visualized through

¹⁵⁵ Poem by Marsilio Ficino the Florentine of his Book "On Life" To the Magnanimous Lorenzo De' Medici Preserver of his Country, in *De Vita*, p. 103.

¹⁵⁶ Bono, *The Word of God*, p. 138.

¹⁵⁷ Gouk, 'Harmony, Health, and Healing', in *The Practice of Reform in Health, Medicine, and Science*, p. 24 and p. 28.

¹⁵⁸ Paul Oskar Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino* trans. Virginia Conant (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), p. viii.

the metaphor of musical health and proportion because the physical human is ruled by the five external senses, the geometric pentagon that infers proportion since man is aligned to the universal circle.¹⁵⁹ It is the association love and beauty as harmony that inspires the divine *furor* – the soul's desire to return to its heavenly source – that forms the central argument in Ficino's *De amore*.

Although Love affects the diverse natures of men differently, Ficino maintains that music and song appease the restless soul, calming the body's agitation (Commentary, p.122). Music is the accepted language of love since its temporal and transient nature provides a metaphor for harmony. In chapter 5 I demonstrate how Ben Jonson's *New Inn* provides a significant example of early modern drama's treatment of Ficino's treatise on love, as expounded in his *De amore*.

Ficino identifies music as a cure for melancholy in *De Vita* to take away the sleeplessness he associates with melancholy. Music, Ficino suggests, can cure disorders of the mind, a model that has resonances in writings following Ficino such as Heinrich Khunrath and Robert Burton who, like many early modern physicians, sought to heal body and soul.¹⁶⁰ Although melancholy was familiar to physicians through their study of Galen, it was Ficino who first observed that philosophers were more prone to becoming melancholic (*De Vita*, pp. 113-115).¹⁶¹ This idea is absorbed by dramatists such as Shakespeare, as chapter 5 makes evident, where I examine how Shakespeare constructs *Pericles* around the healing power of music.

¹⁵⁹ Christopher Bamford (ed.) *Homage to Pythagoras: Rediscovering Sacred Science* (Hudson, New York: Lindisfame Press, 1982), pp. 100-101.

¹⁶⁰ Gouk, 'Harmony, Health, and Healing', in *The Practice of Reform in Health, Medicine, and Science*, p. 29.

¹⁶¹ Gouk, 'Harmony, Health, and Healing', in *The Practice of Reform in Health, Medicine, and Science*, p. 31.

De Vita provides a source for the use of music as spiritual medicine. It is in the third part, 'On Obtaining Life from the Heavens', that Ficino gives his rules on how to capture the particular influences of each planet by means of song. Since all music comes from Apollo, these Orphic songs can counteract the melancholic influence of Saturn.¹⁶² His aim, Penelope Gouk points out, was to recreate the healing and purifying effects that Orpheus and David achieved through their hymns. She suggests that Ficino sought to emulate their ability to cure diseases of the soul, that is, bring the soul into a state of virtuous harmony.¹⁶³ Thus musical healing is an important instrument in spiritual transformation. The next chapter explores how Ficino's musical model occupies a central role in Michael Maier's *Atlanta Fugiens*, and addresses the question through an examination of this treatise and the circle of correspondents and intellectual belief with which Maier engages.

¹⁶² Angela Voss, 'Marsilio Ficino, the Second Orpheus, in *Music as Medicine*, pp. 166-167.

¹⁶³ Gouk, 'Harmony, Health, and Healing', in *The Practice of Reform in Health, Medicine, and Science*, p. 36.

Chapter 3

‘One single melody’: Michael Maier’s Alchemical Music¹

Introduction

As the previous chapter has demonstrated, Ficino’s conviction in the *prisca sapientia* – which reveals ‘the knowledge of all things human and divine’ – led to a new approach to his holistic healing.² Cosmic sympathy, or in Ficinian terms cosmic love – which Ficino analogises as the sympathetic vibration and reverberation of two lutes – is expressed metaphorically as the music of the spheres.³ Thus the Ficinian metaphor of the tuned lyre becomes, I argue, a contemplative point within Michael Maier’s medical musical philosophy since the responsibility for keeping the soul tuned lay within man himself. It suggests that his music assists the reader to keep a well-tuned soul, for to be ‘untuned’ means a return to sin.

Maier’s spiritual alchemy was a natural extension of the macrocosm- microcosm theory of correspondences where the notion of a world spirit that animates human, animal, vegetable and minerals is a defining feature.⁴ This ancient doctrine of correspondences is, it has been argued, the foundation of Maier’s spiritual alchemy because the soul corresponds to the alchemical process through universal chemical laws.⁵ Therefore the music of the spheres becomes a reality for Maier because the effects of music in preparing the soul for a

¹ Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 104.

² Chapter 2, p. 101 and p. 108; Voss, ‘Marsilio Ficino’, in *Music and Medicine*, p. 154.

³ Chapter 2, p. 109 and p. 116.

⁴ Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 33.

⁵ Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 38; Introduction, p. 31.

spiritual contemplation form an essential component of his work. As I suggest in chapter 1, the complexity of the ancient principle of Pythagorean music represents, for Maier, the unified cosmos since it reduces the infinite to finite, to that which is tangible.⁶

Ficino's natural magic sought to restore unity through the preparation and performance of music and, for Maier, as a Lutheran, this translates as the application of the knowledge of the occult sympathies present in nature, a central concern in his search for a universal medicine.⁷ The congruency which exists between the language of philosophical alchemy, music and healing, is particularly evident in Maier's *Atalanta Fugiens* (1617), an emblem book published by the printer Hieronymus Gallerus at Oppenheim at the expense of Johann Theodor De Bry.⁸

This book, reworking the classical fable of Atalanta and the golden apples, is composed of fifty separate studies, each containing a detailed alchemical and healing image, accompanied by a three-voiced fugue, complete with musical notation and words. All fifty studies each have accompanying poetic sextets in Latin and German. Although this book is written in a mythological and alchemical language which obscured hidden truths, this was, Margaret Healy suggests, following the fashion set by the discovery of the Hieroglyphica that initiated the French Academy's fascination with Hermetic Neoplatonism.⁹ As I argue in this chapter, Maier's explanations in his 'Preface to the Reader' assist in the unravelling of these truths to reveal 'those subtle, wonderous and rare things' that are the 'secrets of Chemistry'.¹⁰

⁶ Chapter 1, p. 65.

⁷ Voss, 'Marsilio Ficino', in *Music and Medicine*, p. 154; Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix* p. 38.

⁸ Read, *Prelude to Chemistry*, pp. 234-236. Theodor De Bry also drew the symbolic illustrations in *Atalanta Fugiens*, designed to illustrate the supposed relationships between alchemical doctrines and classical mythology.

⁹ Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy*, p. 39.

¹⁰ Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 101.

The particular pattern in which Maier positions the music and emblems in *Atalanta Fugiens* reveals the importance music held as a therapeutic model in his philosophy: music articulates harmony or the ‘chemical’ order of the universe.¹¹ For Maier, the fugues represent ‘the order and perfection of the inaudible harmonies of heaven’ and form a central component in his spiritual alchemy.¹² This certainty in music’s ability as a medium for spiritual contemplation was foreshadowed by Ficino and the French theoreticians from the Pléiade and Baif’s Academy.¹³

Writing an emblem book that reflected the ‘measure, number & weight’ of God’s Creation (*The Wisdom of Solomon* XI: 17) called for an equilibrium in the composition and proportion of the music, emblems and epigrams. It suggests that the role of music, based on Pythagorean principles of harmony and proportion, as discussed in Chapter 1, is an integral component of Maier’s healing philosophy.¹⁴ As such, it shares a commonality with the art of medicine because its harmonizing nature contains a cathartic power.¹⁵ Based upon the idea of the universe striving towards unity and perfection, the philosophical alchemist was supposed to be a devout man with extraordinary spiritual discipline and I argue that *Atalanta Fugiens* was Maier’s ‘emblematic treatise’ aimed at helping its reader to achieve this objective.¹⁶

Recent scholarship has added significantly to the paucity of existing biography on Michael Maier, which John Read argues is due to the sack of Magdeburg by Tilly in 1631,

¹¹ Hereward Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix: Spiritual Alchemy and Rosicrucianism in the work of Count Michael Maier* (1569-1622), (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co., 2003), p. 44. All citations are to this edition.

¹² Linda Phyllis Austern, ‘Nature, Culture, Myth, and the Musician in Early Modern England’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Spring, 1998), pp. 1-47, p. 2.

¹³ Yates, *The French Academies*, p. 7.

¹⁴ Chapter 1, pp. 55-56.

¹⁵ Streich, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 22.

¹⁶ Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 104.

when, it is probable, valuable records relating to Maier were destroyed.¹⁷ However, research by Figala, Neumann and Tilton has uncovered documentation that sheds new light on Maier's life, for example, his birth year, and the philosophical ideas that influence his writing.¹⁸ Born in 1569 at Rendsburg in Holstein, Maier graduated from the University of Frankfurt an der Oder.¹⁹ In *De Medicina Regia* Maier relates how he enters the royal court, thought to be that of Christian IV, King of Denmark.²⁰ Following this visit, Maier undertook medical training with Matthias Carnarius, personal physician to Duke Johann Adolph of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorf, before undertaking further studies at the Universities of Padua and Basel.²¹ After establishing a medical practice in 1599 in Königsberg, East Prussia, Maier became increasingly interested in alchemy and iatrochemical experimentation and healing.²² In 1608 he moved to Prague, which had become a centre of alchemical research under the rule of Rudolf II, the 'wizard Emperor'.²³

Two months after the publication of *De Medicina Regiae et vere heroica, Coelidonia* (1609) Maier was appointed as a personal physician to Rudolf and on the 29th September 1609, when he was forty years old, the hereditary title of Imperial Count Palantine was

¹⁷ Read, *Prelude to Chemistry*, p. 230.

¹⁸ Maier's biographer, J.B. Craven takes the 1568 date from Matthew Merian's copperplate illustration printed in Maier's *Symbola Aureae Mensae*, (1617) and *Atalanta Fugiens* (1617), J.B. Craven, *Count Michael Maier, Doctor of Philosophy and of Medicine, Alchemist, Rosicrucian, Mystic, 1568-1622. Life and Writings* (Kirkwall: William Peace & Son, 1910), p. 1. However, Karin Figala and Ulrich Neumann's study of *De Medicina Regia* suggest that Maier's birth year is 1569 and not 1568. Figala and Neumann, "'Author cui Nomen Hermes Malavici'" New Light on the Bio-Bibliography of Michael Maier (1569-1622)' in *Alchemy and Chemistry in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (eds.) Piyo Rattansi and Antonio Clericuzio (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994), p. 124.

¹⁹ Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 48.

²⁰ Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 52.

²¹ Maier's *Theses de Epilepsia* for his medical doctorate is dated 16th October 1596, Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix* p. 59.

²² Although most frequently used in relation to Paracelsian medicine, *iatrochemia* in the sense of manufacturing medicines from inorganic material existed prior to Paracelsus, for example in the work of Johannes de Rupescissa in the fourteenth century. As Maier was not a Paracelsian, the term is used in this broader sense. Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 16, n. 65.

²³ Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 69.

conferred on him.²⁴ For reasons that remain unclear, Maier left the Imperial court less than a year after entering the Emperor's service and travelled extensively. Following an unsuccessful bid for the patronage of Moritz the Learned of Hessen-Kassel, whose court was the foremost centre of occult sciences in Germany prior to the Thirty Years War, Maier journeyed to England. How often, and why Maier visits England remains unclear, but epistolary evidence shows that he delivers letters of Christmas greetings to King James 1 of England and Prince Henry in 1611 and that he is among the Elector Palatine's gentlemen who attended the funeral of Prince Henry of Wales in London on the 6 November 1612.²⁵

Frances Yates argues that the aim of Maier's journey to England should be contextualized within a German Calvinist effort to secure the imperial throne for the Elector Palatine, who married Princess Elizabeth the daughter of James 1 on 14 February 1613.²⁶ Thus, Yates suggests, Maier's alleged link to Rosicrucianism may have contained a diplomatic element.²⁷ However, Tilton suggests that it was the pursuit of alchemical knowledge and patronage that were the driving impetus for Maier's visit to England.²⁸ This argument is strengthened by Elias Ashmole who wrote that Maier 'came out of Germanie to live in England; purposely that he might so understand our English Tongue, as to Translate Norton's *Ordinall* into Latin verse, which most judiciously and learnedly he did: Yet (to our shame be it spoken) his Entertainement was too course for so deserving a Scholler.'²⁹ Furthermore, Tilton suggests, Maier's first association with Rosicrucianism only occurred after he returned to Germany in the summer of 1616, where, at the autumnal book fair in

²⁴ Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 71.

²⁵ A letter sent by Johannes Hartmann to Maier's friend and fellow alchemist in Prague, Matthias Borbonius on the 1st July 1612 states that Maier is already in London with a congratulatory poem for the wedding of Elizabeth and Friedrich. Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 88.

²⁶ Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, p. 16.

²⁷ Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, p. 90.

²⁸ Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 99.

²⁹ Ashmole, *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*. p. A2v, [accessed 09.08.2011](#).

Frankfurt he came across the anonymous Rosicrucian manifestos.³⁰ Despite their mysticism Tilton argues, these tracts, with their anti-Roman Catholic agenda and condemnation of ‘Popery, Galen and Aristotle’, presented Maier and like-minded Protestants with a ‘comprehensive and provocative intellectual agenda, giving expression to a Paracelsian-inspired Hermeticism and a heterodox, humanist Lutheranism with strong millennialist overtones’.³¹ While it remains unproven as to what degree of involvement Maier had with the Rosicrucian movement, it is evident that Maier wrote numerous works in defence of this obscure Brotherhood.³²

In April 1618, Maier was given the position of *Medicus und Chymicus von Hauß aus* at the court of Moritz of Hessen-Kassel.³³ However, when *Civitas Corporis Humani* (1621) was published three years later, no such appellation appears on the title-page, which Figala and Neumann argue, suggests that Maier no longer held this position.³⁴ Maier died in the late summer of 1622 and his reputation appears to have fallen into disrepute because of his leading role as an apologist for the Rosicrucian Movement in addition to his association with alchemy.³⁵ However, within the past decade Maier’s work and reputation has been rehabilitated like that of the Elizabethan magus, John Dee, and scholars such as Tilton describe this physician, philosopher, alchemist, classical scholar and musician, as ‘a formidable humanist scholar’.³⁶

³⁰ These manifestos were the *Fama Fraternitatis* (1614) and the *Confessio Fraternitatis* (1615) Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, pp. 114-116.

³¹ Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, pp. 118-119.

³² Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 115.

³³ Figala and Neumann, *Alchemy and Chemistry*, p. 135.

³⁴ Figala and Neumann, in *Alchemy and Chemistry*, p. 136.

³⁵ W. McGuire *et al*, ‘Alchemy and the Occult’, in *Alchemy and Chemistry*, pp. 348-349.

³⁶ Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 35.

Influences

Tilton argues that a number of distinctive key elements may be found in Maier's alchemy; 'a distinctive Protestant and individualist spiritual quest, a paradoxical conjunction of spiritual and material factors' and 'a confluence of pagan and Christian sentiments' that allowed Maier to make an alchemical interpretation of Greek and Egyptian mythology.³⁷ Together with a profound belief in Rosicrucianism, Maier's alchemy was based on 'an esoteric tradition' stemming from antiquity, a nascent German nationalism and solar mysticism based on a doctrine of solar and astral influence. Convinced of the existence of a Hermetic theory of correspondences, Maier, whose Hermetic roots may be traced to Ficino, believed that the laboratory process mirrored the alchemist's spiritual life.³⁸ 'This is the true transforming work of the spiritual alchemist', Margaret Healy suggests, through the reproduction of God's macrocosmic creation in the microcosm of man, 'the soul could be regenerated, repairing the ravages of man's fallen condition and enabling enhance spiritual vision'.³⁹

Maier's spiritual interpretation of alchemy, although highly allegorical, is concerned with the relationship between body and spirit.⁴⁰ Through his experience as a physician and his world of 'curious and classical learning' Maier is able to appeal to the 'physical, soul or spiritual level'.⁴¹ This is why, I argue, he makes a clear distinction between 'wandering deceivers and pseudo-chemical frauds' and men 'most prominent in virtue, learning, and

³⁷ Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 16.

³⁸ Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 17.

³⁹ Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy*, p. 103.

⁴⁰ Schuler argues that this is a main concern of seventeenth-century alchemists, Robert M. Schuler, 'Some Spiritual Alchemies of Seventeenth-Century England', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 41, No. 2, (Apr-Jun., 1980), pp. 293-318, p. 310.

⁴¹ Godwin, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 9.

true nobility of the soul', for *Atalanta Fugiens* is an alchemical adaptation of the classical ideas of an ordered universe to stimulate the right mood for the healing regeneration of the soul.⁴²

Maier's three-voiced fugues of *Atalanta Fugiens* suggest a mystic philosophy of celestial love within an alchemical construct that merges alchemical imagery with music that could, Gretchen Finney suggests, attract astral influence or aid the alchemist in controlling the quintessence.⁴³ It was this quintessence or fifth element that some alchemists called the Ficinian world spirit because it was the product of reconciling the four elements of which the universe was composed into one harmonious and perfect unity.⁴⁴ By turning to mythological and alchemical imagery and the influence of Neoplatonic theories in *Atalanta Fugiens*, Maier becomes the inspired musician, emulating the ancient musicians such as Orpheus and Arion, where the power of music is heuristic, providing the reader with inspiration, whilst simultaneously offering a channel for mediation and contemplation, that is, a state where the soul prepares for future existence.⁴⁵

The power of Orpheus with its half-god and half-man enhancing potency, can access the Divine, and Maier's suggestion of the Orphic presence intimates a Divine source that inspires him to eloquence, which may be interpreted as a manifestation of the Ficinian divine frenzy. Thus music becomes a vehicle for Maier to express the universal harmony or chemical cosmos as he perceived it. His creative music imitates the alchemical process, or rather, may be interpreted as alchemy in progress because, Orphic-like, Maier's fugues have the ability to transform the soul-psyche via the efficacy of their music to the Wise.

⁴² Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 101 and p. 99.

⁴³ Finney, *Musical Backgrounds*, p. 192.

⁴⁴ Abraham, *Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, p. 75.

⁴⁵ Winternitz, *Musical Instruments and Their Symbolism*, p. 179.

Maier's translation of Norton's *Ordinall of Alchemy* (1477), published in *Tripus Aureus* (1618) advocates the importance of music in alchemy and is persuasive in suggesting that Maier believes in the therapeutic properties of alchemical music because of its astrological influences and replication of a harmonious cosmos. Maier's alchemically healing music occupies, I suggest, a landmark position in the transmission of the Ficinian doctrine of music and *spiritus*, as discussed in chapter 2, which survived beyond the early modern period.

Drawing on Neoplatonic number mysticism and the Ficinian doctrine of microcosmic-macrocosmic correspondence that was closely allied to the Pythagorean harmonic principles, Maier developed a theory of universal harmony in which the sun, gold and the human heart are bonded to God by a hidden consonance which is akin to the striking of an octave.⁴⁶ Thus God's creation is a work of alchemy and Maier's geo-heliocentric cosmology corresponds to the microcosm of the human body.⁴⁷ The connection between music and alchemy, derived from the Pythagorean belief in the harmonious correspondences between the notes of the musical scale extended to the music of the spheres, is one that finds repeated expression in alchemical literature.⁴⁸ Since ancient times, music had been closely associated with rituals and ceremonies of religion and magic, and was considered to have a beneficial effect upon the Great Work of alchemy.⁴⁹ To the philosophical and spiritual alchemist, such as Maier, music may have been not merely an

⁴⁶ Maier, Foreword, *De Circulo Physico Quadrato* (1616), in Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 183.

⁴⁷ Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 185.

⁴⁸ John Read, *Through Alchemy to Chemistry*, (London: G. Bell and Sons Ltd., 1957), p. 71.

⁴⁹ Read, *Prelude to Chemistry*, p. 249.

antidote to his melancholic temperament, but an intrinsic part of what he perceived as the religious nature of his alchemy.⁵⁰

Maier's early medical theories were overwhelmingly Aristotelian-Galenic in nature.⁵¹ While it has been suggested that Maier was an ardent follower of Paracelsus, Hans Stiehle argues that Maier's medical practice is Galenic in orientation.⁵² Following his time with Carnarius, in the spring of 1595 Maier travelled to the University of Padua, which was, Tilton suggests, one of the most important centres of Galenic medicine in Europe.⁵³ Bruchaeus, one of Maier's teachers at Rostock was a prominent critic of Paracelsus, regarding him as an empiricist who relied on experimental observation rather than traditional medical practice. Despite Maier's work containing numerous polemics against such empiricists, in his *Themis Aurea* (1617) he writes that 'both the chemical remedies of Paracelsus and the simples of Galen have their appropriate applications' while elsewhere he praises Paracelsus and equates his work in the field of iatrochemistry to that of Luther.⁵⁴ I suggest that by the time Maier writes *Atalanta Fugiens* he merges his Galenic training with Paracelsian iatrochemistry: where medicine was based on the 'four pillars of philosophy, astronomy, alchemy and ethics'.⁵⁵ Creating a highly individualistic and syncretic medical philosophy, Maier argues in *Themis Aurea* (1618) that the physician's office is to recover

⁵⁰ Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 41.

⁵¹ At Frankfurt an der Oder, a well-known centre of German humanism, Maier's MA had defended the work of the Roman Catholic doctor of philosophy, theologian and medicine, Johannes Fersius. Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 49.

⁵² Hans Stiehle, *Michael Maierus Holsatus*, Doctoral thesis, Zentralinstitut für Geschichte der Technik Der Technischen Universität München, 1991 as quoted in Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 60.

⁵³ Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 54.

⁵⁴ Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 61.

⁵⁵ Allen G. Debus, *The English Paracelsians* (London: Oldbourne Book Co. Ltd, 1965), p. 24.

and restore man through medicine and chemistry since medicine ‘hath much in it of divinity, having the same subject with Creation and Generation’.⁵⁶

At the court of Rudolf II of Hapsburg, Maier joined a community of men whose interests and contacts extended beyond the Rudolfine court into Central Europe. Alchemy, with its language of mediation, presented ‘a metaphysical rendering of the multitude of contraries in the temporal world into a unified and meaningful whole.’⁵⁷ It offered a site of intellectual reconciliation irrespective of the different religious affiliations and growing divisions within the Holy Roman Empire and many of Maier’s acquaintances, responding to the Paracelsian call for a new attitude towards science, embraced the mystic and occult approach to knowledge that promised divine illumination to the alchemist.⁵⁸

Music was an integral part of this alchemical discourse: Rudolfine ceremonial and courtly symbolism revealed his interest in the Pythagorean theories of music that offered contact with cosmic forces. Court composers such as Hans Leo Hassler explored the link between music and mechanics through the use of new automatic instruments, and an extension of this was the use of music by alchemists to create a favourable atmosphere necessary for the work of transmutation.⁵⁹ Alchemy – as the imitator of nature and therefore key to divine knowledge – harnessed a power that gave mankind the potential to

⁵⁶ Michael Maier, (1656) *Themis Aurea The laws of the Fraternity of the Rosie Crosse. Written in Latin by Count Michael Maierus, and now in English for the information of those who seek after the knowledge of that Honourable and mysterious Society of wise and renowned Philosophers. Whereto is annexed an epistle to the Fraternity in Latine, from some here in England.* London, Printed for N. Brooke at the Angel in Cornhill. Bodleian Library <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.proxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 12618241, p. 27, accessed 15.08.2009. All citations are to this edition.

⁵⁷ Pamela H. Smith, “Alchemy as a Language of Mediation at the Habsburg Court,” *Isis*, Vol. 85, No. 1 (Mar., 1994), pp. 1-25.p. 7.

⁵⁸ Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, pp. 101-104.

⁵⁹ R.J. W. Evans demonstrates the cosmopolitan nature of Rudolph’s music circle which included local musicians, artists from the Netherlands, de Monte, Karl Luython, Jacob de Kerle; Frenchmen such as the poet-composer, Jacques Regnart; Germans such as the organist Valerian Otto and the Hassler brothers; the Spanish monk, Mattheo Flecha and Kryštof Harant of Polžice (Czechoslovakian), Evans, *Rudolf II And His World, A study In Intellectual History 1576-1612* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), pp. 190-191.

change the world tainted by the Biblical Fall and thus redeem itself. It provided a spiritual discourse and in a climate of religious and political anxiety, offered the key to reconciliation and reform. The fugues in *Atalanta Fugiens*, therefore, represent the audible sounds of unfathomable forces at work while providing evidence of Maier's belief in music's therapeutic value. He writes that the fugues, which are close to nature, will be held in esteem because they serve 'the intellect and 'several senses'.⁶⁰ Maier believes that his music can cure diseases of the soul by bringing the soul into a state of harmony. He asks, 'if there are merchants who value and buy some painter's artifice for a great sum of money, in which the eyes are merely deceived,... how much more should men of letters prize and value' the musical pieces, because he believes that, 'great things are to be hoped for from them, both as to utility and as to amusement'.⁶¹

Peregrine Horden argues that Maier's separation of the fugues and healing images in *Atalanta Fugiens* suggests that no correlation existed between music and the healing images, because, 'not every cure is a musical solution'.⁶² I suggest that this viewpoint dismisses an important idea in early modern medicine where the healing power of music, stemming from the Pythagorean tradition as discussed in Chapter 1, is an acknowledged and widely accepted tenet of medical and non-medical literature.⁶³ Maier's medical philosophy is, I argue, a syncretic mixture of Galenic and Paracelsian medicine: while seeking to cure disease and preserve health, through the harmonious balancing and purification of the four humours, his inclusion of the Paracelsian principle of Salt, for example in *Atalanta Fugiens*, is particularly notable. Maier is neither unique nor alone in

⁶⁰ Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 104.

⁶¹ Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 104.

⁶² Horden, *Music as Medicine*, p. 32.

⁶³ Chapter 1, p. 48.

the blending of Galenic and Paracelsian medicine. As I discuss in chapter 4, Robert Fludd's medicine may be described as an amalgamation of the two models, and by 1633 this Galenic-Paracelsian hybridity had moved from medical discourses into the world of masques. James Shirley's *The Triumph of Peace* (1633) refers to 'A Galenist, and parcell Para[el]fus, Thriu'd by di[ea]ses', signalling that the physician-character is partly a follower of Paracelsus.⁶⁴

In the 'Authors Epigram' and 'Preface to the Reader' Maier refers only to the traditional alchemical elements of Sulphur and Mercury: Atalanta as philosophical mercury and Hippomenes as the golden sulphur. He explains how they are stabilized and grounded by the third voice. This voice, which is a simple and constant rhythm, is the Golden Apple which represents the alchemical Salt since it signifies the static, neutral element of the ternary or three alchemical principles.⁶⁵ The musicologist, Hildemarie Streich suggests that the principle of alchemical Salt is not only evident in the fugues but also in Maier's geometric squaring of the circle in Emblem 21. She equates the interwoven mathematical figures of the Emblem with the timeless principles of harmony and balance that Maier's music offers.⁶⁶ Thus the components of musical composition – voices, modes, scales – are not merely compared to nature and the cosmos in a metaphorical sense, but rather, have a fundamental correspondence: the voice connects with the elements, fire, water, air and earth, because each musical mode has a planetary influence. Therefore, the occult

⁶⁴ James Shirley (1633) *The triumph of peace. A masque, presented by the foure honourable houses, or Innes of Court. Before the King and Queenes Majesties, in the Banqueting-house at White Hall, February the third, 1633.* Invneted and written, by James Shirley, of Grayes-Inne. Gent. London : Printed by Iohn Norton, for William Cooke, and are to be sold at his shop, neere Furnivals-Inne-gate, in Holborne, 1633. Eton College Library, STC/ 1585:06. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books online, eebo citation: 99850042, [accessed 03.09.2012](#).

⁶⁵ Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 103; Titus Burckhardt, *Alchemy* trans. William Stoddart, 2nd impression (Longmead, Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element Books Ltd, 1987), p. 147.

⁶⁶ Streich, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 32

sympathies in nature – or natural magic– could operate musically and the Golden Apple in the three-voiced fugues brings balance, corresponding to the principle of Love which helps complete the alchemical opus.⁶⁷

Maier is perhaps best remembered for his defense of Rosicrucianism. Although the manifestoes where in themselves harshly anti-Catholic, they did promote a pansophic ideal of classical philosophy, Biblical wisdom and scientific sentiments.⁶⁸ Maier's melancholic temperament may have made him identify with worldly suffering and personal hardships, thereby shaping his medicine into one of altruism and Christian practice.⁶⁹ His was a medicine of piety, a cure for intemperance of mind and body at a time when the diagnosis and treatment of disease was closely associated with ideas of morality.⁷⁰ Maier expresses this ideal balance in musical terms in his *Jocus Severus* (1617) where he writes, 'as musical harmonies out to be present in the voice, so also should they be present in the heart, and no tone is dissonant in the thread of life itself'.⁷¹ Maier returns to this theme in *Atalanta Fugiens* which confronts the philosophical premise of death bringing eternal life, and the ensuing pansophic theme of harmony, in which the truth of the music of the spheres is expressed, thereby articulating Maier's spiritual alchemy.

Harmony, the unifying force that binds the cosmos, provided a philosophical basis for Maier to explore the link between alchemy and music. 'Sounds and images', Giordano Bruno had argued, were not chosen 'at random' but rather stemmed from the 'language of the universal spirit'.⁷² Penelope Gouk suggests that medical practitioners, engineers,

⁶⁷ Streich, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 35.

⁶⁸ Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 119.

⁶⁹ Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 44.

⁷⁰ Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, 137.

⁷¹ Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p.138.

⁷² Giordano Bruno, *Theses de Magia*, XV, vol. III, p. 411 as quoted in Coulano, *Eros and Magic in the Renaissance*, p. 91.

painters and musicians, were among those men who used an array of empirical techniques to demonstrate how natural magic could effect psychological and psychosomatic changes in human behaviour through the manipulation of emotions.⁷³ Within this philosophical framework, musical sympathy was believed to have a powerful and magical force, thus, the musical theorist, Gioseffo Zarlino wrote, given the strong affinity between music and the emotions, physicians should understand the fundamental principles of harmony in order to properly investigate music's effects on the body and soul.⁷⁴

Stanton J. Linden argues that the language of exoteric alchemy may be used to express philosophical, theological and mystical aspirations, although there are distinguishing key elements between exoteric (practical) and esoteric alchemy, that concentrate on inner spiritual and philosophical values. However, these two types of alchemy were often inextricably mixed as is evident in Maier's work.⁷⁵ *Atalanta Fugiens*' imagery and music, while stemming from the symbolic language of the alchemical laboratory process, may also be interpreted as visual and auditory aides for contemplation and meditation. Jocelyn Godwin suggests that the fugues and emblems are not entertainments or expressions of personal emotions but rather 'supports for contemplation' since their repetitive nature allows the reader a 'focus of attention' in order to seek a 'direct' experience of the Divine.⁷⁶

In return, the alchemist's transportation of alchemical perceptions to mysticism, that is, the inward pronouncement of a formula or name, directed to, or, evoking God, requires the repetition of a word or phrase, or, as demonstrated in *Atalanta Fugiens*, the use of

⁷³ Gouk, *Music, Science and Natural Magic*, p. 13.

⁷⁴ Zarlino, *Le institutioni harmoniche*, Part 1, Chapters 2,4,7, as quoted by Gouk, in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, p. 227.

⁷⁵ Linden, *Darke Hieroglyphicks*, p. 8.

⁷⁶ Godwin, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 16.

repetitive music as a means of concentration.⁷⁷ This ‘ejaculatory prayer’ as Titus Burckhardt terms it, derives from ‘divine’ revelation or contains a Divine Name, and is related to the soul, in which the ‘transmutation’ to ‘light’, mirrors the alchemical process.⁷⁸ Based on this spiritual framework, the fugues in *Atalanta Fugiens* acquire the authority of a ‘singing’ prayer, that is, they resonate with the religious overtones of hymns. Thus, for the spiritual alchemist, this devotional process ‘allows’ the transmutation of metals to symbolize man’s transition from sin to unity with God.⁷⁹

Through his plea, couched in mythological terms, for music to transform and heal the soul, Maier suggests that the profound and mysterious healing powers of music, allows the reader to understand the alchemical truths presented in each of the emblems. He is, H.M.E. De Jong points out, examining ‘truths’ that have been handed down, and testing them experimentally, while simultaneously revealing the Rosicrucian doctrine of purification and ‘soul-therapy’.⁸⁰

The foundation of Maier’s work is, I argue, the conviction that alchemical processes were a reflection of the material and spiritual transmutation that occurs in the universe, where it was possible for the pious man to come to understand the deepest secrets of Creation and the relationship between God and his creatures. Alchemy was a ‘sacred’ science, in which the hidden truth could be discovered in alchemical allegories and classical legends thereby communicating the mystic message as Maier demonstrates.⁸¹ His inclusion of the mythologically based fugues indicates his familiarity with speculative music theory,

⁷⁷ Burckhardt, *Alchemy*, p. 157.

⁷⁸ Burckhardt, *Alchemy*, p. 157.

⁷⁹ Linden, *Darke Hieroglyphicks*, p. 8.

⁸⁰ H.M. E. De Jong, *Michael Maier’s Atalanta Fugiens, Sources of an Alchemical Book of Emblems*, (Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1969), p. xi.

⁸¹ De Jong, *Michael Maier’s Atalanta Fugiens*, p. 15; Introduction, pp. 28-29.

whereby, music had the power to move the passions, and, therefore, alter the inward and outward senses and affections of its hearers.⁸²

Combining the curative power of music with alchemical healing, Maier sought to preserve health by striving to achieve a spiritual harmonious balance. Citing Plato he argues that ‘one is not put together harmoniously who does not rejoice in Music’s harmony.’⁸³ From an alchemical viewpoint, the human body is a retort in which the ‘*Arcana Naturæ*’ manifests itself: paradoxically the body ‘becomes’ the container for, and the beneficiary of, the alchemical process; therefore, for Maier, healing implicitly contains an alchemical element.⁸⁴

As I have discussed in chapter 1, music sets moods according to the mode that is being played, and Maier himself writes that ‘music has this particular power, that it excites or calms the affections, according to the different musical modes’.⁸⁵ The historian, P. G. Maxwell-Stuart suggests that Maier’s fugues may have had a practical as well as well as a spiritual purpose. He argues that some alchemists – and he implies that Maier is included in this category – may have played music in their laboratories to induce a mood change within themselves, thereby affecting their alchemical processes.⁸⁶ Maxwell-Stuart defends this hypothesis by citing the example of Heinrich Khunrath’s engraving, *Amphitheatrum sapientiae* (1609) where the central table, laden with musical instruments, bears a Latin inscription which reads, ‘Sacred music disperses sadness and evil spirits because the spirit rejoices cheerfully in a heart filled with devout joy’.⁸⁷ ‘Spirit’ in this sense may be interpreted at many levels: it describes the animating Neoplatonic principle providing the

⁸² Austern, ‘Art to Enchant’, p. 203.

⁸³ Chapter 1, pp. 70-71; Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 102.

⁸⁴ De Jong, *Michael Maier’s Atalanta Fugiens*, p. 297.

⁸⁵ Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 102.

⁸⁶ Maxwell-Stuart, *The Chemical Choir*, p. 113.

⁸⁷ Maxwell-Stuart, *The Chemical Choir*, p. 113.

link between body and soul; it defines the substance obtained by distillation, or it may refer to a melody in the early modern period.⁸⁸ Such cultural moments highlight the important relationship between music, healing and spiritual alchemy because music's potent effect on human emotions, and its significance in the numerical relationships found in the Pythagorean-Platonic model, provides a significant link between nature and the harmony of the celestial world. This harmony is articulated in the early modern body as health, the concord between body, mind and spirit. As a preliminary condition of life and health, any disruption to this harmony brings disease and death.⁸⁹

Atalanta Fugiens

Atalanta Fugiens is unique in that it is the only emblem book of its time to include a musical score to accompany the emblems, thus marking out its singularity in a commonplace genre of the early modern period. Maier is not inventing something new in *Atalanta Fugiens* but rather rekindling an ancient tradition: the importance of music's association with alchemy may be traced back to the ancient Greeks, where the Pythagorean concept of Number as the origin of the Cosmos, and the relationship between Number and the notes of musical scales played a key part in the development of alchemy which derived its mystical relationships partly from the Pythagorean canon.⁹⁰

By the seventh and eighth centuries scholars such as Heliodorus, Theophrastus and Stephanos considered alchemy and music as expressions of cosmic harmony. Thus the music accompanying the alchemical process enhances the harmony between body, soul and

⁸⁸ OED, <http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/cgi/entry/186867>, accessed 25.01.2011.

⁸⁹ Streich, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 22.

⁹⁰ Read, *Prelude to Chemistry*, p. 247.

the music of the spheres.⁹¹ This harmony transforms into a therapeutic modality, since music may be used to engage the spiritual dimension of an integrated mind-body experience.⁹² In his Preface to the Reader, Maier refers to this ancient relationship. He writes:

Music, both vocal and instrumental, in which the ancient Philosophers so exercised themselves that one was thought ignorant who refused the lyre at feasts, ...Socrates was educated in Music, and Plato, too, who stated that one is not put together harmoniously who does not rejoice in Music's harmony.⁹³

Re-establishing the bond between music and alchemy, *Atalanta Fugiens* recalls the mythological fable of Atalanta; a frequently used story in alchemy as its symbolism expresses the union of Sulphur and Mercury; a central tenet of alchemy.⁹⁴ While Ovid's tale is ostensibly about the power of love, Maier moulds the mythological story to illustrate not only the stages of the alchemical process – itself concerned with the union of a contemplative approach to the practical investigation of the transmutational properties of matter – but also to provide a quest for the philosophical alchemist to augment his spiritual regeneration.⁹⁵ The purpose of such purification is that the soul is in a state of perfection to receive God's salvation.⁹⁶

Maier's 'Preface to the Reader' is significant as it reveals the reasons why Maier has written this strange emblematic book. The 'flighty Virgin' Atalanta, who is 'celebrated by the Poets for her speed, by which she beat all her suitors in a footrace, is, Maier tells us, 'purely chemical, namely the Philosophic Mercury' while Hippomenes, to whom Atalanta

⁹¹ De Jong, *Michael Maier's Atalanta Fugiens*, p. 29.

⁹² Young and Koopsen, *Spirituality, Health, and Healing*, p. 126.

⁹³ Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 102.

⁹⁴ Streich, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 34.

⁹⁵ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, X., pp. 243-247. Streich, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 78.

⁹⁶ Stanton, J. Linden, *The Alchemy Reader From Hermes Trismegistus to Isaac Newton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 22.

‘yields the prize’, represents ‘golden sulphur’.⁹⁷ Their race, during which Hippomenes throws down three golden apples one by one, is an allegory for the difficulty in Mercury and Sulphur’s union, with the golden apples from the garden of Hesperides, representing the only way possible for the completion of the union.⁹⁸ For, as Maier tells us, if Mercury is ‘fixed and retained in flight’, Sulphur will have ‘the wife whom he seeks, but without which knowledge he will lose his goods and perish’.⁹⁹

Sexual congress in Cybele’s temple symbolizes incomplete fusion and it is only after the goddess transforms the couple into lions, that perfect unification occurs, ‘Which makes them red of body, fierce of heart/That this race should be shown in truest form’,¹⁰⁰ signifying the alchemical stage of perfection, that is, the joining of sulphur and mercury.¹⁰¹ Reconciliation is achieved through this union of substances and marriage of opposites, frequently depicted as an alchemical marriage.¹⁰² Lyndy Abraham describes this marriage as metaphysically the ‘perfect union of the creative will or power (male) with wisdom (female) to ‘produce a third substance or effect’ – the child or stone – ‘which could heal not only the disease of the physical world but also the affliction of the separated soul’.¹⁰³ Thus, Joscelyn Godwin argues, Maier’s particular syncretistic knowledge and experience as a physician allows the reader to engage with *Atalanta Fugiens* at the physical, soul or spiritual level’.¹⁰⁴

Maier exhorts the ‘gentle reader’ to ‘investigate greater things’ that ‘God has concealed’ for the ‘cultivation of the intellect’ by profound contemplation’ in his ‘Preface

⁹⁷ Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 97 and p. 103.

⁹⁸ Godwin, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 9.

⁹⁹ Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, pp. 103-104.

¹⁰⁰ Maier, The Author’s Epigram, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 97.

¹⁰¹ Read, *Prelude to Chemistry*, pp. 26, 147, 92.

¹⁰² Abraham, *Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, p. 35.

¹⁰³ Abraham, *Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, p. 37.

¹⁰⁴ Godwin, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 9.

to the Reader'.¹⁰⁵ This address suggests that Maier is targeting *Atalanta Fugiens* to a specific audience: while the words 'gentle reader' were used in this period as a complimentary epithet or as a polite address, they were also used as a playful archaism that I suggest Maier specifically uses to alert the reader to the ancient mythological tradition of the text.

Derived from an etymology suggesting well-born or noble, 'gentle' also suggests that the reader emulates 'those learned men, devoted to the refined arts and sciences' as opposed to 'numerous men given to bodily pleasure, lust, gluttony, external pomp and suchlike things'.¹⁰⁶ Thus Maier's Dedicatory Epistle and 'Preface to the Reader', addresses an intellectually sophisticated audience which alerts them to the spiritual and philosophical nature of *Atalanta Fugiens*. It is through contemplation of the emblems, epigrams and fugues that those of 'higher skills, liberally educated' are born to investigate greater things that are most subtle, august, sacred, rare and abstruse.¹⁰⁷

While musicologists such as Johann F.W. Hasler have commented on the strange, unpredictable and unusual nature of the fugues, Joscelyn Godwin points out that the omission of any points of reference is deliberate on Maier's part in order that he could convey a sense of timelessness to his music.¹⁰⁸ This timelessness, Johan Hasler argues, aids

¹⁰⁵ Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 101.

¹⁰⁶ Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 101; OED, <http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/cgi/entry/77666>, accessed 13.08.2011.

¹⁰⁷ Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 101.

¹⁰⁸ Johan F. W. Hasler, 'Performative and Multimedia Aspects of Late-Renaissance Meditative Alchemy: The Case of Michael Maier's *Atalanta Fugiens* (1617)', *Revista de Estudios Sociales* No. 39, Tema: Temas Varios, Abril de 2011, pp. 135-144; Godwin, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 15.

in the intellectualization of the fugues, for as Maier writes, if the usage of *Atalanta Fugiens*:

should be more intellectual than sensual, the more useful and agreeable it will eventually be: for if indeed it is first entrusted to the sense, there is no doubt that it should be transferred for the sense to the intellect, as through a portal.¹⁰⁹

Since, as Godwin suggests, the educated reader of Maier's time would be able to sing a line of music, the inclusion of the fugues in *Atalanta Fugiens* is apposite because music could, it was believed, train the faculty of memory.¹¹⁰ While Maier does not make this point explicitly, it was not an uncommon belief; James Haar demonstrates how Georg Philipp Harsdörffer argues that music allowed 'one to grasp and remember the whole' in the fifth book of his *Frauenzimmergesprächspiele* (1642-1649).¹¹¹

In *Atalanta Fugiens* the language and musical scores are physically juxtaposed in a manner that suggests a mirroring of philosophical intent. This amalgamation of music and language stems from a classical and Biblical source, for, as Ficino tells us the Pythagoreans 'used to perform wonders by words, songs and sounds in the Phoebean and Orphic manner' (*De Vita*, p. 255). Maier uses the particular combination for a specific purpose for, as Linda Phyllis Austern points out, this amalgamation of language and music forms an 'intellectually inseparable continuity of rhetorical persuasion... while language provides rational content, music serves as an 'extra-rational channel for memory or affect'.¹¹²

Maier uses this relationship to demonstrate the intimate relationship between these two creative art forms for the fugues 'tell' the story and the epigrams decipher the music. The relationship between words and music is one that intrigued many early modern writers

¹⁰⁹ Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 103.

¹¹⁰ Godwin, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, pp. 12-13.

¹¹¹ Haar, 'The Tugendsterne of Harsdörffer', p. 178.

¹¹² Austern, 'Nature, Culture, Myth', p. 5.

and musicians, for example Sir Philip Sidney in his *Defence of Poetry* (1595) and Thomas Campion's *Observations in the Art of English Poesie* (1602) that I discuss in chapter 6.¹¹³ The mirroring effect that Maier successfully achieves through the words and music presents an overall sense of harmony within *Atalanta Fugiens* for it echoes the tripartite nature of music itself – words, harmonic mode and rhythm – that Plato argued are the core components of song.¹¹⁴ Plato, Maier writes, states 'that one is not put together harmoniously who does not rejoice in Music's harmony'.¹¹⁵

Maier also makes the correlation between the 'spiritual senses, namely of sight, hearing and the intellect itself' to music in order to 'introduce to the soul that which is to be understood at one and the same time'.¹¹⁶ I suggest that while Maier is using music as an *aide memoire* to contemplative study, he is simultaneously expounding the philosophical construct of music within an alchemical paradigm. He explains that he has 'joined Optics' (the 'highest' sense) to Music and 'the sense to the intellect, that is, rarities for the sight and hearing with the chemical emblems that are proper to this science'. By doing this Maier produces a 'single view' that will 'embrace these three objects'.¹¹⁷

This amalgamation of three-into-one implies a harmonious, united whole that is a repeated motif throughout *Atalanta Fugiens*. It is also implicit in Maier's own self-identity; he describes himself as 'School and Caesar have given me three titles each: this remains to me'.¹¹⁸ The number three, itself, was deemed a perfect number since it was the principle of odd numbers and the first number to have a beginning, middle and end. As such, it signified

¹¹³ Chapter 6, p. 302.

¹¹⁴ Plato, *Republic III* 398d, in *Complete Works*, p. 1035.

¹¹⁵ Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 102.

¹¹⁶ Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 102.

¹¹⁷ Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 102.

¹¹⁸ Maier, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 93.

the perfection of the world. Guillaume du Bartas described the number three as:

‘Th’ eldest of Odds, God number properly;
Wherein, both Number, and no-number enter:
Heav’ns deerest Number, whose inclosed Center
Doth equally from both extreames extend:
The first that hath beginning, midst, and end.’¹¹⁹

In Orphic cosmogony the Pythagoreans believed in three stages of creation, and three was the first of the ‘marriage numbers’ since Eros was believed to have mediated in the marriage of Heaven and Earth. For Maier this is not simply a triadic iconography but a sophisticated expression of the fundamental building blocks of man and nature that he replicates in the imagery, patterns and threefold nature of the epigrams and fugues, which is echoed in the nature and elements of the alchemical process itself.

Readers thus of *Atalanta Fugiens* have input from three sources: visual in the form of the emblems, linguistic from the epigrams and auditory from the music for the ‘soul’s recreation’.¹²⁰ Maier emphasises on the title-page that all three are to be ‘to be looked at, read, mediated, understood, weighed, sung and listened to’ (in order that the reader may engage all his senses to comprehend the deep meanings of the ‘strange and jarring’ messages of this book.¹²¹

The tripartite nature that is the nexus of this meditative study also lies at the heart of the music itself: the fugue form that Maier employs is written for three separate voices. He

¹¹⁹ *Du Bartas, his deuine weekes and workes translated: and dedicated to the Kings most excellent Maiestie by Iosuah Syluester*. Printed at London: By Humfrey Lounes [and are to be sould by Arthur Iohnson at the signe of the white horse, neere the great north doore of Paules Church, [1611]] <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 99846291 p. 361, accessed 08.08.2011.

¹²⁰ Hasler, ‘Performative and Multimedia Aspects’, p. 139.

¹²¹ Maier, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 91 and Preface, p. 103.

explains in the Preface to the Reader:

As this Atalanta flees, so one musical voice always flees in front of the other, and the other follows like Hippomenes, while they are stabilized and grounded by the third voice, which is simple and of constant rhythm, as a golden apple.¹²²

The first voice is *Atalanta fugiens* (Atalanta fleeing), followed by *Hippomenes sequens* (Hippomenes or the voice that follows) and lastly *Pomum morans* (the apple that delays the race).¹²³ Just as the sung texts replicate exactly the Latin epigrams so too does Maier's chosen musical notation emulate the legend, since a key feature of the fugue form is counterpoint; the art of combining two or more independent melodies that has been described as the musical equivalent of conversation, 'acknowledging the presence and participation of the other' as is seen in the relationship of Atalanta's and Hippomenes' voices.¹²⁴

Importantly, the mirroring of words and music implies that the healing words present in the epigrams, are inherent in the music, for example, in the 46th and 47th fugues Maier uses the *Tempus perfectum* – the perfect rhythm in triple meter.¹²⁵ Represented in musical theory as a circle that symbolically denotes unity in alchemy, the wholeness of the rhythm reflects such words as 'nursed' (Emblem 2), 'noble medicine' (Emblem 5), 'healing waters' (Emblem 13) and 'recovery' (Emblem 28) that Maier includes in his therapeutic musical paradigm.

Maier stabilizes the voices of Atalanta and Hippomenes through the third voice – the golden apple – which is 'simple and of constant rhythm'. It is the voice of the golden apple, the unifying medium, that allows the completion of the alchemical Opus through its ability

¹²² Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 103.

¹²³ Streich, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 35.

¹²⁴ David Matthews, 'Form-Compelling' *London Review of Books*, 21 September 2006, pp. 27-29, p. 27.

¹²⁵ Streich, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 66.

to balance and harmonize, thereby reflecting the unity of the universe.¹²⁶ This ‘third voice’ reflects the alchemical principle of the primordial one because the task of the music of the golden apple is to reconcile the conflicting opposites of alchemical Sulphur and Mercury in the same manner the physician effects reconciliation and establishes a mutual love between the most basic bodily elements.¹²⁷ Maier’s musical replication of the transmutation process may be discerned in his depiction of the philosophical egg in Emblem 8 – a comparison that has its roots in Babylonian and Egyptian myths and adapted from these ancient ideas for a Christian purpose.¹²⁸ This world-egg also recalls John Dee’s Hieroglyphic Monad which represents not only the alchemical process but the evolution of the cosmos.¹²⁹ Thus the music informs the reader of its esoteric purpose because it underpins every aspect of the narrative tale.

The three voices in the fugues represent the alchemical elements Mercury (Atalanta: corresponding to the spirit), Sulphur (Hippomenes: corresponding to the soul) and Salt (the golden apple: corresponding to the body).¹³⁰ In nature, alchemical Sulphur and Mercury correspond to the active and passive poles respectively while striving towards the wholeness of their one. This mutual attraction is reflected within the soul; Sulphur represents the essence or spirit while Mercury corresponds to the soul itself.¹³¹ It is alchemical Salt, the neutral element of the ternary that serves to fix the ‘volatile’ spirit. While these three elements together constitute the nature of metal or man as spirit, soul and body, it is Salt, at a metaphysical level that provides the fixative point. Thus the body, transcending human passion, can serve as the support for a contemplative state because it

¹²⁶ Streich, in *Atlanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 32.

¹²⁷ Plato, *Symposium*, 186d, in *Complete Works*, p. 470.

¹²⁸ De Jong, *Michael Maier’s Atalanta Fugiens*, p. 98.

¹²⁹ De Jong, *Michael Maier’s Atalanta Fugiens*, p. 175.

¹³⁰ Streich, in *Atlanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 35.

¹³¹ Burckhardt, *Alchemy*, p. 124.

reflects the cosmos.¹³² Maier's fugues become, I suggest, the site where the body, mind and spirit forge and transform in a timeless process.¹³³ His music unites this essence of humanness so that the soul reflects the harmony of the octave.

As the harmonizing force that brings order to the Cosmos, the voice of the Golden Apple, like alchemical Salt, corresponds to the principle of Love that helps complete the alchemical process. In his Author's Epigram Maier aligns his alchemical music to the goddess Aphrodite's gift to Hippomenes, that is, the three golden apples:

My muse has given three-voiced fugues to me:
One remains simple-the delaying fruit;
The second flees, the third voice follows it. (Lines 19-21)

Here Maier makes it implicitly clear that the beneficial effects of music could be expressed alchemically. He suggests that music is inextricably linked to the golden apples representing the power of Aphrodite, that is, love, as the Ficinian concept of one principle in two modes of existence while simultaneously reflecting the dual nature of music itself.¹³⁴

Maier unites the power of music to love and this becomes the creative impetus that sustains *Atalanta Fugiens* through the magic potency of the music. By appealing to the reader's senses – importantly hearing first, then sight – Maier declares in the Authors Epigram that the mind may 'grasp the treasures that lie hid therein' (Line 25). These treasures are wealth, that is, knowledge, and 'Medicine of health' (Line 26). Because it is bound to the power of love, music becomes a vital constituent of the chemical wedding, the

¹³² Burckhardt, *Alchemy*, p. 147.

¹³³ Streich, in *Atlanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 36.

¹³⁴ Chapter 2, p. 94.

‘double Lion’ (Line 27) that represents the reconciliation of philosophical Sulphur and Mercury in order for the philosopher’s stone to be conceived and born.¹³⁵

Johan Hasler has suggested another interpretation of the Atalanta myth. He argues that Hippomenes represents the philosopher who knows it is impossible to outrun Atalanta who represents nature and her mysteries. The golden apples are his strategy to outwit Atalanta and by using them wisely – as the reader would use Maier’s book – the seeker of truth can catch up with nature and unite with her in the chemical wedding.¹³⁶ Interpreted in this context, Maier’s alchemical music suggests a contemplative aspect that unites the philosophical alchemist to nature in a transformative and therefore healing manner. The philosophical alchemist is able to keep his soul ‘tuned’ in his search for wisdom and the mysteries of God and the universe because the Golden Apple melody symbolises the power of immortal love; it is the voice that succeeds in balancing the power of nature, in realigning the pure receptivity of the soul in its original state with the *materia prima* of the whole world.¹³⁷

In the fugues the voices of Atalanta and Hippomenes closely imitate each other while the music of the golden apples is a slow descending *cantus firmus* – the ‘fixed voice’ – which is continually repeated throughout.¹³⁸ This third stabilizing voice can be contextualized within a classical and Biblical framework. Hildemarie Streich, analyzing the structure of the fugues, demonstrates that an inherent feature in the melody of the Golden Apple melody is that it is composed in the Dorian mode.¹³⁹ This mode, considered in

¹³⁵ Maier, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 97; Abraham, *Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, p. 167.

¹³⁶ Hasler, ‘Performative and Multimedia Aspects’, p. 138.

¹³⁷ Burckhardt, *Alchemy*, p. 97.

¹³⁸ Streich, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 36.

¹³⁹ Streich, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 42.

ancient Greek music theory as the mode of equilibrium, is one of the two musical modes approved by Plato.¹⁴⁰

The harmony and simplicity of the golden apple melody is reminiscent of the Platonic Myth of Er where ‘the concord of the eight notes produced a single harmony’.¹⁴¹ In the myth the three daughters of Necessity – representing the past, present and future – sing the music of the Platonic Sirens, and through this analogy Maier frames his appeal for the cultivation of the intellect within a musical model that provides the reader with the means for spiritual mediation and contemplation for the fugues appeal to the rational as well as emotion.¹⁴² This appeal to ‘intuitive contemplation’ and ‘comprehension through the senses’ mirrors the definition of the fugue itself because, as a polyphonic composition, it is harmonized according to the laws of counterpoint’.¹⁴³

Maier himself alludes to the classical modes of music, for he writes how Pythagoras was said to have ‘used musical symphonies morning and evening to compose the spirits of his disciples. For Music has this particular power, that it excites or calms the affections, according to the different musical modes’.¹⁴⁴ He gives the example of Terpander of Lesbos, who when summoned before the tumultuous Lace-daemonians, ‘drew out their spirits with his song that they returned to amity and ceased from sedition’.¹⁴⁵ The image of Lesbos and song also suggests the Orphic legend and this approbation of the myth connects Ficino, Shakespeare, Maier, Fludd, and Campion through a shared inspirational vision that illuminates how music has the power to elevate the soul so that it may return to the eternal harmony of the Divine.

¹⁴⁰ Chapter 1, pp. 52-53.

¹⁴¹ Plato, *Republic X*, 617b, in *Complete Works*, p. 1220.

¹⁴² Streich, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 20.

¹⁴³ OED, <http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/cgi/entry/75270>, accessed 10.6.2011.

¹⁴⁴ Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 102.

¹⁴⁵ Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 102.

For Maier, music had its roots in God, the sounding Word, whose divine force is hidden in all created things as a divine, golden spark of light.¹⁴⁶ This eternal principle may be found in the Golden Apple voice which is based on the *Christie eleison* of Gregorian Mass IV.¹⁴⁷ Implicit within this melody is the image of the resurrected Christ, symbol of love and truth and perfect wholeness in spiritual alchemy.¹⁴⁸ Thus the fugues and emblems become, Godwin suggests, supports for contemplation that do not require novelty or variety, because their repetitive nature allows the reader to seek a 'direct' experience of the Divine.¹⁴⁹ They are, Margaret Healy asserts, 'a key facet of this harmonizing soul work or medicine'.¹⁵⁰

While alchemical operations had, by their nature, a physical aspect in the transmutational processes, the spiritual alchemist was more concerned with the 'passion', 'marriage' and 'death' of substances. This clearly references Christ, who through his birth and resurrection becomes the philosopher's stone the 'agent of healing, deliverer from sin and baseness, rewarder of merit, author of grace and salvation and creator of new heavens and a new earth'.¹⁵¹ This is not simply alchemical rhetoric for Maier, but rather, a prescription on how the spiritual man should live his life, 'I can live well in Christ; I can die' he writes in his description of himself, suggesting like the canonical voices, a metaphor of proportion radiating from God.¹⁵²

This divine perfection was represented alchemically as the Hermaphrodite, the complete undivided unity, such as seen in Emblem 33. In spiritual alchemy this image is,

¹⁴⁶ Streich, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 23.

¹⁴⁷ Godwin, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 11.

¹⁴⁸ Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy*, p. 89.

¹⁴⁹ Godwin, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 18.

¹⁵⁰ Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy*, p. 43.

¹⁵¹ Linden, *The Alchemy Reader*, p. 22.

¹⁵² Maier, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 93.

Margaret Healy argues, the symbol of the developing philosopher's stone, representing perfection and therefore Christ.¹⁵³ Maier replicates this hermaphroditism in the fugues through the strict imitation of the female-male voices suggesting that within his music lies the contemplative key for the purification and regeneration of the soul as seen in Emblem 14 where the dragon 'dies and is reborn'.¹⁵⁴ This is only possible through the presence of philosophical Mercury, the universal agent of transmutation that is, paradoxically polyvalent. It is simultaneously the water of life from which Creation arose and the water of destruction in which the soul perishes, for, as in the alchemical process where all metals must dissolve to be 'reborn' as gold, so too in inner alchemy must the soul be purified and born again to receive the Golden Apple that represents the immortal power of love of Christ the hermaphrodite and Mercury-Christ.¹⁵⁵

Thus for Maier alchemy is a holy science, an art which is only accessible to the Wise.¹⁵⁶ In his *De Circulo Physico Quadrato* (1616) Maier explains:

that there are certain hidden bonds which maintain the harmony of the universe, namely those between God, the sun, the human heart and the hidden power of gold which correspond to each other in their mutual exchange.¹⁵⁷

Universal harmony is maintained by the circular connection between God, the sun, gold and the human heart and because of these bond man can turn his soul towards God.¹⁵⁸

Maier defines these bonds through the proportion of the intervals of the octave: between God and the sun there exists an interval of one octave, between the sun and gold four intervals and between the human heart and God there are eight. Maier's Neoplatonic model

¹⁵³ Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy*, p. 70.

¹⁵⁴ Maier, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 133.

¹⁵⁵ De Jong, *Atalanta Fugiens*, p. 9.

¹⁵⁶ Streich, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 80.

¹⁵⁷ Maier, 'De Circulo Physico Quadrato', in Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix* p. 183

¹⁵⁸ De Jong, *Atalanta Fugiens*, p. 9.

of microcosmic-macrocosmic correspondence suggests that the soul must be tuned to the harmony of the octave and its intervals. The octave, Streich argues, symbolizes the connection between Heaven and earth, and earth and the sun while the double octave symbolizes the 'new wholeness, the spiritual child or fruit, and also the Stone of the Wise' signifying a spiritual rebirth of the inner self.¹⁵⁹ Inextricably linked to the Stone of the Wise is the Hermetic philosopher, Solomon who built his temple with the aid of the philosopher's stone and this resonates within the music of *Atalanta Fugiens* intimately linking the Song of Solomon with the classical myth.¹⁶⁰

The idea of an inherent Christian theology at the heart of alchemy is not confined to alchemical authors such as Maier, Robert Fludd or Heinrich Khunrath. John Donne in a sermon preached at the Spittle, on Easter Monday 1622 spoke of God as one who can 'work in all metals, and transmute all metals'.¹⁶¹ Alchemy was more than the art of transmuting base metals since it contained a spiritual and contemplative nature. As Margaret Healy points out, this was a 'poetic, philosophic and scientific synergy in which humans, nature and the cosmos were one thing – a mystical unity'.¹⁶² The transformation of metals mirrors the internal transformation of the soul and the regeneration of man.¹⁶³ Donne's sermon suggests that this was a recognized analogy in early modern consciousnesses, not merely limited to arcane alchemical texts. Within this context alchemical language with its symbols and codes, and to some extent the perplexing music of Maier's fugues themselves, hides a deliberate intent, for the secrets of God needed to be masked in obscurity since direction revelation was a sin. The Divine mind could only be

¹⁵⁹ Streich, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, pp. 67 and 80.

¹⁶⁰ Abraham, *Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, p. 186.

¹⁶¹ George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson, (eds.) *The Sermons of John Donne*, 10 vols. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1953-1962), vol. iv, p. 110.

¹⁶² Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy*, p. 2.

¹⁶³ Read, *Prelude to Chemistry*, p. 12.

revealed to the Wise who used Christ's parables as a benchmark for their allegorical styles.¹⁶⁴ Maier locates his music within this discourse for 'God has concealed infinite arcana in nature' for the 'cultivation of the intellect', and music, with its 'particular power', acts on the listener's senses, tuning the soul to the Divine will.¹⁶⁵ I argue that the Hermetic nature of Maier's writings suggests an inherent spiritual alchemy where the correspondences, reflecting the relationship between macrocosm and microcosm, are the way to an esoteric knowledge of spiritual truth essential for salvation. He urges his readers to 'precipitate your bodies in fresh water/Which soon will work to cure them of disease' (Emblem 13).

Maier offers *Atalanta Fugiens* as a 'literary gift' which focuses on meditation and 'profound contemplation', that is, the 'inner' or spiritual alchemy which aims to transform or regenerate the Self.¹⁶⁶ For those of 'higher skills, liberally educated and born to investigate greater things' (Preface, p. 101) this striving for a higher spiritual nature, or enlightenment, can be attained by following God, 'the divine alchemist'.¹⁶⁷ In the Book of Genesis the words 'God said' are repeatedly used in the creation of the world implying that God has a voice that is used to create. (Genesis 1:3.6.9.12.20.and 24). Since every voice has the ability to sing, there is an implication that alchemical music is at the heart of God's work, that is, nature, as Maier makes clear in Emblem 46 where he writes, 'Let Nature be your guide, and with your art follow her closely. Without her you'll err'.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ Gareth Roberts, *The Languages of Alchemy* (London: The British Library Centre for the Book, 1997), p. 7.

¹⁶⁵ Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, pp. 101-102.

¹⁶⁶ Maier, Dedicatory Epistle, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 99 and Preface, p. 101; Hasler, 'Performative and Multimedia Aspects', p. 137.

¹⁶⁷ Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 101; Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy*, p. 53.

¹⁶⁸ Maier, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 189.

For the alchemical philosopher it is only through the intrinsic and extrinsic regeneration of nature that an Edenic equilibrium can be regained. Henry Reynolds affirms in *Mythomystes* that we must ‘search for the knowledge of the wise and hidden wayes & workings of our great Gods hand-maid, Nature’.¹⁶⁹

As the universal language, music held the key to an ecstatic contemplation of eternity because it offered continuity between the natural, human and divine realms of an ordered universe. In conjunction with his visual imagery, Maier’s music explores the Neoplatonic concept of harmony as a unifying feature of the cosmos because the images and fugues emphasise a reflective analogy between nature, human and the divine realms for, as Elias Ashmole avows, it is the ‘work of the Magi or Hermetick Philosophers’ to ‘handle’ the ‘universal and All-piercing Spirit’ in order to ‘let it loose that it may freely worke as it doth in the Aetheriall Bodies’. This work’, Ashmole writes, ‘depends on the aforesaid Harmony’, necessary for an understanding of the ‘Order and Symmitry of the Universe’.¹⁷⁰ Maier, whom Hereward Tilton argues, regarded his entire existence as a spiritual journey, analogous to a Christian pilgrimage, presents *Atalanta Fugiens* as a profoundly spiritual emblem book in which the alchemical meditative nature provides an intellectual and spiritual site where ‘moderate Anglicans, orthodox Calvinists, and radical Puritans alike could find in alchemy something to harmonize with their different religious beliefs and experiences’.¹⁷¹

Maier transforms the Ovidian myth into an allegory of nature because the alchemical process echoes nature’s regenerative quality. However, nature, ‘the driving power behind

¹⁶⁹ Reynolds, ‘Mythomystes’, in *Critical Essays*, p. 165.

¹⁷⁰ Ashmole, *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, pp. 446–447, accessed 09.08.2011.

¹⁷¹ Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 56; Robert M. Schuler, ‘Some Spiritual Alchemies of seventeenth-century England,’ *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 41, No.” (Apr. – Jun., 1980), pp. 293–318, p. 294.

all transmutations', has a dual aspect similar to the Ficinian theory of love.¹⁷² Burckhardt defines inner alchemy as 'that maternal power which releases the soul from its fallow, arid and sterile existence'. She is therefore, 'the power of desire and longing in man' while simultaneously she 'develops all the capacities hidden in the soul, against or in keeping with the desires or the ego, depending on whether the latter assimilates the power of nature, or becomes its victim.'¹⁷³ Thus nature has the potential to move in two opposite directions – one which moves from the spiritual centre towards multiplicity (where man is linked to passion), and one which moves from multiplicity back towards the spiritual centre.¹⁷⁴ Maier unifies this binary opposition through his music because it achieves harmony and balance though the integration of its dissonance and consonance simultaneously.

Maier defines nature in terms of rhythm and harmony for the natural vibration of the soul which accompanies alchemical transmutation echoes the Pythagorean discovery of cosmic harmony.¹⁷⁵ Echoing the scholar Cassiodorus, who declared that the science of music is diffused through all the acts of our life – for the association of the rhythms of the body were inextricably linked to the numerical harmonies in the soul and in the universe – Maier's music is an extension of the rhythms generated by the physical body and the means of focusing on a spiritual inner awareness thereby affirming the existence of life itself.¹⁷⁶ Thus *Atalanta Fugiens* extracts 'the most subtle, august, sacred, rare and abstruse' things that constitute the 'secrets of Chemistry and through its epigrams, emblems and music

¹⁷² Burckhardt, *Alchemy*, p. 118.

¹⁷³ Burckhardt, *Alchemy*, p. 118.

¹⁷⁴ Burckhardt, *Alchemy*, p. 122.

¹⁷⁵ Burckhardt, *Alchemy*, p. 123; chapter 1, p. 37.

¹⁷⁶ Nancy G. Siraisi, 'The Music of Pulse in the Writings of Italian Academic Physicians (Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries)', *Speculum*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (Oct., 1975), pp. 689-710, p. 701.

provides illumination and wisdom, ‘the fruit from the Tree of Life’ (Emblem 26) for the reader, for without Wisdom, Maier writes, mankind is living dead’.¹⁷⁷

The layout of *Atalanta Fugiens* follows a repetitive pattern of paintings (engravings), music and poetry, which often, in early modern works, corresponds with the mental faculties of imagination, memory and judgement.¹⁷⁸ On the right-hand pages are the sequentially numbered *Emblema de secretis naturae* followed by a Latin epithet which gives a general explanation. Below this is an engraving which is accompanied by a Latin epigram of six lines that explains the symbolism of the engraving in a codified manner. The musicologist Johann F.W. Hasler notes that on the opposite left-hand pages, although the numbers remain the same, the word *Emblema* is replaced with *Fuga* with an accompanying technical explanation on how each particular fugue has been composed, with specific mention of the interval employed, for example ‘*Reciproca*’ in Fugue 46. Below this ‘technical heading’ appears a German translation in Gothic script of the Latin epithet on the opposite page followed by the musical score.¹⁷⁹

Although Maier uses other intervals, Hasler equates *reciproca* with unison: the singing or playing of a single melodic line at the same pitch by more than one instrument or voice.¹⁸⁰ Translated from Latin, it means ‘to move backwards and forwards, to reverberate’ giving a sense of continuous flow within the composition.¹⁸¹ It infers a sense of meditation,

¹⁷⁷ Maier, Preface, in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 101; Maier as quoted by Streich, in *Atalanta Fugiens: An Edition*, p. 80.

¹⁷⁸ James Haar, ‘Astral Music in Seventeenth-Century Nuremberg: ‘The Tugendsterne of Harsdörffer and Staden’, *Musica Disciplina*, Vol.16 (1962), pp. 175-189, p. 178.

¹⁷⁹ Hasler, ‘Performative and Multimedia Aspects’, p. 138. Hasler argues that even though Maier calls them fugues, modern music theory would call them imitative canons, though not all of them imitate at unison or the octave, and several imitate at different intervals, as fugues do.

¹⁸⁰ Hasler, ‘Performative and Multimedia Aspects’, p. 138.

¹⁸¹ *Collins Latin Dictionary*, (Glasgow: Harpers Collins Publishers, 1997), reprint 2004, p. 182.

where the ebb and flow of sustained reflection allows the spiritual alchemist to withdraw paradoxically from, yet into himself.¹⁸²

Maier's use of musical intervals signals his intent to provide a harmonious whole between the words and musical notation of the fugues themselves. It places the fugues within the Latin Christian religious musical tradition; Isidore and Aurelian of Réôme wrote of chanting with two choirs in alternation ('*antiphona...vox reciproca duobus scilicet choris alternates psallentibus*', *Etymologies*, vi, 19.7).¹⁸³ Thus an association is established between the musical interval *reciproca* and the antiphon; a liturgical chant with a prose text, sung in association with a psalm. Derived from the Greek word *antiphōna*, the neuter adjective *antiphōnon* signified for Pseudo-Aristotle (*Problems*, xix.39) the interval of the octave which he scarcely distinguished from unison (*Problems*, xix.17).¹⁸⁴ This implied unison – or note/sound of the same pitch as another – not only represents a musical instruction, it also encapsulates Maier philosophical aim: the spiritual transformation of the Self through the reaffirmation of the intricate systems of correspondence that existed between the alchemical processes occurring in the alembics and the spiritual changes within the heart and soul of the philosophical alchemist.¹⁸⁵ Maier's religious alchemical philosophy, Frances Yates argues, 'presents a lesson in perseverance and purity of intention to the spiritual alchemist' which he teaches through the emblems and music of *Atalanta Fugiens*.¹⁸⁶

William R. Newman and Anthony Grafton argue that 'early modern alchemy was not a contemplative discipline focusing on internal spiritual development' but that the idea of

¹⁸² Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy*, p. 123.

¹⁸³ Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>, accessed 07.09.2011.

¹⁸⁴ Oxford Music online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>, accessed 07.09.2011

¹⁸⁵ Linden, *The Alchemy Reader*, p. 22.

¹⁸⁶ Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, p. 82.

spiritual alchemy as an idea ‘popularized by nineteenth-century occultists and their later followers.’¹⁸⁷ Johann Hasler points out that Streich’s interpretation of alchemy as a form of inner work is a Jungian ‘inner development’ model that clearly belongs to a later school.¹⁸⁸ However Maier’s own words suggest otherwise. His emphasis of the spiritual and philosophical alchemy in *Atalanta Fugiens* is a fundamental and dynamic dimension of the work. The premise, that the allegorical language of alchemy may be interpreted as a vehicle for a spiritual content, has been defended by scholars from a wide variety of academic disciplines, for example, Frances Yates, Robert M. Schuler and more recently Stanton J. Linden, Peter Forshaw and Margaret Healy.¹⁸⁹

In the title-page Maier immediately directs the reader’s attention to music’s alchemical and healing power. This is his key to the role of music in inner alchemy that was supposed to transform the Self – the focal point of spiritual regeneration. His choice of words such as ‘meditated’, ‘understood’ and ‘weighed’, directs the reader to use the imagery and fugues for contemplative and meditative purposes within a Biblical framework:

Atalanta Fleeing that is, New Emblems of the Secrets of Nature, Adapted partly for the eyes and intellect in figures engraved on copper, with legends, Epigrams and notes attached, partly for the ears and the soul’s recreation with about 50 musical fugues in three voices, of which two are set to a simple melody suitable for singling the couplets, to be looked at, read, meditated, understood, weighed, sung and listened to, not without a certain pleasure.¹⁹⁰

Music is the means through which the reader can cultivate this intellect because the juxtaposition of ‘ears’ to ‘soul’s recreation’ recalls the Ficinian argument of the importance

¹⁸⁷ William R. Newman and Anthony Grafton, *Secrets of Nature: Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2001), p. 14.

¹⁸⁸ Hasler, ‘Performative and Multimedia Aspects’, p. 137.

¹⁸⁹ Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, p. 82; Schuler, ‘Spiritual Alchemies’, p. 293; Linden, *The Alchemy Reader*, p. 22; Forshaw, ‘Subliming Spirits’, pp. 255-275; Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy*, p. 4.

¹⁹⁰ Maier, Title-page in *Atalanta Fugiens, An Edition*, p. 91.

of the sense of hearing since music was vital for the communication between body and soul, for ‘the universal soul and body, as well as each living being, conform to musical proportion’ (Letter 92, vol.1, p.143). This idea of cosmic harmony through proportion is also implicit in the Scriptural ‘weighed’ derived from the *Wisdom of Solomon* (XI: 17) that proportions all God’s Creation to ‘measure, number & weight’.

Atalanta Fugiens is, I argue, a profoundly intellectual and spiritual work. By positioning *Atalanta Fugiens* within an alchemical framework, Maier advocates the healing properties of his music because the Universal Medicine that the philosopher’s stone represents, was believed to cure all disease. Thus Maier’s alchemical quest is a material and spiritual realisation where music is the metaphor for Universal Order that bonds body and soul.¹⁹¹ His music is the philosophical site where the metaphorically charged *musica mundana* – representing the order of the universe – and the *musica humana*, the harmonious ‘tuning’ of the human body, converge to allow the reader a harmonious union with God.

Through his adaptation of the classical ideas of an ordered universe to a Christian purpose, Maier’s music heals, or transforms the soul through the metaphysical interpretation of music reflecting the great harmony of the Cosmos. Mirroring the paradox of alchemy itself, Maier’s music echoes the ordered structure of nature while communicating the Ficinian divine frenzy since music elevates the soul. The efficacy of Maier’s music is in its contemplative nature while simultaneously allowing the spiritual alchemist to hear the music of the spheres through his mediation of the divine. As the

¹⁹¹ Stanislas Klossowski De Rola, *The Golden Game, Alchemical Engravings of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd. 1988), p. 19.

alchemical process begins and ends in the pre-Creation and post-Apocalyptic silences, so too, Maier's music recalls the Orphic utterances that emerge and return to this silence.

This chapter argues that the foundation of Maier's work is the conviction that alchemical processes were a reflection of the material and spiritual transmutation that occurs in the universe, where it was possible for the pious man to come to understand the deepest secrets of Creation and the relationship between God and his creatures. In *Atalanta Fugiens* Maier suggests that the profound and mysterious healing powers of music transform and heal the soul through the alchemized mythology of Atlanta, representing alchemy, and Hippomenes, the potential adept.¹⁹² The linking of these figures by the golden apple implies the significant role which music, based on the Pythagorean concepts of harmony and proportion, played in alchemy. Margaret Healy suggests that the transformative stages of the alchemical work in this emblem book – traceable to the aphorisms of Hermes' *Emerald Tablet* – emerge in the songs of the fugues that sought to guide esoteric and exoteric practices simultaneously.¹⁹³

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¹⁹² Linden, *Darke Hieroglyphicks*, p. 204.

¹⁹³ Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy*, p. 46; p. 8; Introduction, pp. 27-28.

¹⁹⁴ Linden, *Darke Hieroglyphicks*, p. 204.

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In conclusion, this chapter has argued that Maier's alchemical music aided the contemplation in the alchemical process as demonstrated in *Atalanta Fugiens*. As Penelope Gouk points out, the physician who practises this kind of spiritual medicine is capable of restoring inner harmony to the individual and society and is therefore of potentially eliminating sickness and disease, through his ability to harness cosmic harmonies.¹⁹⁶ In this context music illuminates the Pythagorean principles of harmony –aligned to the Biblical account of proportion – which form a pivotal component of Maier's spiritual alchemy.

The publisher Johann de Bry only published two works containing musical notation; Maier's *Atalanta Fugiens* and Robert Fludd's *Utriusque Cosmi, Maioris scilicet et Minoris, metaphysica, physica, et technica historia* (The metaphysical, and physical, and technical history of the two worlds, namely the greater and the lesser, or History of the Macrocosm and Microcosm).¹⁹⁷ In chapter 4 I shall examine Robert Fludd's Christianized Hermetic philosophy. As physicians Fludd and Maier share similar medical background, but they also possess a commonality in their philosophical beliefs, in which music is both an ontological metaphor and a powerful therapeutic modality, suggesting a broader European acceptance of the Pythagorean musical model.

¹⁹⁵ Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy*, p. 46; p. 8; Introduction, pp. 27-28.

¹⁹⁶ Gouk, 'Harmony, Health, and Healing', in *The Practice of Reform in Health, Medicine, and Science*, p. 41.

¹⁹⁷ Peter Hauge, *'The Temple of Music' by Robert Fludd* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011), p. 12, n. 43. All citations will be to this edition.

Chapter 4

‘The sunne shal not smite thee by daie, nor the moone by night’: Robert Fludd’s harmonious cosmos.¹

Introduction

In chapter 3 I demonstrate how Michael Maier’s philosophical contemplation of the cosmos through his alchemical music details the relationship between God, man and the act of Creation. I explain the pivotal role music plays in his spiritual alchemy - which is informed by Ficino’s medico-musical theory – that provides a vehicle for the exploration of universal truths and spiritual fulfilment.² Ficino’s model is also discernable in the work of the English physician, Robert Fludd (1574-1637) and this chapter argues that Fludd believes music has a powerful physiological effect on man because his soul remembers the divine harmony it once heard.³

The Biblical reference to the power of light and dark, and indeed to time itself, since night and day make up all time, in psalm 121 signifies an attestation to the eternal power of God. As both shelter and preserver, God shields mankind from these tremendous forces, physically and more importantly, spiritually, and it is this belief, I argue, that captures the essence of Robert Fludd’s Christianized Hermetic philosophy. Fludd, whose concept of the universe was based on his belief in Mosaic principles, argued that the universe was

¹ *The Geneva Bible*, Psalm 121v.6, f. 262v.

² Introduction, p. 42.

³ Introduction, p. 43.

interconnected in a harmonious way by the spirit of God.⁴ Because harmony was interpreted as the reconciliation of opposites, music was believed to be the model of all harmony, the earthly manifestation of the divine concord between heaven and earth.⁵

His understanding of the structure of the universe and the relationship between man and God reveals the important role music held for him, and this is illustrated in his interpretation of the universe, where he uses the single-stringed monochord to describe the harmonious relationship between the macrocosm and the microcosm.⁶ Following the Pythagorean tradition, Fludd imagines the whole of creation stretched along the single string that reached from the earth through the elements and the planets to the hand of God, the master musician who tunes the universe.⁷

Representative of Fludd's syncretic view of the universe, the monochord is a musical illustration of universal harmony through the Neoplatonic emanations from God through the hierarchies, based on the Pythagorean octave in which the aim – in Neoplatonic terms – is to ascend the physical world through contemplation, to obtain unity with God. Through this musical paradigm Fludd recalls the music of the spheres – in which the divine properties explain all Creation – aligning this interpretation to the human body so that the heart, sun, and diapason occupy the same metaphysical position. Thus Fludd views the human body as the physical representation of cosmic harmony, for man 'which is called the

⁴ William H. Huffman, *Robert Fludd and the end of the Renaissance*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 101. All citations are to this edition.

⁵ Gretchen L. Finney, 'Music: A Book of Knowledge in Renaissance England', *Studies in the Renaissance*, Vol. 6 (1959), pp. 36-63, pp. 42-43.

⁶ Joscelyn Godwin, *Harmonies of Heaven and Earth. The Spiritual Dimension of Music from Antiquity to the Avant-Garde* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1987), p. 127.

⁷ Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, p. 356.

little-world, is composed of soul and body'.⁸ George Herbert, a contemporary of Fludd, describes this relationship as man the little sphere: 'Man is all symmetry' he writes, 'Full of proportions; one limb to another/ And all to all the world besides'.⁹

Fludd argues that in order for mankind to understand himself and his place in the cosmos, he had to attain a mystical knowledge of God through the rediscovery of the ancient philosophy and divine music.¹⁰ Using the Boethian musical model, Fludd illustrates harmony in nature through the monochord, for his interpretation of nature is based on the ancient belief in a harmonious *anima mundi* or world soul.¹¹ This is, he asserts, the essence that animates all creatures, because it is inherent in the breath of God (*Mosaicall Philosophy*, p.150).

With a renewed academic interest in the Western philosophical tradition, scholars such as Joscelyn Godwin, William H. Huffman, Peter J. Ammann and, more recently, Peter Hauge, have re-evaluated the Fluddian scholarship of J.B. Craven, Frances Yates and Allen G. Debus.¹² The *Dictionary of National Biography* (DNB) describes Robert Fludd as a 'physician and writer on the occult', but this does not accurately reflect either his role or

⁸ Robert Fludd, (1659) *Mosaicall philosophy grounded upon the essential truth, or eternal sapience. Written first in Latin, and afterwards thus rendred into English by Robert Fludd, Esq.* London, Printed for Humphrey Moseley, at the Prince's Armes in St. Paul's Church-yard. 1659. Harvard University Library. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 12252507, accessed 21.05.2008, p. 147. All citations are to this edition.

⁹ George Herbert, 'Man', in *The English Poems of George Herbert* (ed.) C.A. Patrides (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1974), p. 106.

¹⁰ Peter J. Ammann, 'The Musical Theory and Philosophy of Robert Fludd', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtland Institutes*, Vol. 30. (1967), pp. 198-227, p. 199.

¹¹ Sir John Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, Vol. II, 1853 (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1963, an unabridged republication of the J. Alfred Novello edition, 1853), p. 621.

¹² Godwin, *Robert Fludd*; William H. Huffman (ed.), *Robert Fludd, Essential Readings* (London: The Aquarian Press, 1992); Ammann, 'The Musical Theory and Philosophy of Robert Fludd'; Hauge, 'The Temple of Music' by Robert Fludd; J.B Craven, *Dr Robert Fludd* (Kirkwall: William Peace and Son, 1902); Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*; Allen G. Debus, 'Robert Fludd and the Circulation of the Blood', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, Vol. 16 (1961). All citations are to these editions.

contribution in English, or indeed European, early modern culture.¹³ As a graduate of St Johns College, Oxford in 1598 and Christ Church College, Oxford in 1605, Fludd was part of an intellectual wave of Latinate scholarship aimed at a European audience at the end of the sixteenth century that included, amongst others, Francis Bacon, William Harvey, Everard Digby and John Case.¹⁴ This renewed interest may account for why, with the exception of his *Doctor Fludds answer vnto M. Foster* (1631) and his own translation of the *Mosaicall philosophy*, Fludd composes his treatises in Latin.¹⁵

Fludd's biographical details in the Oxford University Grove Music Online fare little better than the DNB entry. Described as an English writer and composer, his views are portrayed as 'unorthodox', written in an 'obscure' language with 'fantastical diagrams'.¹⁶ While this citation acknowledges his conceptualization of the universe as a musical instrument played by the world spirit, it does not emphasize Fludd's reputation as a respected and successful London gentleman and physician, well connected in society and at court. Rather, it concentrates on his intellectual controversies with the contemporary theoreticians, Johannes Kepler, Marin Mersenne and Pierre Gassendi.¹⁷ As recently as 2009

¹³ Ian Maclean, 'Fludd, Robert (bap. 1574, d. 1637)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9776>, accessed 22 Feb 2006.

¹⁴ J.W. Binns, 'Elizabeth I and the universities' in, John Henry & Sarah Hutton, (eds.) *New Perspectives on Renaissance Thought: Essays in the history of science, education and philosophy* (London: Gerald Duckworth & co. Ltd., 1990), p. 251.

¹⁵ Robert Fludd (1631) *Doctor Fludds answer vnto M. Foster or, The squeezing of Parson Fosters sponge ordained by him for the wiping away of the weapon-salue VVerein the sponge-bearers immodest carriage and behaiour towards his bretheren is detected...*, London: Printed [by J. Beale and G. Purslowe?] for Nathanael Butter, 1631. British Library. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 99838161, accessed 21.05.2008. All citations are to this edition.

¹⁶ Andrew Asbee, 'Fludd, Robert', Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online. 26.04.2008. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/09883>, accessed 26.04.2008.

¹⁷ Asbee, 'Fludd, Robert', <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/09883>, accessed 26.04.2008.

Fludd was still being defined in terms of the Keplerian debate: he was witheringly described as simply ‘eccentric’.¹⁸

This reading of Fludd is derived in part from Sir John Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music* (first published in 1776).¹⁹ Although Hawkins does indeed describe Fludd as ‘a man of a disordered imagination’, whose unsound philosophy was written in a ‘turgid and obscure style’, nonetheless he acknowledges that Fludd was held in great esteem as a successful physician and ‘a man acquainted with all sorts of learning, and one of the most Christian philosophers that ever wrote’.²⁰

This viewpoint concurs with a near contemporaneous account of Fludd. Thomas Fuller, writing in *The Histories of the worthies of England* (1662), describes him as a ‘deep Philosopher and a great Physician’, whose books are ‘great, many and mystical’.²¹ Fludd’s works, Fuller tell us, are for the English to ‘admire’ and for the ‘French and Forraigners to understand and use’, since they are ‘more enquiring into such difficulties’.²² Likewise, Anthony á Wood recalls that Fludd was ‘esteemed by many scholars a most noted Philosopher, an eminent Physician’.²³

¹⁸ Joost-Gaugier, *Pythagoras*, p. 126.

¹⁹ Hawkins, *A General History*, pp. 620-623.

²⁰ Hawkins, *A General History*, pp. 620-623.

²¹ Thomas Fuller (1662) *The history of the worthies of England who for parts and learning have been eminent in the several counties: together with an historical narrative of the native commodities and rarities in each country* / endeavoured by Thomas Fuller. London: Printed by J.G.L. and W/G. for Thomas Williams..., 1662. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 12142638, accessed 16.07.2012. All citations are to this edition.

²² Fuller, *Worthies*, p. 79.

²³ Anthony á Wood (1691) *Athenae Oxonienses an exact history of all the writers and bishops who have had their education in the most ancient and famous University of Oxford, from the fifteenth year of King Henry the Seventh, Dom. 1500, to the end of all the year 1690 representing the birth, fortune, preferment, and death of all those authors and prelates, the great accidents of their lives, and the fate and character of their writings: to which are added, the Fasti, or, Annals, of the said university, for the same time...* 1691. Reproduction of original in Union Theological Seminary Library, New York, and University of Michigan Libraries. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 12202663, accessed 16.07.2012, p. 509. All citations are to this edition.

However, Fuller and á Wood also equally attest to the mystical nature of his books, the ‘clouding’ of his ‘high matter with dark language’.²⁴ This disparity may be, the musicologist Peter Hauge suggests, due to Fludd’s reputation as an alleged Rosicrucian, a fact noted by these early biographers that continued to obfuscate academic enquiry until recently.²⁵ Described alternatively as either, an ‘occultist Rosicrucian’ or, one of the last Renaissance men who ‘sought to embrace the whole of human knowledge within a divine and hierarchically ordered cosmology’, Fludd was certainly a Rosicrucian apologist.²⁶ He repeatedly defended the Rosicrucian philosophical tracts on natural magic, Hermeticism and macrocosmic-microcosmic harmony, publishing, amongst others, his *Apologia Compendiaria Fraternitatem de Rosea Cruce Suspicionis et Infamiae Maculis Aspersam, Veritatis quasi Fluctibus abluens et abstergens* (Leydae, 1616).²⁷ However, neither he, nor Michael Maier, appears to have been contacted by the Society – if indeed it existed – nor did Fludd know or hear of anyone being a member.²⁸ Nevertheless this did not detract from his desire to become a Rosicrucian or, indeed, to base his own philosophy – a synthesis of Neoplatonic, Cabalist and Hermetic knowledge – on an alleged Rosicrucian model, revealing a valuable and complex interpretation of a unified cosmos with reference, amongst others, to music, anatomy and astronomy.²⁹

²⁴ á Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, p. 510.

²⁵ Hauge, *The Temple of Music*, p. 1.

²⁶ Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, ‘Preface’ in, Huffman, *Robert Fludd: Essential Readings*.

²⁷ Craven, *Dr Robert Fludd*, p. 43.

²⁸ Huffman, *Robert Fludd*, pp. 159-161; Peter Hauge, ‘Robert Fludd (1574-1637): A Musical Charlatan? A Contextual Study of His “Temple of Music” (1617-18) / Robert Fludd (1574-1637): glazbeni šarlatan? Kontekstualno istraživanje njegova djela “Temple of Music” (1617-18), *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (jun., 2008), pp. 3-29, p. 4.

²⁹ Huffman, ‘Introduction’, in *Robert Fludd: Essential Readings*, p. 24.

Until recently, it has been argued that Fludd began his treatise on music while studying at Oxford in the 1590s.³⁰ However, Peter Hauge points out that while Fludd may, indeed, have been collecting material for his 'Temple of Music', this assumption has been based on a passage from *Utriusque historia Cosmi*. He draws attention to Fludd's assertion that he is 'studying' the (or 'a') treatise on music, suggesting Fludd is focusing more on research in this period.³¹

Huffman argues that Fludd's interest in medicine, science and Hermetic musico-philosophy certainly stemmed from his days at St Johns College, where he came into contact with men such as Matthew Gwynn, Reader of the musical lectures, poet, playwright and later Professor of Physic at Gresham College.³² The theologian and physician, Ralf Hutchinson, President of the College during Fludd's studies, may have influenced his particular association between medicine and theology. Fludd's medical education – under the influence of men such as Hutchinson, John Buckeridge and John Perrin – is immersed in a strong Protestant, theological framework and this is discernible in his own work, with its frequent Scriptural referencing and the belief in disease having its origin in sin.³³

This early medical influence, and –by his own admission– the extensive study of music, suggests, I argue, the establishment at Oxford of a foundation in which Fludd formulates his musico-medical philosophy.³⁴ Oxford had a long tradition as a centre of humanist and Platonic thought: Thomas Linacre and William Grocyn had studied under

³⁰ Huffman, *Robert Fludd: Essential Readings*, p. 21; Ammann, 'The Musical Theory and Philosophy of Robert Fludd', p. 205; Godwin, 'Robert Fludd on the Lute and Pandora', *Lute Society* 15 (1973), pp. 11-19, p. 18.

³¹ Hauge, *The Temple of Music*, p. 4. I shall be citing from this translation.

³² Huffman, *Robert Fludd*, p. 10.

³³ Maclean, 'Fludd, Robert (bap. 1574, d. 1637)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9776>, accessed 22 Feb 2006.

³⁴ Maclean, 'Fludd, Robert (bap. 1574, d. 1637)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9776>, accessed 22 Feb 2006.

Angelo Poliziano and had formed a circle of Oxford scholars on their return to England that included John Colet and William Latimer.³⁵ Certainly Fludd's anti-Aristotelianism, as well as the typographical systems and sub-systems of his latter works, are due to the influences of Ramism that was strongly prevalent at Oxford during his residence.³⁶ One of the reasons Fludd writes *Mosaicall philosophy* is, he tells us, to demonstrate the 'true wisdom' of Plato (*Mosaicall philosophy*, p. 32) against the 'erroneous and false doctrine' of Aristotle' (*Mosaicall philosophy*, p. 30), 'puffed up with self-conceit' (*Mosaicall philosophy*, p. 32).

While at Oxford Fludd must have read Boethius as part of the university curriculum for he references the three-tiered Boethian model in *Utriusque Cosmi Historia*. Following university, Fludd travelled to the Continent where he met the physician, Master Gruter, who taught Fludd the art of motions and inventions of machines.³⁷ This meeting almost certainly had a profound impact on Fludd since he maintained an interest in machines and music throughout his life. Joscelyn Godwin suggests that the mechanical musical instruments which Fludd describes in his *Tractatus Apologeticus* (1617) brought him into contact with the masque makers of the early Stuart court.³⁸ Through this association it is possible that Fludd knew Inigo Jones and Thomas Campion since his interests extended to large-scale perspective painting using the squared grid.³⁹ Likewise, in his *Clavis Philosophiae et Alchymiae Fluddanae* (1633), Fludd states that his monochord had been approved and recommended by eminent French and English musicians at the Court of St. James.⁴⁰

³⁵ Ficino, *Letters*, Vol. 1, pp. 230-231.

³⁶ Huffman, *Robert Fludd*, p. 12.

³⁷ Craven, *Dr Robert Fludd*, p. 27.

³⁸ Godwin, *Robert Fludd*, p. 9.

³⁹ Godwin, *Robert Fludd*, p. 9; Frances A. Yates, *Theatre of the World* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1969), p. xii and p. 52.

⁴⁰ Amman, 'The musical theory and philosophy of Robert Fludd', p. 219.

While in Germany, it is conceivable that Fludd may have visited the courts of the Count Palatine in Heidelberg, and Moritz the Learned, Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, who employed Michael Maier as his personal physician, and whose court was a major centre of learning with close ties to England.⁴¹ Certainly, there are suggestions that it was Michael Maier who carried Fludd's *Utriusque Cosmi Historia* to the De Bry publishers in Oppenheim.⁴² It was the Landgrave's father, William IV the Wise (1532-1592), who had corresponded with Queen Elizabeth and Tycho Brahe and had been visited by John Dee at Cassel in 1584 or 1585.⁴³ Fludd's biographers agree that the interests he developed at Oxford were probably formulated and broadened into his philosophical framework by his travels to Europe.

After returning to England and graduating in medicine, Fludd established a prosperous medical practice in London in Fenchurch Street and later in Coleman Street, obtaining his licence from the College of Physicians in 1609.⁴⁴ He was considered an established, orthodox medical practitioner by figures such as Nicholas Culpepper and Peter Cole, and counted Ben Jonson and John Selden amongst his patients.⁴⁵ William Munk, author of *The Roll of the Royal College of Physicians*, first published in 1861, describes

⁴¹ Huffman, *Robert Fludd*, p. 31.

⁴² Fludd, 'Declaratio Brevis', in *Robert Fludd: Essential Readings*, p. 93.

⁴³ Huffman, *Robert Fludd*, p. 31.

⁴⁴ Maclean, 'Fludd, Robert', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 22 Feb 2006; Craven, *Dr Robert Fludd*, p. 29; Godwin, *Robert Fludd*, p. 8.

⁴⁵ Huffman, *Robert Fludd*, p. 19; Mark Bland, 'Jonson, "Biathanatos" and the Interpretation of Manuscript Evidence', *Studies in Bibliography*, 51 (1998), pp. 154-182, p. 169, n. 36, 'A medicinal recipe dated 16 April 1637 and signed by "[Robert] Fludde" is to be found in Jonson's copy of Bede (Cologne, 1612). It was sold by Quaricth (Reference 138, 1985); John Selden (1614) *Titles of Honour*, London: By William Stansby for Iohn Helme, and are to be sold at his shop in S. Dunstons Church-yard, M.DC.XIV [1614]. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 99852300, accessed 17.07.2012. In his Dedication Selden praises Fludd's medical care, writing, 'my dangerous and tedious sickne[s]e; being thence freed (as you know too, that were a continuall, mo[s]t friendly, and carefull witne[s]e) by the Bounteous humanitie and adu[i]se of that learned Ph[i]sician Doctor Robert Floyd (whom my Memorie always honors)', sig.. a3r. All citations are to this edition.

Fludd's treatments as including 'a kind of sublime, unintelligible cant to his patients, which by inspiring them with greater faith in his skill might in some cases contribute to their cure'.⁴⁶ Although Fludd clearly had Paracelsian leanings and practised astrology, this did not debar him from being a College censor in 1618, 1627, 1633 and 1634.⁴⁷ While Lauren Kassel points out that not all astrologers were medical practitioners, nor all medical practitioners astrologers, Fludd's combination of medicine and astrology was not unusual in early modern medical practice.⁴⁸ For example, one of Fludd's contemporaries, Richard Napier, was an astrological physician and Church of England clergyman, while Simon Forman's astrological medicine has been well documented.⁴⁹

From his Oxford days, Fludd's closest and lifelong friend was Richard Andrewes, and both Andrewes and Gwynn became colleagues of Fludd at the College of Physicians in London. It was through the College that Fludd became acquainted with William Harvey, Sir William Baskerville, physician to King James and later to his son Charles 1, and Sir William Paddy, physician-in-ordinary to James, and to whom Fludd dedicated his *Medicina Catholica* of 1629.⁵⁰ In addition to his associates in the College of Physicians, Fludd's medical acquaintances included his learned 'Fellow-Colleague', William Gilbert, whose *De Magnete magneticisque Corporibus et de magno magnete Tellure Physiologia nova* (1600), Fludd frequently cites, acknowledging his debt to its 'Magnetic skill and deep search, as well contemplative as experimentall touching this subject' (*Mosaicall Philosophy*, p. 203).

⁴⁶ William Munk, *The Roll of the Royal College of Physicians*, (1861-), Vol. 1, p. 150. <http://munksrole.rcplondon.ac.uk>, accessed 24 Feb 2006

⁴⁷ Maclean, 'Fludd, Robert', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 22 Feb 2006; Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy*, p. 34.

⁴⁸ Kassel, *Medicine and Magic*, p. 90.

⁴⁹ Jonathon Andrews, 'Napier, Richard (1557-1634)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 online edn, Jan 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19763>, accessed 16 Jan 2009; A. L. Rowse, *Simon Forman, Sex and Society in Shakespeare's Age*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974), pp. 6-9.

⁵⁰ Huffman, *Robert Fludd*, p. 18.

There can be little doubt, therefore, that Fludd was a key and influential figure in the medical establishment in the early seventeenth century.

Besides his medical associates, Fludd was friends with John Thornborough (1551-1641), Bishop of Worcester, whose seat, Hartlebury Castle, served as an 'Apollinian retreat' for alchemists and men interested in Hermetic-Christian metaphysics.⁵¹ By his own admission, Fludd is known to have stayed at least once at the castle, and he dedicated his *Anatomiae Amphitheatrum* (1623) to Thornborough calling him, 'my singular friend, most studious in accurately inquiring into the mysteries of nature, in whom is the true light of the world, and the treasure of treasures'.⁵² John Thornborough also provides a link between Fludd and Simon Forman since Thornborough employed Forman as his servant when he studied at Magdalene College, Oxford.⁵³ The possibility that such a connection existed between the two men is posited by William Lilly who suggests that Fludd may have copied one of Forman's manuscripts.⁵⁴ Likewise Fludd's association with Thornborough provides a link – albeit a tenuous one – to Shakespeare since the bishop was treated by John Hall, Shakespeare's son-on-law, for scorbutic wandering gout in 1633.⁵⁵

Fludd was also associated with the Society of Antiquaries, formed around 1585, that was closely linked with Sir Robert Bruce Cotton's renowned library visited by men such as Frances Bacon and Ben Jonson.⁵⁶ This gave Fludd access to important Renaissance Hermetic texts, such as the works of Roger Bacon and the pre-eminent cabalist scholar,

⁵¹ Dedication by 'R.N.E.' in John Baptista Lambye, *A revelation of the Secret Spirit declaring the most concealed secret of Alchemia*, 1623, trans. R.N.E. and quoted in Allen G. Debus, *The English Paracelsians*, (London: Oldbourne Book Co. Ltd., 1965), pp. 104-105.

⁵² Huffman, *Robert Fludd*, p. 32.

⁵³ Rowse, *Simon Forman*, p. 30.

⁵⁴ William Lilly, *William Lilly's history of his life and times from the year 1602 to 1681* (ed.) Charles Baldwyn, Printed from the original ms. London 1715 (London: Reprinted for Charles Baldwyn, 1822).

⁵⁵ Joan Lane, *John Hall and his Patients* (Stratford-upon-Avon: The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, 1996), p. 319.

⁵⁶ Huffman, *Robert Fludd*, p. 33.

Reuchlin, both of whom Fludd admired.⁵⁷ It also provided a vital link between John Dee – who had visited the library – and Fludd; this association, Frances Yates argues, provided Fludd with many of the themes John Dee explores in his Preface to the English translation of Euclid's *The Elements of Geometrie* (1570).⁵⁸

What emerges from Fludd's professional practice, and his learned associations in England and the Continent, is that he was an important intellectual figure and medical practitioner who was accepted at the highest levels of society – he enjoyed the patronage of both James I and Charles I.⁵⁹ This picture is a very different from the one that examines Fludd's published works, and the intellectual debates that they generated. These disagreements – especially between Kepler and Fludd – may be interpreted as a polemical dispute about their musico-philosophical ideas since they arose over differences regarding the harmonics of the Pythagorean-Neoplatonic cosmos.⁶⁰ As both men shared a similar Renaissance Christian Neoplatonist outlook on the structure of the universe, they occupied similar positions in the intellectual tradition of the seventeenth century. However, since Fludd argued on the wrong side of the mathematically proven Copernicanism of Kepler, his intellectual reputation was at odds with the modernist viewpoint until his recent rehabilitation.

'The Temple of Music' in *Utriusque Cosmi Historia*

As Peter Hauge acknowledges, one of the major obstacles in approaching Fludd's work is the language barrier, given that no translation of *Utriusque Cosmi Historia* has ever been

⁵⁷ Huffman, *Robert Fludd*, p. 33.

⁵⁸ Yates, *Theatre of the World*, pp. xi-xii.

⁵⁹ Huffman, *Robert Fludd*, p. 34.

⁶⁰ Huffman, *Robert Fludd*, p. 56.

published although Fludd's fascinating copperplates have been widely alluded to in early modern studies of the history of science and philosophy.⁶¹ Hauge has recently translated and published the musical section of *Utriusque Cosmi Historia* under the title of '*The Temple of Music*' by Robert Fludd (2011) in an effort to reposition Fludd's relegation to the periphery of early modern music theory and practice and make this work accessible to scholars across the disciplines.⁶²

Published between 1617-26, *Utriusque Cosmi Historia* is a monumental work of over seven hundred pages that was not only an exposition of the metaphysics of the microcosm and macrocosm, but includes subjects ranging from geometry, arithmetic, the art of mnemonics, medicine, meteorology, perspective, geomancy to music.⁶³ Indeed, the encyclopaedic nature of the work led to accusations of Rosicrucianism because, Fludd's opponents argued, no single person was able to know so much about such a great variety of topics.⁶⁴ Its metaphysics is concerned with the relationship between the macrocosm and microcosm through numbers, ratios, musical intervals and rhythms. This relationship between the individual and the world constitutes the basis of early modern medical knowledge. The Delphic injunction to 'know thyself' was synonymous with knowing the world.⁶⁵ As a microcosm, the individual mind was an image of nature, thus the concept of nature took on a new significance in the early modern period resulting in an expansion of scientific knowledge.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Hauge, 'Preface', in *The Temple of Music*, p. 1.

⁶² Hauge, 'Preface', in *The Temple of Music*, p. xv.

⁶³ Hauge, 'Robert Fludd: A Musical Charlatan?', p. 8.

⁶⁴ Hauge, 'Robert Fludd: A Musical Charlatan?', p. 8.

⁶⁵ Don Parry Norford, 'Microcosm and Macrocosm in Seventeenth-Century Literature', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (Jul.-Sept., 1977), pp. 409-428, p. 410.

⁶⁶ Norford, 'Microcosm and Macrocosm', p. 410.

Fludd believed it was essential to understand this relationship in order to comprehend the structure of the universe and the corresponding harmonies in man. Music –in a harmonic sense – and the principle of musical intervals, symbolized by the monochord, was foremost in his metaphysical model of the universe as his main aim was to demonstrate that rhythm is purely a relationship between numbers, just as intervals are numerically related.⁶⁷ Fludd categorizes music as *musica theoretica* and *musica practica*– following the pattern of musical theorists – but he also includes a section on musical instruments.⁶⁸

In his *Declaratio Brevis* to James I Fludd relates the controversy that occurred between the ‘individual to whom I entrusted this volume’ and the publisher, Johann Theodore de Bry. The former, he writes, ‘endeavoured to assign the honour of my book and labour to the Landgrave of Hess’, while the latter tried to ‘assign it to the Count Palantine’. Fludd therefore is ‘compelled’ to dedicate *Utriusque Cosmi Historia* to ‘God and to you, my King’.⁶⁹ Frances Yates argues that by addressing James as ‘*Ter Maximus*’– the epithet sacred to Hermes Trismegistus – Fludd is assigning him a Hermetic role that would not only have unsettled James, due to the association with magic, but may have given the impression that James approved of esoteric philosophy in his son-in-law’s domains.⁷⁰ This is, I suggest, too literal an interpretation since Fludd and James I appear to have continued their cordial relationship: on 30 May 1620, for example, James ordered the Council to consider Fludd’s counter-petition for a patent to make steel.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Hauge, ‘Robert Fludd: A Musical Charlatan?’, p. 10.

⁶⁸ Hauge, *The Temple of Music*, p. 4; Hauge, ‘Robert Fludd: A Musical Charlatan?’, p. 14.

⁶⁹ Fludd, *Declaratio Brevis*, in *Robert Fludd: Essential Readings*, p. 88.

⁷⁰ Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, p. 78.

⁷¹ Huffman, *Robert Fludd*, p. 23.

Fludd did not complete *Utriusque Cosmi Historia* and only volume one and parts of the second tractate of volume two were ever published.⁷² Volume One, tractate one demonstrates the metaphysical aspect of Fludd's musico-philosophical argument in relation to the creation of the macrocosm.⁷³ In the second tractate, in the section entitled *De Templo Musicae* – comprising of seven books, written sometime between 1596 and 1610 – Fludd discusses the effect of music's influence on the body and soul.⁷⁴ The overall structure of *Utriusque Cosmi Historia* generally follows a contemporaneous pattern on composition, music practice and theory – such as Morley's *A Plaine and Easie Introduction of Practicall Musicke* and Thomas Ravenscroft's *A brief Discourse* (1614). Fludd diverges from this tradition to include material from other sources, such as the Neoplatonic tradition, to offer a unique vision of the world as a harmonic cosmos of spheres and correspondences.⁷⁵ *The Temple of Music* is an attempt to incorporate all the musical harmonies into one construction.⁷⁶ The first three books address the definition, etymology, classification and invention of music, focusing on the nature of sound and the sense of hearing, while the remaining four books concentrate on the rudiments of music, the division of the monochord, musical time and techniques for composition.⁷⁷

⁷² Hauge, *The Temple of Music*, p. 3.

⁷³ Godwin, *Robert Fludd*, p. 93.

⁷⁴ Hauge, 'Robert Fludd: A Musical Charlatan?', p. 12.

⁷⁵ Introduction, p. 12; Thomas Ravenscroft (1614) *A brief discourse of the true (but neglected) vse of charact'ring the degrees, by their perfection, imperfection, and diminution in measurable musicke, against the common practice and custome of these times Examples whereof are exprest in the harmony of 4. voyces, concerning the pleasure of 5, vsuall recreations. 1. Hunting, 2 hawking, 3 dauncing, 4 drinking, 5 enamouring. By Thomas Rauenscroft, Bachelor of Musicke*. London : Printed by Edw: Allde for Tho. Adams, 1614. British Library. . <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/proxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 99846123, accessed 25.07.2012. All citations are to this edition; Hauge, 'Robert Fludd: A Musical Charlatan?', p. 17; Ammann, 'The Musical Theory and Philosophy of Robert Fludd', p. 199.

⁷⁶ Huffman, *Robert Fludd*, p. 52.

⁷⁷ Gouk, *Music, Science and Natural Magic*, p. 99.

Fludd begins this section of *Utriusque Cosmi Historia* with an intriguing detailed illustration of a temple composed of musical annotation and theatrical architecture.⁷⁸ This is, Fludd writes:

Nothing else than our certain imaginary invention by which we have attempted to compress the whole art of music into the image of a temple or palace, and to display the shown arrangements of this most noble art to the diligent and attentive.⁷⁹

This pictorial representation is Fludd's model of the cosmos: as the monochord reflects the universal music of the spheres, so too does the temple reflect the universal music of the earth.⁸⁰ It was devised as a mnemonic device for students to learn the rules of music and composition, for as Fludd advises, 'if you will examine keenly the parts of the temple, you will be a sharer of all its mysteries and an extremely experienced master in this pre-eminent knowledge'.⁸¹

Throughout the treatise Fludd explains the symbolism behind the temple since each detail represents some aspect of *musica mundana, humana and instrumentalis*. Thus the triangles represent musical composition; the organ pipes the soft, natural and hard hexachords; while the spirals symbolise air set in motion with the doors leading into the temple representing the ears.⁸² The mythological figures in the temple, around which Fludd creates a narrative, are of equal importance. Setting the temple in 'naturalistic' surroundings he imagines it situated on the top of Mt. Parnassus –the home of the Muses– amidst Edenic splendour.⁸³

⁷⁸ Godwin, *Robert Fludd*, pp. 78-79.

⁷⁹ Hauge, 'Robert Fludd: A Musical Charlatan?', p. 19.

⁸⁰ David Todd Barton, *Robert Fludd's Temple of Music: A Description and Commentary*, <http://www.vortexmaps.com/htmla/fludd.php>, accessed 30.07.2012, p. 3 of 9.

⁸¹ Hauge, 'Robert Fludd: A Musical Charlatan?', p. 19.

⁸² Hauge, 'Robert Fludd: A Musical Charlatan?', p. 19.

⁸³ David Todd Barton, *Robert Fludd's Temple of Music*, p. 4 of 9.

Fludd portrays Pythagoras listening to Jubal and his sons striking an anvil in the temple's foundation, depicting the Biblical and Classical origins of music as powerful and steadfast. Beside this tableau, Fludd places an unaccompanied lute, signifying its figurative and literally importance, for as he writes:

No other invention, ancient or modern, is more seemly for consorts nor more desirable for symphonies, nor more admirable to the ears of listeners. Time destroys not the sweetness of its sounds, neither do fickle inventions seduce men's affections from it, however rare, unusual, or more easily learnt these may be.⁸⁴

Above Pythagoras and Plato's *lambda* stands the Muse, *Thalia*, with her composing baton. As the mediary between heaven and earth, her harmony explains the occult mysteries to the pilgrims who seek her oracle.⁸⁵ Saturn with his scythe represents time, while Apollo plays his lyre –the divine origin of music, symbolising melody– above the monochord, a central symbol in Fludd's music-philosophical theory.⁸⁶ This suggests that Apollo is the heart and soul of the universe, since he personifies the harmonizing forces of nature. Fludd's pictorial Temple of Music is iconographic of all the elements of music: its complexity and layout may also suggest Hermetic principles since the upper echelons of the drawing reflect the foundation principles, 'as above, so below'.⁸⁷

Fludd's use of music may be interpreted as both the organizing structure of his universe and also a manifestation of universal harmony.⁸⁸ It is a sophisticated and intelligent means for understanding the world in Neoplatonic terms.⁸⁹ Music in its most literal sense was merely an echo of the eternal music of the spheres, a symbol of the divine concord and a model for all harmony. The revival of the Neoplatonic tradition in the

⁸⁴ Godwin, *Robert Fludd*, p. 78.

⁸⁵ Barton, *Robert Fludd's Temple of Music*, p. 5 of 9.

⁸⁶ Hauge, 'Robert Fludd: A Musical Charlatan?', p. 19.

⁸⁷ Abraham, *Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, p. 70.

⁸⁸ Gouk *Music, Science and Natural Magic*, p. 95.

⁸⁹ Gouk *Music, Science and Natural Magic*, p. 96.

fifteenth and sixteenth centuries interpreted universal mathematics as revealed through music. This was represented by Fludd through the analogy of the octave, the symbol of completeness.⁹⁰ The health of body and soul depended on musical harmony, an idea the anonymous author of *The Praise of Musicke* (1586) had explored when he compared the symphony of music with the powers of the human soul.⁹¹

Fludd introduces his written section on music in Book One with an affirmation of the Boethian principles of *musica mundana*, *humana* and *instrumentalis* that I have previously discussed.⁹² Defining music as ‘a divine science by which all things in the universe are connected by an unbroken chain’ (*Temple of Music*, p. 39), he immediately foregrounds the argument that the music of the spheres, of the human body, and of instruments and voices are all related. Because man mirrors the universe, the balance between body and soul is represented macrocosmically by the music of the spheres, a harmony which *musica instrumentalis* strives to imitate. Fludd links this affirmation to the Muses, whom the ancients believe were invented for the power of their songs.⁹³ ‘Even Socrates confirms this’, Fludd writes, for, ‘according to Plato in *Alcibiades*’, the Muses are ‘the first protectors of the art of music’ (*Temple of Music*, p. 39).

Fludd’s recounting of the ancient history of music includes Pythagoras’ mythological discovery of numerical ratios, and he argues that the Pythagorean belief in the music of the spheres implies that *musica humana* employs the same harmonic proportions as those of the planets, since God ‘made the celestial orbs stir up a harmony by intervals and motions’

⁹⁰ Finney, ‘Music: A Book of Knowledge’, p. 51.

⁹¹ Anon, (?) John Case *The praise of musicke*, [accessed 17.11.2009](#), p. 44; Finney, ‘Music: A Book of Knowledge’, p. 53.

⁹² Chapter 1, pp. 76-78.

⁹³ Cassiodorus, from *Fundamentals of Sacred and Secular Learning*, Book V. ‘Of Music’, p. 148; Isidore of Seville, from the *Etymologies*, Book Three, 15, ‘Of Music and its Name’, p. 149, in Strunk’s *Source Readings in Music History*.

(*Temple of Music*, p. 41). He envisages Apollo, the leader and governor of music, as ‘the heart of the heaven itself’ (*Temple of Music*, p. 41), corresponding to the heart of man since he is the centre of both macrocosm and microcosm.

Within his carefully crafted argument, Fludd elaborates further on the Boethian categorization of music. Following this model, he subdivides *musica mundana* into the harmony of the spheres, of the elements and of the seasons, while *musica humana* is subdivided into harmony of the body and soul, the harmony of the rational and irrational parts of the soul, and the harmony that hold the parts of the body in an established order.⁹⁴ Focusing particularly on the bond between *musica mundana* and *musica humana*, Fludd reaffirms the inaudibility of the music of the spheres: that ancient proposition expounded by Aristotle, Macrobius and Boethius.⁹⁵ He argues that *musica mundana* is ‘produced from the essential effects of the planets and elements’, since their ‘optimal order and proportional arrangement’ produces the ‘greatest symphony’ (*Temple of Music*, p. 41). This is essentially the Platonic argument in *Timaeus* that Macrobius and Ficino use in their affirmation of cosmic sympathy.⁹⁶ Sympathy – which is the interaction and affinity of different parts of the cosmos – moulds the elements from ‘a formless mass’ into ‘a sympathetic arrangement’ (*Temple of Music*, p. 43).⁹⁷

The implication that sympathy invokes the law of similarity – like produces like – profoundly impacts on Fludd’s Neoplatonic macrocosmic-microcosmic model, as it explains how the harmony between body and soul employs the same harmonic proportions

⁹⁴ Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music*, Book 1.2, pp. 9-10.

⁹⁵ Aristotle, *On The Heavens*, II, ix, 290b, pp. 193-195; Macrobius, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, p. 199; Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music*, Book 1.2, p. 9.

⁹⁶ Plato, *Timaeus*, 35b-37b, in *Complete Works*, pp. 1239-1241; Macrobius, *Dream of Scipio*, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, pp. 185-193 and 197-200; Arthur Fardell, *All Things Natural: Ficino on Plato’s Timaeus* (London: Shephard-Walwyn Publishers Ltd., 2010), p. 65.

⁹⁷ Hauge, *The Temple of Music*, p. 250, n. 31.

as the celestial spheres.⁹⁸ Drawing on this concept, Fludd observes that ‘the soul is linked to the body of microcosm, whence wonders produce actions of like and agreement of humours to both vivification and invigoration’ (*Temple of Music*, p. 43).

This animation between body and soul derives from the Ficinian hypothesis in *De Vita*.⁹⁹ It is this relationship between body and soul that *musica instrumentalis* tries to recreate, Fludd suggests, for harmonic music must reflect the balance between body and soul. To achieve this, harmonic music must be ‘discerning of measurement’, because it may be either ‘*positional* (according to the ratio of sounds and pitches in a continuous quantity) or *durational*, according to the proportion of longa and breve shapes in a discrete quantity)’ and therefore consists of numbers and pitches (*Temple of Music*, p. 43). While Fludd’s metaphysical speculation of numbers and measures – which concurs with musical intervals and duration of measure – may be a derivation of the classical concept of numbers and figures, it also explicates the harmony and unity of the divine numbers.¹⁰⁰ This is one of Fludd’s driving arguments since unity is the origin of harmony and the soul of the macrocosm and microcosm.¹⁰¹

Because Fludd defines *musica instrumentalis* as ‘the science of numbers related to sounds’, since the voice – the ‘natural instrument’ – or man-made musical instruments produce a ‘universal harmony’, he has to incorporate rhythmic and metrical music in this category to include all the elements of sound, for example pitch, duration and volume (*Temple of Music*, p. 43).¹⁰² Acknowledging the importance of rhythmicity in poetic scansion, Fludd emphasizes its value, a concern that was shared by his contemporary,

⁹⁸ Marcel Mauss, *A General Theory of Magic*, trans. Robert Brain (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950, 1972), p. 12; Hauge, *The Temple of Music*, p. 247, n. 2.

⁹⁹ Chapter 2, p. 94.

¹⁰⁰ Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, 1.1, pp. 2-5.

¹⁰¹ Ammann, ‘The Musical Theory and Philosophy of Robert Fludd’, pp. 206-207.

¹⁰² Hauge, *The Temple of Music*, p. 251.

Thomas Campion in his *Observations in the Art of English Poesy* (1602).¹⁰³ The delivery of *musica instrumentalis* is clearly one that concerns Fludd, for he returns to the philosophical and mathematical implications of composition and delivery in chapter five.

In Book three, Fludd concentrates on the effect of music for, he states, ‘the working of music and its wonderful power on soul and body must certainly be admired’ (*Temple of Music*, p. 43). This knowledge is, he writes, ‘according to the opinions of some philosophers’, necessary for the ‘arrangements of men’s life and character’ (*Temple of Music*, p. 43). Fludd names these philosophers as Plato, Ficino, and the tenth century musical theorist, Guido of Arezzo, and Aristotle, who is one of the primary advocates of music therapy.¹⁰⁴ Looking to Plato’s *Republic*, Fludd establishes that music is beneficial because it ‘penetrates the interiors of the soul and strikes the soul very forcefully’ (*Temple of Music*, p. 45). Adhering to the Platonic model which insists that rhythm and harmony ‘permeate the inner part of the soul more than anything else’, Fludd suggests that this ‘produces a beautiful shape through which whoever is properly learned in music becomes fair and beautiful’ (*Temple of Music*, p. 45). Thus he equates physicality to character, or moral disposition, suggesting music may be used as an instrument of modification as well as a metaphysical gauge: Plato had equated disharmony and bad rhythm to bad character, while their opposites were akin to a moderate and good character.¹⁰⁵

Fludd then turns to the harmony of music explaining how cosmic harmony is able to penetrate the soul of man ‘by the movement of subtle air’ (*Temple of Music*, p. 45) as previously forwarded by Ficino in *De Vita*.¹⁰⁶ Because the spirit preserves complete harmony

¹⁰³ Chapter 6, pp. 302.

¹⁰⁴ Aristotle, *The Politics*, 8.3, p. 456 and 8.5, pp. 463-467.

¹⁰⁵ Plato, *Republic* 3, 401a, in *Complete Works*, p. 1038.

¹⁰⁶ Chapter 2, pp. 88-89 and pp. 96-97.

in the soul, Fludd argues, it ‘affects the senses by emotion; acts on the mind by meaning and appeases sweetly by contemplation’ (*Temple of Music*, p. 45). Just as music fills the spiritual and material nature ‘with a certain wonderful pleasure’ so too does it ‘ravish and wins over to itself the whole man’, rendering them ‘free, happy and amiable’ (*Temple of Music*, p. 45).

However, music does more than move the passions of men. Fludd describes how music sometimes ‘removes headaches and sadness’ (*Temple of Music*, p. 45), a subject that is dealt with in detail in Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy*, as I have previously mentioned.¹⁰⁷ If the soul languishes, Fludd argues, then the body also languishes and music, he believes, should be employed for the health of both the body and soul to dispel ‘unclean spirits and evil humours, and bad illnesses’ (*Temple of Music*, p. 45). He finishes the treatise by noting how music teaches physicians accurately to judge the pulse, rhythmically and metrically, a subject he writes extensively on elsewhere (*Temple of Music*, p. 45). In his *Pulsus seu nova et arcana pulsuum historia* (n.p., n.d.,?Frankfurt, 1630), he employs note values to indicate fast and slow pulses.¹⁰⁸

Although Fludd cites Guido as one of his philosophic sources, Peter Hauge argues that the ideas he attributes to Guido are not derived from Guido’s *Micrologus*, but rather stem from multiple sources such as Agrippa’s *De Occulta Philosophia*, Isidore of Seville *Etymologiarum* and, Boethius’ *Fundamentals of Music*.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, Guido’s citations in *Micrologus* of psychological cures with music by David and Asclepiades most likely

¹⁰⁷ Chapter 2, p. 143.

¹⁰⁸ Hauge, *The Temple of Music*, p. 251; Godwin, Robert Fludd, p. 94.

¹⁰⁹ Hauge, *The Temple of Music*, p. 253.

originate from Cassiodorus.¹¹⁰ Yet his attribution of music's therapeutic power to the 'Divine Wisdom', which allows man 'some insight into obscure things' would have appealed to Fludd's innate Christian Neoplatonism.¹¹¹

Fludd's final chapter of the first book, dealing with music and the sense of hearing, clearly derives from Ficino – who links 'hearing to air' (Letter 76, vol. 7, p. 85) although Fludd does not acknowledge this.¹¹² The common premise of Fludd and Ficino is the motion of air, the 'violent vibration' that penetrates the ears and invades the senses' (*The Temple of Music*, p. 49).¹¹³ Both men link this movement of the air to the soul and to the music of the eternally spinning celestial spheres that signifies harmony. Fludd defines sound as the 'undissolved percussion of air and a violent vibration of the same both in low and high pitches', a popular early modern definition that is traceable to Aristotle – who examines the relationship between sound and hearing in *On the Soul* – via Boethius.¹¹⁴ Fludd illuminates this point through the imagery of temple doors analogous with the anatomical temple – the flattened region on each side of the human forehead.¹¹⁵ This imagery reveals Fludd's belief in the intimate association between man and God through music. The sense of hearing provides the means to inform the soul for, Fludd writes, 'we have imagined the pair of temple doors in the manner of double ears on the top of the system, for without the sense of hearing, the entrance is not opened into the Temple of Concord' (*Temple of Music*, p. 49). This argument vividly engages the Ficinian assertion that hearing is the highest of the senses that daily fill the soul (*De Vita*, p. 211), for above

¹¹⁰ Claude V. Palisca (ed.), *Hucbald, Guido, and John on Music: Three Medieval Treatises*, trans. Warren Babb (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), p. 54.

¹¹¹ Palisca, *Hucbald, Guido, and John on Music*, p. 70.

¹¹² Hauge, 'Robert Fludd: A Musical Charlatan?', p. 17.

¹¹³ Ficino, *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 142.

¹¹⁴ Aristotle, *On the Soul*, 2.8, pp. 176179; Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music*, p. 11 where he defines sound as a percussion of air remaining undissolved all the way to the hearing'.

¹¹⁵ OED, <http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/cgi/entry/236704>, accessed 30.07.2012.

‘both doors’ the ‘dissolved motion of air can be grasped better by the mind’ (*Temple of Music*, p. 49).

The first book of *The Temple of Music* is, I argue, a rendition of the Neoplatonic expression of music as the figurative manifestation of the numbers and proportions of cosmic harmony, offering a level of spiritual illumination that emphasises the nature of man and his relationship to God. In addition to his musico-philosophical argument, Fludd also supports the ancient belief in the healing power of music. Music in the early modern period was interpreted as a book of knowledge since it revealed God and nature and the workings of their laws, making man aware of the existence of cosmic harmony.¹¹⁶

This harmony extended to the health of man’s body and soul and Fludd’s musico-philosophical works attempt conceptually to portray this. While he uses a musico-mathematical model to demonstrate the underlying principles of order and proportion, he also dwells on the spiritual and physical impact of music on mankind, reviving the tradition of Augustine, Boethius and Ficino with extraordinary enthusiasm. As he explains in his *Tractus Apologeticus* (1617), it is ‘impossible for anyone to know himself’ without knowledge of the mysteries of music. Without this he will be unable to reach a perfect knowledge of God, for he who understands himself truly and intrinsically perceives in himself the idea of the divine Trinity.¹¹⁷ Fludd’s Christianized interpretation of Neoplatonism likened the triad – diatessaron, diapente and diapason – to the divine Three-in-one Godhead. Thus while universal mathematics were revealed through music, music

¹¹⁶ Finney, ‘Music: A Book of Knowledge’, p. 36.

¹¹⁷ Allen G. Debus, *Robert Fludd and his Philosophicall Key* (New York: Science History Publications, 1979), p. 9.

also importantly played a role in man's redemption. 'A sinner is more musique when he prays', Donne wrote, and this sums up an important truth for Fludd.¹¹⁸

Fludd interpreted the harmonious sounding of music as an illuminator of the harmony of the elements, the humours. Indeed, the seven notes of the musical scale, returning at close to the original tone of the octave, represented the perfect circling of the spheres and the seven days of Creation. Real wisdom, Fludd believed, was to be found in the writings of natural magicians, that is, mathematicians, that could be revealed through the profound wisdom of Pythagorean doctrines.¹¹⁹ He urged that music – traditionally part of mathematics – should be studied through the 'true and profound music of the wise' to reveal the proportions of natural things and the harmonic consensus of the whole world.¹²⁰ It is music, he writes, that deals with the joining of the elements, proportioning light and weight in the stars.¹²¹ Because this influences our terrestrial world, music is the key, Fludd argues, to the sacred knowledge that can only be obtained from the speculations and revelations in the occult science of music which demonstrate how the macrocosm is in celestial harmony with the microcosm.¹²²

His belief in the correspondence of sympathy suggests an intellectual acceptance of music's innate predisposition to cure certain physiological disorders. As a Neoplatonic philosopher he relied on an ancient tradition but this did not preclude his inclusion of contemporary music theory.¹²³ Thus his *Temple of Music* may be interpreted as medicine for the mind for it provides the body and soul with the means to attain wisdom through

¹¹⁸ Finney, 'Music: A Book of Knowledge', pp. 50-51; Helen Gardner, *John Donne, The Divine Poems*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), XXIII, p. 24.

¹¹⁹ Debus, *Robert Fludd and his Philosophicall Key*, p. 109.

¹²⁰ Debus, *Robert Fludd and his Philosophicall Key*, p. 6.

¹²¹ Debus, *Robert Fludd and his Philosophicall Key*, p. 6.

¹²² Debus, *Robert Fludd and his Philosophicall Key*, pp. 6-7.

¹²³ Hauge, 'Robert Fludd: A Musical Charlatan?', p. 18.

healing music – that cures and controls the passions – leading to harmony between body and soul, man and universe.

While his theories on musical composition were supported by men such as Thomas Campion and John Coprario –one of the leading Stuart composers– this inclusive work aimed at the natural philosophers of the intellectual elite, may be said to anticipate the Neoplatonic revival in the late seventeenth-century in a dialectic response to the growth of Cartesianism.¹²⁴ It has been argued that the controversies and intellectual debates stimulated by *Utriusque Cosmi Historia*'s publication led to later natural philosophers becoming familiar with Fludd's work even if they had not read his works directly.¹²⁵

The Mosaicall Philosophy (1659)

As I have previously demonstrated, men such as Michael Maier used music as a contemplative means to achieve harmony between body and soul, microcosm and macrocosm. For Fludd, medicine was the most perfect science of all, as knowledge of the microcosm would lead to a greater understanding of the Creator, and the body was the basis on which natural philosophy rested.¹²⁶ His treatise on the power of music to heal the body in *Utriusque Cosmi Historia* emphasises the integral role of music in his medicine: Fludd strove to achieve humoral balance with the administration of sympathetic natural magic through herbs, chemical medicines and music.¹²⁷ Since the microcosm is an image of the

¹²⁴ Hauge, 'Robert Fludd: A Musical Charlatan?', p. 3; Charles Webster, *From Paracelsus to Newton: Magic and the Making of Modern Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 2.

¹²⁵ Gouk *Music, Science and Natural Magic*, p. 96.

¹²⁶ Allen G. Debus, *The Chemical Dream of the Renaissance* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons Ltd., 1968), p. 22.

¹²⁷ Huffman, *Robert Fludd*, p. 22.

macrocosm, *musica humana* mirrors the *musica mundana*. This explains the strong effect music has on man: his soul remembers the divine harmony it once heard.¹²⁸

The interrelation between medicine and philosophy in Fludd is not original but rather follows a trend of the typical physician-philosopher in the early modern era.¹²⁹ Following the example of Ficino, who promoted the idea of a 'pious philosophy', Fludd's Neoplatonism provided him with the cosmological tools he needed in his philosophical speculations.¹³⁰ Thus Fludd's concept of healing in the *Mosaicall Philosophy* is one of spiritual health, well-being or salvation: the healing of the soul in order to purify, repair and restore it from evil affection.¹³¹

Fludd's final work centres on his prime argument that the universe is interconnected in a harmonious way by the spirit of God. His vision of the cosmos is of a universe of spheres, since he conceived God as an 'intellectual circle, whose center is all that which existeth and whose circumference is without and beyond all things' (*Mosaicall Philosophy*, p. 48). In terms of the circle, God is both centre and circumference and Fludd applies this relationship to God and the universe. Thus the universe is a contraction of God, and man a contraction of the universe.¹³²

The circular nature of Fludd's philosophy is a common conceit in early modern philosophy and poetic discourse. John Donne, in his Easter sermon (1619), describes the

¹²⁸ Ammann, 'The Musical Theory and Philosophy of Robert Fludd', p. 209.

¹²⁹ Giancarlo Zanier, 'Platonic Trends in Renaissance Medicine', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 48, no. 3 (Jul. –Set., 1987), pp. 509-519, p. 509.

¹³⁰ Zanier, 'Platonic Trends in Renaissance Medicine', p. 510.

¹³¹ OED, <http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/cgi/entry> 84999 and 85000, accessed 02.08.2012.

¹³² Norford, 'Microcosm and Macrocosm', p. 414.

cycle of life as a circle, created by God the Mathematician:

Their death was a birth to them into another life, into the glory of God; It ended one Circle, and created another; for immortality, and eternity is a Circle too; not a Circle where two points meet, but a Circle made at once; This life is a Circle, made with a Compasse, that passes from point to point; That life is a Circle stamped with a print, an endlesse, and perfect Circle, as soone as it begins.¹³³

Donne contemplates this metaphor of life and death as a circle in his religious poetry where he images man's soul to 'be a sphere' guided by devotion, just as the celestial spheres are guided by angelic intelligence.¹³⁴ Thus he uses the correspondence between macrocosm and microcosm to transcend the world since the soul of the worshipper contains the whole universe.¹³⁵

During an illness in 1623, he composed a *Hymne to God my God, in my Sicknesse*, where the poetic voice meditates on death. Visualizing the transformation of the immortal soul, Donne writes, 'I shall be made thy music', thus the corporeal body dissolves into spirit suggesting that through the metaphor of music man can comprehend divine eternity. Passing from the earthly life, the poet vows to 'tune the instrument here at the door' comparing the preparation of the soul in relation to the concord of the heavens since man, 'the little world made cunningly of elements', is a microcosmic reflection of a universe where 'God is harmony'.¹³⁶

In this analogy he likens God's divine harmony to a musical instrument for 'if some strings be out of tune, wee doe not presently breake all the strings, but reduce and tune

¹³³ John Donne, 'Sermon No. 9: Preached to the Lords upon Easter Day [March 28, 1619], at the Communion, the King being then dangerously sick at New-Market, on *Psalms* 89.48 (No. 27 in *LXXX Sermons*), in George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson (eds.), *The Sermons of John Donne in Ten Volumes*. Vol. II (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1955), p. 200.

¹³⁴ Donne, 'Good Friday, 1613. Riding Westward' in, *Donne, Selected Poetry*, p. 174.

¹³⁵ Norford, 'Microcosm and Macrocosm', p. 420.

¹³⁶ *Hymne to God my God, in my Sicknesse*, p. 177 and Sonnet V, p. 167 in Donne, *Selected Poetry*; Donne, 'Preached at Lincolns Inne upon Trinity-Sunday, 1620' in, *Sermons* Vol. III, p. 148.

those, which are out of tune'.¹³⁷ Thus God, the master Composer, heals man's spiritual afflictions through his divine music. Donne's microcosm and macrocosm resembles a chain of being that reflects the universe in each individual. It has been argued that the seventeenth-century fascination with the resemblance between the infinitely large and small may be related to the developing consciousness of infinite space.¹³⁸

God's harmony implies unity from which the divine numbers of the proportioned universe flow, but this also includes a 'two-fold differing property', a divine duality that Fludd argues is to be found in 'the hidden secrets' of the ancient Theology of Orpheus, Hesiod, Euripides and Eschylus' (*Mosaicall Philosophy*, p. 136). As the binary opposition of night and day is represented by Dionysus and Apollo, god of music, poetry, harmony and cosmic order, Fludd suggests that music must be an integral component of God's light from which all life exists. Indeed, the inherent duality of music itself—the rational and irrational modes— I have previously discussed, reflects Fludd's fundamental principles of polarity, light and darkness (*Mosaicall Philosophy*, p. 137).¹³⁹ He defines the eternal struggle between these two principles geometrically represented as the oppositional pyramids Sympathy and Antipathy as the 'divers proportion or disproportion of matter, or mundane spirit, guided by one and the same eternal soul' (*Mosaicall Philosophy*, p. 188). Since unity is the source of all the divine numbers, Fludd argues, it must be the origin of all things created and uncreated.¹⁴⁰

Drawing on the Pythagorean tuning system of the three perfect consonances —octave, fifth and fourth — Fludd develops his theory of inter-penetrating pyramids which are the key

¹³⁷ Donne, *Sermons*, Vol. III, p. 148.

¹³⁸ Norford, 'Microcosm and Macrocosm', p. 422.

¹³⁹ Chapter 1, pp. 69-72.

¹⁴⁰ Ammann, 'The Musical Theory and Philosophy of Robert Fludd', p. 206.

to understanding his concept of Creation theory, based on the separation of dark and light. Harmony in the universe – divided into the three regions of the elements, the planets and the angelic hierarchies – can only be achieved through the correct proportions of light.¹⁴¹ Fludd analogizes this as the monochord, in which the string induces harmony into different parts of the world.¹⁴² This analogy to a musical instrument, assigns to each element a certain place, according to the laws of gravitation together with the planets and the heavens.¹⁴³ It also symbolizes God's unity, since God's hand is depicted as reaching out to tune the formal and material octaves, creating an unambiguous space to incorporate the diversity and symmetry of Fludd's universal harmony.¹⁴⁴

Fludd suggests that the key to understanding the relationship of all things comes from knowledge of the musical harmony throughout the universe.¹⁴⁵ Through the harmony of the celestial music, the harmony of the world is created, based on musical intervals representing the proportions of sympathy and antipathy. Because man mirrors the universe, Fludd reflects, his soul must likewise be receptive to harmonic proportions.¹⁴⁶ Thus the musical dimensions of Fludd's cosmos, which are reflected in man, suggest that music provides philosophical and physical healing of body and soul.

Within his three regions, Fludd envisages four spheres corresponding with the ancient principle of the four elements of earth, fire, water and air. At the head of this universe is the one Absolute God. Thus man lives and moves in harmony with God since in Him 'we live,

¹⁴¹ Ammann, 'The Musical Theory and Philosophy of Robert Fludd', p. 200.

¹⁴² Ammann, 'The Musical Theory and Philosophy of Robert Fludd', p. 200.

¹⁴³ Hawkins, *A General History*, p. 612.

¹⁴⁴ Robert S. Westman, 'Nature, art and psyche: Jung, Pauli, and the Kepler-Fludd polemic', in *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance*, p. 199.

¹⁴⁵ Huffman, *Robert Fludd: Essential Readings*, p. 23.

¹⁴⁶ C.G. Jung and W. Pauli, *The Interpretation of Nature and the Psyche* (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1955), p. 199.

move and have our beeing' (*Mosaicall Philosophy*, p. 3). Although Fludd's highest authority is the Bible, he attributes his Neoplatonic philosophy to 'my Master Moses, who also received them, figured or framed out by the finger of God' (*Mosaicall Philosophy*, p. 6), implying the validity and truth of his work because it stretches back directly to God's authority through Moses and Hermes Trismegistus. The eternal wisdom which 'God has revealed unto the Elect by his Spirit' (*Mosaicall Philosophy*, p. 11), that is, Moses, Solomon and David, Fludd points out is the 'fountain or cornerstone, firstly, of the higher Arts, namely, of Theology, Physick, or the art of Curing, Astronomy, Musick, Arithmetick, Geometry, Rhetorick', since all sciences are 'but the handmaids unto this wisdom' (*Mosaicall Philosophy*, p. 18).

While the universe is a harmonic cosmos of spheres and correspondences, musical proportions bind the 'discording elements' into a 'harmonious union', since 'every sublunary element, and superlunary sphear, are disposed by an essentiall kind of symphoniacall accord' (*Mosaicall Philosophy*, p. 23). Revealing a Hermetic interpretation, Fludd believed man-made music was an 'imitation' of those 'melodious tunes and concords', the sound of an ordered cosmos which Orpheus had sung about (*Mosaicall Philosophy*, p. 23). Thus, the Neoplatonic belief in the power of Orpheus to restore life through music, provides Fludd with the cosmological tools he needed to explain his philosophical universe.

The legend of Orpheus' power to move trees and stones, tame wild beasts and restore life to the dead through music, gave rise to centuries of preoccupation about the ability of music to restore life. For the early modern Hermetic philosopher, the air was permeated by the quintessence, the fifth element or world spirit that brought life and was akin to the soul. Spirits were believed to become purer as they ascended from inanimate objects through

man to the higher beings and, for the alchemist, his work was a quest to capture the quintessence, to convert the essence of an inferior form to that of a superior one, or in metallurgical terms, the transmutation of base metals to gold.¹⁴⁷

Reanimation by music was through the natural, vital or animal spirits, accessible via the Hermetic tradition or through the Platonic philosophy of love: Ficino had broadened the concept of spirit from a medical to cosmic one, accessible through the divine frenzy I have previously described.¹⁴⁸ Like Ficino, Fludd held that the air contained spirits and that God produced the winds ‘out of his treasury, from whence we hear the noise of their breath’ (*Mosaicall Philosophy*, p. 37). Air was the Breath of God that gave life, that vital nutrient that breathed into the body, forming arterial blood and giving spiritual nourishment without which mankind would perish. Since inspired air moved in a circular motion, the spirit of life reached the heart by imitating the divine circularity of God. It has been argued that Fludd’s friend, William Harvey, may have been inspired by Fludd’s metaphysical speculations.¹⁴⁹ Thus his theory on the air has implications in medicine for it suggests the beginning of our modern understanding of circulatory and respiratory physiology.

Fludd claimed that arterial and venous blood were fundamentally different because two types of spirit were essential for the two types of blood. However, for the maintenance of life and spirit, a second aerial spirit was vital which Fludd identified as that spirit responsible for the procreation of saltpetre (Potassium nitrate). Fludd’s anatomical system required two types of blood for the two types of aerial spirits, essential for all living things. He believed that a secret communication existed between the still and occult spirit in the congealed blood through natural sympathy, explaining the relationship in terms of a

¹⁴⁷ Finney, *Musical Backgrounds*, p. 104.

¹⁴⁸ Chapter 2, p. 97 and p. 122.

¹⁴⁹ Allen G. Debus, ‘Robert Fludd and the Circulation of Blood’, p. 374.

musical analogy in his response to M. Foster.¹⁵⁰ Here he describes sympathetic harmony that occurs through the vibration of lute strings, and this has important repercussions as proof of the efficacy of Fludd's weapon-salve cure. Thus Fludd combines music and physiology in a particularly integrated way, building on the Ficinian notion of *spiritus*, uniting body and soul to the cosmos.¹⁵¹

Fludd's ordered and harmonious universe is bound by the Biblical notion of number, weight and measure which Fludd interprets through music (*Wisdom of Solomon* XI: 17). In this context, music evolves from the divine numbers, by which Fludd means arithmetical dimensions, where the art of music forms an integral part of Fludd's chemical creation. Quoting Genesis, Fludd recalls Jubal, the 'Father or beginner of playing on the Harpe; and Organ: And Jubal –Cain was the Inventor of iron and brass works'(*Mosaicall Philosophy*, p. 25). This suggests that Fludd believes that the Book of Genesis authorizes a spagyric creation since music – which is God given – and alchemy, are inextricably linked, as they both derive from the same source.

Fludd adds to the complexity of this Creationist belief a Hermetic interpretation, since he believed that the semi-divine Hermetic tradition placed a special emphasis on the Biblical creation.¹⁵² Hermes, he tells us, shall 'sing thy praises in those things which thou has made to appear out of darknesse' (*Mosaicall Philosophy*, p.46). Heavenly and earthly phenomena – interpreted as chemical processes in the macrocosm – are reflected in man, the microcosm. Therefore the laboratory creations of the pious alchemist were believed directly to imitate the work of God, giving credence to the belief that the secret knowledge

¹⁵⁰ Fludd, *Doctor Fludds answer vnto M. Foster* p. 35.

¹⁵¹ Chapter 2, pp. 87-88 and p. 92.

¹⁵² Debus, *The Chemical Dream*, p. 14.

of alchemy was divine.¹⁵³ As Margaret Healy points out, the celestial bodies of the early modern Hermetic cosmology were seen as a link between God and mankind, since they possessed a divine efficacy that the skilled natural philosopher could access.¹⁵⁴

Fludd's music in the *Mosaicall Philosophy* is an integral part of his narrative.

Recalling the wisdom of the Pythagoreans who reached a certainty of belief in God through their profound study of numbers and musical ratios because, Fludd suggests that music acknowledges the life and light of God. Since ratios form the basis of the heavens, the elements and the body and soul of man, everything depends on musical harmony.¹⁵⁵

Gioseffo Zarlino (1517-1590) had asked, 'if the doctor does not understand music how will he mix in due proportion'? Fludd perpetuates this musico-medical model because music, he believed, led man back to the contemplation of God.¹⁵⁶ His explanation of the meaning of the divine numbers within the macrocosmic-microcosmic framework derives in part from his mathematical analogy to music: the joining of the elements, the proportions of light and weight in the stars, and their influence on the terrestrial world, that is, celestial harmony. Fludd believed that the principles of Creation – and by implication the human body – can be explained through a natural chemical process, or an understanding of the divine mathematics: the Pythagorean arithmetical sequence consisting of the first four integers that lays the basis for musico-philosophical treatises.¹⁵⁷

While Fludd believed that experimentation was always subservient to the revealed truth of the Bible, he also argued that it was impossible for anyone to attain a full

¹⁵³ Robert M. Schuler, 'Some Spiritual Alchemies of the Seventeenth-Century England', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Apr. - Jun., 1980), p. 303.

¹⁵⁴ Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy*, p. 30.

¹⁵⁵ Finney, 'Music: A Book of Knowledge', p. 51.

¹⁵⁶ Gioseffo Zarlino, 'On the Praise of Music' from *Istitutioni harmoniche*, in Strunk's *Source Readings*, p. 296.

¹⁵⁷ Westman, 'Nature, art, and psyche' in, *Occult & Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance*, p. 199.

knowledge of natural philosophy unless they had a thorough training in the occult sciences. The alchemist's concern for the harmonious blending of nature, led to the alchemical philosophers searching for a cure for mankind's ills.¹⁵⁸ Drawing on Dürer's symmetrical representations of the human body, Fludd suggests that man's shape becomes the "harmonic instrument" that divides the spherical world into equal proportions, that is, four elements, humors and limbs, imitating the cosmological four spheres.¹⁵⁹ Man as the son of the world or God is 'framed after the image of the Archetype' (*Mosaicall Philosophy*, p. 203). Corresponding to the macrocosm, man is divided not only into a heaven and earth but his body regions also correspond to the elements, planets and angels. Man's body therefore becomes an iconographical representation of Fludd's universal harmony: the downward descent of the Divine Mind through the hierarchies into mankind goes via the musical octave, bringing to man part of the nature of each hierarchy.

Man represents the harmonious conjunction of body and mind, the 'miraculous harmony' between the spiritual octave, linking imagination and intellect, and the material octave, linking body and imagination. Thus in the axis of symmetry, God is directly in man:

We see how God is the player of *musica humana*, the player of the string of the monochord, the inner principle which, from the centre of the whole, creates the consonant effects of life in the microcosm. The string which by its vibration spreads the luminous effects of the Inspirer through macrocosm and microcosm as accents and sounds of love, as it were, is the luminous spirit which participates in the two extremes and which joins them together. This string equally denotes the system of notation, or staff, in man by which the soul descends from the higher spheres and reascends towards them after death, when the ties of the body, the meanest of all places have been dissolved.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Allen G. Debus and Robert P. Multhauf, *Alchemy and Chemistry in the Seventeenth Century* (Los Angeles: University of California: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1966), p. 6.

¹⁵⁹ Westman argues that Fludd is indebted to a tradition of pictorial imagery with Dürer being his major iconographical source, Westman, 'Nature, art, and psyche', in *Occult & Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance*, p. 186.

¹⁶⁰ Ammann, 'The Musical Theory and Philosophy of Robert Fludd', p. 209.

Fludd believed that the light and warmth of the sun –the midpoint between Heaven and earth – emanated directly from God. Sunlight or sunbeams are, he writes, ‘the Messenger betwixt Heauen and Earth’ reflected as the incorruptible spirit in man (*Doctor Fludds answer vnto M. Foster*, p. 66). He verifies this claim through ‘an observation in Musick’ namely harmony, arguing that the sun, the tabernacle of God, is philosophically equal with the diapason–the interval of an octave– and the heart of man (*Mosaicall Philosophy*, p. 62). The sun, diapason and heart represent the perfect midway points, and just as the sun is the fountain of light, so Fludd views the human heart as the link between the mind and the body. Because the sun, the heart and the diapason are the essence of life, they govern everything in the universe, he suggests, for they create a harmonious unity from the highest angelic order to the sublunary elements. Through this, a continuous connection is established, a cosmic chain allowing mankind access to the music of the spheres.

By aligning the sun, heart and diapason to the same metaphysical position, the human body becomes the physical representation of the Monochord of Cosmic Harmony, for the ‘diapason is the most perfect accord of all others, and therefore noteth, that the middle betwixt the light of heaven, and the earth, is the seat of the greatest perfection, which doth correspond unto the unison as 1 doth to 2’ (*Mosaicall Philosophy*, p. 62).

This is, Fludd argues, the meaning of ‘true harmony’, the ‘perfect accord’ that the Platonists imagined was the soul of the world (*Mosaicall Philosophy*, p. 63). Above all, he believes that it is the diapason that most closely represents the sacred unity. Thus as the unity comprehends the Trinity, so the diapason comprehends ‘the other two inferior accords in Musick, namely, Diapente, and Diatessaron’ (*Mosaicall Philosophy*, p. 63). It is probably, Fludd suggests, that the ‘whole harmony of the heavens, and consequently of the world’, are ‘soundeth out’ by the ‘eternal Spirit’ from his ‘glorious Instrument’.

Fludd tells us that this sounding of harmonious music is ‘the office of the eternall Christ’, the divine physician and Musician who ‘heals’ mankind, for he is life, ‘as the Evangelist John testifieth’ (*Mosaicall Philosophy*, p. 63). This explicit presence of Biblical harmony validates Fludd’s musico-philosophical theory: sacred harmony was regarded as the dispeller of evil spirits or as medicine for the intemperance of Satan.

Although in 1614 Isaac Casaubon had correctly identified the dating of the *Hermetica*, Fludd completely ignores Casaubon’s findings, giving equal weight to Hermes Trismegistus, the ‘Egyptian Moses’ and the Holy Scriptures throughout his work.¹⁶¹ Indeed his Creation narrative is an amalgamation of Genesis, alchemical imagery and the Hermetic *Pimander* – for which Fludd is indebted to Ficino – overlaid with his own unique interpretation.¹⁶²

Fludd did not view alchemy as simply the means of transmuting base metals into gold, but rather as the key to discovering nature’s secrets: it formed the basis of understanding the macrocosm, the ‘the hidden mysteries of Nature’ (*Doctor Fludds answer vnto M. Foster*, p. 18). He believed that natural magic was a force encompassing the chain of life, a way of explaining the harmony of the world which Fludd believed was bound up with healing. Since he aimed to harmonise scripture with natural philosophy through Hermetic, Neoplatonic and alchemical learning, Fludd’s medicine is fundamentally religious in character. While God imparts unto man the spiritual gift of healing, it is only God that truly heals, when ‘he is pleased to cure or heale, he hath an infinity of good angels to performe that office’ (*Doctor Fludds answer vnto M. Foster*, p. 24). Alchemy was potentially a well of deep truth for Fludd: like Paracelsus he believed that this science was

¹⁶¹ Linden, *Darke Hieroglyphicks*, p. 204.

¹⁶² Yates, *Giordano and the Hermetic Tradition*, p. 439.

the key to Creation itself and its secrets would reveal an understanding of nature and God.¹⁶³

Fludd views Christ as the divine physician because He holds the office of life, preservation and health. Conversely, God punishes evil with sickness and disease. Because death is part of the natural order of life, mankind achieves salvation, or is spiritually healed, through the Tabernacle in the sun, in which the emanations from the centre point of the universe, are imitated by the diastolic and systolic contractions of the human heart, giving physical and eternal life, for the invisible 'sonne of God the father governeth from the sonne vpwards by a spirituall & invisible Diapson'.¹⁶⁴

Fludd's writings were highly effective in depicting the harmonic relationship between biblical doctrines, Paracelsian natural philosophy, and medicine, adding to a growing acceptance of Paracelsianism within the English medical community in the late 1650s and 1660s.¹⁶⁵ With the establishment of the Royal Society in 1660, came an enthusiasm for *philosophia libera*, a re-evaluation of all philosophical systems. As an alternative to the scholastic philosophers, John Webster recommended amongst others, the works of Plato, Ficino and Fludd, whose writings Webster regarded as the most complete exposition of the Christian point of view available at the time.¹⁶⁶

Fludd's writings are a fascinating example of a complex Hermetic philosophy which had ramifications well into the seventeenth century. Despite Francis Bacon's affirmation of a new logic in *Sylva Sylvarum* (1627), his philosophy similarly demonstrates evidence of

¹⁶³ Debus, *Robert Fludd and his Philosophicall Key*, p. 6.

¹⁶⁴ Debus, *Robert Fludd and his Philosophicall Key*, p. 150.

¹⁶⁵ Charles Webster, *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine and Reform 1626-1660* (London: Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1975), p. 276.

¹⁶⁶ Webster, *The Great Instauration*, p. 513.

Hermetic and Neoplatonic influences, no different from the magical texts of Dee, Fludd and Cardano.¹⁶⁷

As this chapter has demonstrated, Fludd believed music to be the model of all harmony. As physicians, both Maier and Fludd equated celestial harmony with health, echoing Ficino's recreation of the ancient magi's musical healing. Chapters 3 and 4 have argued that this had a significant impact on the philosophical and cultural milieu of the early modern period. As recent scholarly re-evaluations have confirmed, both Maier and Fludd were influential figures in their respective fields and not merely Rosicrucian enthusiasts.

Fludd's musico-philosophical model, steeped in the Pythagorean music of the spheres and the psychological effects of the music of David and Orpheus, connected music to everything in the universe. His notion of the healing power of music had a privileged significance, since it connected the universe to man. The music of the spheres was inextricably linked to the inner alchemy through which a perfect knowledge of God could be attained for, he explains, without knowledge of the mystery of music, it is impossible for anyone to know himself.¹⁶⁸

This Hermetic belief that envisaged music as an intrinsic part of the cosmos that could affect and transform body and soul, shared the vision of Ficino's healing music; a vision that is transformed into fictional representations in Shakespeare's *Pericles* and Jonson's *New Inn*, which I examine in chapter 5

¹⁶⁷ Paolo Rossi, *Francis Bacon: Science to Magic*, trans. Sacha Robinovitch (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1968), p. 56.

¹⁶⁸ Debus, *Robert Fludd and his Philosophicall Key*, p. 9.

Chapter 5

‘In sweet music is such art’: The Dramatic Representation of Healing Music

‘A man may see how this world goes with no eyes. Look with thine ears’.

King Lear 4.6.146-147.¹

Introduction

In chapter 1, I demonstrated how the ancient Pythagorean tradition – postulating a belief in a universe ordered by the same numerical proportions which produce musical harmonies – informed the Boethian tripartite model. With the revival of Pythagoreanism in the early modern period, the conviction that the music of the spheres could be reflected in the tempering of the bodily humours was reformulated by Marsilio Ficino. Chapter 2 explained the important implications this had in Ficinian philosophy and the therapeutic musical regimes he prescribed, particularly in *De Vita*. In chapters 3 and 4 I established the development and absorption of Ficino’s model within early modern philosophical and medical discourses. The work of Michael Maier and Robert Fludd demonstrates the continued belief in the Pythagorean principle of cosmic harmony and, as speculative music, underpins the relationship between body, mind and spirit through contemplation.²

In this chapter, I shall argue that Shakespeare’s music of the spheres is rooted in Ficino’s Christianized Pythagorean concept of universal harmony, which offered a new

¹ Shakespeare, *King Lear*, in *The Norton Shakespeare* p. 1847.

² Introduction, p. 1.

explanation for the effective powers of music. While Shakespeare alludes to the music of the spheres in *Twelfth Night* (3.1.101), *The Merchant of Venice* (5.1.58-62), and *Pericles* (21.214), he also uses music to ‘underscore climactic scenes, make the supernatural perceptible and to symbolise abstract ideas’ thereby making it possible for him to use the musical metaphor to enhance the expression of his plays. Thus music is both a preventative means to ward off disease and death and a channel for restoring spiritual and physical health.³ This articulation of health linked to universal harmony is similarly present in the works of Shakespeare’s contemporaries; for example, the poet Sir Philip Sidney closes *The Defence of Poetry* by warning ‘you cannot hear the planet-like musicke of poetry, if you have so earth-creeping a mind that it cannot lift itself up to look to the sky of poetry’.⁴

Music and love were seen to resemble each other as both influenced the soul to become one with universal accord: music was regarded as a symbol of the proper harmony that only true love could create.⁵ Love gave order, unity and life to an animated universe creating a harmonious music, which was, Plato had argued, ‘simply the science of Love on rhythm and harmony’.⁶ Ficino’s unique version of idealized Platonic love and beauty, evident in Shakespeare’s sonnets and, among others, Jonson, Spenser and Sidney, gives Ficino a distinctive influence in England as discussed in chapter 2.⁷ In this chapter I also examine Ben Jonson’s play *The New Inn*, in which he articulates the Ficinian idea of celestial harmony when Lovel describes the attributes of a gentleman as one who can, ‘tune his mind/ Or manners more to the harmony of Nature’ (1.3. 49-50). The aim of this chapter

³ Long, *The Final Comedies*, p. 130.

⁴ Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poetry* (ed.) J. A. Van Dorsten (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 75. All citations are to this edition.

⁵ Ross, ‘Shakespeare’s “Dull Clown”’, p. 111.

⁶ Plato, *Symposium* 187c, in *Complete Works*, p. 471.

⁷ Jayne, ‘Ficino and the Platonism of English Renaissance’, p. 225.

is to examine how effectual Shakespeare and Jonson were in negotiating the dramatic representation of the Ficinian ideals of universal harmony and love.

Harmony in *The Merchant of Venice*

While the term ‘universal harmony’ does not appear in the Shakespearean canon, fifteen of his plays contain the word ‘harmony’.⁸ Shakespeare’s use of ‘harmony’ is not simply by imitative constructs of the Sidneyan poetic vision but, in conjunction with the musical metaphor, he provides a dramatic paradigm of spiritual and physical healing notably in the discourse between Lorenzo and Jessica in Act 5 of *The Merchant of Venice*. This final Act, acknowledged as a problematic one, has been described as an expression of harmony: critics such as Danson and Barber interpret Act 5 as redemptive and permeated with musical imagery, culminating in the harmony of love.⁹ Other critics, such as Stephen Orgel, have pointed out the discordance at the end of *The Merchant of Venice*, notably in relation to the characters of Antonio, who remains ‘unpaired’, and Shylock, who is absent, leading to imperfect harmony.¹⁰

David Lindley suggests that Lorenzo’s speech examines the tension that exists between speculative and practical music, in that it offers no link between the music of the spheres which we cannot hear, and the effects of music on the ear which we may not respond to.¹¹ I argue that Lorenzo’s discourse on the music of the spheres is not a ‘retreat of

⁸ Shakespeare Collection (Gale), <http://Shakespeare.galegroup.com.proxy.sussex.ac.uk>, accessed 29.01.2010.

⁹ Warren Chernaik, *William Shakespeare The Merchant of Venice* (Plymouth: Northcote House Publishers Ltd, 2005), p. 92.

¹⁰ Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations, The performance of gender in Shakespeare’s England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 14.

¹¹ Lindley, *Shakespeare and Music*, pp. 48-49.

the *musica mundana* into metaphor' that is detached from the *musica instrumentalis*, but an 'invocation to the divine power of music that is a positive affirmation of musical reparation.

Lorenzo declares:

LORENZO: How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank
Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears. Soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patens of bright gold.

There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still chiding to the young-eyed cherubins
Such harmony is in immortal souls
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

[Enter Musicians]

Come, ho, and wake Diana with a hymn.
With sweetest touches, pierce your mistress' ear,
And draw her home with music.

[The Musicians] play (*Merchant of Venice*: 5.1.53-67)

While David Bevington acknowledges the beauty of this speech, he argues that this is an old-fashioned way of thinking about nature and the cosmic order.¹² However, the location of this scene is important in terms of the play's dynamics because 'the sounds of music' dissipate the hatred, greed and bitterness that mark the previous Act. The lyricism of this speech turns the dialogue between Lorenzo and Jessica into *dramatica per musica* whose primary function is to repudiate the tragic elements developed earlier in the play.¹³ The music informs, I suggest, the poetical rhetoric by increasing the intensity of the emotions of the words.

¹² David Bevington, *Shakespeare* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), p. 140.

¹³ Long, *Seven Comedies*, p. 111.

Lorenzo's request to Stefano to 'bring your music forth into the air' (5.1.52) introduces the significance of music in this passage with a play on the word 'air'. While modern editions use 'air', the 1619 edition reads 'ayre'.¹⁴ Although the OED defines melody as an 'air', it also denotes the early modern spelling as 'ayre' – a song to be accompanied by the lute. Moreover, first used in 1597, ayre refers to the 'feeling or atmosphere of a musical composition; the quality of having a pleasing progression of sounds, or of otherwise satisfying the ear'.¹⁵ Stefano's music thus supports and augments Lorenzo's speech indicating the extent to which the whole scene is underpinned by music.¹⁶

The call for music – the *musica instrumentalis* – has a two-fold purpose: it allows the lovers to be alone on the stage providing an utopian space for the discourse on aesthetic harmony, while at the same time Shakespeare follows a conventional dramatic device of using music to introduce and signify the importance of this discourse. Dramatically this provides music without the presence of musicians; therefore, to a listening audience, it emulates the music of the spheres, a point underscored by Lorenzo's request for a hymn to the goddess Diana (5.1.65) and evocative of the Ficinian incantations.¹⁷ This is reinforced with the musicality of the language; the softness of the spoken word derives from the alliterative 's' of the consonants and stressed syllables that instil a cadence into the metrical foot of each line echoing the consonance and tempo of music and the harmonious interval or chord that is also mirrored in the internal rhyme of the double 'e' sound of 'sweet',

¹⁴ William Shakespeare, (1600) [i.e. 1619], *The excellent history of the merchant of Venice With the extreme cruelty of Shylocke the Iew towards the saide merchant, in cutting a iust pound of his flesh. And the obtaining of Portia, by the choyse of three caskets*. London. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/sussex.ac.uk>, eebo citation 99846609, accessed 03.11.2010.

¹⁵ OED, <http://dictionary.oed.com/ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/cgi/entry/50004908>, accessed 03.11.2010.

¹⁶ Long, *Seven Comedies*, p. 113.

¹⁷ Lindley argues that Ficino's ideas were filtered and transmitted through a number of sources, so that, in attenuated form, they figured as part of the network of ideas about music on which Shakespeare drew, Lindley, *Shakespeare and Music*, p. 33.

‘sleeps’ and ‘creep’. This rhythmicity is associated with the heard *musica instrumentalis* and the unheard *musica mundana* while the softness of the language reflects the solemnity or ‘stillness’ in a paean to the goddess and anticipates Jessica’s response.

Because Lorenzo’s lyrical poetry emphasizes love and beauty, dissipating the previous enmity within the play and resolving the previous tension of the trial scene, I suggest that he is following the Neoplatonic tradition that inextricably links the cosmos and music as described in chapter 1.¹⁸ His ‘musical’ words act as an antidote by calming the dramatic tension, thereby changing the emotional cadence of the final scene. The resonances of the power of music, and how it elicits a powerful emotional response, are not only an issue in contemporary musical aesthetics, but were a matter of concern in the early modern period that had inherited from the ancient world the concept of music’s ethical power to affect the soul and the presence of harmony in the cosmos.¹⁹

Despite the gender politics and subterfuge that characterize the final Act in *The Merchant of Venice*, and the sense of unease at the play’s close, Shakespeare also reminds us that the restoration of harmony can be achieved. Shakespeare’s discourse on music of the spheres concentrates on the healing aspect of divine music, that is, its ability to restore physiological equilibrium. This is reiterated by Jessica’s response, ‘I am never merry when I hear sweet music’ (5.1.68). While some scholars interpret this line as evidence of Jessica’s ‘false’ testimony, David Lindley argues that in line with standard musical theory of the period, where different kinds of music provoked different responses, Jessica is

¹⁸ Chapter 1, p. 37.

¹⁹ Tomlinson, *Music in Renaissance Magic*, p. 67.

registering an appropriate sensitivity to Lorenzo's hymn, and the 'choiring' harmony that is 'in immortal souls' (5.1.62).²⁰

Music is, Henry Peacham recounts, 'a principall meanes of glorifying our mercifull Creator', and therefore Jessica's response recalls the *gravitas* of solemn or sacred music, that echoes the ethos of Dorian *harmonia*.²¹ Jessica's rejoinder is thus associated with the healing music of the Biblical David. Because the psalms, with their constant references to singing and praising the Lord, played an important role in Christian liturgy, Jessica is aligning herself not only with this fundamental Christian practice but also invoking the metaphor of Christ the musician-healer –the Christianization of the Orphic legend. Therefore, Jessica's interjection may be interpreted as the harmonious link between Lorenzo's two speeches through her understanding of speculative music and suggestion of the Orphic power of music that Lorenzo elaborates upon. The biblical authority of her response merges the healing musical powers of an Old Testament king to the Platonic music of the spheres, thus her 'sweet', that is 'well-tuned' emotions, are tempered to the solemnity of Lorenzo's 'song'.²²

Lorenzo's instruction to Jessica (and the audience) on the 'power of music' (5.1.78) focuses on the human senses and imagination, thus the eye can 'see' 'the floor of heaven' while the soul can perceive the harmony of the spheres. The effect of his words is that they teach a philosophical lesson while simultaneously containing an affective value because they emotionally move the audience. They are asked to stretch their imaginations to see and

²⁰ David Lindley, Shaksper, The Global Electronic Shakespeare Conference, <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2005/0251.html>, p. 3, accessed 07.04.2010.

²¹ G.S. Gordon, (ed.) *Peacham's Compleat Gentleman 1634* (Milton Keynes, UK: Kessinger Publishing's Legacy Reprints, 2010), p. 104.

²² In the sixteenth century, 'sweet' means 'well-tuned', Hollander, *The Untuning of the Sky*, p. 253.

hear beyond their corporeal reality. Frances Yates suggests that Lorenzo provides a voice for the universal harmony that underpins *De harmonia mundi* written by the Cabalist Friar of Venice, Francesco Giorgi (1460/6-1540). Music, she argues, is Shakespeare's recurrent symbol of harmony.²³ Yates' interpretation is endorsed by scholars such as Peggy Muñoz Simonds who interprets Lorenzo's speech as the harmony of an ordered universe that is reflected in our souls and links us to all of God's creation.²⁴ By linking the *musica instrumentalis* to the discourse on the music of the spheres, Shakespeare appears to be striving towards a harmonious resolution. He makes the point that divine harmony, embedded within man's immortal soul, is inextricably linked to love.

However, it is Ficino's distinct blend of Christian and Neoplatonic theology – that revealed Christian truths through the Orphic way to the mind – which Shakespeare appears to reference in his allusion to the Orphic power of music in the following passage:

LORENZO: The reason is your spirits are attentive,
 For do but not a wild and wanton herd
 Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,
 Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud
 Which is the hot condition of their blood,
 If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,
 Or any air of music touch their ears,
 You shall perceive them make a mutual stand.
 Their savage eyes turned to a modest gaze
 By the sweet power of music. Therefore the poet
 Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones and floods
 Since naught so stockish, hard, and full of rage
 But music for the time doth change his nature

(*The Merchant of Venice* 5.1.53-81)

²³ Frances A. Yates, *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age* (London and New York: Routledge Classics, 1979), p. 150.

²⁴ Peggy Muñoz Simonds, *Myth, Emblem, and Music in Shakespeare's Cymbeline, An Iconographic Reconstruction* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1992), p. 131.

Through the example of the Orphic tale Lorenzo demonstrates to Jessica and the audience how music influences human, animal and inanimate matter. His assertion, that music 'doth change his nature' (5.1.81), illuminates the effective power of healing music brought to bear on the characters and by default, the audience.

Lorenzo's speech implies that music has the capacity to affect human and animal behaviour and mood, underlining the fundamental principle of a harmonious universe whose unity is derived from mathematical proportions that are directly related to musical harmony. It has been argued that the Lorenzo-Jessica dialogue consists of two component parts, namely the spiritual and the physiological. In the first part of the speech Lorenzo suggests that the *musical mundana* is in 'immortal souls' whilst the second part focuses on the physiological effect of music's power.²⁵ Jessica's spirits are 'moved' he tells her because she is 'attentive'. By 'spirits', Shakespeare may mean the natural, vital and animal spirits of Galenic medicine that mediated between the bodily humours and soul.²⁶ Music, therefore, animated the spirit affecting the higher faculties of the mind and soul as well as the four humours and thus, because of this connection between mind and body, music could be employed as a cure for disease.²⁷ Thus Lorenzo's words lead us by 'the sweet power of music' to Platonic enlightenment, for, by tuning the soul, music 'doth change his nature' and the audience is charmed into spiritual transcendence.

In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *King Henry VIII* Shakespeare links the Orphic power of music to the *musica mundana*, suggesting the presence of a divine component in music's power to heal or restore a harmonious balance. When Proteus advises Thurio on how to woo Silvia with music and song, he cites the mythological powers of Orpheus'

²⁵ Lindley, *Shakespeare and Music*, p. 29.

²⁶ Chapter 2, p. 74.

²⁷ Chapter 2, p. 73.

music to transform nature. The implication is that music may enchant or transform Silvia's feelings so that she will love Thurio and forget Valentine:

For Orpheus' lute was strung with poets' sinews,
Whose golden touch could soften steel and stones,
Make tigers tame, and huge leviathans
Forsake unsounded deeps to dance on sands

(*The Two Gentlemen of Verona* 3.2.77-80)

However, the character Silvia is both a mortal woman and the heavenly goddess of love and beauty, which an early modern audience would have understood. Shakespeare makes this clear in the song 'Who is Silvia' when he describes her as 'Holy, fair and wise is she./The heaven such grace did lend her' (4.2.39-40). The stage directions have Silvia enter 'above' (4.2.79) thus the song moves upwards to her like an invocation to a deity and, indeed, in Act 5 Valentine pleads to this divine aspect to 'repair me with thy presence, Silvia' (5.4.10). This speech, imbued with love and the image of Silvia's beauty, has the power to reunite the lovers immediately. Thus Orpheus foreshadows the end of the play where the two couples are united in harmony, but just as Proteus uses the mythology to guide Thurio's unsuccessful suit, so the myth inverts itself on Proteus to heal him of his inconsistency and unfaithfulness to Julia, so that through love he may open the eyes of his soul to receive the heavenly vision that is God's love. This Neoplatonic interpretation may explain the perplexing line where Valentine says to Proteus, 'All that was mine in Silvia I give thee' (5.4.83), that is, he is offering his friend the experience of perfection and eternal beauty.²⁸

²⁸ Vyvyan, *Shakespeare and Platonic Beauty*, p. 71.

It was believed that music could attract and repel certain influences: while one sort of harmony could cure diseases of the body and mind, another sort could inflict them.²⁹ W.H. Auden wrote that there was a 'bad' kind of music that 'corrupts and weakens' such as when Proteus uses music in an attempt to seduce Silvia in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* playing 'false' (4.2.56) to Julia. Shakespeare is making the analogy between unfaithfulness and playing out of tune, the music 'jars' (4.2.63) and its discordance gives Julia 'a slow heart' (4.2.61), a metaphor for rejection.³⁰

Likewise Cloten in *Cymbeline* desires to 'assail' Innogen 'with musics' (2.3.35). Innogen's lack of response to Cloten's 'music' may be interpreted as vindication of the laws of morality inherent in the harmonist theory described at the beginning of this chapter.³¹ However Shakespeare's double entendre 'If you can penetrate her with your fingering' (2.3.12) subverts the musical aesthetic of the 'The fingers of the powers do tune/The harmony of this peace' (5.6.466-467). This metaphor of musical concord recalls the darkness of Cloten's brutish sexuality, lending an ambiguity to the play's ending because two types of music are operating. Cloten exemplifies Platonic corruption as portrayed in *Phaedrus* where Socrates describes the defiled man as unmoved by beauty but rather, 'surrenders to pleasure and sets out in the manner of a four-footed beast, eager to make babies; and, wallowing in vice, he goes after unnatural pleasure too, without a trace of fear or shame'.³²

This is the condition of the impure soul that Ficino expresses in his *Platonic Theology* and while Shakespeare's dyad of good versus evil reflects the heaven and hell dichotomy, it

²⁹ Austern, 'Art to Enchant', p. 196.

³⁰ W.H. Auden, 'Music in Shakespeare' in *Shakespeare Criticism 1935-60* (ed.) Anne Ridler (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 307.

³¹ Muñoz Simonds, *Myth, Emblem, and Music*, p. 340.

³² Plato, *Phaedrus* 250e, in *Complete Works*, p. 582.

also opens up unanswered questions of moral authority in *Cymbeline*.³³ The tradition that music could either be therapeutic or cure madness held that music could also have a negative effect. Both traditions derive from ancient Greece and Plato differentiated the distinct Dorian and Phrygian classical modes in terms of their psychological or therapeutic effects.³⁴ Because the influence of music could lead upwards or downwards, Shakespeare uses music to articulate concord and discord, Caesar distrusts the ‘lean and hungry’ Cassius, ‘he hears no music’ (*Julius Caesar* 1.2.205), while Iago vows ‘O, you are well tuned now,/Bit I’ll set down the pegs that make this music’ (*Othello* 2.1.196-197), that is, he will destroy Othello’s marriage and untune his soul. The discord of these plays remains unresolved and this failure of harmony leads to tragic consequences. While some critics suggest that Shakespeare did not overvalue music, I argue that he repeatedly uses the idea of *musica universalis* as an expression of man’s nature.³⁵ He makes this point explicitly when he writes:

The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils.
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus.
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music. (*The Merchant of Venice* 5.1.82-87)

Shakespeare visualizes human discordance through man’s potential chaos but uses music to counteract dyscrasia— the imbalance or disordering of the physiological state - to restore inner harmony and health, a Ficinian concept that emphasized the effect of harmonious

³³ Ficino, *Platonic Theology*, Vol. 6, Book XVIII: X, pp. 181-207.

³⁴ Hoeniger, *Music and Shakespeare*, p. 263.

³⁵ Daniel Albright, *Musicking Shakespeare A Conflict of Theatres* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2007), p. 1.

music on the ear, in *De Vita Triplica* as discussed in chapter 2.³⁶ Therefore, I suggest, Shakespeare continually strives to bring harmonious music to the listener, creating dramatic unity and demonstrating how the *musica mundana* has the power to influence human behavior.

Pericles

Numerous studies stress the importance Shakespeare assigns to music within his plays, but they vary greatly in the emphasis placed on specific aspects. Early critical appraisal tended to focus on the place of music within Renaissance society such as Shakespeare's use of song, while modern critics have shifted the focus onto Shakespeare's relationship to the complex musical aesthetics of the early modern period. All of Shakespeare's plays, except four, mention music and even here music is present with the use of songs, ballads and hymns.³⁷ This section will concentrate on *Pericles* (1607-8) the most beneficial of the plays in terms of musical healing because Shakespeare uses music as the initiator of health and harmony suggesting that harmony in music and the universe is inseparable from harmony in mankind. It will examine how the Boethian tripartite division of music, can be identified within *Pericles*, a play that expresses the curative powers of *musica humana*.³⁸ As an emblematic symbol of the entire universe the musical references in *Pericles* have a thaumaturgic value, that is, music has the power of working marvels or miracles evident in the revival of Thaisa and healing of Pericles.³⁹ No significant action occurs within the play

³⁶ OED, <http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/cgi/entry/50071880>, accessed 20.02.1010.

³⁷ The four are *All's well that ends well*; *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *King John* and *Henry VI, part 3*.

³⁸ Dunn, 'The Function of Music', p. 391.

³⁹ OED, <http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/cgi/entry/50250373>, accessed 23.02.1010.

that does not incorporate the restorative powers and emblematic function of music which is a symbol of divine harmony.⁴⁰

The themes of loss and resurrection, purity and corruption undulate throughout the play, giving cadence to the moments of despair and anguish that alternatively rise to celestial bliss and truth. Therefore the framework of the play may be defined in musical terms because *musica humana* is portrayed through the notion of temperament and the restorative power of music used to emphasize the perception of a metaphysical truth.⁴¹ In the early modern period music began to evolve from its speculative role that explored numerical relationships, to an art form that conveyed feelings and sensations, for example Monteverdi's *Lamento d'Arianna* (1608).⁴² This move was reflected in writers such as Francis Bacon who moved beyond the poetic conceit to examine the relationship between human temperament and music, linking the tropes in music to rhetorical tropes:

Is not the precept of a Musitian, to fall from a discord or harsh accord, vpon a concord, or sweete accord, alike true in affection? Is not the Trope of Musicke, to auoyde or slyde from the close or Cadence, common with the Trope of Rhetoricke of deceyuing expectation? Is not the de-light of the Quauering vpon a stopppe in Musicke, the same with the playing of Light vpon the water? ⁴³

This new manner of using music as an empirical tool to express human nature is, I suggest, inherent in *Pericles* which begins with Gower, the fourteenth-century English poet whom

⁴⁰ F. Elizabeth Hart, "'Rough" Music in Pericles, 3.2.', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol.51, No. 3 (Autumn, 2000), pp. 313-331, p. 316.

⁴¹ Anne Barton argues that 'metaphysical' is a term frequently used to describe the stylistic peculiarities of the romances with their attention to dualities and antithesis, Anne Barton, 'Leontes and the Spider: Language and Speaker in Shakespeare's Last Plays', in *Shakespeare: The Last Plays* (ed.) Kiernan Ryan (London and New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999), p. 37.

⁴² Christensen, *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, p. 957.

⁴³ Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* (ed.) Michael Kiernan The Oxford Francis Bacon. IV (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2F2^r, p. 78.

Shakespeare resurrects to:

Sing a song that old was sung
 From ashes ancient Gower is come,
 Assuming man's infirmities'
 To glad your ear and please your eyes
 It hath been sung at festivals
 On ember-eves and holy-ales,
 And lords and ladies in their lives
 Have read it for restoratives

(*Pericles* 1.1-8)

In this choric introduction, Shakespeare introduces the play's major themes of resurrection, and 'man's infirmities' and 'restoratives' in a quest for self-realization and spiritual equilibrium.⁴⁴ From the beginning, Shakespeare makes it abundantly clear that music is the healing agent because the ancient song, personified through the presence of Gower, is a 'restorative': the song allows the rediscovery of eternal truths implicit in Gower's allusion to 'ember-eves and holy-ales' which places music in a religious context that anticipates not only heavenly joy but the healing sanctity of Cerimon in Scene 12.⁴⁵ John Case elaborates this point when he writes 'Musicke is necessary in the church of god ...that by the delight of the eares the weake soule may bee stirred vp into a feeling of godlinesse.'⁴⁶

With his references to 'resurrection' through the power of music, Gower invokes the legend of Arion who is saved from death by song, a central concern in *Pericles* where the *musica mundana* that resurrects the physical body, and the passions of the human soul - *musica humana* – converge to elicit a universal harmonious outcome through the

⁴⁴ Richard Hillman, 'Shakespeare's Gower and Gower's Shakespeare: The Larger Debt of *Pericles*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (Winter, 1985), pp. 427-437, p. 428.

⁴⁵ DeIVecchio and Hammond in William Shakespeare, *Pericles*, The New Cambridge Shakespeare (eds.) Doreen DeIVecchio and Antony Hammond (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 52.

⁴⁶ John Case, (1586) *The praise of musicke*, Oxenford. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 99850231, accessed 15 08 2009, pp. 40-41. All citations are to this edition.

transforming power of music.⁴⁷ Because it can be perceived in terms of harmonies and dissonances, it is possible to describe *Pericles* as Gower's song which supports but also transcends the dramatic mimesis.⁴⁸ Orphic-like, Gower belongs to another world, whose song has the power to heal and enchant. The Orphic conception of poetic language that seeks the transcendence of the natural world is significant for Shakespeare, who unites himself, as poet, with the Orphic power: the Orphic lyre becomes the poet's body. Through harnessing this poetic creativity, Shakespeare can construct a fictional world of mutability, represented in Gower's song, Cerimon's healing and Diana's theophany.⁴⁹

Modern criticism has noted Shakespeare's marked change of style and dramatic purpose that defines the late plays or romances.⁵⁰ *Pericles*, the first of these plays, has been described as an allegory of a spiritual journey.⁵¹ For Pericles to achieve spiritual equilibrium he must 'pass necessity' (5.6) through the stages of spiritual growth that focus on the mysteries of birth, death and resurrection.⁵² His progression leads to redemption in the final scene where, after his paternal bond is re-established with Marina, Pericles is allowed to hear the 'rarest sounds' (21.216) that is 'the most heav'nly music' (21.218)

⁴⁷ Hillman, 'Shakespeare's Gower', p. 437.

⁴⁸ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957, published by Penguin Books Ltd by arrangement with Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 301.

⁴⁹ Pauline Kiernan, *Shakespeare's Theory of Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 15-16.

⁵⁰ Howard Felperin, 'Shakespeare's Miracle Play', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Autumn, 1967), pp. 363-374, p. 364. Some critics have suggested that Shakespeare underwent some kind of religious conversion while Suzanne Gosset suggests that Shakespeare may have suffered the painful memories of the loss of a child with the death of Edmund Shakespeare and his son. Coupled with this was the fear of losing his daughter, Susanna, who had given birth in the week of the 21 February 1608. Gosset argues that this grief and Shakespeare's joy at his granddaughter's birth is discernable in the scenes of birth and apparent death in the third and fourth acts of *Pericles*. William Shakespeare and George Wilkins, *Pericles*, The Arden Shakespeare (ed.) Suzanne Gosset (Croatia: Arden Shakespeare, 2004), p. 61.

⁵¹ Shakespeare, *Pericles*, The New Cambridge Shakespeare, p. 53.

⁵² DeIVecchio and Hammond describe the stages of this spiritual journey as purgatorial, Shakespeare, *Pericles*, The New Cambridge Shakespeare p. 38.

indicating the change in his fortune. Startled he observes:

[*Celestial music*]

PERICLES: But hark, what music?
 Tell Helicanus, my Marina, tell him
 O'er point by point, for yet he seems to doubt,
 How sure you are my daughter, But what music?

HELICANUS: My lord, I hear none.

PERICLES: None, The music of the spheres! List, my Marina.

LYSIMACHUS: [*aside to the others*] It is not good to cross him. Give him way.

PERICLES: Rar'st sounds. Do ye not hear?

LYSIMACHUS: Music, my Lord?

PERICLES: I hear most heav'nly music.
 It raps me unto list'ning, and thick slumber
 Hangs upon mine eyelids. Let me rest.

[*He sleeps*]

(21.209-220)

Within the construct of the music of the spheres, there appears to be a play on the word 'none' suggesting the idea of the divine monad, the 'one' who is everything and nothing.⁵³ No other character on the stage hears the music, suggesting a double awakening for Pericles who 'for three months hath not spoken/ To anyone, not taken sustenance/But to prorogue his grief' (21.18-20). He awakens from his 'spiritual death' to complete the final stage of his journey and there is a realization of the restorative power of the *musica humana* reflected in the rebalancing of his humours and healing his melancholy.⁵⁴ His awakening 'retunes' him to the cosmic and psychological harmony.

Whether an audience was meant to hear the music of the spheres, that 'rar'st sounds', with Pericles remains unclear: tradition suggests that the music of the spheres was inaudible

⁵³ Chapter 1, p. 51.

⁵⁴ G. Wilson Knight, *The Crown of Life* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd., 1977), p. 67.

to the human ear since the Fall of mankind.⁵⁵ This inability to hear the celestial music was because the ear as a bodily organ was subject to change and death.⁵⁶ Nowadays it is accepted that hearing is the last sense to leave the dying body and Pericles can only hear the music because he has spiritually died and been 'resurrected' through his reunion with Marina.⁵⁷ Renaissance thought regarded the soul as substantive, physically affected by the five senses of which hearing was believed to be the strongest. Perception reached the soul via the spirit which could move between the body and the soul. This spirit could also be transmitted to others through vision, or more importantly, hearing in the form of music, an auditory beauty which touched the soul, since music and soul were regarded as vivified air.⁵⁸ Music allowed man to escape from his corporeal body and unite with the greater cosmos: human reasoning accepted the existence of celestial music because it recognized mathematical proportions. In some exceptionally ecstatic states – such as the Ficinian *divine furor* – music, it was believed, could be heard by certain individuals.⁵⁹ In *Pericles* the music of the spheres signals the allegorical and dramatic climax of the play and this may be interpreted as Shakespeare offering a solution based on the Platonic idea of the world being an instrument upon which the gods play, that is, harmony arises from the world being in tune: harmonious music is a symbol of human and divine reconciliation.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Linda Phyllis Austern argues that diverse authorities such as John Dee, Stephen Gosson, Thomas Morley and George Sandys agree that the mystical music that rules the earth, the heavens and the soul and body of man cannot be heard by human ears or reproduced by current mortal means. Austern, 'Art to Enchant', p. 196.

⁵⁶ Auden, in *Shakespeare Criticism*, p. 307.

⁵⁷ Young and Koopsen, *Spirituality, Health, and Healing*, p. 175.

⁵⁸ Linda Phyllis Austern, "'Sing Again Syren': The Female Musician and Sexual Enchantment in Elizabethan Life and Literature", *Renaissance Quarterly* Vol.42, No. 3 (Autumn, 1989), pp. 420-448, pp. 425-426.

⁵⁹ Ficino, *Letters*, Vol. 1, Letter 7 'On divine frenzy', pp. 42-43.

⁶⁰ Dunn, 'The Function of Music', p. 405.

Because his soul is now in tune with universal order, I suggest that at the end of the play, Pericles represents the Neoplatonic ideal of temperament and harmony because he is revived from a 'living death' and can now perceive the Platonic trinity of beauty, love and goodness that Ficino ascribed to the divine mind.⁶¹ As Gower tells us, Pericles receives his reward, he is 'led on by heav'n' (22.102) because his virtue has been 'preserved from fell destruction's blast' (22.102). Shakespeare achieves this not only by words and dramatic tension but also through the use of *musica instrumentalis* to signify the *musica mundana*.⁶² Constrained by the limits of human expression, Shakespeare uses music as a practical way of representing the inaudible and unseen in theatre. Because the supernatural is closely allied to fantasy in *Pericles*, Shakespeare's choice of music could beguile the audience into a belief that they too could hear the divine music, drawing them into the emotional syntax of the play.⁶³ *Musica instrumentalis* in itself is considered powerful because it not only recalls or imitates the divine order but claims a fabled ability to tame wild animals, 'Their savage eyes turned to a modest gaze/By the sweet power of music' (*The Merchant of Venice* 5.1.77-78). Because Shakespeare uses this theatrical device in other plays, for example, Paulina commands the music to 'awake' Hermione's statue (5.3.99) in *The Winter's Tale*, and solemn, wordless music accompanies Posthumus' vision of his dead family in *Cymbeline* (5.5.120-123-124), it is probable that the audience would have heard the physical music representing *musica mundana* with Pericles, sharing the intensity of the

⁶¹ Ficino, *Commentary*, p. 47.

⁶² How this was portrayed in early modern theatre is unknown but John H Long suggests that the type of music usually associated with celestial music by the Elizabethans was played by a consort of recorders with the musicians hidden from the audience. Long, *The Final Comedies*, p. 47.

⁶³ Austern, 'Art to Enchant', p. 206.

dramatic moment created by the playwright.⁶⁴

After hearing the music of the spheres Pericles falls asleep and experiences Diana's theophany commanding him to tell his story at her temple in Ephesus, leading to the reunification of Pericles, Thaisa and Marina – a reunion echoed in the 'sire, child and happy mother' of Shakespeare's appropriately numbered Sonnet 8 - referring to the notes of an octave or diapason in music - to create the 'true concord of well-tuned sounds'.⁶⁵ This sonnet that 'sweetly chides' a young man to marry, achieves a 'rhyming concord of unison' for example, the chiasmus of 'music to hear, why hear'st thou music' in the opening line sets up a natural dynamic internal rhyme for the sonnet.⁶⁶ The harmonious concord that marriage offers in the sonnet is significant because the meaning of the number 8, inherent in Pythagorean number theory and the doctrine of the harmony of the spheres, connects this sonnet to *Pericles*. The young man offended by music, 'that which thou receiv'st not gladly' (Line 3) and Pericles, whose heroic status is paradoxically portrayed through the language of music – his 'delightful pleasing harmony' (9. 26) makes Pericles 'music's master' (9. 28) – are both souls out of harmony and Shakespeare's remedy to their discordance is to offer in unison 'one pleasing note do sing;' (Line 12). Fred Blick points out the impossibility of a family singing one note in the same pitch due to 'sex and age' but Margaret Healy argues that 'Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one'(Line 13)

⁶⁴ F.D. Hoeniger believes that the audience are meant to hear the celestial music, even if Pericles' companion's do not. F.D. Hoeniger,(ed.) *The Arden Edition of the Works of William Shakespeare* 3rd edition (London: Methuen & co Ltd., Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. lxxviii.

⁶⁵ Greenblatt, *The Norton Shakespeare*, p. 1926.

⁶⁶ Fred Blick, 'Shakespeare's Musical Sonnets: Numbers 8, 128, and Pythagoras', *Upstart Crow*, Issue 19, 1999, pp. 152-168, p. 153.

may be interpreted alchemically as hermaphroditic symbolism.⁶⁷ Shakespeare's 'concord', with its associations with the octave, and the striving towards a single, perfect note recalls the Pythagorean monad and doctrine that all things are numbers.⁶⁸

The Neoplatonic notion of the heavens forming a musical scale is one from which Shakespeare may have drawn his number symbolism.⁶⁹ He makes a strong correlation between the relevance of number and the harmony of the soul appearing to recognize the medicinal value that music had to offer.⁷⁰ Sonnet 8's significant doubling of words such as 'music', 'sweets', 'joy', 'receiv'st', and mixed metaphors establishes harmony within the sonnet, but this has been described as the 'cloying harmony' of a procreation sonnet that avoids physical passion.⁷¹ Instead we are confronted with the three-part polyphony familial iconography akin to the Holy Family or Trinity. The harmonious image is achieved through sympathetic vibration to produce 'mutual ordering' (Line 10) that smothers all contradictions.⁷² The strings are not plucked with the erotic sexuality that plucking implies, but rather 'sing', transforming into a family of strings that psychologically reduces diversity and strengthens a sense of unity that singing in unison brings.⁷³

This personification of musical strings enhances the unity and sameness of Sonnet 8 but the dominant patriarchal topos, 'Mark how one string, sweet husband to another' (Line

⁶⁷ Blick, 'Shakespeare's Musical Sonnets', p. 157; Margaret Healy, "'Making the quadrangle round": Alchemy's Protean Forms in Shakespeare's Sonnets and a *Lover's Complaint*' in, *A Companion to Shakespeare's Sonnets* (ed.) Michael Schoenfeldt (Massachusetts, USA, Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2007), p. 419.

⁶⁸ Chapter 1, p. 62.

⁶⁹ *As You Like It* (3.2.162-163) *The Merchant of Venice* (4.1.130) and *Twelfth Night* (4.2.44-45) all refer to the Pythagorean philosophy of number.

⁷⁰ Regula Hohl Trillini argues that many writers from the 'Golden Age of English Music' tended to view music as a psychological, moral or medical means rather than as an end in itself. Trillini, 'The Gaze of the Listener: Shakespeare's Sonnet 128 and Early Modern Discourses of Music and Gender', *Music and Letters*, Vol. 89, No.1. pp. 1-17, p. 2.

⁷¹ Trillini, "The Gaze of the Listener", p. 13.

⁷² Sympathetic vibration can be observed in the production of a tone by a free string, if another one, placed at a distance, but tuned to exactly the same frequency is struck, Hollander, *The Untuning of the Sky*, p. 137.

⁷³ Auden, in *Shakespeare Criticism*, p. 310.

9) exemplifies a gender tension that is also discernable in *Pericles* where Pericles' recuperation of his patriarchy proves disquieting. Embedded in the early modern cultural hegemony, fatherhood symbolized a political, domestic and religious ideal: the relationship between father and child was paradigmatic of the paternal image of God as a loving father nurturing his obedient children.⁷⁴ I argue that Shakespeare explores an alternative viewpoint as Pericles does not present as the biblical 'nourcing father'.⁷⁵ He abandons the motherless Marina -for fourteen years- in the care of Cleon and Dionyza whose increasing jealousy of Marina develops into a murderous plot, culminating in Marina's bondage into a brothel where her future might be to become 'as good as rotten' (16.7).⁷⁶

Likewise, Pericles offers Marina to Lysimachus in marriage, a governor whose sexual morals and practice implies the taint of venereal disease, creating a sexually polluted space that not only allows the brothel to reclaim Marina but offers her a potential future of sterility and death.⁷⁷ This 'unequal match' Margaret Healy argues, has important negative consequences on how we read the character of Pericles because it undermines his rule and credibility in relation to Jacobean power-politics.⁷⁸ Thus Pericles never offers Marina a paternal protection but rather it is Marina who saves herself.

Pericles is not the only Shakespearean play with difficulties in the father-daughter relationship – it is a problem inherent in the romances that critics such as Leonard

⁷⁴ Debora Kuller Shuger argues that this may be an ideological concealment of oppressive power relations: King James' depiction of king as a loving father naturalizes the absolutist demand for obedience and subordination, Debora Kuller Shuger, *Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 219-228.

⁷⁵ Isaiah 49.23, *The Geneva Bible*, f. 300v.

⁷⁶ Kuller Shuger suggests that the majority of children left home between eight and fifteen in the early modern period, *Habits of Thought*, p. 235.

⁷⁷ Syphilis may cause maternal infertility or if transmitted to the foetus in pregnancy may result in foetal stillbirth, abortion, prematurity, death or congenital syphilis. *Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine*, eleventh edition (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1987), p. 644.

⁷⁸ Healy, *Fictions of Disease*, pp. 183-184.

Tennenhouse argue deliberates the relationship between family and government.⁷⁹ Pericles' relationship with Marina echoes that of Egeus' relationship to Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* when he claims 'As she is mine, I may dispose of her' (1.1.42).⁸⁰ Thus the resolution achieved by reunion is destabilized, reworking the problematic relationship of masculine versus feminine authority.⁸¹

Marina's spiritual power is evident from her birth when Pericles likens her delivery to a nativity where 'fire, air, water, earth and heaven' 'herald' her from the womb (11.32-33), signalling a god-like quality that is not only biblical, but suggests Marina embodies the *prima materia*.⁸² She is literally 'sung' into being though the noise of storm, the 'deaf'ning dreadful thunders' (11.5) that represents the power of nature over humanity, the unheard 'seaman's whistle' (11.9). Nature's musicality, surrounding Marina's birth, is juxtaposed with the music of her mother's internment, the 'belching whale and 'humming water' (11.61-62) that will become Thaisa's monument. Thus music is bound up in the cycle of birth and death that features so prominently within this play, providing a bond that enhances the spiritual dimension of the characters. Marina's divinity is reinforced by Gower who says that she sings like 'one immortal, and she dances/As goddess-like to her admired lays' (20. 3-4). Her singing, Gower tells us, makes 'the night bird mute' (25. 26) implying a musical timbre to her voice that Pericles recognizes and compares to 'silver-

⁷⁹ Leonard Tennenhouse, 'Family Rites: Patriarchal Strategies in Shakespearean Romance' in, *Shakespeare: The Last Plays*, p. 44.

⁸⁰ Greenblatt, *The Norton Shakespeare*, p. 815.

⁸¹ Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers, Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, Hamlet to the Tempest* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 194.

⁸² The idea of the four elements derives from Empedocles and Plato's *Timaeus*. According to Aristotle everything was created from one original substance – the *prima materia* and the first 'forms' that arose from this original chaos were the four elements from which all bodies were created in differing proportions and combinations. Abraham, *Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, p. 68.

voiced' Thaisa (21. 98) who 'starves the ears she feeds, and makes them hungry/The more she gives them speech' (21. 100-101).

Through this comparison Pericles creates a physical bond between mother and daughter – 'My dearest wife was like this maid, and such/ My daughter might has been' (21.95-96) – anticipating the final reunification and attributing to Marina's voice the beneficial, antibacterial effects of silver, suggesting healing and purification. This image is underpinned by the goddess Diana's oath to her 'silver bow' (21.233) and Pericles' assertion of Marina's virginity as 'silver liv'ry (22.27) in Diana's temple at Ephesus. Diana's bow recalls the silver bow of Apollo, god of healing and therefore there is an implicit correlation between the healing power of Marina's voice and her virginity.⁸³ Paradoxically Marina's sexual status, denoting purity, supports an interpretation as *prima materia* while Pericles' mingled memories of mother and daughter present Marina as the virgin-mother, the reconciliation of opposites that Robert Fludd describes in his *Utriusque Cosmi...Historia* as the figure of nature, the proximate minister of God who 'turns the sphere of the stars'.⁸⁴ This internal purity categorizes Marina as the Christian virgin martyr or kidnapped princess of Greek romance and her representation as this natural purity is portrayed in her music. ⁸⁵

Because her soul has never been 'disordered', Marina's *musica humana*, is in perfect harmony with the *musica mundana* which not only aids her father's recovery but also offers Lysimachus sanctitude: as cosmic virgin, Marina is morally and physically disease free and their marriage may be interpreted as the lustration, that is atonement through ceremonial

⁸³ W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and their Gods* (London: Methuen & co. Ltd., 1950), p. 184.

⁸⁴ Chapter 5, p. ;Jocelyn Godwin, *Robert Fludd Hermetic Philosopher and Surveyor of Two Worlds* (Boston, U.SA: Phanes Press, 1991), pp. 22 and 23.

⁸⁵ Lorraine Helms, 'The Saint in the Brothel: Or, Eloquence Rewarded', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (Autumn, 1990), pp. 319-332, p. 323.

purification, whereby Lysimachus may be morally 'cleansed'. Emblematic of the Neoplatonic ideal of beauty and love, Marina inspires the highest possible love that in marriage would provide a stable anchor.⁸⁶ Music itself was allegorized as the virtuous 'Mother and Nurse', thus Marina's music not only signifies her purity but cleanses the corruptions of the brothel.⁸⁷ Bound to her chastity, her music heals the corruption or defilement of nature because it can move the affections and inspire divine love and Marina's restorative power is ultimately the power of love.⁸⁸ Thus Marina, I argue, exemplifies not only ideal purity, but she also embodies the feminine personification of music as a healing woman.

Song was considered by the Greeks as the most perfect form of music. According to Aristotle music produced by the human voice was an 'ensouled thing'.⁸⁹ Marina's education includes the study of music – as befits her noble status – and her perfection is symbolized in her musical skill.⁹⁰ Pericles commands that she must have 'princely training that she may be /Mannered as she is born' (13.16). Humanist education regarded music as essential because it was an ancient art that taught moral and spiritual virtues.⁹¹ John Case

⁸⁶ Linda Phyllis Austern, "Alluring the Auditorie to Effeminacie": Music and the Idea of the Feminine in Early Modern England', *Music and Letters*, Vol. 74, No. 3 (Aug., 1993), pp. 242-254, p. 346.

⁸⁷ Thomas Ravenscroft, (1614) makes this assertion in his *Apologie, A Briefe Discourse of the True (but Neglected) Use of Charact'ring the Degrees, by their perfection, imperfection, and diminution in measurable musicke, against the common practise and custome of these times Examples whereof are exprest in the harmony of 4. voyces, concerning the pleasure of 5. vsuall recreations. 1 Hunting, 2 hawking, 3 dauncing, 4 drinking, 5 enamouring*. London,. British Library.
<http://eebo.chadwyk.com/exproxy/sussex.ac.uk>, eebo citation 99846123, p. 2r., accessed 19.06.2010.

⁸⁸ Kiernan, *Shakespeare's Theory of Drama*, p. 84.

⁸⁹ Aristotle, *De Anima* 420b, p. 178.

⁹⁰ Formal musical training was usually reserved for the wealthier classes because musical training was costly and time-consuming and that only the most privileged ladies had the leisure time for music, Austern, 'Sing Againe Syren', p. 430.

⁹¹ Austern, 'Sing Againe Syren', p. 428.

writes that:

Aristotles resolution touching the ciuill necessity is, that musick hath relation to these three things, to delectatio~, to discipline, and to an happy life. To delectation, because Musicke with the sweetnesse thereof, doeth refresh the minde and make it better able to greater labours. To discipline, because it is a case of breeding in vs chastitie, temperance, and other morall vertues. To an happy life, because that cannot consist without iudgement and liberall delectations, whereof Musicke is the chiefest.⁹²

Gower's insistence on Marina's virtuous character, coupled with her superior musicality, emphasises a Neoplatonic interpretation, where music – regarded as the universal symbol of harmony and concord- is compared to feminine beauty which could lead to love and heavenly rapture.⁹³ As Thomas Morley writes 'Musick', saith Plato 'is a science of loue matters occupied in harmonie and rythmos'.⁹⁴ However, the relationship between music and early modern women was complex, expressed in a convoluted duality that could liberate, or ensnare, body and soul. While providing a spiritual exercise in moral and intellectual discipline, music simultaneously acted as a vehicle for the display of feminine beauty and accomplishment. Translated into musical training for attracting husbands, arguments arose for and against the use of music by women.⁹⁵ Music – considered a God – given gift – becomes an agent of raw sexuality complicit with feminine allure.⁹⁶ Thus within the domestic sphere, when women play music or sing, the essence of spirituality in the music and their souls remains pure, whilst in the public domain, when they sing or play

⁹² Case, *The praise of musicke*, p. 71.

⁹³ Austern, 'Sing Againe Syren', p. 422.

⁹⁴ Morley, *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke*, p. jr., [accessed 05. 04.2010](#).

⁹⁵ Austern, 'Sing Againe Syren', p. 431.

⁹⁶ Austern argues that the effect of music was almost universally blamed on the performers use of the medium rather than on the medium itself. Thus feminine intents and masculine moral weakness tended to be overlooked and music itself became an inflammatory tool which could around corrupt passions, thus making the female musician/singer more desirable. Austern, 'Sing Againe Syren', p. 434.

music before men, their art and beauty unite to doubly ‘ravish’ their audience, through a seductive, almost magical effect.⁹⁷

Marina, trained by Cleon in music, embodies this duality. Scholars such as Ann Barton have noted that Shakespeare appears to use Marina less as a character and more as a medium through which the voice of the situation can be made to speak.⁹⁸ Her character appears to personify the conflicting ideologies that music held in the early modern period. The noblest music denoted universal harmony and spiritual love and as such was incorruptible. In the poetic conceit of the chaste lover, it mimics the ecstasy of sexual union, suggesting rapture and harmony between lovers. Alternatively, music can corrupt and weaken, particularly in singing, where, W.H. Auden argues, there is an essential erotic element which is always in danger of being corrupted for sexual ends.⁹⁹ Shakespeare demonstrates how the human voice – with its potential to incite rapture – is also capable of the diametrical opposite. Boult declares that he has ‘drawn’ Marina’s picture with my voice’ (16.82-83) vocally anatomizing Marina’s body for public consumption and transforming it into a useable commodity. Her sexual marketability is described to Lysimachus as ‘that which grows to the stalk, never plucked’ (19.43) suggesting the metaphor of virgin nature contrasting with the diseased pollution that unplucking implies in this context.¹⁰⁰

Thus the site of Marina’s body raises the suggestion of the Bakhtinian ‘grotesque’

⁹⁷ Austern, ‘Sing Againe Syren’, p. 436.

⁹⁸ Barton, *Shakespeare: The Last Plays*, p. 30.

⁹⁹ Auden, in *Shakespeare Criticism*, p. 312.

¹⁰⁰ Helms argues that pollution rules create sharp boundaries between the pure and defiled body that cannot be penetrated by motive or intention, ‘The Saint in the Brothel’, p. 322.

body that transgresses its own limits in the favoured space of the marketplace.¹⁰¹ While Lysimachus, as nobleman, requires 'wholesome iniquity' (19.30), that is, an untainted prostitute to preserve his bloodline, Marina's dynastic value is threatened with destruction where the 'corrupted' flesh metamorphoses into the diseased whore.¹⁰² At odds with the lyricism of her previous scenes, Marina language changes after her encounter with Lysimachus. She berates Boulton coarsely as:

Thou damned door-keeper to ev'ry coistel
That comes enquiring for his Tib.
To th' choleric fisting of ev'ry rogue
Thy ear is liable. Thy food is such
As hath been belched on by infected lungs. (19.180-184)

The vituperation and imagery of Marina's language diverges sharply from previous eloquence, for example, her Senecan defence on the right to retain her virginity.¹⁰³ The 'infected lungs' morally opposes th'purer air (19.19) that Marina begs from the gods, suggesting the contamination of everything associated with the brothel, possibly even Marina herself. Again her language recalls the Bakhtinian grotesque that speaks the 'language of festive obscenity and abuse.'¹⁰⁴ The expired breath of the infected lungs tarnishes the vivified air and music becomes the tool of the prostitute to beguile men's carnal appetites, providing a powerfully grotesque metaphor that exposes a cultural anxiety about syphilis that would have been familiar to a Jacobean audience.¹⁰⁵

'Belched' recalls the poetic imagery of Thaisa's burial, but in this context it becomes an exposition of the physiologically impossible: to belch is to void wind noisily from the

¹⁰¹ Peter Stallybrass, 'Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed' in *Rewriting the Renaissance, The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe* (eds.) Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, Nancy J. Vickers (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 124.

¹⁰² Helms, 'The Saint in the Brothel', p. 328.

¹⁰³ Helms, 'The Saint in the Brothel', p. 320.

¹⁰⁴ Ferguson *et al*, *Rewriting the Renaissance*, p. 124.

¹⁰⁵ Healy, *Fictions of Disease*, p. 181.

stomach through the mouth.¹⁰⁶ The harshness of language provided by repetitive hard sounding consonants portrays an image of contagion, but while music has the power to corrupt in the brothel, it also offers Marina an opportunity for independence. No other Shakespearean heroine has this self-determination outside familial bonds and Marina uses her princely education and eloquence to negotiate her freedom. She asks Boult to ‘Proclaim that I can sing, weave, sew and dance/ With other virtues (19. 195-196), an inversion of Boult’s earlier proclamation, transforming Marina from sexual commodity to fiscal autonomy. Thus music becomes an economic tool necessary to purchase her freedom and, more importantly, part of the preventative measure through which Marina staves off Boult’s attempted rape, and subsequent physical and moral deterioration. Music empowers her self –determination thereby allowing Marina’s body to move from the shadow of the Bakhtinian grotesque to the image of the ‘completed’ classical body.¹⁰⁷

Music not only defines Marina, but is catalytic in her relationships, most notably in scene 21 when Lysimachus commands Marina to be brought aboard Pericles’ ship to ‘win some words of him’ (21.32). Because Marina has enchanted everyone with her music, Lysimachus believes that her music will literally penetrate Pericles’ condition and thereby move his soul or psyche:

She questionless, with her sweet harmony
And other choice attractions, would alarum
And make a batt’ry through his deafened ports
Which now are midway stopped. (21. 34-36)

Lysimachus requests Marina to use her ‘sacred physic’ (21.63) upon the ‘kingly patient’ (21.60) because he believes it is her ‘sweet harmony’ (21. 34) that will cure Pericles.

¹⁰⁶ OED, <http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.sussec.ac.uk/cgi/entry/50019855>, accessed 24.05.2010.

¹⁰⁷ Ferguson *et al*, *Rewriting the Renaissance*, p. 124.

Marina chooses music - a song - to provide 'my utmost skill in his recure' (21. 65), providing dramatic tension since Pericles' ship is a public space. Potentially, Marina's song becomes a shared spectacle, relocating her back into the brothel, but she requests that 'None but I and my companion maid / Be suffered to come near him (21.66-67). Thus the public song becomes a private communication that anticipates the celestial music that her 'sweet harmony' implies and Pericles hears, once he has recognized Marina as his daughter. However, Pericles does not respond to Marina's song, he neither 'marked' (21.67) the music nor looks at Marina but roughly repulses her. The Q1609 (1) text indicates that Marina sings, but the song from Shakespeare's source – Twyne's *Painfull Adventures* – is a bawdy one that Shakespeare deliberately omits because it is not in keeping with Marina's 'harmonious' revival which may explain Pericles' reaction.¹⁰⁸ It is only when she speaks to him that Pericles responds; a conundrum that has perplexed many critics because music is one of Marina's most notable skills.

The Arden editors, DeVecchio and Hammond, argue that Marina's singing is unable to revive Pericles because it is his soul that is sick, not his body, unlike Thaisa who, they suggest, needs musical stimulation to reawaken.¹⁰⁹ This interpretation dismisses contemporaneous early modern opinion, for example, John Case, who explains how 'Musike restoreth madmen to their wits', because 'Musicke aswageth and easeth the inordinate perturbations and euill affections of the mind'.¹¹⁰ I argue that desexualized and detached from the public spectacle, Marina's song forms part of the process of Pericles' recovery. By reintegrating harmony back into the plot, her song allows the dramatic action

¹⁰⁸ Long argues that Pericles can only respond when he has fully absorbed the importance of Marina's words, Long, *The Final Comedies*, p. 45.

¹⁰⁹ DeVecchio and Hammond argue that it is not Marina's music but her words that Pericles need to hear. Shakespeare, *Pericles*, The New Cambridge Shakespeare, p. 73.

¹¹⁰ Case, *The praise of musicke*, p. 61.

to move forward to completion. As such, Marina personifies health and harmony because she is the main instrument in freeing Pericles from his melancholic state, enabling him to see beyond tragedy because she transcends a comparable suffering.¹¹¹

Nonetheless, there is a sense of unease about Marina's fate after her reconciliation with Pericles. The only line Marina speaks after the father-daughter reconciliation is at the revelation of Thaisa as her mother, where she kneels and says 'My heart leaps to be gone into my mother's bosom' (22.66). Although Marina's final portrayal varies according to directorial interpretation, the play's stage directions do not indicate that she rises, and therefore Marina is silent and kneeling at the play's end: her eloquence and music gone. She does not hear the music of the spheres and it is silence, not music that defines her at the end of the play. This silence links Marina to Antiochus' silent daughter in scene 1. The silence of the two daughters may be explained by the theories of early modern medical practitioners who espoused the ancient belief that a woman's voice changes when she has intercourse because, 'her upper neck responds in sympathy to her lower neck'.¹¹²

Bonnie Gordon argues that early modern doctors endorsed this ancient belief that intercourse deepened a woman's voice by enlarging her neck, which responds in sympathy to the stretching of the lower neck.¹¹³ The early modern female body was viewed as leaky; excess fluids rendered women inherently incontinent, unruly and lascivious.¹¹⁴ In an era where one's outward appearance reflected an inner morality, women were not supposed to reveal their bodies, and social mores from around 1600 called for a quietened feminine

¹¹¹ Hoeniger, *The Arden Edition*, p. lxxxv.

¹¹² Ann Hanson and David Armstrong's 'The Virgin's Voice and Neck: Aeschylus, Agamemnon 245 and Other Texts', *British Institute of Classical Studies* 33 (1986), pp. 97-102, p. 99.

¹¹³ Bonnie Gordon, *Monteverdi's unruly women, The power of song in early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 4.

¹¹⁴ Gordon, *Monteverdi's unruly women*, p. 3.

voice that reflected their chastity and distanced them from inappropriate eroticism.¹¹⁵ The anatomical structures that make singing possible, that is, the mouth, tongue and throat were imaged differently when attached to women. The female mouth opened up the dark and frightening abyss of the body, affecting those organs that made sex and reproduction possible, for example, the opening and closing of the glottis in the throat paralleled the opening of the uterus imagined to accompany orgasm.¹¹⁶

Thus the female mouth and chastity were sites of constant surveillance for early modern writers since they frequently collapsed into each other.¹¹⁷ Because women's bodies were considered colder than men's, it was believed they were affected more by the 'temperature-altering and fluid —exuding act of singing', and the early modern association of mouths and wombs related women's singing, to a sexually productive part that men lacked.¹¹⁸ I suggest that while Marina's silence may be linked to the inaudible music of the spheres, Antiochus' daughter's silence is because she cannot sing; she must remain silent to 'preserve' her pseudo-virginity.

Highlighted by Gower in the Prologue, Antiochus' incest has been read as an example of moral degradation and defilement of kingship.¹¹⁹ While Shakespeare begins the play with an ancient riddle game that is part of the convention of folklore, his inclusion of incest provides an intentional perplexity that rests uneasily with the fairy-tale element of the plot.¹²⁰ However, in philosophical alchemy, royal incest was often used symbolically to

¹¹⁵ Gordon, *Monteverdi's unruly women*, p. 1.

¹¹⁶ Gordon, *Monteverdi's unruly women*, p. 31.

¹¹⁷ Ferguson *et al*, *Rewriting the Renaissance*, p. 126.

¹¹⁸ Gordon, *Monteverdi's unruly women*, p. 5.

¹¹⁹ Shakespeare, *Pericles*, The New Cambridge Shakespeare, p. 65.

¹²⁰ G. Wilson Knight argues that in no other Shakespearean play is there such a stark contrast between scenes of power and beauty those of disquietude, Knight, *The Crown of Life*, p. 32.

describe the union of opposite forces to create a new, purer form.¹²¹ Thus in the discord of the opening scene is the foreshadowing of the birth of the 'pure' Marina, thereby encapsulating the themes of resurrection, creation and renewal that occur in *Pericles* and the implication of a regeneration of the soul.

Unnamed and with one speaking line, Antiochus' daughter may be considered insignificant, yet she is described in terms that prefigure the appearance of the goddess Diana: Gower's prologue describes her as 'buxom, blithe and full of face/ As heav'n had lent her all his grace (1.23-24). Her conception is a recalled memory in which 'The senate-house of planets all did sit/ In her their best perfections to knit' (1.53-54), that is, the astrological forces arranged to give her every perfection, while she is 'clothed like a bride/Fit for th' embracements ev'n of Jove himself' (1.49-50).¹²² Before her appearance, Antiochus' daughter is described in mythological and cosmological vocabulary and her entrance is accompanied by music that Antiochus commands be played.

However, this is an artful game of dissimulation that father and daughter play with a dazzling display that obfuscates the truth and Antiochus' daughter has been interpreted by some scholars as the visual seductive power of sin; thus the healing restorative music from the prologue is aligned with sin and death – it becomes discordant and has been interpreted as the false precursor of the music of the spheres.¹²³ G. Wilson Knight argues that scene 1 is a moral exposé of visual lust creating an evil that denies the 'lawful music' of the harmony of marriage as described in Sonnet 8, where father, mother and child are described as making a single music.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Abraham, *Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, p. 106.

¹²² Hart, "'Rough" Music in *Pericles*', p. 331.

¹²³ Hillman, '*Shakespeare's Gower*', p. 436.

¹²⁴ Knight, *The Crown of Life*, p. 38.

Shakespeare is not the only early modern playwright to use the metaphor of discordant music to emphasise corruption. John Marston's opening stage direction calling for 'the vilest out-of-tune music being heard' in *The Malcontent* suggests the pervasive corruption of the courtly world that 'breathes that music' (1.2.1).¹²⁵ Shakespeare's use of 'unlawful music' symbolizes the realisation that man and his world are not perfect. Just as the motions of the spheres were often contrary to each other, they were still following a single plan with 'all parts answered in a general symphony of the whole.'¹²⁶ Sin was an ever present constant but was not an insurmountable obstacle to the Divine Musician, just as discord and dissonance could be integrated into the grand harmony.¹²⁷ Thus, for example, Prospero in *The Tempest* acknowledges Caliban as his own because Caliban, 'this thing of darkness' (5.1.278), is part of us and of the world.

While Shakespeare may merely be copying his source material, Antiochus' comparison of his daughter, 'Fair Hesperides/ With golden fruit, but dangerous to be touched' (1.70-71) resonates with alchemical meaning.¹²⁸ The mythological Hesperian gardens were a favourite symbol in philosophical alchemy, because the golden fruit symbolized immortality.¹²⁹ This mythological imagery may be a sophisticated adaptation of philosophical alchemy and language as poetic expression that Shakespeare uses elsewhere. The three Hesperides – said to sing near springs which spurted forth ambrosia – were

¹²⁵ John Marston, *The Malcontent* (1604) in *English Renaissance Drama A Norton Anthology* (ed.) David Bevington (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002), pp. 555-556.

¹²⁶ Eliot, *The Monachie of Man* 11, pp. 9-10; quoted in James Daly, 'Cosmic Harmony and Political Thinking in Early Stuart England', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, New series, Vol. 69, No. 7 (1979), pp. 1-41, p. 13.

¹²⁷ Daly, 'Cosmic Harmony', p. 13.

¹²⁸ In Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, one of Shakespeare's sources for the play, Antiochus' daughter and her situation are initially described in a sympathetic light and Shakespeare may simply be copying this viewpoint. Shakespeare, *Pericles*, The New Cambridge Shakespeare, p. 5.

¹²⁹ The golden also signified the philosopher's stone thought to change all base metals into gold, Abraham, *Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, p. 101.

turned into trees with the loss of the golden fruit.¹³⁰ Thus silenced, the Hesperides articulate the silence of Antiochus' daughter and Marina, who share the spectre of incest. Janet Adelman argues that Pericles' journey is a reworking of the initial incest, foregrounding Pericles' own potential Oedipal desire, 'Thou that begett'st him that did thee beget' (21.82).¹³¹ In Adelman's interpretation, masculine identity can only be re-established through the detoxification of the female body.

If Antiochus' daughter represents the diseased, sexualized female body that needs to be excised, Marina is the purifying antidote, but only after her own spiritual cleansing. She transforms into the 'sacred physic' (21.63), the binary opposite of Antiochus' daughter's 'sharp physic' (1.115). The feminine silence could be interpreted as the darker side of love; Antiochus' incest and Lysimachus's sexual laxity. Because of the perceived similarities between femininity and music, both were conceived as either inflaming the passions or as a metaphor for divine love and providence.¹³² Music, like love, 'ravisheth the soul and carries it beyond itself, helps, elevates, extends it.'¹³³ Harmonious love was connected to the rational aspects of music because harmony and sympathetic correspondences could be described in musical terms.¹³⁴ Conversely, when physical carnality supercedes the spiritual essence of love, music becomes an irrational and uncontrolled art, leading to death or spiritual destruction.¹³⁵

¹³⁰ Stephen Kershaw (ed.) *The Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1991), p. 200.

¹³¹ Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers*, p. 196.

¹³² Austern, 'Alluring the Auditorie to Effeminacie', p. 343.

¹³³ Burton, *Anatomy*, Part.2, Sect. 2, Member 6, Subsection 3, A24r, p. 373, [accessed 31.05.2010](#).

¹³⁴ Linda Phyllis Austern, 'Love, Death and Ideas of Music in the English Renaissance' in *Love and Death in the Renaissance* (eds.) Kenneth R. Bartlett, Konrad Eisenbichler and Janice Liedl, Janice (Toronto: Dovehouse Editions Inc., 1991, p. 20.

¹³⁵ Austern, in *Love and Death in the Renaissance*, p. 27.

Having established that Marina and Antiochus' daughter represent the 'pure' and 'corrupt' of music – encapsulating the duality that stems from the Platonic precepts of Dorian and Phrygian music - Shakespeare's metaphorical and alchemical language intimates that their roles are not as concretely defined as first appears, suggesting an ambiguity that opens a dramatic moment allowing an audience/reader to question the nature of humanity. Because *Pericles* is a play about confusion, the ambiguities that permeate the play are evident from the first scene where Pericles realises that he faces death whether or not he deciphers Antiochus' riddle.¹³⁶ Thus the answer to the riddle remains enigmatically elusive and Shakespeare emphasises this point by convoluting the musical metaphor of Pericles' response:

You're a fail viol, and your sense the strings
 Who, fingered to make man his lawful music,
 Would draw heav'n down and all the gods to hearken,
 But, being played upon before your time
 Hell only danceth at so harsh a crime

(1.124-129)

'Viol' plays on the association between music and medicine because of its phonetic closeness to 'vial' or 'phial', a 'glass bottle for holding liquid medicine, drugs or chemicals'.¹³⁷ However the irony lies in the poisonous contamination and death that the 'viol' will bring and this is underscored by the language and tone of lines 128-129 where the strings are subversive, performing not a 'lawful music' linked to the rational harmony of the cosmos, but a sexually charged 'fingered' dissonance recalling the penetrating 'fingering' (2.3.12) of Cloten in *Cymbeline* and the physicality of the incestuous act, an act

¹³⁶ Jeanie Grant Moore, 'Riddled romance: Kinship and Kinship in "*Pericles*"', *Rocky Mountain review of Language and Literature*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (2003), pp. 22-48, p. 34.

¹³⁷ OED, <http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/cgi/entry/50177359>, accessed 11.06.2010.

that Janet Adelman views as the woman's fault, where the female body becomes the site of monstrosity.¹³⁸

Thus music becomes the semantic property of the play's language, but the silence of both daughters establishes another voice within the play. As the antithesis of sound, silence also represents the inaudible music of the spheres. It resonates with the Pythagorean silence that Isocrates believed stood for moral discipline and self-control, an idea recalled by Pico del Mirandola in his correspondence with the Venetian humanist, Ermolao Barbaro in 1485.¹³⁹ Because *Pericles* ends with silences and open-ended questions, I suggest that Shakespeare uses music to express the dark-light fluidity of human nature. Music demonstrates the bivalency of human potential; the playwright ultimately allows the audience to choose a moral position. Thus the capability for self-generation may be found in the music and the deep silence, where Casanus believed, we are granted a vision of an indivisible God.¹⁴⁰

The Healing Music of Cerimon

Shakespeare demonstrates the power of music not only as a notion of temperament but as a means to achieve psychological and physical cures through Cerimon, the 'reverend appearer' (22.37) and physician of Ephesus in *Pericles*. While previous attempts to heal have failed in the play, for example, Lychorida's inability to save Thaisa in childbirth or protect Marina from her foster parents; Cerimon's revival of Thaisa is interpreted as one of

¹³⁸ Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers*, p. 195.

¹³⁹ Copenhaver and Schmitt, *Renaissance Philosophy*, p. 171.

¹⁴⁰ Copenhaver and Schmitt, *Renaissance Philosophy*, p. 179.

the ‘pinnacles of Shakespeare’s art’.¹⁴¹ Although Cerimon speaks fewer than one hundred lines in the play he is portrayed as a great magus figure who has studied the ‘secret’ art of physic.¹⁴² Virtue and cunning, that is, knowledge, Cerimon argues, makes ‘a man a god,’ and he tells how he learned ‘the blest infusion/ That dwells in vegetives, in metals, stones / And so can speak of the disturbances/ That nature works and of her cures’ (12. 24-35).

Because of his learning, Cerimon has often been likened to Prospero who is ‘rapt in secret studies’ (*The Tempest* 1.2.77). However, Prospero’s ‘secret studies’– magic– allows him control over other people, whereas Cerimon’s ‘sacred art’ cures: he prays to Apollo to ‘perfect me i’th’ characters (12.65) and Aesculapius to ‘guide us’ (12.108). Both men resurrect the dead, Prospero tells how ‘graves at my command/Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let ‘em forth/ By my so potent art’ (5.1.48-50).¹⁴³ While Prospero’s magic suggests a terrifying power, Cerimon works with nature curing with natural means – music, fire, medicines so that ‘Nature awakes, a warmth breathes out of her’ (12.90-91). His humanity is evident from his first appearance on stage when he tells a servant, ‘Your master will be dead ere you return/There’s nothing can be ministered in nature/ That can recover him’ (12.6-7).

Dramatically this creates anxiety and tension around the question of Cerimon’s ability to resurrect Thaisa, while at the same time affiliating him to Christ, the divine physician. Frances Yates interprets Cerimon as ‘an almost Christ-like figure’ who heals the sick not for payment but for charity and spiritual benevolence: she sees ‘divinely healing influences’ flowing from Cerimon. He represents, she argues, the new ideal of the physician spreading

¹⁴¹ Knight, *The Crown of Life*, p. 15.

¹⁴² Shakespeare takes Cerimon’s name and profession from Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*, Frances A. Yates, *Shakespeare’s Last Plays* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1975), p. 88.

¹⁴³ William Shakespeare and George Wilkins, *A Reconstructed Text of Pericles, Prince of Tyre* (ed.) Roger Warren (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Oxford World’s Classics, 2003), pp. 44-45.

in Europe through the influence of Paracelsus in whom new medical skills are combined with a reputation for a new magic.¹⁴⁴ Critics such as Alison Thorne read Yates' work as 'unbridled speculation driven by the need to impose a preconceived scheme of idea on the plays', but I would argue that Yates' interpretation of Cerimon is correct.¹⁴⁵ While some modern theatrical interpretations depict Cerimon as a practitioner of occult magic or witchdoctor, I suggest that the playwright makes it explicitly clear that Cerimon is no charlatan, but an esteemed physician in Ephesus where, 'hundreds call themselves your creatures, who by you/ Have been restored.' (12. 41-42).¹⁴⁶ Christ as healer also evokes the Ficinian belief in God as the divine physician to cure the ills of the soul, for the 'power of healing is the gift of God' so that everyone could co-exist in harmony (Letter 81, vol. 1, p. 127). Bound up with this image of Christ the physician – the greatest of physicians – was the notion that music could symbolize Christ's commandments because it was capable of dispelling demonic influences or possession – widely held to be the cure for madness.¹⁴⁷

The servants bring the body of Thaisa to Cerimon, who appeals to Apollo to 'perfect me i'th' characters,' (*Pericles* 12. 65). Apollo, as the mythological Greek god of medicine, is evoked to enable Cerimon to resurrect the supposedly moribund Queen: Plato had identified Apollo as the 'purifying god' who washes away all evil impurities to make a person pure in body and soul.¹⁴⁸ In *Cratylus*, Plato relates how Apollo expresses his power

¹⁴⁴ Yates, *Shakespeare's Last Plays*, pp. 88-89.

¹⁴⁵ Alison Thorne, *New Casebooks, Shakespeare's Romances, Contemporary Critical Essays* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 12.

¹⁴⁶ Elizabeth E Hart argues that Cerimon is often depicted as an early modern practitioner of occult magic in "'Rough" Music in *Pericles*', p. 313, while Molly Mahood defends Cerimon against suggestions of necromancy in *Bit Parts in Shakespeare's Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 19.

¹⁴⁷ Hoeinger suggests that the lyre came to signify the Cross and its curative powers, *Mirror up to Shakespeare: Essays in Honour of G.R. Hibbard* (ed.) J.C. Gray (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), p. 61.

¹⁴⁸ Plato, *Cratylus* 405b, in *Complete Works*, p. 123.

in music, prophecy, medicine and archery, thus the ‘resurrection’ scene is a tangible representation of the divine powers of curative music. Cerimon’s revival of Thaisa through his art, fire and music is not depicted as a spectacle but rather suggests that the healing power of music was firmly entrenched in early modern thought.¹⁴⁹

This revival can only be achieved because of the purity of Cerimon’s soul – a purity that correlates with that of Thaisa and Marina – and music becomes directly implemental in Thaisa’s restoration because it contains an animating power: it is to the sound of the viol, correctly tuned, that Thaisa is restored. Thus Cerimon’s invocation and language, ‘The still and woeful music that we have/ Cause it to sound, beseech you’ (12.86) recalls the gravitas of Jessica’s response in the *Merchant of Venice*, locating Cerimon’s healing music in the sanctuary of sacred music. While his implicit use of restorative drugs would have been prosaic, music’s role in the revival process is miraculous, prefiguring the music that accompanies Diana who promises Pericles the recovery of his lost wife:

‘Perform my bidding, or thou liv’st in woe/ Do’t, and rest happy, by my silver bow’ (22.230-234).¹⁵⁰ Cerimon’s second call for music, parallels his request for ‘the vial once more’ (12.87), and this juxtaposition of music with the medical ‘vial’ strengthens the curative quality of music that represents the binary opposite of Antiochus’ daughter’s ‘fair viol’ because it underscores the ordered souls of Thaisa and Cerimon, reflecting the divine order of the universe.

Shakespeare’s language in this passage – ‘air’, ‘Nature’, ‘Breathes’, and ‘gins to blow/ Into life’s flow’r again’ (12.89-92) – suggests the Stoic *pneuma* that is, the spirit, soul or life force that permeates the body as an invisible fluid or spirit forming the vital

¹⁴⁹ Dunn, ‘The function of Music’, p. 399.

¹⁵⁰ Percy A. Scholes, ‘The Purpose behind Shakespeare’s Use of Music’, *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 43rd Sess. (1916-1917), pp. 1-15, p. 7.

principle of health and strength.¹⁵¹ Thaisa will live because ‘Nature awakes,’ evident in the ‘warmth’ that ‘breathes out of her.’ As such *pneuma* was regarded as the breath of God, or the Holy Spirit but it is also a sign in musical notation indicating a melodic leap.¹⁵²

Shakespeare may have derived his ideas of an invisible, all encompassing force from either traditional humoral medicine or from an alchemical interpretation of nature that encompassed a Hermetic philosophy in the belief in universal spirits.¹⁵³ This may explain the alchemical discourse resonating in Cerimon’s recollection of ‘an Egyptian that nine hours dead / Who was by good appliance recovered’ (12.83-84), recalling the ancient association of alchemy with Egypt.¹⁵⁴

With the development of the organ in the sixteenth century, the image of the universe as heaven’s deep organ with its parallel in man drew comparison with the human body as a mechanism of pipes and channels. Thus the universe was conceived as a tuned instrument made discordant by human sin, and music in *Pericles* symbolically illustrates the spiritual progress from disorder to a new harmony.¹⁵⁵ Air, closely aligned to music in terms of the human breath, was believed to be a living essential component because it affected our vital spirit.¹⁵⁶ Music, therefore, is associated with the breath of God in the Creation of Mankind, providing rationality and cohesion to the universe, a rationality that is notable in Cerimon’s

¹⁵¹ OED, <http://dictionary.oed.com.exprozy.sussex.ac.uk/cgi/entry50182166>, accessed 14.06.2010.

¹⁵² OED, <http://dictionary.oed.com.exprozy.sussex.ac.uk/cgi/entry50182166>, accessed 14.06.2010.

¹⁵³ The Stoic *pneuma* was an area of intellectual debate in the early modern period. Although he accepted God as world-soul, Justus Lipsius argues that the Stoics did not really equate God with *pneuma*, while Fracastoro’s work on contagion contained a like minded principle on the Stoic *pneuma*. Copenhaver and Schmitt, *Renaissance Philosophy*, pp. 269,306.

¹⁵⁴ Egypt was sometimes referred to as the motherland of alchemy. Read, *Prelude to Chemistry*, p. 4.

¹⁵⁵ Shakespeare, *Pericles*, The New Cambridge Shakespeare, ‘Introduction’, p. 71.

¹⁵⁶ Chapter 2, p. 96.

speeches:

I held it ever;
Virtue and cunning were endowments greater
Than nobleness and riches. Careless heirs
May the two latter darken and dispend,
But immortality attends the former

(12.23-27)

His argument flows from showing the consequences of an adherence to worldly values to the ‘immortality’ that may be achieved by learning. He builds on this by citing a list of his medical skills in blank verse that builds to a climax at the end of the speech where ‘nature works, and of her cures’ (12.35), gives Cerimon contentment and ‘true delight’ (12.36).

Editorial speculation exists over the word ‘still’ music. While the *Norton Shakespeare* has emended the word ‘rough’ to ‘still’, the editors of *The New Cambridge Shakespeare* series describe the music as ‘rough and woeful’ (3.2.85).¹⁵⁷ Which word is used is critical in understanding Cerimon’s healing powers. ‘Rough music’ may reflect early modern theories that believed the systolic and diastolic heartbeat corresponded to the upbeat and downbeat of musical rhythm. Combined with the phenomenon of the sympathetic vibration in two perfectly attuned strings, ‘rough music’ indicates a strongly rhythmic music whose tempo approximates Thaisa’s heartbeat, whilst the sympathetic vibration restarts her heart.¹⁵⁸

However, ‘rough music’ also hints at a link between the healing powers of Cerimon’s ‘secret art’ and the mysteries of the archaic goddesses associated with the ancient city of Ephesus.¹⁵⁹ It was here in a city ‘ful of cofusion’ (v. 29) that Saint Paul found ‘exorcistes’

¹⁵⁷ Shakespeare, *Pericles*, The New Cambridge Shakespeare, this is taken from the 1609 quarto of *Pericles* (Q1). Because of the questionable status of Q1 *Pericles*, various editions have adopted the word ‘still’ instead.

¹⁵⁸ Dunn, ‘The Function of Music’, p. 396.

¹⁵⁹ Hart, ““Rough” Music in *Pericles*”, p. 317.

(v.13); users of ‘curious artes’ (v.19) and worshippers of ‘the great goddesse Diana (v.35).¹⁶⁰ Ephesus was renowned for its great temple to Diana and Shakespeare includes a short scene of only seventeen lines where Cerimon not only advises Thaisa to retire to Diana’s temple, when she expresses her wish to become a votaress, but offers Thaisa ‘a niece of mine’ (14.14) to attend her there suggesting a link between Cerimon and the Diana cult which was closely associated with Mother-worship.¹⁶¹

The cult of Phrygian Mother-worship included a jarring type of music, often performed by the priest class which was well known to the Romans for its ‘savagery’.¹⁶² In this context Cerimon represents the priest-physician acting as a mediator between the human and divine where his ‘rough music’ is sacred: part of a Phrygian rite to heal human suffering.¹⁶³ Thus Cerimon’s ‘rough music’ may indicate the healing powers that were a principal function of the Asian mystery rites.¹⁶⁴ The central deity defining this culture was Cybele, one of the great Bronze Age Mother goddesses, and harsh music had long been associated with Cybele’s cult and mysteries.¹⁶⁵ Cybele embodied the dual personification of the earth and moon, representing nature and fertility whose characteristics had been transferred over the centuries to Diana of Ephesus. She personified the life and death cycle of human and vegetative existence, thus epitomizing the themes of birth, loss and resurrection that *Pericles* addresses.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁰ The Actes, chapter XIX, verses 13-35, *The Geneva Bible*, f. QQ.iiii.

¹⁶¹ Hart makes a distinction between Ovid’s Diana, the Roman goddess of hunting and the Moon and Diana of Ephesus, This cult of Mother-worship flourished in the territory of Phrygia, the home province of Ephesus and also of ancient Troy. Hart, ““Rough” Music in *Pericles*,’ p. 317.

¹⁶² Hart, ““Rough” Music in *Pericles*,’ p. 320.

¹⁶³ Hart, ““Rough” Music in *Pericles*,’ p.330.

¹⁶⁴ Ephesus though under the domain of the Greek goddess Artemis, became more familiarly associated with Diana under Roman rule in the first century BC, ““Rough” Music in *Pericles*,’ p. 318.

¹⁶⁵ Hart, ““Rough” Music in *Pericles*,’ p. 327.

¹⁶⁶ The myth of Cybele and Attis is believed to have originated from the end of the Neolithic Age in Western Culture, Nathan Schwartz-Salant, *C. G. Jung, Jung on Alchemy* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 31.

Thaisa's revival focuses on a central concern in the play of women who die and are revived.¹⁶⁷ The Arden editor, Suzanne Gossett argues that Thaisa may be suffering from a type of 'syncope or swooning' derived from the work of Edward Jordan.¹⁶⁸ In his treatise, *A briefe discourse of a disease called the suffocation of the mother*, (1603), Jordan to be describes this particular condition as:

All the faculties of the body fayling, it self lying like a dead corpe ththree or foure houres together, and ^d sometimes two or three whole dayes without fenfe, motion, breath, heate, or any sign of life at all.¹⁶⁹

This suggests that Shakespeare dramatic portrayal of Thaisa's apparent death is depicting a human phenomenon that doctors were trying to explain, in their pursuit of an increased understanding of the human condition. Because of her inner purity, Thaisa's *musica humana* responds to Cerimon's commands. Since music always accompanies the mystic happenings in *Pericles*, it encompasses the notion of immortality, where death becomes a delusion, and love, the companion of music, becomes victorious.¹⁷⁰

The cadences of the poetic imagination highlight the loss and recovery that penetrates *Pericles*. Music in *Pericles* transcends the physical auditory sensation and becomes an allegory of the untainted spirit of Neoplatonic mysticism, reaching a level of spiritual purity to become the *musica mundana*; thus, this is a play about silences and hearing, the sense

¹⁶⁷ Shakespeare, *Pericles*, The Arden Shakespeare. p. 45.

¹⁶⁸ Shakespeare, *Pericles*, The Arden Shakespeare. p. 45.

¹⁶⁹ Edward, Jorden, (1603) *A briefe discourse of a disease called the suffocation of the mother* Written vpon occasion which hath beene of late taken thereby, to suspect possession of an euill spirit, or some such like supernaturall power. Wherin is declared that diuers strange actions and passions of the body of man, which in the common opinion, are imputed to the diuell, haue their true naturall causes, and do accompanie this disease, London. British Library. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.ac.uk>, English Early Books on line, eebo citation: 99854567, D2, accessed 17 09.2010.

¹⁷⁰ Knight, *The Crown of Life*, p. 22.

closest to the soul.¹⁷¹ This implies a health of body and soul with music tuning the body to moral soundness. The consistency with which music appears in this form throughout *Pericles* suggests that music is not merely an expedient dramatic device, but a signifier of divine providence and the microcosmic and macrocosmic correspondences, suggesting a resurgence of Shakespeare's creative power in the late plays.¹⁷² While Gower evokes the ancient song of Orpheus to create universal harmony, the conquest of patience over fortune in *Pericles* – derived from a Stoic tradition – ultimately leads to reunion and harmony, allegorized in the music of the spheres, which extends beyond the characters to the audience. As a spiritual myth in the Neoplatonic sense, *Pericles* moves from the helplessness of humanity in a world of tragic conflict to the final music – the *musica mundana*, which unites the *musica humana* – the internal singing- to the cosmological order.¹⁷³

Melancholy and Music

In the early modern period melancholy was seen as a disease of the body and soul. Robert Burton described it as 'a common infirmity of body and soul, and such a one that hath as much need of a spiritual as corporal cure'.¹⁷⁴ A disease of infinite permutations, the diagnosis of 'melancholy' covered an array of disorders ranging from a saddened mood to a systemic disease, therefore, as a 'cause or an effect, a disease, or symptom' it had, Burton

¹⁷¹ Austern, 'Sing Againe Syren', p. 438.

¹⁷² Long, *The Final Comedies*, p. 132.

¹⁷³ Knight, *The Crown of Life*, p. 15.

¹⁷⁴ Burton, *Anatomy*, pp. 11-12, [accessed 06.10.2010](#).

wrote ‘several descriptions, notations, and definitions’.¹⁷⁵ It is, Burton writes, an ‘epidemicall disease that so often, so much, crucifies the body and mind.’¹⁷⁶

The ambivalent nature of music – stemming from the Pythagorean belief in musical harmonies purging or purifying the passions – was recognized as both the cause and cure of melancholy and madness.¹⁷⁷ Thomas Wright, examining how music stirred up the passions writes:

Let a good and a godly man heare musicke and he will lift up his heart to heaven: let a bad man heare the same, and hee will convert it to lust... So that in this, mens affections and dispositions, by means of msuick may stirre up divers passions...Wherefore the naturall disposition of a man, his custome or exercise, his vertue or vice, for most part at these sounds diuersifcate passions’.¹⁷⁸

In the *Anatomy of Melancholy* Robert Burton acknowledges this paradigm, writing that Theophrastus ‘right well prophesied that diseases were either procured by Musick or mitigated.’¹⁷⁹ ‘Music is most pernicious’ Burton argues for it ‘enchants’, it will ‘make such melancholy persons mad’ and, indeed, ‘many men are melancholy by hearing music’. Overall, Burton appears to view music as a ‘present remedy’ because it ‘expels cares, alters the grieved minds, and easeth in an instant’.¹⁸⁰

Shakespeare likewise demonstrates this paradoxical nature of music in his plays; for example, in Richard II’s final soliloquy, music fails to console the king. Richard’s meditation on ‘this prison where I live unto the world’ (*Richard II*, 5.5.2) is interrupted by the sound of music - outside his cell - which he mistakenly interprets as ‘a sign of love’

¹⁷⁵ Burton, *Anatomy*, pp. 11-12, [accessed 06.10.2010](#).

¹⁷⁶ Burton, *Anatomy*, p. 70, [accessed 06.10.2010](#).

¹⁷⁷ chapter 1, p. 49.

¹⁷⁸ Thomas Wright, (1601)*The passions of the minde*. London: Printed by V[alentine] S[immes] for W. B[urre], Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/expozy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 99847067, [accessed 28.08.2010](#).

¹⁷⁹ Burton, *Anatomy*, Part 2. Sec.2. Memb.6.Subs.3. p. 375, [accessed 28.09.2010](#).

¹⁸⁰ Burton, *Anatomy*, Part 2. Sec.2, Memb.6.Subs.3, p. 375, [accessed 06.10.2010](#).

(*Richard II*, 5.5.65).¹⁸¹ The discrepancy between the soundscape and the ‘sour sweet music’ (*Richard II*, 5.5.42) that Richard hears, may signify his disordered mind but it also increases the pathos and melancholy of the dramatic situation; the scene is given its emotional intensity by the presence of music.¹⁸² Indeed, Richard acknowledges that music ‘have help madmen to their wits/ In me it seems it will make wise men mad’ (*Richard II*, 5.5.61-63). However, because the music fails to console Richard as he struggles to cope with his changed circumstances, Lindley argues that Shakespeare is subverting the audience’s expectations.¹⁸³ Since music acts on the senses of the listeners, it resonates with an audience who, understanding Richard’s suffering and the notion of music curing a troubled soul, simultaneously are aware that the music could potentially foreshadow his death.

As I demonstrate in chapter 1, since music was believed to represent cosmic harmony with its ideal proportions and occult powers of sounds and words, it was aligned with the harmony of the body and soul and thus thought to be an efficacious therapy in the treatment of mental illness.¹⁸⁴ Indeed, it has been suggested that from the spectrum of human emotions, music has the closest kinship to melancholy.¹⁸⁵ Shakespeare alludes to this belief in *Romeo and Juliet* in a witty exchange between Peter, the Capulet’s serving man, and the musicians in Act Four. The ‘silver sound’ (4.4.130) of music not only puns on the idea of silver as payment, but also implies a cure to the ‘gripping grief the heart doth wound/And doleful dumps the mind oppress’ (4.4.148-149), that is, melancholy. While Shakespeare

¹⁸¹ Lindley, *Shakespeare And Music*, p. 123.

¹⁸² Lindley, *Shakespeare And Music*, p. 123.

¹⁸³ Lindley, *Shakespeare And Music*, p. 124.

¹⁸⁴ A.C. Crombie, ‘Mathematics, Music and Medical Science’, *Organon* 6 (1969) Warburg Institute, University of London, p. 23; chapter 1, p. 80.

¹⁸⁵ Doris Silbert, ‘Melancholy and Music in the Renaissance’, *Notes*, Second Series, Vol. 4, No. 4 (Sept., 1947), pp. 413-424.

subverts the idea of ‘silver sound’ for comically effect, the exchange also negotiates the belief that the powers of certain modes of music, independent of any sung text, could be therapeutic.¹⁸⁶ Likewise Cardano believed that music and medicine shared a close affiliation since both address the passions, senses and temperaments of the ensouled body.¹⁸⁷

Prior to the publication of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, health regimens such as Sir Thomas Elyot’s *The Castel of Helth* (1541) and William Bullein’s *The gouvernement of health* (1595) focus substantial portions of their treatises on the subject of melancholy while medical authors such as Timothie Bright and Thomas Wright devoted entire books to the topic.¹⁸⁸ Sir Thomas Elyot – citing Marsilio Ficino in the margin as his point of reference (*Ex Marcilio Ficino de uita fana*) – defines melancholy as:

Melancoly is of two sortes, the one is callyd naturall, whiche is onely colde and dry, the other is called adust or bourned. Naturall melancholy is (as Galene saidth) the residence or dregges of the bloude: & therefore is colder and thicker than the bloude. Melancholy aduste is in foure kyndes, ... finally all aduste melancolye annoyeth the wytte and iudgement of man. For whan that humour is hette, it maketh men madde, and whan it is extincte, it maketh men fooles, forgetfulle, and dull.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ Hollander, *The Untuning of the Sky*, p. 36.

¹⁸⁷ Giglioni, in *The Sciences of Homosexuality in early Modern Europe*, p. 212.

¹⁸⁸ William Bullein, (1595) *The gouvernement of health: a treatise written by William Bullein for the especiall good and healthful perseruacion of mans bodie from all noisome diseases, proceeding by the excesse of euill diet, and other infirmities of nature: full of excellent medicines, and wise counsels, for conseruation of health, in men, women, and children. Both pleasant and profitable to the industrious reader*. London. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 99842726; Timothie Bright, (1586) *A treatise of melancholie*, London. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.exprozy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 99842180, and Thomas Wright (1601) *The Passions of the Minde*, London. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.exprozy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 99847067, accessed 12.07.2010.

¹⁸⁹ Thomas Elyot, (1539) *The castel of helth gathered and made by Syr Thomas Elyot knyghte, out of the chiefe authors of physyke, wherby euery manne may knowe the state of his own body, the preseruatio[n] of helthe, and how to instruct well his physytion in syckenes that he be not deceyued*, Londini, British Library. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.exprozy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 99844811, the Thyrd Boke, 74r, accessed 12.07.2010.

An excess of black bile led to humoral imbalance, resulting in melancholy that was subject to, or exacerbated by, external influences such as the non –naturals – ‘diet, retention and evacuation ... air, exercise, sleeping, waking and perturbations of the mind’.¹⁹⁰ The early modern pre-occupation with melancholy, particularly philosophic melancholy, has its origins, Headlam Wells suggests, in Ficinian teaching that refashioned the pseudo-Aristotelian idea of the ‘melancholy man of genius.’¹⁹¹

The topic of melancholy features prominently in medical and non-medical texts in the period between the publication of Ficino’s *De Vita* and Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Angus Gowland, examining the heightened early modern consciousness of melancholy, presents a comprehensive list of literature from the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries to substantiate this claim.¹⁹² Given the prevalence and nature of melancholy, it is unsurprising that it is a topic Shakespeare returns to repeatedly, throughout his plays where he shows how the transformative powers of melancholy can affect the human psyche.¹⁹³

While it is arguably Hamlet who is the most notable melancholic character, Shakespeare’s treatment of melancholy in its various guises and nuances within the plays should be seen in context of how melancholy was defined in the early modern period. For example, Don Jon exhibits the surly melancholy of discontent in *Much Ado About Nothing* and the cause of Antonio’s deep melancholy in *The Merchant of Venice* remains a site of

¹⁹⁰ Burton, *Anatomy*, Part 1, Sect. 2, Memb. 2, Subs. 6, p. 85, [accessed 06.10.2010](#).

¹⁹¹ Headlam Wells, *Elizabethan Mythologies*, p. 191; Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy, Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion and Art* (Cambridge: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd. 1964), p. 255.

¹⁹² Angus Gowland, ‘The Problem of Early Modern Melancholy’, *Past and Present*, No. 191 (May 2006), pp. 77-121, p. 84.

¹⁹³ Burton, *Anatomy*, p. 70, [accessed 06.10.2010](#).

debate for early modern scholars.¹⁹⁴ Burton contextualizes the difficulty in providing a definitive definition of melancholy and its actions and effects on the body by attempting to provide a broad classification:

The most received division is into three kinds. The first proceeds from the sole fault of the brain, & is called head melancholy: the second sympathetically proceeds from the whole body, when the whole temperature is melancholy: the third ariseth from the bowels, liver, spleen, or membrane called mesenterium, named hypochondriacal or windy melancholy, which Laurentius subdivides into three parts from those three members, Hepatick, splenetick, meseraick.¹⁹⁵

Music's beneficial power to calm the mind, influence the passions or emotions, such as in melancholy, is discernible in *Henry VIII* or *All is true* where the troubled Queen Katherine implores her gentlewomen to 'Take thy lute, wench. My soul grows sad with troubles/Sing and disperse 'em if thou canst' (3.1.1-2). However, the Queen's music, serves a dual purpose; John Long suggests that the use of song, predicting the approach of death, was a popular early modern dramatic device. The death of the Duchess in Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* is foretold in the madman songs who 'sing like swans, to welcome death' (V1.11, 70).¹⁹⁶ However, because the madman's song is part of the psychological torture that the Duchess' brother inflicts upon her, the music is 'dismal', unaligned to the sleep-inducing Orphic song that Katherine experiences. According to Aristotle the soul is defined as the 'Actual Being, the perfection or first act of an organical body, having power of life' and

¹⁹⁴ A.C. Bradley discusses Hamlet and melancholy in *Shakespearean Tragedies* 3rd edition (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1992) and Peter Davidson discusses the similarities between Hamlet and Timothy Bright's definition of the melancholic man in 'The Comedy of "Hamlet"' in *Hamlet, Contemporary Critical Essays*, New Casebooks series (ed.) Martin Coyle (Hampshire, New York and London: Palgrave, 1992), pp. 37-46, p. 46. Some psychoanalytical scholars see Antonio's melancholy as a symptom of his homosexual attachment to Bassanio, but while a strong friendship exists, there is no proof that it goes beyond a male Platonic attachment. Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* Oxford World, p. 31.

¹⁹⁵ Burton, *Anatomy*, pp. 52 – 53, accessed 06.10.2010.

¹⁹⁶ Long, *Seven Comedies*, p. 9, and John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, Revels Student Editions (ed.) John Russell Brown (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 142.

was divided into vegetable, sensitive and rational faculties.¹⁹⁷ Thus the Orphic song appeals to Katherine's soul both outwardly, via the faculty of hearing the song through the 'moving' power of her sensible soul, and inwardly through the spirits and pulse aligning the power of the song to her imagination and memory.¹⁹⁸

The song rejuvenates her melancholic spirit allowing her movement from corporeal stasis to another imagined world where Orpheus' lute 'made trees/And the mountain tops that freeze/Bow themselves when he did sing' (*All is True*, 3.1.3-5). John Hollander suggests that the soothing text allies itself to the soothing power of the song itself, operating with the same assurances as a lullaby.¹⁹⁹ Frances Yates argues that the song lifts the play momentarily out of the 'cruel world of religious controversy on to another level, opened up by the magical union of poetry and music.' She suggests the song is reminiscent of Ficino's revival of what he believed to be ancient Orphic singing, a practice that was continued in Baïf's Academy of Poetry and Music.²⁰⁰ The image of 'a lasting spring'(3.1.8), where the plants and flowers are 'ever sprung' (3.1.7) recalls the eternity of the circle in philosophical alchemy, reflecting back to before the Fall of Mankind and forward in perpetuity, made possible by the power of music, 'In sweet music is such art'(3.1.12).²⁰¹

With the song's submerged allusions to the Biblical David soothing Saul with his harp and the association between the psalmist and Orpheus that was emphasized by early

¹⁹⁷ Burton, *Anatomy*, Part 1, sect. 1, Memb. 2, Subs. 4, p. 29, [accessed 06.10.2010](#).

¹⁹⁸ Burton, *Anatomy*, Part 1, sect. 1, Memb. 2, Subs. 5, p. 32, [accessed 06.10.2010](#).

¹⁹⁹ Hollander, *The Untuning of the Sky*, p. 165.

²⁰⁰ Yates writes that Shakespeare had certainly heard of the Academy: he refers to it in *Love Labour's Lost*. At Baïf's Academy, Catholic and Protestant musicians practised together their measured poetry and music, with the deliberate aim of soothing the terrible discord of the French wars of religion through the 'effects' of music. The Orphic singing in *Henry VIII*, Yates argues, might have had a similar purpose, Yates *Shakespeare's Last Plays*, p. 77.

²⁰¹ Abraham, *Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, p. 189.

Christian and Medieval scholars, the song evokes Neoplatonic mysticism, an intellectual current of high affect in cultural circles towards the end of Elizabeth's reign.²⁰² However, this song is not merely a paean to a prelapsarian Eden: its references to new life contrast starkly with Katherine's own lack of fecundity and thus the song acts as a diagnostic tool in assessing Katherine's physicality and spirituality.

Like Eurydice, Katherine will die and Orpheus cannot restore her to life but the spirit of his music has the power of 'Killing care and grief of heart' (3.1.13) thus elevating her soul and 'revealing' heaven. The final line of the song, 'Fall asleep, or hearing, die' (*All is True*, 3.1.14) prophetically foretells Katherine's death in scene 4.2 while simultaneously alluding to the ancient belief that after death, the soul could hear the music of the spheres, a point that the ill Katherine acknowledges in her final scene, 'On that celestial harmony I go to' (4.2.80).

Katherine utters these words prior to falling asleep where she has a vision of six garland-bearing spirits who dance before her, who, in turn hold a garland over her head. Immediately preceding the vision, Katherine requests that the musicians play for her that 'sad note' (4.2.78); that is, solemn and sad music while she meditates. Following the Neoplatonic tradition, solemn music, born of the celestial spheres, breathes life into the soul of the listener, where the music and words of the song reach the listener's soul connecting them to an animated cosmos in the Orphic tradition, presenting a celestial image that restores man to his state of original purity.²⁰³ Socrates asserts that the soul is harmony, that 'a harmony is something invisible, without body, beautiful and divine in the attuned lyre, whereas the lyre itself and its strings are physical, bodily, composite, earthy and akin to what

²⁰² Headlam Wells, *Elizabethan Mythologies*, p. 193.

²⁰³ Gretchen L. Finney, 'Music: "The Breath Of Life"', Warburg Institute University of London, Reprinted from *The Centennial Review*, Vol. 1V, No. 2, Spring 1960, p. 195.

is mortal'.²⁰⁴ Thus the solemn music of private meditation, not only has the theological gravitas of religious harmony based on Dorian *harmonia* but the image of the soul as the stringed instrument provides a metaphor for the spiritual adjustment or 'tuning of the soul'.²⁰⁵

Through the music of the meditative process the soul's strings are 'tightened' to express the desire for Katherine's prayers to be answered and the vision offers her the peace she requires, the promise of 'eternal happiness' (4.2.90).²⁰⁶ Because she has partaken in the *musica universalis*, Katherine abjures the 'harsh and heavy' (4.2.96) music once she awakens from the celestial vision. Thus Shakespeare gives meaning to Katherine's death through the metaphor of Neoplatonic harmony: the transcendent music finally sets her free. Thomas Healy suggests that this allows for a sympathetic presentation of the Spanish-born queen that 'finds ready parallels in the other history plays emphasising the dramatists' refusal to collapse the implication of events into simple opposition of the good versus the bad'.²⁰⁷ The association of Orpheus with Katherine shares a commonality with the mythological relationship between Orpheus, music and death. However, the Orpheus-Christ figure with its lyre or viol becomes the psychopomp, the symbol of resurrection, leading the soul to heavenly bliss. Thus the Orphic song will 'revive' Katherine's soul after death, joining in the singing and dancing of heaven.²⁰⁸

The relationship between melancholy and music in Shakespeare is particularly evident in *Pericles*, where the cohesive harmony that Shakespeare strives to achieve through music, is juxtaposed with the melancholy Pericles succumbs to in the play. After

²⁰⁴ Plato, *Phaedo*: 86, in *Complete Works*, p. 75.

²⁰⁵ Hollander, *The Untuning of the Sky*, p. 267.

²⁰⁶ Holland, *The Untuning of the Sky*, p. 272.

²⁰⁷ Thomas Healy, 'History and Judgement in Henry VIII' in *Shakespeare's Late Plays New Readings* (eds.) Jennifer Richards and James Knowles (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 165.

²⁰⁸ Mayer-Baer, *Music of the Spheres*, p. 336.

his encounter with Antiochus, Pericles 'sad companion' becomes 'dull-eyed melancholy' (2.2), a melancholy that prefigures the more severe melancholy he suffers after the loss of Thaisa and Marina. In the banquet scene, (Scene 7) Simonides, noting Pericles despondence, 'yon knight' who 'doth sit too melancholy' (7. 53) vows to 'awake' him from this state and calls for dancing which implies music is played for the knight's dance. Burton – like Ficino before him – writes that some 'dance, sing, laugh, feast and banquet' to alleviate their melancholy and I suggest that Shakespeare creates this scene not only to provide a theatrical spectacle but to offer a referential point on Pericles' melancholy that realigns his humours to the *musica mundana*.²⁰⁹

While Stephen Greenblatt interprets Simonides command to Pericles to 'Unclasp, unclasp' (7.110) meaning 'disclose' (p.2739), the New Cambridge editors construe the meaning as a command to Pericles to unbuckle the armor he wears in the knight's dance in order to partake in a more graceful dance with Thaisa.²¹⁰ The OED dates the word 'unbuckle' to 1530 meaning to 'unfasten the clasp(s) of' but by 1599 Shakespeare was using the word in a figurative meaning 'to open up, display'.²¹¹ I argue in the context of this scene and after the Knight's dance, Simonides is charging Pericles to abandon his melancholy and 'open up' his mind and heart to Thaisa. Dance and music are keynote, therefore, in establishing a bond of love between the two characters while simultaneously curing Pericles' melancholy and rebalancing his humours.

Gower's role as the narrator in *Pericles* is, I suggest, a significant indicator of the relationship between music and melancholy within the play. At the end of the Prologue in

²⁰⁹ Burton, *Anatomy*, p. 25, accessed 10.10.2010.

²¹⁰ Shakespeare, *Pericles* The New Cambridge Shakespeare, p. 123.

²¹¹ OED, http://dictionary.oed.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/cgi/entry_main/50263339?query_type, accessed 29.09.2010.

his *Confessio Amantis* – one of the source materials Shakespeare uses for *Pericles* – Gower prays for the arrival of a new Arion whose ‘harpe of such temprure’(1055) would bring harmony to a discordant world and ‘putte away malencolie’(1069).²¹² Music, Gower asserts, banishes melancholy, one of the five servants of Wrath and the most ungoodlich and the werste’ of all the humours (404).²¹³ This assertion, derived from Book 7 of the *Confessio Amantis* – a treatise on good kingship purporting to derive from the teachings of Aristotle to Alexander the Great – is particularly pertinent because Pericles becomes, I suggest, the new Arion at the end of the play.²¹⁴ Healed of his melancholy and triumphant over adversities, Pericles undergoes a spiritual transformation, thus representing a harmonic whole whose dynastic rule promises peace in a previously dissonant world.

This is clearly evident, I argue, in the short fifteen line scene 8a of *Pericles* whose brevity suggests a prophetic tableau of Pericles as Arion, indicating the beneficial effects of music from a Neoplatonic viewpoint: by ‘tuning’ his soul with the beauty and goodness of the cosmos through his music, Pericles opens the path to harmony.²¹⁵ The scene depicts Pericles, after falling in love with Thaisa, in solitude with a stringed instrument singing of the ‘sovereignty’ of day over the ‘empire’ of night (8a, 11-12). This contrast couched in regal metaphor implies a comparison between Thaisa (light) – and by default, Marina – and Antiochus’ daughter, (darkness) the binary opposites of sacred and profane love

²¹² John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, vol. II, *The Complete Works of John Gower* (ed.) G.C. Macaulay, 4 vols. (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1901, republished 1968). All citations are to this edition, Prologue, p. 35.

²¹³ Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, vii, p. 244.

²¹⁴ Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, p. lxxx.

²¹⁵ This scene is not in Q1 or other modern editions. The *Norton Shakespeare* has adapted it from Wilkins *The Painful Adventures*, providing reference for Simonides comments in Scene 9. *The Norton Shakespeare*, (n) p. 2741.

representing the Ficinian idea of love symbolized by the two Neoplatonic Venuses that signify one principle in two modes of existence.²¹⁶

The notion of Pericles as the new Arion is reinforced in the following scene where Simonides calls Pericles 'music's master' (9.28) because he is 'beholden' to Pericles for his 'sweet music', declaring that his ears 'were never better fed with such delightful pleasing harmony' (22-26). Certainly Pericles' vision from Diana in Scene 21 (224-234) marks him out as one who has had a divine calling and whose music strives to represent the unheard harmonies of the celestial spheres. As such, Pericles appears to become the prototype of the hierophantic Orpheus, whose poetic *furor* Ficino strived to imitate in order to communicate the cosmic mysteries.²¹⁷

In the final act we learn that Pericles has succumbed to melancholy once again through Helicanus' report to Lysimachus on the condition of his king, 'A man who for this three months not spoken/To anyone, nor taken sustenance, but to prorogue his grief' (21. 18-20). Helicanus believes that Pericles' 'distemp'ture' (21. 21) 'springs from the precious loss /Of a beloved daughter and a wife' (21. 23) and he draws back a curtain to reveal Pericles lying on a couch with 'a long overgrown beard, diffused hair, undecent nails on his fingers and attired in sack cloth'(21.27-28). This portrayal of Pericles implies that the melancholy that he now suffers has a more profound physiological effect than his previous attack. It suggests that his mental state has deteriorated to one of severe melancholy as a consequence of the grief he endures. The capacity of human beings to react to personal changes such as separation and loss is the outcome of evolutionary developments.²¹⁸

²¹⁶ Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology*, p. 152.

²¹⁷ Headlam Wells, *Elizabethan Mythologies*, p. 193.

²¹⁸ Harold I. Kaplan, Benjamin J. Sadock, *Modern Synopsis of Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry/III* 3rd edition (Baltimore and London: Williams & Wilkins, 1981), p. 360.

However, this description of Pericles suggests a move from the normal accompaniments of the human condition to that of clinical psychopathology.²¹⁹ It is, as previously demonstrated, Marina's 'sweet harmony' (21.34) that cures Pericles of his extreme melancholy. Music is, as Burton points out in a subsection entitled 'Musick a remedy':

a tonick to the saddened sour, a Roaring Meg against Melancholy, to rear and revive the languishing soul, affecting not only the ears, but the very arteries, the vital and animal spirits; it erects the mind and makes it nimble. This it will effect in the most dull, severe, and sorrowful souls, expel grief with mirth, and if there be any clouds, dust, or dregs of care yet lurking in our thoughts, most powerfully it wipes them all away, and that which is more, it will perform all this in an instant: cheer up the countenance, expect authority, bring in hilarity, uniform our manners, mitigate anger...it is an most present remedy.²²⁰

'Sweet melody', Burton informs the reader, 'repaireth sad hearts' because music has the ability to 'expel the greatest griefs...abateth heaviness, and...causeth quiet rest'.²²¹ I suggest that Burton's claim reminds us of the Ficinian argument of how the 'sweetness of the lyre and song avail against the bitterness of black bile' (*De Vita*, p. 135). Burton uses the musical tropes of 'instrumental', 'vocal' and 'strings' to suggest that music has the power to 'cure all irksomeness and heaviness of the soul'.²²² Because Marina personifies health and harmony, she becomes the instrument through which Pericles is cured. Her

²¹⁹ The essential features of severe melancholy or depression is a distinct period of decreased psychophysiological activation where the person shows a pervasive loss of interest or pleasure, and frequently not aware or complain of the mood disturbance. What is evident is a withdrawal from usual activities and symptoms may include sleep disturbance, loss of appetite, cognitive disturbances, include an inability to concentrate or make decisions, slowed thinking, and decreased energy, feelings of worthlessness and guilt and thoughts of suicide and death. Kaplan and Sadock, *Modern Synopsis of Psychiatry*, p. 367.

²²⁰ Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Part. 2, Sec. 2, Memb. 6, subs. 3, p. 372, [accessed 10.10.2010](#).

²²¹ Burton, *Anatomy*, pp. 372-373, [accessed 10.10.2010](#).

²²² Burton, *Anatomy*, p. 373, [accessed 10.10.2010](#).

name, meaning ‘from the sea’, signifies an important aspect of Pericles’ healing process because Marina allegorically represents the salt and water of the ocean.²²³

While salt in itself is a preservative and disinfectant, it is also a necessity of life because it is an essential component of bodily fluids. Physiology describes how the critical loss of salt (sodium chloride), a major extracellular cation, that is, a positively charged ion, in the human body, leads to drowsiness/ confusion, depressed reflexes, or stupor due to cerebral oedema.²²⁴ Significantly, this extends to alchemical imagery, because it recalls the third Paracelsian principle; salt represents the body and gives fixity to the one essence that emerges from the *tria prima*.²²⁵ Thus Pericles’ melancholy may also be defined in terms of hyponatraemia, and only when he is reunited with Marina can he be cured. Therefore, Marina’s music and quintessentially Marina herself, becomes the ‘powerful thing’ that ‘ravisheth the soul’, the ‘nurses song’ that heals her fathers melancholy.²²⁶

The affiliation between salt, which is synonymous with the *albedo* stage of the alchemical process, and Marina, suggests that her music rules the ‘incorporeal soul’ and ‘carries it beyond itself, helps, elevates, extends it.’²²⁷ Representing the final, purist stage of philosophical alchemy, her divine music, besides having the ‘excellent power’ to ‘expel many other diseases,’ is itself, ‘a sovereign remedy against Despair and Melancholy’.²²⁸

²²³ ‘Marina’, A Dictionary of First Names, Patrick Hanks, Kate Hardcastle, and Flavia Hodges. Oxford University Press, 2006. Oxford Reference Online. Oxford University Press. University of Sussex. <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t41.e2224>, accessed 30.07.2010.

²²⁴ Severe hyponatraemia defined as $<125\text{mmol l}^{-1}$. Martin Smith, ‘Disorders of sodium balance’, *Core Topics in Endocrinology in Anaesthesia and Critical Care* (eds.) George M. Hall, Jennifer M. Hunter and Mark S. Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 179.

²²⁵ Abraham, *Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, p. 176.

²²⁶ Burton, *Anatomy*, p. 373, accessed 10.10.2010.

²²⁷ Burton, *Anatomy*, p. 373, accessed 10.10.2010.

²²⁸ Burton, *Anatomy*, p. 373, accessed 10.10.2010.

Thus Marina's music is the powerful *pharmakon* that will obliterate Pericles' melancholy transforming him into the new Arion that Gower prays for.

The New Inn

Although this romantic comedy was not a commercial success for Jonson – it probably only saw one performance in 1629 – nevertheless, it provides modern scholarship with a significant example of an early modern dramatic representation of love as it is defined in Ficino's his *De amore*.²²⁹ This play, which has been successfully reinstated into the mainstream Jonsonian canon, is structured around the debate form, using as its source Ficino's thoughts on love as the court scene makes clear.²³⁰ Lovel's Neoplatonic theorizing is set against Beaufort's Ovidian physicality and Host's good nature that opposes Lovel's melancholia, 'I will maintain the rebus 'gainst all humours/ And all complexions i' the body of man', Host declares, in the opening speech (1.1.9-10).²³¹ Thus from the outset *The New Inn* signals a harmonic and healing interpretation of love, on how love affects the body and soul. Resolution can only be achieved by the lovers arriving at a new understanding of themselves and each other; to embrace true love in the final Act in a Neoplatonic context.

Jonson's definition of love is derived from Ficino's hypothesis of love, truth and beauty in *De amore* that accepts the assertion of music as a manifestation of beauty.²³² Since Jonson defends Platonic love, an implicit understanding exists that accepts music as a philosophical model for understanding body and soul and, I would argue, this is visibly

²²⁹ Jonson, *The Devil is an Ass and other plays*, p. xxx.

²³⁰ Sanders, 'The Day's Sports Devised in the Inn', p. 545.

²³¹ Sanders, 'The Day's Sports Devised in the Inn', p. 549.

²³² Chapter 1, p. 64.

demonstrated in Act 3.2 which contains the only stage directions in the comedy to instruct Musicians to ‘enter and play’ during the central discourse on love.²³³

Jonson, who possessed a copy of *De amore*, establishes a philosophical framework for his exposé of love in the ‘Dedication to the Reader’, where he exhorts the reader, ‘if thou canst but spell and join my sense’ (*The New Inn*, p. 332). This pun on the word, ‘spell’ evokes the Ficinian declaration that, ‘love is a magician’ because ‘the whole power of magic consists in love’ (*De amore*, p. 127). Jonson’s evocation also recalls the transformative power of magic to the senses, and in Ficinian terms, this must include music, an essential component of his natural magic and healing medicine, since this appeal to our senses.

Jonson’s structural division of *The New Inn* into seven component parts – the dedication, the argument with a synopsis of the five acts, and the play itself – closely resembles, I argue, the arrangement of the seven speeches in *De amore*. This implies that Jonson’s emulation of Ficino’s transformative power of love is discernable within the structure of the play itself, signifying a conscious intent to mirror the Ficinian model. By engraving metaphorically, ‘the figure of the beloved on his own soul’ through the structure of the play, Jonson ensures that his comedy becomes a ‘mirror in which the image of the beloved is reflected’ (*De amore*, p. 57).

Jonson acknowledges the influence of his Platonic and Ficinian sources in his reference to ‘these philosophical feasts’ in Beaufort’s request for a ‘banquet o’ sense, like that of Ovid’ (3.2.143-144). This evokes images of the ravishing appeal of beauty in contrast to Ficino’s intellectual apprehension of ideal love and beauty. While modern scholarship remains unsure if Chapman’s poem is an attempt to reconcile the sensual with

²³³ Gouk, in *Music as Medicine*, p. 173.

the senses, or a dramatic descent into bestial passions, both interpretations, although diametrically opposed, take cognizance of its essential Platonic orientation.²³⁴ Since it is Beaufort who speaks the line, Jonson is, I argue acknowledging Ficino's ambiguity in relation to the exact nature of human love for, juxtaposing Beaufort's request, is Lovel's direct reference to Plato's Banquet (3.2.105).

Platonic love is a subject that Jonson repeatedly returns in his *Masque of Beauty* (1608) and *Love through Callipolis* (1630) where the Platonic myths are celebrated. As Stephen Medcalf notes, Lovel's description of love follows both Plato's *Symposium* and Ficino's *De amore* since Jonson, although anticipating the new fashion for Platonic love, cultivated by Henrietta Maria, reflects back in his thought and style to an earlier time.²³⁵

Jonson does not treat philosophical love with absolute reverence throughout the play. In Act 2.5 particularly, he inverts the image of harmony for comic effect. However, Jonson's lampooning of universities and scholars such as Euclid, whom Tipto describes as 'stale and antique' (2.5.80), turns on itself since the accessibility of this higher form of learning is unavailable to Fly and Tipto. Their incorrect identification of mathematicians as fencing masters clearly suggests their ignorance of the divine mathematics of the universe. Likewise, the integrity of Host's opinion is suspect for he is subsequently revealed as Lord Frampul, while Jonson reveals his own familiarity with scholarly discourse. At a simplistic level Jonson's dramatic satire provides an audience with the opportunity to laugh or deride the academics. However at an intellectual level it reveals, I argue, the Platonic concealment of the Hermetic mysteries. Just as the ancient theologians protected their pure and holy

²³⁴ James Phares Myers, Jr., "'This Curious Frame': Chapman's Ovid's Banquet of Sense', *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 65, No. 2 (Apr., 1968), pp. 192-206, pp. 192-194.

²³⁵ Stephen Medcalf, 'Shakespeare on beauty, truth and transcendence', in Baldwin and Hutton, *Platonism and the English Imagination*, p. 119.

knowledge from the 'profane and impure' (*De amore*, p. 72), so Jonson equally shields his own metaphysical speculations behind the veil of comedic form.

The central discourse of the play is in Act 3.2 which Jonson sets up as a court to ascertain the nature of love. Although Jonson's comedic and dramatic tension is derived from his subversion of the judiciary process and the anticipation of a highly sexualized discourse – the lovers swear an oath on Ovid's sensual *De Arte Amandi*, and not on the Bible – this does not detract from his underlying intention. Lovel and Beaufort are pitted against each other, representing Platonic and corporeal love. Ficino describes this love as 'the two Venuses in the World Soul', the first heavenly for contemplating divine Beauty and the second vulgar, for procreating (*De amore*, p. 118).

In response to Lady Frampul's request to 'Tell us what love is, that we may be sure/ There's such a thing, and that it is in nature.' (3.2.77-78), Lovel's definition of love is intriguingly significant:

For what else
Is love, but the most noble, pure affection
Of what is truly beautiful and fair?
Desire of union with the thing beloved. (3.2.90-93)

Containing the Platonic tropes of love and beauty, Lovel's answer also draws attention to Ficino's rendering of 'love as the desire of beauty' (*De amore*, p. 40). Using Ficino's definition of beauty, Jonson constructs a Neoplatonic interpretation of love where music interprets everything in the universe, for without music we cannot decode the mysteries of the universe or, indeed, ourselves. This infers that love may be found through the divine musician, Orpheus who 'holds the keys to the world' (*De amore*, p. 67) so that, through love, we are part of the cosmic process.

Lovel – as Jonson’s main protagonist – argues that the more exalted form of love is one in which the lovers are able to set aside carnality in order to develop an intellectual appreciation of the beloved. Although Jonson puns on the character’s name – ‘But is your name Love-ill, sir, or Love-well?’ (1.6.95) – he sign-posts Lovel’s anticipation in the Platonic debate in Act 3.2 with his references to an ‘academy of honour’ (1.3.57), which teaches a gentleman how to ‘tune his mind’ and learn manners ‘more to the harmony of Nature’ (1.3. 49-50). This resonates with images of Ficino’s Florentine Academy where discipline and learning were regarded as essential to the spiritual life, and where the Platonic tradition considered deeply significant.²³⁶

Spurred on by Host’s request for further enlightenment on the nature of true love, Lovel responds by describing true love as, ‘fixed, constant, pure, immutable’ (3.2. 1420) alluding to the divine mathematics symbolizing the immortal love. Although Lovel’s logic is Aristotelian, he follows *De amore*’s idea of love and beauty since divine beauty generates love.²³⁷ Lovel continues by declaring that ‘love transfers the lover in the loved’, for they engrave ‘Th’ idea of what they love, first in themselves’, and like glasses, their minds take in the ‘forms of their beloved, and them reflect’, since love ‘is a spiritual coupling of two souls’(3.2.116-123). It is through this love that the soul can be aroused to the Hermetic vision of its former divine state, that it can imitate the music of the spheres. This ‘spiritual coupling’ of the lovers echoes the ‘birth of love’ where, Ficino had asserted, creation is harmoniously formed by God (*De amore*, 39).

Lady Frampul declares that she is transformed by Lovel’s defence of love: ‘How I am changed! By what alchemy/ Or love or language am I thus translated? (3.2.189-190), she

²³⁶ Ficino, *Letters*, ‘Introduction’, Vol. 1. pp. 22-23.

²³⁷ Jonson, *The Devil is an Ass and other plays*, editorial note, p. 513.

questions. Erica Veevers points out that Lady Frampul's use of the exaggerated language of the romances and her egocentricity –makes a mockery of Platonic love.²³⁸ I argue that it is precisely this sense of inflated language and alchemical imagery, 'His tongue is tipped with the philosophers' stone/ And that hath touched me through every vein', which suggests the ability of human transcendence, the 'transmutation o' my blood' to 'become another creature' (3.2.189-191-194). It is not a 'deceptive metamorphosis' by Jonson to expose the folly in believing that all the problems of mortal life will magically disappear, but rather a sophisticated use of occult philosophy to suit his purpose.²³⁹

Conversely, although Beaufort rejects this 'philosophical feast', one of his speeches contains the fundamental principle of the division of humanity into male and female (*De amore*, p. 72). Beaufort defends procreative love and sexual desire as a means to restoring the initial whole, but the starkness of his speech, where the image of men and women are 'cleft asunder' (3.2.99), is closer to the graphic description in Plato's *Symposium* than to the religious imagery that Ficino employs to describe the origin of mankind.²⁴⁰ Jonson uses this as a dramatic device to create a contrasting argument to Lovel's assertion for the pre-eminence of spiritual love. Neither Lovel nor Beaufort is able to persuasively change the other's opinion, suggesting that Jonson deliberately allows the audience/reader to decide what type of love is better. When Lovel entreats his mistress to 'hear my vision sung, my dream of beauty/ Which I have brought prepared to bid us joy' (5.5.149-150), it suggests that Jonson situates *The New Inn* in the Orphic vision of harmonizing the body and mind for spiritual transformation through the medium of love. The Neoplatonic philosophy that

²³⁸ Erica Veevers, *Images of Love and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 38.

²³⁹ John S. Mebane, *Renaissance Magic and the Return of the Golden Age*, (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), p. 145 and p. 162.

²⁴⁰ Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy*, p. 69.

imbues the play associates it with the Caroline court masques and the suggestion of resolution through debate that echoes some of the political anxieties leading up to the Civil War.²⁴¹ The kiss that Lay Frampul bestows on Lovel after his discourse on love signifies the healing of emotional needs, the physical recognition that Lovel has indeed learnt from Host's moral instruction to have a lighter heart (1.3.145).

In conclusion, this chapter has explored the significance of music and harmony in *The Merchant of Venice*, and the power of music for healing melancholy in *Pericles*, in the light of Ficino's influential writings. The metaphysical assertion, which suggests that the harmony of *musica humana* is inseparable from the cosmic music, is also examined in *Pericles*, the most 'significant' of Shakespeare's plays, I have argued, in terms of the representation of musical healing due to its depiction of thaumaturgic music as a means to restoring health.

This chapter has also demonstrated how Jonson's *The New Inn* utilized Ficino's version of idealized Platonic love and beauty and celestial harmony. It is this expression of Ficino's music as Pythagorean harmony which serves as a central point in the prose, poetry and masques of Fludd's contemporary, the poet-musician, Dr. Thomas Campion.

²⁴¹ Sanders, 'The Day's Sports Devised in the Inn', pp. 559.

Chapter 6

‘Tune thy music to thy heart’: The healing art of Thomas Campion

Introduction

Tom Dixon has noted that by the early modern period *musica universalis* was very much part of the European intellectual background, offering philosophical resolution through divine harmony.¹ This universal model, propounded by Ficino and his followers, was replicated at the level of the individual as the tuning of the soul.² As I have argued, in the early modern period music was believed to be the audible proof of cosmic order: an earthly translation of cosmic harmony. Its power, residing in the fusion of the musical concepts of harmony and rhythm, astronomical revolutions, and the soul, was understood to give music the affective power to penetrate the body and harmonize it physiologically and spiritually.³ This is acknowledged in the Christianized musical model propounded by Ficino, Maier and Fludd; and dramatised as harmonic love and the music of the spheres, as I illustrated in chapter 5. In this chapter, I shall demonstrate how, at the turn of the seventeenth century, the poet-composer Thomas Campion draws on this model in his ayres, masques and poetry by harnessing the Orphic power of song.

¹ Tomas Rodney Dixon, “‘Spiritual musick’: the model of divine harmony in the work of Peter Sterry (1613-1672)”, <http://ethos.bl.uk/orders.do,THESIS00714249>, accessed 09.11.2013, pp. 103-103.

² Dixon, “‘Spiritual musick’”, p. 137.

³ Smith, *The Acoustic World*, pp. 295-297.

In Claudio Monteverdi's *Orfeo* (1607), *La Musica* – the spirit of music – invites the audience to listen to the story of Orpheus, who vows to rescue Eurydice from Hades by the power of song. Ficinian Neoplatonism permeates this particular music drama as the Orphic song illustrates music's fundamental role in the structuring of the cosmos and the magical effect it had on man.⁴ As the enchanted singer, Orpheus is a saviour liberating his beloved, symbolizing the magical power of music to redeem love from the dead.⁵ His story, while appearing superficially simple, belies a deep psychological and philosophical complexity: art enters life as a means of dealing with death. While the Orphic myth's fluidity lends itself to speculative interpretations, certain key elements remain immutable: the musician who can tame nature with song, the shaman who visits the underworld, and the prophesying severed head.⁶ These vividly striking images, and indeed the mythological figure of Orpheus himself, were to play an integral role in the Stuart court masques as I shall demonstrate later in this chapter.

Monteverdi's opera is an illuminating example of the early modern engagement with the Orphic fable; music cannot be set apart from Orphism in this period. Certainly musicians such as Thomas Campion (1567-1620) and John Dowland (1563-1626) share Monteverdi's vision of Orphic love as Platonic assuagement and spiritual purgation in line with the rapidly evolving progression of sixteenth-century music.⁷ In John Dowland's *First Booke of Songes or Ayres* (1597), Thomas Campion wrote a dedicatory epigram comparing

⁴ Gary Tomlinson, 'Pastoral and musical magic in the birth of Opera', in *Opera and the Enlightenment* (eds.) Thomas Bauman and Marita Petzoldt McClymonds (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 13.

⁵ John Warden suggests that Christian doctrine is the only point of reference. The myth will either diverge from it (thus be the works of the devil) or conform to it (and thus be God's prefiguration of the truth). Warden, *Orpheus: The Metamorphoses of a Myth* (1982), p. xi.

⁶ Mellers, *The masks of Orpheus*, p. 4.

⁷ Mellers, *The masks of Orpheus*, p. 9.

Dowland to Orpheus:

*Famam, posteritas quam dedit Orpheo
Dolandi meliùs Musica dat sibi,
Fugaces reprimens archetypes sonos;
Quas & delitias praebuit auribus,
Ispis conspicuas luminibus facit.*⁸

(Fame, which later ages gave to Orpheus, Music gives better to you, O Dowland,

Restraining the fleeting sounds by writing down the delights that Orpheus offered to our ears, making them visible to our eyes).⁹

Implicit in Campion's epigram is the suggestion that Dowland's music captures the spirit of Orpheus. Music, Campion writes, offers Dowland more than eternal fame: by appealing to both our visual and auditory senses, Dowland's music has the power to move our hearts and minds, which ultimately promotes health in the body. Since this was believed to affect our *spiritus*, Campion infers that Dowland has captured the Orphic healing power of music, the power of music to control nature. Dowland himself, in his dedication to Sir George Carey, writes that harmony, 'which is skilfullie exprest by Instruments', easily 'stirs vp the minds of the hearers'. From the 'heauenly Art of musicke', he argues, the poems of Linus and Orpheus were framed so that Plato defined melody to consist of 'harmony, number and words; harmony naked of it selfe, words the ornament of harmony, number the common friend & vniter of them both'.¹⁰

⁸ John Dowland (1597) *The first booke of songes or ayres of fowre partes with tablature for the lute so made that all the partes together, or either of them seuerally may be song to the lute, orpherion or viol de gambo. Composed by Iohn Dowland lutenist and Batcheler of musicke in both the vniversities. Also an inuention by the say'd author for two to pale vpon one lute.* [London] : Printed by Peter Short, dwelling on Bredstreet hill at the sign of the Starre, 1597. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>, Early English Books on line, eebo citation: 99842400, accessed 06.08.2012. All citations are to this edition.

⁹ Translated by Christopher Whittick, senior archivist at East Sussex County Council and Dr. Lesley Boatwright, 31 January 2009.

¹⁰ Dowland, 'Dedication', in *The first booke of songes*.

Thomas Campion, physician, one-time law student, poet and musician – both as composer and theorist of harmonic and poetic metrification – occupies a special place in literary history as one of the finest lyrical poets of his era.¹¹ As such, his range of interest was considerable, but following his death his works sank into obscurity. However, in recent decades scholars such as Miles Merwin Kastendieck, Edward Lowbury, Timothy Salter and Alison Young, David Lindley and Walter R. Davis have sought to re-examine Campion's works, exploring his theories on composition, the range of his poems and medical practice.¹² It is now acknowledged that his ayres, his musical poems – which were either erotic or overtly religious in nature – represent the most significant effort of his era in transforming the standard sixteenth-century musico-poetic form of repetitive rhyming and madrigals.¹³

What sets Campion apart from other lyrists are his literary efforts: he was the first author to state the harmonic ideas that were replacing the contrapuntal theory of the Middle Ages, although his idea of marrying music and poetry was not unique since the majority of Elizabethan and Stuart lyrics were written to be set to music.¹⁴ Campion's ayres, according to the title-page of *The Third and Fovrth Booke of Ayres*, are meant to be 'exprefsed by one Voyce, with a Violl, Lute, or Orpharion'.¹⁵ This echoes the monophonic (composed of a single melodic line) nature of ancient Greek and Roman music where the Pythagorean

¹¹ David Lindley, *Thomas Campion, Medieval and Renaissance Authors 7* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), 'Preface', p. ix.

¹² Miles Merwin Kastendieck, *England's Musical Poet, Thomas Campion* (New York, Russell & Russell, 1963); Edward Lowbury, Timothy Salter and Alison Young, *Thomas Campion Poet, Composer, Physician* (London: Chato & Windus, 1970); Lindley, *Thomas Campion* and Walter R. Davis, *The Works of Thomas Campion* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1970).

¹³ Paul J. Davis, 'Thomas Campion: Lyrick-Doctor in Physicke', *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 208, No. 1 (April 7, 1969), pp. 115-119, p. 115.

¹⁴ Pattison, *Music and Poetry*, p. 36.

¹⁵ Percival Vivian, *The Works of Thomas Campion*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), p. 157. All citations are to this edition.

assertion of harmonic ratios could be demonstrated on a single string to reflect cosmic harmony and proportion as I have argued in chapter 1.¹⁶ At a philosophic level, music theorists such as Campion could ‘tame’ singing and instrument playing through a metaphorical transcendence from speech via music to the music of the spheres.¹⁷ The singularity of this type of music creates an Orphic role for the singer since it shapes the physical world with voice and lyre: the manipulation of the instrument strings served as a visual reminder of the origins of cosmic harmony, affecting how people listened to the music.¹⁸

While Percival Vivian incorporates all of Campion’s known Latin epigrams and poetry in his Oxford edition of *Campion’s Works*, he does not include accompanying English translations. In particular, one of the most notable features of the revised 1619 edition of his *Thomas Campiani Poetata* by Richard Field at London in 1595 contains a large number of epigrams dealing with medical subjects.¹⁹ The revised edition contains a plethora of epigrams on symptoms, diseases and remedies and this shift of emphasis – reflecting a physician’s outlook on life—appears to verify Vivian’s assertion that Campion qualified as a physician sometime between 1602 and 1606.²⁰

¹⁶ Smith, *The Acoustic World*, p. 296.

¹⁷ Smith, *The Acoustic World*, p. 138.

¹⁸ Smith, *The Acoustic World*, p. 296.

¹⁹ *Tho: Campiani Epigrammatum Libri II, Umbra, Elegiarum Liber Unus* by Richard Griffin at London, Campion, *Works*, p. 235 and p. 327.

²⁰ Dana F. Sutton, *The Latin Poetry of Thomas Campion*, a hypertext critical edition by The University of California, Irvine. First posted December 24, 1997, revised version posted May 23, 1999. <http://www.Philological.bham.ac.uk/campion/introduction.html>, accessed 12.04.2008; Campion, *Works*, p. xxxix.

Campion's Musico-Poetic Aesthetics

Campion strove to portray universal harmony in his lyrics, masques and Latin poetry.

Within a Neoplatonic framework he persuades us – with his references to Orpheus and the healing power of song – that music is an emblem of creativity and order: a microcosmic imitation of the rapturous music of the spheres, and a Pythagorean mathematical model of universal order.²¹ Music, therefore, is an integral part of his medicine, ‘Love and sweete beautie makes the stubborn milde/And the coward fearlesse’, (VII, *Works*, p. 23) the poetic voice sings. In the dedication of his treatise on four-part counterpoint, Campion praises the practice of music in medicine exemplified by Galen, the ‘first of Physitions’, who ‘became so expert Musition, that he could not containe himselfe, but needes he must apply all the proportions of Musicke to the vncertaine motions of the pulse’.²²

Campion developed an interdependent relationship between poetry and music, a musico-poetic aesthetic where each art compliments, but does not dominate, the other. Describing this intimate relationship between the two sister arts, Campion explains to the Reader in his *Two Bookes of Ayres* (ca. 1623) that, ‘I have chiefly aymed to couple my Words and Notes lovingly together, which will be much for him to doe that hath not power over both’.²³ As a poet-composer, Campion was primarily concerned with the auditory imagination: the lyric as epigram was not merely a poetic conceit but a radical new way of creating poetry and music as an undifferentiated unit of sound.²⁴ Given that song contains both an intellectual concept and a sensory perception, Campion used it both as a metaphor

²¹ John T. Irwin, ‘Thomas Campion and the Musical Emblem’, *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, Vol. 10, No.1 The English Renaissance (Winter, 1970), p. 136.

²² Campion, *Works*, p. 191.

²³ Campion, *Works*, p. xli and p.115.

²⁴ Davis, *The Works of Thomas Campion*, p. xxiii.

for unity – since universal harmony is concordant in the soul of man – and as a sustaining element in his lyric poetry. Captivated by the varieties of sound and the ways in which music could emphasise the lyrics, Campion was more concerned with making an auditory impact on his audience.²⁵ Thus his music may be said to nourish his words, for he emphasises the interpretative value of music and how it evoked emotion.

Music and poetry share a common root in classical mythology: it is thought that the first poetry was sung, and tradition told how Orpheus and Arion enchanted their listeners by words accompanied by the lyre.²⁶ With the Renaissance's renewed interest in classical Greek culture, the knowledge that Greek lyrics had been sung strengthened the cultural impetus in trying to unite these two art forms although the relationship between them was always to remain complex. While Bruce Patterson suggests that the two art forms were closely linked for centuries influencing, and to some extent dependent upon each other, John Stevens argues that the relationship between the courtly arts of music and poetry was at best tenuous in the Middle Ages.²⁷ Elizabethan vocal writing, he points out, represented a 're-union' between two separate arts'.²⁸ It has been argued that certain qualities found in the Elizabethan lyric suggest that the poetry is waiting for the music to give it tone and emphasis and Campion, England's 'musical poet', strives to achieve this with prosody: uniting the music to the poetry through the coalescence of melody to the sense of the

²⁵ Paul Davis, 'Thomas Campion: Lyrick-Doctor', p. 118.

²⁶ Thomas J. Mathiesen, *Apollo's Lyre: Greek Music and Music Theory in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), p. 74.

²⁷ John Stevens, *Music & Poetry in the Early Tudor Court* (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1961), pp. 35-38.

²⁸ John Stevens, 'The Elizabethan Madrigal: "Perfect Marriage" or "Uneasy Flirtation"' in *Essays and Studies* (ed.) B. Willey (London: John Murray, 1958), p. 21.

stanza.²⁹

Campion's poetry does not rely on visual imagery but rather he uses music to develop his poetic form and underpin his philosophy, for music was not merely about composition but also a way of understanding the universe.³⁰ His conception of the divine cosmos is an acoustic one for, 'to his sweet Lute Apollo sung the motions of the Spheares/ The wondrous order of the Stars, whose course diuides the yeares/And all the Mysteries aboue' (VIII, *Works*, p. 178). The notion that the universe –nature– is an aural experience is one that Campion extends to the physical senses so that the listener feels the movements and emotions of his work. His poetry emphasises sound, thus breath may be 'doleful', (I, *Works*, p. 106) and 'sad harts' will 'sigh', he writes, in his *Songs of Mourning* ('To The Most Illvstriouvs and Mighty Fredericke', *Works*, p. 108).

This organisation of sound into rhythm was essential to Campion's lyric poetry because it provides the correct harmonic, melodic and rhythmical nature essential to both art forms.³¹ Rhyme appears to take secondary importance to the cadence of Campion's work for rhythm and proportion were fundamental to the composition of the air: his ayres were written in measured sounds. While this was contemporaneous with other sixteenth-century lyric writing, it has been argued that Campion, more than any other song writer of his era, was the poet of the auditory rather than visual imagination.³²

²⁹ Catherine Ing argues that the lyrics of the Elizabethan age were the products of highly conscious artists, often working to rule, always well aware of the effect they wished to produce, and deliberately choosing certain means towards their chosen ends. Catherine Ing, *Elizabethan Lyrics A study in the development of English metres and their relation to poetic effect* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1968), p. 9; Hallett Smith, *Elizabethan Poetry: A Study in Conventions, Meaning, and Expression* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 268; Kastendieck, *Thomas Campion*, p. 63.

³⁰ Finney, *Musical Backgrounds for English Literature*, p. ix.

³¹ Plato describes harmony as the reconciliation of opposites, "Music, like medicine, creates agreement by producing concord and love between these various opposites." Plato, *Symposium*, 187c, in *Complete Works*, p. 471.

³² Davis, *Works*, p. xiv.

Although England had no formal academy in developing humanist and Platonic theories, English literary and musical culture were influenced by music from the Netherlands, and the work of the Italian and French academies, especially the French *Pléiade* and Florentine *Camerata*.³³ Ronsard, a *Pléiade* poet, was a friend of the Earl of Leicester, the uncle of Sir Philip Sidney – believed to be a member of the group known as the Areopagus –with poetic aims similar to those of the *Pléiade* and *Accademia della Nuova Poesia*.³⁴ Thomas Nash, a member of the Areopagus, was an acquaintance of Campion since his Cambridge days, whilst John Dowland provided Campion with another link to the Sidney circle.³⁵ The influence of the Areopagus is discernible in Campion's argument for the adaptation of quantitative metres in English poetry, as well as equating poetic and musical rhythm in his *Observations in the Art of English Poesy* (1602), a debt he acknowledges in epigrams to Sidney and Spenser.³⁶

By the sixteenth century, English musicians had learned how to add relevant contrapuntal texture to the song melody, adding a dimension of emotional expression and moving away from the plainsong linked to Medievalism and the church.³⁷ The change and secularization of the musical tradition was reflected in other art forms and writers such as Sidney sought new means of expression in their poetry.³⁸ Using the Petrarchan convention as its model, poetic imagery focused on the individual's emotional intensity that was matched with the musical equivalent, such as the use of chromaticism to suggest

³³ Pattison, *Music and Poetry*, p. 122.

³⁴ Pattison, *Music and Poetry*, p. 62.

³⁵ Campion, *Works*, p. xxvii.

³⁶ Pattison, *Music and Poetry*, p. 71.

³⁷ Pattison, *Music and Poetry*, p. 100.

³⁸ Ing, *Elizabethan Lyrics*, p. 23.

poignancy, melancholy or pain.³⁹ This is a technique Campion uses repeatedly in his ayres to add another emotional dimension, or expressiveness to the words.⁴⁰

The amalgamation of music and poetry had to develop in a manner in which neither art detracted from the other: words had to be heard over the music and, reciprocally, music had to stress emotion by the cadences of the melody. Campion, aware that the intellectual appeal of music was different from poetry, believed that sung verse should be kept simple if both arts were to be combined successfully.⁴¹

Two pathways of literary criticism developed in response to the new fusion: the French school was concerned that the form of poetry and rhythm of music should be correct whilst the Italian school argued that the emotions should be natural.⁴² Campion was indebted to the work of Jean-Antoine de Baïf's *Académie de Poésie et de Musique* for the musical humanism in his *Observations in the Art of English Poesy* (1602). This work –the only treatise on verse written by a musician in this period– examined new ways to stylise poetry as well as looking at ways of setting poetry to music.⁴³ Campion believed that one art could illuminate the other and he aimed to achieve the perfect union of verse and music by scanning verse quantitatively as well as accentually. ‘In ioyning of words to harmony’, he argues, ‘there is nothing more offensive to the eare than to place a long syllable with a short note, or a short syllable with a long note, though in the last the vowel often beares it out’.⁴⁴

³⁹ Pattison describes the music of poetry as ‘word-painting’: the wish to give emotional meaning to music was a manifestation of that quickened interest in the psychology of the individual which is at the very centre of the Renaissance. Pattison, *Music and Poetry*, p. 101.

⁴⁰ Stevens, ‘The Elizabethan Madrigal’, in *Essays and Studies*, p. 26.

⁴¹ Pattison, *Music and Poetry*, p. 142.

⁴² Pattison, *Music and Poetry*, p. 127.

⁴³ Ing, *Elizabethan Lyrics*, p. 13.

⁴⁴ Campion, *Works*, p. 35.

As a Latin scholar, Campion believed that he could incorporate classical metres in vernacular poetry; the verse line, he argues, should be the unit of time and the metrical feet fractions of this unit.⁴⁵ Following the example of the French Academician's theory of measuring music to the quantity of the words, Campion argued:

when we speake simply of number, we intend only the disseuer'd quantity; but when we speake of a Poeme written in number, we consider not only the distinct number of the sillables, but also their value, which is contained in the length or shortnes of their sound.⁴⁶

The idea of amalgamating verse with mathematical metre to achieve poetic harmony was not unique to Campion, for he is following the tradition that believed the divine mathematics were the root of universal proportion and concord, as I have previously discussed.⁴⁷

The importance of number, derived from classical sources, had been expounded by philosophers such as St Augustine, Boethius and Ficino and its significance on cosmological and religious theories had already made an impact in English literature by the end of the sixteenth century. George Puttenham, for example, wrote that 'all things stand by proportion, and that without it nothing could stand to be good or beautiful'. This is because, he continues, 'God made the world by number, measure, and weight'.⁴⁸ Importantly, Puttenham notes that 'some for weight say tune' and this encapsulates Campion's own conviction that in nature and art, order and harmony must be similar to accommodate the Divine symmetry of the universe.⁴⁹ 'The world is made by Simmetry and proportion, and is

⁴⁵ Lindley argues that his Treatise shows Campion struggling to be true to the actual complexities of verbal rhythm despite the inadequacies of his classical preoccupations. Lindley, *Campion*, p.161

⁴⁶ Campion, *Works*, p. 35.

⁴⁷ Chapter 1, p. 52.

⁴⁸ George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* in G. Smith *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, Vol. II (London: Oxford University Press, 1904), p. 67. All citations are to this edition.

⁴⁹ Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, p. 67.

in that respect compared to Musick, and Musick to Poetry', Campion writes, reflecting the Boethian principles where music was conceptualized as a mirror to universal order.⁵⁰

For Campion, number in poetry and music is the essence and functions on two levels: it meant the actual number by counting of syllables in a line but also it had a philosophical dimension which distinguishes it from its concrete quality. Numbers in music represented order, proportion and mysticism.⁵¹ Campion asks, 'what music can there be where there is not proportion observed?'⁵² Music, like the geometrical structures of the universe, was thought to be immutable, and this immutability allowed mankind to dwell on God in a harmonious relationship.⁵³

Campion's Neoplatonic interpretation of music revealed God and the working of nature to him. Music is more than poetic harmony, he believed, since it presented the Pythagorean tradition of expressing the universe in number, thereby allowing mankind access to the infinite or Divine. For Campion, God's act of Creation is replicated in music: 'Come, let vs sound with melody, the praises/ Of the kings king, omnipotent creator', he writes, for God is the ultimate 'Author of number that hath the entire world in Harmonie framed' (XXI, *Works*, p. 17). This ayre is not simply Campion's affirmation of Neoplatonic philosophy for his verses follow Sapphic metre, demonstrating clearly his intent in naturalising classical metres to contemporary vernacular verse.⁵⁴ His choice of metrical form echoes the ancient Greek belief that number equates to harmony: a gift from Apollo who 'first taught number and true harmony'.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Campion, *Works*, p. 35; Chapter 1, p. 65.

⁵¹ Finney, *Musical Backgrounds*, pp. 36-37.

⁵² Campion, *Works*, p. 35.

⁵³ Finney, *Musical Backgrounds*, p. 62.

⁵⁴ Lowbury, Salter and Young, *Thomas Campion*, p. 85; David Lindley, *Thomas Campion*, p. 78.

⁵⁵ Campion, *Works*, p. 41.

Campion's use of the Sapphic metre and his strong identification with Orphic mythology intentionally invokes, I argue, that aspect of the legend that insists that Orpheus' power survived his death. While Orpheus' heart and lyre sang as they floated down the Hebrus to the sea, his head was borne by the winds to Lesbos, an island closely associated with the lyric poetry of Sappho and regarded as the most tuneful of all the islands.⁵⁶ Here Orpheus' head became famous as a giver of oracles.

The dismembered Orphic body also symbolizes the dichotomy between the body and soul, a legacy that is passed onto European Christianity from ancient Greek civilisation. Theologians interpreted the Orphic songs, believed to have calmed wild beasts, as an analogy for calming the bestial aspect of human nature. More importantly, however, Orpheus was a figure who descended into darkness (Hades) and was reborn. This is the most significant analogy with Christ, contextualizing Orpheus within the Christian cultural hierarchy. His musical power over nature and animals is transferred to Christ who becomes the musician- healer who maintains harmony in the universe.⁵⁷ It is these tropes that Campion draws on in this ayre, for he invokes the 'holy Sprit, to 'penetrate, reuiue me'. As the transformed Orpheus, Christ becomes the guide to the afterlife, the psychopomp of the Christian soul, for the poetic voice pleads 'to guide my soule' so that he may be rescued from 'earthly darkness' (XXI, *Works*, p. 18).

In the early modern era the belief in Orpheus' power to restore life to the dead through music was intertwined with the Platonic ideal of love, an idea that was also prevalent in Hermetic philosophy. Astrological and alchemical beliefs, closely associated with the Hermetic tradition, accepted the occult effects of music on the natural, vital and

⁵⁶ John Block Friedman in *Orpheus in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 214.

⁵⁷ Warden, *Orpheus: The Metamorphoses of a Myth*, p. 6.

animal spirits as I have previously discussed.⁵⁸ Evidence of Ficino's musico-medical model – he believed that music could transmit a celestial influence– is discernible in Campion's works; for example, the poet's description of his beloved observes that, 'when her sad planet raignes/ Froward she bee' (XIII, *Works*, p. 13). Since each planet was believed to possess a specific dominant emotion, their 'moods' could be imitated in *musica instrumentalis* because both shared the world spirit. This pervading universal music – or cosmic breath that defined the universe in terms of musical proportions – was believed to be inhaled and could, therefore, influence or even change human emotion and characteristics.⁵⁹

Music's power was also celebrated in alchemy where Cornelius Agrippa's analysis of music and number proved to be significantly influential in transmitting this tradition. The motion of air set up by sound had the ability to move the body and spirits: emotion was believed to be accompanied by motion of the spirits, as I demonstrated in Chapter 3.⁶⁰ Music, like the cosmic spirit, was believed to move in a circular motion imitating the divine harmony and reflecting the Platonic notion that the soul of man and the universe are similarly harmonious.⁶¹ Love and music were both characterized in this manner: the analogy of a stone dropped into water, making a series of concentric circles, was a familiar one, used by writers such as Donne, Chapman and Campion; the 'rosie cheeckes' and 'euer smiling geyes' of Campion's beloved, are expressed as 'spheares and beds where Loue in triumph lies' in his *Two Bookes of Ayres* (XX, *Works*, p. 144).⁶²

⁵⁸ Chapter 2, pp. 87-88.

⁵⁹ Finney suggests that a deluge of writing believing in the efficacy of music to call down celestial spirit followed the translation of Agrippa's *Occult Philosophy* in 1651. Finney, *Musical Backgrounds*, p. 112.

⁶⁰ Finney, *Musical Backgrounds*, p. 146; Chapter 2, p. 92.

⁶¹ Plato, *Timaeus*, 47c-d, in *Complete Works*, p. 1250.

⁶² Finney, *Musical backgrounds*, p. 77.

The seductive power of voice is one of the recurring themes in Campion's lyric poetry. This power could restore harmony to the soul, imitating the Orphic power of breathing life into stones and trees. As Henry Reynolds notes in *Mythomystes* 'there is nothing of greater efficacy then the hymnes of Orpheus'.⁶³ Importantly, the impact of sound on the listener was significant because music and voice are auditory sensations. 'The eare', Campion writes, 'is a rationall sence and a chiefe judge of proportion'.⁶⁴ He engages with this acoustic phenomenon since the sound of poetry is dependent on stress, language, metrical feet, word syllables, type of verse and organisation of time in relation to speech sounds. 'Let well-tun'd words amaze with harmonie diuine' (XII, *Works*, p. 166), the poetic voice entreats, for Campion had a strong sense of time which enabled him to choose words in which the syllables came close to meeting the needs of classical feet.⁶⁵

While many of Campion's lyric poems dwell on the contrast between heavenly joy and earthly love, they are also concerned with the potential impact love can have on the body: the signs and symptoms of the lover's chills, fevers, paleness, erratic behaviour and moods and the consequential loss of appetite and malaise. Ovid's *Remedia Amoris* – in which the causes and cures of lovesickness are described – may have been a source for Campion since love, he suggests, can bring both joy and anguish.⁶⁶ The 'vnkind euent of loue' (V, *Works*, p. 8) transforms in his later ayres into a eulogy to love, where he admonishes the listener to 'tune thy Musicke to thy hart' since 'love can wondrous things affect' (VIII, *Works*, p. 121).

⁶³ Reynolds, *Mythomystes*, in *Critical Essays*, p. 166.

⁶⁴ Campion, *Works*, p. 36.

⁶⁵ Ing, *Elizabethan Lyrics*, p. 60.

⁶⁶ Jerome Mazzaro, *Transformations in the Renaissance English Lyric* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1970), p. 38.

Since love governs the universe and music regulates all things, Campion's poetry acknowledges that music is love because love is harmony and harmony is music.⁶⁷

Through balancing the music and mood of his words, Campion reflects the Platonic union of music and love where 'music, like medicine, creates agreement by producing concord and love between these various opposites.'⁶⁸ Plato argues that poetry and music are similar to medicine because they are all guided by the god of Love in the search for physiological and spiritual harmony. Therefore the physician's task is, he believes, to reconcile and establish 'mutual love between the most basic bodily elements'.⁶⁹

This philosophic understanding of music's therapeutic benefits is particularly evident in Campion's *Third and Fourth Booke of Ayres* (circa 1617) where his work demonstrates a profound depth of understanding about the physical effects that emotions can have on the body.⁷⁰ In his opening address Campion dedicates this book to Sir Thomas Monson – who had been imprisoned after his implication in the scandalous Overbury Murder – and who had subsequently suffered ill-health. He was treated by Campion who refers to Monson's languishing illness: 'I whose trust and care you durst commit/ Your pined health, when Arte despayr'd of it.'⁷¹ As a physician, Campion knew that musical harmony was a metaphor for deciphering humoral equipoise. But music also reflected the life of man: both have a beginning, middle and end. Believed to reflect human emotion, music's cadences reflected the highs and lows of human feeling but most importantly, could also articulate the inevitability of death.⁷² Campion intends this book to be an aid to help Monson recover

⁶⁷ Finney, *Musical backgrounds*, p. 77.

⁶⁸ Plato, *Symposium*, 186c, in *Complete Works*, p. 471.

⁶⁹ Plato, *Symposium*, 186c, in *Complete Works* p. 470.

⁷⁰ The *Third Booke of Ayres* and the *Fourth Booke of Ayres* were published as one volume, Campion, *Works*, p. 157.

⁷¹ Campion, *Works*, p. 160.

⁷² Finney, *Musical Backgrounds*, p. 41.

from his misfortune, for the light straynes of Musicke' will 'sweetly with the wide-spreading plumes of love' remove Monson's 'pensiuenesse'.⁷³

It has been suggested that the lyric poems of this book, 'these youth-born Ayres' that are 'prisoned in this Booke', should be read in this context for they dwell on the human condition: misfortune and disenchantment; the wounds that love 'hath justly made', juxtaposed with the enchanted music and love that cures pain.⁷⁴ However, Campion's remarkable perception and understanding of the emotional benefits of music is neither new nor unique: the multiple editions of Pierre De La Primaudaye's *The French Academie*, (1586) which suggests an easy accessibility and popularity – commends Euripides, for 'musicke ought rather to be sent for, when men are angrie, or mournem that when they are feasting or making merry'.⁷⁵

What is evident in this final book of ayres is the increased medical terminology Campion uses, as well as greater attention on the body as the locus of an afflicted construction. Words such as 'plague' and 'maladies' creep into the ayres, describing the poet's emotional and physical state.⁷⁶ The vocalization of poetic anguish suggests that the ayre provides a cathartic escape; the 'voyce' which 'Musicke doth beget', providing 'comfort neuer wanting' (XIII, *Works*, p. 166). The principles of Galenic medicine are discernible through Campion's assertion that the left side of the body is associated with

⁷³ Campion, *Works*, p. 160; Lindley, *Thomas Campion*, p. 25.

⁷⁴ Lindley, *Thomas Campion*, p. 25; Campion, *Works*, p. 160 and p. 181.

⁷⁵ Peter De La Primaudaye, *The French Academie*, trans. B.T. Bowes. (Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms Verlag, Anglistica & Americana series 1972), p. 202; A.W. Pollard and G.K. Redgrave, *A Short-Titled Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland and Ireland and of English books printed abroad 1475-1640* (London: Printed by arrangement with the Bibliographical Society for B. Quaritch Ltd., 1926). The first part, translated by T. Bowes, ran into five editions (1586, 1589, 1594, 1602, 1614); there were two editions of the second part (1598, 1605); and one of the third part, translated by R. Dolman (1601). The English collected edition is *The French Academie; fully finished in foure books*, (1618).

⁷⁶ Campion, *Works*, p. 177 and p. 186.

weakness, 'a heate I finde/ Like thirstlonging, that doth bide/ Euer on my weaker side/ Where they say my heart doth moue'(IX, *Works*, p. 177). Within this medical model he provides a commentary throughout the ayres on sex, 'bloudlesse sicknesse', the pain of childbirth, weaning, and impotence.⁷⁷

One of the most frequent medical metaphors Campion uses in the last book of ayres is the notion of hidden wounds which cannot heal without divine aid, 'a wound long hid growes past recure', the lyric poet sings (VI, *Works*, p. 135). This is particularly significant for the poetic voice directs Monson to turn to God, the Divine physician, to heal his physical and spiritual self. The latter builds on Campion's earlier assertions of evil as the 'poisoned baytes of sinne' (V, *Works*, p. 19). It is only through God, Campion stresses, that our 'sinne-sicke soules by him shall be recurred' (III, *Works*, p. 118).⁷⁸ While the act of curing or being 'recurred' is one that Campion repeatedly uses, the ultimate cure is God to 'cure our grieve' (II, *Works*, p. 133). Campion's perception of the relationship between God and man – mirroring that of Fludd, Maier and Ficino – may be defined in terms of music, the harmonious model of divine accordance. Music, as an image of divine harmony, has the power to 'recure' the soul; 'with one touch of grace cure all my paine' (XV, *Works*, p. 167).

Campion's ayres may be interpreted as a means of 'recuring' the effects of physical and psychological 'wounds'; of striving to create a harmonious whole. This is, I argue, his interpretation of the Ficinian desire of the human soul to ascend to the Original One. Certainly, his interest in the divine music and mathematics of Platonic theology, which is prevalent throughout his work, suggests that the purpose of his music is to elevate the

⁷⁷ Campion, *Works*, p. 187, p. 167, p. 183, p. 186.

⁷⁸ Campion, *Works*, p. 121 and p. 118.

listener. By enabling the listener to have access to divine harmony through his musico-poetics, Campion effectively 'heals' the soul.

His images of wounding and healing by love are another prevalent feature in the final book of ayres. He strikes a particular resonance with his images of grief 'past recure fooles try to heale' (III, *Works*, p. 177). Juxtaposed with this image of quackery and false hope, Campion offers the only true cure, God, whose mercy and power will 'sweeten eu'ry note' (VII, *Works*, p. 120). Just as Shakespeare demonstrates in *Pericles*, Campion likewise expresses the danger that untreated grief can lead to. The 'first step to madnesse', he reflects, 'is the excesse of sadnesse' (XIII, *Works*, p. 182). The best medicine for rejected love, he believes, is the ability to forget. To this end the poetic voice yearns for the '*Lethes* water', the 'best med'cine' for the 'pain'd' to loose all thought of 'past delight' (XVI, *Works*, p. 183). By recalling the river of Oblivion from the underworld of Greek myth, Campion evokes the memory of Orpheus and poetically they share anguish for lost love.

However, just as love causes pain, so too has it the power to enchant and charm, suggesting the acoustic power of words and sounds to captivate the beloved. Campion elaborates on the idea of enchanted music when he invokes the 'Fayries' music' (XVIII, *Works*, p. 169). His use of repeated assonance and alliteration throughout this ayre conveys the sense of an enchanted song with the magic to 'melt her hard hart with your melodious sound'. Campion's replication of the word 'thrice' evokes the magical power of number, lending a sense of incantation. Campion takes on the role of magician, who appeals for a transformation in his beloved's response. As lyric poet he has a dual role: his Orphic power is used to animate his beloved's feelings and his song transports the listener to a dimension where the song is part of the harmonic whole. This enchanted appeal for universal love through the power of music conjures up the fairy blessing in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer*

Night's Dream where Oberon and Titania bless the wedding feast with song, marking resolution of the drama through the restoration of lost harmony, as Puck tells us, to 'restore amends' (5.2.16) after the spiritual transformation of the characters.

Miles Merwin Kastendieck describes Campion as a great musical poet.⁷⁹ This is achieved, by Campion's ability to derive his melody from the inflection of the spoken word. This skill, combined with his medical knowledge, provides a potent medium for Campion to express a profound understanding of the complexities of human nature.⁸⁰ His work is a reflection of the change in Elizabethan and Jacobean philosophical thought and demonstrates a new and penetrating vision in the history of ideas. His work may be seen as a product of the convergence of Continental European and English cultural traditions in which words and notes achieve a perfect union. This marriage of words and notes sustains the therapeutic and consolatory intent of the ayres since the expression of human emotions are encapsulated and illuminated with the accompanying music.

The vitality of cultural expression at the end of the sixteenth century reflected a transitional period of an era in which a tension existed between a growing humanism that contemplated an awareness of individual consciousness – the belief in the power of the individual to control their own destiny – and the Christian hierarchy of the Middle Ages. There was no sharp delineation in this transitional process but rather interpenetration between the old and the new.⁸¹ This new individualism was echoed in music through new values in musical notes and a change in how songs were sung. Ficino's divine *furor* – where he perceives the soul receiving the divine music of God and the movement of the heavens

⁷⁹ Kastendieck, *England's Musical Poet*, p. 161.

⁸⁰ Kastendieck, *England's Musical Poet*, p. 161.

⁸¹ Wilfred Mellers, *Harmonious Meeting, Meeting A study of the Relationship between English Music, Poetry and Theatre, c. 1600-1900* (London: Dobson Books Ltd, 1965), p. 19.

through the human ear – was, he believed, reflected in the singer's voice. The union of poetry and music thus provided the perfect means of expression for this imitation of *musica universalis*: the listener was persuaded that the audible sounds of music were an expression of a divine intelligence manifesting through the various dimensions of creation.

Campion was one of the forerunners in exploring the musical imagination within the confines of human experience: he deals with man's potentialities and explores man's essential nature. His poetic rhythms although varied, never lose the inflections of the speaking voice, yet, at the same time, they flowed spontaneously with the accompanying music, because the word structure in many of his lyrics follows a similar pattern of imagery, rhythm and emotional contours to that of the melody.⁸² While his lyrics are unpretentious and simple, scholars are still unsure if Campion wrote the words to fit the music or vice versa but each art form has the ability to stand alone as a separate entity from the other. His chief originality is the musical quality of his lyric poetry because it strives to achieve perfection between the words and the 'sound' of the poems and the magic of his work lies largely in Campion's ability to achieve this.

Although they are moulded in the generalized conventions of late Elizabethan and Jacobean lyric poetry, Campion's ayres reveal an extraordinary commentary on emotions and moods ranging from depression and madness to love and euphoria.⁸³ The overriding desire for harmony accompanied by the enchanted musical magic in his ayres, suggests an Orphic power to move the listener: his poetry and music elevate the listener to the

⁸² Mazzaro argues that the poetry appears deliberately designed to allow for the anticipatory drive of music. Mazzaro, *Transformations in the Renaissance English Lyric*, p. 129.

⁸³ Lowbury, Slater and Young suggest that it is significant that in the twenty-one poems by Campion in Rosseter's *Booke of Ayres*, which was published several years before he took his medical degree, there are no references to wounds or healing, and very few images to suggest the impact of medical experience. Lowbury, Slater and Young, *Thomas Campion*, p. 182.

spirituality of the gods.⁸⁴ In his *Epigrammatum* (1610) Campion goes as far as to identify himself with Apollo, the god of music and healing: ‘Ancient writers’, he claims ‘say that Apollo practices three arts, all of them I practice too and will always practice; now they all recognise Campion the musician, the poet, the doctor’.⁸⁵ Although this assertion might be described as arrogantly self-promoting, it was not until the rebirth of lyricism in the Romantic Period that music and poetry were united again in a manner that Campion had achieved in Renaissance England.

Campion’s Court Masques

While Campion’s lyric poetry conveys a sense of an intimate relationship to the addressee, his masques were created for an elite audience to magnify the splendour and aura of royalty.⁸⁶ Described as the court equivalent of the city pageants and country harvest festivals, masques were indoor entertainments in which music was the prime medium for achieving acoustic unity, since it was the modulator between speech and environmental sound.⁸⁷ Within an enclosed space, music had a ‘totalizing power’ for shaping and propagating sound.⁸⁸

The masques are read as both royal celebrations and as expressions of the nature of the obligations and perquisites of kingship.⁸⁹ They are, as Stephen Orgel points out, always topical: the ‘festal embodiments of the concept of monarchy’, that was an extension of the

⁸⁴ Katz, *The Powers of Music*, p. 112.

⁸⁵ Campion, *Works*, p. 259.

⁸⁶ Ian Spink, *English Song Dowland to Purcell* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1974), p. 53.

⁸⁷ Smith, *The Acoustic World*, p. 92.

⁸⁸ Smith, *The Acoustic World*, p. 267.

⁸⁹ Orgel, *The Illusion of Power, Political Theatre in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1975), p. 38.

royal mind.⁹⁰ While the geographical layout of the masque centred on the seated monarch with the aristocratic audience in attendance around him, the king was not merely a visual construction – to see and to be seen – but was the chief soundmark: he made his aural presence felt.⁹¹ Thus the central experience is concerned not with the performance of the masquers but rather with the interaction between the production and the monarch and the structural organisation around him.⁹²

The king's visual and auditory embodiment is replicated in the masque by the setting, music and the performers themselves: the human body is the link between visual and aural phenomena. While the body is a physical entity, it also produces sound through voice and listening.⁹³ Aristotle wrote that voice is the product of sound and soul, for nothing 'without soul gives voice'.⁹⁴ In the masques, sound could be represented as the Apollonian harmony of the spheres in contrast to, and distinctly separate from, the Dionysian bodily music – often represented in the antimasque.⁹⁵ Thus singing, reverberating inside the body and projecting outwardly into the surrounding space gives voice to character, providing a vivid hold on the imagination of the audience. This creative act mirrors cosmic order by providing auditory proof of the ontological principles that were believed to govern the universe.⁹⁶ Composed of distinct constituent parts – the masquing or disguised dancing, the verse and drama and the choreography, poetry and theatre – the masque's structure, based on a classical mythological story, was centred on the resolution of conflict.

⁹⁰ Orgel, *The Illusion of Power*, p. 43.

⁹¹ Smith, *The Acoustic World*, p. 94.

⁹² Orgel, *The Illusion of Power*, p. 14.

⁹³ Smith, *The Acoustic World*, p. 97.

⁹⁴ Aristotle, *De Anima* 420b, p. 178.

⁹⁵ Smith, *The Acoustic World*, p. 138.

⁹⁶ Smith, *The Acoustic World*, p. 294.

Under the Stuarts, these lavish entertainments took on a significant social and political role: their extravagance was viewed as an artistic representation of royal magnanimity.⁹⁷ They became a theatrical sphere of didacticism where a philosophical position could be argued as their allegories gave a higher meaning to court life by creating heroic roles for their patrons. The masques may be interpreted as vehicles for the power of art to persuade, transform and preserve since they offered an ideal medium to express a political commentary through the analogy of universal love and harmony.⁹⁸

Lord Hayes Maske

When James came to the throne in 1603 he was determined to unite his two kingdoms – England and Scotland – to create one Great Britain. As part of his policy of integration James encouraged the intermarriage of his English and Scottish nobility, believing it would promote a new sense of British identity.⁹⁹ The *Lord Hayes Maske*, performed on the 6 January 1607, was part of the celebrations honouring the first of these high-profile marriages: that of Lord Hayes, a Scottish nobleman and favourite of the King, to Honora Denny.¹⁰⁰

In the published edition Campion locates this masque within a Neoplatonic framework, for he references the divine application of number as the inspirational and

⁹⁷ Orgel, *The Illusion of Power*, p. 38.

⁹⁸ Orgel, *The Illusion of Power*, p. 40; Katz, *The Power of Music*, p. 112.

⁹⁹ Kevin Curran argues that the novelty of this policy cannot be underestimated. Moving the practice of Anglo-Scottish marriage to a status that had royal sanction highlighted the socio-political implications of James' new kingship in a very tangible way, Curran, 'Erotic Policy: King James, Thomas Campion, and the Rhetoric of Anglo-Scottish Marriage', *Journal for Early Modern Studies* 7.1 (2007), pp. 55-77.

¹⁰⁰ David Lindley, *Court Masques: Jacobean and Caroline Entertainments 1605-1640* Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 221.

universal power of love through music. He uses number symbolism in a conscious expansion of philosophical reconciliation with the authority of the ancient tradition, or *prisca theologia*. This spiritual doctrine was believed to generate – often through the mathematical model – the Pythagorean transcendental ideals of spiritual love or the ideal political state.¹⁰¹

Mathematics was believed to help understand the divine truths: the ideal order where the principle of universal correspondence shows how all parts correspond and work together. The harmony of the macrocosm could be replicated as harmony between body and soul if the passions and humours are reconciled in man. Since the four mathematical principles of number, geometry (measuring), music (harmony) and ‘celestial arithmetic’ (astronomy) create the decad – where all numbers are contained – number was believed to be magically more efficacious than anything else.¹⁰²

Three and its multiples are important in every step of the design of *Lord Hayes Maske* since the ‘Gods agree’ that the ‘best of numbers is contained in three’.¹⁰³ Holding similar ideas to Michael Maier about the power of the number three, Campion also believes that the transformative powers of the gods are implicit in this number. He suggests that within the construct of song he can weave a ‘triple spel’, decreeing that by joining ‘three by three’, Apollo’s knights will be returned to human form.¹⁰⁴ This anticipates the ‘solemne musick’ that ‘shall enchant the aire’, when Night commands the spell: ‘the last, and third of nine, touch, magic wand/ And give them back their formes’.¹⁰⁵ Forgiven for their transgression,

¹⁰¹ Christopher Butler, *Number Symbolism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1970), p. 50.

¹⁰² Butler, *Number Symbolism*, pp. 58-59 and p. 67.

¹⁰³ Campion, *Works*, p. 71.

¹⁰⁴ Campion, *Works*, p. 70.

¹⁰⁵ Campion, *Works*, pp. 70-71.

the masquers can only now perform their third dance suggesting the imperativeness of spiritual purification before completing the masque.

The allegory of three is a motif that Campion returns to repeatedly throughout the masque. While representing perfection, it also alludes to the tripartite nature of music itself as it was understood in the early modern period: *musica mundana, humana and instrumentalis*. This is reflected in the way the musicians are organised into three sets, as ‘if it were a triangle’.¹⁰⁶ Their physical organisation – representing the harmony between the three deities in the masque – also replicates the divine geometry and appropriates the image of the Christian Trinity, while simultaneously pointing to an older symbolism of creation. The uniting the male, represented as one, to female – represented as two- makes the analogy fitting for a wedding masque.¹⁰⁷

The discord of the three major deities –Phoebus, Diana and Venus –is resolved through the Orphic triad of Heaven and Earth united by Love.¹⁰⁸ David Lindley argues that part of the masque’s success is the resolution of discord between the warring planets: Diana (cold and moist) and Venus (warm and moist) need the hot dryness of Apollo to solve the first dispute and the mediation of Hesperus to resolve the second one.¹⁰⁹ Thus the masque engages with the concept of planetary influences, embracing the image of the harmonizing power of love as both a nuptial and universal principle of order and proportion. The *Lord Hayes Maske*’s celebration of this harmony is Campion’s attempt to present an ideal picture of an Anglo-Scottish union.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Campion, *Works*, p. 62.

¹⁰⁷ Lindley, *Court Masques*, p. 179 and p. 222.

¹⁰⁸ Lindley, *Court Masques*, p. 222.

¹⁰⁹ Lindley, *Thomas Campion*, p. 178.

¹¹⁰ Lindley, *Thomas Campion*, p. 181.

At the very core of this harmony lies musical healing. Campion explicitly sums this up in the masque's epigram addressed to Phoebus, when he asks, 'Why do you involve yourself in verse? Is it that verses, sportively written, do befit a physician, seated in his chair?' The answer, Campion tells us, is that Phoebus, is a musician, a physician, and a celebrated poet too', whose 'charm of poetry helps the sick when art demands it'. The 'one who has no taste for the poets song', Campion concludes, has 'not the skill of a physician'.¹¹¹ It is song and music, Campion suggests, that has the power to heal and regenerate the soul for music initiates every movement of the masque, underscoring its symbolic importance. Referring to himself as a 'Doctor of Physicke' on the title-page, Campion intimates that his masque captures a new harmony through the Orphic power of enchantment and transformation. Campion's Phoebean supplication also recalls the Ficinian assertion that Phoebus gave us 'two of the most powerful things, light and the lyre' (*De Vita* p. 379). Life could be prolonged through music, Ficino insisted, and Campion makes this assertion tangible through the potential regeneration that the masque offers.

As a multiple of three, by implication, the number nine must also contain a powerful magic.¹¹² There are nine enchanted trees representing the nine aristocratic masquers because nine is 'the best and amplest of numbers'. Campion's comparison of the number nine to the 'Diappason in Arithmetick', or the musical octave, suggests that the masque's resolution – like the numerical ordering of the universe – will be revealed through music.¹¹³ As a number 'framed by the Muses and Worthies', Campion suggests that nine is the

¹¹¹ Lindley, *Court Masques*, p. 225.

¹¹² Campion, *Works*, p. 71.

¹¹³ Campion, *Works*, p. 63.

number ‘most apt for change and diuersitie of proportion’, and this reveals, I argue, the fundamental intent of the masque: the celebration of a new unity or order.¹¹⁴

James’ political aspirations are evident in the opening song where the Neoplatonic themes of love, beauty and unity are expressed. The allusion to the purity and innocence of the white rose merged to the expression of love in the red rose sings of an image of enduring togetherness and unity. This sustained metaphor simultaneously refers to the historical merging of the warring houses of York and Lancaster through marriage, suggesting the regenerative power of love and fertility: ‘What strife can be where two are one?’ asks the song in Dialogue.¹¹⁵ It provides an alternative interpretation to James’ political vision: not an overturning of the old order, but rather a continuation of a historical precedent, for the ‘princelier flowers’ must ‘still be mingled’.¹¹⁶ Campion makes this assertion explicitly clear in his opening address to King James, adding a religious dimension so that the ‘blood sacrament’ becomes these ‘bloods deuinded mixe in one/ And with like consanguinities prepare/ The high, and euerliuing Vnion/ Tweene Scot and English.’¹¹⁷ Thus the red and white roses – the conventional attributes of Venus, goddess of love and marriage – are merged with a religious and political rhetoric as Campion strives to offer a balanced interpretation of a political reality.¹¹⁸ James is, Campion writes, the new Arthur that Merlin foretold, and this allusion to the magical legend of a united Britain sets the tone for the overriding theme of the masque.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Campion, *Works*, p. 63.

¹¹⁵ Campion, *Works*, p. 66.

¹¹⁶ Campion, *Works*, p. 65.

¹¹⁷ Campion, *Works*, p. 59.

¹¹⁸ Lindley, *Thomas Campion*, p. 180.

¹¹⁹ Campion, *Works*, p. 59.

However, the presence of anti-Scottish tone suggests an anxiety felt by the James' English subjects.¹²⁰ This anxiety is alluded to when Night berates the 'Despightful Flora'. Is there 'not enough of griefe/ That Cynthia's robd, but thou must grace the theefe?' she asks.¹²¹ The thieves – the Knights of Apollo –denote the male, Scottish aspect of the marriage. Their representation as thieves may be interpreted as an expression of English concern over the acquisition of wealth and brides by the Scottish contingent at James' court.¹²² As such, the masque voices sexual fears – the ravishment of the English feminine body – for the thieves profane Cynthia's 'holy forests'.¹²³ Night's revelation of Cynthia's punishment of the knights for 'seeking to seduce her Nymphes with loue', while reiterating this sexual anxiety, also highlights the need for the physical and spiritual growth of the Knights: they require a healing transformation.

It is Night – who is subject to Diana's authority – who 'prepares the way' for this transformation through song. As the daughter of Phanes – the creator and first ruler of the gods, Night holds a remarkable position in the Rhapsodic Theogony, that is, the Orphic mythological account of the origins of the world.¹²⁴ Like Orpheus, she was an intermediary between this world and the next, and Campion poetically retains vestiges of her ancient, celestial power to redeem the beloved from death. Recalling the ancient stories that

¹²⁰ Lindley, *Court Masques*, p. xv.

¹²¹ Campion, *Works*, p. 67.

¹²² Orgel, *The Illusion of Power*, p. 52.

¹²³ Campion, *Works*, p. 67.

¹²⁴ Guthrie, *Orpheus and the Greek Religion*, p. 71.

revealed music's healing power, Night asks:

Did not the Thracian harpe long since the same
 And (if we ripp the ould records of fame),
 Did not Amphions lyre the deafe stones call
 When they came dancing to the Theban wall?
 Can music then ioye? ioye mountaines moues
 And why not trees? ioyes powerful when it loues.¹²⁵

Night promises that the wounded trees –the knights – will be redeemed by the song of transformation. With her enchantment, her 'magic wonders' will unfetter the punishing spell, so that the knights may yet again become their 'better forms'.¹²⁶ Night's appeal to the Orphic hymns, which played a central role in Ficinian natural magic, persuades the audience of the magical power of music. Love's ability to change or transform the beloved, requires the affective power of music – the heavenly joy that moves stones, trees and mountains – since music is the expressive channel for the passions of the soul.¹²⁷ Thus joy provides a route to health because it moves the heart: a Galenic precept imprinted on top of the early modern idea of the heart by the Salerno School Code of Health.¹²⁸ Joy is, Campion writes in his *Relation of Royal Entertainment* (1613), 'the sweet friend of life, the nurse of blood/ Patron of all health, and fountaine of all good'.¹²⁹

The song of transformation revives the Knights who move to the house of Night to regain their former appearance. A distinguished harmony is achieved, writes Campion, by the 'seuerall nature of instruments, and changeable conueyance of the song', that came together in the end yielding a 'great satisfaction to the hearers'.¹³⁰ While unity is achieved

¹²⁵ Campion, *Works*, p. 69.

¹²⁶ Campion, *Works*, p. 69.

¹²⁷ Katz, *The Powers of Music*, p. 119.

¹²⁸ John Ordranax (trans.) *Code of Health of the School of Salernum* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1871, reprint BiblioLife, LLC), p. 133.

¹²⁹ Campion, *Works*, p. 85.

¹³⁰ Campion, *Works*, p. 71.

dramatically with the transformation, Campion's pun of the oppositional Night and Knight (of Apollo) signifies a metaphysical balance. The cosmological order is correctly realigned and this is realised within the microcosmic body of the masquers who each receive an hour from Night that enables them to pluck off their 'false robe' and don a 'glorious habit' in order to attend the bowre of Flora (nature).¹³¹ Since they have repented and have been forgiven by Diana, through the mediation of Hesperus, their world is reformed into a happier one.

From Flora's bower the masquers proceed to the dance area to complete the masque. The restoration of the knight's internal harmony, the tempering of their humours – similar to the tuning of a musical instrument as envisaged by Boethius and Ficino – is a realization of the Aristotelian moderation of thought, feeling and behaviour through which the reconciliation of opposites can be achieved.¹³² It has been argued that this desired state can only be achieved after the radical, spiritual transformation of the characters, the 'spotles mindes', where the 'roote is temperance grounded deepe'.¹³³ Temperance is, Campion offers, the empirically sound path for marriage: a highly desirable ideal to be realised.¹³⁴

Lord Hayes Maske celebrates the concord of marriage that is equated to the concord of the State.¹³⁵ In Campion's Latin dedication to James, he refers to the King as 'the father of England and of united Scotland, or the husband, or neither, or both at once'.¹³⁶ While this points to the ideology of the King's two bodies – natural and political – the ambiguity

¹³¹ Campion, *Works*, p. 72.

¹³² Muñoz Simonds, 'Killing care and grief of heart', in *Renaissance Papers*, p. 80.

¹³³ Campion, *Works*, p. 72.

¹³⁴ Lindley, *Thomas Campion*, p. 190.

¹³⁵ Wilfred Mellers argues that the values of togetherness (marriage) and oneness (chastity) are reconciled in a union of flesh and spirit, earth and heaven. Mellers, *Harmonious Meeting*, p. 161.

¹³⁶ Lindley, *Court Masques*, p. 221.

and strangeness of the language contains a deeper significance.¹³⁷ Campion's vision of James as 'one man' who 'should join himself a pair of wives at the same time', and the 'parent' who may 'violate daughters in a marital embrace', relies on alchemical tropes for interpretation. It acknowledges the hybridism of James' royal blood, and illuminates the Hermetic binary opposites of husband-father: the alchemical fusion of opposites. This alchemically incestuous imagery – reminiscent of the ancient marriage practices of the royal house of Egypt – emphasises the essential similarity of the substances being joined even though they appear to be opposites of unlike nature.¹³⁸ It is this alchemical principle that Campion appropriates for the masque, the 'golden dream' that brings concord.¹³⁹

The Lords Maske

The Lords Maske was presented in the Banqueting House before the whole court on the night of the marriage of Princess Elizabeth to the Elector Palatine in February 1613.¹⁴⁰ This strongly suggests that Campion's previous masque – the *Lord Hayes Maske* – had found royal favour since he was asked to present a new masque, in conjunction with Inigo Jones, for such an auspicious occasion.¹⁴¹ The wedding celebrations also raise the intriguing spectre of a historical moment that connects Shakespeare to Maier, Fludd and Campion. Frances Yates postulates that Shakespeare may have had some contact with Maier who was

¹³⁷ Christopher Pye, 'The Sovereign, the Theater, and the Kingdome of Darknesse: Hobbes and the Spectacle of Power' in Stephen Greenblatt (ed.) *Representing The English Renaissance* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 279-301.

¹³⁸ Abraham, *Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, p. 106.

¹³⁹ Campion, *Works*, p. 61.

¹⁴⁰ David Lindley writes that the entertainments written for this great state occasion were spectacular, lengthy and extremely costly and was Campion's most important commission. Lindley, *Thomas Campion*, p. 190.

¹⁴¹ Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, p. 5.

moving between Prague and London in the early years of the seventeenth century.¹⁴²

Johann Hartmann, the great Marburg chemist and friend of Maier, wrote to Matthias Borbonius in July 1612 stating that Maier had been in London with a '*Carmen gratulatorium*' for the Elector Palatine and his bride to be, Princess Elizabeth. Maier may have remained in England because he was included among the Palatine's gentlemen who attended the funeral of Prince Henry on the 6 November 1612.¹⁴³ Margaret Healy suggests that Maier was also a friend of Robert Fludd; certainly there are suggestions that it was Maier who carried the manuscript of Fludd's *Utriusque Cosmi Historia* to De Bry in Oppenheim for publication in 1616.¹⁴⁴ It is also not inconceivable that Fludd knew Campion since they shared a common association with people such as Ben Jonson.¹⁴⁵ It has been argued that Fludd's musical theories may have inspired his contemporaries, Campion and Coprario, owing to the similarity of their music theories.¹⁴⁶

The wedding of Elizabeth and Frederick symbolized an ecumenical attempt to restore peace and tolerance in Europe after the upheaval of the Reformation, for James endorsed a policy for a reunited Christendom, a desire shared by Rudolf II.¹⁴⁷ Campion alludes to this political hope in a song that blends the 'Chorall motions' – the harmony of the spheres – to the 'nuptial vow' where the 'Rhenus' and 'Thames', that is, Germany and England, are united.¹⁴⁸ This political alliance and the fact that the Princess Elizabeth shared the same

¹⁴² Yates, *Shakespeare's Last Plays*, p. 98.

¹⁴³ Tilton writes that the funeral procession was some two thousand strong and that Maier walked with Rumphius, the personal physician of Frederick V and others of the German retinue, but at a distance from the Elector Palatine and his closest courtiers. Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 101.

¹⁴⁴ Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy*, p. 39; Hauge, *The Temple of Music*, p. 21; Huffman, *Robert Fludd*, p. 155.

¹⁴⁵ Chapter 5, p. 255

¹⁴⁶ Hauge, 'Robert Fludd: A Musical Charlatan?', p. 22.

¹⁴⁷ Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix*, p. 36.

¹⁴⁸ Campion, *Works*, p. 93.

name as the late, great Queen, together with the recent death of Prince Henry, made her the symbol of Protestant hope.¹⁴⁹

In this masque *Campion* returns to the theme of the harmonising power of Orphic love, alongside similar alchemical tropes that he imposes on *Lord Haye's Masque*. This is particularly pertinent as Elizabeth and Frederick were viewed as the monarch's 'alchemical' golden couple for, as Frances Yates points out, Johann Valentin Andreae's *Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosencreutz* (1616) was believed to reflect the court of the couple at Heidelberg.¹⁵⁰ Prophetically, the masque's alchemical influences that promise spiritual nourishment reveal philosophical ideals of spiritual reform and reconciliation that would be associated with the Rosicrucian movement.¹⁵¹ Alchemists, believing that the power of metal lay in oppositional attraction, used metallic imagery to understand and interpret spiritual alchemy. Thus *Campion's* reanimation of the silver statues, the silver bird that Orpheus holds, and the silver obelisk at the end of the masque, –together with the golden motif– suggests the chemical wedding of the sun and moon necessary for the birth of the philosopher's stone.¹⁵² Central to this transformative allegory are the healing qualities of silver –containing antibacterial effects known since antiquity –and the life-giving force of the sun.¹⁵³ The masque offers, I suggest, a message of purification and healing to Elizabeth and Frederick within the paradigm of music, for music is implicit in the construction of the world and therefore has the magical power to create and transform.

The Lords Maske opens with the 'sweet Enchanter heau'nly Orpheus', the supreme practitioner of the creative arts who points the way, by example, to a harmonious resolution

¹⁴⁹ Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, p. 7.

¹⁵⁰ Yates, *Shakespeare's Last Plays*, p. 8.

¹⁵¹ Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, p. 45.

¹⁵² Abraham, *Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, pp. 86-88.

¹⁵³ Thomas Stuttaford, 'The Silver Lining', *Time* 2, Thursday 29 Nov. 2007.

of the mind-body dissonance.¹⁵⁴ By the power of his music, the masque's opening suggests that Orpheus will charm away melancholy and madness. Since music can elevate humanity to the spirituality of the gods, it effects change in man and his surrounding cosmos. Thus Orpheus represents the musicalization of the world.¹⁵⁵

The simplicity of the plot – the rescue of Entheus from Mania by Orpheus, the solemnization of the nuptials by Prometheus, and the transformation of the silver statues by Jove – is deceptive for it belies the complexity of the aesthetic intent. As the *theologus poeta*, Orpheus is possessed of the divine *furor* which, Ficino argued, united God and man through love (*Letters* 35, vol. 5, p. 56). As poet, priest, prophet and lover Orpheus provides inspiration, for he is privileged to understand and sing of the mysteries of the universe.¹⁵⁶ As the civilizing power of art, Orpheus can compel Mania to abandon the darkness of her cave. It is the 'powerfull noise' of Orpheus' music that 'importunes me/ T'abandon darkness which my humour fits'.¹⁵⁷ His music also allows him to rescue Entheus from madness for, 'Ioue into our musick will inspire/ The power of passion that their thoughts shall bend'. His music initiates the shift away from the Franticks 'medly of madnesse' to the image of divine love in the main part of the masque.¹⁵⁸

However, as Orpheus acknowledges, music has a protean mutability: it can be the 'loud phantasticke tune' that sends men into a 'madde measure', or a 'solemn ayre' that 'softly played' initiates change, for Mania and the Franticks depart.¹⁵⁹ While this recalls the Platonic classification of musical modes in the *Republic* that I have discussed in chapter 1, it simultaneously represents the Hermetic belief in the inherent duality of man: the

¹⁵⁴ Campion, *Works*, p. 90; Muñoz Simonds, 'Killing care and grief of heart', in *Renaissance Papers*, p. 80.

¹⁵⁵ Katz, *The Powers of Music*, p. 112.

¹⁵⁶ Warden, *Orpheus: The Metamorphoses of a Myth*, p. 93.

¹⁵⁷ Campion, *Works*, p. 89.

¹⁵⁸ Campion, *Works*, p. 90.

¹⁵⁹ Campion, *Works*, pp. 90-91.

transformative power of wondrous man to regain godliness or descend to a beast-like state. It bears witness to the paradoxical nature of Orpheus himself, as the civilizing enchanter of man, or the initiate of the Dionysian cult.¹⁶⁰ It may also symbolize, I argue, the paradoxical nature of the alchemical metaphor: the reconciliation and combination of the male and female principles.¹⁶¹

The resultant harmonious union is implicit in Entheus' question to Orpheus, if her 'affliction vanish?' for it implies an association between the healing power of Orpheus' 'soft and calme sounds', and the universal medicine of the Philosopher's Stone that dispels all corruption, heals all disease and suffering, and bestows youth, longevity and wisdom.¹⁶² Campion draws on the idea of the intensity of feeling or passion that was believed necessary by some Neoplatonists to achieve the *opus alchymicum*: the Orphic 'madness' or rapture required for the tempering or untuning of the soul.¹⁶³ Since the central message of Hermetic writings was striving towards a heightened vision, the 'celestial rage' and 'excelling rapture' acknowledged both the body's sensuality and its need for temperance, the unity of body and soul.¹⁶⁴

Campion joins to his alchemical healing a vision of Ficinian *furor*, the 'excelling rapture' borne with 'sacred wings' which is inspired by Jove.¹⁶⁵ Like Orpheus, the masque attempts to lead the audience with its 'charm'd musicke' towards transcendence.¹⁶⁶ However, by its nature the masque has an elitist quality and its mystical vision of love

¹⁶⁰ Ivan M. Linforth, *The Arts of Orpheus* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1941), p. 207.

¹⁶¹ Abraham, *Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, p. 167.

¹⁶² Campion, *Works*, p. 90-91; Abraham, *Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, p. 145.

¹⁶³ Abraham, *Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, p. 145; Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy*, p. 187.

¹⁶⁴ Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy*, p. 188.

¹⁶⁵ Campion, *Works*, p. 91.

¹⁶⁶ Campion, *Works*, p. 91.

moves from the Ficinian aesthetic to court political potency: Prometheus commands Orpheus to ‘apply thy musicke, for it well /Helps to induce a Courtly miracle’.¹⁶⁷

The combined music of Entheus and Orpheus has the power to ‘discouer all’, by summoning the ‘ancient hero’ Prometheus, the bringer of life to mankind who epitomizes the knowledge of the sacred mysteries.¹⁶⁸ Campion explains Prometheus’ significance in the description of the golden conceits of the silver statue-women:

In the first was Prometheus, embossing in clay the figure of a woman, in the second he was represented stealing fire from the chariot-wheele of the Sunne; in the third he is exprest putting life with this fire into his figure of clay.¹⁶⁹

Surrounding Prometheus’ entry into the masque are eight stars that are transformed into eight masquers anticipating the transformation of the statues. Their descent from the heavens – accompanied by music and celestial fire – signifies man’s earthly existence, the Ficinian mobility of the soul that descends from the unmoving unity to give life to bodies (*Platonic Theology*, Vol.1, Bk. III, ch. II, pp. 225-245). But as the soul descends so it must ascend once again and it has been suggested that *The Lords Maske* is based on the Platonic notion of the four Furies – poetic, mystico-religious, erotic and prophetic that lead man from earthly to divine contemplation.¹⁷⁰ David Lindley suggests that Campion’s portrayal of the four Furies, evident in the characters of Orpheus, Entheus, Prometheus and the statues of Elizabeth and Frederick, imitates the divine love in Pontus de Tyard’s *Solitaire*

¹⁶⁷ Campion, *Works*, p. 93.

¹⁶⁸ Campion, *Works*, p. 91 and p. 92.

¹⁶⁹ Campion, *Works*, p. 95

¹⁷⁰ Lindley, *Thomas Campion*, p. 192.

premier, ou, Prose des Muses de la fureur Poetique (1552) where poetic inspiration reveals divine love.¹⁷¹

Thus the masquers, filled with 'loues desires', celebrate the 'nuptiall night' and they dance with the 'fowre new transformed Ladies', indicating that harmonious dance supersedes the disordered chaos of the Franticks. However the circle is incomplete. Campion indicates in the fourth golden conceit that 'Iupiter, enraged' with Prometheus' theft of celestial fire, 'turns these new made women into statues.'¹⁷² Orpheus – at Prometheus' request – sings to Jove for clemency, and the women are transformed, to be entertained with love through 'courtship and musicke'.¹⁷³ Only after all the transformations have occurred does Sybilla appear drawing a silver obelisk – representing fame – with a thread of gold, and the golden statues of Elizabeth and Frederick on either side of the obelisk. Her Latin speech sets her apart from the other characters signifying the ascent to divine love.¹⁷⁴

This tableau signifies the climax of the masque: the marriage of Elizabeth and Frederick, it suggests, epitomizes the elevation of earthly love to divine love. With the 'musick seru'd of old', this 'pair' are 'both diuine', 'more than men', for they are the physical embodiment of divine love.¹⁷⁵ Recalling the philosophical premise of Platonic love and beauty that I have previously discussed, Campion's masque offers a vision of spiritual harmony and love made possible through the power of poetry and music. Creativity, he suggests, pervades and reveals the universal mysteries and through art, life can be created or revitalized, just as the statues have been reanimated in the masque. Thus

¹⁷¹ Lindley, *Thomas Campion*, pp. 192-194; Yates, *The French Academies*, p. 77.

¹⁷² Lindley, *Thomas Campion*, p. 193; Campion, *Works*, p. 95.

¹⁷³ Campion, *Works*, p. 96.

¹⁷⁴ Lindley, *Thomas Campion*, p. 194.

¹⁷⁵ Campion, *Works*, p. 99.

the masque diminishes the barrier between spectacle and reality, persuading the audience of the didactic truth of its central theme; the power of peace through love. Its celebration and articulation of love also informs the monarchy itself: as an idealised picture of the court, it could also offer counsel through the paradigm of poetry and music.¹⁷⁶

*The Description of a Maske: Presented in the banqueting roome at Whitehall, on Saint Stephens night (The Somerset Masque)*¹⁷⁷

Campion's final masque, *The Somerset Masque*, presented on the 26 December 1613 was performed for the wedding of Frances Howard to the King's favorite, Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset.¹⁷⁸ Of the three major masques that he wrote this was perhaps the most difficult owing to the political intrigue and scandal surrounding the marriage and this is reflected in its shortened length, simpler composition and indeed in the title of the masque itself.¹⁷⁹

Frances Howard's sensational divorce from the Earl of Essex in 1606 had been fraught with allegations of impotency and witchcraft. Free, she was able to marry Robert Carr, a favorite of King James.¹⁸⁰

The masque opens with four squires – symbols of the earth's tetrad (earth, wind, fire and air) – that are thematically paralleled with the four barges in the epilogue.¹⁸¹ Campion's intent is, I suggest, presenting a cosmic vision since the musical tetrad, which expresses the unity of four notes, also suggests the metaphysical Pythagorean Tetractys corresponding to

¹⁷⁶ Lindley, *Thomas Campion*, p. 175.

¹⁷⁷ This masque is also referred to as the *Somerset Masque*. I use this abbreviated form in the text.

¹⁷⁸ Enid Welsford, *The Court Masque A Study In The Relationship Between Poetry And The Revels* (New York: Russell & Russell Inc., 1962), p. 114.

¹⁷⁹ Lindley, *Thomas Campion*, pp. 216-217.

¹⁸⁰ Linda Levy Peck (ed.) *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 230; Lindley, *Thomas Campion*, p. 222.

¹⁸¹ Campion, *Works*, p. 155.

the harmony of the spheres.¹⁸² The Squires explain why twelve knights, traveling by sea, are prevented from attending the wedding celebrations by the ‘mischeifes’ of the fiends, ‘Deformed Errour’, ‘wing-tongu’d Rumor’ and the Sorceresses ‘Curiositie’ and ‘Credulitie’.¹⁸³ This raises the opportunity I argue, not only for presenting the antimasque, but also providing a social commentary on the controversy surrounding this marriage, with the allusion to magic and, by implication, to witchcraft.

It is only with the arrival of Eternity, the three Destinies, Harmony and nine musicians that order is restored. The Queen is invited to take a branch from the tree to release the knights from their enchantment, and in a scene change to London, the transformed masquers perform their dances honoring the marriage.¹⁸⁴ The transition from sea to land – the marriage of sea and earth – carries one of the fundamental themes of the masque because it symbolizes spiritual transformation: the earthly tetrad is transcended by the divine triad of Eternity, Destiny and Harmony.¹⁸⁵

The vision of cosmic chaos – showing the fiend’s dance and music, that ‘strait forth rusht the foure Windes confusedly’ – then bewilders the four winds, the four elements and the four continents of the earth itself.¹⁸⁶ This is replaced by healing music when Harmony appears accompanied by the three Destinies carrying distaffs and a ‘tree of Golde’. These distaffs are, Campion writes, ‘according to the descriptions of Plato and Catullus’.¹⁸⁷ This recapitulates the Platonic vision of universal concord in the Myth of Er, as I have

¹⁸² Campion, *Works*, p. 152; Chapter 1, p. 64..

OED. <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/199831>, accessed 23.08.2012.

¹⁸³ Campion, *Works*, pp. 150-151.

¹⁸⁴ Campion, *Works*, pp. 149-156.

¹⁸⁵ Lindley, *Thomas Campion*, p. 217.

¹⁸⁶ Campion, *Works*, p. 151.

¹⁸⁷ Campion, *Works*, p. 152.

previously argued.¹⁸⁸ The golden tree - a metamorphosis of the Spindle of Necessity – has a miraculous calming effect on the chaos, and as a symbol of the *musica mundana*, alters the classical malevolence of the Fates to one of benignity, as a balancing oppositional force to Rumour and his cohorts.¹⁸⁹ This balanced harmonic vision is endorsed with Campion's use of the symbolism of the number three and its multiples. Confusion and disorder may be dispelled by Platonic rationalism, this suggests, since music restores the harmony necessary for the transformation of the knights.¹⁹⁰

This masque differs from Campion's other two in that the Queen is actively involved: she is invited to pull a branch from the golden tree, to 'vouchsafe vs a diuine touch't bough' in order to release the knights who then descend from a cloud transformed.¹⁹¹ This implies that the Queen ratifies the Platonic ideal of divine harmony; as the physical embodiment of Neoplatonic love, she represents order and unity. However the Platonic intent is subverted: as the intermediary for transformation, the Queen, and by implication the King, the 'Triple Maestie', provide a political endorsement of the marriage on the literary stage, setting a royal seal of approval on the match by providing a disclaimer to the popular rumours.¹⁹²

However, Campion does not dwell on the transformative process in this masque as much as he had previously done: no distinction is made between the transformations of the two distinct groups of Knights.¹⁹³ Rather, he accords prominence to the containment of universal chaos by Harmony, through which Rumor, Error, Curiosity and Credulity are displaced. This shift in emphasis, and changing pattern of the masque's dynamics, appears to stress the importance of dispelling rumour and trying to relocate harmony and love as the

¹⁸⁸ Chapter 1, p. 52.

¹⁸⁹ Lindley, *Thomas Campion*, p. 219.

¹⁹⁰ Lindley, *Thomas Campion*, p. 219.

¹⁹¹ Campion, *Works*, p. 153.

¹⁹² Campion, *Works*, p. 156.

¹⁹³ Lindley, *Thomas Campion*, p. 221.

central theme. Campion may have hoped to achieve this through the lyrics, songs and music of the masque but this ideal was subsequently challenged by the added complexities surrounding the Overbury murder in 1615 in which the Somersets were implicated.¹⁹⁴ His poetic voice embraces the Orphic prophetic vision implicit in the final vision of the Somerset masque: the ‘blessings which the Fates, Propheticke, Sung’ contain the presence of ‘tongue’, implying a fate of health or disgrace.¹⁹⁵

The presence of Eternity, suggests the legitimate propagation of the Somerset name, endorsing, as the fourth Song suggests, Francis Howard’s divorce on the grounds of impotency: ‘What good can be in life/ Whereof no fruites appeare?’, the song asks, offering ‘posteritie’, the ‘liuing Ioy’, which is the central hope of matrimony in the literary convention of the masque.¹⁹⁶ However, as the president of the Fates, Eternity – like the figurative tongue – can be interpreted as morally ambiguous, and within a historical context, proleptically anticipates Carr’s disgrace, imprisonment and loss of reputation.¹⁹⁷ Thus the eradication of rumour that this masque offers in cosmic terms contains a sense of unease.

Nonetheless, the signifiers of Neoplatonic harmony remain evident. The coherence of the words and music in the songs retains the power to move an audience by communicating the idea of the harmonious ordering of the universe, giving them a sense of wonder.¹⁹⁸ Campion strives to present an idealized unity in the face of the considerable apprehension that surrounded the performance of this masque.¹⁹⁹ I suggest that he was partially

¹⁹⁴ Levy Peck, *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, p. 230.

¹⁹⁵ Campion, *Works*, p. 156.

¹⁹⁶ Lindley, *Thomas Campion*, p. 227.

¹⁹⁷ Levy Peck, *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, p. 230.

¹⁹⁸ Lindley, *Thomas Campion*, p. 233.

¹⁹⁹ John Orrell, ‘The Agent of Savoy at The Somerset Masque’, *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, Vol. 28, No. 111 (Aug., 1977), pp. 301-304, p. 301.

successful in this endeavor; certainly, there are elements of *The Somerset Masque* that share a commonality with William Davenport's masque, *The Temple of Love* (1635) written for Henrietta Maria.²⁰⁰

The year 1613 represents the summit in Campion's masque compositions: *The Lords Masque* and *The Somerset Masque* were both presented at court that year, and he may have been already composing *The Caversham Entertainment* that was presented to Queen Anne by Lord Knollys at Cawsome House on her progress to Bath in April 1614. While the themes offered by the masques may be contextualized in terms of Jacobean political and social constructs, their aesthetic value should be gauged by the combined effects of their music, poetry, pageantry and sense of occasion.²⁰¹ The music in these royal entertainments invoked a sense of healing: through its magical charm and curing of the state and the individual. The vitality of the masques refashioned the presentation of drama in addition to influencing the emerging fields of opera and ballet in which music played a profound role, for song, and indeed music itself, requires a leap of the imagination.²⁰²

Campion's comprehension of healing music, indebted to Ficino, suggests a metaphysical model where all relationships –human and cosmic– could be harmoniously united and regulated with the ecstatic *furor* necessary for union with the divine, or with the beloved. Thus the power of music could give order and unity to an animated universe: Campion emulates the powerful efficacy of the Orphic song by elevating the soul with his music. His healing music is able to influence emotions and memories; in *the Booke of Ayres*, which he dedicates to Sir Thomas Monson, he tries to provide a healthy distraction

²⁰⁰ Barbara Ravelhoffer, *The Early Stuart Masque: Dance, Costume, and Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 235.

²⁰¹ Lowbury, Salter and Young, *Thomas Campion*, p. 101.

²⁰² Lowbury, Salter and Young, *Thomas Campion*, p. 13; Tomlinson, in *Opera and the Enlightenment*, p. 7.

from the misfortunes, the ‘hidden wounds’ from which Monson suffers. Campion’s remarkable perception and understanding of the emotional benefits of music suggests that his ayres can alleviate the symptoms of depression while simultaneously providing enjoyment. They are, I have argued, the means of ‘recurring’ by elevating the listener to the harmony of the divine will, thereby healing the soul.

Drawing on a Neoplatonic background, Campion developed an interdependent relationship between poetry and music. This draws an analogy to Robert Fludd’s pictorial representation of the ‘Temple of Music’ since both men understand harmonious counterpoint as melody with a base-derived harmony.²⁰³ Thus his verses give the reader a sense of sharing the mood of his poetic experience.²⁰⁴ Campion’s employment of Neoplatonic themes and ideas are celebrated in his masques where the inspirational power of love through music constitutes the focus of these court celebrations. Musical healing represents moral and political resolution as evidenced in the wedding masque of Elizabeth and Frederick.

Since music contains both an intellectual concept and a sensory perception, it provided early modern writers such as Campion with a metaphor for uniting human physical and spiritual health with the harmonious music of the spheres. Campion’s music may be described as a powerful antidote to our aural vulnerability, for it speaks to us about the power of music and the human voice provoking our imagination to comprehend Campion’s vision of the cosmos.

²⁰³ Godwin, Robert Fludd, pp. 78-89

²⁰⁴ Ing, *Elizabethan Lyrics*, p. 176.

CONCLUSION

The discovery of a shawm, forerunner of the oboe, near the door of the surgeon's cabin by archaeologists diving on the Mary Rose intriguingly illuminates the negotiation between music and medicine in the early modern period. Since the immateriality of music has always been considered a privileged medium when it comes to expressing philosophical ideas, its ability to reach the transcendental realm enables it to be used as an effective medical therapy accompanying critical human events and as a model of universal harmony.¹ Indeed, as Sir Philip Sidney's biographer, Fulke Grevil notes, the dying Sidney called for music, 'to fashion and enfranchise his heavenly soul into that everlasting harmony'.²

Throughout history man has sought ways to combat the myriad of diseases that afflict the human body –physically and spiritually- which has resulted in a number of evolving philosophies that challenge existing viewpoints and practices.³ As my thesis demonstrates, Marsilio Ficino's Christianized musical philosophy – vitalized through the legends of Pythagoras, Hermes Trismegistus, Orpheus, and David – forms the cornerstone of his medical model. Underpinning this distinctive philosophy is Ficino's musico-magical doctrine, in which the relationship that exists between music and natural magic, enables him to formulate a successful model for reconciliation with music at the heart of the healing process.

¹ Pelter Cosman, *Machaut's World*, p. 3; Jan Christiaens, 'Sounding Silence, Moving Stillness; Olivier Messiaen's *Le banquet céleste*', in *Silence, Music, Silent Music*, p. 53.

² Fulke Grevil, *The Life of the Renowned Sir Philip Sidney* (London: Gibbings & Company Limited, n.d., a facsimile copy of the 1651 edition), p. 103.

³ Introduction, p. 23.

The natural magic in Ficino's Orphic hymns led to harmonization of the soul, for it implies the use of music to bind the sympathetic correspondences of the macrocosm and microcosm. This contemplation and knowledge of the divine is made possible, he argues by the protean nature of the soul; its desire to return to its heavenly origin.⁴ It is because the soul is intrinsically divine, that it has a recollection of its true nature allowing us only a memory of heavenly perfection. 'Musical sounds' arouses the sleeping soul, Ficino writes, driving away 'dissonant discord' and tempering 'various aspects of the soul' (*De Vita*, p. 170). This is a crucial point for, as Margaret Healy suggests, 'the soul must be tuned to the harmony of the octave'.⁵ This convergence of philosophical belief and vibrant metaphor provides clarity for the function of philosophical music; as a contemplative tool, the images of the Boethian *musica universalis* could be reflected in the *musica humana* – the internal music of the human body.⁶ Penelope Gouk, emphasizing the way *De Vita* recreates the purifying hymns of Orpheus and David, suggests that Ficino's musical model could heal diseases of the soul, a belief I have argued throughout this thesis, which has repercussions on early modern social, cultural and intellectual perspectives as evidenced in the later work of Robert Burton, and Peter Sterry who envisaged his role as that of a Pythagorean healer.⁷

This crystallization of harmony is not merely a Neoplatonic conceit: the noted Oxford Aristotelian, John Case describes music and concord as the 'golden pair', a harmony he attributes to the work of Ficino.⁸ Within the wider cultural context which

⁴ Ficino, *Letters*, Vol. 3, p. 28.

⁵ Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy*, p. 91.

⁶ Introduction, p. 2.

⁷ Gouk, 'Harmony, Health, and Healing', in *The Practice of Reform in Health, Medicine, and Science*, p. 36; Dixon, 'Meditation is the Musicke of Souls', in *Silence, Music, Silent Music*, p. 200.

⁸ Case, *Apologia Musices*, <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/music.trans.html>, p. 3 and p. 12 of 41, accessed 07.11.2011.

debated the benevolent or corruptive power of music, the persistent belief in the idea that the human body could be governed by the same mathematical principles as those which governed the planetary bodies, was commonplace.⁹ Gouk suggests that while Robert Fludd may have been the first physician to depict this type of physiological model in his remarkable image of ‘man the microcosm’ in *Utriusque cosmi...historia*, this belief was not unique to Fludd, since the harmony between macrocosm and microcosm was something most intellectuals of the time took for granted.¹⁰

Drawing on this philosophical background Fludd and Maier adopt the idea of the regeneration of the soul through the cultivation in the human body of a balanced attention to body and spirit, and the limits it strives to reach. In chapters 3 and 4, I demonstrate that, contrary to previously implied marginalization, these two physicians held respected positions in their respective societies.¹¹ As Peter Hague points out, this obfuscation was most likely due to their identification as apologists for the Rosicrucian Movement.¹² However, as I have shown, Maier had held the position of personal physician in the intellectually sophisticated court of Rudolf II, where he was honoured with the title of Imperial Count Palantine.¹³ Likewise Fludd, in his own era, was acknowledged as an esteemed and successful London physician, well connected in society and at court.¹⁴

Central to their healing music is a strong, Protestant theological framework; an affirmation of a divine universe where music provides the model for spiritual contemplation and reconciliation. *Atalanta Fugiens* is a unique example of Maier’s

⁹ Gouk, ‘Harmony, Health and Healing’, in *The Practice of Reform in Health, Medicine, and Science*, p. 24.

¹⁰ Gouk, Harmony, Health and Healing, in *The Practice of Reform in Health, Medicine, and Science*, p. 25.

¹¹ Chapter 3, p. 153.

¹² Hague, *The Temple of Music*, p. 1.

¹³ Chapter 3, p. 151.

¹⁴ Chapter 4, p. 192.

application of the Hermetic theory of correspondences, a central concern in his search for a universal medicine.¹⁵ His alchemical music reaffirms Ficino's tradition of Neoplatonic divine love for it provides the model for universal harmony. The layout of *Atalanta Fugiens* is highly significant because it shows that Maier gives equal weight to his alchemical imagery, words and fugues, suggesting that the physicality of the book itself echoes the harmonious unification of sensation and intellect that the content offers.

As I have demonstrated the fugues provide a powerful paradigm for the cathartic power of music, for they articulate through their sound, the silent contemplation of the philosophical alchemist. This reading of music as the medium for metaphysical meaning and spiritual fulfilment signifies the attunement to God's will through universal harmony, and indeed, Fludd believes music's powerful effect is because the soul remembers the divine harmony it once heard.¹⁶ As I have shown in chapter 4, Fludd thought the key to healing was embedded in nature; an idea he explores through the metaphor of the divine monochord. Here the harmony between body and soul is represented as a musical instrument; the body is an instrument to be 'played' by the soul, which shows how the relationship between God and man is mediated. In Fludd's Christianized Hermetic universe, music becomes the medicine of the intellect, for it allows the comprehension of the beauty and proportion of the cosmos. His divine monochord, signifying God's divine harmony reaching down to man, implies the healing power of music in the Orphic tradition since it connects music to everything in the universe.

Shakespeare and contemporary authors manipulate this perception of music and universal harmony to create metaphorical imagery for dramatic effect. For example,

¹⁵ Voss, 'Marsilio Ficino', in *Music and Medicine*, p. 154; Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix* p. 38.

¹⁶ Introduction, p. 43.

Shakespeare turns the belief in the music of the spheres into a simile: ‘the smallest orb which thou behold’st/ But in his motion like an angel sings’ (5.1.69-60). Here Shakespeare appears to be relying on the pictorial angelic tradition rather than the Christianized version of Plato’s Myth of Er in which the sirens become muses then angels.¹⁷ However, he makes the point that divine harmony is contained within man’s immortal soul, but that being human, bound to a fixed spot in time and space, man cannot hear the celestial music. Instead, the unheard music is related to immortality and, by extension, to a prelapsarian condition when our souls were originally in tune.¹⁸

Shakespeare’s central location of music’s curative power in the cosmological scheme and Orphic mythology offers an explanation as to how music could affect human behaviour. His Orphic references point to the Platonic harmonist theory that likens the internal maintenance or repair of harmony within oneself, to temper or tune the humours as the strings of a lute are tuned to each other.¹⁹ By tempering the humours Shakespeare suggests that life – as perceived by the senses– can be reshaped or transformed by art to reflect the divine harmony. Orpheus, the poet-musician who calms beasts with his music represents the controlling of human passions.²⁰ The Orphic tuning of the humours also suggests our acceptance of our own mortality for Shakespeare’s Orphic vision liberates us from the pain of loss by promising some form of reunion after death: an idea he

¹⁷ Kathi Meyer-Baer suggests that the pictorial tradition of the representation of the angels became increasingly independent of the doctrine of the harmony of the spheres during the later Middle Ages and Renaissance, Meyer-Baer, *The Music of the Spheres and the Dance of Death*, *Studies in Musical Iconology* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1970), p. 163.

¹⁸ Ross, ‘Shakespeare’s Dull Clown’, p. 118.

¹⁹ Peggy Muñoz Simonds, “‘Killing care and grief of heart’: Orpheus and Shakespeare’ in *Renaissance Papers 1990* (eds.) Dale B.J. Randall and Joseph A. Porter (Durham, North Carolina: The SouthEastern Renaissance Conference, 1990), pp. 79-90, p. 80; chapter 2, p.

²⁰ Muñoz Simonds, in *Renaissance Papers*, p. 84.

revisits in *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest* and *Pericles*.²¹ Importantly, Orpheus' art also has the power to console human grief through the beauty of his music, freeing the listener from woeful melancholy, a theme I explore in my analytical examination of *Pericles* in chapter 5. Since music was recognized as a cause and a cure of melancholy and madness, the melancholy to which Pericles succumbs is juxtaposed with Marina's healing song, a resolution that would have been acceptable to an early modern audience, as the healing power of music was a believable and accepted tenet as I have shown²².

Stephen Medcalf speculates that it is possible that Ben Jonson introduced Shakespeare to Plato.²³ Certainly Jonson's exposition of love in *The New Inn* bears the hallmark of Ficino's *De amore*.²⁴ Jonson's refashioning of the Ficinian ideas of love and beauty promotes the Hermetic vision of harmony, since music is the manifestation of the ideal of beauty. It is this association of love and beauty as harmony that inspires the divine *furor*; as a marker of emotion music becomes the semantic property of the play's language in which the transformative power of love, leads to a 'spiritual coupling' or transcendence, the healing of body and mind, through the expression of music that reflects this ideal. Music is the accepted language of love since its temporal and transient nature provides a metaphor for harmony, appeasing the restless soul and calming the body's agitation (Commentary, p.122).

²¹ Muñoz Simonds, in *Renaissance Papers*, pp. 82-83.

²² Hoeniger, *Medicine and Shakespeare*, p. 268.

²³ Stephen Medcalf, 'Shakespeare on beauty, truth and transcendence', in *Platonism and the English Imagination*, p. 118.

²⁴ Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy*, p.26; Medcalf, in *Platonism and the English Imagination*, p. 119.

As I have shown, Ficino's musical model provided a framework in which music could heal the body and soul through the harmonious rebalancing of the four bodily humours. This belief is emulated in the masques and poetry of Thomas Campion who sought to replicate this universal harmony by harnessing the Orphic power of song. Since music contains both an intellectual concept and a sensory perception, it was used by writers such as Campion as a metaphor for uniting our physical and spiritual health that was reflected in the harmonious music of the spheres. Thus man, the intermediary between the sublunary world and the music of the spheres uses music as a means to understand the universe, and submit to God the divine physician, to heal the physical and spiritual self.

In the works of these authors, this conviction in the transforming power of healing music, and the visualization of the body through the metaphor of musical proportion, is a reaffirmation of Ficino's Christianized musical philosophy which provides a framework for the harmonizing model of unity or reconciliation. This model, which illuminates Neoplatonic divine love, is given potency by the healing power of *musica humana*. As a human construct, music embodies emotions and ideas, offering a means through which we may regulate our complex cognitive functioning.²⁵ In this thesis I have sought to demonstrate how the musical theories of Maier and Fludd provide a new insight into the continuing tradition of the Ficinian model, and how this is dramatized in popular culture by Shakespeare and Jonson. My work on Campion identifies how this model impinges on the masque culture and popular ayres of the period, providing a soundscape for the negotiation of the relationship between body, mind and soul and the perpetuation of the tradition of universal harmony.

²⁵ Philip Ball, *The Music Instinct* (London: Vintage Books, 2011), p. 4.

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