

**THE SINGER-ACTOR AS CREATOR AND  
COLLABORATOR:**

**A model for performer-led new music theatre works**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study sets out to consider alternative creative, collaborative and career possibilities for the classically trained singer in current industry practice. By means of three music theatre works written, or co-written, co-produced and performed by the author/ researcher, the thesis maps and interrogates the process of creating and producing the projects under industry conditions, from inception through to performance and final evaluation. The dissemination of these dual creative and professional processes is tracked via the methodological framework of the Pro-Create cycle, a model conceived by the researcher and presented as a new contribution to integrated practice-led performance research. Current models, for example Robin Nelson's and Melissa Trimingham's, map and analyse the creative process on its own terms; the researcher's model, by contrast, tracks and reviews not only the cyclical developmental progress of the creator and the creative work itself, but the dialogic dynamic of how that work's production is affected by the external factors of industry acceptance and promotion.

Through the trajectory of the three self-created performance projects, the Pro-Create model concurrently examines the singer-actor's collaborative and agential journey, the interaction between the singer-actor's autobiography with the authorial process, and links between creative responsibility and enhanced performer agency. Finally, the thesis explores the inherent tension between creative autonomy and professional agency for the singer-actor as independent producer, in current industry conditions.

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis presents an investigation into ‘the singer-actor as creator and collaborator’ by means of three small-scale, professionally produced music-theatre pieces, each one of which takes as its starting point the adaptation of an historic life, or historic lives. The researcher uses the term ‘singer-actor’, rather than ‘singing actor’ or ‘singer’ in order to stress equality between these performance elements, as embodied in the practice under study. *Singing-actor* suggests the primacy of the actor; *singer* gives the actor no stress at all. Although the researcher/ practitioner is an opera singer by training and industry background, this is not a thesis about technical aspects of singing; the work under investigation here represents a new direction for the practitioner under study, away from main stage opera production and into the process of the creation, production and performance of self-created music theatre works; a process during which the performer sometimes ‘acts’ through song, and sometimes through spoken text.

One of the strands of enquiry throughout this thesis, highlighted in the research questions to follow, is in which ways the self-creation and performance of music theatre work might lead to an enhanced sense of agency and authority in the act of performing. In dissemination of the phenomenological recapturing of the performance act, any perceived increase in agency and authority is often referred to in this study in conjunction with enhanced *embodiment* of the given role. As Experience Bryon acknowledges in *Integrative Performance*, ‘Embodiment is a much-debated term in cognitive studies and, more recently, within performance theory’ (Bryon 2014: 34). Her usage of the term allows that ‘the body/ mind is a mutually interdependent dynamic that produces a sense of knowledge in and of practice’ (Bryon 2014: 34). This thesis recognises embodiment as a phenomenological ‘being in the moment’ during which ‘the mutually interdependent dynamic’ of the ‘body/ mind’ achieves a free-flowing synergy, without the ‘self’ of the performer obstructing the channelling of the given role. Although theories of performer agency are explored in the thesis, theories of embodiment as they arise in cognitive science and performance theory are not the focus here, and the term is used throughout as an expression of optimum performance. Other work, detailing the psychology and cognitive awareness behind optimum performance, is currently being carried out in this area, including Fiona McAndrew’s doctoral study at the University of Melbourne entitled ‘Getting “carried away”: an interpretive phenomenological analysis of optimal aesthetic states of consciousness on the professional operatic stage’.

### Context

The initial impetus for this research enquiry was an incremental creative dissatisfaction with working as an employed singer in main-stage opera

productions. Opera director Peter Sellars refers to collaboration as ‘the definition of opera – multiple voices’ (Delgado 1996: 232). Indeed, opera is a highly collaborative art form with its accruing of creative and interpretative voices – the composer’s, the librettist’s, the director’s, the designer’s, the conductor’s, the singers’. Yet it is not the ‘voice’ of the singer that is typically heard in the collaborative process of opera production today. The director as auteur, a possible outcome of the attempt constantly to breathe life into an historic canon of works, has re-calibrated the collaborative hierarchy in opera. For an understanding as to why this has happened, we can look to how opera production has altered from its inception in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, to its production today. In *Composing for Voice*, Paul Barker tells us:

[I]n the seventeenth century, when opera was in one of its eras of irrepressible growth, a composer could not begin his opera until he knew precisely which singers would be singing it, because he was expected to mould his music to exhibit the individual strengths of the performers so that each might be heard to the best possible advantage.

(Barker 2004: 8)

But in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as Paul Atkinson observes in *Everyday Arias*:

Opera productions and seasons, indeed, are now quite likely to be known primarily for the producer [...] Patrice Chereau’s Ring [...] in which the mise-en-scène defines the work far more than does the conductor or the principal singers.

(Atkinson 2006: 44)

Bar a small number of ‘star’ performers guaranteeing strong box office, around whom productions are still mounted (for example Bryn Terfel’s Wotan in Wagner’s *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at The Royal Opera House in 2007 and 2012), there has been shift in focus from the performers to the director, reflecting the fact that most opera produced today is not new work. If most of the performed canon of opera work is no longer new, reinvention, or re-adaptation is necessary in order to continue to attract audiences. This reinvention falls to the director and the designers. It is with the commissioning of new work by opera companies that the singer has the possibility to become not so much a re-interpreter, but rather an integral part of primary creation. Yet, in the latest years for which there are figures - 2004-2006 - according to Agid and Tarondeau in *The Management of Opera* (2010), only 7% of the operas produced in opera houses worldwide were new works. Of the £60 million funding per year apportioned to the four major opera companies in



England – The Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Opera North and Welsh National Opera – according to Symonds and Karantonis in their article *Booming Voices, Empty Houses*:

[B]y far the greatest output privileges the celebrated classics...The story is the same the world over, leaving the development of an alternative repertoire to take place in far less heavily subsidized conditions.

(Symonds and Karantonis 2013:13)

Opera houses rely on these ‘celebrated classics’ to attract audiences. As Agid and Tarondeau state:

The same 50 operas, mostly composed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century or the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, are performed everywhere. Contemporary works make a brief appearance and then disappear, having failed to attract a large enough audience for subsequent revivals.

(Agid and Tarondeau 2010: 3)

There are exceptions. Certain new works have entered the repertoire; most recently with Thomas Adès’ *The Tempest*, Harrison Birtwistle’s *Minotaur*, Gerald Barry’s *The Importance of Being Earnest* and George Benjamin’s *Written on Skin*. But with the majority of new work not reliably attracting sustainable audiences, and most funding allocated to the classics, rather than singers habitually being first-time interpreters of a living and dynamic art form, they have, in main stage opera production, become interpreters in a lineage of past interpreters.

With this scarcity of new music theatre being created in a well-funded environment, the professional singer’s opportunity to be part of the primary creation of work, in which the composer writes to the skills and strengths of the individual, is limited to Symonds’ and Karantonis’ ‘far less heavily subsidized conditions’. There are notable exceptions - Harrison Birtwistle’s *Minotaur*, cited above, was written for the specific abilities of bass John Tomlinson – but Tomlinson is an artist of renown. For the middle tier artist working in main stage opera in Britain, there are no such opportunities. Although, given a sympathetic director, the singer might well act as a creative contributor in the rehearsal process, in particular with regard to the interpretation of their own role, they are not bestowed with creative authority; their primary tasks are to sing in a technically assured manner, and to execute the over-arching theatrical and musical visions of the creative team.

It is as a response to this particular cultural climate, in which only a small number of established, classically trained singer-actors are creating and producing independent work as a part of their professional profile (notably tenor Tom Randle, singer-actor-cellist Matthew Sharp, vocalist Frances Lynch, and baritone Simon Butteriss), that the researcher set out to engage in the self-creation of music theatre work; firstly as a means through which to experience greater collaborative and creative agency, and secondly, to record insights from that process for the benefit of wider industry and academic practice, through the mode of practice-led research.

### **Rationale**

The potential of the singer as creator and collaborator, as evidenced by the singer him/ herself, has not yet been comprehensively documented; books by singers tend to fall either into the categories of autobiographies of the famous, or technical methodologies for voice production. Yet, in an overcrowded profession there is a need to appraise and evaluate alternative career paths for the professional performer. Currently, the written discourse on this subject comes from theatre-makers, pedagogues and academics, as with the following examples:

Theatre director Di Trevis has acknowledged the need for change in both training and industry with regard to actors:

Actors must be prepared to wrestle some means of production into their own hands. They will have to generate their own work. There should be more emphasis through their training on making their own work, seeking out collaborators, developing skills in adaptation, and writing, re-inventing and developing a new kind of Poor Theatre for the 21st Century – a theatre high on talent and low on resources.

(Trevis 2011)

In fact, in the training sphere, this issue is now beginning to be addressed for both actors and singers, with a greater emphasis on collaboration and creativity across some new conservatoire degrees for performers, which will be detailed in the conclusion of the thesis. What Trevis does identify here is the need for actors to take creative responsibility and make high talent, low resource work, as both an outlet and showcase for their abilities, and in the face of the lack of employed performance opportunities.

Experience Bryon's *Integrative Performance* (2014), is a treatise that acknowledges the need for training more fully rounded collaborative artists, in order that they are better prepared for the cultural climate they enter. Bryon is

herself a singer by background, but the book is concerned with training, which is not the focus of this thesis. For a manifesto focused on the creative and collaborative potential of singers in industry, one can look to Michael Bawtree's *The New Singing Theatre*, written as long ago as 1990, in which he cites the need for:

[A] situation in which talented people with something to say (express, communicate) have opportunities to say it through the medium of singing theatre, and in which artists can realise their originality and potential; a context that not only allows but actively encourages creation.

(Bawtree 1990: 65)

He goes on to state that it is:

[T]hrough collaboration with composers, writers and designers, singer-actors will develop their sense of shared creative responsibility.

(Bawtree 1990: 68)

Bawtree called for a *new singing theatre* in which singers take on creative responsibility. Similarly, and more recently, Roesner and Rebstock have called for 'hybrid performers' in *Composed Theatre*, their manifesto for work that sits *between* current genres of opera, music theatre, music, performance art; they suggest that early performer collaboration is key, citing:

[A]n increased need for continuity in the collaboration in order to afford the performer the chance to embrace new kinds of tasks and challenges and for the composer/ director to know and 'collect' (Goebbels) the individual and unique qualities of the performers.

(Roesner and Rebstock 2012: 341)

They also call for a situation in which artists can 'stretch their abilities and their understanding of their professional selves' (340), a view which resonates with the potential benefits of self-created work listed earlier.

These examples of existing documentation demonstrate that there has been and is a call for production models in which performers are integrated at an earlier stage of the collaborative process, and encouraged to discover their creative and collaborative potential. However, these manifestos are written on behalf of, and not by the singer-actor. This thesis addresses a knowledge gap; it provides primary evidence from the singer-actor perspective exploring

how, or whether there are professional and artistic benefits arising from greater collaborative and creative agency, and whether this could influence current and future pedagogical and industry practice.

### **Research questions**

This is a study carried out by means of practice-led research, rather than Practice as Research, a distinction drawn out later in the introduction. With any practice-led performance enquiry, the nature of the research, in which the artist is both subject and object, has militated against 'ideas of fixed, measurable and recordable knowledge.' (Nelson 2013: 192). An enquiry such as this is more likely, with continued critical reflection on the practice, to yield 'substantial insights' (Nelson 2013) as opposed to 'knowledge' per se. It has therefore followed that questions, although an intrinsic part of the motivation for the research, have remained as open as possible, to allow the practice to develop as it might, rather than in accordance with tight enquiry parameters.

Questions have been fluid and subject to change through the research period. As heuristic insights from the practice itself develop, so 'evidence may emerge beyond the practice itself' (Nelson 2013: 705), leading in turn to the refinement and alteration of the precise line of enquiry. For this reason, the questions initially posed allowed for discoveries as the research progressed, and have been refined over time:

1. In today's industry, how might the production of self-created music theatre works enhance the singer-actor's collaborative, creative and employment potential, and their agency and authority?
  - (a) Might the enhancement of this combination of agency, authority, collaborative skills and creative potential contribute to increased 'embodiment' in performance for the singer-actor?
2. What role does autobiography play in the choice of material, self-adaptation and appropriation of sourced historic lives for performance?
  - (a) During this creative and performance process, what is the interaction between the authorial 'self' and the performing 'self'?
3. What is the impact of external factors of funding and industry take-up in shaping the creation, production and performance of self-created music theatre works?

With these questions and sub-questions there is an emphasis placed both on the creative work and process itself, and of how that work and process do and could function in current and future industry practice. (It should be stated that in the context of this thesis, the term 'industry' encompasses professional music, opera and theatre organisations, including festivals, which employ or commission freelance creative artists as part of their remit). Mindful of Trevis's statement about high talent, low resource theatre, this is a thesis which interrogates, from the start, not only the possibility for alternative production models in which the singer-actor might play a greater collaborative and creative role, but of how the external pressures of industry impact on the professional creation of the work itself. In *Fair Play*, Jen Harvie describes 'culture as always enmeshed in social, material and historical conditions' (Harvie 2013:16). This cultural materialist approach is key to the practice under study, in which the 'culture' of the researcher's creative practice, its viability and parameters are determined within the context of current industry conditions.

Whilst the performer in industry is the focus of question 3, exploration of question 1 incorporates psychologist Albert Bandura's theory of agency (2001), in its investigation of links between autonomy, authority and agency; question 2, meanwhile, examines theories of auto/biography - notably Deirdre Heddon (2008), Gale and Gardner (2004), Ursula Canton (2011), Linda Anderson (2011) – and theories of adaptation and appropriation, including Linda Hutcheon (2006) and Julie Sanders (2006).

By theorising the self-creation of performance work in industry from these multiple perspectives, and modelling possible outcomes, this thesis explores the potential shift in creative input, performer agency and employment possibilities that could arise from exercising the 'muscle' of self-made work, but from the specific perspective of the classically trained singer.

### **Methodologies**

The enquiry takes the form of *practice-led* research, as distinct from practice as, practice for, or practice through research. The definition of practice-led is taken from Carole Gray's definition in *Inquiry Through Practice*:

By 'practice-led' I mean, firstly, research which is initiated in practice, where questions, problems, challenges are identified and framed by the needs of practice and practitioners; and secondly, that the research strategy is carried out through practice.

(Gray 1996: 3)

Although, according to John Freeman in *Blood, Sweat and Theory*, ‘practice as’ and ‘practice-based’ are being used relatively interchangeably and without prejudice’ (Freeman 2010:1), it should be acknowledged that certain universities differentiate between the two. Here, the practice under investigation, both professional and artistic, has acted as the starting point; insights have arisen as a consequence of that practice. For this reason, the mode of investigation can be labeled practice-led. It is elucidated by means of a written exegesis, and by DVD documentation of the three creative projects; the methodological strategy for the research has also developed alongside the practice. Because the subject under investigation is the work of the researcher, and the way in which that work can be contextualised within industry practice, the broad methodological structure could be seen to be a reflexive ethnography, as consistent with Rosanna Hertz’s definition:

To be reflexive is to have an on-going conversation about experience while simultaneously living in the moment. By extension, the reflexive ethnographer does not simply report “facts” or “truths” but actively constructs interpretations of his or her experiences in the field and then questions how those interpretations came about.

(Hertz 1997: viii)

Analysis of this definition reveals the existence of other methodologies forming sub-categories within the reflexive ethnography umbrella – phenomenology, heuristic thought, and hermeneutic analysis - all of which are utilised in this thesis, as described below:

#### *Phenomenology*

The ‘ongoing conversation’ and ‘living in the moment’ are both qualities inherent in phenomenological criticism, described by Bert O States as:

[A] stopping place, as it were, at the starting place, not of all possible meanings but of meaning and feeling as they arise in a direct encounter with the art object.

(States 2007: 27)

The ontologies of creation and performance are notoriously difficult to ‘capture.’ As Peggy Phelan states in *Unmarked; the politics of performance*:

Performance's only life is the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representation of representations.

(Phelan 1993: 146)

The greater the embodiment in performance, the more elusive is its recapturing; one can sense, during the performance act, more acutely what does not work, rather than what does. However, despite its ephemeral, transient nature, phenomenological insights about the creative act, perceived during performance can serve to recapture as far as possible 'meaning and feeling as they arise'. This method of recapturing is built into the research design, and includes 'stream of consciousness' narrativisation of key creative and performance moments.

#### *Heuristic thought*

The interpretation of 'experiences in the field' is essentially the heuristic analysis of practice, which Clark Moustakas describes as autobiographic, and 'as the search to understand one's self and the world in which one lives' (Moustakas 1994: 17). Moustakas also states:

From the beginning and throughout an investigation, heuristic research involves self-search, self-dialogue, and self-discovery; the research question and the methodology flow out of inner awareness, meaning, and inspiration.

(Moustakas 1990: 11)

In fact, the stimulus for this research flowed in the first instance from heuristic thought - from an inner awareness of an under-used creativity. It was this self-searching that initiated the inner dialogue through which self-discovery has become possible.

#### *Hermeneutic interpretation*

The autobiographic, inward-looking heuristic interpretation of each creative work and performance reaches out for context with distance from the practice by means of hermeneutic interpretation - what Hertz refers to as 'how those interpretations came about'. Trimmingham refers to this 'hermeneutic-interpretative' process as circular rather than linear; a spiral which 'indicates that as one part of understanding changes, the whole changes too' (Trimingham 2002: 56). So, with distance from the practice under investigation, the more objective analysis of how interpretations have been made feeds directly back into the circular and recursive processes of creation. Although this interpretation has arisen mainly from analysis of the

researcher/practitioner's own evolving testimony, the research design has also included the contextual use of correspondence and conversations with individual collaborators and industry professionals where appropriate to the enquiry.

Finally, as Carole Gray notes:

The practitioner-researcher does not wear two alternate hats, but one hat which integrates or at least allows difference to co-exist.

(Gray 1996: 7)

In order to chart the creative and professional processes with one, integrated 'hat', the thesis expounds a new model for practice-led research - the *Pro-Create* cycle; a methodological meta-framework through which each project is systematically mapped and analysed both proximally and distally. The structure and workings of this model form the subject of chapter 1; it is a cyclic process developed from existing current PaR and practice-led live performance models – Trimmingham's, Nelson's, Roberta Mock's. Its function is to act simultaneously as a framework for the dissemination of professional and creative practice, at each stage of the process, and with specific focus on the questions posed at the beginning of the thesis.

### **THE THREE PERFORMANCE PROJECTS: focus for each chapter**

The thesis will map the creative and professional processes of three individual professionally produced performance projects, all of which have been conceived and (co)-created by the researcher. In the three project chapters, each creative piece is presented and described largely in isolation, by means of the evolving Pro-Create model, with a gathering final chapter detailing the interconnectivity between the three, and conclusions that can be drawn from the study. In each project chapter, a DVD accompanies the written dissemination. It is important to note that the researcher set herself the manifesto of creating work that was both financially expedient and creatively rewarding; the project chapters do not focus on artistic innovation per se, but rather on artistic exploration and development within industry conditions.

The three performance projects forming the foundations for this research enquiry are:

#### **Project 1 - *The Girl I Left Behind Me:***

A solo piece about the phenomenon of the male impersonator in Victorian music hall, co-devised by Jessica Walker and writer/ director Neil Bartlett.



Performed by Jessica Walker, accompanied by music director Jim Holmes. Originally commissioned and produced by Opera North Projects in 2010.

This chapter will focus on the devising process and first time collaboration with a director, staging historiographical research, performance identity, and the initial authority and agency of the singer-actor under study.

**Project 2 - *Pat Kirkwood is Angry*:**

A solo piece about the late actress and singer Pat Kirkwood, written and performed by Jessica Walker, directed by Lee Blakeley and accompanied by music director Jim Holmes. Originally co-produced by Opera North in association with Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester in 2012.

This chapter focuses on justifications for singing onstage, phenomenology of the creative process, the inter-relationship between the author and the performer and the ethics of representation of auto/biography on stage.

**Project 3 - *An Eye for an Eye*:**

A cabaret opera inspired by the historic true crime of the Papin sisters, two murderous maids in 1930s France, on whom Genet's *The Maids* was based. Composed by David Knotts. Libretto and original idea by Jessica Walker. Scored for piano, saxophone, accordion, double bass. Conducted by David Knotts. Performed by Mezzo-sopranos Jessica Walker and Harriet Williams. Co-produced by Bath International Music Festival, St Magnus International Festival, and Jess Walker Music Theatre in 2013.

This chapter focuses on adaptation of literary and documentary sources for the creation of music theatre, the function of the librettist in the librettist-composer collaboration, the writing of interiority for sung characters and the context for the production model in wider industry.

Here, it is perhaps apposite to note that although each project was tracked via the evolving Pro-Create process, each creative model was distinct from one another; project 1 was devised in the rehearsal room; project 2 was a scripted play with songs; finally, project 3 was a cabaret opera co-written by composer and librettist.

### TIMELINE FOR PERFORMANCE PROJECTS

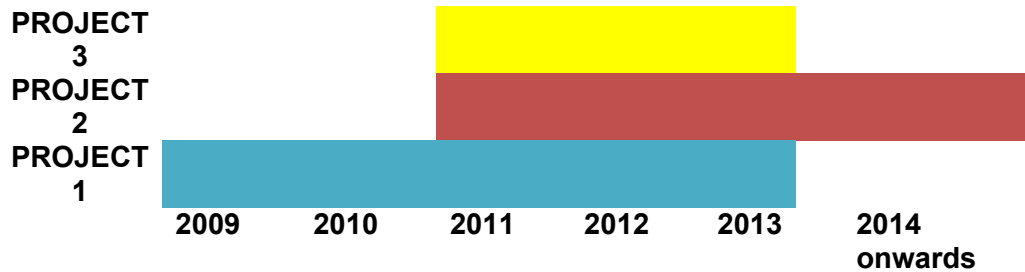


Figure 1: timeline for performance projects

The above timeline shows the duration of each project, from initial inception, through any periods of workshops and development, up until final performance. Although projects 2 and 3 were conceived during the same time period, the initial performances of project 2 took place in October 2012, 7 months before the first performance of project 3, which is why, for the purposes of this study, it is named as the second project.

The dissemination of the projects is given in the first person; the dynamic, phenomenological process of 'making' the practice is best expressed with the proximity of first person register. The introduction, explanation of the modelling and conclusion of this thesis represent a more formal, critically reflective analysis of the research material, and as such, are presented in the third person.

**CHAPTER 1**  
**AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PROFESSIONAL/ CREATIVE CYCLE**

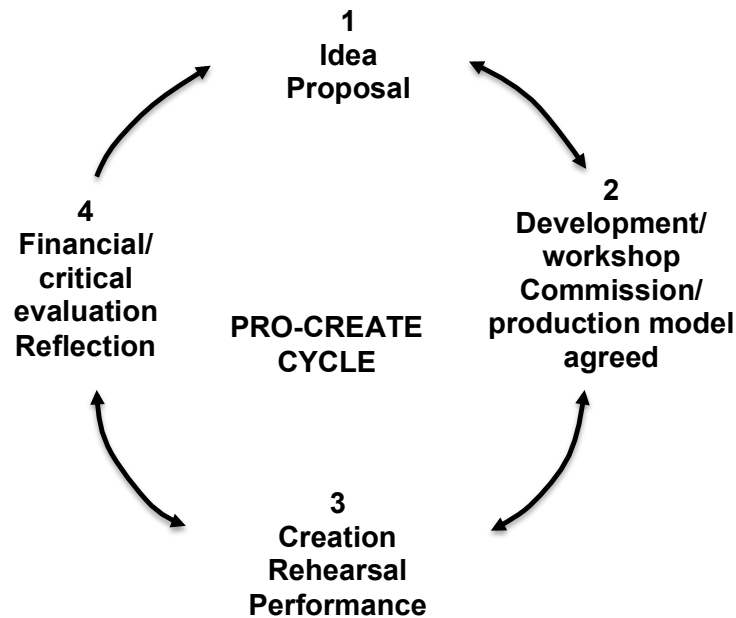


Figure 2: Pro-Create cycle

The above model encapsulates the core components of the collective creative processes that the researcher has reiterated through the three projects under study. It is named the Pro-Create cycle partly as abbreviations of the professional and creative cycles it maps, but also as an acknowledgement that the cycle represents the process of *procreation* for the three performance projects undertaken. Within the broad structure of the Pro-Create process exist multiple processes at each stage of the cycle. How the meta-structure and the processes within that evolved will be interrogated and unpicked in the individual project chapters to follow.

The premise for the Pro-Create cycle came about as a result of the researcher's exploration of current practice-as, practice-led and practice-based research models, and a realisation that there was not as yet a creative practice, live performance model foregrounding the 'professional' in its conceptual framework. As a representation of these forms of research, this is understandable; the modelling of performative research is a visualisation of research process, and that process, especially within an academy setting, is not contingent on or affected by a need to be commercially viable. These models can, therefore, afford to be inward-looking. They analyse process on its own terms, without casting the net wider to look at how that process is, or

might be affected by outside forces. Although there are several examples of such models, including Smith and Dean's 'iterative, cyclic web' (Smith and Dean 2009) and Barrett and Bolt's 'recursive and iterative creative development' (Barrett and Bolt 2007: 152), during this study it has been the PaR processes described by Melissa Trimmingham, Robin Nelson and Roberta Mock which have particularly influenced the development of the researcher's Pro-Create model. Trimmingham's "hermeneutic-interpretative" spiral' (Trimingham 2002: 56), Nelson's triangle for dynamic mixed mode research (2006 and 2013), and Mock's five processes of the creation of live performance (2000) all reflect aspects of the Pro-Create model. Trimmingham's 'spiral which constantly returns us to our original point of entry but with renewed understanding' (Trimingham 2002: 56) made explicit to the author a hitherto only tacit grasp of how the iterative creative process could be configured and mapped; Nelson's triangulation of 'practitioner knowledge', 'conceptual framework' and 'critical reflection' (Nelson 2006) showed a clear structure for ordering the evolving epistemology of live performance process; Mock's five processes – conception, development, presentation, reception, reflection (Mock 2000) – directly mirrored the researcher's own experience of the key stages of the creative process. However, where the researcher's model is divergent from the three is with the embedding of 'commission/production model agreed' and 'financial evaluation' into its framework. Whilst Nelson advocates 'Arts praxis', or 'theory imbricated within practice' (Nelson 2013: 914) in the most recent version of his PaR model, this thesis proposes imbricating creative practice within professional practice, thereby creating a new contribution to current live performance modelling, in which the creative and the professional, the process and the product-in-industry, are enmeshed in one cycle of action. The work under investigation in this study, as distinct from operating within an academy setting, and without external pressures, only exists insofar as industry allows it to. The dialogic nature of the professional with the creative in this paradigm acknowledges Raymond Williams' cultural materialist theory (1965), in which, as Harvie states:

[A]rt and performance do not exist in some kind of material and historical vacuum, hovering in an idealized realm outside of time, political signification, social relations and material processes and conditions.

(Harvie 2013: 16)

By subjecting the work to these particular conditions, the study combines what John Freeman refers to, in *Blood, Sweat and Theory*, as the desirable combination of a 'blend of methodological hybridity and 'real world' usefulness' in practice-led research (Freeman 2010: 234).

## **An explanation of the model**

Haseman and Mafe are quoted in Nelson's recent book, *Practice as Research in the Arts*, as stating:

[T]he creative work is one research output but creative research in itself is something that works with the creative component to establish something other, some critical or technological finding for example. So while there are emergent outcomes within creative practice, it is when this potent and somewhat unruly discipline is co-joined with research that creative practice-led research becomes truly emergent in its outcomes.

(Nelson 2013: 1119)

Certainly, the researcher's original intention of working through performance projects with the aim of elucidating key research enquiries through practice, has proved enlightening on its own terms, in ways which will be drawn out in the project chapters, but the surprise has been the almost accidental emergence of the above model; a 'something other' that only came into being as a byproduct of investigation of artistic process. The search for making tacit, practitioner understanding of the creative process explicit for the purposes of academic dissemination led the researcher to the existing PaR models, which in turn led to the discovery of a potential knowledge gap: how to describe and analyse a creative process which is reliant on industry take-up.

In *Blood Sweat and Theory*, the learning outcome from this combination of 'methodological hybridity and 'real world' usefulness' in practice-led research is referred to by Freeman as 'Mode 2 Knowledge production' (233), which 'tends towards immediacy, relevance and application: the very heart and soul of performance practice.' (234) He also notes that 'the relationship between academic and professional practice is more blurred now than at any time in the past.' (233). The Pro-Create model is consistent with Mode 2 knowledge production and this blurring of lines; it tracks and responds to industry circumstances as they occur; it addresses external concerns at the same time as examining artistic practice, by mapping the author's creative process within a structured epistemological framework. Like Trimingham's spiral, the model has a hermeneutic heart; it represents a continual cycle of interpretation and reflection from project to project which deepens both the researcher's understanding of her artistic practice, and of how that practice fits into wider music theatre practice today. At the same time it acknowledges the primacy of 'product' in professional art-making, with the inclusion of 'commission' and 'financial evaluation' at key stages of the cycle.

As specified earlier, the diagram represents a distillation of process over three performance projects, each of which had different inceptions and went through divergent modes of creation. What follows here is a general explanation of the cycle - a cycle that is further deconstructed in the individual project chapters.

### **Stage 1: Idea, proposal**

The researcher's creative process begins with the spark of an **'idea'**, or perhaps what Peter Brook meant by a 'deep, formless hunch' (Brook 1987: 3). Once in a coherent enough form, this 'hunch' is shared with potential collaborators and/or producers, until one of them expresses an interest. To state the obvious, if no third party expresses an interest, the professional cycle does not begin, but insight gained from this failure at the first hurdle might lead its author towards a more 'sellable' idea, or the decision to create the work alone, with no collaborators, financial support or industry backing. In an interview with John Fulljames, currently Associate Director of Opera at The Royal Opera House, he referred to his time as Artistic Director of The Opera Group with the following:

It was one product at a time, and this gave an inbuilt quality control. If we couldn't get funding, venues, the project could and would fail at any stage, and we would have to move onto something else.

(Walker and Fulljames 2013)

In other words, for the small-scale producer/ creator, in the cultural marketplace, however strongly that artist might believe in their idea, it is industry that decides whether or not it is viable. If it is not deemed viable, and the artist can afford to realise the idea with their own funds, they might find an alternative means of having their work performed. In the Pro-Create cycle to date, each of the researcher's projects has been funded to a greater or lesser extent by outside partners. This will be further detailed in the project chapters.

If an idea is of interest to a third party, they might ask for a written **proposal**, which can in turn either lead to the idea being dropped, to the suggestion of work-shopping part of the piece, or to a request for further development of the idea. Each of the research projects in this thesis followed different paths at this initial stage, all of which will be unpicked in the project chapters.

### **Stage 2: Development/ workshop; Commission/ production model agreed**

A development period, or workshop enables the third party producer to see whether a project, as Producer Dominic Gray of Opera North described it 'has legs, or we might decide through that process the project isn't going

anywhere' (Gray 2010). If it does 'have legs' – or in other words is considered to be worthy of further development - it can lead to a direct **commission** from one company, or the suggestion of a **co-production** between two or more partners. It can also lead to a combination of funds offered from one organisation and the offer of 'in kind' support from another – for example the offer of rehearsal space, performance venue, press and marketing, stage management and technical crew. (Increasingly, a production model might also involve private donations, crowd-funding and successful funding applications, although none of these have formed part of the researcher's experience to date). Again, the individual models will be described on a project-to-project basis in more detail in later chapters, but the inclusion of 'commission' and 'production model' at this stage, stress the weight of industry factors, highlighting product-based concerns in the cycle from the outset. The double-headed arrows in the diagram between stages 1 and 2 indicate the fluidity of process at this point in the cycle. Sometimes it is the development period that leads to the request for a written proposal. Sometimes stage 2 is the end of the journey for that particular proposal with that particular third party, forcing the process back to stage 1, and an attempt to 'sell' the idea to an alternative promoter.

### **Stage 3: Creation, rehearsal, performance**

During stages 2 and 3, many or all of their elements can exist concurrently, depending on the agreed development model. In a devised piece, **creation**, development and **rehearsal** can co-exist right up until the finally realized **performance**. The double-headed arrows between stages 2 and 3 indicate this mobility of process. An initial period of creation, rehearsal and performance might only lead to a partial realisation of the project. If the project is performed only in part, and with minimal budget in order to attract other producers, industry take-up at this stage might be contingent on a return to a further development period and then into further creation, before fully realised staged rehearsals and performance. As noted by John Fulljames, a project can fail 'at any stage' (Walker and Fulljames 2013), and it is possible for the professional cycle to break down after both workshops and partial creation, if there is doubt from promoters and producers as to the viability of the piece. In the event that this happens, with reflection (stage 4) and alteration, it might also be possible to resurrect this project at a later date. Either way, the hermeneutic cycle of learning and understanding can continue even if the professional cycle comes to an abrupt halt.

#### Stage 4: Financial/ critical evaluation, reflection

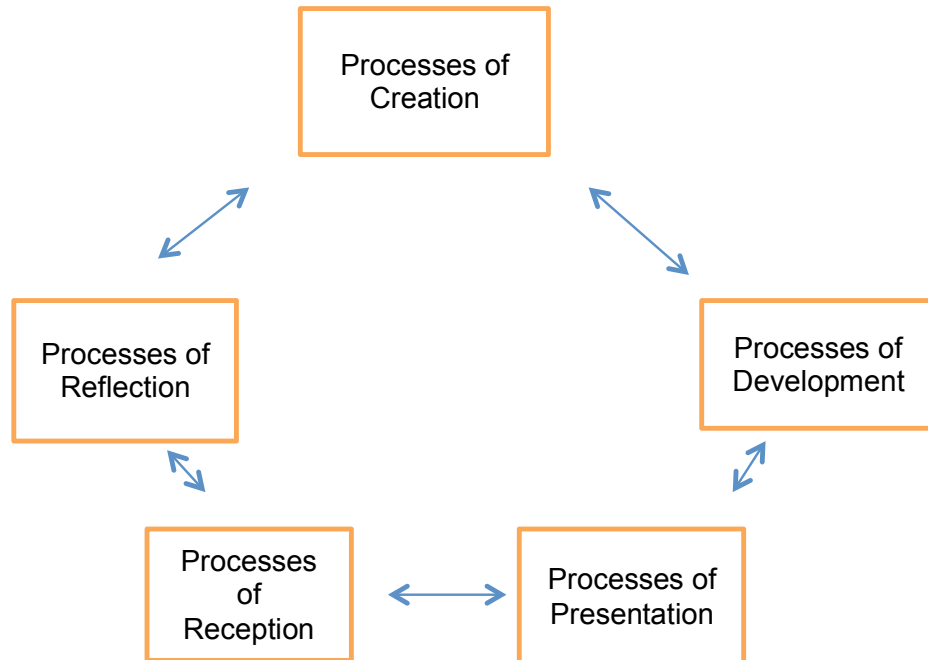


Figure 3: Roberta Mock's 5 stages for performance process (Mock 2000: 5)

Consistent with Roberta Mock's model, shown above, in the Pro-Create cycle, there are double-headed arrows between stage 3 (creation, rehearsal, performance) and stage 4 (financial/critical evaluation, reflection), as an indication of the mobility of process and product at this point (a positive evaluation can lead back to more performances of the same piece). However, in a divergence from Mock's cycle, in which 'processes of reception' comes as a separate stage from 'processes of reflection', the Pro-Create model merges the two stages and substitutes '**evaluation**' for 'reception'. This is in order to highlight the fact that in industry, the **financial and critical evaluation**, post-production, by critics and managements is inextricably linked with the reception of that product. If the piece is well received by critics, and well attended by audiences, it is likely to be evaluated positively by its producers. These are not separate stages of the professional practice cycle; they are the point at which a product is either slated for revival or let go. As Jonathan Reekie, the former director of Aldeburgh Music said in interview:

A big thing that's missing today...is the chance for people to write operas that aren't very successful, learn from it, and then go on to write other operas that are successful.

(Walker and Reekie 2011)



The professional cycle can come to an abrupt end after only one revolution, if the product is deemed 'unsuccessful' by management. There is little chance of being offered another opportunity by the same company if the first product does not receive critical acclaim and/ or sufficient ticket revenue. (Reekie admitted that in this eventuality a creative team could be 'sunk'). By the same token, the endorsement of critical and/ or financial 'success' makes industry take-up with further performances, or a second revolution of the Pro-Create cycle more likely.

Artist evaluation is more multi-faceted at this stage. For the artist as producer evaluation includes a practical analysis both of the product's critical reception and of its box office. The financial reckoning may well influence the artist's next project, both in terms of subject and of funding opportunities. If the project has fared poorly in financial and critical terms, potential collaborators, as stated before, might be deterred from commissioning/ co-producing another piece. The artist might need to develop links with other companies in order to gain another opportunity. For the artist as creator/ performer, the evaluation is conjoined with **reflection**; reflection on the piece and on the performance itself, either at the end of the process, or in order to make changes, and/or reinforce and clarify existing text and gestures before further performances. This is complex. Brad Haseman has written of this process in reference to practice-led arts research:

[T]he attempt to make tacit knowledge more explicit involves a process of dynamic movement from the closeness of subjectivity to a greater distance, if not quite achieving objectivity as traditionally conceived.

(Nelson 2013: 571)

The practitioner-researcher must deal with this difficulty twice over, firstly in discovering the means through which to express the recapturing of the phenomenological acts of writing and performance, and, subsequently, how to filter those findings in order to disseminate them formally. The artist, in Nelson's words 'knows through doing'; they 'do', and then have to find a way of 'knowing' what they were 'doing' after the event. If they are conscious of exterior 'thinking' during the 'doing' of creation or performance, they are in danger of operating at one remove from the embodiment they seek to achieve. It can take time for a performer or writer to reach a sufficient level of 'distance' to begin an analysis of their work. Aleksander Dunderovic quotes director Robert Lepage on this point:

As in poetry, the actor-creator has to make new expressions and then search for what is hidden beneath them. Lepage urges practitioners to accept this, to understand that meaning comes after the fact.

(Dunderovic 2009: 42)

The Pro-Create model supports this process of 'doing' and then 'knowing' what has been done, and this will become evident through an analysis of the creative and professional processes at play in the three research projects, firstly as separate entities and later as part of an interconnected discourse. This has been possible, as stated in the introduction, through combining the methodologies of phenomenology – States' 'stopping place, as it were, at the starting place' (States 2007: 27), with an heuristic gaze on the creative process and performances themselves, and finally with the more distant hermeneutic reflection on that process, and where the pieces sit in current industry practice.

Although the artist's evaluation and reflection can serve to enrich and deepen understanding of practice, and this may feed into a new project when the cycle starts again, it will only lead directly back to the original project being revived if the outsider evaluation is positive. In the event that the product is revived, it might be contingent on modifications being made to the piece (a return to stage 3) but even if the piece remains the same on paper, the revived project alters after a period of critical thought. The recursive act of performance, followed by a period of reflection, experientially has resulted in a deepening of characterisation, an embedding of movement and expression, which has allowed the performer under study a wider spectrum of colours to draw from (this observation will be interrogated in the project chapters). Barrett and Bolt touch on this idea in *Practice as Research: approaches to creative arts enquiry*:

Reflective practice, with its accompanying "loops" of feedback and critique, offers practice-led researchers in Theatre and the other creative arts a coherent framework within which they can develop the methods and tools for deepening and documenting their emerging understandings of practice.

(Barrett and Bolt 2007: 153)

The 'documenting' of process as it occurs, which has been achieved in this study by means of note-taking, analysis of correspondence with collaborators, and recordings – both visual and audio – serves as an aid to the re-capturing of phenomenological insights, whilst simultaneously enabling the researcher to contextualise these insights with more distant reflection, leading to a

'deepening' of understanding of the practice and its context. This 'deepening' has implications both on and off stage. For the performing artist, a deepening of understanding can lead to a more nuanced performance, and a greater freedom of expression and autonomy. For the performer who is also creator and co-producer, it can lead to a change of professional strategy. As an example, each project in the study benefited from repetition. In the future, the practitioner/ researcher would attempt to avoid a performance attended by critics and industry until the piece was sufficiently developed (As actor Harriet Walter observed in her book about acting - 'most plays take months to grow into' (Walter 2003: 196)). At this final stage of the Pro-Create cycle, it could be that the piece is not going to be performed again. Even if this is the case, the process of reflection continues into the next revolution of the cycle, and into the next creative project, bringing 'renewed understanding at the point of entry.'

In the three chapters to follow, each of the projects is disseminated separately via an evolving version of the Pro-Create process. A diagram representing the individual creative and professional cycle for that particular project begins each chapter. Each project interacts differently with the Pro-Create model. It is most present in the first project, during which timeframe the initial model was conceived and structured. The project chapters are of differing length; project 3 represented the most complicated collaborative and creative process, and this is reflected in the higher word count. Insights about practice are recorded about each project as they occurred, wherever possible, before a final, gathering chapter synchronising insights from the overarching study, followed by concluding statements, including an outlook on potential future use for the study in industry and training.

**CHAPTER 2**  
**THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME: CREATIVE BEGINNINGS**



Figure 4: Jessica Walker in *The Girl I Left Behind Me*. Fotofillia 2010

*The Girl I Left Behind Me* is a 65 minute solo piece about the lives and songs of the male impersonators on the Music Hall and Variety stages, from approximately 1865-1950. The co-writers explore this theme through the medium of a narrator who tells their stories, at the same time as illuminating personal aspects of her own life. Performances have run from 2010-2013, including a week's run at the Barbican Pit as part of the BITE Festival 2011, and a three week run at the Brits off Broadway Festival, New York in 2013. The New York performances were produced by Jess Walker Music Theatre and accompanied by MD Joseph Atkins. The piece was published by Oberon Plays in 2011. A CD of the American version of the show was released by Original Cast Records in December 2013.

### Pro-Create process for *The Girl I Left Behind Me*

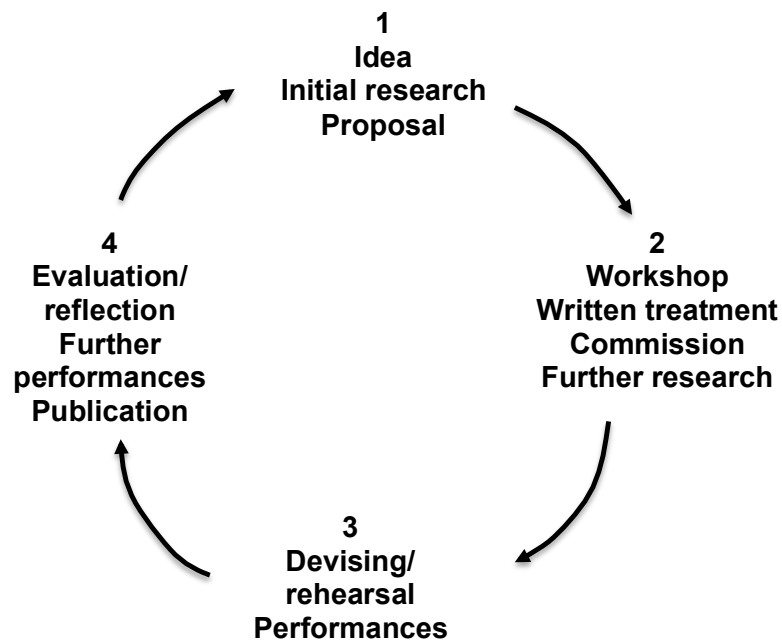


Figure 5: Pro-Create process for *The Girl I Left Behind Me*

The above diagram represents the Pro-Create cycle's first revolution through the creative and professional processes of *The Girl I Left Behind Me*. The arrow between stages 3 and 4 shows the continuation of the cycle into project 2. This chapter focuses on exploration of certain themes, the first two of which were questions asked in advance of the creative and production processes, and the remainder of which emerged during the Pro-Create process:

- How might the agency and authority of the performer be enhanced by involvement in a devising process, on a piece crafted towards her particular performance abilities?
- How might this enhanced agency inform the hierarchy in authorship between director and co-deviser/ performer?
- How does the performer/ co-deviser's identity interact with the identities of the historic performers selected for interpretation?
- What are the difficulties in the presentation and embodiment of an autobiographical narrator, when that version of autobiography has been collaboratively constructed?

These foci are first examined phenomenologically and heuristically during the processes of creation and performance themselves, and then with a more hermeneutic reflection, leading to an explication of how the emerging practice formed the foundations for the Pro-Create model.

## PLEASE WATCH DVD 1 NOW

### Idea, initial research, proposal

#### *Idea and initial research*

This section explores motivations leading to the inception of *The Girl I Left Behind Me*, including the possibilities for direct communication in solo performance, and the examination of identity in cross-dressed performance.

The fascination with solo performance arose from its potential for self-expression, direct communication with an audience and as an exploration of performer identity.

The presence of a single performer in front of an audience of many instantly creates conflicting roles for both performer and viewer – great power and great vulnerability.

(Bonney 2000: xii)

The ‘great power and great vulnerability’ that can co-exist in solo performance, at one moment with the performer, at another with the audience, was first made clear to me in Elaine Stritch’s solo performance *At Liberty* in 2003, in which, bird-like in her costume of over-sized white shirt and black tights, and on a bare stage, she spoke and sang a scripted and rehearsed version of her life story. Stritch’s performance, with its illusion of spontaneity and informality, was what initially sparked an interest in solo performance. It was a pure theatre, in which there existed a concentration of intent transmitted from the performer to her audience, undiluted either by high production values, or by another stage presence with whom to engage. As a classically trained singer, the nearest I had come in performance to an intense exchange with an audience was as a soloist in a more formal concert setting. In a move away from mainstream opera production, I became involved in concerts with more eclectic programming, in which I gained a greater degree of interpretive control, including an evening of Tom Waits songs, for which Opera North employed me. The material, in which I took on an androgynous persona, and sang - among other things – love songs from a man’s perspective, unexpectedly provided the entry point to a new set of performance possibilities. In opera productions, I had been fully used to appearing in trouser roles such as Cherubino in Mozart’s *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Hansel in Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel*, but in these productions, the roles I assumed were an interpretation and representation of fictional characters. During the Tom Waits concerts, there was no clear external character to represent; my identity as Jessica Walker became blurred with the androgynous persona I developed, while singing lines such as:

'She's my only true love  
 She's all that I think of  
 Look here, in my wallet, that's her'

(Waits 1982)

If one is playing a part in an opera, however much one might identify with the subject, it is possible to divert attention away from oneself with the justification given in *The Girl I Left Behind Me*:

[B]ut that wasn't me singing those words – I was in character.

(Bartlett and Walker 2010)

With the Waits songs, there was no longer the device of an external, pre-created character to hide behind. My singing self was transformed from someone obviously 'playing a part' into a more direct exchange between the audience and me; If I sang 'she's my only true love', wearing a trouser suit, the audience might well deduce the fact that I was gay. This was a new level of exposure which, in the words of Deirdre Heddon in *Autobiography and Performance*, provided me with 'a way to bring into being a self' during performance (Heddon 2008: 3). All performance has the potential for revealing autobiography; it is 'always informed by who we are, as subjects embodied in time and space, with our own cultures and histories' (Heddon 2008: 7), but having this personal connection with the material provided a brief insight into the 'great power and great vulnerability' of solo performance. I had now voiced some of my most personal thoughts, alone, without the armour of a theatrical costume, and in front of witnesses. It was not a big mental leap from this into the trousers of the music hall male impersonators, a vehicle through which the issue of identity in performance could be further explored.

In *Voices made flesh: performing women's autobiography*, it is observed that:

In a sense, we could say that the writer-performer looks for surrogate selves in order to play out aspects of her personality and then gain insight into them.

(Miller, Taylor and Carver 2003: 154)

Certainly, the experience of singing the Tom Waits songs as an ambiguous, androgynous presence, instigated the search for 'surrogate selves' in initial creative steps; first Victorian male impersonator Vesta Tilley, after a chance remark that I resembled her in the Tom Waits performance, then other lesser

known historic male impersonators such as the Edwardian era Hetty King and American pioneer of the form, Annie Hindle. From Sara Maitland's book about Tilley (1986), and Laurence Senelick's book, *The Changing Room* (2000), about the history of cross-dressing on stage, I discovered a rich and largely neglected performance history; women who, as early as 1865, commanded the highest fees in entertainment, by standing on a stage wearing a suit and singing, among other numbers, love songs to the women in the audience. This discovery, of women who achieved great industry recognition through the performance of the male gender, fuelled an interest in unearthing the 'surrogate selves' of this forgotten onstage phenomenon, as well as the often transgressive offstage lives of the women themselves, in order to channel something of them through my own stage persona for a contemporary audience.

### *Proposal*

In Roberta Mock's *Performing Processes*, Playwright Christine Roberts writes:

For a play to be performed usually means an acceptance of that play by an established theatre or theatre company. The Artistic Director of a theatre is driven not only by aesthetic concerns but also commercial ones.

(Mock 2000: 13)

Dominic Gray, Projects Director at Opera North, who had employed me for the Waits project, expressed an early interest in the male impersonators idea and suggested pairing me with writer/ director Neil Bartlett. Bartlett had pedigree with music hall; he had previously produced an evening of music hall songs when he was Director of the Lyric, Hammersmith (1994-2004). He had also written and performed several monologues for the stage, which had been published as the book *Solo Voices* (2005). Gray made it clear that his interest in commissioning the project would be contingent on Bartlett's involvement in an initial workshop, funded by *Resonance* - Opera North's research and development arm. Bartlett, a well-known theatre-maker with the combination of current mainstream work as a theatre director and of devising queer theatre in the 1980's with his own company, *Gloria*, could attract both a diverse audience and multiple publicity strands. Although 'commercial concerns' do not by necessity lie at the heart of subsidised companies, poor audiences can reflect badly on the judgement of the programmer and subsequent funding bids. Even though the proposed project would not be expensive in Opera North terms, already industry concerns dictated the commencement of the Pro-Create cycle.



**Workshop, written treatment, commission**



Figure 6: Cover page song-sheet I Love the Ladies: Library of Congress Online Archive

After an initial meeting with Bartlett, he agreed to an exploratory workshop. For this three day period, at the end of January 2009, I provided Bartlett with historical accounts of key male impersonators and their song repertoire, accessed from the British Museum and online American archives (see above image). During the workshop days, Bartlett scripted the historical accounts I had provided into dialogue; these stories were interspersed with the songs, in a simple structure. At the end of the third day there was a twenty-five minute presentation to an invited audience. Having seen the results of the work, Gray agreed to commission the piece, subject to the provision of a written treatment explaining the proposed contents of the piece. Despite the commission, Bartlett did not commit to a date, and it was only when a major project for him fell through that the idea was resurrected. Serendipitously, a slot became available at Opera North for Spring 2010, owing to another project stalling there. Within weeks of Bartlett re-establishing contact, a three-week rehearsal period and seven performance dates had been finalised.

Having secured the commission, I spent the following months immersed in historiographical and archival research, including Dr Gillian Rodger's doctoral

thesis: *Male Impersonation on the North American Variety and Vaudeville Stage, 1868-1930* (Rodgers 1998). With a sizeable collection of songs and life stories now sourced, I ensured that the songs were committed to memory for the beginning of the rehearsal period, whether or not they would, in the end be used. As a singer by background, this element of preparation has been inculcated in me from the beginning of my professional life; music must be 'sung into the body'. The complex physical and mental process of combining text with the sung voice, and enabling it to appear effortless to the viewer/listener, is hard won. The muscles employed in phonation must adapt to a new set of instructions with every new piece of music that is learned. This is a recursive act with no short cuts – experientially it can take in advance of two months to reach a place of vocal comfort with new material - and with only three weeks of rehearsal before the first performance, this work needed to have been put in, in advance.

### **Devising/ rehearsal, performances**

#### *Devising/ rehearsal*

It was during this stage of the Pro-Create process, in the combined rehearsal and devising, that themes highlighted at the beginning of the chapter began to come into focus: of relative authorship between co-devisers, of my identity as the narrator and of my authority as a performer. Bartlett, as director, led rehearsals from the outset. He was clear that the songs would provide the skeleton for what the piece was to become. Singing through the songs as a starting point was consistent with my professional life to date in main stage opera production, in which one habitually prepares the music in advance and arrives on the first day of rehearsal to sing through the piece with the cast and conductor. Here I had authority; I could project a character confidently through song. The Music Director was Jim Holmes, with whom I had collaborated on several concerts, including the Tom Waits project, and with whom I had a musical rapport. Through a process of elimination by joint consensus, the number of songs and arias were whittled down by half to sixteen; for some of them only one verse was selected, and only a couple of lines in the case of Octavian's aria from Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*. The function of each piece was to express something unique - musically, emotionally, or through the text, in order to retain a place in the programme. The classical numbers – the Strauss and Cherubino's act two aria from *Le Nozze di Figaro*, performed a dual function; they reflected my musical past in opera – stressing the autobiography inherent in the project - and highlighted that cross-dressed females on stage were by no means an invention of the music hall. Bartlett's proposed structure was that each song would be accompanied by a short narrative pertaining to the relevant historic performer.

It was only when the process of unravelling these stories began, and how they would be channelled through my contemporary performing persona that I became aware of my creative inexperience. Out of necessity, here, Bartlett became the teacher and I the student; I had never devised a piece of theatre before, and he had an established track record. I was not sure of my authority, either to share my opinions or theatrical ideas. I was intimidated by Bartlett's surety and reputation, and easily fell into passivity in the rehearsal space. Without many ideas forthcoming, Bartlett began by questioning me as to my motives in wanting to stage a piece about male impersonators. These are the notes I scribbled down after that rehearsal:

*I want to puzzle through why these performers sang cross-dressed; what they were thinking when they poured out their desire for a woman through song, or took on the stance of a soldier and sang about going to war. Was it about autonomy in a time at which women had little? Was it simply the best way to earn money on stage? Why did audiences become so smitten with them, and how was it possible that women proposed marriage to them, buying into the illusion of their masculine persona? Why I am I drawn to these stories and what I could communicate to an audience about myself, through these historic figures. Why do I want to communicate something about myself to an audience, when that something renders me so vulnerable??*

(Walker 2010)

As a set of questions, these provided fertile ground for the devising process ahead. Brad Haseman has said that:

[P]ractitioner-researchers do not merely 'think' their way through or out of a problem, but rather they 'practice' to a resolution.

(Nelson 2013: 329)

With this set of questions, the practitioner-researcher was emergent. Through the performance project I was aiming to create and perform my way into insights pertaining to the historical figures, and more potently, insights into my own motivations as a creator/ performer. I already knew it was not fulfilling solely to perform in pre-created works; I was beginning to experience the need to say something about or for myself in the creative sphere, but as yet had only a tenuous understanding of what this 'something' might be. In Mark Ravenhill's documentary about queer performance artist Bette Bourne, *It Goes with the Shoes* (Ravenhill 2013) Bourne recounts the day he took the decision to stop working as a classical actor, and form his own company, *Bloodlips*. A friend had come to watch him playing alongside Sir Ian McKellen

in a 1969 production of Shakespeare's *Richard II*. After the performance the friend reflected 'you were very good, but what did it say about you?' It was enough to confirm Bourne's suspicion that, although he possessed the skills to appear in a Shakespeare play, if he was to find a means through which he could express 'himself', he would have to break away from the established canon and make his own theatre. Here I was with the opportunity to do exactly that; to make a new piece, and to explore my thoughts about identity in performance, but at this juncture, although I could express the motivating questions, which dictated the narrative drive of the piece, I could not formulate creative text for performance. I did not know how to 'say' what I wanted to 'say'. Bartlett literally put the words in my mouth during the rehearsal period, having interrogated me about the questions I provided. In the introduction to the published text, I write:

It was immediately evident that a solo show, the subject for which I had chosen myself, was going to make me question what, or who, this trouser-wearing "I" was.

(Walker 2011: 2)

Followed by:

This question of who 'I' was, was to become central to the process of making the piece, from the workshop onwards. The narrator persona we developed for the stories of the historical figures whose lives I told, became pretty close to a version of myself. S/he often spoke in the first person, and sometimes even forgot altogether that s/he was actually meant to be talking about somebody else.

(Walker 2011: 2)

The difficulty presented in performing this version of myself, was that it was Bartlett who had crafted it; he took my thoughts about identity on stage, about what or whom I hoped to embody while singing these songs, and created the narrator persona, who weaved her way through the stories of the historic performers, right from the outset of the piece:

Very early in my career, I realised that when I'm singing, I don't have to behave.

(Bartlett and Walker 2011)

These are the first lines of the evening delivered by the narrator persona, and were words I had said to Bartlett in an early rehearsal. Whether or not I would have chosen to repeat these words to an audience as the opening lines of the

piece is a moot point, but they became the opening lines because I gave Bartlett the authority to mould my thoughts into his own particular stage language - a language that was further fashioned into his style of delivery throughout the rehearsal period, as he directed the way I delivered the text. I could not easily embody the words I spoke, because the words had been provided by Bartlett, so although the narrator 'became pretty close to a version of myself', inhabiting the text to the degree that this happened took until at least the end of the first production run. I had to learn how to present an authentic version of myself through somebody else's writing. That this proved more difficult than interpreting a pre-created role I knew not to be 'myself', is perhaps paradoxical, but the deliberate presentation of 'self' as 'other' allows for the imagining of a character away from oneself; the attempt to authentically present 'self' does not. It pre-supposes the spontaneity of delivery consistent with how 'oneself' speaks. As these words were learned, and not in the speech patterns I habitually use, the task proved onerous.

Although already, at this stage, we were co-creators, inasmuch as I provided the material (of myself and of the historiographic research) from which the piece would be fashioned, during the process I attributed very little of this authorship to myself. Yoni Prior has written about this performer/ director dynamic in devised work, from her PaR reflections on *Levad*, a solo performance piece in which she was both co-author, from a devised process, and performer:

The attribution of authorship (or auteurship) in a collaborative performance-making process is a problematic issue. A singular, signature, or successfully integrated performance style or aesthetic is, more often than not, assumed to be the product of a single and singular vision – that of the director. The fact that the contribution of the performer/author in the creation of any performance work is so often rendered invisible by the needful invisibility of the work in the rehearsal room has led to a mythology which characterises the actor as the passive, compliant instrument of the director.

(Freeman 2010: 123)

Certainly, 'passive' and 'compliant' are words I would have used about my presence in the rehearsal room *at that time*; I would also have said that the 'aesthetic' of the 'performance style' was guided by Bartlett, even though implemented by me. My creative contribution in the rehearsal room, at this stage, was invisible even to myself.

The DVD of *The Girl I Left Behind Me* is taken from its opening night, at the Howard Assembly Room, Opera North, on the 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2010. The

documentation provided by the DVD, as well as the notes made in the days after the initial performances, gave me access to the phenomenological recapturing of experience, described here:

*Earlier that day was the dress rehearsal. Because the work was devised, up until the last moment there were cuts and changes to the text. As a singer from the opera world, this degree of last minute alteration was an anathema; I began that first performance convinced that I would forget most of what I had to say. I was aware of how tired I was, both physically and mentally; how every time I breathed in my back ached with the effort; how fragile my spoken voice felt compared with my sung voice away from the microphone. The experience was of performing as I had been instructed, rather than as I was moved to, and of being afraid of 'doing it wrong'. If these were first steps towards creative agency as a performer and writer, they were well masked. There was awareness at every point of spoken text that I was, to a degree, channelling Bartlett's way of speaking, both in delivery and in the formation of the sentences. My instructions were to deliver the first page of text slowly and quietly, in order to draw the audience in. I was self conscious through every moment of that opening few minutes. It was not how I would speak to an audience. It was alien, arch. Part of me wanted to break out and do it differently, but I diligently stuck to the director's vision. It was when I sang that my authority came more to the fore. Here I had the full range of expression at my disposal. The songs were embodied; I had been singing them for months. My technique as a performer through song was well honed and reliable. I could use a much wider palette of vocal colours and choices than when I was talking, because communication through song was how I was used to 'speaking' on stage. I could also put aside my fear of forgetting the words – with the signpost of musical phrases, text is far easier to learn than without it.*

This initial exposition of the 'feelings' I experienced during the first performance, was compatible with States's 'stopping place [...] at the starting place' (2007), as were the following notes, written after the final performance of the initial run:

*By the third performance of the initial run, in London at the Purcell Room, I was beginning to gain confidence in the spoken text and was aware of a greater jouissance with the audience, but with the words still relatively new, and the experience of speaking on stage still a novelty, it was with sadness I reflected on the last night that I might never perform the piece again. There was much to learn about how to deliver it; so far I had only caught a glimpse of how to inhabit the narrator persona and the women who spoke through her.*

Insights gathered from the initial, phenomenological recapturing and further heuristic consideration of the performance run, about lack of performer

agency, degree of authorship and narrator identity will be explored in the reflections below.

### **Evaluation/ reflection, further performances, publication, recording**

Reflecting on and evaluating *The Girl I Left Behind Me* has been an evolution, in part because the piece was still being performed until July 2013, but also in part because this was the first research project, and it took time to acquire the distance from the 'doing' of the practice, into filtering and then articulating methodological insights – to find meaning after the fact. It was this critical reflection of the project that led to an early modelling of the Pro-Create cycle, detailed later in the chapter. The critical reflection below is subdivided under the separate headings of creative process in rehearsal, narrative structure, performance identity, authority and agency, and professional process.

#### *Creative process in rehearsal*

Playwright Sam Shepard, in an interview in *The Observer*, was recently quoted as saying:

I'm a great believer in chaos. I don't believe that you start with a formula and then you fulfill the formula. Chaos is a much better instigator, because we live in chaos – we don't live in a rigorous form.

(Shepard 2013)

Here Shepard was alluding to the rehearsal process for his new play, *A Particle of Dread*, but his comment has resonance with the creative and reflective processes of *The Girl I Left Behind Me*. Although not chaos exactly, from a jumble of material and ideas eventually patterns and structures have emerged, not least with the initial modelling for the Pro-Create cycle, as a lens through which to view process and product. To continue the Shepard analogy, during rehearsals for his play, he presented re-writes at every rehearsal, dramatically changing the structure and content throughout the process, until a cohesive work emerged. In other words, not living in a rigorous form did not obviate the need to create one for the purposes of writing a play. The process might have been instigated in chaos, but through the cyclical rigour of repetition, change and refinement in the rehearsal room, he found a way towards form. During a developmental process like this the writer, although immersed in the process of creating the work, at least has the inbuilt distance of being an observer in the rehearsal room, and gaining insights – even creative inspiration – from the chaos, in order to be able to find 'form.' As the performer/ co-creator of *The Girl I Left Behind Me*, I was immersed in both processes simultaneously, which made any objectification of the 'creative chaos' doubly difficult.

Trimingham's hermeneutic spiral is presented as a methodology for sifting insights through this creative sieve:

The problem of methodology centres on the fact that the material on which the research conclusions are based depends almost entirely on a creative process, and the process, in fact, has many disorderly features. However, we do not have to pretend that the process is more orderly than it really is: only that the planning is orderly. The 'disorderliness' of the creative process must be incorporated into the methodology.

(Trimingham 2002: 3)

The production and creation processes during and after the rehearsal and devising process for *The Girl I Left Behind Me* were 'disorderly', but through hermeneutic interpretation of that creative disorder it has been revealed how planning led to 'form' on more than one level. At its base level, in an attempt to filter insights from process, it led to this early attempt to model a generalised Pro-Create process:

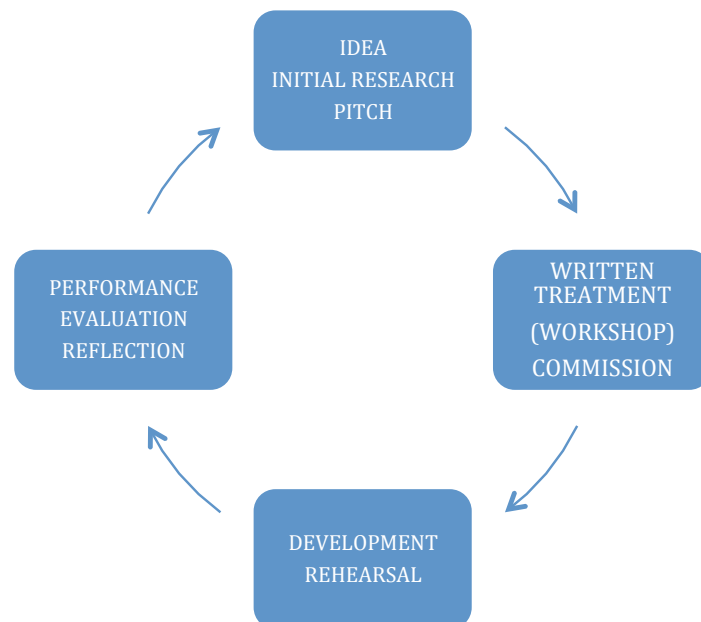


Figure 7: first Pro-Create cycle

This early version reflected the experiential cycle of creation up until that point. The one-directional arrows reflect that up until that point, the professional process had gone according to plan, with no need for reversal. This will be re-visited in the final chapter. With the meta-structure in place,



the project's progress could be unpicked; it became evident that the developmental process in the rehearsal room was itself a micro-cycle. As Mock writes in *Performing Processes*, in reference to her cycle for live performance, 'relationships between these processes are processes themselves' (Mock 2000: 6). Our process within a process followed a path similar to Anna and Lawrence Halprin's RSVP cycle (Halprin 1970). The *Resource* – the stuff the piece was to be created from – was the songs and historiographical research; the *Score*, or instructions for the work, was our initial exploration of this material; the *Valuaction* – by which Halprin meant a process of dynamically responding to the work based on values – was the iteration, cutting and refinement of that material, and the *Performance* – setting the work in motion – was the final stage of the process. Within this micro-cycle, was a concrete plan; Bartlett unilaterally placed the songs at the creative centre. The songs became the hook; the starting point – they would serve as both bedrock and inspiration for the developmental process. We could have formulated a multitude of plans; we could have begun with the stories and seen where that led us; we could have improvised for a week. What was beginning to become apparent about the devising process was that the point of entry was not crucial; you had to start somewhere, and somebody in the room needed to take the initial responsibility for where that 'somewhere' was. From the disorder of a random beginning point, form would hopefully emerge. If we had started with the stories, would the final piece have been different? Surely it would have, but for every piece that is made, there are many left unmade aside from in one's imagination. Collaborative creativity might not have a specific 'formula', but it does have need of any number of imposed strategies in order to take the potential product from a melting pot of group ideas into a cohesive whole. Bartlett's decision to start with the songs, with each one sung and discussed, then either discarded or explored further, formed the springboard for ideas. It was an evolving process – a creative cycle, if not yet a spiral, in which decision led to insight to decision and so on, with continued analysis and refinement. This process is highlighted with the following example:

*Narrative structure: The Johnny Medley*

The most popular genre of song in the music hall was the 'masher' song, in which a young dandy showed off about money and flirting with the girls. The convention of the male 'masher' or 'dude' was well established at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While the Victorian audience understood that these songs gently poked fun at a certain type of dandified man, the social commentary of the lyrics might, today, be somewhat obscure. Unwilling to let the songs go completely, because the lyrics and the tunes were strong, Bartlett suggested using the songs differently and gathering them into a medley, performing a verse of each, and showing a young man called Johnny (most of these men were called Johnny) through all stages of his life, from the seventeen year old

Johnny, singing 'Why did I kiss that girl?' (33.40 into the DVD) through to the same character as an old man singing 'I've got the time, I've got the place, will someone kindly introduce me to the girl?' (41.30). This last 1910, upbeat number was re-imagined as delivered by a lonely old man, and a man who is much too exhausted to bother with singing. He speaks the song from beginning to end. Speaking the song subverted the meaning; now rather than sounding confident, energised and flirtatious, as I had when I first sang it through, the man sounded vulnerable and flat.

Making the Johnny section out of those specific songs was the start of the concentric layering of material; to the initial plan of starting with the songs we now had the stratification of songs within songs; placing the section, as was decided, at the mid point of the show, it also acted as a pivotal point for the mood of the piece. The jollier early 'Johnny songs' related back to what became the first half of the show, in which were placed the more youthful and vibrant songs, with the backgrounds of the women who sang them; the transformation into the older, increasingly tired Johnny led into what became the more reflective section of the evening and the stories of those women. That one early decision to join the masher songs together and plot the journey of Johnny, effectively created the narrative structure for the entire piece. Below is a visualisation of that process:

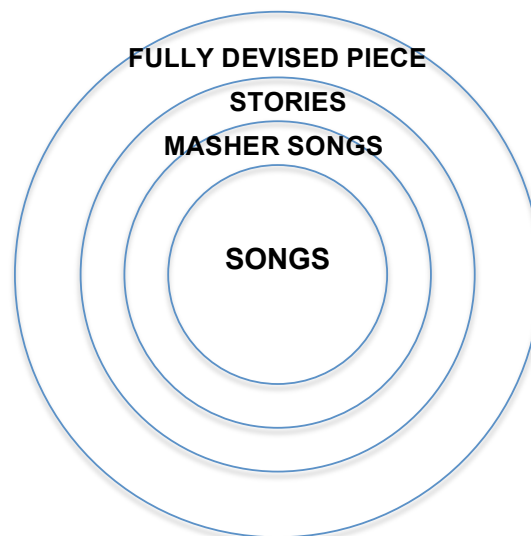


Figure 8: narrative structure *The Girl I Left Behind Me*

#### *Ella Shields and empathy*

As an extension of how the narrative structure developed from the masher songs, the loneliness and disappointment created by the final Johnny song

guided us towards the treatment for the story of Ella Shields, and her most famous number, *'Burlington Bertie from Bow'* (45 minutes into the DVD).

Coming out of the final, elderly Johnny song, Bartlett gave me a line of text to speak, taken from a question I had asked during an early rehearsal:

What must it be like, for a woman to grow old as a young man?

(Bartlett and Walker 2010)

I had asked the question in relation to Ella Shields, who went on singing her most famous number – *Burlington Bertie from Bow* - for more than 39 years. Shields' story was the one I was most keen to tell; she had collapsed five minutes after singing the song for the last time on stage and died later that night. There was something about the image of this elderly lady, pretending to be a young man right up until the end, I found inexpressibly poignant. The word 'inexpressible' here is key; I was a practitioner, practising my way to a resolution (Nelson 2013), and part of that was an attempt to give theatrical voice to the inexpressible – to know through doing.

Although *Burlington Bertie from Bow* is traditionally presented as a comedy number, in this version the narrator persona introduces the song with a presage of Shields' death, and the song is delivered as if it is her last performance 'on August the 3rd 1952 at a holiday camp in Morecambe Bay' (Bartlett and Walker 2010). The narrator transforms physically into Shields as an old lady for the beginning of the song. Within the song, the elderly Shields plays a tramp, who is himself pretending to be a young man. Shields attempts to hide her frailty, and to present as still vigorous. Within that one song I am playing Shields as an elderly woman, who is playing an old man pretending to be a young man. In order to show this degree of layering, Bartlett directed me to walk with a shuffle and to attempt large gestures, but as if they hurt too much to complete. The combination of the halted gestures and the shuffle showed both the vulnerability of the character, and her will to go on. As the character in the song, I employed different accents, so that the tramp's voice occasionally pushed through the mask of the gentleman. It was this combination of gestures, physical and vocal, that created the multiple stratification of identity. This stratification became further confused towards the end of the song, where we included the historical truth of Shields forgetting the words and ruefully telling her audience, after a long pause 'I used to be Burlington Bertie, you know'. By halting unexpectedly and looking, silently at the audience, there was a moment when the characters collapsed into one another; when it was not clear whether Shields had stopped, or whether I had. Bert O States writes:

[I]n the theater our sympathetic involvement with the characters is attended by a secondary, and largely subliminal, line of empathy born of the possibility that the illusion may at any moment be shattered by a mistake or accident...it is a crucial aspect of the phenomenal quality of stage performance. It is our creatural bond with the actor, who stands before us in a vulnerable place.

(States 1985: 119)

At this moment during the piece, there existed fleetingly this possibility that the illusion was about to be shattered; as if the performing 'I' had made a mistake and was about to crack. A seed of anxiety was planted in the audience, which made Shields (and me), seem somehow 'brave' when we carried on. When the Shields character then 'died' in the musical chords at the end of the song (50.00), there was a palpable sense of upset from some audience members at most performances. I would interpret this reaction by means of States' observation above; the audience had sensed vulnerability, either in 'me' or in Shields, and this had created an empathic response. Through the simple theatrical device of an unexpected suspension, we had steered the audience into a particular reaction.

Although the narrator and/ or Shields character attracted the audience's sympathy at this juncture, it had not been asked for in the *manner* of playing. When the narrator informed the audience, after the first pause, that 'On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 1952, Ella forgot the words', s/he did so in a matter-of-fact way. My natural inclination would have been to over-emote, showing the audience what I felt about this; Bartlett's inclination was to insist that I hold back, report. In Luere's *Playwright versus Director*, Robert Wilson states:

I prefer a distance with the emotions. You must never fill the theatre with your emotions; you must always leave room for the audience to participate and fill in the spaces.

(Luere 1994: 60)

Bartlett's approach gave the audience the chance to 'fill in the spaces'. It was in those spaces that their empathy had time to grow. The effect I hoped to capture in Shields' story had been achieved, but by releasing the emotions in the audience, rather than in myself.

#### *Authority and agency*

These insights into narrative structure and theatrical expression began to gather with the continued analysis of both process and product. Watching the

DVD of the piece afforded a less pleasurable insight; that as much as the Shields section represented a theatrical strength, the opening five minutes represented its nadir. As written earlier, the piece began with lines I would not have chosen to say, and with a delivery I found stilted and difficult to master. Watching those opening minutes, I was struck by how small and monotone my voice was in timbre - how restricted in colours. In my delivery of the text I was copying what Bartlett had told me to do, rather than 'being in the moment.' This resulted in a commensurate lack of immediacy and authenticity, both crucial ingredients in the 'liveness' or flow of an embodied performance. It is interesting to compare this with the same section of the piece on the CD, made in October 2013 (Track 2), in which the variation in colours is noticeable. I had found a different way to deliver the lines, partly because the disc was made after 39 performances of the piece, and partly because away from the director's corrective ear I gradually assumed greater ownership of the material.

It is perhaps useful to remember here, my background was in opera, and as Paul Atkinson writes, in *Everyday Arias*:

[A]lthough I have written that singers and producers work together, it would be wrong to imply that the negotiated outcomes are normally the product of equal and symmetrical work. For the most part, producers direct singers [...]. On more than one occasion it has been suggested to me that singers "need" authority figures to direct them.

(Atkinson 2006: 85)

Previous experience in the rehearsal room accompanied me into the devising process for *The Girl I left Behind Me*. Bartlett was not autocratic, but I looked to him as the authority figure, and presented as more passive than might be ideal for a collaboration. It was only with time away from the piece, with the recursive act of performance and with distance from the director's instructions, I began to comprehend the potential for agency during performance, and greater authorship of the material itself.

Psychologist Albert Bandura's concept of human agency involves:

[A] combination of human capacity and potential that assists a person to exercise some control over the nature and quality of his or her own life.

(Chen 2006: 131)

While this definition will be further examined as part of the conclusion to the thesis, in which the journey of performer agency is mapped through the projects, it could be stated that during the final project 1 performances I had begun to exercise more control over the material, which, in turn, led to an increased sense of personal agency. This occurred most notably during the New York run, at the 2013 *Brits off Broadway* festival. There, I performed 24 shows in the space of 21 days; a positive review in the *New York Times* led to full houses. The combination of this critical affirmation, the subsequent full houses and a sizeable number of performances during which to further embody the material, away from the instructions of the director, contributed to this enhanced sense of personal agency.

There was a concomitant professional agency gained at this time. When Opera North made the decision that they could not justify risking tax-payers' money for a project in a country outside of their remit, Peter Tear, the director of *Brits off Broadway*, invited me to come as a solo enterprise; the piece was owned by its co-authors, and only the production was Opera North's. Having researched the quickest way to become a non-profit-making organisation, a necessity for the requirements of the theatre, I started a small charity called *Jess Walker Music Theatre*. It was under this umbrella that I became the producer of the piece. As a producer, my only revenue would be from box office receipts. The positive reviews and strong audience attendance validated the financial risk I had taken, leading to a sense of professional agency. The links between personal and professional agency will be covered in detail in the conclusion to the thesis.

As co-author of the material, there was also a new authority I was granted - the authority of someone who not only 'does', but of someone who 'knows'. Despite having sung professionally for fifteen years, I had never been invited into a broadcast discourse on the work I was appearing in. Now I was asked to appear on BBC Radio 4's *Woman's Hour* to discuss the phenomenon of the male impersonator and the context for the performance piece (25/11/2011). This affords a possible insight into the hierarchy inherent in the traditions of current industry practice; I was granted authority as a 'maker', although a novice, when I had never been granted it as a 'doer', although an experienced practitioner. The status of a primary creator, one might conclude, is more elevated than that of a secondary creator - or performer. The performer is granted a public platform to speak usually only if they are already known; the primary creator does not necessarily have need of this distinction.

*Identity and the narrator persona*

Whatever they wore, whatever they said or did, these ladies always sang in their own voices – which meant no-one was ever fooled, or even meant to be fooled, by their act.

(Bartlett and Walker 2010)

These are among the first lines I speak in *The Girl I Left Behind Me*, and go some way to addressing a central tenet of male impersonation: that the art of impersonation is that it is 'knowing'. The performer is saying to the audience 'You know that I know that you know that we're all in this act together.' (Bartlett and Walker 2010), words said by the narrator later in the piece. I have written about the confused identity of the male impersonator, with reference mainly to the voice, in the article 'The Girl I left Behind Me: the disjunction between vocal and visual performance in male impersonation' (*Studies in Musical Theatre* 6: 1 2012 pp 99-113). For this thesis, I concentrate on what Sara Maitland labels the act of 'double deception' in her book about Vesta Tilley:

Male impersonation – within the theatrical conventions available – does not seek to confuse; finally, it does not really require deception. It *pretends* to be deceptive, and is thus, so to speak, doubly deceptive.

(Maitland 1986: 10)

The double deception I presented in performance was one with which my audiences colluded; they knew that I was not a man, and that I knew I was not a man. However, performing, as I was, a 'version of myself' as the narrator, and at other times as the historical characters, my identity was more complex than a 'double deception'. It was a double, double deception. When I sang in the guise of the historic figures, not only was I a woman playing a man who knew she was not a man, I was also acting as another woman who existed, at another time, and who played men, knowing they were not men. The narrator, equally, was not directly autobiographical, even though I was co-author. As narrator I played a man, knowing I was not a man, but added to that layering was the extra deception that the person I presented as myself – as autobiographical - and in the knowing act of impersonation, was not necessarily a version of myself. By construction this self was a collaborative self. Deirdre Heddon writes about the collaborative presentation of autobiography:

[M]ost theatrical events, including solo performances, involve some form of collaboration [...] The performance of autobiographical material,

then, is typically a collective affair which will have an impact on the representation of that autobiography or the re-presentation of the 'self'.

(Heddon 2008: 9)

The collaborative construction of the narrator in *The Girl I left Behind Me* had an 'impact' on how 'I' was re-presented. Even though, to an extent, the performance of the historic figures contained 'auto' in its biography, by dint of the fact the women were presented through the conduit of my history and personality; when I played them, I nevertheless knowingly acted a part. I had prior knowledge of what the women sang and how they lived. I presented them as I imagined them to have been, I also presented them largely through song, my most comfortable mode of communicating on stage. When I was the narrator, the audience perceived that I was talking to them as 'myself'. I gave clues that it was 'me' during the piece, by interrupting myself because I had something important to say, for example in the middle of 'Hi Waiter', 41 minutes into the DVD:

I'd just like to say before going on...that song was sung by Miss Ella Wesner. Ella Wesner – you know, the one who died with her suit on. How strange and how marvellous it must have been for her to sing those words – *and all those who've never made love to a girl, well, they don't know the fun they've missed*.....sorry, where was I, Jim?

(Bartlett and Walker 2010)

By repeating the words from the song, and then forgetting where I was, I appeared to give away something about myself – that I was personally affected by the words I had spoken to the audience. But this confessional self had been collaboratively constructed. I had drawn attention to the line in rehearsal, as an example of how risqué these women could be in the guise of a man, but it was Bartlett who decided I should repeat it here. It seemed as if it was 'me', but in fact, I distanced myself from the lines, and consciously played a part, in order not to be self conscious delivering them. The autobiography on show here was more 'bio' than 'auto'. The audience was deceived into accepting the narrator as a version of myself, thereby adding an extra layer of deception to my act.

To analyse *intention* against *results* in terms of my identity onstage, I did not experience the level of personal identification with the material I had imagined I might. The stage lighting was bright – I could not see the audience in most venues. I sang and spoke into the audience without knowing whether, when I addressed someone in the audience, they were male or female. It was communication into a black hole and there was little catharsis. In New York



the atmosphere changed; the venue seated only 70 and I could see them all. It was unnerving. I was initially tentative in the lines I had been directed to sing or speak to individual women, lest they were embarrassed. With eight shows per week I soon surmounted this self-consciousness, and the act became just that: an act. It no longer felt personal or dangerous; it was an hour to be negotiated, vocally and physically, 24 times in 21 days. Director Katie Mitchell writes about this shift from feeling to replicating:

It was no longer essential for the actors to feel the emotions; now what mattered was that the audience felt them. What was essential was that the actors replicated them precisely with their bodies.

(Mitchell 2009: 232)

Unlike my previous experience as a soloist in concert, in which all physical and emotional energy had been directed towards the release of one performance, in New York I had to find a strategy for pacing finite energy. Because these actions were by now embedded, the gesture of them appeared to be sufficient, without the same weight of emotion behind them. As Mitchell points out here, in a similar vein to director Robert Wilson, what was important was for the audience to experience the emotion, and not the performer. The reiteration of the material, although it may not have yielded personal catharsis night after night, did seem to convince its audience of 'authenticity.'

As a summary of the multiple strands of identity integral to *The Girl I Left Behind Me*, although the piece was a solo performance, it was not, strictly, a monologue, but rather, what Kara McKechnie, after Delia Dick (1999) refers to as a 'monopolylogue' 'as the character re-enacts many others' (McKechnie 2007: 164). Contextually, notable solo theatre pieces following this format of one person embodying multiple historic characters include Peter Ackroyd's *The Mystery of Dickens*, in which Simon Callow interpreted 49 characters (albeit fictive) and, with a greater similarity to my piece, Robyn Archer's *A Star is Torn*, in which she inhabited and sang as multiple past stars including Judy Garland and Billie Holiday. In *The Girl I Left Behind Me*, this re-enactment of many characters could be visualised in a similar structure to Nelson's triangulation for mixed mode practice-led research:

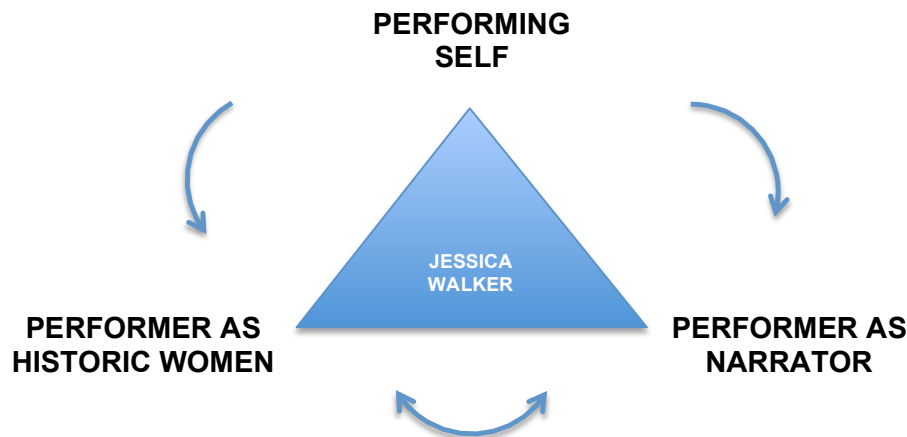


Figure 9: strands of identity in *The Girl I Left Behind Me*

There are differences from Nelson's model - his triangulation of practitioner knowledge, conceptual framework and critical reflection does not suggest a hierarchy. In this model, the performing self is the apex, and the other characters stem from that. Further to this change, the process moves only in one direction from the apex of the performing self, and in two directions between the narrator and the historic women. This modelling represents a process within the Pro-Create cycle, and is shown as processual, rather than as the layering structure of the devising process, because a layering might suggest that some elements of the performance were 'deeper', or more essential than others. In fact, the elements were 'different' from one another, but they were equally embodied, and it would be difficult to say that one came before another. All owed something to each other; namely, that they were channelled through the same artist. The artist, therefore, is placed at the core of the triangulation. As the performing self is already a hyper-real version of the self, it is positioned at the apex of the triangle, as an extension of the artist herself.

Ursula Canton writes, in *Biographical Theatre: re-presenting real people*:

Re-discovering the lives of people whose experience relates to our own is often seen as the basis for a new 'understanding of our own lives.'

(Canton 2011: 18)

This was an ingredient in the creative impetus for presenting the lives and songs of the historic male impersonators. I was drawn to the material in part because I wanted the experience of creating and performing a cross-dressed persona, without the imposed barrier of a pre-created character. After analysis, even though the material was devised around my particular

personality and artistry, I was always conscious that I was playing a 'part'. I was on stage, in a costume, before an audience. I may have chosen the costume; I may have selected the material and helped to shape it, but when the performance began, I left 'myself' behind, and took on a series of embodied roles, represented above.

#### *Professional process*

As a professional process, *The Girl I Left Behind Me* 'succeeded', although the variable of serendipity in the revolution of the Pro-Create cycle cannot be disregarded. At the beginning of the creative process, the professional cycle of commission and performance only began because of other projects falling through. With no prescribed model as to how work is commissioned and made - how to have one's creative 'voice' endorsed by wider industry - 'chance' will always be a factor.

Financially, as co-creator of the piece, I was paid a sum on commission to make the work. I was also paid per performance. In New York I made a profit after costs. Creating and performing *The Girl I Left Behind Me* never cost me money, personally. Critically, there were positive reviews in *The Guardian* (Costa 2010), *The Independent* (Taylor 2010) and the *Yorkshire Post* (Jackson 2010). The advance publicity had been strong; with the double clout of Opera North as commissioners and Bartlett's high profile, together with the interest in the subject matter itself, Lyn Gardner interviewed us for *The Guardian* (Gardner 2010), and we were interviewed for *Diva* magazine (Bartlett and Walker 2010). After this degree of press interest, high audience numbers and the favourable reception, offers from British festivals came in and, before 2010 was out, there was a 2011 tour planned, including a week's run at the Barbican Pit for November that year, as well as the publication of the piece as a play script, by *Oberon*. We toured further in 2012, also under the auspices of Opera North. In New York I received favourable reviews in the *New York Times* (Isherwood 2013), the *New York Post* (Vincentelli 2013) and the *New Yorker* (2013), all of which contributed to good houses. Critical approval for the piece facilitated industry interest in project 2; by the beginning of 2012 I had secured sufficient backing from the Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester and Opera North to begin the next rotation of the Pro-Create cycle with *Pat Kirkwood is Angry*.

In a return, finally, to the questions highlighted at the beginning of the chapter, the first revolution of the Pro-Create cycle allowed me to circumnavigate a heuristic process – intuition, indwelling, focus – through the creation, production and performance of *The Girl I Left Behind Me*, which, in turn, facilitated elucidation of the research questions. By the end of project 1, I was beginning to experience enhanced agency and authority in performance. I was also aware of attributing more authorship to myself than I had during the

devising process and initial performances. However, these were still tentative steps, and moving towards the next creative projects, I wanted to assert a greater degree of authorship. As I gained in agency, resulting from familiarity with the text, and critical validation of the work and my performance, I more fully inhabited the narrator persona. However, this persona remained a rehearsed role; although it became invested with the illusion of spontaneity necessary to present an authentic and authoritative presence, and one in which I appeared to play a version of myself, I did not lose the awareness of carrying out the director's instructions. The expression of autobiography was embedded in the material; I selected the subject, the histories of the late performers and which aspects of their lives I wanted to represent. How autobiography interlinked with the adaptation of lives for performance, and subsequently with identity in performance became an area for further exploration, and particularly with regard to how this combination of self-creation for one's own performance might contribute to a further degree of agency. At this stage of performer and creative development, despite the level of creative involvement, I did not experience a significantly greater level of agency in performance, than I had in my career to date in main stage opera. It was this lack of agency, most specifically, I now wished to address, and that was to drive the direction of development for project 2, *Pat Kirkwood is Angry*, for which I was to write the text and select the collaborators.

**CHAPTER 3**  
**PAT KIRKWOOD IS ANGRY: DEVELOPING CREATIVE AUTONOMY**



Figure 10: publicity photo for Pat Kirkwood is Angry. Caroline Michael

***PAT KIRKWOOD IS ANGRY*** is an 80 minute solo play with songs about the life and songs of Salford-born singer/ actress Pat Kirkwood, who was named Britain's first wartime star in 1939, at the age of 18, but whose career was blighted after allegations of an affair with HRH the Duke of Edinburgh refused to die down. In the play Kirkwood tells her story from early life, right up until her death from Alzheimer's in 2007. The narrative is propelled by a series of date-changes on an onstage board. Originally a co-production with Opera North in association with the Royal Exchange Theatre Manchester in 2012, the piece has been performed across Britain, and went to Brits Off Broadway in June 2014 for a three week run, produced by Jess Walker Music Theatre in association with RET, Manchester.

### Pro-Create process for project 2: Pat Kirkwood is Angry

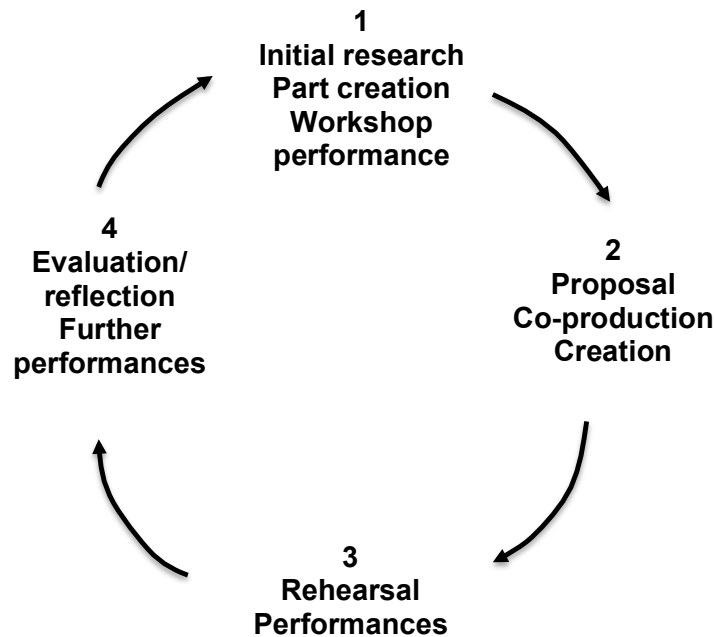


Figure 11: Pro-Create process for Pat Kirkwood is Angry

The above representation of production process is particular to project 2. The addition of ‘co-production’ at stage 2 of the process, led to a refining of the Pro-Create model from its initial iteration in the previous project, which will be interrogated later in the chapter. As stated at the close of the previous chapter, emergent themes from project 1 contributed to a developing set of artistic foci; these formed the foundations for artistic exploration in project 2:

- How does the adaptation of biography for performance interlink with performer/ author autobiography?
- How might this interlinking, combined with a sympathetic collaborative model, contribute to an enhanced sense of performer agency?
- What is the relationship between the writer and the performer in the self-creation of solo music theatre work?

Other questions emerging from the creation, production and performance of *Pat Kirkwood is Angry* are:

- What are justifications for and functions of singing on stage?
- How can phenomenology and heuristic thought be used for ‘recapturing’ and reflecting on both the creative process, and on performance itself?

- What are the ethical implications in appropriating a life for the stage?

### PLEASE WATCH DVD 2 NOW

#### Idea, initial research, part-creation, workshop performance

##### *Idea, initial research*

The initial questions I pondered at the start of the second revolution of the Pro-Create cycle were: under what circumstances in performance is the spoken word not sufficient to convey the weight of emotion required, and how is the emotional transition between speech and song negotiated? Linda Hutcheon quotes Jeremy Tambling's *Opera, Ideology and Film*, with regard to this transition:

[W]hen speaking characters break into song, they imply that "life cannot be contained in its ordinariness, but must spill over into it, and into rhythm, singing and movement".

(Tambling 1987 in Hutcheon 2006: 41)

As a singer embarking on a first subject to write and perform alone, it was crucial to be able to find a justification for 'breaking into song', in order fully to invest in the creative process. Aside from project 1, in which I sang because the historic characters sang, previous work in opera and main-stage music theatre productions had left my justification for singing unformed; I habitually opened the score and learned the notes, then interpreted the pre-created role onstage in song without considering why I did this, other than that I was a singer by profession. The next question I asked myself was: 'what is *my* reason for singing onstage?' The immediate answer that came was:

- Because I am used to communicating through song on stage

This phenomenological response might appear self-evident and simplistic, but as Bert O States notes in *The Phenomenological Attitude*, phenomenology is 'the systematic attempt to unmask the obvious.' (States 2007: 31). Unmasking the obvious revealed that at an essential level, I identified as a performer though the medium of the sung voice. I was not an actor primarily by background, but an actor through song.

Leaving aside the option of creating a through-composed piece with a composer, which is investigated in the following chapter, as a solo creator, in order to self-justify the switch into song, I could either create a piece in which the protagonist 'had' to 'break into song', because the spoken word was no

longer a sufficient mode of communication for the emotion expressed, or, I could use cultural commentator Mark Lawson's suggestion of the self-reflexive subject of a singing performer, 'in which many of the biggest numbers are not dialogue being sung self-consciously but consciously sung songs' (Lawson 2013) - for example the character of singer Sally Bowles in the film version of Kander and Ebb's *Cabaret*, who only sings in the Kit Kat club, and ostensibly as part of her act. In the event, the piece I was to create contained elements of both these possible justifications, as will be detailed later in the chapter.

I had initially become aware of singer Pat Kirkwood during research for *The Girl I Left Behind Me*. Kirkwood played male impersonator Vesta Tilley in the 1957 film *After the Ball*, based on Tilley's life (itself an example of a self-reflexive subject for a musical, justifying the use of song). Kirkwood's autobiography, *The Time of My Life* (Kirkwood 1999) provided the creative 'spark' for project 2, owing initially to the sense of omission and/ or evasion in her telling of her own story. As Maggie B Gale states in *Auto/Biography and Performance*:

Unpicking the 'inner life' - or even the 'real life' - from the complex matrix that informs and defines the performer's autobiography is no simple task.

(Gale and Gardner 2004: 11)

Certainly, Pat Kirkwood's was an autobiography in which the presentation of self was carefully managed; she glossed over the more painful aspects of her 'real life', dismissing the circumstances leading to allegations of her affair in less than a page of text, despite the fact that the rumours irreversibly damaged her reputation and career. With the Duke of Edinburgh still alive, she was, one imagines, limited as to what could be committed to print, but the matter of what she might have said provided the 'formless hunch' of an idea, in which I might begin to 'unpick' the 'complex matrix' of her life; to fashion her autobiography into a solo piece. The piece was conceived from the start as an adaptation of form, as well as of a life, adhering closely to the format of Elaine Stritch's *At Liberty*, in which she presented the audience with a scripted version of her life, recounting anecdotes and songs from her past. If Stritch presented a version of herself, this creative project would involve the author writing a play to be performed *as if* it were autobiography. This appropriation of a life, layering of identities and the piece's narratological structure will be drawn out later in the chapter, but the presentation of Kirkwood was intended, from the beginning, as an amalgamation of the inherent subjectivity of my authorship and performing personality with what I would appropriate from hers. In *Voices Made Flesh*, Lynn C Millar writes about this amalgamation in



reference to her performance as autobiography of author Gertrude Stein, stating:

The performer not only creates the lens through which to view another's life but becomes actively engaged with that life (critiquing it, interpreting it, transforming it into the vocabulary of another era) and so builds a dynamic and living new persona. The performance, then, necessarily becomes an amalgam or merging of the body, voice, and intelligence of the performer with those of the person portrayed.

(Miller, Taylor and Carver 2003: 48)

Through this exploration, in which I was to choose, author, co-produce and perform a piece, the hope was to discover whether or not this level of creative autonomy would enhance the level of agency and authority I experienced as performer and creator.

*Part creation, workshop performance*

At this stage of the Pro-Create process, in the initial writing and performance of a section of the piece, I became aware of how phenomenology could be used, both as part of the writing process itself and as a tool with which to test the efficacy of writing during performance. Having presented the initial 30 minute work-in-progress version of the piece at the University of Leeds as part of their *New Stages Festival* in March 2011, it became evident how focused the narrative was on the technicality of presenting a deceased first person as the subject. In order for Kirkwood to speak as if she were still alive, I had presented her as a ghostly presence, reminiscent of Elvira in Noel Coward's *Blithe Spirit*. This device served a dual function; it allowed her to re-examine her own life posthumously, and militated against having to represent her with any degree of mimesis. When I wrote Pat Kirkwood as a ghost, I was, unknowingly, creating what Ursula Canton refers to as an 'intro-theatrical' (Canton 2011:104) meta-structure. Canton explains that with the introduction of a posthumous narrator 'The illusion of biographical reconstruction is rejected from the beginning' (Canton 2011:103); it is a deliberate and knowing device that immediately breaks any illusion of straightforward biographical representation. Although this was a neat technical solution to telling a life from beginning to end, during the phenomenological act of performance, the device immediately 'felt' inauthentic. When, after singing a few lines of *Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered*, I as Kirkwood announced:

'Gosh, I'm frightfully rusty, but then, I suppose I haven't sung since I died, and who knows how long ago that was?'

(Lines from workshop script: Walker 2011: 1)

I logged the experience of discomfort as a performer, and the temporary distancing from the role, in a not dissimilar way from the inability to identify with the narrator persona in project 1. The difference here was that, as author, I was responsible for the words provided. It could be said that the authorial 'self' made itself present at this moment in the performance, noting that although the technical solution of making Kirkwood a ghost might have worked on paper, in performance, the framing was not imbricated with sufficient theatrical 'truth' for either writer or performer to continue with the idea. This early on in the creative process, phenomenological thought highlighted that the performing 'I' would influence the writing 'I'. It was only through the physical embodiment of the material in front of an audience that both identities were fully present. The presence of these dual identities offered a new perspective on the efficacy of the writing as a vehicle for performance. As the sole author, I now had the authority to make changes in response to this phenomenological thought.

From this early version of the piece to the finished and performed final product, there remained two distinct ways of viewing the writing and the performing of the writing as it developed; the unchecked and the checked; the phenomenological and the significative. Bert O States refers to these two:

[M]odes of seeing' as 'a kind of binocular vision; one eye enables us to see the world phenomenally: the other eye enables us to see it significatively.

(States 1985: 8)

The phenomenological was necessary to both writing and performance, in order to access the free-flowing creativity in the writing phase and the 'in the moment' quality necessary for uninhibited stage performance. However, the phenomenological also then needed scrutinising. How this functioned in the performance phase will be further discussed later in the chapter, although as stated earlier, it was the 'feeling' experienced during performance that prompted analysis of and changes to the writing. During the writing itself I did not check myself or allow myself the chance consciously to reflect until I reached an impasse, but chose instead to follow a thread of thought until I could go no further. An inability to proceed was followed by a period of indwelling – a characteristic of heuristic research design - which led either immediately back to the writing, or into additional research in order to trigger further creative ideas. The first instinct was important as States' 'stopping place at the starting place' (States 2007: 27).

Although States posited this in reference to a spectator's immediate encounter with the art object of a play, there are parallels with the creative process itself. If the art object is the play being written, one could say that direct encounter with thoughts stimulated by research are necessary for the writing even to begin and to achieve momentum. The stopping place at the starting place comes in immediate reflection on what has been written, from which arise further phenomenological feelings in direct response to this heuristic reflection, which are then acted upon in changes to the writing. In this way, it could be argued that the writing process is a mix of the phenomenological with the significative; that it is analysis of the immediate feelings and meanings encountered either by what one has written, or what one has researched, that leads to a period of indwelling, from which the significance of the immediate 'feelings' become manifest. This new clarity stimulates the next phase of writing. Lucidity regarding the writing's functionality for performance came, at this stage in the process, only with the performing of it. The phenomenological encounter with the material during performance of the 30 minute work-in-progress yielded significative insights into the structure and pace; having dwelt on the phenomenological discomfort during parts of the performance, and focused on why I experienced this discomfort, it was possible to clarify that the piece needed a more authentic theatrical framework for the performer, than the device of a ghost.

### **Proposal, coproduction, creation**

After the workshop version, creation of the full script did not begin until a production model had been agreed. This stage of the Pro-Create cycle therefore begins with the circumstances of the eventual production model, and is followed by an analysis of the creation of the piece, including the two distinct phases within this, of *appropriation and writing auto/biography*, and of *shaping the script*.

#### *Proposal and coproduction*

The start of the Pro-Create cycle was contingent on a company or companies agreeing to house and fund the production. This process began differently to project 1, with no offer of a direct commission from any company arising from the initial proposal. Instead, in a meeting secured with Sarah Frankcom, Artistic Director of the Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester, it was agreed that the theatre would house the production in Autumn 2012, in the studio theatre. They offered to support the play 'in kind', which effectively provided without charge the studio space, a week's rehearsal time, technicians, stage management, press and marketing, and front-of-house staff. It also entitled me to 70% of box office for the four performances. Despite the lack of commission, support from a major theatre company was of value, in order to 'sell' the piece to other interested parties. Opera North subsequently agreed to host the piece at the Howard Assembly Room. Frankcom suggested I apply

to the Arts Council for a touring allowance, in order to meet the shortfall in funding. Her suggestion was in line with the position many subsidised organisations currently take regarding external, or partially supported touring productions, and has been highlighted recently by theatre maker Bryony Kimmings in a much-shared blog '*You show me yours*':

A venue just expects you will be applying to ACE to make up THEIR deficit. This is why our system is so fucked. The party line is that you have to get tour funding to ACTUALLY cover the cost of a tour. This is like a secret unwritten clause in a venue's mind, that ACE will mop up the rest.

(Kimmings 2013)

This situation has, perhaps, arisen as a result of continued funding cuts to subsidised theatre companies. The area needs further research; as a model in perpetuity it is not sustainable for artists always to apply to the Arts Council in the expectation of extra money, when touring to organisations already within their portfolio. This point is revisited in the conclusion to the thesis. Having applied for a touring allowance, despite the concrete offers of four performances at the Exchange, and one at Opera North, my application to the Arts Council was turned down twice. With no other money forthcoming, I wrote to Richard Mantle, the General Director of Opera North, asking for his advice regarding sponsorship. As Kirkwood was born in Salford and died in Ilkley, financial support from a local business was a potential avenue for additional funding. Mantle knew my work well, after several years' association with his company, and offered a lump sum of £4,000 towards the production, from the Opera North projects department, run by Gray. This sum of money made the company co-producers. The new production model now needed to be reflected in the evolving Pro-Create model, with the addition of 'production model agreed' as an alternative eventuality to direct commission. It should also be noted that as at the start of the professional production process for *The Girl I Left Behind Me*, serendipity played a major part in starting the Pro-Create cycle's 2<sup>nd</sup> revolution. The meeting with Frankcom was only secured after a personal friend and actor who was employed by the theatre urged her to respond to my proposal; before his intervention, my correspondence had not been acknowledged.

With limited finances and initial venues now in place, I could begin the creative and collaborative processes. Without a commissioning company invested in the decision-making process, I enjoyed creative freedom at this stage, and assembled the team of Lee Blakeley as director and Jim Holmes as music director; this already afforded me a greater degree of authority than in project 1, in which Opera North, as commissioners, selected the director,

whose participation was essential in order for the project to proceed. Having sourced sheet music for Kirkwood's songs from the British Library and from an out-of-print sheet music company, Holmes and I spent an exploratory day working through songs and listening to Kirkwood's few available recordings. Already, the process was collaborative – we chose the material together. Holmes had a good understanding of my voice by now - its strengths and its limits - and could arrange the music accordingly. With a developing idea of which songs were suitable, the writing process could begin.

*Creation:*

*Appropriation, and writing auto/biography*

As stated earlier, from the start of the adaptation of Kirkwood's life and songs, the project was immersed in my own auto/biography; any material I selected and how I interpreted that material was in effect an appropriation of Kirkwood's life for my own use. Julie Sanders defines appropriation as involving:

[A] more decisive journey away from the informing source into a wholly new cultural product and domain.

(Sanders 2006: 26)

Project 2 represented an appropriation, as opposed to a straightforward adaptation of the material. Firstly, it represented a 'decisive journey away' from the written autobiography and from archival sources, into the new cultural product of a staged interpretation of a person with songs. Secondly, having named the project *Pat Kirkwood is Angry*, the project was also taking what Sanders calls a 'transpositional' stance on her life. Anger permeated the subtext of Kirkwood's autobiography, but was not in the text per se. I was, therefore, offering a commentary on the source text; by attributing to Kirkwood the hypothetical motivation of anger I was appropriating the source material. Ethical implications for this choice will be discussed in the reflection at the end of the chapter. At the initial creative stages, the ethics of reinterpreting a life for performance did not give undue concern; the conundrum was how to sift fact from the conflicting versions of her life story. In a meeting with journalist Michael Thornton, who held Kirkwood's archive, and who had been a close personal friend, he recounted anecdotes about Kirkwood, which often contradicted Kirkwood's own recollections in the autobiography. Thornton's anecdotes might have been equally unreliable, but the discrepancy between versions of events began to proliferate. Kirkwood claimed in the book only to have met the Duke of Edinburgh on two occasions – once backstage after her performance in *Starlight Roof* (the occasion that led to the rumours of an affair) and once at a Royal Variety performance, with Queen Elizabeth herself present. However, Kirkwood had allegedly told Thornton that she had met

with the Duke privately on seven occasions. In emailed correspondence with the daughter of Kirkwood's great love, 'Sparky', I was informed that her father had left her mother for Kirkwood, and that she had only seen him again once in her life. In the autobiography, 'Sparky's' marital status when they met, and the existence of a daughter are not alluded to.

In *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, H Porter Abbott quotes a letter from Mark Twain to fellow author Dean Howells, highlighting the discrepancy between presentation of self and 'truth' in autobiography:

An autobiography is the truest of all books for though it inevitably consists mainly of extinctions of the truth, partial revealments of the truth, with hardly an instance of plain straight truth, the remorseless truth *is* there, between the lines, where the author-cat is raking dust upon it, which hides from the disinterested spectator neither it nor its smell...the result being that the reader knows the author in spite of his wily diligences.

(Abbott 2008: 68)

Between the lines of Kirkwood's autobiography, where the 'author-cat' was perhaps covering over unpalatable facts, I had already intuited that she was far more 'angry' than she committed to print. Having now also established that her 'facts' did not necessarily correlate with other accounts, I decided to incorporate her unreliable testimony into the writing. She would deliberately not always speak the 'truth'; however, it was my intention that the audience would be made aware of this by the way the performer delivered the text. The author would speak 'through' the representation of Kirkwood by means of the performer. As with Twain's observation that 'the reader knows the author in spite of his wily diligences', here, the audience would 'know' the subtext provided by the author, because of the precise wording and the manner of the performer's playing. Again, there was an inextricable link developing between the writer and performer; the writer wrote for the performer from the start, imagining the performer in the act of performance. This represented a new, and exciting degree of creative control. It also represented an engagement with heuristic thought. Douglass and Moustakas state that:

Tacit knowing is a basic capacity of the self or the researcher and gives "birth to the hunches and vague formless insights that characterize heuristic discovery".

(Douglass and Moustakas 1985: 49)

Much as the iterations of the Pro-Create cycle were beginning to enhance the ability to convert tacit knowledge about practice and process towards critical reflection, so tacit insights about Kirkwood's personality, derived from research, were transforming over time, with heuristic indwelling and focus on the subject, towards formed ideas and narrative structure.

This heuristic thought, in which I engaged with the instability of 'fact' in Kirkwood's autobiography, led towards an interpretation of events, in order to construct a narrative. Abbott writes:

[T]he past is infused with meaning through the process of narrativization. Facts, in short, don't speak for themselves. They must be interpreted. And interpreting facts as they proceed in time requires turning them into a story.

(Abbott 2008: 155)

By reading between the lines of what literary critic Wayne Booth called the 'unreliable narrator' (Booth 1983) of Kirkwood in her autobiography, I began to turn Kirkwood's life into a 'story'. I was creating a biography of Kirkwood, to be presented on stage as if it were autobiography. This could be seen as an example of auto/biography, referred to by Barbara Caine in *Biography and History* as suggesting:

Implicitly [...]that the writing of a biography usually involved some form of autobiographical involvement on the part of the author.

(Caine 2010: 66)

My adaptation of Kirkwood's story was auto/biographical from the start - the choices I made about her veracity; the stories I selected for dramatisation; the songs I chose to interpret – all of these represented subjective decisions made by writer Jessica Walker at a particular time, in her sustained engagement with the subject of Pat Kirkwood. That this biography was then also to be presented in the first person – Jessica Walker representing a version of Kirkwood – made the level of *auto* in the biography more pronounced; the writer automatically selected a mode of narrativisation that would suit the skills and personality of the performer.

The motivation in narrative direction was also driven by an interest in uncovering the private person behind the public persona. Barbara Caine refers to the prevalence in contemporary biography of:

[R]efer[ing] to the intimate emotional life of an individual and to an interest in **interiority** and a person's sense of identity. For many contemporary readers, 'private' involves a detailed depiction of an individual's sexual, emotional and domestic life. We are interested, above all, in the ways in which private and public lives are connected.

(Caine 2010: 28)

Indeed, as both writer and performer I was inexorably drawn to exposing Kirkwood's emotional and private life; without an understanding of the interiority of her character, it would be difficult to 'play' her. This narrativisation of Kirkwood's biography transpired by means of autobiographical thought. As Linda Anderson states in *Autobiography*, 'biography must become autobiography in order to understand the "inner life"' (Anderson 2011: 91). Feelings I attributed to Kirkwood's in reading about her life, were my interpretation of how I might have felt, were I her. Having traced her performance history from her first film, *Save a Little Sunshine*, made in 1937, to the final footage of her in concert at the Theatre Royal, Stratford East, in 1983, intuition as to the private person behind the performing figure influenced the narrative direction. For example, as the subject for Michael Aspel's *This is Your Life* in 1994, she seemed, to me as viewer, to be emotionally conflicted. Michael Thornton explained that she had known about it from the outset; that she had doctored the guest list. The tears of nostalgia when certain guests came on were perhaps not of nostalgia, but of frustration at having to appear pleased by their presence. Throughout the programme, Kirkwood's private feelings wrestled with her desire to keep up appearances. This 'fact' I used as central to the version of Kirkwood I now began to write; the struggle between what she might have felt behind her presentation of self. The further I investigated Kirkwood's personality through personal testimony and on film, the greater compunction there also became to honour this life I was beginning to 'know'. Here I am mindful of Linda Anderson's quoting of Virginia Woolf, as trying to reimagine biography as:

[A] queer amalgamation of dream and reality, that perpetual marriage of granite and rainbow.

(Woolf 1967: 235 in Anderson 2011: 90)

The task here was to create a synthesis between fact and fiction; to bring into being my appropriated, imagined version of Kirkwood's 'inner life', but to present this adaptation of a life on stage in a way that was also 'truthful'; a mixture of the 'dream and reality', the 'granite and rainbow.'



*Shaping the script*

At this stage of the Pro-Create cycle, analysis of the workshop performance led to the authorial decision to abandon the ghost conceit; the piece now began with Kirkwood announcing her own entrance from off-stage (00.12 seconds into the DVD):

‘Ladies and gentlemen, will you please put your hands together for the queen of the West End....for the one, the only, the angry.....Miss Pat Kirkwood!’

(Walker 2012: 1)

This opening immediately highlighted the transpositional stance of the characterisation; by highlighting her ‘anger’, the presentational façade of the performer was already juxtaposed with the private feelings behind it. The fact that she was making her own announcement also provided a clue that her glory days were behind her.

Only scant directions for the actions of Kirkwood were included in the script, other than in the opening description of her appearance:

*Pat is dressed glamorously and in high heels. As the drama continues, she ages. She removes her shoes, swapping them for slippers, until by the end she is an old lady.*

(Walker 2012: 1)

Experientially, and in the first revolution of the Pro-Create cycle, the director was the leading figure in the rehearsal room. For project 2, however, not only was I the creator, I was director Blakeley’s employer. This was to be uncharted collaborative ground, in which my status was altered from interpreter, to include creator and employer. Unused to the new authority this situation bestowed, my inclination was to allow Blakeley as much freedom as possible; to keep the stage directions to a minimum, and to give no indications throughout the script as to Kirkwood’s character or mood.

The matter of ‘instructions’, or ancillary *Nebentext*, in the script or score, was a new consideration, as a first-time writer, and one that is further explored in the next chapter’s collaboration, during which a tension developed between the alternative theatrical visualisations of librettist and composer as recorded in the vocal score. For now, I was aware that the script I prepared was only a template for eventual performance, and one in a series of adaptations, beginning, before a word was written, with my adaptation of Kirkwood’s life. As Linda Hutcheon states in *A Theory of Adaptation*:

In a very real sense, every live staging of a printed play could theoretically be considered an adaptation in its performance [...] it is up to the director and actors to actualize the text and to interpret and then recreate it, thereby in a sense adapting it for the stage.

(Hutcheon 2006: 39)

My intentionality as the author, in other words, although essential in the writing of the script, might serve the eventual performance better if I allowed the other creative voices to interpret the text. By leaving the stage directions minimal, the director would be free to adapt this 'score' in accordance with his directorial vision.

The structure of the script was not complex; songs were attached either as self-consciously sung numbers from musical theatre pieces Kirkwood performed in, and now demonstrated, or as emotional expositions emanating from particular life events, in which the character 'had' to sing. These choices were consistent with the justifications cited earlier in the chapter for the inclusion of song in a staged narrative, but rather than opting for one or other of the justifications, both were used in the structure for the piece. This structural choice perhaps owed something to my background in opera, and the difference in function between the recitative – plot exposition – and the aria – emotional reflection or outpouring. Hutcheon quotes Weisstein on this subject:

[O]pera also has a fixed convention for representing interiority: the aria. Dramatic action and conversation stop during the aria, and we eavesdrop on a character's moment of introspection and reflection.

(Weisstein 1961: 18 in Hutcheon 2006: 60)

The narratological treatment of the death of Kirkwood's great love, Sparky, after only two years of marriage (beginning 40.57 into the DVD) followed this pattern; Kirkwood narrates the story of how Sparky dies (recitative function); then the dramatic action stops and the song (aria function), George Melachrino's *So Little Time*, exposes the inner, emotional world of Kirkwood in her grief.

This device was repeated throughout the play. It replicated a model I understood from a performing perspective in opera; it allowed for spoken plot information without over-emoting, and for that emotion to be channelled through the songs. Unconsciously, the writer wrote to the performer's strengths, again highlighting the inter-relationship between the two roles at

each stage of the creative process. Still not entirely practiced in speaking dialogue on stage, I created a narrative that did not require huge emotional leaps, leaving those leaps to the sung voice, through which I had access to a greater range of interpretive colours.

This shaping of the staged narrative worked in direct opposition to the format of *The Girl I Left Behind Me*, in which the songs were the lynchpin from which the stories emerged. With *Pat Kirkwood is Angry*, Kirkwood's life story formed the foundations of the piece, with the songs as emotional extensions or comments, as shown in the concentric circles below:

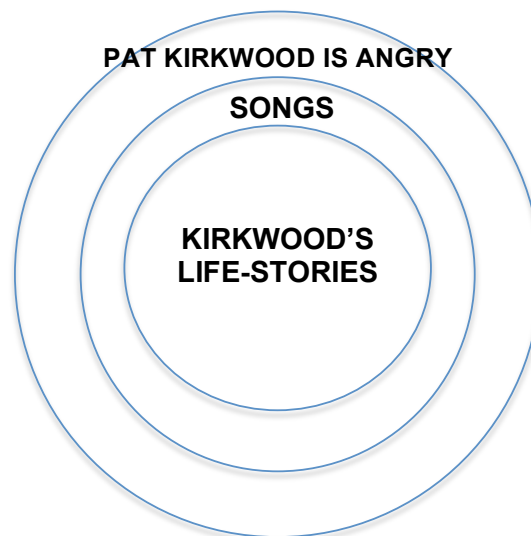


Figure 12: narrative structure *Pat Kirkwood is Angry*

The performing self continued to interact with the writing self, providing the litmus test for the script. Employing phenomenological thought, as during the workshop performance, one eye remained on the performing self, reading back sections of script out loud as spontaneously as I was able, and observing how the structure of the sentences 'felt' when voiced. If they were awkward, they were rewritten until the speech rhythms were natural and I could accept my version of Kirkwood as an authentic creation, albeit through the lens of my voice and personality. I began to take on Kirkwood's northern accent when I read back to myself. The accent fed into the word choices and the sentence structure: 'I'd never so much as bought a loaf of bread on my own, let alone been told anything about men' (Walker 2012: 4); and: 'And even June piggin' Whitfield has a CBE!' (Walker 2012: 25).

Finally, Blakeley's interpretation of the script led to a change in the narrative framework before rehearsals began, after he observed:

It's as if she can't control her life, or the pace of her life. Things just happen to her. I think we should have a board at the side of the stage with dates on, so it's as if she has no choice. The dates are there and her life is whizzing past her.

(Blakeley 2012)

Having discussed this possibility, I revisited the script, highlighting dates of importance and adding a direction for Holmes to change the date on a board each time. Incorporating the dates into the script afforded the opportunity to insert her date of death – 2007. With the simple addition of this date, there was now the possibility to stage Kirkwood's death. The dates also served to alter the flow of the narrative, from one in which Kirkwood controlled the pace, to one in which she was a passenger on a pre-ordained path. It changed the character I had originally imagined, as both writer and performer, from an active 'teller' into a victim of circumstance. Unlike in project 1, where the devising of the piece took place in tandem with the rehearsal of it, here, the collaborative relationship between director and writer/ performer was already beginning to be established; Blakeley took the script, or score, I had written, and began to develop it, in tandem with me as writer-performer, into a score for performance.

### **Rehearsals, performances**

It was during the rehearsal and performance stage of the Pro-Create cycle that key strands of enquiry came more sharply into focus. This next section details the layering of identities that began to become evident and how the collaborative and creative model led to increased agency as a performer, and a greater ability to embody the performed role.

#### *Identities and exchange: the writer, the performer, Pat Kirkwood, Jessica Walker, the audience*

As stated earlier, I viewed myself primarily as an actor through song rather than an actor per se, and yet I had written a piece in which the greater percentage was dialogue. Blakeley and I agreed that mimesis would not be a fruitful route to take. I neither looked nor sounded like Kirkwood; nor had I written a script entirely representative of the way Kirkwood 'spoke'. I did not have it on authority from anyone that Kirkwood was funny, but my instinctive handling of the more emotionally difficult elements of her life, was to present pain in the guise of humour. This appropriation, with my own auto/biography so directly responsible for the choice and interpretation of content of Kirkwood's life, perhaps made it inevitable that 'I' would be more present, than were I an actor interpreting a character written by a third person.

A possible way of interpreting how authorship influenced the construction of the performing style might be what Canton describes as:

[A] self-reflexive acting style that reveals the actor's presence as creator of a role rather than emphasising a representational mode where their presence seems to disappear behind the character.

(Canton 2003: 100)

I was creator of the role because I had written it, and the intertwining of my personality with Kirkwood's was there in the foundations of the writing itself. However, it would be simplistic to suggest that the style for performance had only one mode – either representational or self-reflexive. Both were present, depending on context; sometimes the self-reflexive presence was deliberately brought to the fore. As an example, there is a moment in the performance (16.11 on DVD) when Kirkwood tells the audience:

The eighth wonder of the world the critic Kenneth Tynan called my legs – although now when I look at them they're more reminiscent of number six, the Colossus of Rhodes. Not sure what happened there.

(Walker 2012: 8)

Here, the performing 'I' representing Kirkwood, collapses momentarily into the 'self' of the performing Jessica Walker behind the representation, and behind that into the author behind the performer. All are present at that moment; the author's intentionality creates the schism; Kirkwood expressing displeasure at the legs, which are not hers, but which clearly are mine. The self-reflexive 'I' knowingly separates from the representation of Kirkwood, in order to 'comment' on the action. This postmodern device, in which the spectator 'is asked to be aware of the constructing author, of the artifice of the piece' (Sanders 2006: 64), draws attention to the layering of identity immediately present in performance, rather than attempting to present the audience with any direct representation of Kirkwood.

This deconstruction of identity is further used when Kirkwood presents as an unreliable narrator. 28.16 minutes into the DVD, Kirkwood tells the audience about her evening with the Duke of Edinburgh, and seems as if she is about to confess to what happened:

Pat Kirkwood – oh yes – wasn't she that showgirl who slept with prince Phillip? I would hereby like to state, categorically and definitively, I am not a showgirl. A showgirl is a member of the chorus, and I was never in a chorus in my life.

(Walker 2012: 12)

Instead of confessing, which is the expectation built up by the writing, she veers off at a deliberate tangent. It is a joke put in by the writer deliberately to destabilise the audience. Kirkwood is present, talking to her audience, but as well as Kirkwood there is the presence of another duality – the performing ‘I’ behind Kirkwood, and within her, the knowing writer who is enjoying the trickery.

The multiplicity of ‘selves’ onstage during performance - the writer, the performer behind Kirkwood and the representation of Kirkwood – did not result in the playing of the part feeling fractured or inauthentic. The layering was crafted during writing and rehearsal; in performance all three ‘selves’ were channelled through a single phenomenological funnel, even if the performer behind the representation sometimes appeared to ‘comment’ knowingly, as in the anecdote about the legs. Bert O States acknowledges this need to collapse component parts into one, with reference to the three different presences in staged performance; the self-expressive ‘I’, the collaborative ‘you’ of the audience, and the representational ‘he’ of the part played (or in my case, ‘she’). Having detailed the component parts as distinct from one another, he writes:

[H]aving separated them out we should probably allow them to fall back together into a perceptual synthesis.

(States 1985: 196)

Unlike States’ ‘presences’, the discovery made from the rehearsal and performance of *Pat Kirkwood is Angry* was that it was the writer who formed the third ‘presence’. In this particular equation, the audience would form a fourth. To examine this further, the rehearsed embodiment of character for performance takes place without the audience present. The deconstruction of ‘self’ into ‘selves’ has already been reconstructed before its introduction to the audience. In the performance of *Pat Kirkwood is Angry*, the collaborative ‘you’ of the audience, therefore, must form a fourth and additional presence. Although this audience is essential for the exchange of performance to occur, it cannot be a component part of the actor’s embedding of the role, because each audience behaves differently. If a performer is to react and change always in accordance with their kinaesthetic awareness of the audience, where is the stability in the construction of their ‘part’? Synthesis of the performer’s component ‘selves’ is necessary for their embodiment of the part; this synthesis is what is received by the audience and reacted to. The audience, the fourth presence, allows the ‘chemistry’ of theatre to function, but the actor’s performance, although flexible within limits, must retain its own integrity no matter who constitutes the audience. For example, in the anecdote about the legs, the ‘self expressive’ comment was rehearsed in; it

was embodied and not 'off the cuff'. However, for the *illusion* of spontaneity to be convincing, the ability to remain phenomenological, for the component parts to be in 'perpetual synthesis', was paramount. Although I delivered this anecdote as consistently as possible, how the audience received it and reacted to it varied from performance to performance. The integration of 'presences', or 'selves' and analysis of exchange during performances of *Pat Kirkwood is Angry* might be visualised thus:

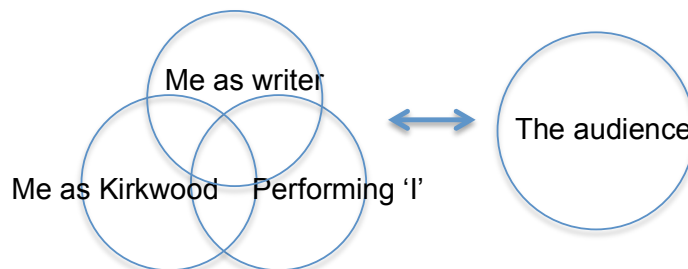


Figure 13: exchange between performing 'selves' and the audience in *Pat Kirkwood is Angry*

How this rehearsed integration of presences contributed towards an increase in performer agency is explored later in the chapter.

#### *Collaboration and developing the score*

As director, and stated earlier, Blakeley was dealing with more than one presence in me: writer, performer, co-producer and employer. My authorial voice was in the rehearsal room, in a way it had not been as co-author of *The Girl I Left Behind Me*, during which process I allowed Bartlett to shape both the script and my performance. Blakeley's directorial style was different from Bartlett's; he shaped what I presented him with, whereas Bartlett often made the initial direction for action before I had presented anything. Their directorial styles were divergent, but also reflected the altered hierarchy. As inexperienced co-author in a devising process, in project 1, I tended towards passivity, necessitating creative pro-activity from Bartlett. With Blakeley, having pre-created the material, he could shape what was written. This led to a more directly collaborative relationship. In addition, as solo author of the script, I had the authority to 'speak'. I was the expert on the subject of Pat Kirkwood in the room; having created the piece by reading it back to myself I already knew by heart, and embodied to a degree the words we now rehearsed. Blakeley interpreted what was written and how I presented it, beginning with the suggestion of the dates as signposts to Kirkwood's life. His interventions, and Holmes' arrangements of the songs in sympathy with my vocal abilities developed the initial adaptation into a score for performance.

This collaborative model for *Pat Kirkwood is Angry* shares a similarity with the initial stages of the Aston and Savona model in *Theatre as Sign System* (1991), in which the writer's text is decoded by the director as part of an ever-accumulating chain of collaborative decoding and re-encoding. However, this is where the similarity ends; Aston and Savona do not include the performer's collaborative input in their model, moving from director immediately to designer in the chain towards the final spectator reception. In the collaborative model for project 2, the director decoded and re-encoded the author's conception, which sometimes necessitated changes in the script. This led not only to a change in the construction of the piece, but it altered the interpretation by the actor, which, in turn, inspired new ideas from the director. Further to this, the musical director influenced the atmosphere of the staged action with underscoring, in response to my physicalisation of the directorial suggestions. This particular process represented a synthesis of authorial and interpretative voices that could be viewed thus:

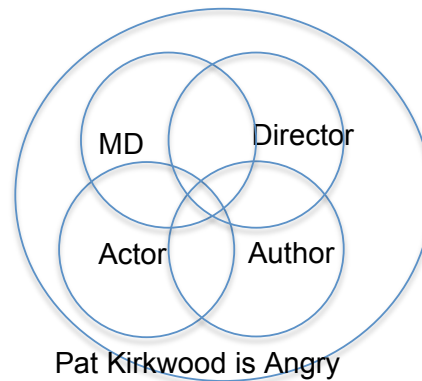


Figure 14: synthesis of authorial and interpretative voices in *Pat Kirkwood is Angry*

Here, the author's script is assimilated and interpreted by the director, leading to an enrichment of the product which is in turn assimilated by author, actor and musical director, thus creating the 'whole' of the piece. This 'whole' is ever-evolving during the recursive act of rehearsal, and reliant on the collaborative synergy between the participants. The author and actor remain separate in the visualisation, because although both represented by one person, they responded to the director's authorial voice as separate entities. The author made changes to the script; the actor interpreted that script according to the director's suggestions.





Figure 15: Jessica Walker in Pat Kirkwood is Angry RET studio 2012 (screen grab)

*Spontaneity, synthesis, agency*

At the performance stage of the Pro-Create cycle, I became aware of an increase in agency, in comparison with the performance of project 1. This manifested in a greater ability to present ‘spontaneity.’ Jo Bonney writes, in *Extreme Exposure*:

Solo work is a format that not only tolerates but thrives on the coexistence of the illusion and reality of improvisation. There is often a “phenomenal” quality to the live shows, seemingly infused with the infectious, raw energy of spontaneous storytelling. But usually, except in the workshop phase, the semblance of spontaneity is carefully fostered by the skilful writer/performer (often with the support of offstage collaborators such as directors, co-writers, designers, composers and technicians).

(Bonney 2000: xiii)

Agency in the performance of *Pat Kirkwood is Angry* presented as a tacit, embodied quality, or Bonney’s ‘spontaneous storytelling’, even though it had been carefully rehearsed and constructed with the collaborators. This quality in performance shares similarities with Polanyi’s synthesis of *subsidiary* and *focal* elements (1969), cited by Moustakas in *Heuristic Research: design, methodology, and applications* (1990). Polanyi uses as an example of this synthesis of skills, the riding of a bicycle, in which the subsidiary tasks of pedaling, steering, balancing, braking, a sense of space, timing, appropriate motions, and coordination, combine with the focal – readiness, self esteem, confidence, optimism, sense of whole (Polanyi 1969 in Moustakas 1990). This

is analogous with the experience, during performance, of the 'embodiment' of the role, or increased agency as a performer, in which the subsidiary, or motor elements of singing, speaking, moving, spatial awareness, timing and coordination, combine with the focal, or 'belief' elements of readiness, self esteem, confidence, optimism, and sense of whole to create a tacit ease, or 'spontaneity.'

The synthesis of these motor skills with 'belief' in *Pat Kirkwood is Angry* was arrived at through a combination of the re-writing, deconstructing, reconstructing and reiteration of the text, resulting in an exponential increase in my confidence as a performer. Just as the learning of the motor skills for riding a bicycle must combine with the belief that the riding of that bicycle is possible, so, in performance, the technique acquired through repetition must be in synthesis with the performer's belief that they can optimally embody the role. How this phenomenon of embodiment can then be recaptured and disseminated is problematic. As with the bicycle, experientially, when this synergy is achieved, it is characterised by a lack of awareness of 'self' which makes it particularly difficult to perceive. For example, it is only when an obstacle appears, and one struggles to stay on the bike, that one gains an increased awareness of the muscles and the will employed to keep one from falling off. In performance of *Pat Kirkwood is Angry*, it was distraction caused by an audience member in a New York performance that revealed both the presence and the fragility of the embodiment:

*I finished the last line of the final song – For All We Know, in which Kirkwood sings from beyond the grave. Emotionally drained, and placing the microphone down on the stool, I slowly walked offstage into the darkness, as the pianist played the dying chords of the piece. Before taking my final step into Kirkwood's oblivion an audience member muttered 'oh, get on with it'. Startled, I became acutely aware of 'myself', and of my annoyance with the audience member, and lost all sense of the end of Kirkwood's life, in which I had previously been immersed.*

(Notes from performance June 28th 2014)

In this example, it was the unexpected jolt out of the synergy that forged a realisation that embodiment had been achieved up until that moment. In other words, phenomenologically, although I came to understand that I had experienced greater agency in performance, this experience was always 'recaptured' after the event, and was not a conscious perception in the moment.

### **Reflection, Evaluation, Further performances**

I have shown in the previous sections how the more autonomous production model in this iteration of the Pro-Create cycle, involving the solo creation of the work combined with the particular, sympathetic collaborative model, contributed towards an increased sense of agency in performance.

As an artistic evaluation, the project represented a development from the Pro-Create cycle in project 1, in which I was co-author, and did not attain the same degree of authority either in the rehearsal room, or in performance. During project 2, becoming a more equal collaborative partner contributed to a greater embodiment in performance; consistent with Bandura's theory of human agency, by exercising control over the 'nature and quality' of the creative process 'through forethought, self-regulation of motivation, affect, and action through self-influence' (Bandura 2001 in Chen 2006: 132) there was a positive agential shift. Here, a possible link was emerging between the *autonomy* of self-creation, the *authority* this granted me in the rehearsal process, and the subsequent personal *agency* in performance. This will be drawn out in analysis of all 3 projects, in the concluding thesis chapter.

The financial evaluation of *Pat Kirkwood is Angry*, by contrast, served to highlight the problematised position of the independent producer/ creator in the Pro-Create model of working. The project was a co-production with Opera North, in association with the Royal Exchange Theatre. This financial modelling immediately necessitated an alteration from straightforward commission to 'Commission/ production model agreed' at stage 2 of the Pro-Create cycle. In this revolution of the cycle, the only money forthcoming in advance was from Opera North. With good box office receipts from The Exchange theatre and the investment from Opera North, I was not in financial deficit, and my company, *Jess Walker Music Theatre*, returned from the New York performances in profit.

After the initial performances I became sole producer, as opposed to project 1, in which Opera North remained involved in booking performances, until the project went to New York. Project 2 has subsequently played at festivals and at theatres, in Britain and in New York, under differing financial models. For festivals, the piece is offered a straightforward fee. To date, when the piece has appeared at subsidised theatres, the contract has involved a box office split; commercial theatres, by contrast have required a guaranteed fee to them, to cover running costs. In both theatre scenarios I, as producer have had to pay for flyers to promote the event. After costs there has been no profit.

Critic and commentator Lyn Gardner refers to the problem of the current theatre model for independent, touring productions with reference to the

*Paines Plough* theatre company, who find 'that theatres can no longer book them because they cannot afford guarantees' (Gardner 2013). This is an area that needs further research; with the theatre model as it stands, if the independent producer does not accept a box office split, or a guarantee to the theatre in the event of poor attendance, they might not find a willing venue for their work. But, with no guaranteed income, the risk is currently greater for the individual artist/ producer than for the, often subsidised, theatre. There exists a tension here between creative autonomy and financial security. With the increased financial risk inherent in the creative autonomy of the model for project 2, has come the increased reward of a greater understanding of craft and of performance. The problematised position of the independent artist in current industry practice will be revisited in the conclusion to the thesis.

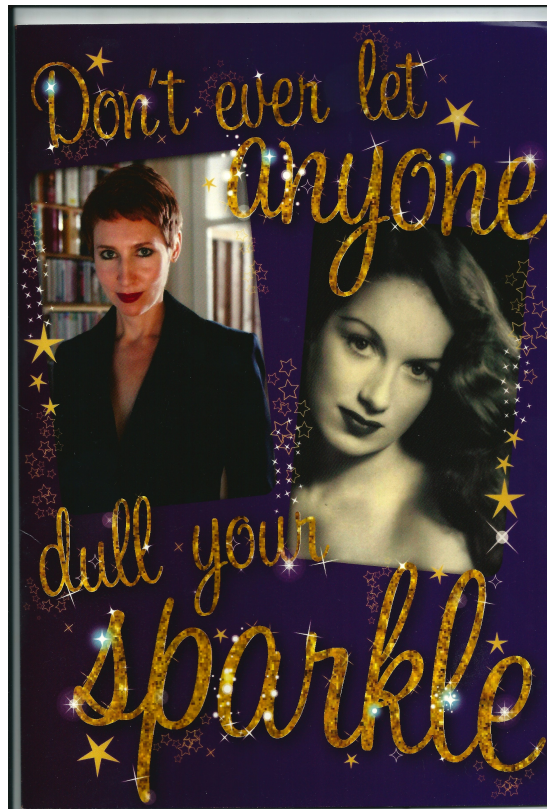


Figure 16: anonymous card sent to Jessica Walker from 'the fans of Pat Kirkwood' 2013

#### *Appropriation and ethics*

The subject and treatment of Pat Kirkwood, in which I delivered a first person narrative, allowed me to experience, for the first time, a sustained engagement with one character, that I had both researched and crafted. This represented a change in structure from project 1, in which I, as narrator, mediated the lives of several historic performers, with demonstrations of their

repertoire, represented by consciously sung songs. Moving away from a narrator construct, and into the autobiography of another, allowed for a development of that character over time, and exponentially towards a greater awareness of the story I was attempting to tell. Abbott writes:

For at bottom all writers [...] are engaged in adaptive interpretation. [...] Historians, biographers, and journalists, digging up raw material in their research, find the skeleton of a story and then grasp it by rendering it as narrative. To tell a story is to try to understand it.

(Abbott 2008: 108)

Tracking the researching, making and performing of project 2 via the Pro-Create cycle, this understanding of the story – of practising my way to a resolution - came increasingly into focus; of the attempt to give back a voice to a marginalised artist; to interpret the private behind the presentational; to ponder why some artists achieve lasting fame while others are passed over with the passage of time. At the same time the project offered an opportunity to voice elements of autobiography: of fear of insignificance, of fear of death. This appropriation of a life, therefore, provided not only a renewed public awareness of the source of Pat Kirkwood's songs and life, but it provided me, as creator and performer, with an outlet for expressions of autobiography.

That it also provided a public platform from which to enhance my professional profile was a less comfortable aspect of the appropriation of a life, and one, which came sharply into focus when publicity began to appear for the premiere of the piece. The headlines below offer an example of the publicity generated. Thornton, the archivist, and a journalist, managed to place articles about Kirkwood and the letters from the Duke of Edinburgh in several national newspapers, including the *New York Post*, *the Daily Mail*, *the Daily Telegraph*, *The Times* and the *Daily Express*.



Figure 17: Headline examples: above Yorkshire Post, below Daily Mail

That so many publications were willing to place articles publicising a small-scale solo show without a star name involved, indicates that interest in Kirkwood was still, from beyond the grave, inexorably linked with the name of Prince Phillip and the historic letters he wrote to her. As quoted from Caine's *History and Biography* earlier in the chapter, the interest in contemporary biography is often fuelled by the desire to see the private laid bare; it was the life, and more specifically, the sexual life behind Kirkwood's professional life that continued to provoke enough prurient interest for the press to run stories. That she would not have been happy about this, I am certain; that it contributed to full houses, although gratifying as co-producer, creator and performer, was ethically more complex. The publicity about Kirkwood reflected neither the content of the piece nor my treatment of the character of Kirkwood. However, this same publicity created what Julie Sanders refers to as the 'continued interest in the original or source text' (Sanders 2006: 97) that a new adaptation can provide. Fans of Pat Kirkwood sent anonymous greetings cards to me, with my image next to Kirkwood's (see figure 16). For these fans, I represented a continuation of their relationship with her. Linda Hutcheon writes:

For the reader, spectator or listener, adaptation as *adaptation* is unavoidably a kind of intertextuality *if the receiver is acquainted with the adapted text*. It is an ongoing dialogical process.

(Hutcheon 2006: 21)

By presenting a version of Kirkwood, I became that intertextuality of the continued dialogue, between them and her. I provided them with the familiar, with songs from their pasts, reconnecting them to memories about a performer they had admired. To those new to Kirkwood I introduced her for the first time. There is an inherent tension here between the ethical implications of appropriating a life, and the enjoyment an audience can derive from such an adaptation, versus the business and artistic 'gain' for the creator/ performer.

To reflect on the questions posed at the beginning of the chapter, I have shown how the adaptation of a life for performance linked with auto/biography, creating an appropriation of the life of Pat Kirkwood, and a new cultural product embedded with my creative choices, voice and personality. This self-creation of a solo piece, and its linking with auto/biography, has yielded insights about performer agency; the first opportunity to embody words written in my own speech patterns, to interpret songs suited to my particular abilities, and to choose the creative team with whom I wished to collaborate all contributed towards a greater embodiment of character in performance. The creative model represented a new level of profession autonomy which, combined with the sympathetic collaboration in the rehearsal room, and directorial interventions, developed a piece and performance through which I was able to experience a greater degree of agency than in project 1.

Phenomenological observation combined with heuristic thought elucidated elements of the creative process, from justifications for singing onstage, to how the performing 'self' commented on the efficacy of the writing 'self' leading to changes in the script, through to the delivery of the performance and the recapturing and dissemination of agency on stage.

Finally the ethical implications of appropriating a life for stage have been interrogated, without any definitive conclusion being drawn, other than a choice not to represent a person within living memory for project 3.

Other insights gathered from this revolution of the Pro-Create cycle include the hermeneutic contextualising of the piece within broader industry practice, revealing the problematised position of the small-scale independent artist/ producer, and the tension between artistic control and financial precariousness.

Certain elements from project 2 warrant further interrogation in the following chapter, which is a progression of form into the first-time collaboration with a composer. These elements include a further exploration of justifications for singing onstage, specifically in the context of a through-composed piece of music theatre; the dissection of a more complex collaborative model, involving two singer-actors; the potential for performer agency in a sung role written for specific artists; finally, the function of words when they do not exist as the primary means of communication, but rather as an aid to the composer's over-arching theatrical story-telling through music.



**CHAPTER 4**  
**AN EYE FOR AN EYE – A CABARET OPERA BY DAVID KNOTTS AND**  
**JESSICA WALKER: COLLABORATING WITH A COMPOSER**

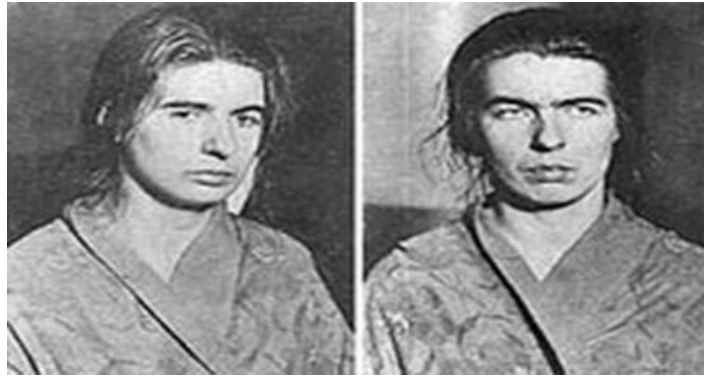


Figure 18: Léa and Christine Papin after the crime. Public domain

*An Eye for an Eye* is based on the historic case of the Papin sisters, two maids in 1933 Le Mans, France, who murdered their mistress, Madame Lancelin, and her daughter, Genevieve, in a frenzied attack, after an argument over a blown fuse. A particularly disturbing element of the crime was the manual gouging out of the victims' eyes. This fact, together with suggestions of an incestuous relationship between the sisters, made the crime one of the most notorious in French history. The story of the sisters has subsequently inspired plays – including Genet's *The Maids* - novels, films and operas, as well as forming the initial stimulus for Lacan's mirror phase theory. Composer David Knotts and librettist Jessica Walker adapted the story into a cabaret opera, with two singers playing the multiple roles of the sisters, their employer Madame Lancelin, and her daughter Genevieve. The opera is set on the day of the crime itself, with preparations underway for Madame's party that night, at which she hopes to find a husband for her daughter.

**PLEASE WATCH DVD 3 NOW**

**Pro-Create process for project 3: *An Eye for an Eye***

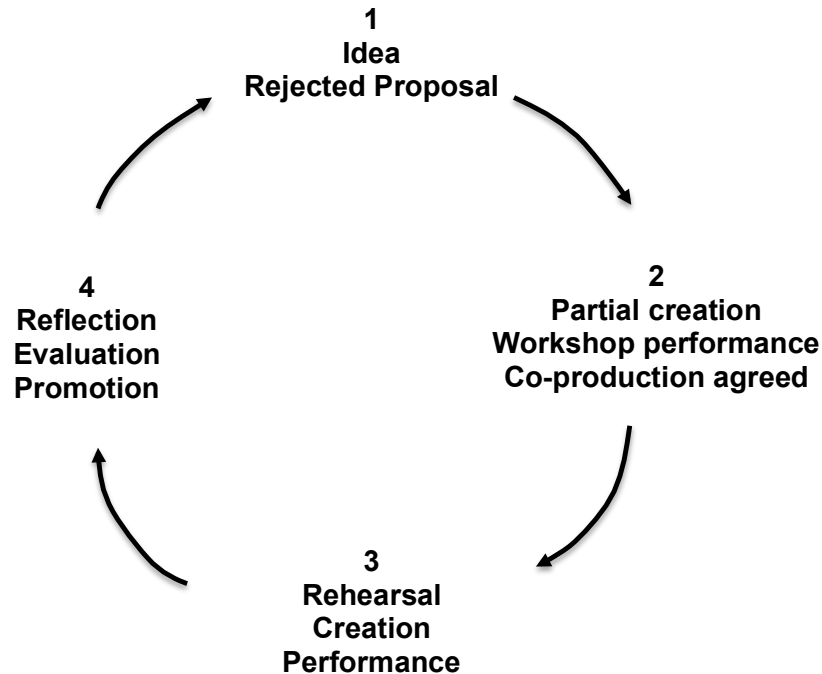


Figure 19: Pro-Create process for *An Eye for an Eye*

The above process reflects the genesis and production model specific to *An Eye for an Eye*, explored stage by stage in this chapter. The creative model for the project represents a development from the solo performances of projects 1 and 2, and the solo authorship of project 2, into a composer-librettist collaboration, and into a staged performance with another singer-actor. Particular questions emerging from this process, and interrogated in the chapter, are:

- What is the suitability of the historic case of the Papin sisters as a vehicle for a music theatre piece, and how might it be adapted to become one?
- What is the creative function and authorship of the librettist in collaboration with a composer for a piece of staged music theatre?
- How do librettist and composer 'write' interiority of character for music-theatre performance?
- How does *An Eye for an Eye* sit within current industry models for the production of small-scale new music theatre?

The professional and creative processes undertaken during *An Eye for an Eye* are mapped and analysed below, with an emphasis on these key questions, all of which are developments of the original questions posed at the beginning of the thesis.

Having already explored two themes with performers as subjects, for the third project I wanted to broaden the creative discourse by finding a collaborator with whom I could work on a sung, music theatre piece. Although I was aware that collaboration with a composer might lead to a more costly project, I was interested to be involved from the inception of a music theatre piece to its completion - to understand the process for the first time from the perspective of a primary creator. By 'primary creator', I do not exclude the singer-performer, whose input can and should be valuable in the creation of a new music theatre work. Experientially, the singer's creative input comes into play at the workshop stage, when they have the initial drafts of words and music to perform and discuss. It was the intention from the outset to collaborate on a vehicle for two female singers, one of whom would be me, and the other of whom, I hoped, would be mezzo soprano Rebecca de Pont Davies. (Here it should be noted that de Pont Davies is my partner, and knew that this piece was intended as a project for both of us). With two named singers as the projected performers, this process was always intended to be tailor-made to the abilities of the individual artists involved, providing potential insights about one of the key research questions - whether writing for and collaborating with specific artists can enhance the performer's agency and authority.

### **Idea, rejected proposal**

At this first stage of the creative and professional processes, the discourse on the conception of *An Eye for an Eye* focuses on the inspiration for the piece, why and how the source material of the crime was deemed a suitable vehicle for a piece of through-composed music theatre, and what the function of the librettist is.

#### *Initial inspiration: The Maids. Jean Genet 1947*

The case of Christine and Léa Papin is perhaps most widely recognised as the source material for Jean Genet's play, *The Maids*, in which the author strays from the documentary material on the case into a fictional narrative. In the written testimonial of the crime, the Papin sisters murder their mistress, Madame Lancelin, and her daughter, Genevieve, after a row over a blown fuse. Genet's maids, Claire and Solange, by contrast, take turns in dressing up as their mistress and enacting a servant/ mistress ritual, in which, during the course of the play, they plan to poison their mistress. Instead, Claire takes the poison, whilst in the guise of the mistress, effectively committing suicide. This divergence from source, in which Genet appropriated the 'true' story and

created a new narrative, was the initial impetus for my interest in creating a new adaptation of the historic crime - one that returned to the case itself.

Genet's appropriation began with the central conceit, as per his original written suggestion that the sisters might be played by men, thus already introducing a hyper-real and 'decisive journey away' from the source. The play did not attempt to fathom the psychological and societal reasons behind the Papin sisters' crime because there was no murder in the play. With the two existing 'operatic' readings of the story both taken from *The Maids - Jungfrurna*, by Peter Bengtson in 1993, a main-stage opera with a full orchestra, performed in Swedish, and *The Maids*, by John Lunn in 1998, performed by brothers Christopher and Nigel Robson in the title roles - there was creative mileage, potentially, in a treatment of the story that reclaimed the sisters as women, and explored the motivations behind their horrific crime.

#### *Why music theatre?*

Music theatre has frequently been created as a response to extreme or violent events. Of the 20<sup>th</sup> century repertoire, Mieczyslaw Weinberg's *The Passenger* (1968) is among the most potent adaptations of trauma, based, as it is, on the testimony of and play by a World War 2 concentration camp survivor. Most recently, composer Tansy Davies has examined the horrors of 9/11 with librettist Nick Drake in their opera *Between Worlds* (2014); author Adam Strickson's doctoral thesis, *The librettist's adaptation of source in collaboration with the composer* (Strickson 2014), explores this use of contemporary extreme events as a vehicle for music theatre adaptation.

Gruesome murder as a vehicle for music theatre also has many precedents in the current repertoire - Bartok's *Bluebeard's Castle* and Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd* to name but two. This type of *Grand Guignol* horror has traditionally lent itself well to music theatre adaptation; an exploration through music and gesture, as well as words, with which to evoke the visceral nature of the crimes themselves and the interiority of the perpetrators. Of *Bluebeard's Castle*, *Kobbé's Opera Book* states 'The piece has almost no action, and yet the music is essentially dramatic.' (Harewood 1992: 1318). Here, the *suspense* of what might lie behind each door, and of what Bluebeard might be about to do to his unsuspecting wife, Judith, is engineered by the pacing and texture of the music. The inner world of the protagonists is elucidated by the music.

Although *Sweeney Todd* and *Bluebeard's Castle* are fictions, the extreme nature of the crime of Léa and Christine Papin is almost as grotesque. The crime scene was described at the time in lurid detail by Janet Flanner, an American journalist living in Paris at the time of the crime, whose *Letter from Paris* appeared monthly in the *New Yorker* under the nom de plume of Genêt:

On the third step from the landing, all alone, staring uniquely at the ceiling, lay an eye. On the landing itself the Lancelin ladies lay, at odd angles and with heads like blood puddings. Beneath their provincial petticoats their modest limbs had been knife-notched the way a fancy French baker notches his finer long loaves. Their fingernails had been uprooted; one of Genevieve's teeth was pegged in her own scalp. A second single orb – the mother's, this time [...] rested shortsightedly gazing at nothing in the corner of the hall. Blood had softened the carpet till it was like an elastic red moss.

(Flanner 1972: 116-7)

Flanner's reading of the crime scene – reported after the court case – is itself almost operatic in register. The eyeball 'staring uniquely', the heads 'like blood puddings.' These were not words used by the prosecution; they were her own vivid adaptation of the reportage: words that confirmed a developing intuition that the crime of the Papin sisters, with its unspeakable horror and complex motivations, might represent a suitable vehicle for a music theatre adaptation.

At this early stage, it could be said that I entered a tacit, and heuristic self-dialogue about the case of the Papin sisters in relation to the adaptations by Genet and Flanner. During the self-dialogue, I found myself opposed to Genet's treatment of the case, and imaginatively jolted by Flanner's. Both of these reactions were instinctive and immediate, and led towards an inkling about the piece I might collaborate on; a piece that would be operatic, or heightened, in register, whilst concerned with the actualities of and psychological motivations behind the documented crime; a piece that plotted and emotionally explored through a music theatre narrative what could have driven two young women in servitude to an act of such brutality against two other women. In Clark Moustakas's *Heuristic Research*, he states:

The bridge between the explicit and the tacit is the realm of the between, or the intuitive [...] Intuition makes immediate knowledge possible without the intervening steps of logic and reasoning.

(Moustakas 1990: 23)

Here, I had acquired knowledge of the direction in which I wished to explore the subject, in the realm of the between; a between in which intuition was allowed to emerge as the result of unguided thought. It was this period of thought that prompted a written list of why the idea might function well as music theatre, noted down whilst 'living with' the response to the adaptations:

- *A heightened subject – the gruesome murder*
- *Potential for suspense*
- *A subject in which the psychology of the sisters could be revealed through music*
- *A sympathetic collaborator with a shared theatrical vision - David Knotts*
- *A piece catering to my theatrical strengths*
- *Economically viable*
- *Provocative and therefore sellable*

(Walker 2011)

An analysis of this list provides certain insights into how the idea was to progress. The collaboration itself, with Knotts, will be detailed later in the chapter, but from the earliest stage of conception, he was the composer I had in mind, specifically on account of a shared theatrical and collaborative vision. With regard to the final three points on the list, it would not become clear until much later in the process whether or not the piece would suit my theatrical and vocal capabilities, or whether it would prove either economically viable or easy to sell. It was evident that the subject itself could be realised with few resources – there were potentially only two singers required, and the number of musicians could be determined at a later date by budgetary constraints. What the list does indicate is that from the outset of the project, there was a need to reconcile the practical and professional concerns with the creative ones. This could be seen as a reflection of the developing model for the Pro-Create cycle, and the concurrent increased experiential awareness of the need to engage with professional concerns. But the list also represents the more systematised, heuristic approach I was beginning to take, in order to record and map process. Here is Moustakas again:

[Heuristic] refers to a process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experience and develops methods and procedures for further investigation and analysis. The self of the researcher is present throughout the process and, while understanding the phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge.

(Moustakas 1990: 9)

The greater awareness engendered by the iterative process of the Pro-Create cycle, was serving to develop ‘methods and procedures for further investigation and analysis.’ In projects 1 and 2, I might have mentally conceived such lists, but I did not commit them to paper. It is perhaps

apposite to mention here that both of these previous projects, from their inception, were supported in some way – there was a workshop performance planned for both before the need for practical considerations came into play. Project 3 began with no such support, and with no knowledge of what its genesis might involve. Not only that, but the collaboration could not even begin until I had secured the interest of the composer. Writing down the tacit, unchecked thought, to which I could then apply a more concentrated, focused gaze, was a way of bringing into being the creative essence of the piece, whilst setting clear practical parameters from the outset.

While the final three points are essentially practical in nature, the first three detail the subject's suitability as a vehicle for music theatre. What music theatre is, or might be, is an ongoing debate for academics and practitioners alike. For the purposes of this thesis, I quote two sources that provide concise appraisals of how music theatre might be defined; the first is from an interview I conducted with Jonathan Reekie; the second is from Peter Mudford's *Making Theatre: from text to performance*:

It's about theatre coming from music. It's not music with theatre, which is what a musical is. It's music that's not being used as an illustrative device, it's actually drama through music.

(Walker and Reekie 2010)

The words of the libretto tell a story which music develops into a dramatic action expressing feelings and emotions which the words cannot alone express.

(Mudford 2000: 210)

These two views correspond with the contention that the music is what develops the dramatic action; the music is at the heart of the theatre. With regard to the list drawn up for *An Eye for an Eye*, these definitions are useful. The 'heightened subject' of the murder suggests its suitability for the hyper-reality of 'theatre coming from music'. 'Expressing feelings and emotions which the words alone cannot express' corresponds with the idea for the psychology of the sisters to be 'revealed through music,' as noted in the list.

It was specifically this psychology, or interiority of the Papin sisters, of what drove them to commit such an extreme crime, that guided the direction of the piece from the outset. And it was this element of the sisters that might be most intensely drawn through music theatre. On the subject of this possibility for interiority in music theatre, Linda Hutcheon writes:

Their [the characters'] music has been likened to their un-verbalized subconscious. The words they sing may address the outer world, but their music represents their inner lives[...]This is why the music can represent interiority.

(Hutcheon 2006: 60)

The 'un-verbalized subconscious' was of interest with regard to the Papin sisters, both in order to explore motivations for the crime but also on account of the central fact, revealed in the trial, that in six year's employment their mistress never addressed a single word to them, but would, instead, send her daughter to the kitchen with written instructions. Muteness was at the heart of the case; the mistress's refusal to speak to them; their inability to defend themselves at the trial – 'They answered questions in a whisper or not at all' (Edwards and Reader 2001: 13). This silence, juxtaposed with the physically extreme nature of the murders, pointed towards an exploration of the subconscious through music and gesture, as well as words. Flanner was already dramatising the crime in her style of writing, making it into a theatrical 'scene' rather than drily describing the aftermath of a crime. Jacques Lacan, in his article of 1933 about the Papin sisters' murders, referred to it as 'an atrocious quadrille' (Edwards and Reader 2001: 37), consciously or not attributing to the crime the properties of a dance accompanied by music. Here was a crime so extreme, that even at the time, it was being described by theatrical, choreographic and musical means.

#### *The function of the librettist*

In *Unsung Voices*, Carolyn Abbate writes about the operatic form:

Musical gestures are conceived as *signs* for human actions or psychological states.

(Abbate 1991: 22)

Experientially, as a singer-actor on stage in a piece of music theatre, it is the 'musical gesture' that inspires and initiates both the physical gesture and the emotional response, thereby communicating character to the audience – this remains the case whether the character being channelled is singing or silent. The character on stage is given life through a combination of the musical texture and pacing, together with the somatic response to the other singer-actors on stage. Character clues from the *libretto* come earlier, in the learning period, when the vocal score is 'read' and worked through. These clues might then be discussed in the rehearsal process with the director. The final character presented to the audience develops as a synthesis of all these elements; the 'thinking' work in the initial stages and during conversation with



the director; the physical expression of that character as a response to musical gesture and texture, the kinesthetic relationship with the other cast members. In performance, the character being played must be engaged during silent passages as well as during sung passages. The character without 'voice' remains a living, breathing entity, and an essential part of the dramatic tension on stage. It must be concluded, therefore, that the physicalised representation of character, as expressed through the music, has primacy over the exact words being communicated. If this had been my impression as a performer, and in the knowledge that audiences very often cannot comprehend the exact words being sung, it was easy to ascribe the librettist a marginal influence on the emotional thrust of any given performance. Further to this, I was mindful that in an early stage experience, playing a member of the chorus in Elena Langer's *The Girl of Sand* at the Almeida festival, the chorus sang only vowel sounds throughout the piece, and yet, we represented different characters, as distinct from one another. Paul Barker's *El Gallo* also represents an example of a music theatre piece without text. If such pieces, with musical, vocal and physical gesture, but without words, still function as music theatre. What, then, precisely, was the function of the librettist's words?

David Pountney, in reference to his libretto for the opera of *The Wasp Factory*, composed by Ben Frost, writes that his job was:

[T]o create a verbal skeleton on which music would be the flesh. "Leave room for the music," is the librettist's motto.

(Pountney 2013)

His understanding of the librettist's job is that the words *facilitate* the composer's path towards the creation of the end product. In *Twentieth Century British Authors and the Rise of Opera in Britain*, writer WH Auden observes, similarly to Pountney, that:

[T]he job of the librettist was "to furnish the composer with a plot, characters and words" and that "of these, the least important ...are the words."

(Morra 2007: 8)

Plot and character could be seen as contiguous with the 'skeleton' to which Pountney refers. Plot treatment and character analysis were also what had emerged from the period of heuristic thought after engaging with the Flanner and Genet adaptations – questions about the exact story I wished to tell, and the about the inner workings of the sisters. At this stage of the Pro-Create

cycle, what seemed essential in the putative collaboration, and what represented the librettist's function, was the development of a creative synergy between the two partners, in which plot and character, delivered by the librettist through the medium of words, stimulated a fusion of musical-theatrical ideas in the composer. In the final analysis of a new piece, it would be the efficacy of this synergy and synthesis that was judged, but, as John Lloyd Davies (Head of Opera Development at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden from 2005-2012) highlighted to me in interview:

The music is why it works. A good libretto to very bad music is still a terrible opera, whereas lots of operas survive a libretto that isn't perfect.

(Davies and Walker 2011)

It is the immutability of this fact that perhaps means music theatre is always more likely to have its genesis with the composer.

#### *Rejected proposal*

Having agreed in principle to fashion the piece around two named singers, Knotts and I prepared and sent an initial, brief proposal to Andrew Comben, director of the Brighton Festival, who agreed to a meeting. Comben had worked with Knotts at Aldeburgh Music, and had hosted *The Girl I Left Behind Me* at the Brighton Festival in 2010. As a result of the meeting in early 2011, he offered to commission the piece outright, contingent on Neil Bartlett, co-author and director of *The Girl I Left Behind Me*, agreeing to direct. Bartlett, however, declined, citing as his reason in an email correspondence with me, that 'it was hard to find an audience for this kind of new chamber opera beyond an opening showcase of a festival' (Bartlett 2011). Bartlett's statement is quoted here, because, although at the time I believed it to be short-sighted, the remarks were, in hind-sight, prescient. The problematised position of how to revive a new music theatre piece has become a central concern in this iteration of the Pro-Create cycle, and will be further detailed at the end of the chapter. Back in 2011, with Bartlett's rejection of the project, Comben withdrew the offer of a commission. As a practitioner, this was a disappointment; for the thesis, and the Pro-Create cycle, it presented a dilemma. John Freeman writes, about practice-led arts research, that 'It is just as important to attempt an understanding of what is unsuccessful as to focus on what it is that works' (Freeman 2010: 215). Here, however, the failure to 'succeed' impacted on the research itself. There was little process to 'understand', and no product to evaluate, from which I might gain research insights. In initial meetings about the project, Dominic Gray, director of Opera North projects, had expressed an interest in housing any future production of the nascent project. The commission having fallen through, he now offered

the opportunity of work-shopping some of the piece in order that it could still form part of my thesis. The thesis is concerned with the professional production of music theatre works; a workshop that stood no chance of leading to a production fell outside of the criteria I had set myself for the performance projects. Had I accepted the offer of the workshop, I could have gained valuable insights into the creative collaboration between composer and librettist, but not how the project functioned under industry pressure. If the piece was not going to be professionally produced, for the purposes of research my preference was, at this stage, to let it go, and to reflect this failure to proceed in the modelling of the Pro-Create cycle.

### **Partial creation, Workshop performance, Co-production agreed**

This next phase of the Pro-create cycle for *An Eye for an Eye* is examined with an emphasis on how the smorgasbord of source material was appropriated by librettist and composer in order to begin collaboration on the piece.

*An Eye for an Eye* remained in a stalled state until March 2012, when Bill Bankes-Jones, director of *Tête à Tête*, a festival which stages and showcases a variety of new music theatre, allocated the project two half an hour slots for the 2012 festival. Although the festival does not provide a fee to artists, its 'in kind' investment runs to up to £5,000 per production; it is a resource providing a London platform to pieces in their early or incomplete form, in front of an audience. If not a guarantee of life beyond the work-in-progress, the festival offered greater potential for industry interest than an isolated workshop at Opera North. With the resources and publicity generated by the festival, we could stage a section of it in a studio theatre, with lighting, and invite potential producers.

#### *Partial Creation:*

##### *Adaptation, appropriation and auto/biography*

The multi-source bricolage employed for the creation of the piece can be divided into two distinct groupings: the adaptation of source material, both fictive and factual, and the plundering of a diversity of narrative and musical styles.

#### *Source material*

In addition to Genet's *The Maids*, and Flanner's *Letters from Paris*, there exist several film adaptations, or appropriations of the Papin sisters' story:

- *Sister my Sister* (Nancy Meckler 1994) from the play *My Sister in this House* (Wendy Kesselman 1982)
- *Murderous Maids* (Jean Pierre Denis 2000)

- *The Maids* (Christopher Miles 1974)
- *La Cérémonie* (Claude Chabrol 1995) after the novel *A Judgement in Stone* (Ruth Rendell 1977)

The intertextuality of these adaptations, in which one borrows, to a greater or lesser extent from the other, represents an intricate web of fiction fusing with fact, across time periods and in differing cultural and socio-political settings. Inevitably, in engaging with these diverse adaptations, alongside the historiographical accounts, I selected what it interested me to explore, thus immediately appropriating the material myself, as well as introducing an element of auto/biography into the creative equation. Not only was I writing from the perspective of the librettist, but also as one of the projected performers. Linda Hutcheon writes:

E.H Gombrich offers a useful analogy when he suggests that if an artist stands before a landscape with a pencil in hand, he or she will “look for those aspects which can be rendered in lines”; if it is a paintbrush that the hand holds, the artist’s vision of the very same landscape will be in terms of masses, not lines (1961: 65). Therefore, an adapter coming to a story with the idea of adapting it for a film would be attracted to different aspects of it than an opera librettist would be.

(Hutcheon 2006: 19)

The masses and lines to which Gombrich refers could be seen as the difference between interiority and exteriority in the multitude of adaptations of the Papin sister’s crime. In analysing the story from a variety of media, both factual and fictive, it could be said that the film adaptations yielded psychological insights - finer detail, or lines, focusing as they could on the interiority of the characters. The Genet play was more demonstrative, or exterior; the characters self-consciously ‘performed’ during their ‘ceremony’; the brushstrokes were broader. Filtering this material, I was attracted to aspects that stimulated both writer and performer, both the detail and the broader strokes. During the period of heuristic ‘indwelling’, after having engaged with all the adaptations, two facets of the story remained prominent:

- The psychology behind the crime, or interiority of the sisters
- The idea of the demonstration, or exteriority of the ceremony, in which one of the sisters masqueraded as their employer.

To explore the first point, a specific focus on illicit desire in the psychology of the sisters arose as a response to the layers of intrigue apparent in the Meckler film. Towards the end of the film, shortly before the murder,

Madame confronts the sisters on the stairs, telling them they will never work again after what she has 'seen':

That hair, that face – you smell of it my dear. Just look at that sister of yours. You'll never work with her again. God forgive me for what I have harboured here.

(Kesselman 1994)

Earlier in the action, Meckler films Léa, the younger, submissive sister, brushing the hair of Genevieve, the employer's daughter. It is clear from the way the scene is shot, that we are meant to imagine there is sexual tension between the two women. Kesselman and Meckler's appropriation of events is, therefore, not only that the sisters are lovers, but also that there is attraction between Léa and Genevieve. This interpretation, elucidated by means of look and gesture, provides an insight into the crime. Christine, the older and more dominant sister is suspicious not only of her employer knowing she is engaged in a sexual relationship with Léa, but that Genevieve has designs on Léa. The stage is thereby set for her paranoia and jealousy to spiral out of control, as she imagines being usurped by Genevieve, and regarded with disgust by her employer for what she 'is.' Given the single most shocking element of the crime - Christine's removal of her employer's eyes – we might conclude that she was tearing out what had 'seen' her relationship with Léa, and that by removing the 'seeing' eyes, she was freed from judgment.

This idea of the removal of the seeing 'other' intersects with point two - the performance of the ceremony, and whether or not, in *An Eye for an Eye*, the two singer-actors would play all four characters equally, or play only the two sisters indulging in role play, as per the ceremony in the Genet play. In the denouement, would Christine and Léa literally be murdering their employers, or figuratively murdering that part of themselves they despised? In Lacan's 1933 article about the crime, he writes:

That fateful evening, under anxiety of an imminent punishment, the sisters mingled the mirage of their illness with the image of their mistresses. They detested the distress of the couple whom they carried away in an atrocious quadrille.

(Edwards and Reader 2001: 37)

It was Lacan's view that the sisters were suffering from paranoia. He suggests that when they killed their victims, they were in some way excising what they hated in themselves. His mirror phase theory developed partly as a result of the Papin sisters' crime, in which he describes how a person in a narcissistic

phase of development might gather their sense of identification from the 'Other' (Lacan 1933).

In Lacan's reading, the sisters saw what they perceived as their unified selves reflected back at them by their employers. When they killed their employers, they therefore also killed that part of themselves they detested. In *An Eye for an Eye*, if the two sisters were always role-playing as the other characters – enacting a ceremony involving masquerade - they might only be figuratively 'killing', at the end. This would, in effect, mean that every time the singer-actors embodied the roles of Madame and Genevieve, they were 'performing' them from within the roles of the sisters. If this became so, the characters of Madame and Genevieve might be seen as 'exterior', and the sisters as 'interior.' At this stage of the creative process, the question of whether or not the singer-actors would equally embody all four characters was left undecided, but the play between their interiority and exteriority, borrowed from analysis of the adaptations, became key to the foundations of the piece, as did exploration of the sisters' identities, paranoia, ritualised performance and hidden desires.

This appropriation of the source material in order to fashion a narrative was suffused with autobiography. As with project 2, I 'took' what interested me. The place and function of illicit desire became central to the narrative arc of *An Eye for an Eye* only partially because it created motive for the crime. It was also a way to explore the theme of same-sex desire. Whilst I did not in any way identify with Christine or Léa Papin, I sequestered them as a means through which to express personal and political views, much as Meckler, Genet and Chabrol had done in their adaptations – Meckler as a lesbian, feminist filmmaker, Genet as an alienated, anti-bourgeois gay man and Chabrol with what he named 'the last Marxist film' (Edwards and Reader 2001: 104). The motivation to explore same-sex desire emanated from the writer's wish to see 'herself' represented; to create and perform a piece in which women desired women. I took a possible motivation for the crime, and placed it centrally, as a way of 'voicing the silenced and marginalized' (Sanders 2006: 19), both of the doomed sisters, and in order to address the scarcity of female, same-sex desire I see represented in theatre and opera, as audience member and artist alike.

#### *Narrative and musical styles*

This second grouping of appropriated material for the creation of *An Eye for an Eye* came into play during the early collaborative stages with the composer, and in light of an initial inability to provide him with the requisite narrative structure.

To quote Sanders once more, she points to Angela Carter's analysis of the creation of fairy tales, as a 'brilliant summary' of bricolage. Carter writes:

The chances are, the story was put together in the form we have it, more or less out of all sorts of bits of other stories long ago and far away, and has been tinkered with, had bits added to it, lost other bits, got mixed up with other stories, until our informant herself has tailored the story personally to suit an audience...or simply, to suit herself.

(Carter 1990: x in Sanders 2006: 89)

Similarly, with *An Eye for an Eye*, the narrative was already formed from 'all sorts of bits of other stories', from which the informant (me) tailored the story personally to suit my own ends. This narrative, however, now needed to be structured into a form with which the composer could begin his work. Early theatrical ideas for the piece had coalesced, with both collaborators agreeing on a cabaret treatment for the story, exploring influences from 1930's French and German musical culture. Knotts had suggested we present the piece as a series of numbers, in the style of a nightclub cabaret performance, rather than as through-composed; each number would take a different musical form. However, my first draft was sent back, with this emailed response from Knotts:

I feel that your first draft heads up the horror in a way because it describes a lot of the gruesome stuff [...] It could be dramatically stronger to see the bread licking (a hilarious musical moment) see the incompetent maids and hear the over-aspiring Mme Lancelin and for the audience to know that these two things are going to end in disaster because they're so incompatible. I think that too much explaining weakens the situation.

(Knotts 2012)

I had not 'left room for the music', as Pountney suggested was the librettist's task. Inexperienced in the form, I was 'describing' and gesturing the same actions, as this example from the first draft shows:

**Christine:** (*cutting a baguette*)

Ficelles

Baguettes

Levain.

Pain quotidien

*(She picks up a whole baguette and traces her fingers across the diagonal marks on it as she repeats the words)*

**Léa:** *(stirring soup)*

My sister loves the patterns on the bread  
 Every day she has the same routine  
 She caresses, strokes and sometimes licks  
 Along the doughy grooves – what if she's seen?

(Walker 2012)

Christine picks up the baguette, and her sister explains what she is doing. This was one example of many, in which I duplicated word and gesture in the initial draft.

At this stage, Knotts could 'see' and 'hear' the theatre more clearly than I could. Although I had identified the key areas for the narrative direction and content – the psychology behind the crime, the play between the exteriority and interiority of the sisters – I did not yet know how to realise this on the page. The singer-actor part of me understood that gesture and music could create character, because I had experienced it; now, I need to apply this idea to the structuring of the libretto. The composer's work was almost by stealth, it seemed; he 'read between the lines' of actual text, in order to draw out the subtext of character. By giving the characters 'explaining' text, I was not yet furnishing him with the characters' intrinsic qualities, from which he could then musically imagine, and subsequently portray them.

In order to create a useable structure, Knotts suggested I give each character a different 'voice' through which to speak. Genevieve, the daughter, would communicate through fairy tales, in keeping with the emotionally regressive personality I had developed for her. The medium of the fairy-tale, from Perrault onwards, has traditionally been used as a way through which to impart gruesome stories in an essentially child-friendly way. Perrault's stories have also formed the foundation of myriad adaptations, including Grimms' renowned retellings and operatic versions of *Bluebeard's Castle* and *Cinderella*. Subverting this genre, so that the content is at odds with the delivery, is not new. Heinrich Hoffmann's 1845 children's book *Struwwelpeter* included the story of a girl who burns to death after lighting matches, and a boy who has his thumbs cut off as a punishment for sucking them. These already macabre tales were appropriated by performance group *The Tiger Lillies* in 1998 and turned into *Shock-headed Peter; a junk opera*, in which the violence is ratcheted up and the child in each story is killed.



By writing fairy tales for Genevieve, and nursery rhymes for the maids, a similar disjunction was set up in *An Eye for an Eye*. The means through which the characters 'spoke' could be child-like and simple in structure, but what they actually 'said' was of an adult, and often violent nature. It perverted the norm; the content was not suitable for children and yet it seemed as if it ought to be, thus making it doubly shocking.

In addition to this borrowing of narrative style, came a concomitant borrowing of musical style. The nursery rhymes were given pastiche nursery rhyme tunes and rhythms; the grandiose verse of Madame was given waltz music, as a nod to her bourgeois sensibilities. These musical and narrative tropes acted as a shortcut towards delineation of character. Auto/biography became evident here, too. For Christine's love song about her sister (number 6 in the printed score), I wrote the words imagining a French cabaret song from the period, and asked Knotts to conceive the music in the appropriate style. Not only was it tailor-made vocally, but it also allowed for the expression of autobiography, in that it is a love song from one woman to another.

Our final musical appropriation was of the tango (number 11 in the printed score), in which all four characters break out of the plot and confrontationally sing their 'back story' to the audience. Here, imagining a number in the style of a Brecht-Weill song, I wrote the words to a tango rhythm, and asked Knotts to set them accordingly. The performed song evoked 1930's Weimar cabaret; it was not plagiarism, but it was a clear appropriation of style that summoned a past era and atmosphere, allowing the characters to perform in a jagged, reporting mode, reminiscent of Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt*, or distancing.

By focusing more on the exposition of *character*, through these differing poetic and musical forms, the collaboration began to develop, with the composer now able to identify and therefore further draw the individual characters. The essence of the libretto's function was not so much to write *what* the characters said, as *how* they said it. The gathering of historical testimony, the reading and watching of adaptations of the source crime, the decisions about narrative direction, all led to the point at which collaboration became possible. Having formed a strong narrative arc, the elements were now in place to mould the material in line with the composer's requirements.



Figure 20: Rebecca de Pont Davies and Jessica Walker.  
An Eye for an Eye -Tête à Tête Festival 2012. Claire Shovelton

*Workshop performance, coproduction agreed*

At this stage of the Pro-Create cycle, findings from the workshop performance and its mode of production influenced the subsequent trajectory of the piece. Due to financial constraints, major production elements were not in place for the half an hour version (numbers 1 to 7 in the score) presented at the *Tête à Tête Festival* in 2012. The artists wore their own clothes, self-directed, lit and designed the showcase. Knotts accompanied and conducted the performance from the piano. This level of creative and practical involvement was new for all participants; as in the model of Roesner and Rebstock's *Composed Theatre*, there now existed a:

Range of multiple artistic personalities within *one* person [...] creating an 'I as other', stepping in and out of adopted and trained roles.

(Roesner and Rebstock 2012: 342-3)

Multiple personalities made concentration on the act of performance itself difficult to achieve; the 'I as other', in which one must create and make decisions from outside of one's trained role, was in evidence during the performance itself. Distracting thoughts habitually flash across the mind of the performer engaged in performance, but here there were three different

distracting ‘voices’ to comment on the action – the performer’s, the director’s and the lighting designer’s. It was evident, that were the piece ever to receive a full production, it would be necessary for the performers and conductor to be able to commit more fully to their ‘trained’ roles. Although the specific practical skills acquired from this stage proved useful in the latter stages of the production, it was also of value to understand that there was a limit to how far the *performer’s* focus could tolerate being split. As a result, when, subsequent to the show-case, the offer of a production came for 2013 from the Bath and St Magnus International Music Festivals, I offered to become a co-producer with *Jess Walker Music Theatre*; the festivals were not offering to commission the piece; neither was there money in their budget to pay for a director. By becoming a co-producer, I negotiated funds from them towards costumes and a lighting designer, whilst offering to pay for the director from *JWMT*. Again, I was stepping out of my ‘trained’ role, this time into the role of producer, but in doing so, I was protecting the performers’ roles, ensuring that key production elements were in place in order that they could give their full focus to the act of performance itself.

This financial and production model represented a change from the first two iterations of the Pro-Create model; in its original incarnation, commission was a key part of the professional cycle. In the second revolution, some funding came in advance from a co-producer. *An Eye for an Eye* was going to be produced, but without commission, or indeed any money upfront. Neither composer nor librettist would be remunerated for the creation of the product itself. This change, and the initial failure to proceed with Brighton Festival both needed to be reflected in the Pro-Create model. ‘Production model agreed’ had already been added as an alternative to ‘commission’ at stage two of the process as a result of the production model for *Pat Kirkwood is Angry*. Now there needed to be the addition of a double-headed arrow between stages one and two, to represent the process having started again and finally progressed with a new co-producer. This mode of production, including the lack of commission for the composer and librettist, will be further discussed at the end of the chapter, as part of the discourse about current models in music theatre production.

### **Creation, Rehearsal, Performance**

This next stage of the Pro-Create cycle focuses on:

- The librettist-composer synthesis – developing insights
- What constitutes ‘the score’ in newly created music theatre
- The artistic versus the pragmatic in artist-led music theatre production
- Embodiment and characterisation in performance – exteriority and interiority

*Creation**Composer-librettist synthesis*

Having sent an initial draft of the completed libretto, Knotts sent back scenes individually as he scored them, either with requests for changes, or occasionally with his own changed or added words to fit the scansion of his chosen time signature. For example, the lines:

Ficelles baguettes levain  
Pain quotidien

Were altered by Knotts to:

Ficelles, *fougasses*, baguettes, levain  
*Donnez nous notre* pain quotidien

Whilst my internal rhythm had intuited a 4/4 bar, Knotts wrote the section (*Mr Baker* - number 5 in the score) in 2/4, adding the word *fougasses*. During the creation of the libretto, as in the writing of *Pat Kirkwood is Angry*, writer and performer inhabited the same creative space. In the phenomenological act of writing, I imagined myself singing the words; I heard, internally, an un-composed music. Knotts, naturally, heard a different music, and a different pace, when he worked with the words; sometimes our rhythms and pace corresponded, but more often they did not.

In the final stages of preparing the vocal score, Knotts added stage directions, or *Nebentext*, throughout. Roman Ingarden's *Haupttext* and *Nebentext* have been described as:

[T]he unity and interaction of two discrete, unequal elements; the *haupttext* (dialogue) and the *nebentext* (side text). The *nebentext* includes those features that distinguish drama from a genre such as prose fiction, the most important being stage directions; although as essential as dialogue to the coherence of the script, the *nebentext* is ancillary, as the term suggests, to the *haupttext*.

(Kidnie 2000: 460)

Knotts' *Nebentext* caused the first collaborative friction. During the writing of the libretto, I had only written in *Nebentext* in order to avoid giving 'explaining' text to the characters, as discussed earlier in the chapter. Where music and gesture would suffice, I had suggested possible actions. The tension arose with which of the writing partnership, if any, should be responsible for this 'ancillary' text, and its essential function of pointing both theatrical action and psychological state. Knotts not only heard an alternative music when he read

my words, but he 'saw' and 'felt' an alternative theatre, as with the following example:

In number 6, the cabaret song, *Sister mon Amour* (20.00 in the DVD), Knotts had written:

The music of a popular chanson begins on the gramophone. Christine sings the song offstage in a high, quavery voice, reminiscent of Mireille. The English is sung with a French accent, and the French is very French. Lea [sic] is transported to another world and mimes to the song using a wooden spoon as a microphone.

(Knotts 2013)

Knotts' instructions here fall into two distinct categories - musical and staging. The initial requests are musical – he requires a distant quality to the sound, and in a particular style. However, in the further instruction for Léa to mime onstage with a wooden spoon, he seeks to influence the onstage 'direction.' With a greater creative involvement hitherto, than were the piece a straightforward commission, we had both developed strong, but often, divergent visions for the staging. My wish was for the staging to emerge as a result of what happened in the rehearsal room, once a director had been introduced. Knotts' contention was that, as the composer, he had too often seen his theatrical intentions in the music ignored in production, and had learned to highlight them in advance, in order to retain a degree of control. In this instance, the composer was protecting his 'score' from outside interference, as a result of negative past experience. It is also possible that Knotts was not aware of how or when his musical instructions strayed into the realms of staging. Theatrical and musical realisations are not easily separated – his request for the singer to be offstage in the above example, is enmeshed with his desire to 'hear' an offstage quality to the voice. His theatrical vision is embedded within the compositional process, which can make an alternative theatrical vision from a director or librettist potentially problematic.

Knotts' attempt to assert control over his score poses an interesting question as to what, in fact, constitutes the 'score' in the first place.

*The score - 1*

Paul Barker raises the subject of what constitutes the score in *Composing for Voice*, asking:

[W]hether a score represents the end of the process of composition, or whether a performance does so more completely.

(Barker 2004: 9)

What Knotts and I had written together was a score, in as much as it was a set of vocal and rhythmic instructions to be followed by performers, lighting designer and director, but the 'meaning' of that score would only be found during rehearsal and performance, with the input of these additional 'voices'. The written template we were providing was the starting point, as was the script in project 2 for the final, performed score. In the previous chapter, I quoted Linda Hutcheon's reference to this journey, from printed play to performance score, as representing another type of adaptation. In that same passage, she also goes on to reference 'musical drama', stating:

In musical drama, the score too has to be brought to life for the audience and "shown" in actual embodied sound; it cannot remain inert as lifeless black notes on a page.' A visual and aural world is physically shown on stage – be it in a play, a musical, an opera, or any other performance piece – created from verbal and notational signs on the page.

(Hutcheon 2006: 39)

This statement will be revisited later, as part of the exploration of the director and performers' roles in rehearsal and performance. At this juncture, already the composer and librettist had adapted and appropriated source material in order to collaborate on the score in its present form. The sharing of ideas resulted in both individuals developing their own individual skills and abilities, but creating a new and separate entity of this working score; a score which existed only as a product of those two collaborators and what their mutual appropriation had led them to fashion at that particular time. The 'verbal and notational signs' would, with the input of performers, director and musicians, become another score, contingent on what those other creative 'voices' were to bring. An encapsulation of the formation of the piece up to the point of rehearsal could be shown thus, as a series of concentric circles:

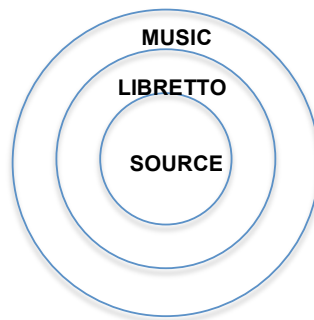


Figure 21: components of working score *An Eye for an Eye*

Now, as was the discovery made during the creation of project 2, it was my contention that Knotts and I would serve the piece better if we could relinquish our idea of the score to the rehearsal and performance processes.

### *Rehearsal and performance*

#### *The artistic versus the pragmatic*

The score underwent an immediate and forced change when Rebecca de Pont Davies discovered she was not free for the performance period. A well-paid opera engagement made her participation impossible on financial grounds. This created a dilemma – either to wait until she was available and lose the performance opportunity, or to re-cast the role, even though the piece had been written specifically with her vocal and theatrical capabilities in mind. Eventually we made the difficult decision to re-cast, and after holding auditions, cast mezzo-soprano Harriet Williams. This necessitated alterations to Knotts' writing; Williams did not comfortably sing in as low a tessitura as Davies, and some of the part was altered to reflect this.

It should be acknowledged that already an artistic compromise had been made in order for the Pro-Create cycle to continue. A change of personnel before rehearsal began was regarded as a lesser compromise than returning to stage one of the process and finding another producer. As the author of this thesis, the compromise was not without tension. The agreed manifesto for the piece was to co-create a vehicle for two specific performers, in order, partly, that I might explore the collaborative possibilities that arose from writing for specific singer-actors. But, as a working artist in need of the employment and desirous of the professional platform it provided, it was preferable to substitute one singer for another, than to fulfil my desire to nurture the singer-actor as collaborator. Here, professional considerations outweighed both artistic and research concerns. The decision to recast not only altered the very substance of the creative project, but it also led to an absence of testimony in this chapter from the other singer-actor involved. Because Harriet Williams was auditioned, and 'brought in' at the rehearsal stage for the full production, rather than being the artist for whom the role was conceived, she was chosen for her vocal and physical aptitude for the role. Her function in this project

became not dissimilar from any employed soloist's. As a result, her testimony would not have contributed to the specific discourse, as to whether writing for and collaborating with specific artists can enhance the performer's agency and authority.

The original artist Rebecca de Pont Davies admitted, in the context of the rehearsal and performance of the workshop version, that after a long career primarily in main stage opera, she was comfortable only in taking responsibility for her own performance, and not for any overarching creative vision. Not having completed the process, it has not been possible to ascertain, for the purposes of the thesis, whether or not a sustained increase in creative responsibility might have altered her position.

The artistic gave way to the pragmatic again in the arrangements for the rehearsal period. Owing to my work commitments, it became necessary to schedule the bulk of the rehearsal time in February 2013, even though the premiere at the Bath Festival was not until May. Again, this was far from ideal from an artistic point of view. It is during rehearsal that the performers' momentum builds towards the first night. Here, we would have the build up of rehearsal, with no immediate release of performance; any momentum and ingraining of character was to be stored, put on hold and picked up after a period of three months.

A further artistic compromise arose when the director, Maxine Braham could not attend the rehearsals in the lead up to the first night in Bath; late in the day she was offered a two month, well-paying job that clashed with the opera dates. Once again, artistic vision was compromised due to the unavoidable pressure of financial needs and constraints. As co-producer, and under the aegis of *Jess Walker Music Theatre*, I was responsible for Braham's fee, which was not generous enough for her to justify turning down well-paid work. By accepting the new job, Braham lost the greater part of her fee for *An Eye for an Eye* in paying for her replacement. Finally, these same financial constraints meant that we rehearsed with the musicians for the first time the day before the first night; there was not the budget to bring them to Bath earlier. Of all the artistic compromise, this was potentially the most damaging, carrying with it, as it did, the risk of an unprepared ensemble for the first performance. The sum of these restrictions recalls Symonds' and Karantonis' observation quoted at the beginning of the thesis, in which they recognise that 'the development of an alternative repertoire [takes] place in far less heavily subsidized conditions' (Karantonis and Symonds 2013: 13). As an analysis of this stage of the Pro-Create cycle in the production of *An Eye for an Eye*, these far less heavily subsidised conditions brought with them a level of restriction and artistic concession that were in danger of significantly affecting the integrity of the final product, and subsequently of the artists themselves in



the act of performance. In the production trajectory for *An Eye for an Eye*, the motivation on the part of the artists to 'make it work', come what may, arose from the fear of losing the opportunity to have the work performed in the public realm. The desire to create, and to have one's work realised, was a sufficient barrier to clarity of perspective, that it potentially placed the artists themselves in the vulnerable position of having their work exposed in a disadvantaged light. This point will be revisited at the end of the chapter.

### *The score – 2*

In rehearsal, it was agreed that director/ choreographer Maxine Braham should be free to disregard the *Nebentext* in the vocal score. Actions subsequently emerged from her reading that served the dual function of developing the performers' psychological intent and creating stronger theatrical imagery. An example of altered psychological intent comes in number 10 in the score (39.40 in the DVD) when Madame has been disturbed and angry, but is temporarily calm, and urging Genevieve to look at the specks of dust in the shafts of light cast onstage. At this point in the action, there is a sinister and melodically altered reprise of Madame's *Valse Caprice*. Braham physicalised this by directing Madame to cradle a suckling Genevieve in her arms. Madame rocks Genevieve after feeling comforted by the echo of the waltz. It is a mother and baby scene, but a grotesque one, suggesting an unnatural relationship between the two characters, whether they are mother and grown child, or in fact the two maids indulging in role-play. This was not a character suggestion from the vocal score; it emerged from Braham's response to the music, and altered the characterisation of the performers in their roles.

Braham's influence on the theatrical imagery included her staging solution for how, practically to show the murder (1 hour 13 onwards in the DVD) – the denouement of the action. The vocal score provided no *Nebentext* as to how this might be realised. Her suggestion of pounding a watermelon onto a white sheet as a representation of the victims was both an economical and effective way of hinting at the violence perpetrated. In this way, Braham interpreted the score of words and music, and found gesture with which to demonstrate both the interiority of the protagonists' motivations, and the exteriority of their deeds.

Braham was absorbing the score as it stood, and adding her own *Nebentext*, thereby creating a new and evolving score. Similarly to project 2, this was a dialogic process between director and performers. A somatic awareness developed between the two singer-actors, from which our characters developed exponentially, and in synthesis. The director, therefore, not only absorbed the authors' conception from the vocal score, but she watched this characterisation and physicality of the performers as they related to and

developed alongside one another, which in turn stimulated ideas for direction. This back and forth collaborative construction of the score is perhaps best represented as an extension of the visualisation of the vocal score, shown earlier, by means of concentric circles, in which each element becomes embedded within the next. In the earlier diagram, adaptation of source material formed the kernel of the subsequent concentric adaptations into a vocal score. Here, director and performers adapted that vocal score into the score for performance.

The final layering of this adaptation of score came into play in the performance itself, with the addition of lighting. The points at which the lights went on, off or flickered, were included as *Nebentext* in the vocal score, and subsequently discussed with a lighting designer. Light played a significant role in the narrative structure of *An Eye for an Eye*, almost acting as a distinct character. In 1933 regional France, electricity was new, and unreliable. The iron fusing, and plunging the house into darkness, seems to have been a frequent occurrence; it was also the catalyst for the murders. Janet Flanner writes:

The iron had blown out on Wednesday, been repaired Thursday, blown again Friday, taking the house lights with it at five. By six the Lancelin ladies, in from their walk, had been done to death in the dark – for the dead do not scold.

(Flanner 1972: 118)

Whenever the lights fused, Madame Lancelin docked the maids' wages. This had already occurred once that week, as reported by Flanner. The lighting for *An Eye for an Eye* created the final adaptation of score, because the action during the piece was contingent on the success and failure of electricity. Not only did the stress on the frailty of electricity form a useful theatrical device, with tension building each time the lights flickered or went out, but each character could be understood in terms of the effect 'light' had on their lives: Madame's love of electric light because it represented her wealth and superiority; Genevieve's love of it because it facilitated her voracious reading; the maids' hatred of it because of having their wages docked when it failed; finally, the vulnerability of Madame when her electricity was taken away, and she was plunged into 'unseeing' and subsequent annihilation. The function of light was to form part of the exteriority of the dramatic action, whilst providing insights into the interiority of the characters, thereby contributing to the layering of the final performance score. In the event of a more fully realised production, the lighting designer would have interacted with a set designer, the contribution of whom would also have been reflected in the final score. However, for the production circumstances of *An Eye for an Eye*, there was

no financial contingency for a set designer, and no defined concept from the librettist or composer as to how the scenography might contribute to the dramatic action. With set choices limited to a table, three chairs and a screen, sourced at the individual venues, the scenography could not be said to have formed a deliberate, integral part of the performed reading of the piece. An accurate reading of this score could, therefore, be visualised thus:

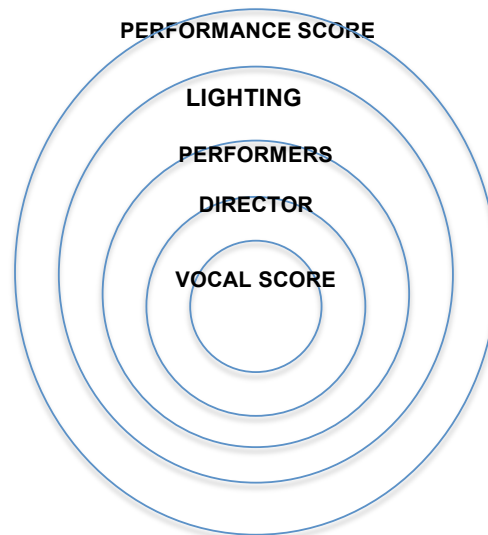


Figure 22: components of the performance score *An Eye for an Eye*

*Characterisation in performance: interiority and exteriority*

This was the first of the three projects under study which did not represent a direct conversation between my onstage persona(e) and the audience. It was also the first in which the dramatic action emerged through newly composed music. Subsequently, during rehearsal and performance, the kinesthetic response to the music, the somatic relationship with the other performer, and the director's influence, contributed as much to the deepening of character as any proactive, deliberate construction on my part. I have written earlier about the director's influence on characterisation in the rehearsal period, and of how character was elucidated through music and gesture. In performance, it was the addition of the second performer that immediately altered the stage experience from the previous projects; the two-way conversation between performer and audience became a triangular dialogue, in which the performers might interact with one another, seemingly to the exclusion of the audience, or they might, either dually or singly, engage in direct communication with the audience. These different modes of stage action could be said to be modes of either 'showing' or 'telling'. In *An Introduction to Narratology*, Monika Fludernik explains that with drama:

[I]t seems as if the action were taking place before our very eyes, without any mediation.

She goes on:

Traditionally, however, stories are told, and a person tells them to us, so that we actually see before us a *teller* who mediates the story to the reader or audience.

(Fludernik 2009: 35)

In the previous projects, I mediated the stories I told, either as a conscious narrator, or in the guise of another character. The constant link with the audience and the deliberately performed songs made me a 'teller.' In *An Eye for a Eye* there was interplay between both this mode, of telling, and the mode of showing. All four characters at times presented their stories to the audience in a 'telling' mode, and at other moments interacted with one another in 'showing' mode, as if immersed in the unfolding action. There is perhaps a link here between 'showing' and 'telling' in music-theatre performance, with interiority and exteriority of character play. Carolyn Abbate, as quoted earlier, states the case for music and gesture being able to represent the interiority of the performed character. This interiority is possible, she insists, because only the audience hears the music that the characters sing, unless the character is singing a 'phenomenal' song, by which she means a deliberately performed song within the piece (Abbate 1991). If the character does not deliberately perform their music, the audience can take that music to 'mean' something about the inner world of that character. In other words, when the characters were 'showing', or interacting with one another, they did not consciously 'perform' their music, and their interiority could emerge. Conversely, when the characters 'told', or presented 'phenomenal' songs to the audience, the deliberately performed style was consistent with representing exteriority.

In performance, each character, during the course of the piece, both interacted with their counterpart, and presented deliberately to the audience. Although no decision was made about whether or not Madame and Genevieve were roles performed by the sisters, or discrete and separate entities, nevertheless, Madame and Genevieve were 'written' by composer and librettist in heightened styles. Madame sang in grandiose verse; Genevieve presented grotesque fairy tales. Yet, in performance, these styles did not necessarily translate as 'exterior'. If the characters were interacting with one another, whatever the style of the music, the character retained its essence. By contrast, if the number was deliberately 'delivered' to the audience, without interaction with the other onstage singer-actor, there was a consciousness of the reporting of information - a distancing from the

character. The tango, for example, was exterior; each character presented, or 'told' their story to the audience. This was a 'phenomenal' song, in which the characters 'knew' they were singing. As such, it acted as a suspension from the through-line of the drama, and represented a moment in which the characters were released from their interiority. Conversely, when Genevieve seduces Léa, on pages 88-91 of the printed score, even though she is reading out her fairy tale, which could be viewed as a 'performed' mode of action, she is immersed in the action, reading it *to* Léa, and not consciously singing a song, or directing information to the audience. As a performer in this scene, I remained in the interior world of Genevieve, and motivated by her desire for Léa.

From this onstage experience, what began to emerge phenomenologically was the sense that Christine and Genevieve were one and the same. The performer, Jessica Walker, took on the role of Christine, through whom Genevieve emerged. Because the interiority of the character was expressed in either role, and because each role shared motivations - they both desired Léa; they both despised Madame - it became apparent that in this appropriation of the Papin sisters' story, the denouement of the action was the Lacanian murdering of self, rather than the murder of Madame and Genevieve. In this reading, Christine 'knew' that Madame was Léa, and deliberately engaged in role-play with her. It was only in performance that the nature of the adaptation was revealed as a more figurative exploration of the themes, with the direct influence of the relationship between the singer-actors and the audience, as told through the dramatic structure of the music. In addition, although the appropriation emerged from the true crime, the 'meaning' of the piece for me as a performer arose in light of the performance experience, and regardless of my intentionality as co-author. It could therefore be stated that it was only in the performance of it that the 'score' was fully realised.



Figure 23: Jessica Walker and Harriet Williams *An Eye for an Eye* Bath Festival 2013  
(photographer not credited)

### **Financial/ critical evaluation, Reflection, Promotion**

At this final stage of the Pro-create process for *An Eye for an Eye*, the discourse interrogates the links between critical response and financial evaluation of the piece, and what possibilities there are for the continuation of the Pro-Create cycle into a further revolution. As part of this discourse there is an analysis of the production model in context with current industry practice. Finally, there is a return to and reflection on the questions posed at the beginning of the chapter.

#### *Critical and financial evaluation*

Given the constraints during the production process of the piece, it was not a surprise that the one review received for *An Eye for an Eye* read thus:

#### **Unrealised potential at the Bath Festival - Michael White. Telegraph blog**

[The operas] were essentially good things, based on good ideas, but done on such limited budgets that they felt like work in progress rather than finished product. One was a brilliant little cabaret-opera (as I guess you'd describe it) called *An Eye for an Eye*, written by David Knotts (a composer I've admired for years: he's sharp, smart and inventive) and adapting the true story of an upstairs/downstairs murder

into mirthfully macabre music-theatre. Half way between stylised Feydeau farce (the perpetrators are French housemaids) and the horror-comedy of Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*, it was a joy and played in the ideal space of an old, decaying cinema now turned into a comedy club venue. But the piece had obviously been put together on a shoestring. The score – although in some ways wonderful – needed fine-tuning. And though the performances were semi-wonderful too, they could have been so much better with a crisper, cleaner, better-rehearsed staging.

(White 2013)

As a critical evaluation of the first night the review is fair. It is also inextricably linked with the financial evaluation of the process. White identifies the lack of rehearsal and of production resources. Financial constraints led to a poorly prepared first performance; this was reflected directly in White's critique of the piece. The external, professional issues of finances and subsequent availability of key personnel, impacted negatively on the final performed product and its reception. The production process for *An Eye for an Eye* necessitated further investment and industry support in order to be realised as conceived by its creators. But, even with the budget as constricted as it was, the festivals did not recoup their investment. Each performance of the piece cost in the region of £3,000, without including upfront production costs of the director, lighting designer and rehearsal venue. The opera played in intimate venues. If the Bath and St Magnus festivals were already unable to recoup their investment with this limited budget, there would have been little incentive to invest further.

In interview, Jonathan Reekie of Aldeburgh Music admitted there is a problem inherent in the production model for mounting contemporary opera, saying 'the economics are so disastrous' (Reekie and Walker 2011). In the same interview his administrator Chelsea Lawrence clarified his statement by explaining that box office at Aldeburgh Music would never recoup the gap between what was spent and what was earned back. This inbuilt loss-making model is at the heart of the creation of new music theatre under the auspices of Festivals and opera companies in Britain, and highlights a problem for the Pro-Create model going forward with this project, in which I have become the sole, independent producer. Whereas a subsidised festival or opera company can 'borrow' money from its overall budget to support a loss-making product, as an independent producer I have to ensure that I do not sell the product at a loss, because there is no financial contingency. Therefore, whereas a subsidised organisation could offer *An Eye for an Eye* at a reduced rate in order to secure performance dates at other venues, I cannot. This situation is analogous with the penalty paid by low-income households using pay-as-you-

go electricity and gas meters; those who can least afford their energy costs pay more expensive tariffs. For the independent producer trying to mount a piece without the support of a subsidised company, their options are to apply for funding, either from the Arts Council or music trusts, or to present the piece at its lowest cost, and hope to recoup the money from box office. Presenting the piece at its lowest cost runs the risk, as happened with *An Eye for an Eye*, of too great a degree of artistic compromise.

To date, efforts towards further performances of this project have not succeeded, and here I am mindful of Bartlett's comment – that there is not an audience for the work outside of the showcase of a festival. Bartlett has been proved correct, not specifically on account of there being no audience outside of festival conditions (this is unknown) but on account of the costs for an independent producer making such a performance prohibitively expensive to mount. These industry observations pertaining to the production model, and gleaned only as a result of having traversed the Pro-Create cycle through the professional process of *An Eye for an Eye*, could be seen as having generated David Freeman's mode 2 knowledge production, with its tracking of and response to 'real world' circumstances, and its immediate relevance and application going forward. It highlights a problematised position for the independent producer, working outside of the commissioning structure provided by opera companies; namely, that although this model might represent greater collaborative freedom, the ability to 'pay' for the product to be seen to its best advantage becomes increasingly difficult to achieve.

### *Reflection*

Two of Michael White's comments return us to questions asked at the beginning of the chapter. Firstly, White likens *An Eye for an Eye* to Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*, another adaptation of a gruesome murder into a music-theatre format. A central question posed in this chapter was whether the story of the Papin sisters represented a suitable subject for music-theatre, and how it might be adapted to become one. White's comment, in which he makes the comparison with *Sweeney Todd*, suggests that for an audience member, the subject and its treatment 'worked' in this format; it existed in a lineage of similar such adaptations. However, in concentrating on adapting the source crime, and not on adapting Genet's *The Maids*, it is possible that the piece was not as easy to 'sell' as it might have been. In early heuristic thoughts about the piece I stressed the importance of it being easy to sell. Julie Sanders states:



In adaptation, according to TS Eliot, he regarded it as crucial to the aesthetic process that readers were 'alert to the comparative and contrastive relationships'. In other words, the source work had to be well known.

(Sanders 2006: 97)

Genet's *The Maids* is the most known adaptation of source for the Papin sisters' story; both the previous operatic incarnations were called *The Maids*. By not capitalising on this link, Knotts and I created an adaptation of the crime with no well-known comparative source. Adaptation sells because producers and audiences have an immediate frame of reference for the product; it becomes 'safer', because it is recognisable and therefore reassuring. With *An Eye for an Eye*, neither the title nor the subject provided an immediate frame of reference; neither Knotts nor myself were of sufficient industry renown for this not to be an impediment. There is a possibility that by not including *The Maids* in the title, it made the piece harder to 'sell', than had we done so.

White's second comment, relating to the question of the librettist's creative function and authorship, is referred to by means of an omission. In the review, according to White, the opera is 'written by David Knotts.' Nowhere is there a mention of the librettist. Morra quotes E.M Forster's observation of having been similarly left out, after a review appeared in *The Times* for Britten's *Billy Budd*, for which he and Eric Crozier wrote the libretto:

Dear Sir, I have read with interest and approval your article on *An Opera of Good and Evil* in this morning's *Times*, but wish you could have managed to squeeze in a reference to Eric Crozier and myself. We did the libretto. We worked on it in Britten's house for several weeks. We might reasonably be credited with having helped to interpret his intentions and his conception of Melville's intentions.

(Morra 2007: 117)

Even though the combination of words, music, direction, lighting and performances constituted the performed realisation, or 'score' of the adaptation, it was the 'sharp, smart and inventive' Knotts who was, in White's mind, the creator behind what he was watching, and not the librettist who had 'helped to interpret [Knotts'] intentions.' The primacy of music, and drama explored through music, has been examined in the chapter, as has how the librettist's bricolage of source material created the narrative direction of the piece. Creation was a collaborative endeavour; the composer made word changes; the librettist suggested musical styles. The librettist also eventually understood that her function was to supply the structure and character work

from which Knotts could compose the music, and through which could be drawn the interiority and exteriority of the protagonists. Despite this back and forth, collaborative approach between composer and librettist in the creation of *An Eye for an Eye*, the pacing, dramatic textures and sound world is the composer's. Whilst I did not appreciate being left out of White's review, in the absence of him having discussed the genesis of the project with us in advance, it was an understandable omission, and one, which perhaps suggested there was sufficient synthesis between words, gesture and music not to have caused undue concern.

If, with reflection, the librettist's function became clear, in terms of authorship, the collaboration was less clear-cut. The original idea was mine; I asked Knotts to collaborate with me. Whilst this does not necessitate that the final product owed more to me in authorship than had Knotts been the instigator, nevertheless, the choice of subject reflected aspects of autobiography. From the start, I was personally attached to the narrative; I was also co-writing a role for myself to perform. The paths of librettist and performer were often conjoined; the librettist's voice imagined the singer's voice; the librettist's theatrical visualisation imagined the singer's theatrical reification. If this does not apportion the librettist a greater degree of authorship of the piece itself, it does grant the performer in the act of performing increased agency and authority. The piece was 'of' me; I was free to interpret it as I wished. This phenomenological observation, in which as the first interpreter of a role created specifically for my vocal and theatrical strengths I experienced greater ownership of the material than in previous contemporary operas, is an interesting insight to emerge from the creative process, and is consistent with discoveries from project 2. In the concluding chapter I shall seek to determine its possible uses both in the training sphere, and for those singer-actors who wish to experience a greater degree of interpretative agency.

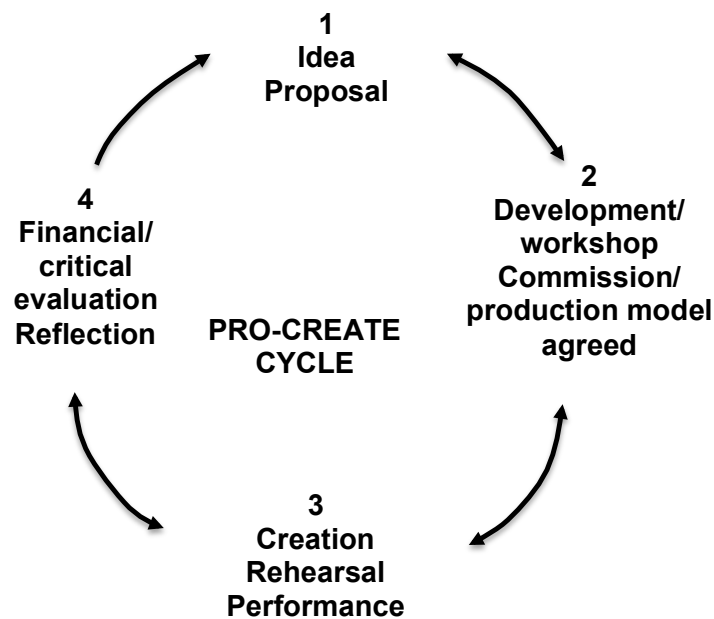
The collaboration with Knotts was a more artist-led approach to authorship than the traditional model of a company commissioning a composer, and either suggesting a librettist, or allowing the composer to select his/ her own. This returns us to the question of how the production model for *An Eye for an Eye* corresponds with current industry models. The production process sat outside of the regular commissioning model, but within a recognised template for independent production. As independent creators, by writing speculatively, we retained a greater degree of collaborative freedom than had we been engaged via the conventional route of commission from an opera house or festival; we were not bound to comply with the requests of a commissioning company; rehearsals were set up and run as we wished; we chose the director and other singer-actor. However, there were significant drawbacks with this method of working practice; as with project 2, greater creative freedom was accompanied by lack of financial aid. Aside from the

inability to raise the money for the piece to be seen to its best advantage, composer and librettist were not paid for the creation of the work. Professional composers and librettists rely on their work for income, and there exists a two-fold danger in writing speculatively; firstly, that the project is never taken up, and secondly, that if writers are prepared to write speculatively, it might remove the incentive for companies to commission work in the first place. This point will be revisited in the concluding chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE PROJECTS AND THE PRO-CREATE MODEL: INSIGHTS AND CONTEXTS

In this final chapter, the thesis re-introduces the research questions, examining insights gathered as a consequence of the 3 revolutions of the Pro-Create cycle. There then follows a conclusion, detailing an outlook both for the practice itself, and for the potential implications for the study in the context of wider industry practice.



Firstly, however, comes a reintroduction to the overarching Pro-Create model, a methodological framework which originated as a response to, and evolved over, the researcher-practitioner journey through the three 3 creative projects.

Carole Gray noted in her keynote lecture at the 1<sup>st</sup> Symposium of Visual Studies in 2006:

Bringing together the creative and the critical in a reflexive relationship is the function of practice-led research.

(Gray 2006: 14)

The existence of this model is the result of that reflexivity and synthesis. The dual journeys of artistic and professional process through the performance projects, and the phenomenological, heuristic, and hermeneutic reflection on

those processes, have contributed to an embedded methodological visualisation, mapping the creative process within current industry conditions. The model, therefore, exists as the result of the practice-led research undertaken; it stands not solely as a representation of the individual practice under scrutiny, but is intended as a new contribution to practice-led performance research models, among which Trimmingham's Nelson's and Mock's were cited as influential to the study at the beginning of the thesis. Further models the Pro-Create cycle shares similarities with, and also referenced earlier in the thesis, include Smith and Dean's 'iterative, cyclic web' (Smith and Dean 2009) and Barrett and Bolt's 'recursive and iterative creative development' (Barrett and Bolt 2007: 152) with its "loops" of feedback and critique' (153). In addition to these examples, in *Composed Theatre*, David Roesner also alludes to the 'circular forms of working processes' (Roesner and Rebstock 2012: 344) frequently described by practitioners.

The Pro-Create cycle has been developed through reiteration and continued critical reflection. The final modelling, with its fluidity of movement between stages, and its suggestion of an ever-evolving cycle, represents both the deepening of artistic practice through continued revolutions, and the unpredictability of the professional process. As an example, two of the three projects did not receive a direct commission. Although the early version of the model for project 1 showed arrows going in only one direction, reflecting the fact that the project ran without significant professional obstacles, the developed model shows arrows travelling in both directions at nearly every stage of the process, reflecting the stuttering professional cycle during projects 2 and 3. This change in the nature of the cycle reflects the differing production models of the last two projects. It also reflects wider industry factors at that particular time, most significantly with the 2011 ACE cuts to many national portfolio organisations. Dominic Gray, projects Director of Opera North, which suffered real term cuts in 2011 of 15%, admitted in conversation that had he been approached a year later with the idea for project 1, *The Girl I Left Behind Me*, he would not have had the budget to commission it (Walker and Gray 2011). How the professional continually impacted on the creative will be further interrogated later in the chapter.

### **The research questions: insights across the projects**

Observations pertaining to professional and artistic practice have already been scrutinised in the previous chapters both as they occurred, and as they inter-connected across the trajectory of the projects. What follows is a distillation of those insights in the context of the original research questions.

The first question posed in this thesis was:

*In today's industry, how might the production of self-created music theatre works enhance the singer-actor's collaborative, creative and employment potential, and their agency and authority?*

*(b) Might the enhancement of this combination of agency, authority, collaborative skills and creative potential contribute to increased 'embodiment' in performance for the singer-actor?*

Although it has become apparent through reiteration of the Pro-Create cycle that the elements of agency, authority, collaboration, creation, embodiment and their development are dialogic, for clarity, it is necessary first to separate them into distinct groupings.

#### *Agency and authority*

With regard to the first part of this question, and dealing initially with agency and authority, the most striking change through the three revolutions of the Pro-Create cycle has been the incremental increase in creative and personal *agency*, which this thesis contends arose as a result of the *authority* gained by creative *autonomy*. (It is necessary here temporarily to separate the idea of creative and personal agency from professional/ career agency, which will be explored separately, and in the context of the employment element of question 1.)

As a comprehensive definition of human agency, Bandura, quoted in earlier chapters, states:

Human agency is characterized by a number of core features. These include intentionality for shaping future plans and courses of action, temporal extension of agency through forethought, self-regulation of motivation, affect, and action through self-influence, and self-reflectiveness concerning one's functioning and the meaning and purpose of one's life. These core features of self-directedness enable humans to play a part in their own development, adaptation, and self-renewal.

(Bandura 2001 in Chen 2006: 132)

Using the example of the researcher's self-created projects, Bandura's 'intentionality for shaping future plans and course of action' is consistent with the starting point of the *decision* to self-create the work, representing a shift from passivity towards **autonomy**. The second stage in the researcher's agential process was the creation of the work, or 'action through self-

influence'. Here, positive evaluation from outsiders, together with a developing self-efficacy over time and with experience, eventually resulted in an increase in **authority**. This authority, conjoined with 'self-reflectiveness concerning [the work's] functioning' across the projects, and by means of the Pro-Create cycle, led to an enhanced sense of personal and creative **agency**. Therefore, the developing process through each project revolution could be viewed thus:

**AUTONOMY** → **AUTHORITY** → **AGENCY**

Figure 25: process towards agency

The recognition of this sequential and incremental journey towards agency was facilitated by the heuristic, intuitive-reflective process, used throughout the study, as a means by which:

All things become clear and evident [...], through a transformation of what is seen; first intuitively in the common appearance, in the manner in which something is presented and then in the fullness and clarity of an intuitive-reflective process.

(Moustakas 1994: 32)

The progression towards increased agency represented a process within the cycle of the Pro-Create model through the projects. Intuitive reflection on the lack of creative agency in the first project led directly to a decision to create project 2 within a more autonomous authorial structure; this facilitated the researcher/ practitioner's developing authority. It could be stated, therefore, that a greater degree of *creative responsibility* also led to enhanced agency, contingent, as it was, on Bandura's key ingredients of 'development, adaptation, and self-renewal'. The researcher contends that contextually, an involvement in the self-creation of work could lead to an increased sense of personal and creative agency, not only for the practitioner here, but also for other singer-actors.

Increasingly, actors are self-creating work and voicing their experience of this in the public realm. Young actor/ writer/ producer Laura Lindsay recently stated in *The Guardian*:

[P]roducing my own work has been empowering and liberating. I no longer feel like a passive component in my own career.

(Lindsay 2014)

Actor Cush Jumbo, with regard to her solo piece about singer and activist Josephine Baker, *Josephine and I* also recently said in interview:

Doing it made me feel in control, because as an actor you often have very little control.

(Jumbo 2013)

That there is not yet similar public testimony from *singer*-actors is perhaps indicative of the fact that classical singers of sufficient renown to be interviewed are employed in and publicising mainstream opera; however, this thesis has demonstrated the possibility of a progression from autonomy, to authority, to agency in the self-creation of work. As Trimmingham acknowledges, and as quoted in the introduction, 'The 'disorderliness' of the creative process must be incorporated into the methodology' (Trimingham 2002: 3). Therefore it should be stated that the schematised progression towards agency, shown above, acts as a means through which to distil elements of the 'disorderly' creative process. Whilst not a definitive 'answer', nevertheless, it represents a substantial insight about the potential agential benefit of self-creating work, yielded through systematised practice-led research. How this might impact on employment potential is explored later in the chapter.

The link between agency and creative responsibility leads to an exploration of the next elements in question 1: whether engaging in the self-creation of work can enhance collaborative and creative potential.

#### *Collaborative and creative potential*

Working outside of the structure of main-stage opera production, and producing music theatre pieces for the first time, has necessitated an increased level of creative responsibility, and an engagement in a range of collaborations. Through the trajectory of the projects new skills have been appropriated, including the multiple roles of singer-actor, co-deviser, author, producer and co-director. This adaptation of role shares similarities with David Roesner's collaborative model for *Composed Theatre*, in which he refers to a 'range of multiple artistic personalities within *one* person' involving an "I as other", stepping in and out of adopted and trained roles' (Roesner and Rebstock 2012: 342-3). Each project in the Pro-Create cycle necessitated the application of new and distinct skills for the 'I as other', owing to the differing collaborative and creative structure of each – the first was co-devised with the director, for the second the researcher self-authored and selected the collaborators, and the third represented a first collaboration with a composer, as librettist. Working across these divergent models facilitated a developing insight as to the multiple ways in which the singer-actor's creative and



collaborative potential could be used. In *Creative Collaboration*, Vera John-Steiner tells us:

Generative ideas emerge from joint thinking, from significant conversations, and from sustained, shared struggles to achieve new insights by partners in thought.

(Steiner 2000: 3)

Across the 3 revolutions of the Pro-Create cycle, each project developed as a result of the joint thinking involved. In each case, with the singer-actor as initiator, collaboration with other artists yielded ideas for staging and character motivation that were the result of the specific partners in thought; although they might have originated through solitary thinking, they took on form collaboratively. The performance 'score' developed as the result of the accumulation of particular authorial and creative 'voices'. The combination of the 'I as other' and the sustained engagement with 3 different collaborative and creative models served, with reiteration, increasingly to 'unlock' an awareness of the practitioner's creative and collaborative potential – particularly as author and librettist - which had previously lain dormant. Thus it could be stated that, similarly to the progression from autonomy to authority to agency, through the revolutions of the Pro-Create cycle, authorial agency has developed through collaboration and creative responsibility:

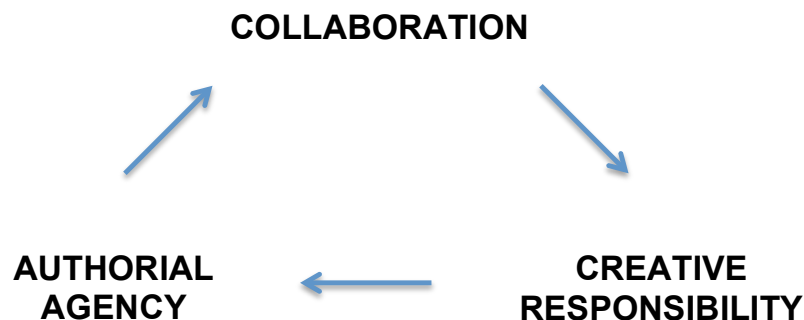


Figure 26: process towards authorial agency

By contrast with the linear, and overarching process of autonomy through to agency during the timeline of this study, the progress towards authorial agency is ongoing; through reiteration, the degree of 'ownership' of the self-authored text has fluctuated, reaching its apex in project 2, but reaching its most collaboratively constructed in project 3. Confidence in authorship has grown exponentially over the three cycles, facilitating the start of a fourth revolution of the cycle - a new play for 3 performers, due to be produced in 2016 by the RET Manchester, which will be detailed later in the chapter.

Roesner's thesis for *Composed Theatre* advocates a similar collaborative model, in which the singer-actor develops his/ her own creative and professional potential *through* collaboration with others:

By involving as many of the performers and 'executors' at the stage of creating material, Composed Theatre not only creates a different sense of involvement, responsibility and authorship of the performers who become co-creators (thereby making the production more reflective of their abilities, biographies, artistic convictions), but it also renegotiates the power relations between the aesthetic elements.

(Roesner and Rebstock 2012: 346)

Roesner advocates a model in which performers' involvement in the creation of material serves to develop their creative and collaborative skills (although he does not focus on singers specifically) and in which their role as co-creator is, subsequently, further reflected in the final product. He indicates that the performers' 'artistic convictions' are represented more completely in this way of working, suggesting a link again between creative involvement and creative agency. There is, however, a fundamental difference between this thesis and Roesner's. Despite the shared elements, the descriptors for what Composed Theatre is – as somewhere between opera, music theatre, theatre, concert, installation, dance and performance – do not have resonance with the projects under study here, which could all be described straightforwardly as versions of music theatre. The elements of experimental devising, central to the composed theatre manifesto, and Roesner's desire to try 'new forms of authorship, of production methods, of understandings of 'skill' or professional identities' (Roesner and Rebstock 2012: 355), house co-creativity in a way that the innate structure of a piece of 'scored' music theatre does not. Thus, the findings here regarding the potential benefits of creative responsibility for the singer-actor, offer a new perspective on Roesner's manifesto. Firstly, they represent a study undertaken *by*, as distinct from *on behalf of*, the singer-actor. Secondly, the singer-actor has grappled with, and reflected on her understanding of 'skill', 'authorship', 'production methods' and 'professional identity', within an accepted paradigm for music theatre production, rather than in an experimental form of theatre-making. Within that structure, it has nevertheless been possible to create work more reflective of her autobiography, abilities and artistic convictions. The reflection on this autobiographical journey provides a direct contextual example for other singer-actors in industry. Namely, that through sympathetic collaboration, it is possible for the singer-actor to develop their creative 'voice'.

*Employment potential*

This thesis has shown that there is developmental and agential value to be had from a pro-active, collaborative mode of working practice. This agency and authority has had an impact on the researcher's employed work, with an increased confidence in the main-stage rehearsal process, both as an artist, more sure of the ability to embody character, and as a 'voice,' with greater experience of being an active member of the collaborative process. The self-created projects have also provided a professional platform, from which a new range of abilities has been demonstrated, and from which certain employed main-stage work has been offered. Therefore it could be posited that the self-creation of work has served to make the artist more employable in wider industry.

There are caveats to this statement. Experientially the employed work offered as a result of an enhanced professional profile has been in the field of contemporary music theatre. An artist choosing to create their own work, by design steps outside of the usual parameters of employed mainstream, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century opera. Setting oneself 'apart' can result in no longer being considered for such work. Paul Barker notes this very point in *Composing for Voice*:

Those singers who embrace a more contemporary vision may not be taken seriously by the prevalent opera culture, which still often remains the core source of income for a career classical singer.

(Barker 2004: 13)

Although the singer-actor in this study did not wish to return to such opera work, it should be acknowledged that for the singer-actor who might wish to combine the two employment streams, gaining profile in a new sphere is not a guarantee of enhanced employment in mainstream opera.

The positive critical evaluation of project 1 in this study has led to two further revolutions of the Pro-Create cycle, in co-production with theatres and opera companies, with a fourth due for production in 2016. Self-created work has, therefore, generated more self-created work. While this work is most certainly a form of 'employment', the financial rewards are limited. Aside from project 1, the pieces have been produced outside of any commissioning structure. Three revolutions of the Pro-Create cycle have highlighted the unreliability of income in this model of working; it is a model, to date, in which there has not been sufficient remuneration to dispense with the necessity for other, employed work. In Mark Bank's *The Politics of Cultural Work* he identifies that:

[A]rtistic desires for creativity and autonomy are not always accounted for or controlled by rational economic systems, nor are they always conducive to capitalist requirements for profit and accumulation.

(Banks 2007: 9)

While detail about the projects in industry context will be further explored in a later section of this conclusion, it is important to note here that there has been, throughout the study, an inherent tension in the relationship between creative autonomy and economic reward. The projects have not been driven by a 'rational economic system'; they have not led to significant 'accumulation.' Experientially, the greater the creative autonomy, the smaller has been the financial reward. And here, the artist is caught in a trap of her own making. As the desire for autonomy has increased exponentially through iterations of the cycle, so the desire to 'go back' to straightforward, employed work has diminished. The heuristic, internal search, engaged with and examined over the course of the 3 projects, has led to a place of self-knowledge and self-awareness in which there is little desire to be a part of a pre-created, historic work. In a case of pragmatism versus idealism, the practitioner now seeks and accepts employed work only as a means through which to be able, financially, to continue the creative work. The self-created work provides artistic 'value', whether or not that translates into monetary value.

### *Embodiment*

As stated earlier in the chapter, the elements of authority, collaborative and creative skills, have all inter-connected, developing exponentially across the study and expediting greater creative and personal agency. This thesis contends that the synthesis of these elements has, in performance, also augmented the perception of 'liveness' or flow, producing an enhanced sense of embodiment. To examine *how* this might be the case, let us first return to the definition of embodiment arrived at in the introduction to the study: a phenomenological 'being in the moment' during which 'the mutually interdependent dynamic' of the 'body/ mind' (Bryon 2014: 34) achieves a free-flowing synergy, without the 'self' of the performer obstructing the channelling of the given role.

In order to disseminate this embodiment, phenomenology has been used throughout the thesis, from the phenomenologically recaptured narrative of the first night in project 1, during which the performer was aware of being 'outside' of the embodiment, through to the analysis of performance in project 2, in which the sense of embodiment was only captured after the fact, when the synergy between elements was broken by an outside distraction.

The 'feeling' of embodiment was at its least evident in the performance of project 1, in which the singer-actor had the least authorial, collaborative and agential input of the 3 projects. It reached its apex during the performance of project 2, for which there was the greatest degree of authorship and creative autonomy. The more pronounced the creative and personal agency, the more acute the phenomenological awareness of embodiment became. This suggests that the trajectory towards embodiment was linked with the process towards agency, in which autonomy led to authority, resulting in increased agency.

Transposing Bandura's concept of agency onto embodiment in performance, in which the 'self' of the performer does not interrupt the channelling of the role, perhaps one could state that the actioning of creative potential, in which the singer-actor performs work that has been self-authored, and which is therefore designed for their particular skills and personality, can lead to circumstances conducive to optimum performance, or embodiment. The singer-actor achieves this optimum place by 'exercising control over the nature and quality' (Chen 2006: 131) of the material they perform.

This insight has arisen from continuous phenomenological reflection on the performance experience during the Pro-Create process, consistent with Husserl's description of reflection:

[A] process through which the "stream of experience (*Erlebnis*) with all its manifold events (phases of experience, intentionalities) can be grasped and analyzed in the light of its own evidence".

(Moustakas 1994: 47)

The 'stream of experience' in performance has been captured, over time, and in each project; the evidence from this recapturing has been used to develop the theory, linking agency with embodiment. The distillation of the interaction between all the aforementioned elements, culminating in increased embodiment, could be viewed thus, as a cycle within the Pro-Create cycle:

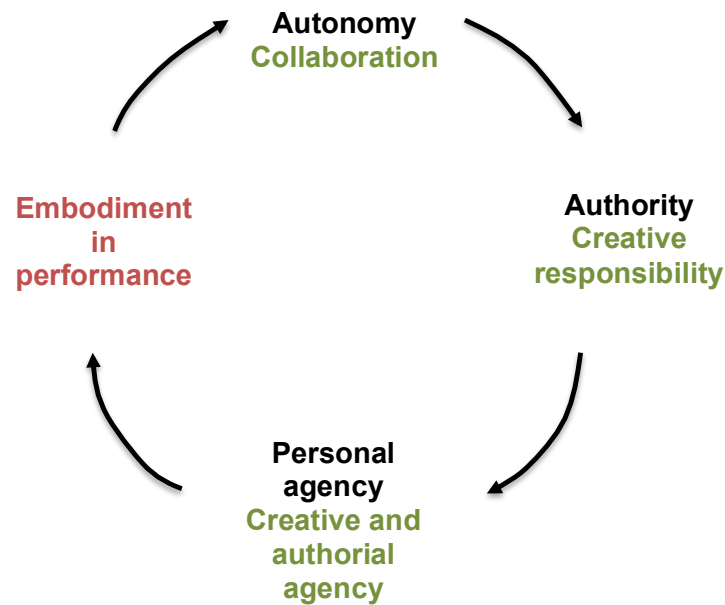


Figure 27: embodiment cycle 1

The identification of this cycle of action has arisen firstly out of phenomenological thought, and subsequently from a sustained engagement with heuristic 'self-search, self-dialogue and self-discovery' (Moustakas 1990), with its inner attention on the researcher's development during the creative and performance processes of the Pro-Create cycle. This phenomenological to heuristic search also represented the essence of the creative process itself over the three projects, during which the 'selves' of the author and performer engaged in a sustained reactive search, dialogue and discovery, and through which the efficacy of the work was tested. The nature of this relationship brings us to the second question posed in the introduction to the thesis:

*What role does autobiography play in the choice of material, self-adaptation and appropriation of sourced historic lives for performance?*

- (b) *During this creative and performance process, what is the interaction between the authorial 'self' and the performing 'self'?*

As a response to the first part of the question, in *Autobiography*, Linda Anderson quotes Candace Lang on the relationship between the autobiography of the writer, and their output:

[I]f the writer is always, in the broadest sense, implicated in the work, any writing may be judged to be autobiographical.

(Lang 1982: 6 in Anderson 2011: 1)

In the choice of material for this thesis, autobiography was implicated twice over; the sourced, historic lives were appropriated by what it interested both writer *and* performer to explore. Autobiography was evident from the outset; the ‘surrogate selves’ selected by the writer, in performance, became ‘an amalgam or merging of the body, voice, and intelligence of the performer with those of the person portrayed’ (Miller, Taylor and Carver 2003: 48). This melding of identities could perhaps best be described as auto/biography, a term defined by Anderson as denoting:

[T]he way autobiographical and biographical narratives are related and to suggest how the boundary between them is fluid.

(Anderson 2011: 140)

This sense of fluidity between ‘auto’ and ‘bio’, inherent in the adaptation and appropriation of historic lives has been comprehensively explored in the project chapters. What is of importance by way of a conclusion, here, is the relationship between the use of auto/biography, with the progression towards increased agency and embodiment in performance. Insights into this can be found in an examination of the sub-section of the question:

*The relationship between the authorial and performing ‘selves’*

The thesis has demonstrated that auto/biography was evident from the conception of each project; each performed piece became an amalgam of the personality of Jessica Walker with the biographies of the historic women. How, specifically the performance pieces developed was contingent on the relationship between the biographical material, the authorial ‘self’ and the performing ‘self.’ During the creative process, it became evident that the performer exerted influence over the author. This became most apparent in the workshop section for project 2, in which the performing self experienced a phenomenological distancing from the character portrayed, if the written framing of that character did not ‘feel’ efficacious. When this disjunction occurred, the writing self made a dramaturgical alteration to the script in order that the performing self would be able fully to commit to the characterisation of the role. For project 3, the performing self exerted influence over the composition of the work in both the writing and performing stages:

- She ‘heard’ music as she wrote the words for the libretto; she imagined herself singing those words and made changes accordingly, until there

was a cohesion of elements that satisfied both writer and prospective performer

- The performer in performance developed the 'score', revealing for the first time the essence of the written adaptation

In these interventions, the discrete creative personalities within the one artist were separated by means of phenomenological thought – by recapturing the essence of the artist's experience, as it happened, in order to comprehend the creative process in real time. The heuristic significance of this thought further identified that the sustained symbiotic relationship between writer and performer, in engagement with the auto/biographic material, finally led to a place of synthesis, from which the performer could deliver the text in an embodied manner, without a perceptual 'distancing'. This synthesis, in which the exploration of auto/biography through 'surrogate selves' was expressed as a unified performance gesture, served to develop a new and distinct, combined authorial and performing 'voice'. This creative 'voice' represented an additional agential force, resulting, as it did, in a greater embodiment during performance. As such, the synthesis between the writing and performing identities, in engagement with auto/biography, forms an addition to the embodiment cycle, illustrated earlier, and can be shown thus:

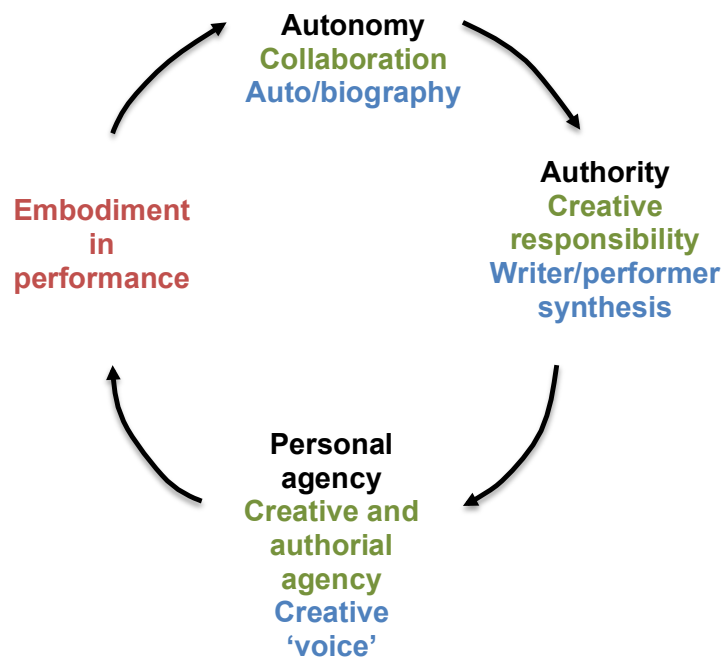


Figure 28: embodiment cycle 2



This cycle towards embodiment is an example of Nelson's *praxis*, in which knowledge has emerged through the imbrication of theory with practice. Nelson states:

The conditions for knowledge to occur lie in the relational encounters, but the mutual illumination of one element by another is likely to be necessary to meet the 'contribution to knowledge' requirement in affording a distinctive understanding that is the aggregate function of the different inputs.

(Nelson 2006:115)

Here, mutual illumination of one element by another has produced new knowledge about the means towards embodiment in performance. Contextually, if the singer-actor under study found the means towards a creative 'voice' through the writing and performing of auto/biography, it could be stated that the singer-actor in industry might also experience enhanced embodiment from engaging in such a process - a process that produces work 'more reflective of their abilities, biographies, artistic convictions' (Roesner and Rebstock 2012: 346). This point will be revisited in the concluding statements of the chapter.

If the above revelation of process demonstrates the potential benefits of creative proactivity for the singer-actor, how that process functions when it is subject to the economic and production realities inherent in industry, is the nexus of the final question posed at the start of the thesis:

*What is the impact of external factors of funding and industry take-up in shaping the creation, production and performance of self-created music theatre works?*

The Pro-Create cycle was modelled as a means through which to map and hermeneutically interpret the effect of industry on the creative process. Moustakas describes this reflective-interpretative process as:

[N]ot only a description of the experience as it appears in consciousness but also an analysis and astute interpretation of the underlying conditions, historically and aesthetically, that account for the experience.

(Moustakas 1994:10)

This analysis of process has resonance with the cultural materialist paradigm in which 'experience' cannot be defined 'outside of time, political signification,

social relations and material processes and conditions' (Harvie 2013: 16). Here, if the creative process represents the 'experience' itself - an experience, which has been analysed both phenomenologically and heuristically - the 'underlying conditions' of industry practice accounting for how that 'experience' functions, have been unwrapped incrementally by hermeneutic interpretation. Inter-linking insights in two categories have arisen from this analysis: namely, how the *external factors* of industry parameters and chance impact on the *agential factors* of creative autonomy versus professional agency.

#### *External factors*

David Roesner identifies external factors as a key concern amongst independent creative artists:

Working conditions and funding mechanisms are a very prominent trope of the discussions and a useful reminder for me as a scholar, who has approached the phenomenon of Composed Theatre with a predominant interest in the creative processes, the aesthetic collaboration and decision-making and the performance results, ignoring at times the significance and immediate influence of seemingly 'external' factors of production, commission, venue, funding, marketing.

(Roesner and Rebstock 2012: 347)

Through the iterations of the Pro-Create cycle, the limitations of factors within each production model, including commission and funding became central to the professional creative process, with their 'immediate influence' on the outcome of each project. However concentrated the focus as an artist was on the creative work itself, each piece could only become what industry *allowed* it to become terms of funding and take-up. Roesner, by his own admission, had not been focused on the significance of these limitations, perhaps reflecting the prevalent culture for PaR and practice-led research, in which work, for the most part, has not been created within an industry context. Yet in Nelson's most recent writing on the subject, he states:

Mining a rich seam, research enquiry into how the arts function in production, composition and reception has great potential to produce new knowledge.

(Nelson 2013: 2029)

Here, there comes an acknowledgement that it is partly the analysis of 'production' that holds the potential for new knowledge – a knowledge that

reflects the external limitations Roesner alludes to, and which lies at the heart of this thesis.

There is precedent for the 'product within industry' in documented PaR. Deviser/ performer Yoni Prior identified the effect of such factors in the academic dissemination of *Bleeding Narratives*, a play professionally produced in 1993, with the observation:

[T]he schematic structure of the piece was, at least in part, a response to the limitations of the rehearsal and production schedule.

(Freeman 2010: 119)

For Prior's piece, a budget-dependent schedule set the parameters within which the project could be made, and this was reflected in the exegesis of the practice.

A less tangible external factor in the Pro-Create cycle has been the role of *chance* or serendipity. John Freeman alludes to this in *Blood, Sweat and Theory*:

[F]or those of us involved in performance, chance is deeply embedded in our professional lives. The best-laid performances plans rarely if ever amount to a route we can follow without the vagaries of creative practice forcing some sort of revision, re-think or re-adjustment.

(Freeman 2010: 280)

Here, although Freeman refers to 'our professional lives', he highlights 'chance' only in reference to the creative practice itself, and not the practice as functioning within industry. This thesis has demonstrated that serendipity was a factor in the inception of each project. Amongst the 'vagaries of creative practice' within a professional context, aesthetic revisions are sometimes made deliberately, as part of the creative progression for the piece, but they are often forced by circumstances beyond one's control.

#### *Agential factors*

A tension exists between the creative autonomy of the Pro-Create process and these external factors of industry parameters and chance. Whilst this autonomy, as has been shown, can facilitate personal and creative agency, the reliance on industry take-up, and the nebulous nature of serendipity, places the artist in a position of vulnerability, both financially and in terms of their professional agency. This leads to a discourse not so much concerned

with the impact of external factors on the work itself, but on the artist in the act of producing that work.

The self-creation of work for the singer-actor under study was not motivated by any 'rational economic system' (Banks 2007), but rather from the desire to experience a greater creative fulfillment. Remuneration, when it came, was not sufficient to dispense with the need for other, employed work; this did not affect the desire to continue creating. Arts Lawyer Henry Lydiate, in his article *Why Are Artists Poor?* (2013), identifies why the creative autonomy of the fine artist working within current industry often leads to such financial insecurity:

In today's highly developed world market economy, goods are manufactured in response to consumers' needs. Artists live in a different economy [...] chiefly operating from a starting point of total freedom and autonomy: works are produced, then a market is sought. A tiny percentage of artists achieve artistic and/or financial success during their lives. Most artists are unable to monetise their works alone and need external support to do so.

He goes on to ask:

Why are artists poor? It is a question of both the necessity and the price of autonomy and artistic freedom.

(Lydiate 2013: 41)

As a credo, this could be applied to the singer-actor under study, for whom the creative impulse initiated the process, and for which a market was only subsequently sought. As a working model, this lies at odds with an economy within which goods are manufactured in response to customer need. It is not a 'rational economic system'.

The problematised position for the artist paying this 'price' for creative autonomy is that part of that price can be a lack of professional empowerment. During the course of this study, the development towards personal and creative agency has not involved a concomitant increase in professional agency. Owing to the reverse economy within which the practitioner has operated, as highlighted above, there has been no guarantee of industry take-up. This renders the artist low status and 'needful' in their interaction with prospective producers. When industry take-up has been achieved, creative autonomy has been granted in inverse proportion to the financial backing: the greater the backing, the less the artist's 'say' in the creative and production processes - from choice of creative personnel to performance venues. Perhaps it is only with celebrity that there is a reversal in

this dynamic. In celebrated film director Mike Leigh's first foray into opera - a production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance* at ENO (2015) - he was given creative carte blanche over the creative team and treatment of the piece. Without the benefit of celebrity clout or cache, the artist under study has found that the lesser the industry backing, the greater the creative autonomy, but the more precarious the pay structure. At no point in the Pro-Create cycle has the practitioner gained authority with regard to the level of financial remuneration for the work produced. If key components of agency include 'affect, and action through self-influence' (Bandura 2001), then the industry structure within which the independent creative has been operating, has militated against this.

Banks refers to the prevalence of an 'individualized cultural workplace', in the current creative industries, in which creative cultural workers are often freelance, and operating outside of any regular pay or benefits structure. As highlighted in this thesis, the singer-actor only received a commission for project 1; for the other 2 projects the remuneration she received was after performance. She was not 'paid' for the creation of the work. In a workplace such as this, the immediate financial risk can therefore be more incumbent on the individual artist, than it is on the company for which the artist creates work. In Banks' view, this neoliberal capitalist paradigm can 'inveigle workers into a precarious and high-risk game of economic survival' in which 'the provision of 'freedom' may prove to be partial or even entirely illusory' (Banks 2007: 57). Whilst the artist under study here was at no time 'inveigled' into making work for low, or no pay, nevertheless, it could be said that artist's desire to have her work taken up necessarily placed her in a position of professional vulnerability. Although the artist has been more in control of her destiny in creative terms, this creative autonomy has not translated into an increase in professional agency. This point will be revisited in the outlook to the study at the end of the chapter.

### **Implications for the study**

Nelson observes that through undertaking practice-led research:

[A]rtists come better to understand their practices in context and that understanding, in turn, enhances the artists' work.

(Nelson 2013: 1390)

By means of this cyclic practice-led investigation, artistic practice has developed alongside a context for that practice in industry. The implications for this have been fourfold: research-based, creative, professional and pedagogical.

### *Research Implications*

With the creation of the Pro-Create model, the practitioner has contributed new knowledge in the area of practice-led research. This paradigm, with its acknowledgement of industry conditions, has addressed a gap in the dissemination of performance practice, a gap, which, as Mark Banks identifies, perhaps has at its origin a more generic lack of worker testimony:

[Creative cultural workers] are primarily responsible for the production of those symbolic commodities judged to be essential components of the transition to a 'post-industrial', 'creative' or 'knowledge' based economy. However, rather surprisingly, accounts of such workers have been largely absent from (or at least significantly under-theorized in) those recent, emergent accounts of cultural industries that I have identified.

(Banks 2007: 7)

The thesis addresses this 'absence', and, via the framework of the Pro-Create model, gives form to certain aspects of what Banks calls the 'evasive structures' (Banks 2007: 7) of cultural work.

Further research implications include the acceptance of a proposed article entitled *The creative/ collaborative process in industry*, for a special edition of *Studies in Musical Theatre* in 2017 - *New Music Theatre: work in/and progress* - edited by David Roesner.

### *Creative and professional implications*

As befits a model imbricating the creative with the professional, the implications for these strands of practice are not easily separated. In addition to the contribution to practice-led performance research, the bridge of hermeneutic analysis has revealed a connection between creative autonomy and enhanced creative and authorial agency. This agency has served to continue the professional practice into a fourth revolution, resulting in a new play for the *Royal Exchange Theatre*, Manchester, due to be produced in June 2016, and in which the author will also perform. The play with songs exists in a direct lineage with the previous projects. Through historiographical research, the author has appropriated an historic, forgotten life for auto/biographic performance. The piece represents a development of the practice, in that it is the first solo-authored play with interaction between three performers. It has been supported in collaboration with director Sarah Frankcom (Artistic Director of RET, Manchester) over three workshop periods. This thesis contends that, as Nelson asserted, engaging in reflective practice can enhance the artist's work; the authoring and structuring of a more complex piece of creative performance writing has emerged from this critical

reflection of artistic practice, and the subsequent creative agency it has expedited. However, as with the previous two projects, there has not been a direct commission for the work, in which a fee is paid upfront for the creation of the piece. The production model is not yet cemented, but at this time the intention is to pay the artist as a performer during rehearsal and performance, with a percentage of box office as a writing royalty after the performance run. The failure to achieve direct commission will be further drawn out in the outlook section of the conclusion.

### *Pedagogical implications*

There have been pedagogical implications for the study, but these are, as yet, in a formative state. Insights about the agential and creative benefits of self-creation and collaboration have been assimilated into the researcher's teaching of students of singing and performance. The findings have informed mentoring work at *Trinity Laban* on the *CoLab* scheme for devised collaborative performance work, and facilitated the researcher's leadership of a new performance module for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year Vocal and Choral studies students at Winchester University. The researcher has led a session at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama's employability week, on the subject of *Taking Creative Responsibility*. She is also currently a contributor to the Jerwood opera-writing scheme at *Aldeburgh Music*, mentoring composers and writers in the creation of new music theatre work. These new employment possibilities, outside of performance work, could be said to represent both professional and pedagogical possibilities arising directly from the research undertaken.

### **Outlook**

Trimingham states that during practice-led enquiry, there should not arrive a point at which 'no more questions need to be asked' (Trimingham 2002: 57). Emergent from the reiterative, cyclic nature of this study are concerns about future performer training and the place of the independent producer/ creator in industry that require further attention.

### *Future performer training*

In his texts on theatre, *Aesthetics of Absence*, theatre director, composer and teacher Heiner Goebbels writes:

That the graduates should have the prospect of reliable jobs at the theatres and opera houses is an important goal – but it would be irresponsible to not also prepare them for a perhaps more precarious and far more complex future at the same time. And with every generation of artists we are in danger of legitimizing and setting in

stone the prevailing understanding of the artistic disciplines, as they are represented by the institutions.

(Goebbels 2015: 77)

Here, Goebbels identifies two weaknesses in traditional, vocational training models: that the narrow parameters within which conservatoires have hitherto operated is not sufficient preparation for today's 'precarious' and 'complex' industry, and that the teaching of artistic disciplines, if set in stone, is not reflective of what is happening in industry *now*. Experience Bryon, similarly, refers to a 'disintegration [...] whereby we identify ourselves as artists, reinforced by current models within our academies, studios and conservatoires' (Bryon 2014: 4); she expounds a more integrative approach to performer training. The Pro-Create model, which sits astride the disciplines of music and theatre, of authorship, production and performance, *is* reflective of current industry conditions, and of the need for performing artists to be able to work across genres in the face of lack of mainstream performance opportunities. It has also demonstrated that an engagement with more collaborative models and the self-creation of work can release the potential for increased embodiment in performance. However, this model does not directly reflect undergraduate conservatoire training for vocational singers or actors. Certain courses are now offered stressing a greater emphasis on the integration of skills; The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama currently offers *Performance Practice as Research* and *Music Theatre* MAs; the Guildhall in conjunction with the Barbican is introducing their *Performance and Creative Enterprise* BA in 2015; Trinity Laban mounts their *CoLab* collaborative practice event for two weeks every year; the Royal Scottish Conservatoire runs a BA in *Contemporary Performance Practice*. This is the start of a perceptual shift into an awareness of what artists entering industry need to have assimilated, and how they might take more creative responsibility as singer-actors. But this alone is not sufficient. For students training in vocational classical singing in a conservatoire environment, the courses remain largely un-unified, and unrepresentative of the singer-actor working in current industry. Looking forward, the researcher identifies a need for continued change. Banks quotes Negus and Pickering as reminding us that 'The aim of self-creation requires appropriate models, and chief among these is art' (Negus and Pickering 2004: 8 *in* Banks 2007: 103). Students of 'art' need to be made aware of modes of practice which both reflect industry, and which they could emulate in order to expand their creative and employment potential.

*The independent creator/ performer in industry*

The thesis ends as it began, with recognition of the impact of the professional on the creative. Banks tells us:



[A]s tradition fades, individualization leads to *active reflection* on ones' positioning within systems and, indeed, on the very nature of systems themselves – and it is this that contains the promise of freedom.

(Banks 2007: 98)

As a result of this study, the researcher has had the opportunity to reflect on her position within the system, and with this has come a significant degree of creative freedom. This freedom has, as stated earlier in the chapter, been at the expense of financial gain. The thesis has demonstrated how working outside of main-stage opera production as an independent producer/ creator in the current economic climate is precarious. The inability to achieve commission, or sufficient remuneration is of particular concern at this time, with freezes and cuts across arts funding to the subsidised arts sector. More problematic still is the hierarchy inherent in the distribution of this funding. Earlier in the thesis Bryony Kimmings was quoted on this issue. Critic and cultural commentator Lyn Gardner also identifies this problem in her theatre blog, *We can't afford not to pay our theatre artists*, in which she suggests that 'it is all theatre artists who have remained the hidden subsidizers of the arts.' She goes on to state:

[I]t's about the relationships between artists and venues and producers, and a proper and equal relationship between them that is not just a transaction but something that benefits and enriches all.

(Gardner 2015b)

Unless the artist is of sufficient renown that a theatre or opera company's need for their creative product is greater than their need for that organisation, in the working model as it stands, there is not an institutional incentive for 'a proper and equal relationship' in terms of remuneration. As Banks states, creative cultural work can offer 'enhanced opportunities for workers to obtain meaning, self-fulfilment and personal autonomy in their work' (Banks 2007: 52), but this autonomy is currently too much at the expense of professional agency in industry practice. In *Fair Play*, Jen Harvie states:

Funding regimes in particular regularly exhort artists to model creative entrepreneurialism, marked by independence and the ability to take initiative, take risks, self-start, think laterally, problem-solve, innovate ideas and practices, be productive, effect impact and realize or at least stimulate financial profits.

(Harvie 2013: 62)

There is a danger here. The independent creative artist routinely subsidises ACE portfolio organisations, for example, by working for low or no pay in the development process, in which they are ‘innovating’, ‘being productive’ and ‘effecting impact’. By capitulating to this model, the artist continues to remove the incentive for arts organisations to take risks, and to support artists in a ‘proper and equal relationship.’ This is an area, which necessitates further investigation, not only with regard to the distribution of funding, but in terms of the impact the resulting lack of professional agency might have on artist esteem.

There are seeds of change perceptible in the prevailing attitude of today’s singer-actor in industry, suggesting the acknowledgement of a shifting cultural landscape in UK practice. If not creating work, a number of classically trained singers are now operating as producers; among the new generation of singers, rising tenor Andrew Dickinson produces operettas with his company *Opera Danube*, and directs the *Rainhill Music Festival* alongside his main-stage opera work; established mezzo soprano Arlene Rolph recently started ‘*The Singing Entrepreneur*’, a popular online forum, part of whose mission statement reads that ‘through focusing on streams of Identity, Business and Performance, TSE seeks [...] to inspire singers with the tools necessary to achieve success on their terms’ (TSE 2015 no pagination).

It would seem that away from the structures of main-stage opera production, in which ‘producers direct singers’ (Atkinson 2006: 85), an increasing number of today’s freelance singer-actors recognise the need to take control of their careers and diversify. The internet and social media facilitate the integration of this disparate group into an online community, giving the freelance artist a ‘voice’ with which to register and share professional concerns, personal experience and job opportunities. It is possible that this public ‘voice’ will, with time, give the singer-actor a greater influence in the industry conditions under which they operate. However, this thesis contends that there is a tension in attaching business rhetoric to creative endeavour, and in particular with the use of the term ‘entrepreneur.’ In *Fair Play*, Jen Harvie tells us:

Derived from the French word *entreprendre*, to undertake, an entrepreneur is someone who sets up a business and takes on financial risk in the hope of profit (Stevenson 2010).

(Harvie 2013: 65)

She later states that:

[Craftsmanship] prioritizes not efficiency and productivity but, simply, quality, thereby immediately challenging entrepreneurialism's drive to profit.

(Harvie 2013: 97)

Although risk-taking and innovation are qualities inherent in both creative artists and entrepreneurs alike, there is a significant difference; within the 'reverse economy' of small-scale, independent creating, the drive to create is focused on process and product, or Harvie's *quality*, before considerations of productivity and profit. The ubiquity of terms such as *entrepreneur*, and *creative enterprise*, when applied to individual creative endeavour, perhaps carries with it an implication that the drive for profit should take precedence; it recalibrates the creative process in line with neoliberal, capitalist values. Whilst this does serve as a useful reminder to artists regarding the practical consideration of financial outcomes, it once again lays the financial risk and responsibility at the artist's door, and not with the institutions for which they develop work.

This thesis has continuously mapped the impact of the professional on the creative via the framework of the Pro-Create cycle; emerging areas for further attention reinforce this impact. In current and future industry practice, there is a concern as to how the singer-actor working in this model might achieve both a sufficient degree of independent artistic control *and* adequate remuneration. For the working singer-actor, the attainment of personal and creative agency is something of a Pyrrhic victory if it is not allied with the professional necessity of earning a living.

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**APPENDIX**

*Included separately:*

Published play - Bartlett, N and Walker, J. 2011. *The Girl I Left Behind Me*. London: Oberon.

CD - Bartlett, N and Walker, J. 2013. *The Girl I Left Behind Me*. New York: Original Cast Records.

Unpublished play script - Walker, J. 2012. *Pat Kirkwood is Angry*.

Unpublished score - Knotts, D and Walker, J. 2013. *An Eye for an Eye*.

Neil Bartlett and Jessica Walker

# THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME



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## THE SHOW

The initial idea for *The Girl I Left Behind Me* came about as the result of a chance remark made in 2009 by Dominic Gray, the special projects director at Opera North in Leeds. As singer Jessica Walker stepped off the stage at the end of a concert of Tom Waits songs in a tuxedo and with slicked-back hair, he joked ‘You remind me of Vesta Tilley’.

It’s a name from British theatrical history still fondly remembered by only a few, and unheard-of by many more – but it was enough to kick-start a process of enquiry and collaboration which eventually produced the show whose script is printed here. The collaboration was between a singer who has never directed, and a director who can’t sing. Here are our accounts of what happened next.



## THE SINGER

Dominic's comment aroused my curiosity; I knew that Tilley had been a male impersonator in the glory days of the British music hall, but had never actually seen picture of her. Having sourced some images on the internet, I found that staring back at me was a crop-haired, small-faced and sharply-suited woman who looked remarkably like the stage persona that I had created for the Waits tour. While I was already aware that the look I had adopted was far from original, I had vaguely assumed this particular style of female stage cross-dressing was derived from Marlene Dietrich's infamous white-tie-and-tails number in the film *Morocco* in 1930. Through further reading, however, I discovered that the first singing male impersonators went back much earlier than that. In fact, as early as the 1860's one Annie Hindle – a woman who was as happy to be called *sir* as *madam* – was already wowing audiences in America by singing in full male costume. And Vesta herself, it turned out, though certainly iconic, was far from being a theatrical rule-breaker; indeed, she was one of the least daring of the male impersonators, living and performing as she did at a time when to be 'mannish' became openly associated with women's suffrage, not to mention the murky world of the sexual invert. It was the true pioneers of the form – Annie Hindle and Ella Wesner most particularly – who challenged social convention, spending periods of time dressed as and identifying as men offstage as well as on, and even 'marrying' other women. As early as 1888, I found, Wesner was dragged up as a man and singing, 'Lovely woman was made to be loved, to be fondled and courted and kissed; and all those who've never made love to a girl, well, they don't know the fun they have missed' – a fact which made my 2009 performances of a few Tom Waits songs wearing a tux rather less daring than I had previously imagined. I began to ask myself what motivated a woman, as far back as the late 1860's, to dress up as a man to earn her living on the stage. To whom did she wish to appeal, and to whom did she *actually* appeal? Was she dressing as a man on stage because it was her only opportunity to express a certain

aspect of her personality, or was she simply dressing in a way that would gain maximum impact and therefore maximum financial reward?

I took these questions to Dominic Gray, as the fledgling thoughts for a piece about the male impersonators, and he immediately suggested that theatre director and author Neil Bartlett was the man to help realise my ideas. In our first meeting, Neil made the prescient observation that actually what we were going to be looking at in the piece was not why Annie, Vesta and Ella felt the need to put on trousers, but why *I* wanted to dress as a man when I sang on stage, a point that I chose, initially, to dismiss as too unsettling. When (for instance) I played a boy role in opera like Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*, I had never been a consideration, because *I* was being someone else, on a stage shared with colleagues. The male impersonators, however, who were plying their trade at exactly the same time as their operatic counterparts, were standing on stage alone, in a self-created persona, rather than behind the mask that an operatic role provided. Where opera had hitherto afforded me the opportunity to cross-dress without ever questioning why I was doing so, it was immediately evident that a solo show, the subject for which I had chosen myself, was going to make me question what, or who, this trouser-wearing ‘I’ was. It became clear in our very first conversations about the piece that for a show about the now-dead male impersonators of the British Music Hall and the American Variety and Burlesque houses to be worth doing in 2010, it would have to be a contemporary reflection on their art – and one in which my personal relationship with the material would be central. Consequently, the narrator persona we developed together through the devising process – a solitary figure who told the stories about these remarkable women, and then sang their songs – became pretty close to a version of myself. S/he often spoke in the first person, and sometimes even forgot altogether that s/he was actually meant to be talking about somebody else. The words Neil gave me, together with his sensitive and skilful direction, drew out a swagger and flirtatiousness in my cross-dressed persona, and,

if you like, provided me with the safety net to be a little bit dangerous.

The logistics of how to move between the narrator, the ladies themselves and the characters taken on by them in their songs (not to mention where *I* fitted in to all that) could have been sticky, but because the devising process began with the selection of the songs and the hammering out of a draft running order – which Neil insisted should be the starting point – we had a firm structure within which to unravel, play with and then reconfigure both my speaking and singing voices. Far from being daunting, the rehearsals were in fact full of pleasure. The songs we had chosen, ranging from well-known numbers like *After the Ball* to 19<sup>th</sup> century obscurities like *Down by the Old Mill Stream*, gave us a huge emotional and physical range to explore – not to mention lots of laughs. Luckily for us, we had the talents of our colleague, MD and accompanist Jim Holmes to draw upon; his ability to transpose and rearrange on the spot and to use the piano, in effect, as another character in the show, with witty instrumental interjections, created both texture and humour along the way.

Jessica Walker, 2011

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Jessica Walker, 2011





## THE DIRECTOR




One of my favourite ways of working in the theatre is to create a text with a voice in my head – to be working not in the abstract, but with and for a particular performer, one who intrigues and inspires me. That’s why I eagerly accepted the chance to work on this project. Moreover, the solo performance is a form I love, and know well; its directness, its economy of means and its potential for direct contact with an audience are all cornerstones of my practice as a theatre-maker. The idea that ‘I’ can be both a stage persona and a person is crucial to my conception of what a performer is.

Moreover, I am no stranger to sartorial misbehaviour. My younger self quite often wore queer drag, and over the years I have often used both queer and theatre drag in my work, both male-to-female (as in my 1989 music-theatre piece *Sarrasine*, or in my own solo performance piece *A Vision of Love Revealed in Sleep*) and female-to-male (as in my productions of *Twelfth Night* for the Royal Shakespeare Company and for the Goodman in Chicago, in both of which actresses in trousers and moustaches turned the tables on anyone thinking that only boys should be allowed to dress up to do Shakespeare). I find cross-dressing on stage beautiful, funny, transgressive – and incredibly useful. It seduces and intrigues an audience straightaway. It immediately foregrounds both the vulnerability and the strength of the performer. It promises the audience some kind of transformation.

I also love the world of the music-hall – its architecture, its songs, its now-vanished audience, its glamour, its ability to make true stars out of the unlikeliest of performers. For me, it is space for dreaming in. And I believe passionately in reclaiming voices which have been written out of history – because they were too unlikely, too queer or too womanly. Like Jessica, I had heard of some of the British trouser-wearers, but like her I was amazed and delighted to discover the earlier and more radical pioneers of their art. I hope we have done them proud.

A word about the script. Solo performance is notoriously hard to transcribe, because so much of it depends on





the tone of voice. This problem is compounded when so much of the show in question is sung. To this end, I have included indications of how Jess handled the material where appropriate, and sketched in some of the gestures of my staging where it seems helpful rather than prescriptive to do. I very much hope other women will perform this show, and I know they will find their own ways of staging it, their own voices, and their own ways of making these wonderful songs come alive again.

Neil Bartlett, 2011





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*The Girl I Left Behind Me*

Devised by Neil Bartlett and Jessica Walker.

Commissioned by Opera North; originally performed by Jessica Walker, with James Holmes at the piano, in a staging by Neil Bartlett.

First performance 15<sup>th</sup> May 2010, in the Howard Assembly Room at Opera North in Leeds.



THE SONGS USED IN THE SHOW ARE

*I'm the Idol of the Girls*, Lyle/Murray/Hilbury, 1908

*I Love the Ladies*, Schwartz/Clarke, 1914

*Jolly Good Luck to the Girl Who Loves a Sailor*, Lyle/Leigh, 1907

*Angels Without Wings*, G. Dance, c. 1900

*Don't Put Your Foot on a Man When He's Down*, C. Vivian, c. 1870

*Down by the Old Mill Stream*, W. Wilson, 1875

*Why Did I Kiss That Girl?*, King/Henderson/Brown, 1924

*Following in Father's Footsteps*, E.W. Rogers, 1902

*I'm Sowing All My Wild Oats*, Lyle/Mellor, 1908

*Hi, Waiter*, J.F. Mitchell, 1888

*I've Got the Time, I've Got the Place*, Henry/Macdonald, 1910

*Burlington Bertie from Bow*, W. Hargreaves, 1915

*Baby Won't You Please Come Home*, Warfield/Williams, 1919

*The Girl I Left Behind Me*, S. Lover, 1866

*After the Ball*, C.K. Harris, 1892

THE TWO OPERATIC EXCERPTS USED IN THE SHOW ARE

*Cherubino's Aria in Act II of 'Le Nozze di Figaro'*  
by Mozart

*Octavian's Aria in Act I of 'Der Rosenkavalier'*  
by Richard Strauss



*A hatstand with a few hats, a table with a few props, a microphone in a spotlight – and a grand piano.*

*The house lights go down.*

*A piano player enters, bows as if he was performing in a very grand theatre, and starts to play.*

### *OVERTURE*

*A sometimes jaunty, sometimes sentimental medley of the tunes to come. The last item in the overture is an instrumental chorus of 'After the Ball'.*

*A woman – immaculately dressed in white tie, trousers and tails, with scarlet lipstick and cropped hair – enters.*

*She looks at the audience. She stops by the hatstand and rearranges one of her hats, then lingers at the props table next to the microphone, lightly touching a couple of singularly male items – a cigar, an ashtray, a cane.*

*She speaks into the microphone. What she says is lightly punctuated by the pianist with chords that take us gently towards the next piece of music – sometimes gentle, sometimes melodramatic. They are indicated simply in the text by an **X**.*

Good evening. Very early in my career, I realised that when I'm singing...I don't have to behave.

In fact, you might say that I make my living doing things I would never do – **X**

Saying things I would never say – **X**

And wearing things I would *never* wear... **X**

This evening, I would like to share with you sixteen and a half songs made famous by some outstanding pioneers of womanly misbehaviour – some of them famous; **X**

Some, infamous; **X**

Some fabulously successful – and some...obscure. **X**

Famous or infamous, handsome or petite, these Ladies had one thing in common; they were all *Male*

*Impersonators* – that is, they were *Ladies* who sang while dressed as *Gents*. (*She indicates her own costume.*) From head...to toe...

But...whatever they wore, whatever they said or did, these women always sang in their own voices – which meant that no one was ever fooled, or even meant to be fooled, by their act; **X**

which meant that it was all alright, because at the end of the evening, everything could go back to being just how it was meant to be in the first place, both onstage

**X**

and off; **X**

which meant, perhaps, that they didn't really mean what they were singing, if you see what I mean... **X**

Or...which meant – perhaps – that they were just ladies who

Like Post-women **X**

Or like Bus-drivers **X**

Or like *me*...prefer to work...in trousers. **X**

*The piano begins a jaunty vamp under.*

*She picks up a walking cane from the table.*

So, if you're sitting uncomfortably, I'll begin. This first number is an iconic little ditty made popular by the most successful trouser-wearer of them all. Born in poverty in 1864, Matilda Powles was rechristened the Great Little Tilley at the age of eight when her father dragged her up in evening dress and put her in the act – and then hastily rechristened again because she looked so convincing that some people thought she actually was a boy, which would have been...confusing – so, *Miss Vesta Tilley* she became, and she never...looked...back.



THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME

*She plucks a top hat off the hat stand during the musical intro, and strikes a pose with her back to audience. She turns – and sings off-mike, in character as a cocksure young man – dapper, suave, flirting with the girls in the audience...*

**I'M THE IDOL OF THE GIRLS**

I meet no end of nice girls, and 'pon my word, at times  
I feel quite bashful when they say they love me;  
It seems that I'm a magnet that attracts them, as it were –  
There's no resisting me when I'm about;  
In my dress I follow fashion, ev'rything's immaculate;  
They cry, 'Why here comes Charlie, he's the Johnnies' fashion-plate!'  
The girls they say they'd die for me – in fact the dark ones do;  
My fav'rite colour's gold you see – that's why they change the hue...

I'm the Idol of the Girls; I'm the Idol of the Girls;  
Fellows come along but they soon go, for they've got no show with the  
Girls!  
I'm the Idol of the Girls – love their dainty little curls –  
There'll be trouble if the wife finds out I'm the Idol of the Girls!!

Since I can first remember, it's always been the same –  
I seem to have the knack of pleasing ladies.  
When I was quite a youngster they would hold me in their arms;  
Now I'm grown up they seem to like it more...  
I often think when all these girls they follow me about,  
There's must be lots of chappies out there have to go without;  
The girls will sit upon my knee; they won't sit on a chair –  
My valet has an awful job to keep the creases there...  
I...

*She suddenly jumps out of character.*







BARTLETT / WALKER

...’m sure I’m not the only one who’s thinking; hang on a minute;

‘I seem to have the knack of pleasing ladies.’

In trousers? With short hair? In public? Was that allowed? Indeed it was. And not just in London – where by 1903 Miss Vesta was slipping £1000 a week into the pockets of her impeccably well-cut and apparently innuendo-proof trousers – beneath which, by the way, she wore male underwear; oh no – it was all the rage across the Atlantic too; oh yes –

‘Meanwhile, in America’

*She swaps her top-hat and evening cane for a straw boater and picks up a walking cane – and swings into a new character – another young man, but brasher and louder.*

## I LOVE THE LADIES



Young Johnny Dunn, was Twenty-one

He liked to dance in each cafe.

He liked the ladies – so they say, that’s why he danced in each cafe.

His daddy’s got, an awful lot, which makes it soft for little Dunn,

When he said ‘Go to work, my son!’,

Johnny said ‘I’m having too much fun...’

*She slips into a cake-walk.*

I love the ladies, I love the ladies, I love to be among the girls.

And when it’s five o’clock and tea is set, I like to have my tea with some brunette.

I love the ladies, I love the ladies, and in the good old Summer-time,

When I’m in swimmin’, I love the women, for they make the swimming so fine.





## THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME

When I'm in London, Paris, or old Vienna, or any other town,  
I feel so homesick, homesick, unless I'm hearing the rustle of a gown.  
I love the ladies, I love the ladies, I love the small ones, tall ones,  
God bless 'em, the world can't twirl around without a beautiful girl,  
The world can't twirl around without a beautiful girl.

'I love the wimmin'... 'I love the ladies' ... 'I'm the Idol  
of the Girls'...I detect a theme emerging.

The girl in this case was one Miss Florenze Tempest –  
who with her sister, Miss Louise Sunshine, performed a  
double-act billed as 'Tempest and Sunshine' – with Lou  
as the Lady and Flo, always, as the Gent. They were  
not a success on the halls – so not a success, in fact, that  
they were forced to seek employment on the legitimate  
stage...

*The hat and cane are regretfully discarded. She picks up soldier  
and sailor hats, and moves back onto the microphone.*

So...just what was it that made a woman in trousers  
so modern, so appealing – and to whom? Was these  
performers' secret that they had a dirty little secret?  
Not at all; there was nothing secret about it – they  
performed in the most respectable of circumstances.  
*(The pianist strikes up an intro.)* Vesta Tilley starred in  
several Royal Command performances (though Queen  
Mary was said to have politely averted the royal eyes  
when the trousers came on stage...) – and when she  
made her farewell performance at the London Coliseum  
in 1920 (having married a man so rich she never needed  
to work again), she topped the bill with the 'patriotic'  
song she had sung throughout the First World War on  
Government Recruiting drives...





BARTLETT / WALKER

### **JOLLY GOOD LUCK TO THE GIRL WHO LOVES A SOLDIER**

*She puts the soldier hat on and salutes.*

Jolly good luck to the girl who loves a soldier

Girls, have you been there?

You know we military men, always do our duty everywhere...

Or, if she had been playing Portsmouth that night –

*She puts the sailor hat on and strikes a nautical pose.*

### **JOLLY GOOD LUCK TO THE GIRL WHO LOVES A SAILOR**

Jolly good luck to the girl who loves a sailor

Real good boys are we.

Girls, if you want to love a sailor you can all love me.

*(With heavy irony.)* – See, no dirt at all... *(Removes sailor hat.)* especially not on the stage of the Royal Opera House, where the hit show of 1913 opened with another lady in trousers – this time impersonating a teenage boy in pyjamas – climbing out of another lady's bed...

*The pianist floats a phrase by Strauss...*

*She sings as if to a female-lover.*

An older woman's bed...

### **OCTAVIAN**

Wie Du warst

Wie Du bist.

Das weiss niemand, das ahnt Keiner...

The boy's name is Octavian, he's seventeen, and those are the opening words of Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*. Of course, in the Opera House, the audience – that'll be



you – could always claim that they didn't know what was going on, because they didn't understand what the lady in trousers was saying – especially when she was in an older woman's bedroom and having some decidedly randy thoughts...as she was once again (*Removing dinner jacket.*) in a show that has rarely left the London stage ever since opening at the Opera House in the summer season of 1814...

*Changing her body language yet again – into that of a gawky, randy teenage. The piano strikes up with some Mozart, and she begins to sing.*

### CHERUBINO

Sospiro e gemo senza voler...

*(As if worried that the audience isn't getting this, she stops – and talks to the pianist.)* – Sorry – sorry – I think they're a bit confused – but since we're not in the Opera House, I think I might take this opportunity to let the Ladies and Gentlemen know exactly what this particular lady in trousers is saying – as Cherubino, in Act Two of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*; what she – I mean he – I mean she – oh you know what I mean – is saying is this:

*(On mike.)* I'm sighing and moaning, although I know I shouldn't...

*(Off mike.)* ...Senza voler. Palpito e tremo, senza saper

*(On mike.)* My heart's beating thirteen to the dozen, and I don't know why...

*(Off mike.)* Non trovo pace, notte ne di, ma pur mi piace...

*(On mike.)* I can't help it – I'm at it night and day. But I like it...

*(Off mike.)* Languir così

BARTLETT / WALKER

*(On mike.)* I like....relaxing. So, ladies, you look like you know what it feels like. Tell me – is this the real thing?

*(Off mike.)* Voi che sapete che cosa e amor

Donne vedete s'io l'ho nel cor

...Of course, the lady in question could always respond to any accusations of impropriety by claiming

*'But that wasn't me singing those words; I was in character!'*

A defence I shall not hesitate to avail myself of should it become necessary...

*(Back on mike.)* Perhaps that's why, in the music hall, where every act was introduced with the singer's name, the songs often began in the third person, with an announcement of the *character's* name – Tom, Dick, Harry; Johnny **X** Charlie **X** Bertie **X** to make sure everyone knew that ***this isn't me*** – I mean, *wasn't her* – singing – and of course every song had its own ... *(Piano flourish as she retrieves dinner jacket.)* ...costume and *(Piano flourish as she removes cigarette from cigarette case.)* ...prop that said – most emphatically – **this isn't me**; I'm just... playing... *(Saucily holding the cigarette erect .)* a part.

Which still begs the question; is this

Suggestion? **X**

*A new pose with each chord...*

Or is it... Provocation? **X**

Is it Substitution...? **X**

*She holds the cigarette jutting out saucily from her trouser-clad groin.*

Or even... *(Putting the cigarette in mouth.)* Identification...

If the performer is a mirror, whose sex – whose sexiness – is 'she' actually reflecting, when 'she' is 'carrying himself' like a 'he'? Well *(Putting on white gloves and*



*talking with the cigarette in her mouth.)...to judge from the rather rancid tone of many of these numbers, 'he' was telling the men in the audience how sexy they were... X while at the same time telling the women in the audience...how sexy they were X ... to the men sitting next to them X ... Listen –*

### **ANGELS WITHOUT WINGS**

The ladies – heaven bless them – now we love them, ev'ry one

We praise them and we toast them o'er our wine.

We laud their many virtues and we sound their many deeds

And call them darling angels so divine.

– But, maybe at the time the little husseys are at home

Pencilling their eyebrows without shame.

Their blushes as divine are ten to one carmine

And still we call them angels all the same –

Angels, angels, angels without wings.

Simple, very simple, very pious little things.

Angels, angels, angels all about.

Like us men, they're angels when they're not found out...

*Getting up from chair.*

Angels, angels, angels without wings.

Simple, very simple, very pious little things.

Angels, angels, angels all about.

Like us men, they're angels when they're not found out.

*Stubs out cigarette.*



– That song was made famous by Miss Hetty King, who after Vesta Tilley was the most famous of the British male impersonators... Hetty King, who married three times, and of whom it was said when she took her act to New York (*On mike.*) ‘Miss King is so real-looking a girl-chap that she might saunter down Fifth Avenue by broad daylight without raising any suspicion of sexual fraud...’ Well that’s alright then... Hetty was still singing that song at the very end of her career, in her eighties... and still saying, in an interview given in 1972, ‘there is nothing more objectionable to me – and I don’t care who I offend by saying it – than a mannish woman...’

Thank you, Hetty.

– Back in the early days, things were very different. I’d like you to now meet a woman called Annie Hindle – ‘Hindle – The Apollo Belvedere of the Vaudeville Stage’ – **X** – note, no ‘Miss’ for her... Back in 1864 Annie was the very first woman to specialise in male impersonation on the halls. Born in Hertfordshire, she first sang in men’s clothes as a joke **X** – then went to America and became a star **X**... (*Striding across stage.*) Annie is reputed to have occasionally worn a moustache and stubble between performances – and is on record as saying that she didn’t care whether her fan mail came addressed to ‘Madam’ or ‘Sir’ **X** Like Hetty, she got through three husbands **X** ...the last of whom was... a wife **X**... Annie was a pioneer, and she sang like one – when she put on her trousers, Annie raised her voice in songs about things that women *really* weren’t supposed to sing about...big things...

(*Gesturing to lights operator; in her butchest voice.*) – Thank you!

*Spotlight comes on. She delivers this number with severe, masculine commitment.*

**DON'T PUT YOUR FOOT ON A MAN WHEN HE'S DOWN**

Society's ways in these curious days  
Need much alteration, I'm sure  
For seldom you'll see that rich folks agree  
With those whom misfortune's made poor.  
Now this must be wrong if there's truth in my song,  
For a man may be worthy, though poor  
Then give him a lift, so he may make shift  
To keep off the wolf from his door.  
Then I give this advice  
Entreating you won't  
On your heel turn away with a frown.  
When a poor fellow needs it,  
Assist him, But don't  
Put your foot on a man when he's down.  
How many good men have again and again,  
Given way 'neath the world's heavy cares?  
For want of a start from a generous heart  
Whose fortune's been greater than theirs.  
And time after time we hear of some crime  
Induced by sad poverty, keen,  
That might have been stayed, had an effort been made  
Before he'd such misery seen.  
Then I give this advice  
Entreating you won't





BARTLETT / WALKER

On your heel turn away with a frown.

When a poor fellow needs it,

Assist him, but don't

Put your foot on a man when he's down.

*(Taking off dinner jacket.)* In 1858 Annie Hindle employed an attractive young woman called Miss Ella Wesner as her dresser *(She holds out jacket as if to dresser.)* ...Ella was a quick learner, it seems, because by 1860 she was treading the boards herself – *(Slipping the jacket back on.)* in a suit. Tall, broad and handsome, Ella was, it seems, a born trouser-wearer; a New York newspaper commented that *(Back on mike.)* 'With her faultless form, and face quite masculine, Nature has liberally endowed her for her specialty', and quoted a female member of the audience saying admiringly, as Ella stepped on stage – 'You wouldn't know'...



– But of course that lady did know – just as you know



That I know

That you know

That we're all in this act together...

...this next number is your chance to prove that, by joining in; from the 'King Song-book' of Miss Ella Wesner, The Mash Idol, I give you that classic tale of thwarted Trouser-love, 'Down by The Old Mill Stream'

## DOWN BY THE OLD MILL STREAM

*Piano intro, during which she fetches a farmer's hat. She sings this number in a comedy rural accent.*

You must know that my uncle is a farmer,

Keeps a large farm in the West.

'Twas there that I met a little charmer



THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME

And many's the time I've caress'd...  
The damsel fair with nut brown hair  
Her equal ne'er was seen,  
And where I met that charmin' little pet  
Was down by the old mill stream....

*She unfurls a sheet with the lyrics of the chorus painted on it,  
and announces:*

– Now there's no need to get tense. I'll be singing the  
first chorus, and then you can be joinin' in next time  
round...

Down by the old mill stream  
There, many happy hours I've seen  
Strolling day by day the time I passed away  
Down by the old mill stream.

Her father was the owner of a dairy  
Her brother worked at the plough  
And while I would roam with dear Mary  
Her mother would go and milk the cow.  
Her father said that we should not wed  
– Which I thought was rather mean.  
As she could not be my wife, she said she'd end her life  
By drowning in the old mill stream...

– **I need your help now...**

Down by the old mill stream – I can't hear you!  
There, many happy hours I've seen

BARTLETT / WALKER

Strolling day by day the time I passed away  
Down by the old mill stream... **not bad.**

The old man laughed at his daughter  
Saying 'I don't believe a word you say'  
But when he saw her struggling in the water  
He exclaimed 'Oh save her, pray!'  
It was too late – she'd met her fate,  
Oh what a dreadful scene.

The old man cried as the neighbours tried  
To pull her out of the old mill stream....  
Down by the old mill stream – **where's it to, then?**

There, many happy hours I've seen  
Strolling day by day the time I passed away  
Down by the old mill stream... **respect now.**  
At last they got her out of the water  
When some of the neighbours said  
'Oh, Brown, you've been the ruin of your daughter,  
For that girl is really...dead.'  
He tore his hair, gave way to despair,  
Ran away, never more was seen  
And now I'm told that the dairy is sold  
That stood by the old mill stream...

*Blowing nose on handkerchief, and unable to join in first two  
lines of chorus, she is so overcome by sentiment...*

Down by the old mill stream  
There, many happy hours I've seen  
Strolling day by day the time I passed away  
Down by the old mill stream.

*(Into mike.)* There you are, you see; not just a sing-a-long; more...a collaboration...

*She clears away the song-sheet.*

In real life – you'll be pleased to hear – the story ended happily; Ella did get the girl. In 1872 she eloped with a notorious New York actress, Miss Josie Mansfield – and spent the next ten years openly living with her in Paris. It was 1917 when Ella made her last appearance as a man – back in the States, and on Broadway. Her last wish was that she should lie in state in the Campbell Funeral Church, on Broadway and 66<sup>th</sup>, in her suit, and then be buried in it. Her last wish – and she got it.

*Farmer's hat back on stand; she picks up a bowler hat.*

*(On mike.)* Ella and Annie both impersonated **men**; by the time First World War was over, things got a bit more circumspect – the impersonators developed a decided taste for the boyish. **X** Facial hair was unknown; **X** clothes were sharply cut and tight-fitting **X** ...and the body beneath them was never a threat. **X** Whatever the excuse was, whether the trousers belonged to *(A different pose for each chord.)* a masher **X** a johnny **X** a toff **X** a bank clerk **X** a telegraph boy **X** – even, on occasion, a fresh-faced curate **X!!** ...the alibi was always *immaturity* – no matter how much he talked about ladies. Which was often...often.

*The piano plays an upbeat intro under.*

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the strangely one-track world of the most popular Christian name amongst trousered alter egos...Here's...Johnny!

BARTLETT / WALKER

## **WHY DID I KISS THAT GIRL**

Bashful Johnny Green  
Just turned seventeen  
Wore his first long pants  
When some friends he knew  
Introduced him to  
Mabel at a dance.  
She was awful nice  
So he kissed her twice  
Then he ran away.  
One week later all the gang heard bashful Johnny say...Oh! —

Why did I kiss that girl?  
Why, oh why, oh why?  
Why did I kiss that girl?  
I could almost cry.  
I'm nervous, so nervous,  
I'm worried and blue  
And if her kiss did that  
What would her huggin' do?  
Ma says that I'm a wreck  
I'll admit, she's right  
Pa says he'll break my neck  
He can't sleep at night.  
They're upset and all because

THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME

I ain't like I used to wuz

Why did I kiss that girl?

Why, oh why, oh why?

Joe and Jack and Jim

All kept after him

Almost ev'ry day.

'Get her on the phone,

See if she's alone,

You'll win her that way.'

Johnny fell again

He kissed her and then

Ran away once more.

When he saw the gang next day, well, he began to roar...Oh! —

Why did I kiss that girl?

Why, oh why, oh why?

Why did I kiss that girl?

I could almost cry.

I'm nervous, so nervous,

I'm worried and blue

And if her kiss did that

What would her huggin' do?

Ma says that I'm a wreck

I'll admit, she's right

Pa says he'll break my neck

BARTLETT / WALKER

He can't sleep at night.

They're upset – it's plain to see,

They don't like this brand new me

Why did I kiss that girl?

Why, oh why, oh why?

Why, oh why, oh why?

– Nobody stays seventeen for long...here's Johnny, a  
year later, up at Oxford, learning to be a *man*...

### **FOLLOWING IN FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS**

To follow in your father's footsteps is a motto for each boy

And following in father's footsteps is a thing I much enjoy

My mother caught me out last evening up the West End on a spree

She said 'Where are you going?'

But I answered 'Don't ask me...'

I'm following in father's footsteps

I'm following the dear old dad.

He's just in front with a fine, big gal,

So I thought I'd have one as well.

I don't know where he's going...

But when he gets there, I'll be glad

I'm following in father's footsteps – yes!

I'm following the dear old dad...

*The pianist keeps the music going under –*

As Oscar Wilde should have said, (*Getting a cigarette out of a cigarette-case.*) to sing one song about becoming like one's father may be accounted a misfortune, but to sing *two* – well, in a show about male impersonators, I'm afraid it's almost impossible to avoid – I mean where else is a girl to get her ideas about masculine behaviour...so, here's Johnny! – again...

### I'M SOWING ALL MY WILD OATS

My dear old father long ago used to say

'Before a boy into a man can grow

His wild oats he is bound to sow'

And, like a good son should, I think father's way

And so before I settle down

I mean to paint the town all red.

The game's rather dear, as the dad's chequebook shows,

But I'm having a real good time, boys,

And I don't care if it snows...

I'm sowing all my wild oats

I'm learning how to be a man

I'm sowing all my wild oats

And stop me no one can

I'm a little bit of hot stuff

What father says is true

I'm sowing all my wild oats... (*Eyeing a woman in the audience.*)

And a bit of someone else's, too...



BARTLETT / WALKER

– I said earlier no one stays young forever...but that doesn't seem to stop the men in these songs from trying. Here's Johnny *several* years later...

*She swaps her cigarette for a cigar – clutches an empty bottle – and ages by about thirty years.*

### HI! WAITER

Lovely woman was made to be loved,  
To be fondled and courted and kissed  
And all those who've never made love to a girl  
Well, they don't know the fun they have missed.  
I'm a fellow who's up to the times,  
Just the boy for a lark or a spree,  
There's a chap that's dead set on the women and wine  
You can bet your old boots that it's me –

Hi! Waiter! A dozen more bottles  
Let's show the ladies a really good spree  
My dad was a banker, so fill 'er up, Jimmy boy,  
Hang the expense – put it all down to me.

*Trips over.*

I'm beginning to think I am tight  
But I think I have room for one, yet  
I'm afraid that cigar was a little too strong,  
So it's back to the old cigarette.  
Now, I feel I'm as good as a king,

THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME

Come along – share a bottle with me

My eyes magnify – there's but one, I know well,

But of waiters, I see sixty three...

*Big instrumental build-up to second chorus; crosses to mike, then, suddenly...*

...Just before we move on, I'd like to say that that's an Ella Wesner song; Ella Wesner, who died with her suit on; how strange and how marvellous it must have been for her, to sing those words –

'And all those who've never made love to a girl – well, they don't know the fun they have missed.'

*Something about that line makes her drift away into a smile...*

Now where was I?

*The piano prompts her with a chord.*

Ah yes...

Eventually, of course, Johnny does get older. But no matter how decrepit he gets, he's still singing the same old song....

*She loses bottle and cigarette, and collects a pipe – she is now an old man.*

**I'VE GOT THE TIME, I'VE GOT THE PLACE**

I'm blue all through

And I'll tell my troubles all to you.

It's all because I have no girly sweet to cheer me

When my weary heart is dreary.

All alone in my home – I'm about as sad as I can be

I've got the time to spare, the place to share,

But not a girly seems to care for me.

BARTLETT / WALKER

I've got the time, I've got the place,  
Will someone kindly introduce me to the girl?  
She needn't be so very pretty – I don't care much for a face,  
And I don't give a jot if her petticoat and things are trimmed with lace.  
She may be tall, she may be small,  
She may be any, any, any kind at all quite frankly –  
Gee – ain't it kind of funny when a fella's got the money  
And the time, and the place,  
But it's gosh darn hard to find the girl...  
...She may be tall, she may be small,  
She may be any, any, any kind at all –  
Yes – ain't it kind of funny when a fella's got the money  
And the time, and the place,  
But it's gosh darn hard to find the girl.

*She stands disconsolately looking from left to right, as if for a girl. Final swig of drink on end of play-out.*

What must it have been like for a woman to grow old as a young man? To put on trousers to go to work every night of your life? When did the applause begin to grate, I wonder...?

*(On mike.)* Ella Shields, third of the great British impersonators, performed this next number – her greatest hit, written for her by her husband – for 39 years. Forced, following a divorce from the aforementioned husband, to stage a come-back tour at the age of seventy three, Ella last sang it on the evening of August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1952, while performing in a holiday camp in Morecambe Bay. Five minutes after the end of the song, she collapsed on the way to her dressing

room, and died that night. But that's not what people remember about her. What they remember, is this song. Ladies and gentlemen I give you; Miss **X** Ella **X** Shields **X**...

### **BURLINGTON BERTIE FROM BOW**

*She collects her top hat and white gloves – then leans against the table during the intro, creating the image of the elderly Ella waiting in the wings.*

I'm Bert – p'rhaps you've heard of me  
Bert, you've had word of me  
Jogging along, hearty and strong,  
Living on plates of fresh air.  
I dress up in fashion and when I am feeling depressed  
I shave from my cuff all the whiskers and fluff,  
Put my hat on and toddle up West...

I'm Burlington Bertie, I rise at Ten Thirty  
And saunter along like a toff.  
I walk down the Strand with my gloves on my hand  
Then I walk down again with them off.  
I'm all airs and graces – correct easy paces,  
Without food so long, I've forgot where my face is  
I'm Bert – Bert – I haven't a shirt  
But my people are well off, you know.  
Nearly everyone knows me, from Smith to Lord Roseb'ry,  
I'm Burlington Bertie – from Bow.

BARTLETT / WALKER

I smile condescendingly  
While they're extending me  
Cheer upon cheer, when I appear  
Captain of my polo team.  
So strict are my people – they're William the Conqueror's strain,  
If they ever knew I'd been talking to you,  
Well, they'd never look at me again...

I'm Burlington Bertie, I rise at Ten Thirty  
Then saunter along Temple Bar.  
As round there I skip, I keep shouting 'Pip, pip!'  
And the darn'd fools think I'm in my car.  
At Rothchild's I swank it – my body, I plank it  
On his front doorstep with *The Mail* for a blanket  
I'm Bert – Bert, and Rothchild was hurt  
He said, 'You can't sleep there!' I said 'Oh?'  
He said 'I'm Rothchild, sonny', I said  
'That's damn funny – I'm Burlington Bertie from Bow.'

*Takes monocle from inside jacket pocket.*

My pose, though ironical  
Shows that my monocle  
Holds up my face – keeps it in place,  
Stops it from slipping away.  
Cigars – I smoke thousands,  
I usually deal in the Strand,

But you've got to take care when you're getting them there  
Or some idiot will stand on your hand...

*Stops.*

– At this point, on the third of August 1952, Ella forgot her words... She stopped, looked at the audience, paused and said

'I used to be Burlington Bertie, you know'.

And then...she carried on.

...I am Burlington Bertie, I rise at Ten Thirty  
And Buckingham Palace I view  
I stand in the yard while they're changing the guard  
And the King shouts across 'Toodle-oo!'  
The Prince of Wales' brother – along with some other –  
Pats me on the back and says 'Come and see mother'  
I'm Bert – Bert – and royalty's hurt  
They once asked me to dine, I said 'No!  
I've just had a banana with Lady Diana,  
I'm Burlington Bertie – from Bow!'

*She waves, and turns upstage... The music turns into a haunting lament, then stops. She walks slowly back to the mike, laying down the hat and gloves with sadness and respect.*

Ella worked till the bitter end – as did Hetty King – with, in her case, the emphasis definitely on the bitter. Right at the end of her career, at the age of eighty, she was still defending herself against accusations that her work – and therefore she – was unwomanly.

'Some people would ask whether she' – Hetty often referred to herself in the press in the third person –

‘was masculine offstage. Oh well, one can’t prevent what people think... I did get letters, terrible letters, declaring that they can’t eat or sleep or are going to kill themselves for love. Sickening. What can one say? It was all just a performance...’

Thanky you Hetty...

And she wasn’t the only one (*Taking the mike off its stand, and beginning to pace the stage.*) In 1930s Harlem the six foot cross-dressing cabaret queen and out bull-dagger Gladys Bentley was as famous for her white satin tuxedo, her matching white topper and her girlfriends as she was for her singing of the blues. But in 1956, Gladys – who at the height of her career had Bea Lillie, Tallulah Bankhead and the young, as-yet unknown Joan Crawford calling round at her Fifth Avenue apartment after the show – was forced to publish a public recantation. Under the headline ‘I am a woman again’, she detailed how treatment with female hormones had allowed her to turn her back on

‘That fantasy world of twinkling bright lights in which some of us dreamed of finding a way of life different from that approved of by society’

And to have

‘Found happiness in the prospect of married love at last.’

Well, that may have been what she said in print; what she sang – with some of the most notorious ladies of New York at her magnificent feet...was this...

### **BABY, WON'T YOU PLEASE COME HOME**

I've got the blues – I feel so lonely

I'd give the world if I could only make you understand

That really would be grand.

THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME

I'm gonna telephone my baby  
Ask her – won't you please come home?  
'Cos when she's gone I worry all night long.

Baby, won't you please come home?  
Baby, won't you please come home?  
I have tried, in vain, never more to call your name.  
When you left you broke my heart  
That will never make us part.  
Every hour of the day you will hear me say  
Baby, won't you please come home?...

*Stands, takes a drink during instrumental.*

...When you left you broke my heart  
That will never make us part.  
Every hour of the day you will hear me say  
Baby, won't you please come home?  
Baby, won't you please come home?

*She puts the mike back on its stand.*

Following the publication of that article, Gladys did get work again – albeit as a novelty act on Groucho Marx's TV variety show – and in a dress. She also did manage to get married, first to a sailor, then to a theatrical columnist...hmmnnn...well, she wasn't the first, and she won't be the last.

*She steps away from the mike.*

You'll be pleased to hear that not everyone gave up their trousers to get married... In June 1886, Annie



Hindle tied the knot with her dresser, Miss Annie Ryan – after show, in a hotel room – but in front of a minister. The groom wore a dress suit; the bride a dress – and the best man was a female impersonator. When the news got out, the minister in question was tracked down by a journalist from *The New York Sun*, to whom he gave an interview in which he said –

‘I know all the circumstances. The groom gave me her – I mean his – name as Charles Hindle, and he assured me that he was a man. I had no other course to pursue. The bride is a sensible girl, and she is of age. I believe they love each other, and that they will be happy.’

I hope they were. Was it her wife, I wonder, that Annie was privately thinking of, when she stepped out on stage in one of the severely tailored Civil War uniforms that her many female fans so much admired, and sang this...?

*With military fervour.*

### THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME

The hour was sad I left the maid  
A lingering farewell taking  
Her sighs and tears my steps delayed  
I thought her heart was breaking.  
In hurried words her name I blessed  
I breathed the vows that bind me  
And to my heart in anguish pressed  
The girl I left behind me.

Then forth I strode to battle fierce

THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME

To win a name in story  
And there when dawned the sun of day  
There dawned our day of glory.  
As blazed the noon on mountain's height  
Therein the post assigned me  
I shared the glory of that fight  
Sweet girl I left behind me.

Surrounded now by friends and kin  
Who smile, weep and caress me  
I watch the tears of joy that fall  
As each dear one does kiss me.

But there is one who moves my soul  
My tears now almost blind me  
God grant I'll be obliged no more  
To leave my girl behind me...  
...God grant I'll be obliged no more  
To leave my girl behind me

Annie's story has a strange last chapter. So far as we know, she never did leave her girl behind her – but her marriage did cost her her career. Her audience, having read that she'd signed the marriage register as 'Charles', started to think that they'd been fooled – that the she they'd been applauding actually *was* a he, instead of just looking like one – and so...they no longer believed in her act. By appearing as her true self, Annie had become a fraud...



BARTLETT / WALKER

What people wanted from these women, it seems, was  
not just Glamour...

**X**

And Skill

**X**

But also...Illusion...or, as I like to call it; *Possibility*.

**X...**

I'd like to end the show with perhaps the most famous  
of these songs, sung by certainly the most famous of  
these ladies. 'After The Ball' was written by Charles K  
Harris – the first man to ever earn a million dollars in  
royalties – and sung by Miss...Vesta...Tilley.

*The lights turn midnight blue, and she is caught in a spotlight  
– a Sickert painting come to life.*



## **AFTER THE BALL**



A little maiden climbed an old man's knee  
Begged for a story – 'Do, uncle, please!  
Why are you single? Why live alone?  
Have you no babies? Have you no home?'  
I had a sweetheart, years, years ago –  
Where she is now, pet, you will soon know  
List to the story, I'll tell it all  
I believed her faithless after the ball.

After the ball is over

After the break of morn



THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME

After the dancers' leaving  
After the stars are gone,  
Many a heart is aching  
If you could read them all  
Many the hopes that have vanished  
After the ball.

Bright lights were flashing in the grand ballroom  
Softly the music playing sweet tunes  
There came my sweetheart – my love, my own  
'I wish some water – leave me alone.'  
When I returned, dear, there stood a man  
Kissing my sweetheart as lovers can  
Down fell the glass, pet, broken, that's all  
Just as my heart was after the ball.

After the ball is over  
After the break of morn  
After the dancers' leaving  
After the stars are gone,  
Many a heart is aching  
If you could read them all  
Many the hopes that have vanished  
After the ball.

BARTLETT / WALKER

Long years have passed, child, I never wed  
True to my lost love, though she is dead  
She tried to tell me – tried to explain  
I would not listen; pleadings were vain.  
One day a letter came from that man  
He was her brother, the letter ran –  
That's why I'm lonely, no home at all  
I broke her heart, pet, after the ball...

*Piano chords – a chiming clock – between the next words.*

Annie... X ...Ella... X ...Hetty... X ...Gladys... X ...Vesta...  
X ... and all the others...thank you –

After the ball is over  
After the break of morn  
After the dancers' leaving  
After the stars are gone,  
Many a heart is aching  
If you could read them all  
Many the hopes that have vanished  
After the ball.

Thank you, and goodnight.

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## PAT KIRKWOOD IS ANGRY

By Jessica Walker

PIANO INTRO AND OFFSTAGE VOICE ON MIC (HER): *LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, WILL YOU PLEASE PUT YOUR HANDS TOGETHER FOR THE QUEEN OF THE WEST END, FOR THE ONE, THE ONLY, THE ANGRY....MISS PAT KIRKWOOD.*

SPOTLIGHT COMES UP ANTICIPATING HER ENTRANCE AT THE WINGS STAGE RIGHT.

PIANO CONTINUES BUILDING UP ENTRANCE MUSIC. SHE FINALLY COMES ON AND STRIDES CENTRE STAGE TO THE MIC STAND. PIANO KEEPS PLAYING

*Pat is dressed glamorously, and in high heels. As the drama continues, she ages. She removes her shoes, swapping them for flatter ones, and eventually for slippers, until by the end she is an old lady.*

*An easel at the side of the stage has a date on it: 1921*

Pat: (brisk. Matter-of-fact. To the audience) On the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 1921 I was born....(Jim plays first line of born in a trunk)...not in a trunk in the Princess Theatre, but in the Seedly Terrace nursing home, Pendleton – or Salford, if you must. Mother was distressed – she had hoped for a boy, so when she got her wish with Brian three years later, that was the end of me. At twelve years old I said to her ‘Mother, do you think I’m pretty’, and she looked at me in a concentrated sort of way and replied, ‘No, Pat, I’m afraid not; you’re irredeemably plain’. I shaved my eyebrows off later that evening with father’s safety razor. They never grew back and I’ve had to draw a line ever since. It was only when I started to sing that mother began to take an interest. She had always wanted to go onstage herself, but if she couldn’t, then I was the next best thing. The schoolgirl songstress, they called me when I debuted at the Salford Hippodrome aged 15. (Jim starts to play The Good Ship Lollipop. She launches into a routine from childhood, including moves)

*On the good ship lollipop it’s a sweet trip to the candy shop*

*Where bon-bons play, on the sunny beach of peppermint bay (segue into Goody Goody)*

*So you met someone who set you back on your heels - goody, goody*

*You met someone and now you know how it feels - goody, goody*

*You gave him your heart too, just as I gave mine to you  
 And he broke it in little pieces, now how do you do  
 You lie awake just singing the blues all night - goody, goody  
 And you think that love's a barrel of dynamite  
 Hooray and hallelujah, you had it coming to y'a  
 Goody goody for him, goody goody for me  
 I hope your satisfied you rascal you, I hope your satisfied 'cause you got yours (segue into  
 Sunny side of the Street)*

*Grab your coat and get your hat, leave your worries on the doorstep. Life can be so sweet on  
 the sunny side of the street*

*Can't you hear the pitter pat, and that happy tune is your step, life can be complete on the  
 sunny side of the street. (Big ending)*

The Hippodrome led to a big variety tour and my first film – Save a Little Sunshine, made when I was sixteen, and which, for the purposes of this evening's entertainment, is probably worth only a medley.

*Save a little sunshine while you may*

*Through the Summer put away some sunshine*

*Deep in your heart*

*Save a little sunshine while it's clear*

*There's a time in every year when Sunshine*

*Has to be found*

*Save it up from April to September*

*And you'll never be without it in December*

*Save a little sunshine while you may*

*Brighten up each wintery day*

*Bring sunshine out of your heart...*

*...into Faites lui mes aveux*



*Lovely flowers be kind and speak for me*

*Will you bring her a greeting*

*From a heart fondly beating*

*Say my heart ever true will speak through you*

*Will you give her my love and speak for me*

*As her hands fondly hold you*

*Tell her all I have told you*

*That I send with my love a tender kiss*

After that film I never sang above the stave again. The only positive about *Save a Little Sunshine* was that I got to meet the actor and comedian Max Wall. When he kissed me full on the mouth for the first time I actually thought my legs would give way. Hard to imagine it now; I can only see him in the black wig and the wrinkled tights, but back then he was quite the lady's man. What some people will do to earn a living...

*Jim puts up 1939*

1939. I was 17 and I made my second picture, *Come on George*, with the great George Formby. What a cretinous little creature he was, and his wife, Beryl wasn't much better. She was so jealous of me, she wouldn't allow me to sing a single song; nor could I be seen in the same frame as George until the last shot of the film - even though we were meant to be sweethearts! It's true. As if this wasn't sabotage enough, she gave the hairdresser on set a backhander to cut all my hair off. Started out with tresses down to here and ended up looking like a failed audition for Joan of Arc. How she could have thought I'd waste a glance on George, I'll never know, because even if he'd been the most handsome man on earth I'd not have been interested at that time; I'd just fallen head over heels with John Lister, the man who was to become my first husband. (piano starts playing *Oh Johnny, Oh...*). Fifteen years my senior, charismatic, witty.....

*All the girls are crazy 'bout a certain little lad*

*Although he's very, very bad,*

*He could be oh so good when he wanted to.*

*Bad or good he understood 'bout love and other things,*

*For every girl in town followed him around, just to hold his hand and sing:*

*Oh Johnny, oh Johnny, how you can love.*

*Oh Johnny, oh Johnny, heavens above.*

*You make my sad heart jump with joy*

*And when you're near I just can't sit still a minute, I'm so*

*Oh, Johnny, oh Johnny, please tell me dear*

*What makes me love you so*

*You're not handsome it's true, but when I look at you,*

*I just oh Johnny, oh Johnny oh....*

We were married at the Actor's church in Blackpool. I was on a short break there with mother, before starting my next show, *Top of the World*, and John followed us there. I should have known he was no good when he tried to pass off my paste engagement ring as diamonds, but he told me he was mis-sold it.

*...Oh, Johnny, oh Johnny, please tell me dear*

*What makes me love you so*

*You're not handsome it's true, but when I look at you,*

*I just oh Johnny, oh Johnny oh....*

Neither of my parents attended the wedding. I walked down the aisle alone, wearing a cheap grey suit and hat, which was all I'd time to buy... I was 19 years old.

On the tour I'd only ever lived with mother. She gave me pocket money - I'd never so much as bought a loaf of bread on my own, let alone been told anything about men. I carried on believing for years that babies were dead until they took their first breath outside the womb. John took control of everything. He said I shouldn't worry myself about financial matters... and I, like a good wife, did as I was told.

*SIRENS*

Back to 1939, and my starring role in the west end revue Black Velvet. It's the first show to open in the blackout and I'm declared Britain's first wartime star on the cover of Picture Post. The bombs never bothered me. (Jim starts playing Crash, bang, I want to go home) Some nights I'm practically the only one left in the theatre, belting out my numbers as cast and audience alike run for cover...

*Where are the lights of London town?*

*Somebody's gone and turned them down*

*Turned them off I ought to say – everybody's lost their way.*

*Oh, what a great big blackout, how can I make my track out?*

*How can I pick my shack out?*

*Crash! Bang! I want to go home.*

*Stumbling along the highway, dodging along some byway.*

*I never can find my way*

*Crash! Bang! I want to go home.*

*I collided with a tailor, a soldier, a sailor*

*If I get home in safety, I shall never want to roam*

*Join in the blackout ditty, somebody please take pity*

*Light up the great big city – Crash! Bang, I want to go home.*

*Oh what a great big blackout (repeat)*

*Groping along the pavement*

*They've pushed me off the pavement*

*I've lost the blinking pavement*

*Crash, bang, I want to go home*

*I've bumped into a beacon, a bishop, a deacon*

*I've crashed into a policeman outside the Hippodrome*

*Join in the blackout ditty*

*Somebody please take pity*

*Light up the great big city*

*Crash, bang, I want to go home.*

**GESTURE FOR LIGHT**

That wasn't the song I became known for in the revue (Jim starts playing My Heart Belongs to Daddy). Throughout my career I've always been asked for My Heart Belongs to Daddy, even though I can't have sung more than two lines of it in the show. I never liked the song, particularly, and it became a positive embarrassment later in life when the daddy would have had to have been about 105 for the song to make sense. I have no intention of singing it now.

(piano peters out)

It was mother who informed me that John had set up house with a barmaid in Croydon. I'd been away on an ENSA tour: singing to the troops in some godforsaken field in the middle of nowhere, stilettos sinking further into the mud with every note. I think she actually took pleasure in telling me. The truth is, ladies and gentlemen: I was not very successful back then...in the bedroom department – it all seemed like so much mess and fuss, and I don't know, I'm sure the barmaid was more fun than me. The trouble was, John had not only stolen my heart, but he'd stolen all my money too.

*In me you see a lonely girl*

*Though certainly not the only girl*

*Whose love life is as cold as driven snow*

*I can't explain why passion chills me so*

*I only know –*

*I want to find my kind of man*

*My heart has designed my kind of man*

*He may be – a gay hussar*

7

*A movie star, a gentleman of renown*

*But when we meet I'll never let him down*

*I want to find my kind of man*

*And I shall do the best I can*

*Not to meet or mate or marry*

*Tom, Dick or Harry*

*Til I find my kind of man*

*I want to find my kind of man*

*I've never designed my kind of man*

*He may be a copper's nark*

*A city clerk*

*Or even a gigolo*

*But when we meet I'll never let him go*

*I want to find my kind of man*

*And I shall do the best I can*

*Not to fall for any stinker*

*Hook, line and sinker*

*Til I find my kind of man*

He came and found me again - decades later when I was married to Peter, husband number four, and living in Yorkshire. I insisted that Peter leave us alone together. I knew John must need money, and I didn't want him to suffer the humiliation of asking for it in front of my husband. He took what he came for, and went on his way.

(change of mood)

When I had the money to give, I was always happy to give it, but I was not so thrilled about being abandoned by John at the tender age of 24, and having to take a season in panto to earn a regular wage. My first review for Dandini in Cinderella: 'Pat Kirkwood was an adequate Dandini' - it could only get better. In the end I became the most famous principal boy in Britain, playing them well into my 50s. 'The eighth wonder of the world,' the critic Kenneth Tynan called my legs, (she lifts her dress) although now when I look at them they're more reminiscent of number six, the Colossus of Rhodes. Not sure what happened there. One of my most successful boys was Prince Rupert of Truly Rural in Humpty Dumpty. Appearing alongside me in the 1948 version at the London Casino was none other than the thirteen year old sensation Julie Andrews – I was the leggy prince...she was the egg.

(I put 1945 up on the board and Jim starts playing Love on a Greyhound Bus)

*Bought a ticket the other night*

*The union station was lit up bright*

*The crowd was shoving with all its might*

*But we all settled down for a trip on a Greyhound bus*

*That's us, heading west on a Greyhound bus...*

1945. Twenty four hours after VE day, mother and I are on a plane to Los Angeles. I'd been offered a 7 picture contract with MGM, and there was no way mother dearest was going to miss out on that. Hollywood. Our first night there, the head of MGM, Mr Louis B Mayer, throws a party for me and asks me to dance. 'You're only dancing with me because I'm Louis B Mayer', he says. I says 'I'm dancing with you because you asked me.' Frank Sinatra comes up to me and slings an arm over my shoulder, telling me 'All you need to know about this town is that the guys are bums and the gals are tarts.'...

*The Holland tunnel was open wide*

*We rode along underneath the tide*

*We found ourselves on the Jersey side*

*What a glorious time for a trip on a Greyhound bus*

*No fuss, heading west on a Greyhound bus*

...Van Johnson was there, that night, too. He was to be the leading man on my first film - No Leave, No Love. He was nice enough – the number one box office draw at the time, but in truth only because everyone else had been away fighting. They wouldn't have him - he had a metal plate in his head. 'Don't worry', he says, 'this picture is going to be a real stinker, so we may as well have a few laughs and forget it.'...

*...Stop for hotdog and soda pop*

*Ask the driver, how long 'til we make another stop...*

... It was alright for him - he was a massive star, but no-one even knew who I was, Stateside. This was my big chance, but he was quite right about the film; there was no plot to speak of, and the script was dreadful. 'Thank you from the heart of my bottom'...it was littered with lines like that. Then there was the ongoing problem of Van's affair with the actor Keenan Wynn. MGM got so jittery about that they forced Keenan to divorce his wife Eve Abbott, and then made Van marry her the day after the divorce came through. How that was a good plan I can't begin to fathom...

*Soon the sun disappeared from view*

*The stars came out like they always do*

*Then I cuddled up close to you*

*And we both fell in love on a trip on a greyhound bus*

*That's us, in love on a greyhound bus*

...The studio really could control your life. I was put on thyroid pills because they said I was fat. I wasn't fat - I had the measurements of Lana Turner, and she was hardly Bessie Bunter; but the pills worked alright. I was under six stone when I was admitted to the psychiatric clinic, soon after filming finished. Apparently I'd tried to jump out of the car on the way there, but I don't remember it...

*Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania,*

*Wheeler and West Virginia*

*Cleveland, Columbus, Ohio, and Indianapolis*

*Indiana...*

*Then we had a slight delay...(piano stops)*

...I've forgotten almost the whole episode - the electric shock treatment took care of that. My one clear memory of the hospital was the day that Jesus appeared. I'd been refusing food and barely sleeping for weeks until one tea-time, there he was at the foot of my bed. Well, I'd never been religious, so you can imagine how surprised I was. The whole room became engulfed with flames; he took my hand and said 'walk with me'. I did as he commanded and sort of floated with him across the flames, until all of a sudden water started streaming around us, putting out the fire, cooling us - so now, not only were my feet burnt to a metaphorical crisp but I was soaked through to boot...miraculously, I started eating again later that day. That vision of Christ absolutely cemented my view that you'd have to be mad to be religious, because I never saw him again until I was in the nursing home and he told me to stop eating. I did as I was told, then, too...

*...Then we had a slight delay*

*When the driver mistook Illinois for Iowa...*

*A Texas storm made us hesitate*

*A bridge washed out and we had to wait*

*We'd be happy in any state*

*Cos we both fell in love on a trip on a greyhound bus*

*That's us, in love on a greyhound bus*

...After eight months in the sanatorium I couldn't have got hired as a street sweeper in Hollywood, let alone as a leading lady. My seven year contract with MGM was torn up and thrown away.

*...Oh, wonders never, never cease,*

*Got to Reno, found the justice of the peace*

*On that very day we were wed*

*Lots of happiness straight ahead*

*No Niagara falls, but instead*

*We'll take our honeymoon*



*Our honeymoon*

*We'll take our honeymoon on a trip on a greyhound bus*

I had no option but to return home to try and find work. Unfortunately mother had gone off the rails with one of her young men, and I had quite a time getting her to come back to Britain with me - had the money not dried up, I'm sure she would have stayed. I found out much later that the writer of No Leave, No Love was - how shall I put it- involved with Joan Crawford, and she had pushed the studio to get it made; so in effect, my career in Hollywood was destroyed by the whim of Joan Crawford's fanny. I wonder how many people could say that...

*1948 ON THE BOARD*

Little more than two years after setting off for the U.S I was back in Britain, back in one piece, more-or-less, and starring in the hugely successful revue, Starlight Roof at the London Hippodrome...

*There was a lady went down to Rio*

*Her name was Cleopatra Brown – the most romantic girl in town*

*She found the boys back home a bore, she longed to travel and explore*

*The day that Cleo went down to Rio*

*She looked around to find a beau, a sud-americano Joe*

*She wanted sweet romantic bliss, and yet the net result was this:*

*When those Latin Joes looked at Cleo Brown you may well suppose how they went to town*

*So no matter what was the time of day you were bound to hear her say:*

*Hold it Joe, hold it, Joe*

*Take it easy and don't let go x2*

*I want to be treated with respect*

*I don't want to have my hairdo wrecked*

*I'm mad about moonlight and guitars*

*Don't want to be chased round cocktail bars*

*Hold it Joe etc...*

*Requiring a little change of scene*

*She travelled down South to Argentine*

*The fellas were waiting at the dock*

*Caramba they chased her round the block*

*Hold it Joe...*

*They scared her so much she thought she'd fly*

*She got on a plane to Paraguay*

*The pilot was tall and dark and mean*

*So Cleo went into her routine*

*Hold it Joe...*

*In Venezuela she said no*

*In Chile she found it touch and go*

*Whenever she'd walk in some cafe*

*The band would get up and start to play*

*Hold it Joe...*

Julie Andrews was in that one, too. She got about a bit. I also had a new man in my life - Baron, the court photographer, although little was I to know what a bad choice he would turn out to be. One night after the show, who should he turn up with outside my dressing room – none other than HRH the Duke of Edinburgh. Mother and I had been chatting away, as usual, and there's a knock on the door. I open it and a head peers round – it's him, Prince Philip, just at the moment mother flushes the chain of the dressing room lavatory and emerges un-tucking her skirt from her tights. Fortunately the two men are inebriated– otherwise I'd never have got over the embarrassment. The Duke refuses to leave my dressing room until I agree to accompany them to dinner at Les Ambassadeurs, which I'm hardly in a position to refuse. He is amusing and flirtatious at supper, and I'll admit, I enjoy his attentions. After supper in the Milroy nightclub upstairs we dance cheek to cheek for several numbers in a row. I've had a little to drink, I'm flattered, and high on my own success, I suppose. It's so late by the time we leave the club we go straight to Baron's flat for a dawn breakfast– well you don't have to be a genius to work out what the press thought of that when they got hold of it.

Without doubt that one night altered the course of my life. A single act of youthful foolishness became a national scandal in which even King George the 6<sup>th</sup> got involved, voicing his outrage at the Duke's behaviour and what he saw as his daughter's humiliation. The then princess Elizabeth was eight months pregnant with Prince Charles at the time – it made me look like a... well, like a whore, quite frankly. 'The Prince and Showgirl'. 'The Duke of Edinburgh buys his showgirl mistress a white Roll Royce'. No matter how much I denied it, nobody would believe that my version of events was the true one.

My supposed affair with the Duke haunted me for the rest of my career; long after everyone had forgotten about me it was the one thing that could jolt their memory. (*Piano starts playing Just One of Those Things*). Pat Kirkwood – Oh yes, wasn't she that showgirl who slept with Prince Phillip? I would hereby like to state categorically and definitively that I was not a showgirl – a showgirl is a member of the chorus and I was never in the chorus in my life.

*It was just one of those things*

*Just one of those crazy flings*

*One of those bells that now and then rings*

*Just one of those things.*

*It was just one of those nights*

*Just one of those fabulous flights*

*A trip to the moon on gossamer wings*

*Just one of those things*

*If we thought a bit of the end of it*

*When we started painting the town*

*We'd have been aware that our ...*

(Stops the piano) I've had enough of that one now. Is it time for another year yet?

...The duke wrote to me years later, when I tried to get the palace to exonerate me. They wouldn't – it wasn't palace policy, but he did apologise for the situation I was in. I must still have those letters somewhere, but I'm not allowed to show them to anyone. Not until we're both dead – and he seems practically immortal. At any rate, what's the point of publishing them posthumously? It's hardly going to help my career then, is it?

I wondered if Mr Coward wrote me the part of gangster's moll, Pinky LeRoy, in *Ace of Clubs* partly to capitalise on my new bad-girl image. He certainly wrote it in a hurry, if the quality of the songs was anything to go by. The first time he plays me my numbers I put on my most serene smile and say 'They're lovely, Noel, I'll do it', but, oh dear, they were second rate. My biggest number, *Chase me Charlie*, was about a cat making love to another cat. It's true. (Looks over to Jim). Medley.

*When it's late and the world is sleeping*

*Our little black cat – no bigger than that*

*Has a date which she's keen on keeping*

*No use dissuading her*

*She's serenading her beau*

*In the garden below*

*She sings 'oh won't you*

*Chase me Charlie, chase me Charlie*

*Over the garden wall*

*I'd like to wander for miles and miles*

*Wreathed in smiles*

*Out on the tiles with you*

*Chase me Charlie, chase me Charlie*

*Don't be afraid to fall*

*Love in the moonlight can be sublime*

*Now's the time, Charlie I'm*

*Waiting for you if you'll only climb*

*Over the garden wall...*

*...Josephine, Josephine from the first was rather chic*

*As a tot she would trot*

*Through the island of Martinique*

*Her fortune was told by an aged crone*

*Who prophesied fame and romance*

*And who hissed in her ear the outrageous idea*

*That she'd also be Empress of France*

*Josephine, Josephine*

*Had with men a set routine*

*And the people who thought her technique was self-taught*

*Didn't know Josephine...*

*...(A different sky, new worlds to gaze upon*

*The strange excitement of an unfamiliar shore*

*One more goodbye – one more illusion gone*

*Just cut your losses and begin once more)*

*When the storm clouds are riding through a winter sky*

*Sail away, sail away*

*When the love-light is fading in your sweetheart's eye*

*Sail away, sail away*

*When you feel your song is orchestrated wrong*

*Why should you prolong your stay?*

*When the wind and weather blow your dreams sky high*

*Sail away, sail away, sail away*

My love interest in the play was Noel's man friend, Graham Payn, whose voice bore a striking resemblance to a wailing cat, now I come to think of it. Noel wanted him to have top billing, but I put a stop to that before rehearsals even started. Pat Kirkwood on the left, thank you very much. It must have riled Noel, because on the first day of production he took one look at me and said

'What happened to your hair? You look like the MGM lion.' His mood never improved throughout the rehearsal period – I think in fact because he knew the show wasn't his best. During one scene in which I seemed to hover at the side of the stage, doing absolutely nothing for hours, I eventually piped up 'Noel, what should I be doing for all of this time? I feel at a loss.'

'Don't worry' he said. 'We're having a little white wheelbarrow made that you can wheel up and down, up and down for the whole scene.' That was the same day he told the conductor, Mantovani, that he was making his music sound like piddling on a flannel. In the end, Noel was dreadfully booed on the first night in London. He was out of favour, you see. Could do no right, having been able to do no wrong for so many years. There was almost a delight in his downfall, as there is, sometimes, it seems, with the British public, and I should know. As for me, I'd all but cemented my tainted profile by starring in a flop, but the thing was, audience, I couldn't have cared less at that point if I never worked again. Just before Ace of Clubs began, I had become engaged again. His name - Spiro de Spero Gabriele – Sparky to me – a 44 year old ship owner, already retired. People say you can know instantly, and I did. I knew I wanted him to be my husband from the day we met. Living in the real world, as he had, he found my theatre antics all highly amusing and rather silly, so when I came home at the end of a long day with Noel, complaining about this and that, there was Sparky, laughing at it all; wrapping his arms around me, his great hands radiating warmth across my back, and everything else – especially theatre – became insignificant. It was the first time in my life I'd not felt alone. The most beautiful time. The most beautiful man. (Jim starts playing)

*You've done something to my heart*

*Some strange something to my heart*

*When we meet, even in the street*

*I feel you in the best of my heart*

*And every moment I'm with you*

*Holds a thrill I never knew*

*While you're there, there's magic in the air*

*That's never there whenever we're apart*

*For you've done something, something to my heart*

We married two years later, after I'd paid off John to get him to divorce me. Even then he did the dirty – I discovered when the document came through he'd cited my desertion as the cause of the split. Still, Sparky and I were together, and I'd finally got mother to understand that I really didn't need her living with me anymore.

I went back on the road, into Variety. Aside from being with Sparky, I was never happier than on a stage alone in front of an audience. All this acting lark in plays, I didn't feel up to it. It was tiresome, worrying that someone might upstage me from the footlights at any moment - as June Whitfield, my understudy, did in *Ace of Clubs*. Her one and only line – 'Hist, she approaches', uttered moments before my first scene, reduced the audience to hysterics on a nightly basis, and I was obliged to wait at least a minute before I could make my entrance....No, It was the audience – you - I loved.

*In my heart you lit a flame*

*Since we met it's not the same*

*Since that fleeting yet fateful meeting*

*I keep repeating your name*

*Strange enchantment when you're with me*

*Desolation when you go*

*Is it love that you have brought me*

*Seems to me it must be so*

*You've done something to my heart*

*Some strange something to my heart*

*When we meet, even in the street*

*I feel you in the beat of my heart*

*And every moment I'm with you*

*Holds a thrill I never knew*



*While you're there, there's magic in the air*

*That's never there whenever we're apart*

*For you've done something, something to my heart*

(Jim changes date to 1954)

The Christmas of 1953 we had an unexpected visitor – my father. Now I'm aware that I may not have mentioned a father, and that's because he didn't figure largely in my life. Mother was the dominant force - from the age of 16 she and I were on tour. Sometimes years passed without me going home to dad, but whenever we were reunited, he was kind to me, and not hurtful, as mother frequently was. He arrived on the 20<sup>th</sup> December, but later that same evening, he fell ill, quickly worsening. We called the doctor out the next day, who said it was bronchitis, so I phoned mother, but she wasn't home. By the next morning it was too late. I was with him when he went - I heard the death rattle as I held his hand, telling him it was going to be alright. His final words - 'Where's mother?'

I'd not seen death before. A month later, on January 29<sup>th</sup>, 1954, mother and I were sitting in the front room and Sparky was standing, leaning against the mantelpiece. He was about to wind up an old clock that wasn't working properly. I said not to bother because I'd grown fond of thinking it was 11.30 all the time in the living room. My comment made him laugh, I remember – he looked at his watch, adjusted the hands on the clock to the right time. 2.38pm, then rubbed his hands together and said 'come on ladies...' He never finished his sentence. Before I could blink, he was slumped down in front of us, his head in the grate. 'The fire!' I shouted, because you see I was worried that his face was near the flames, but never thinking for a minute that he was...well not thinking at all, because you don't... I pulled him round away from the hearth, and it was only then, as I turned his face towards me and saw his eyes, staring blankly, that I knew he was gone. I knew it, because I'd seen exactly the same look on my father's face only a few weeks earlier; I knew it, but I didn't believe it. He still had his sun tan, he looked so well...

*There's no need to tell me*

*I know that it's ended*

*The last words are spoken*

*There's only goodbye*

*Though now it's too late*

*And you'll never return dear*

*My heart is still saying with a ghost of a sigh...*

*So little time to do all we meant to do*

*Say what we meant to say – so little time*

*No matter my love how we schemed and we planned.*

*These few little hours seemed to run through our fingers like sand.*

*When you are gone I will always remember how tonight*

*We watched the clock with the pitiless chime.*

*Our love was all Summer, and Summer is gone with September.*

*So much to say, so much to do*

*So little time, so little time.*

We'd been married two years... I was persuaded to go on that night as Peter Pan. I got through right up until the point I had to say 'to die will be an awfully big adventure'....

A few months after Sparky's death I starred in a television drama about the music hall performer Marie Lloyd, called *Our Marie*. It was such a success I tried to come up with other projects that might work well for me on the box. I know, I thought, how about a musical version of *Pygmalion*? When I took my proposal to the impresario Jack Hylton, he said it was the worst idea he'd ever heard. Expect he was right...

Failing to get that one off the ground, I was, never-the-less, asked by the BBC to star in my own television series – *The Pat Kirkwood Show*. The start of a long career in television, I hoped, but to be honest with you, I wasn't thinking very clearly at that time...just getting through the days...and it wasn't until I watched the darn thing back I realised how tasteless the programme looked. My first song was called 'The rest of my married life' and during the next, 'Little things mean a lot', the camera zoomed in on me fiddling with my wedding ring, which, of course, I still

wore. There were audience complaints – apparently people didn't like to be reminded of real life when they were being entertained – and the show was axed. At the time it didn't feel too worrisome – I'd been asked to appear in Las Vegas with Val Parnell's London Palladium show. Vegas led to an audition for the Rosalind Russell part in Wonderful Town, which was transferring from Broadway into the West End. Now this part was a departure for me – my character Ruth, was meant to be plain. Having worried about it for some time I decided to accept, but on the understanding that I was only prepared to *think* plain rather than actually to *be* plain.

*Why oh why oh why-oh*

*Why did I ever leave Ohio?*

*Why did i wander to find what lies yonder*

*When life was so cosy at home?*

It's towards the end of the run of Wonderful Town I meet the actor and writer Hubert Gregg, who is to become my husband of the next twenty years. I don't want you to think badly of me - something in me had died alongside Sparky's death, but I was lonely, and Hubert was a charmer; I fell for him – in a different way to how I loved Sparky. Hubert whipped up a storm around him, he was bursting with energy and ideas, and ambitious for us both. It was an intoxicating mix...

*He's a fool and don't I know it  
But a fool can have his charms  
I'm in love and don't I show it  
Like a babe in arms*

*Love's the same old sad sensation  
Lately I've not slept a wink  
Since this half-pint imitation  
Put me on the blink*

*I'm wild again  
Beguiled again  
A simpering, whimpering child again  
Bewitched, bothered and bewildered am I*

*Couldn't sleep  
And wouldn't sleep*

*Until I could sleep where I shouldn't sleep  
Bewitched, bothered and bewildered am I*

*Lost my heart but what of it?  
My mistake I agree.  
he's a laugh, but I like it  
because the laugh's on me.*

*A pill he is  
But still he is  
All mine and I'll keep him until he is  
Bewitched, bothered and bewildered  
Like me.*

*I'll sing to him  
Each spring to him  
And worship the trousers that cling to him  
Bewitched, bothered and bewildered am I*

*When he talks he is seeking  
Words to get off his chest.  
Horizontally speaking  
He's at his very best.*

*Vexed again  
Perplexed again  
Thank God I can be over-sexed again  
Bewitched, bothered and bewildered am I*

Unfortunately I didn't realise until rather too late that the word marriage, for Hubert, was not synonymous with fidelity...Many other ladies were at the receiving end of Hubert's particular charms. When I first realised what was going on, I thought 'Oh no, not again'. I longed for Sparky more than ever. But in the end, if that's what someone needs, what can you do? I decided if he was going to treat our marriage vows so laxly, then so would I.

*Wise at last  
My eyes at last  
Are cutting you down to your size at last  
Bewitched, bothered and bewildered no more*

*(Burned a lot  
But learned a lot  
And now you are broke, though you earned a lot  
Bewitched, bothered and bewildered no more*

*Couldn't eat*

*Was dyspeptic  
Life was so hard to bear;  
Now my heart's antiseptic  
Since you moved out of there)*

*Romance-Finis  
Your chance-finis  
Those ants that invaded my pants-finis  
Bewitched, bothered and bewildered no more.*

During the time we were married, I believed, despite the infidelities, that we made a splendid team. He wrote me two films – Stars in Your Eyes and my last film, in 1957, After the Ball - but after it had gone sour at the end, and I'd time to reflect, it dawned on me that all that had happened during our years together was that he had gained a career and I had lost one. Certainly, the pictures he wrote were both rather poor and I was never asked to make another one after that time. After the Ball, based on the life of male impersonator Vesta Tilley, was a crashing bore. Hubert claimed that all he could find out about her of interest was that she once ended up spending a week in hospital with exhaustion, where she suffered an allergic reaction to rhubarb after eating an industrial crumble. It became a central scene in the film. Is it any wonder I didn't work on screen again? Try acting an allergy to rhubarb with conviction. We moved to Portugal when my work started drying up, and I began to find his constant ideas tiresome. Sensing it, he spent increasing periods of time in our flat in London, alone.

*You're so late getting home from the office  
Did you miss your train?  
Were you caught in the rain?  
No, don't bother to explain*

*Can I fix you a quick martini?  
As a matter of fact I'll have one with you  
For to tell you the truth  
I've had quite a day too*

*Guess who I saw today, my dear?  
I went in town to shop around for something new  
And thought I'd stop and have a bite  
When I was through*

*I looked around for someplace near  
And it occurred to me where I had parked the car  
There was a most attractive French cafe and bar  
It really wasn't very far*

*The waiter showed me to a dark, secluded corner  
And as my eyes became accustomed to the gloom*

*I saw two people at the bar who were so in love  
That even I could spot it clear across the room*

*Guess who I saw today, my dear?  
I've never been so shocked before  
I headed blindly for the door  
They didn't see me passing through  
Guess who I saw today?  
I saw you!*

(Jim chawks up 1970)

One day I received a parcel from him – it was his latest book. ‘How sweet of him’ I thought, ‘to send it to me when he’s due back in less than a week.’ Then I read the dedication on the flyleaf ‘To Carmel, with whom my life began.’

I said nothing about the inscription in the book. We were about to do *Hay Fever* together and I didn’t want to cause a fuss during rehearsals. My notices were poor, in any case – as I’ve told you before, I wasn’t so confident in plays, and having Hubert play my husband when all I could think about was ‘to Carmel, with whom my life began’ made my acting rather less convincing than it might have been.

Hubert left me for Carmel eventually - she was young. There was a famous song Hubert had written a while back – Maybe it’s because I’m a Londoner – I felt as if I heard that damned song (sung) ‘wherever I went.’ At least that served him right. He hated that song, and it was the only thing he was ever remembered for. I might have gone down in history as the showgirl who gave Prince Philip a seeing to, but at least I wasn’t the plonker who wrote one of the most annoying songs of all time...

I burned my music and scripts after he left. The Revues, pantomimes, songs; everything. It had lined the shelves of my front room like rows of bared teeth, silently laughing at me; reminding me of what I no longer had. No career, no husband, nothing ahead of me aside from old age. I’d even lost mother. My brother Brian had phoned from the States, where he’d settled to say that he couldn’t cope with her staying with him. ‘She’s lost her marbles’ he said, which is a curious expression, isn’t it? I should have thought having a head full of marbles would be enough to make anyone feel as if they were going round the twist – imagine how heavy they would be. Losing them would surely lighten the load. It was Alzheimer’s. She came to stay and I watched helpless as her mind unraveled, diminished, leaving only a furious husk of the person

she had once been. After the night she tried to climb up the chimney I put her in a home. She died shortly afterwards, and I went permanently to Portugal. To live out my years where no-one would come up to me and say 'are you the original Pat Kirkwood?' Or refer to me in the papers as 'a star we had forgotten who turned up at the Edinburgh festival.' If I was going to be forgotten it was better to be completely forgotten than constantly being reminded that I had been forgotten.

(Piano starts to play *There's no business like show business*)

*There's no business like no business*

*Like no business I know*

*There is nothing 'bout it that's appealing*

*Nothing that the traffic will allow*

*Nowhere could you have that crappy feeling*

*When someone's stealing, your extra bow*

*There's no people like show people*

*They smile when they are low...*

...That's because if they didn't keep smiling they might stop to realize they'd wasted their whole lives caring far too deeply for something that didn't give a shit about them.

(Jim hands her a pair of slippers). Thank you. Ladies and gentleman, my lovely accompanist, Mr Jim Holmes.

(Jim writes up 1980)

1980 - You see, ten years have whizzed by with absolutely nothing to show for them. Hang on a minute – what about Pal Joey in 1976? Surely that counts for something...

*(Jim starts playing Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered again)*

I see, I've sung that already.... It doesn't matter – after all, it was only the last full scale London musical I performed in and had marvelous reviews for....

1980 - Despite imagining that I was going to pass the rest of my days quietly knocking back vats full of dry sherry in the Portuguese sunshine toute seule, one Mr Peter Knight, who was to become my fourth husband, had other ideas. Now at this point I must make a confession. I was never in love with Peter. I was about to turn 60, and I really couldn't be bothered with all that anymore, but he would not take no for an answer, and eventually I caved in. He was rich, he was even older than me, and he absolutely adored me, which were three good enough reasons for saying yes. Although we met in Portugal, he'd soon whisked me back to Bingley – he was president of the Bradford and Bingley building society and had always planned to settle there. Well, if I wasn't bored enough before, there I became practically insane with inertia, endlessly walking the whippets in Wensleydale and going to bed at nine o'clock. My world began to feel pretty small, so naturally, I was thrilled when I got the call asking me to come and do a show at the Theatre Royal Stratford East - An Evening with Pat Kirkwood and Friends. What I hadn't realized until the night was that Peter had arranged it – he loved showbiz and wanted to see me up there doing it. I went along with it for him, and then agreed to appear again a few years later in Glamorous Nights of Music at the Wimbledon Theatre, which I know I only got because Boo Laye fell off the sofa and broke her leg. And that was the problem, ladies and gentlemen - I felt that I wasn't first choice anymore; that I'd used to be first choice and I'd let it slip through my fingers. Made bad choices – with jobs, with liaisons, and with husbands - apart from dear Sparky. I'd only done what I thought I could do perfectly, and turned down the rest, to watch others not do them any better than I could have. They'd all kept going and overtaken me; all been honoured, too, which I never could be because of the whole damn business with Prince Phillip. Dame Vera Lyn, Dame Edith Evans, Dame Thora Hird, Dame practically everyone, but never Dame Pat Kirkwood. Three royal command performances, Hollywood, shows written for me by Noel Coward, Cole Porter at my feet, Desert Island Discs, my own TV series; nothing – not so much as a CBE. And even June pigging Whitfield has a CBE.

(Jim writes up 1990)

I got sick. They cut it out. I got better. Next.

(1993)

I wrote to the palace, asking them to issue a statement quashing the continuing rumours about me and Prince Phillip. We'd had paparazzi on the doorstep for months after our return to Britain and it was getting me down. They refused. Moving on.



(1994)

'Any song of mine – any time'. That's what the great Cole Porter once said to me. Any song, any time. I give my final stage performances at Chichester, in the Cole Porter and Noel Coward revue - Let's Do it.

*Begin the Beguine*

*When they begin the Beguine*

*It brings back the sound of music so tender*

*It brings back a night of tropical splendour*

*It brings back a memory evergreen*

*I'm with you once more under the stars*

*And down by the shore, an orchestra's playing*

*And even the palms seems to be swaying*

*When they begin the Beguine*

*To live it again is past all endeavour*

*Except when that tune clutches my heart*

*And there we are swearing to love forever*

*And promising never, never to part.*

*What moments divine, what rapture serene*

*Til clouds come along to disperse the joys we had tasted*

*And now when I hear people vurse the chance that was wasted*

*I know but too well what they mean.*

*So don't let them being the Beguine*

*Let the love that was once a fire remain an ember*

*Let it sleep like the dead desire I only remember*

*When they begin the Beguine*

*Oh yes, let them begin the Beguine, make them play*

*Til the stars that were there before return above you*

*Till you whisper to me once more, darling I love you*

*And we suddenly know what heaven we're in*

*When they begin the Beguine*

I had to insist on one of my own gowns - they thought I was being difficult. I caught Peter telling the artistic director how to handle me - 'if you put her name in a box and write 'special guest star Pat Kirkwood', I'm sure you'll find her amenable.' He was damn right, too. I had earned that special box – *any song of mine, any time* - but of course, the young people didn't even know who I was. Walking behind a girl leaving the theatre one night I heard her complain 'I thought with a title like Let's Do It, it was going to be rude.' She sounded so dreadfully disappointed.

(Jim plays the theme tune from This is Your Life)

My swansong. On the day, there's me, sitting in the foyer of the Prince of Wales, being interviewed for a documentary about the theatre; there's a poster of me in the background and I'm wittering on about a show I starred in, in around 1850.

'What are your memories of this theatre, Miss Kirkwood?'

'Well, I remember the first time I performed here...oh heavens...who...what's this...?'

Michael Aspel standing there with the red book.

'Gosh...I...'

'Hello....you thought you were here to film a documentary about the Prince of Wales Theatre...'

'Yes...'

'But tonight, Pat Kirkwood...'

'Michael Aspel...gosh...the man with the book...'

'This is Your Life.'

Let's not get emotional - I knew. Peter's behaviour had become increasingly furtive; private telephone calls, unexplained trips in the car. I had convinced myself he was having an affair with the till girl in W H Smith in Darlington, and confronted him with the allegation, so he came clean. I was to be the subject of Michael Aspel's This is your Life. I was livid. It was like being forced to host a party in which you had no control over the guest list. Some people I struck off without further ado. I said no to Michael Bentine, Thora Hird and...I can't remember the third one, but I think he died before the broadcast anyway. I was ambivalent about June Whitfield, too, but apparently she was non-negotiable.

After my superb piece of deception at the Prince of Wales, we go over to Teddington studio in a taxi, and I'm given one of my dresses to put on, which Peter's brought with him, only it's not the dress I would have chosen. It's black for a start, like I'm attending my own funeral. We arrive, and the guests are all there, waiting, and actually the black dress is beginning to feel appropriate - it's absolutely like walking into God's waiting room, because these people are all so old now. And not only are they old, but they're unruly. Lord and Lady Delfont disappear moments before filming and a search party has to be dispatched. Michael Denison and Dulcie Grey can't be found anywhere - turns out they'd gone to Supermarket Sweep by mistake and they're hustled back in at the last minute carrying a packet of cornflakes and a jar of marmite. Van Johnson is shouting his head off - he's stone deaf only nobody realises it. My step children - Peter's children - have been press-ganged into coming, presumably because there aren't enough guests to fill the rows, and that would just look too sad, so let's just invite any old person, whether or not they can stand the sight of me. They are sulking and refusing to mingle.

Filming begins, and I sit in my chair, Peter by my side, but I'm not looking at him because I'm furious about the whole event. And I sit there, and have to endure ancient footage of myself looking beautiful and singing like I never remembered I could sing, and Michael Aspel saying that prince Phillip had been a fan of mine - a fan! Van Johnson staggers on - 'nobody could kiss like Pat Kirkwood'. It hardly feels like a compliment. Wendy Toye talking drivel, Boo Laye on a video from her home, looking as if she's about 108. She's sitting at the piano, she runs her hand up the keyboard, then toasts me with a glass of champagne - 'Have a wonderful evening'. She's clearly already drunk the rest of the bottle. Lewis Gilbert, the film director, on a video link - another one whose not made it to the studio - you can tell he doesn't remember who I am; after all, we only worked together once and that was in 1949...my past is chucked

relentlessly in front of me at a rate of knots...Pat Kirkwood, this was your life... smiling and greeting people I've not seen for years, most of whom I never liked anyway. And then my brother Brian is brought on at the end, the jewel in the programme's crown; a man I've not seen or spoken to for nine years and who's never even met my husband. And we're all laughter and tired anecdotes and I just want to go home and never talk to anyone again. Because it's all too sad.

And do you know what? They're nearly all dead. Apart from Michael Aspel, my step children, my friend Michael Thornton, cousin Tilley and June bloody Whitfield. Dead and forgotten.

(Jim hands her a shoebox. She opens it and looks at the contents – her few possessions from the nursing home, including her autobiography, the Duke of Edinburgh's letters and Palladium gold star. )

(1999 chalked up)

I never appeared in public again. In 1999 I wrote my autobiography. I was glad I did it then, because shortly afterwards I started having trouble with my memory. Strange things – forgetting whole shows I had done and people I'd known. My friend Michael suggested I go and talk to the doctor, which I avoided for as long as I could, because I think I knew what he was going to say. When we got the diagnosis of Alzheimer's it was no surprise. Eventually I was no longer well enough to be cared for at home; Peter couldn't cope with me - he was nearly 90 by now, and evidently I'd turned into the same furious husk I saw my mother become – all bad language and escape attempts - so I agreed to go to Kitwood House in Ilkley. It is a home for elderly people with dementia.

(takes star out of box)

My palladium gold star. They nailed it to the door of my room in the home. Peter thought it would be comforting for me, no doubt - he was wrong, as usual. I hardly wanted to be reminded of how far that gold star had fallen.

And here they are – the letters.

'1988 Balmoral Castle. I am very sorry indeed to hear that you have been pestered about that ridiculous rumour. The trouble is that certain things seem to get into journalist folklore and it is virtually impossible to get it out of the system.' – Understatement.

'Much as I would like to put a stop to this, and many other similar stories about other members of the family, we have found that short of libel proceedings, there is absolutely nothing to be done. Invasion of privacy, invention and false quotations are the bane of our existence.' - *of my existence, you mean.*

There you are, ladies and gentlemen, proof, should you have needed it, that nothing untoward ever happened between me and his royal himness.

My friend Jesus, from the sanatorium all those years ago, started visiting me again when I was in Kitwood House – he didn't tell me to stop swearing, but he did tell me to stop eating, so when the nurses came into my room with food or drink I turned my face to the wall. He told me to sign a good portion of my money over to the Blue Cross cats home, too, which I dutifully did, and that was bizarre, because I didn't even like cats.

(Christmas Day 2007)

(She looks at the date)

Bugger. I don't remember.

I don't effing well remember.

(she returns the contents of the shoebox)

I never forgot the words of any of my songs.

In the words of Vesta Tilley on the night of her farewell performance at the London Coliseum -  
For me, the ball is over. It's goodnight, and goodbye. I shall remember you all for the rest of my days. Please, for a little while, will you remember me?

*For all we know we may never meet again*

*Before you go make this moment sweet again*

*We won't say "Good night" until the last minute*

*I'll hold out my hand and my heart will be in it  
For all we know this may only be a dream  
We come and go like a ripple on a stream  
So love me tonight; tomorrow was made for some  
Tomorrow may never come for all we know*

*So love me tonight; tomorrow was made for some  
Tomorrow may never come for all we know*

WALKS OFF BACKWARDS DURING LAST LINE AND LEAVES THE STAGE

# - An eye for an eye -

## 1. Deux Bonnes Femmes

Lea & Christine

**Allegretto capriccioso**

$\text{♩} = 66$

**Piano**

**ff**

*gliss.*

**ff**

**Pno.**

**7**

*p cantabile e rubato*

**ff**

**12**

*p cantabile e rubato*

**Allegro meccanico**

$\text{♩} = 120$

**18**

*mp*

*fmarc.*

*mf con brio*

*sfz*

**C.**

Fold sheet crisp, neat.

*mf lugubre e pesante*

**L.**

Cold

**Pno.**

*sfz*

28

C. *(h)* Spray mist, spurt, hiss.

L. *port.* soak, stick *port.* *(h)* poke

Pno.

33

C. *sfz* Wring them, fling them, smooth *p*

L. *port.* Scrub them, rub them, hang

Pno.

38

C. the grooves, and now my laun - dry's done.

L. *port.* *(h)* them in the sun.

Pno.

44

Pno.



50 *p sotto voce*

C. The day has be-gun for Chris-tine and Le - a,

L. The day has be-gun for Chris-tine and Le - a,

Pno.

55

C. the great - est help in all Le Mons, ta - king pride in our

L. the great - est help in all Le Mons, ta - king pride in our

Pno.

60

C. eve - ry en - dea - vour, tho-rough,

L. eve - ry en - dea - vour, Scou - ring,

Pno.

64

C. *de - - - di - ca - ted. strong!*

L. *scrub - bing,*

Pno.

67

L. *dust-ing a - long...*

*Lea runs a duster along something* *Christine and Lea get back to work*

Pno.

*ff martellato* *mp* *f marc* *sfz*

73

C. *Bake bread, time flies, so slow,*

L. *Make beds,*

Pno.

*pesante* *port.*

79

L. *I know*

Pno.

*port.* *sfz* *rfz*

Christine adopts a rather manic bright-and-breezy persona to try and enthuse Lea and chivvy her along.

84 *nasal and yappy*

C. Ex - cel-lence is what we strive for, on - ly per-fect

Pno. *Vivacissimo ♩ = 192*  
*pp leggiero e preciso*  
*p*

91

C. makes the grade. Shi - ning sinks and well-oiled man - gle, e - ven though we're bad - ly paid.

Pno.

96

C. *Deux bonnes femmes, femmes de mé-na - ges, Deux bonnes femmes, mé-nages à deux,*

L. *Deux bonnes femmes, femmes de mé - na - ges, Deux bonnes femmes, mè - nages à deux,*

Pno.

100

C. *Deux bonnes femmes, femmes de mé-na - ges, Oo - la - la - la O mon Dieu!*

L. *Deux bonnes femmes, femmes de mé - na - ges, Oo - la - la - la O mon Dieu!*

Pno.

Come Prima - Allegro meccanico

♩ = 120

105 Christine and Lea get back to work again...

Pno. *mp*

*f marc* D.B. gliss *sfz*

Pno. *sfz*

115 *mf*

C. Heat soup green gloop peas crusehd, I'm rushed.

L. *p piangendo* Help... *port.* me... *più f* Help...

Pno. *p*

121


C. Place three loaves in stove and...

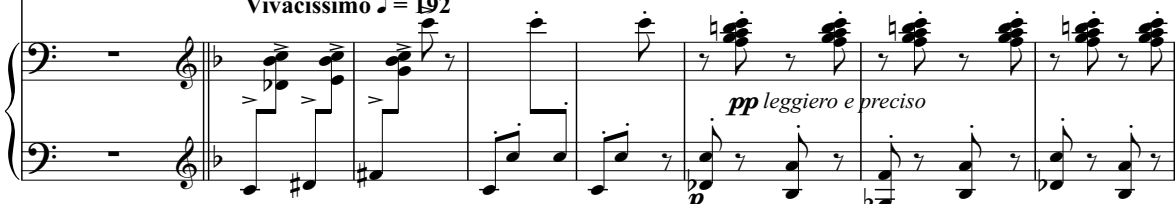
L. *port.* me... *f* I'm stuck!

Pno. *ff articolato*

Trying to chivvy Lea along again...


127 **Vivacissimo** ♩ = 192 *nasal and yappy* 7


C.  Toss the pig's head in the sauce-pan, chop in thir-ty


Pno. **Vivacissimo** ♩ = 192 *pp leggiero e preciso* 

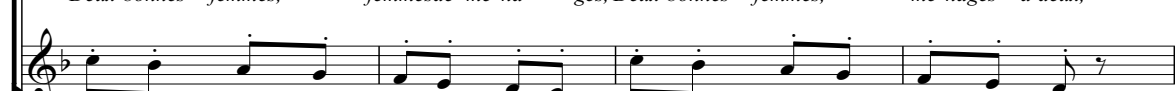
135  five shal-lots, It's a cu-li-n'ry sen-sa-tion, le-mon, trot-ters, sage, car-rots. Hold a-loft the migh-ty dus-ter,


Pno. 

142  Knead the dough in half the time. On garde! Here come Mon-sier mop head, he will blast a-way the grime.

Pno. 

148  *Deux bonnes femmes, femmes de mé-na-ges, Deux bonnes femmes, mé-nages à deux,*

L.  *Deux bonnes femmes, femmes de mé-na-ges, Deux bonnes femmes, mè-nages à deux,*

Pno. 

Christine and Lea dance

152

C. *Deux bonnes femmes, femmes de mé-na - ges, Oo - la-la-la cor-don bleu!*

L. *Deux bonnes femmes, femmes de mé - na-ges, Oo - la-la-la cor-don bleu!*

Pno. *giocososo* 3 3 3 3

158

Pno. 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

**Allegro meccanico**

165 *mp*  $\text{♩} = 120$

*f marc* *sfz*

*mf con brio*

170

C. Pluck the hen

Pno. *sfz*

*mf lugubre e pesante*

174

C. first then stuff with thyme.

L. Why am I so... *port.* *port.* (b) so...

Pno. *sfz*

179 9

C. *Looks fine? Not neat. Deux bonnes femmes..*

L. *Deux bonnes femmes.. I've spoiled this sheet..* *port.*

Pno.

*sfz*

*rit.* **A tempo**  
**Vivacissimo** ♩ = 192

184

C. *Deux bonnes femmes.. Deux bonnes femmes.. Deux bonnes femmes,*

L. *Deux bonnes femmes.. Deux bonnes femmes.. Deux bonnes femmes, femmes*

Pno. *p* *rit.* **A tempo**  
**Vivacissimo** ♩ = 192

188

C. *femmes de mé-na - ges Deux bonnes Sa-cre bleu!*

L. *de mé - na-ges, Deux bonnes Sa-cre bleu!*

Pno. *rfz*

*Leo.*

Meno mosso  $\text{♩} = 112$ 

Christine clutches a terrified Lea, who is covering her ears, to her breast.  
She rocks her back and forth like a child.

195

*p sotto voce*

C. 
  
Ding dong dell, Ma-dame's new

L. 
  
Ding dong dell,

*ppp murmurando*

Pno.

200

C. 
  
bell! Dong, dang, ding,

L. 
  
Ma-dame's new bell! Dong, dang,

Pno.

They leave - Lea is whimpering

206

C. 
  
how it does ring! Ah

L. 
  
ding, how it does ring!

Pno.



211

C.

11

Ah

Pno.

216

C.

à niente

Pno.

# 2. O Electricity, how I do worship thee!

Madame

$\text{♩} = 52$

**Misterioso e proclamato**

221 *f quasi campana* *p*

Ped.  $\wedge$  sostenuto ped Ped.

224 *p*

$\wedge$  sostenuto ped Ped.

228 *ff proclamato* *mf*

O, E-lec-tri-ci-ty! How I do wor-ship thee, they fiz-zing, whiz-zing

Ped.  $\wedge$  sostenuto ped

230 *rfz*

charm.

Ped.

232

Mme. *5* *5* *3* *13*

O, E - lec - tri - ci - ty! I yearn for thee, I a - dore thee,

Pno.

**poco accel.**

233

Mme. *mf* *3* *3* *3* *port.*

thy de - li - cious e - lec - tro mag - ne - tic vi - bra - tions.

Pno. *8va* *f* **poco accel.**

**Più mosso**  $\text{♩} = 60$

234 ***p* semplice minaccioso**

Mme. I may ring from where I choose, bed - room, par - lour di - ning room,

Pno. ***pp*** + pizz

236

Mme. fin - ger flex but - ton push pul - sing, sur - ging cur - rent rush.....

Pno.

14

With wonder on her face, Madame follows an imaginary current whizz eratically round the room like a quickly-deflating baloon.

238

Mme. (sh)

Pno. *pp*

Red.

239

Mme. *p con urgenza* *molto*

The maids willar rive, the maids willar rive, the maids will ar rive,

Pno.

240

Mme. *fff estatico*

O, E - lec - tri - ci - ty! O,

Pno. *ff*

241

Mme. *fp*

E - lec - tri - ci - ty! How I do wor - - - ship

Pno.

Tempo primo

*rfz* // *subito p* *espress*

Mme. 242

thee, Thou dost bring light in - to the night that our

Pno. *f* *subito p* *ppp*

Mme. 244

maids may con-tin-ue to serve. That I may pe-ruse the fa-shion news, my daugh-ter, a -

Pno. *p* *ppp* *p*

Mme. 246

lone, her end-less tones. *mp* con-pi-età - ver thou should leave us,

Pno. *p* *pp* *p*

Mme. 250

it would be tru - ly grie - vous. *f marc* Come on, Ge-ne-vieve, *mp* join in! If

Pno.

252 [Genevieve] *mp*

Gen. If e - ver thou should leave us, it would be tru - ly grie - vous.

Mme. e - ver thou should leave us, it would be tru - ly grie - vous.

Pno.

*Allegretto* ♩. = 88 - 92

255 *mp marc* She raps her fingers on the table *mf*

Mme. Now, where are those lum - ber - ing maids? Now,

*Allegretto* ♩. = 88 - 92

Pno. *mp* *mp*

261 *f* She consults her journal *mp*

Mme. where are those lum - ber - ing maids? It should take fif - ty five se - conds from

Pno.

268 *mp*

Mme. kit - chen to ta - ble if they run with the soup and dis - patch with a la - dle that nas - ty green gloop, and

Pno.

272

Mme. *f* *4*  
 six - ty nine se-conds from hall - way to door if they are scour - ing and scru-bbing and buff - ing the floors like

Pno.

rit. . . . Poco meno mosso

♩. = 72

276 *f* *mp espress e legato*

Mme. *rit.* *Poco meno mosso*  
 hogs on all fours, but on-ly ten counts to Ge - ne - vieve's chair to brush her

Pno. *pp espress*

280 *sotto voce* *mp marc*

Mme. *sotto voce* *mp marc*  
 a - de-quate hair. I des-pair of that pair... Now, where are those lum-ber-ing

Pno.

285 *mf* *mp*

Mme. *mf* *mp*  
 maids? Now,where are those fum-bl-ing, lum-ber- ing...

Pno. *mp*

*She raps her fingers on the table*

Genevieve turns into Chritine. Meanwhile, Madame dons a pair of white gloves.  
She assembles her writing paraphernalia - and passes a gloved finger along surfaces to inspect for dust...

291 *capriccioso*  
Pno. *mp* *pp*  
Allegro ♩ = 120 non ped

294  
Pno. *mp*  
non ped

298  
Pno. *pp*

301  
Mme. *f*  
Ge - ne - vieve! Fetch one of them,  
Pno.

304  
Mme. *rall.* now!  
Pno. *mp* *rall.*



# 3. Valse Caprice

Allegretto capriccioso

♩. = 66

Madame & Christine

19

Pno.

308 *ff* *gliss.* *ff*

Pno.

314 *p cantabile e rubato* *ff*

Pno.

319 *p cantabile e rubato*

Mme.

326 *mp amabile* *poco rit.*  
E - very - thing \_ must be just so to show \_ Le Mons that I know how \_ to throw a splen - did par - ty.

Pno.

*mp amabile* *poco rit.*

Mme.

334 *A tempo* *♩. = 66*  
La cui - sine, \_ the am - bi - ance, the chance \_ to show la belle France e - le - gance be - gins here with...

Pno.

*A tempo* *♩. = 66* gins here with

341 Christine enters  $\text{♩} = 52$  **Proclamato**  
*ff furioso* *port.* *rfz*  
 Mmc. DOES SHE NOT HEAR MY BELL?  
 Pno. *ff*

343  
 Mmc. DOES SHE NOT HEAR MY BELL?  
 Pno. *ff*

345 *subito p* *rfz*  
 Mmc. my bell, my bell? Did she not hear it ring?  
 Pno. *ff*

**Allegro meccanico**  
 $\text{♩} = 120$

348 *mf ritmico*  
 Chrs. Yes, Ma dame. No, Ma-dame.  
 Mmc.

**Allegro meccanico**  
 $\text{♩} = 120$  *mp* *sfz* *sfz*

353

Chr. Like a gendarme organising traffic,  
Madame holds up a white gloved hand to silence Christin

I came as quick-ly as I... I came as quick-ly as I...

Pno.

Madame furiously scribbles a note.....and holds it up for Christine to read....

357

Chr. *mf parlando*

Buc- kets.... coal... fill fif - teen...

Pno. *mf parlando*

**Poco meno**

363 *più legato* *mf ritmico*

Chr. — fif - teen!? Yes, Ma dame.

Pno.

Madame furiously scribbles a another note.

Christine reads it out

371 *sfz* *mf ritmico*

Chr. "Hall floor...scrub\_\_ clean... ta-ble-cloths i-ron crea- ses.. nil... Yes, Ma dame.

Pno.

Madame furiously scribbles a third note; Christine looks over her shoulder and begins to read it as Madame runs out of paper and begins to scribble on the table/in the air?

378

Chr. right a-way, Ma dame. Draw-ing room

Pno. *sfz*

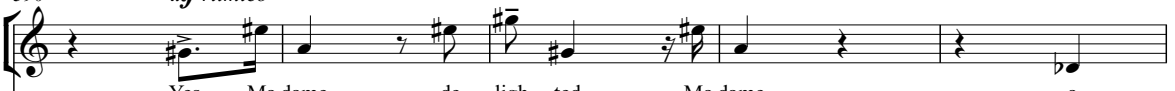
accel. . . . .

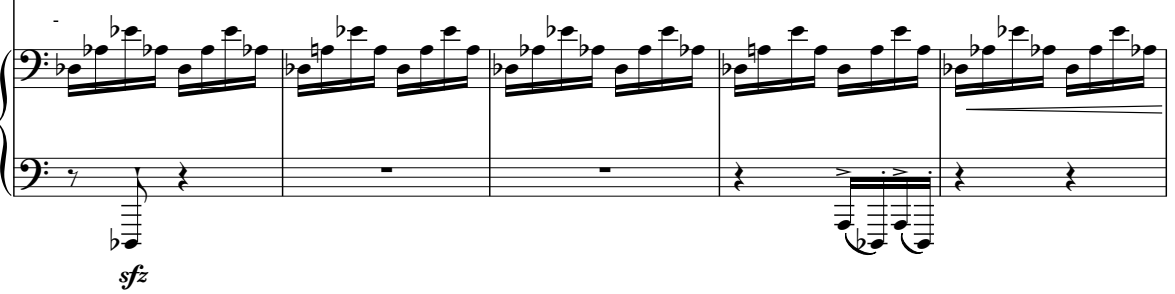
383

Chr. 
  
 dust... re-move fust... Ge - ne-vieve's glo-ri-ous dress - press ex - qui-site gold gown mine beat fifty times

Pno. 

390 - *mf ritmico*

Chr. 
  
 Yes, Ma dame, de - ligh - ted, Ma dame. ...a

Pno. 

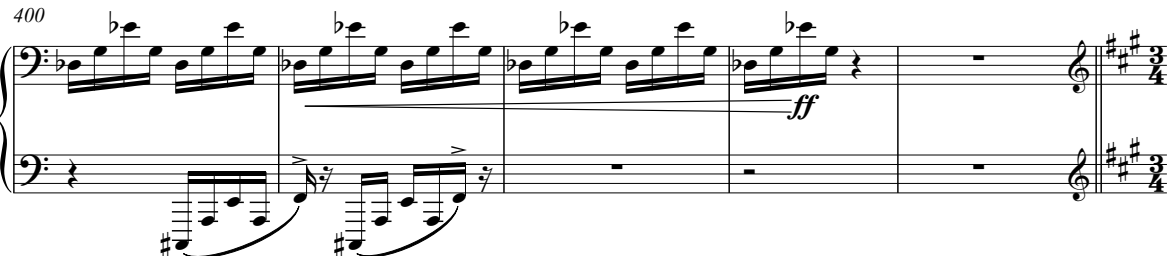
Madame points a gloved finger  
towards the kitchen and  
Christine scurries off

395

Chr. 
  
 plea - sure I am sure....

Pno. 

400

Pno. 

Allegretto capriccioso

405  $\text{♩} = 66$  *mp melanconico*

Mme. Ge - ne-vieve\_\_ will find a mate, of that\_\_ I am de-

Pno. *p*

Red.

411

Mme. ter - mined, I\_\_ shall greet our hal - lowed guests\_\_ in fi - nest er - mine. All\_

Pno.

416

Mme. - of them will mar - vel at\_\_ my in - der - sta - ted charm,\_\_ I'll laugh/flirt and

Pno.

421

Mme. do my ut - most to dis - arm.

Pno.

428 **rit.** . . . . . **A tempo** ♩ = 66

Mme. E - very e - li - gi - ble man from Caens to Saint

Pno.

434

Mme. Ma-lo will bask in the re-flec - tion of my wall lights ho - neyed

Pno.

439

Mme. glow. They will be per - sua - ded that my daugh - ter is the pick, if there is

Pno.

445

Mme. doubt then I can vouch for this.

Pno.

451

Pno.

*p* misterioso

Madame exits continuing her obsessive dust-checking regime.

458

Mme.

E - very - thing — must be just...

*p*

Pno.

To Lea

462

OFFSTAGE

Mme.

I know how — to throw a...

Pno.

467

Pno.

# 4. What a strange story

Genevieve

Sereno ♩ = 52

Piano

*p* *espirando*

*mf* *espress e narrante*

*espress.*

*espress.*

*mp* *parlando e semplice*

477

C.

The Prin-cess Ge-ne - vieve is so <sup>3</sup>ex - qui - site. On see-ing her, cour-ti - ers

Pno.

*mp* *parlando e semplice*

483

Gen.

she turns the page

turn to pud-dles. Her mo - ther the e - vil queen

Pno.

*mf* *espress e narrante*

*f* *impersonating Madame*

487

Gen.

grows en-vi-ous of her beau-ty. "Co- ver your face! with this great mask!" she com mands.

Pno.

*f*

*Red.*



Come prima

492 *mp* she turns the page

Gen. *mp* Should she dis-o-beyher mo-ther, she will ma-gic the gor-geous Ge-ne- vieve... ..in - to a

Pno. *Come prima*

*espress.*

496

Gen. gi - ant ba - guette, and slice her upfor tea. Oh my! What a strange sto - ry, what a fun - ny taletto tell.

Pno.

she turns another page

500

Gen. The mask pier - ces the poor prin - cess, her eyes cry

Pno. *espress.*


504

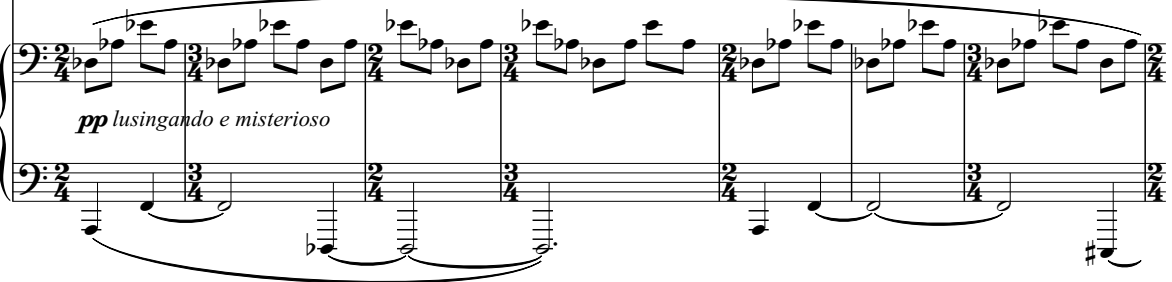
Gen. blood, her brows crust o - ver, she is con fined to her bed cham - ber where


Pno.

*pp* sotto voce, legato

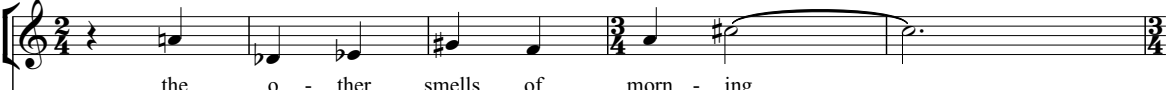
508

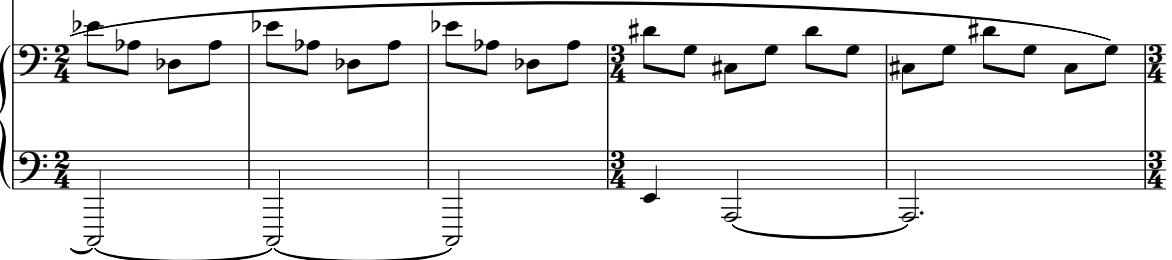
Gen.  two hand - maid - ens tend her weep - ing wounds. — one is bru - tish


Pno. *pp* lusingando e misterioso 

Red. 

515

Gen.  the o - ther smells of morn - ing —

Pno. 



520 *Recit* she closes the book

Gen.  Oh! What a strange sto - ry, what a fun - ny tale to tell. —

Pno. 

## 5. Mr. Baker

**Allegro strepitoso**  
♩ = 133

*Lea and Christine*

Piano

*p*  
*f marcato*  
*mp dolce*

Pno.

529

*p*  
*f marcato*

Pno.

535

*ff marc*

C.  
541 *f strepitoso e non legato*  
Fi-celles, fou-gasses, ba-guettes, le-vain. Don-nez nous notre/nos pain quo-ti-di-an.

L.  
*f strepitoso e non legato*  
Fi-celles, fou-gasses, ba-guettes, le-vain. Don-nez nous notre/nos pain quo-ti-di-an.

Pno.  
*f strepitoso e non legato*

546

Pno.

551

C.

Mis - ter Ba - ker kneads\_ his dough, Mi - ssus Ba - ker

L.

Mis - ter Ba - ker kneads\_ his dough, Mi - ssus Ba - ker

Pno.

554

C.

needs his (gasp) dough, There's a large/fat bun in her o - ven,

L.

needs his (gasp) dough, There's a large/fat bun in her o - ven,

Pno.

558 *P* *f* 31

C. *f*  
It's not Mis - ter Ba - ker's though. Fi celles, fou gasses, baguettes, le vain. Don nez nous notre/nospain quo ti-di an.

L. *f*  
It's not Mis - ter Ba - ker's though. Fi celles, fou gasses, baguettes, le vain. Don nez nous notre/nospain quo ti-di an.

Pno. *ppp* *f* *strepitoso e non legato*

In a flurry of flour, Lea and Christine set to work.  
It's obvious that they're not master bakers..

564 *p parlando, sotto voce*

C. *p parlando, sotto voce*  
Yeast bub- ble...

L. *p parlando, sotto voce*  
Yeast bub- ble...

Pno. *p* *f*

Like a pat-a-cake clapping song

572 *f*

C. *f*  
There's trou ble... Mix flour the (whistle)

L. *f*  
There's trou ble... the knead dough

Pno. *dolcissimo*

(whistle)

578

C.

L.

Pno.

582 *f*

Another flurry of activity

C.

L.

Pno.

*f* *strepitoso e non legato*

Fi-celles, fou-gasses, ba-guettes, le-vain. Don-nez nous\_ notre/nos pain quo ti-di-an.

Fi-celles, fou-gasses, ba-guettes, le-vain. Don-nez nous\_ notre/nos pain quo ti-di-an.

*8va*

587

Pno.

*p*

*f*

593

C.

L.

Pno.

Mi - ssus Ba - ker had\_ a tum - ble with a can - dle

Mi - ssus Ba - ker had\_ a tum - ble with a can - dle

598 *f* *p*

C. man\_called Bum-ble. Dipped his wick in - side her wax\_ Now she's ha - ving lit - tle Max

L. man\_called Bum-ble. Dipped his wick in - side her wax\_ Now she's ha - ving lit - tle Max

Pno.

603 *mp* *f marc* *sfz*

Pno.

608

C. Bake bread,

Pno.

*sfz* *f marc* *pesant* *sfz*

614 *port* *sfz*

C. time flies, so slow,

L. Make beds, I know

Pno.

A terrible, rumbling bell sound  
rocks the rafters of the kitchen

**Maestoso** ♩ = 52

620

Pno.

*fff* *fff* *fff*

8<sup>va</sup> ..... ] 8<sup>va</sup> ..... ] 8<sup>va</sup> ..... ]

Ped. \_\_\_\_\_ ]

625 **Allegro** ♩ = 120 *p sotto voce e preciso*

C. Ding dang dong, what can be

L. *p sotto voce e preciso* Ding dang dong,

Pno. *ppp murmurando*

*ppp*

630

C. wrong? Ma - dam's rung the bell loud\_\_\_ and long.

L. what can be wrong? Ma - dam's rung the bell loud\_\_\_ and

Pno.



635 *mf* impatiently 35

C. *Di - ning room... did you*

L. *long. Which room is that?*

Pno.

Christine glowers at Lea...

640  $\text{♩} = 120$

C. *po - lish the sil - ver*

L. *Oh* *ff lugubre e pesante*

Pno. *f*

...and then contains herself Christine takes her apron off and pats her hair into place. She rushes out to see Madame.

644

C. *I'll go... I'll go...*

L. *no! so slow!* *port.*

Pno. *sfz*

649 Christine leaves

C. I'll tell her I'm to blame.

Pno. off stage

655 *sfz*

C. I'm to blame. \_\_\_\_\_

Pno. *rfz*

661 *pp murmurando*

Pno. *rfz*

667 *rfz*

Pno. *rfz*

673 *pp murmurando*

Pno. *pp murmurando*

679 *8va*

Pno. *8va*

The music of a popular chanson begins on the gramophone. Christine sings the song offstage in a high, quavering voice reminiscent of Mireille. The English is sung with a French accent, and the French is very French. Lea is transported to another world and mimes to the song using a wooden spoon as a microphone.

**Tempo di valse lente**  
♩ = 116

## 6. Always (Sister, mon amour)

*Lea (and Christine)*

685 *mp*

Pno.

691 *mp sempre portamento* **rit.**

C. Sis - ter, mon a-mour, mon chère se-cret. All my wa-king

Pno.

698 **A tempo**  
♩ = 116

C. hours I think of you Long - ing for the time we share a -

Pno.

703 *ossia rit.*

C. lone, in our lie-tle room, all the night through.

Pno.

**A tempo**

♩ = 116

709

C. *Viens vite dans mes bras, Par - le moi tout bas, stay with me, play with me*

Pno. *mp*

715

C. *al - ways. Life for us is hard, our life un - fair, but when we are*

Pno. *mp sempre portamento*

722

C. *one, pain fades a - way. I es - cape in - to a brigh - ter*

Pno.

727

C. *world then rien n'e - xis - te pas, just you and me*

Pno. *ossia*

733

C. Come in-to my arms, I sur-ren - der to you charms. Je t'a-dore, for - e-ver more,

Pno. *mp*

739

C. al - ways. Press your lips to mine, Love is not a

Pno. *mp*

744

C. crime, you and me, e - ter-ni-ty, al - ways.

Pno. *rall.*

## 7. If only

Madame

**Larghetto**  $\text{♩} = 54$

Mme. *p dolente espress. Legatiss*

751

If on - ly my daugh - ter's ap - pear-ance did not of - fend me

Pno. *p lusingando*

*con ped*

Mme.

754

so. If on - ly, I a wo-man of such poise\_ had been spared from see-ing her grow in -

Pno.

Mme.

757

to this sap - ling of (h)ug - li - ness. If on - ly...

Pno.

**Poco meno mosso**

Mme.

760

*mp* If cau-ses me un - told dis - tress... *mf* A masked ball, why\_ do you think I chose a

Pno.

763 *poco rit.*

Mme. masked ball? Not for fa-shion, not at all. If

Pno. *poco rit.*

**Larghetto**  $\text{♩} = 54$   
766 **Tempo primo**

Mme. on-ly... I must co-ver her to hide her por-cine snout. If on-ly... I must co-ver her to ob-

Pno.

769

Mme. scure her pro-tu-be-rant teeth. No man must see\_ what lies be-neath.

Pno.

## 8. Galop

Allegretto ♩ = 133

Piano

Mme. *f* [Recit] *mf*  
Ah, good! Let us re-hearse your de-port-ment for to-night.

Mme. *mp*  
Dear, dear, ma che-rie, you do look... a fright!

Gen. *p semplice*  
Le - a has not briushed my hair.

Mme. [Recit]  
Put your mask on. It's o - ver there.

Pno.



Meno mosso ♩ = 120

*p* piangevole

20

Gen.

Mme. *f* *maestoso* *p* *subito, marc* But Ma-man,  
 In the art of Haute é - cole the eyes must be blin - kered.

Pno. *f* *maestoso* *p*

26

Gen. *mp* *port*  
 — Ma - man... Please Ma - man, Ma - man.

Mme. *mp* *sotto voce*  
 I said 'blin - kered.' (I must co-ver her)

Pno. *p* *mp*

33 *mp* *minacciosamente*  
 Com-mence with the am-ble. Tut! Tut! That is more of a scam-b;e.

Pno.

43 *Più mosso* ♩ = 140

Mme. In - crease pace, trot! Come on, trot! Come on Trot! Trot!

Pno. *mp*

44

**Più mosso** ♩ = 160

Mme. *mf* Trot, trot, Ge-ne - vieve! *f* Come on, <sup>3</sup>come on!

Pno. *mf*

Gen. Must you prod? Must you poke?

Mme. Pokes G with whip

Pno. *sfz*

**Più mosso** ♩ = 200

*accel.*

Mme. *mf* Piaffe! Piaffe! Quick-ly! On the spot!

Pno. *mf*

**Furioso** ♩ = 240

*mp*

\* a yodelling quality is entirely acceptable

Mme. *mp* Clip-pi-ty clop-pi-ty gal-lo-py gi-dy up

Pno. *p*

80

Mme. Train that plain ga - lum-ping fi-ly up!

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

89

Mme. Clip-pi-ty clop-pi-ty gal-lo-py gee\_ gee Train the\_ la - zy\_

Pno. *p* *p*

97

Mme. *f* fi - ly Ge - ne - vie - vee! *f* grandiosamente

Quasi cadenza

Pno.

100

Mme. tend Can - ter and dis - play you hind quar - ters. That's the way.

Pno.

103 **Larghetto** ♩ = 52 *p espress*

Mme. This is a su - pe - rior view. If on - ly... if on - ly I

Pno. *p*

106 *parlando*

Mme. — could in - tro - dice you from the rear - there's an i - dea.

Pno.

**Furioso** ♩ = 240

108 *mf* \* a yodelling quality is entirely acceptable

Mme. Clip - pi - ty clop - pi - ty gal - lo - py gi - dy up

Pno. *p* *mf*

116 *f*

Mme. Train that plain ga - lum - phing fi - ly up! And le - vade, \_\_\_\_\_

Pno. *p* *f* *p*

125 *f* *mf*

Gen. Ma - man! Ma - man!

Mme. ca - pri - ole! \_\_\_\_\_ clop - pi - ty gal - lo - py gee\_ gee Train the\_ Train the\_

Pno.

133 *ff impetuosamente*

Gen. I \_\_\_\_\_ can't play this role Ow -

Mme. la - zy\_ fi - ly Ge - ne - vie - vee!

Pno. *f sfz*

Mme is taken aback by Genevieve's disobedience. She raises her hand high and whips Genevieve on the bum

141 *Meno mosso ♩ = 140 molto rall.*

Gen. ch! C'est dom mage!

Mme. Non - sense! Back to trot,

Pno. *p f*

148

Mme. pas - sage, Am - ble, Whoa! Halt!

Pno.

157 **Meno mosso** ♩ = 120 *p semplice*

Gen. *f* *maestoso* But Ma-man, Ma-man... *mp*

Mme. And that's dres sage, Splen-did! Re-

Pno. *f* *maestoso* *p semplice*

162 *f*

Gen. Ma

Mme. move the mask, such a shame, if on-ly... If on-ly...

Pno. *f*

169 **Meno mosso** ♩ = 64 *mp*

Gen. man! I am not a po-ny! Not a horse!

Mme. The face is not the

Pno. *f* *mf* *pp*

173 *mf*

Gen. Do you hear? I am not a horse!

Mme. sum, of course. Calm down, my

Pno. *mf*

176 *molto espr/apass* 49

Gen. I am plain, - I know that.

Mme. child-have you lost your rea- son? All this is for you you know it is the

Pno. *mf sonoro* *p subito*

183 // *p parlando*

Gen. Short and plump and staid just

Mme. sea - - son.

Pno. // *pp lontano*

188 Genevieve leaves

Gen. leave me in peace I de - test your mas - que - rade.

Pno. *ppp*

Allegretto ♩ = 133

*f marc/ritmico*

Mme. *192*  
 I'm sure I rang the bell! I'm sure they heard it ring!

Pno.

*Red.*

200 Allegretto ♩ = 133

Gen. *ff*

Mme. Why don't they come? Why don't they hear? Wret - ched,

Pno.

Mme. *mp* *pp*  
 wret - ched, wret - ched maids! Hope - less... in - sup - por - ta - ble...

Pno.

She rings the bell again

Allegretto ♩ = 54

Mme. *208*

Pno. *p dolce* 7

*Red.*

215 *p dolce*

rall.

Mme. Ev - ery-thing must be just so. I need to know I have done

Pno. 7



221 **A tempo**  $\text{♩} = 66$  **accel.** **Larghetto**  $\text{♩} = 52$   
*mp marc* *mf*

Mme. all I can find my un - for - tu - nate daugh - ter a man. My life is constant dis - a -

Pno. *mf*

226 **f** **sotto voce** **mf**

Mme. ppoint-ment. Must I spend all my days Mo - ther to a dul-lard child, Ma - dame to two

Pno.

229 **Largo** **ppp** **pppp**

Mme. im - be - ci - lic maids? Is there no - thing more for me? No

Pno. **pppp**

**Allegretto capriccioso** $\text{♩} = 66$ 

232 **mp amabile**

Mme. hand - some mand for com - pa - ny? E - very - thing must be just so to show Le Mons that

Pno. **mp amabile**

## Allegretto capriccioso

♩. = 66

237

Mme. *ff* *dramatico* *Port.*

I know how — to throw a splen did par — No - thing

Pno. *ff* *gliss.*

243

Mme. *p cantabile e rubato*

No - thing, no-thing must spoil — my plans... Une grande

Pno. *gliss.* *ff* *p cantabile e rubato*

249

Mme. *rit.* *// p cantabile e rubato*

— soi-rée A splen - did par - ty...

Pno. *ff* *p cantabile e rubato*

## Allegretto ♩ = 133

256

Mme. *f marc/ritmico* *trm*

Zut a - lors! I'm sure I rang the bell!

Pno. *8va* *Ped.*

264 Exit

Mme.

Pno.

268

Mme.

Pno.

## 9. Madame Iron &amp; Monsier Flex

In the kitchen, Lea is doing her best with the ironing - there is a child-like absorption in her task, but it is clear that she is not getting on very well. Meanwhile, Christine is attending to a large steaming cooking pot. Throughout the song, the lights are flickering.

Tempo di Bouree ♩ = 148

Piano

The piano introduction consists of two staves. The right hand features a series of chords with triplets, starting with a forte (f) dynamic. The left hand plays a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and triplets.

277 *With heavily-exaggerated portamenti* **f**

Lea. Ma-dame I - ron some-times tires,

Pno.

Lea's vocal line begins at measure 277 with a forte (f) dynamic. The lyrics are "Ma-dame I - ron some-times tires,". The piano accompaniment continues with a steady eighth-note pattern.

282

Lea. Mo - sieur Plug is ra - ther smug, Madm'-selle flex wears no specs...

Pno.

Lea's vocal line continues at measure 282 with the lyrics "Mo - sieur Plug is ra - ther smug, Madm'-selle flex wears no specs...". The piano accompaniment remains consistent.

286 *marcato ma sotto voce*

C. Hiss, stut - ter! Phut, splut-ter! Lights out a-gain!

Lea. Hiss, stut - 3-ter! Phut, splut-ter! Lights out a-gain!

Pno. *p legato* *p grazioso coll.*

At measure 286, the music changes to a 3/4 time signature. The character C has the lyrics "Hiss, stut - ter! Phut, splut-ter! Lights out a-gain!". Lea's vocal line has the lyrics "Hiss, stut - 3-ter! Phut, splut-ter! Lights out a-gain!". The piano accompaniment features triplets and a *p legato* section, ending with a *p grazioso coll.* instruction.

291 *Christine peers into the pot...*

C. How's the pig-gy in the pot-ty? Let me have a lit-tle peek!

Lea

Pno. *p lugubre e misterioso*

297 *grazioso*

C. Prod and poke hos hai-ry snou-ty, baste and pink and puf-fy cheek!

Lea

Pno. *f*

303 *port.*

Lea Le - a makes her mis-take: wa - ter drips, flex spits.

Pno. *p marcato ma sotto voce*

308 *subito drammatico*

C. Hiss, stut - ter! Phut, splut - ter! Lights out a - gain!

Lea *port.* *sfz p marcato ma sotto voce*

Sparks fly, Le - a cries. Hiss, stut - ter! Phut, splut - ter! Lights out a - gain!

Pno.

Christine is in the gloom, illuminated only by the light shining from the cooking pot

56

313 *p marcato ma sotto voce* **Poco meno mosso**

C. Hiss, stut-ter! Phut, splut - ter!

Lea Hiss, stut-ter! Phut, splut - ter!

Pno. *p lugubre e misterioso*

317 *rfz*

C. Two black eyes peer from the caul-dron, I don't like the way they peer...

Lea

Pno. *p lugubre e misterioso*

321

C. Push the head down in the li - quor now the beas-ty holds no fear

Pno.

**Tempo primo**

325

Pno.

329 57

Lea *port.*  
Sis - ter Chris - cle - ver miss! Chan - ges fuse Great news!

Pno.

The lights come on Lea holds up the dress she has been ironing...

334 *p ma marc* *dolente*

Lea  
Lights\_ bright.... Aw - ful sight. Dress fringe...

Pno. *pizz pp*

341

Lea  
...black and singed....

Pno.

(8)

345 *fff*

C. *fff*  
Hiss, stut - ter! Fuck! splut - ter! We're in the merde!

Lea *fff marcato ma sotto voce*  
Hiss, stut - ter! Fuck! splut - ter! We're in the merde!

Pno. *fff*

Christine snatches the ruined dress from Lea and takes her over to the pot containing the pig's head.

348

Pno.

*fff* *sfz* *p legato*

352 *grazioso*

C.

Pig - gy's head is near-ly rea- dy fla - king from his dry old skull.

Pno.

*p grazioso colla voce* *p lugubre e misteriosos*

358

C.

He shall truff theground no lon - ger, time for us to scrape and hull.

Pno.

363

*Adagio lusingando*  $\text{♩} = 52$  *p legato*

C.

Drain the pig's head from the

Pno.

*pp*



369

C. *ju - ces, Flay his cheeks and slit his tongue*

Pno.

376

C. *Now my fav - 'rite mo - ment...*

Pno.

383

*pp* *To S. Solo*

C. *Gouge the eyes out one by one.*

Pno. *ppp*

*Red.*

## 10. Animals in the attic

The lights is dim and flickering. A very-agitated Madame enters. She is tearing pages from one of Genevieve's books and scattering them around the room. Genevieve is horrified.

**Vivace furioso** ♩ = 152

Piano

*mp scorrevole*

7

7

436

Pno.

7

7

439

Pno.

*scorrevole*

442

Pno.

444

Pno.

446

Pno.

The musical score is written for piano and consists of six systems of music. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and includes the tempo 'Vivace furioso' and the time signature '♩ = 152'. The music is in 4/4 time and begins with a dynamic marking of 'mp scorrevole'. The first two systems (measures 436-441) feature a prominent seven-note descending scale in the left hand, marked with a '7' and a slur. The subsequent systems (measures 439-446) continue with complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth-note runs and chords, with the instruction 'scorrevole' appearing in the third system. The score concludes with a final cadence in the sixth system.

Pno.

Mme.

*fff* Books! Books! *p* Books, books, books, books,

Pno.

*fff* *3* *3* *fff* *3* *3* *p*

Mme.

books, Books! Books, books, books, books,

Pno.

*p*

Mme.

books, books, books, books, books, books, too ma-ny books!

Pno.

*7* *7*

Mme.

*mf* I should ne-ver have had you e-du-ca-ted.

Pno.

459  
 Mmc. Books! Books! At least our ig - no - rant maids can be  
 Pno.

462  
 Gen. You think so?  
 Mmc. bent to my will!  
 Pno.

465  
 Gen. You think so? Then where are they go - ing, pray?  
 Pno.

468  
 Gen. Up - stairs, up - stairs to  
 Pno.

470 *f* play. *mp sotto voce* scur - ry - ing, scu - rry - ing,  
 Pno.

471

Gen. *scur-ry-ing, scur-ry-ing... scur-ry-ing...scur-ry-ing... scur-ry-ing...*

Pno.

473 *[impersonating Madame's voice]*

Gen. *scur-ry-ing... ...when they should be pre - pa-ring your grande soi - rée!*

Pno. *pp* *pizz 8<sup>va</sup>*

477

Gen. *A-ni-mals in the at-tic! That \_\_\_\_\_ is all we need. A-ni-mals in the at-tic! Chomp - ing as they*

Mme. *A-ni-mals in the at-tic! That \_\_\_\_\_ is all we need. A-ni-mals in the at-tic! Chomp - ing as they*

Pno. *p*

481

Gen. *feed. A-ni-mals in the at-tic! Truf - fling snouts u-pon the floor. A-ni-mals in the at-tic!*

Mme. *feed. A-ni-mals in the at-tic! Truf - fling snouts u-pon the floor. A-ni-mals in the at-tic!*

Pno.

484

Gen. Chill me, chill me to the core!—

Mme. Chill me, chill me to the core!—

Pno.

488

Gen. Ma-man, Ma - man, Some nights— I hear

Pno. *pp*

492

Gen. noi - ses— from the maids' room. Pant - ing, a gut-te - ral cry.

Mme. Does one a

Pno.

496

Gen. It's as if they try to smo - ther ...to smo - ther an

Mme. buse the o - ther?

Pno.

499

Gen. a - ni - mal sound...

Mme. I would send them both a-way if they were not so

Pno. *pp*

502

Mme. cheap, but the ol - der one, Chris - tine, works hard e-nough for two.

Pno. *pp*

505

Mme. No! Des - pite their grunts and groans,, she

Pno.

509

Mme. more than earns their

Pno.

512

Gen. Un - like me.

Mme. keep.

Pno. *sfz*

515

Gen. 3

Mme. 3

No... bnut I'm

Pno. 5

You are not in my em-ploy!

519

Gen. 5

just a use-less toy.

Mme.

Pno. *p*

522

Pno.

525

Pno.

527

Gen. 7

Mme. 7

A-ni-mals in the at-tic! That \_\_\_\_\_ is all we

Pno. *p* 7

A-ni-mals in the at-tic! That \_\_\_\_\_ is all we



530

Gen. need. A-ni-mals in the at-tic! Chomp - ing as they feed. A-ni-mals in the at-tic! Truf-ling snouts u-pon the

Mme. need. A-ni-mals in the at-tic! Chomp - ing as they feed. A-ni-mals in the at-tic! Truf-ling snouts u-pon the

Pno.

534

Gen. floor. A-ni-mals in the at-tic! Chill me, chill me to the core!—

Mme. floor. A-ni-mals in the at-tic! Chill me, chill me to the core!—

Pno.

537

[Recit] **A tempo**

Gen.

Mme. Hea - vens! Is that the time?

Pno.

542

*mp* *pp ma intenso*

Mme. Where are those maids? Where is the ice? Dust... *8va*

Pno. *ppp* *5* *5* *Red.*

68

546 *p*

Mme. *I see dust.*

Pno. *ppp*

sostenuto ped

Ped.

551

Mme. *Look, Ge-ne-vieve. Thou-sands of motes of dir - ty dust*

Pno. *p*

sostenuto ped

557 *ppp*

Mme. *in the glow of the light, the glo - rious light! Sing with me:*

Pno. *sostenuto ppp*

565 *pp*

Gen. *O E - lec - tri - ci - ty how I do wor-ship thee thy fiz - zing whiz - zing*

Mme. *p calmato*

O, E-lec-tri-ci-ty! How I do wor - ship thee, they fiz-zing, whiz-zing

Pno.

sostenuto ped

567 69

Gen. *mp*  
charge... O E - lec - tri - ci - ty how

Mme. *ff* *proclamato*  
charge. Ge - ne - vieve, lou - der! O, E - lec - tri - ci - ty! How I do wor - ship

Pno. trem *fp*

570 *pp*

Gen. I do wor - ship thee Thou does bring light in - to the night.

Mme. *subito p* *espress*  
thee, Thou dost bring light in - to the night

Pno. *f* *subito p* *ppp*

572 *mp*

Gen. If e - ver thou should

Mme. *f marc* *mp*  
Come on, Ge - ne - vieve, join in! If e - ver thou should leave us,

Pno.

574 To S. Solo

Gen. leave us, it would be tru - ly grie - vous.

Mme. it would be tru - ly grie - vous.

Pno.

576

Pno. *pp*

14 14 14 14

*Ped.*

578

Pno.

14 16

579

Pno.

18 20

580

Pno.

Presto meccanico ♩ = 140

581

Pno. *pp*

586

Mme. *sfz* *f pesante, legato*  
 As MADAME  
 Maids fail! Wage

Pno.

591

Gen. Iron blows! Soiled frock!

Mme. *sfz*  
 As LEA  
 docked! Push

Pno.

597

Mme. *port.* *sfz*  
 plug! No luck?

Pno. *pp* *sfz*

601

Gen. Fat chance We're fucked!

Mme.

Pno. *sfz*

605 As GENEVIEVE

Gen.   
 Ma - man, Ma - man, I'm

Pno.

610

Gen.   
 stuck

Mme. *f pesante, legato* *sfz*   
 Leve toi. Shut up!

Pno. *sfz*

615

Mme.   
 Maids, you are hope-less this is a mess. On-ly two hours 'till the

Pno. *sfz* *sfz*

8<sup>vb</sup> -----

621

Mme.   
 guests come. We are plunged in to pan - de - mo - ni - um.

Pno. *pp* *sfz*

8 -----

627

Mme. I can bare - ly breathe, up - hea -

Pno. *pp*

⑧.....

632

Mme. - val makes me spare! I loathe you

Pno. *sfz*

⑧.....

638

Mme. use - less pair!

Pno. *f*

643

Mme. Come here right now, Chris-tine Le - a, I'll make you

Pno. *p* *mf*

649 *cresc.*

Mme. bow be - fore me beg for for for...—

Pno.

655 *To A Solo*

Mme. Ah

Pno. *ff martellato*

658

Pno.



## 11. Complaint Tango

Slow tango ♩ = 112

Christine

When we were young

Piano *p* crisp and light

438

Chr. bea-ten dai-ly by our fa - ther I prayed to God

Pno.

442

Chr. — that we would es-cape one day. He was a drunk

Pno.

446

Chr. and our mo-ther was a sad whore. They could-n't love,

Pno.

450

Chr. on-ly ha-tred came our way.

Lea. **LEA**  
I love Chris - tine but I wish she weren't so

Pno.

455

Mme. sca - ry. I won-der if we're head-ed for some dread - ful

Pno.

459

Mme. crime. I ne - ver know if she'll kiss me or she'll

Pno.

463

Mme. *port.* kill me. And yet I crave her affec-tion all the time. *rit.*

Pno.

468 *p*

Chr. Life here is not as I hoped, Life is not as I

Mme. Life here is not as I hoped, Life is not as I

Pno. *p*  
*rfz*

473

Chr. planned, Life it dead-ens the heart, Life it rips you a - part. We're

Mme. planned, Life it dead-ens the heart, Life it rips you a - part. We're

Pno. *rfz*

478

Chr. stran - ded here in this house four flawed/mad wo-men.

Mme. stran - ded here in this house four flawed/mad wo-men.

Pno. *rfz*

483

Pno.

488

*mf*

Mme.

When my dear Jaques had a heart at-tack and dropped dead,

3

Pno.

492

Mme.

I hoped to find a re - place-ment with no fuss. I've missed the

3

*mp*

Pno.

497

*p*

Mme.

boat, who would want to stroke my bo - dy? My sag-ging

3

*port.*

Pno.

501

Gen.

I hate Chris - tine

*f*

Mme.

flesh could ne-ver move a man to lust.

Pno.

Genevieve

506

Gen.. and the way she treats her sis - ter. I wish her dead

Pno.

510

Gen.. *mp* and lit-tle Le - a for my own. *pp* She'd brush me hair *espress*

Pno.

514

Gen.. and I'd read to her all eve - ning. We'd ne-ver be bored un-hap-py or a

Pno.

519

Gen.. lone. Life here is not as I hoped, Life is not as I

Mme. Life here is not as I hoped, Life is not as I

Pno. *subito p espress* *rfz* *rfz* *rfz*

525

Gen.. planned, Life is not for the weak Life is not for the bland. We're stran - ded

Mme. planned, Life is not for the weak Life is not for the bland. We're stran - ded

Pno. *rfz* *rfz* *rfz*

531

Gen.. here in this house four flawed wo-men.

Mme. here in this house four flawed wo-men.

Pno.

**Più mosso** ♩ = 126 *rfz*

**Christine** *f* common as muck  
*con forza*

536

Chr. Here with Ma - dame, we are pu-nished al-most

Pno.

539

Chr. dai - ly. Our wa - ges docked

Pno.

542

Chr. when the fuck-ing i - ron blows! *sfz*

Mme. **Madame** *mf* warm and operatic

Pno. With no strong

545

Chr. Ah Ah

Mme. man I must make all the de - ci - sions Keep them in *Port.*

Pno.

549

Chr. Ah Ah

Mme. line, oh how wea-ry this task grows. I hope one day **Lea**

Pno.

554

Lea. we will leave this gloo-my cas - tle, Live e - ver af - ter\_\_\_\_\_

Pno.

558

Gen. All Mo-ther wants\_\_\_\_\_

Lea. \_\_\_\_\_ in the coun-try wild and free. Ah\_\_\_\_\_

Pno.

562

Gen. \_\_\_\_\_ is for me to find a hus - band. I'll run a - way \_\_\_\_\_ whisk-ing Le-a off with

Lea. \_\_\_\_\_ Ah \_\_\_\_\_ Ah \_\_\_\_\_

Pno.



567 *p*

Gen. me. Life here is not as I hoped, Life is not as I

Lea. Ah Life here is not as I hoped, Life is not as I

Pno. *p*  
*rfz* *rfz* *rfz*

573

Gen. planned, Life it dead-ens the heart, Life it rips you a - part. We're stran - ded

Lea. planned, Life it dead-ens the heart, Life it rips you a - part. We're stran - ded

Pno. *rfz* *rfz* *rfz*

579 *To S. Solo*

Gen. here in this house four flawed/mad wo-men.

Lea. here in this house four flawed/mad wo-men.

Pno. *rfz*

584

Gen.

Lea.

Pno.

# 12. Duet - I love her is a special way

Con moto ♩ = 92

Piano

Chr. *f* very operatically  
Yes, Ma-dam! Ev-ery-thing's fine...

Pno. *f* *p*

Chr. *rit.*  
...a slight prob-lem with the... sock - et... so wpressed it in a lit-tle fur - ther!

Pno.

The bell rings for Genevieve's room, sounding not so threatening as Madame's. Lea enters slowly with the dress for the party. The scene is surprisingly calm and serene.

A tempo ♩ = 92

Both maids laugh

Pno.

450

Pno.

453

Pno.

*p*

*mp*

459

Chr.

*p*

If Le - a were my sis - ter, \_\_\_\_\_

L.

*p*

Sis - ter, sis - ter \_\_\_\_\_

Pno.

*espress*

468

Chr.

I would care for her. \_\_\_\_\_ Chris - tine

L.

Chris - tine cares for \_\_\_\_\_ me...

Pno.

474

Chr. has few charms

L. Keeps me safe from harm.

Pno.

479 *mp parlando*

Chr. The way she stares some times If on - ly I could

L. if on - ly I could show her just how

Pno.

484

Chr. have her re-moved from this house...

L. much I love her.

Pno. *misterioso pp*

489 *misterioso*

Pno. *pp*

495 Recit

Chr. Do you wish me to read to you?

L. Oh, please, yes, mis-tress, some-thing new...

Pno.

Sereno ma misterioso ♩ = 52

499 Genevieve opens her book.... *mp parlando e semplice*

Chr. The

Pno. *mf espress e narrante* *p espirando* *espress.* *espress.*

*Red.*

506

Gen. sweet-smel-ling hand-mai den lo-ving-ly bathes the sup-pu-ra-ting sores of the poor\_\_ prin-cess.

Pno.

510

Gen. The ol-der mai-den, a-las, is rough, her fin-gers cal-loused, her man-ner gruff. At

Pno. *mp* *mp*

514 *mp* *p* *legatiss*

Gen. night the brute curls up a-lone, a snort-ing fart-ing hud-dle While the prin-cess and her fran-grant miss lie

Pno. *mp* *p* *legatiss*

519 *pp* *semplice dolce*

Gen. down lie down to-ge-ther in warmth and bliss. I feel sad for the bru-tish one

L. *semplice dolce*

Pno. *misterioso pp* *semplice dolce*

528 *ppp* *pp sotto voce, legato*

Gen. Qui-et would you spoil the fun? Mai-den's breath, prin-cess-'s neck limbs

Pno. *ppp* *pp lusingando e misterioso*

Red.

534

Gen. min-gle, skin tin-gles... The prin-cess Ge-ne-vieve re-

Pno.

539 *f* *mf* *p*

Gen. wards her scen-ted friend with a gift of a gol-den locket her like-ness hid-den with-in a

Pno. *p*

544

Gen. lock of hair pressed there.

Pno. *misterioso* *pp*

Genevieve gets up from teh chair and puts a pendent around Lea's neck

551 *ppp*

Gen. *misterioso* Now they have a las-ting bond

Pno. *pp*

557

Gen. Maid and prin-cess for all their lives long.

L. Oh What a strange sto-ry, I don't quite know what to

Pno.

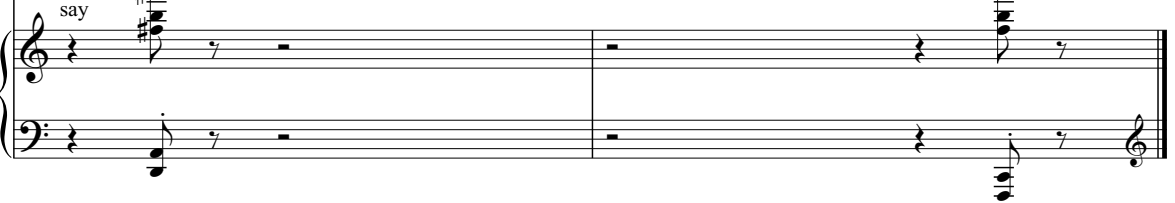


she closes the book

561

Gen. 

L. 

Pno. 

say

# 13. On all fours...

Con moto ♩ = 120

Madame screams from behind the curtain. Genevieve rushes off to see what is going on. Madame storms on

*capriccioso*

Piano

*mp* *pp* *mp*

non ped

Pno.

438 *pp*

Pno.

445 *mp* *mp*

Pno.

450 *fff* *sfz* *fff* *sfz* *p*

Ped. *Ped.* *Ped.*

Pno.

453 *fff* *sfz*

Ped. *Ped.*

The musical score is written for piano and consists of five systems. The first system is for the piano, with a tempo of 'Con moto' and a metronome marking of 120. It features a 'capriccioso' character. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *pp* (pianissimo), and a 'non ped' (no pedal) instruction. The second system begins at measure 438 with a *pp* marking. The third system begins at measure 445 with *mp* markings. The fourth system begins at measure 450 and features a variety of dynamics including *fff* (fortissimo), *sfz* (sforzando), and *p* (piano), along with 'Ped.' (pedal) markings. The fifth system begins at measure 453 with *fff* and *sfz* markings. The score is written in 2/4 time, with some changes to 3/4 time in the later measures.

456 *fff* 93

M. Maids!\_ Maids!\_

Pno. *fff* *sfz* *p*

Red.

460 *f marcato*

M. Chris - tine! Chris - tine! Here\_ now!

Pno. *fff* *sfz* *fff* *sfz* *p*

Red.

463

M. Here now!\_ Chris - tine! Chris - tine!

Pno. *fff* *sfz* *fff* *sfz* *pp*

Red.

467 *mf* *breathy and non legato*

M. This is... the last... she is...

Pno.

471

M. *mf*  
they are... ice has... mel - ted... pool - ing

Pno.

475

M. *fort.*  
o - ver the di - ning room car - pet...

Pno. *pp*

478

M. *mf*  
Looks like...

Pno. *pp*

481

M. *mf*  
drib - ble... the guests... less than... an hour...

Pno.

(swooning as if to faint...)

485

M. *port.* to go... and no... and no, and no, and no

Pno.

489

M. *fff sf sf* i - ice! Chris - tine, Chris - tine! Chris - tine, Chris - tine!

Pno. *fff sfz fff sfz fff sfz fff sfz* *misterioso pp*

Ped.

Christine appears

495

C. *p senza espressione* Yes Ma - dame, no Ma -

Pno.

499

C. dame, I came as quiack - ly as I could.

Pno.

502 Madame furiously scribbles a note and hands it to Christine to read.

*mp* rather lack lustre *rit.*

Fetch more ice... ur- gent...plus de-ter-gent

*mf* *articolato*

*pp*

507 *mp* rather lack lustre

A pid-dle-like pud-dle\_ in the mid-dle of\_ the

*mf* *articolato*

*pp*

*Allegretto capriccioso*  
♩. = 66

510 *p*

of the... I can-not read *this* word

Car-pet\_ ta - pis\_

*ff* *sfz*

Madame snatches the paper and rips it into pieces, throwing it on the floor. She grabs Christine and they face each other for the first time. She points to the pieces of paper and stares at Christine.

515

Steam - ing turd

*sfz* *ff* *fff* *sfz* *sfz* *ff*

*Ped.*

521

Pno.

*fff* *sfz*

Red.

521

522

523

524

525

526 *p* //

C. *p* Yes, — Ma-dame.

M. *p* Pi - ck tha - t u - p

Pno. *p cantabile e rubato* // *ff*

532 *p* *p rit.* . . .

C. All fours, now. Yes... Ma - dame. —

M.

Pno. *p cantabile e rubato* //

540 *ff* *Vivace furioso* ♩ = 152 *p marc*

M. All fours co-chon wild boar! We have

Pno. *pp*

546 *p* *mp*

C. Yes Ma dame, No Ma

M. hared you through the floor, Some - thing hap - pens — in the maids' room.

Pno.



550 99

*mf*

C.   
 dame. Yes Ma-dame

M.   
 Some - thing... strange\_\_ be-tween you two. *mf* First the i - ron

Pno.

554

*f*

C.   
 No\_\_ Ma - dame!

M.   
 then the ice. *mf* I would sack you in a trice

Pno.

557

M.   
 were it not that I need you\_\_ to make things right for to - night.

Pno.

560 *ff*

C. *ff* No,

M. *ff*  
 A - ni - mal! Lick up the dirt Use youre rough-ened tongue.

Pno.

563

C. Ma - dame! No! No!

M. Chew on pa - per

Pno.

567 *mf*

M. *mf* *3* Swal - low down.

Pno.


570 *f* *subito fff*


C. No. Ma - dame! To A. Solo

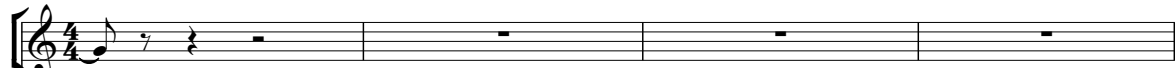
M. *f* *3* The task has just be - gun!

Pno.

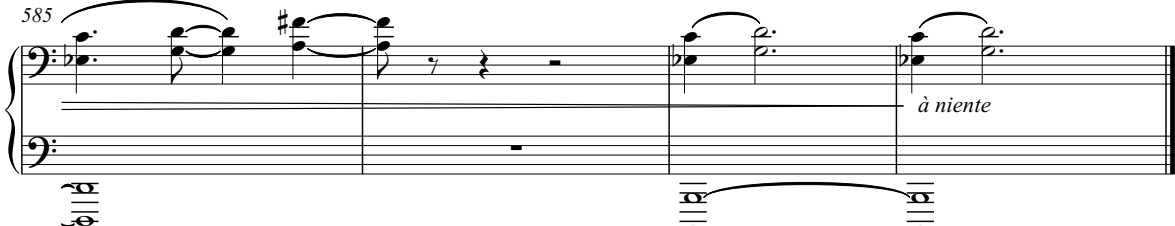
574 **Molto meno mosso** ♩ = 100 *p marc*

C. 

Pno. *pp misterioso* 

581 

Pno. 

585 

*à niente*

## 14. Hunt to Kill

In the kitchen - Lea is taking very-burnt bread out of the oven

## A la gigue - Vivace

8va

Piano *p ballabile*

*f marc*

595 (8)

loco

Pno.

602

Pno.

608

Pno. *p*

615

Pno. *ff*

622

Pno. *pp*

628 Pno. *pp* *p* *8va* 103

634 Pno. *pp* *8va*

640 Pno. *pp* *p* *8va*

646 Lca. *mp* *ma intenso* *port.*

647 Pno. *pp* *8va* The

653 Lca. *port.* *rfz* bread (d) it's burned (d) X. black

654 Pno. *pp* *port.*

659 Pno. *pp* *p* *8va*

104

Pno.

Chr.

*mp*

No time to turn

Pno.

*f*

*pp leggiero*

*espr*

Chr.

back (ck)

Pno.

*espr*

Chr.

*mp*

The bread it's burned

Pno.

*pp*

Chr.

black (ck)

Pno.

*espr*

690 *p* 105

Chr. *Fic-celles, fou-gasses, ba-guettes, le - vain,*

Lea. *black*

Pno. *pp* *p*

696 *Christine starts manically slicing the bread*

Chr.

Pno.

702 *mf*

Chr. *Don-nez nous nos pain quo-ti-di - an. Mis-ter Ba-ker*

Pno. *pp*

710

Chr. *burns his bread burns his bread, Mis-sus Ba-ker chops his head chops his head*

Pno.

Clock chimes again

723

Chr. chop chop chop chop chop chop chop chop

Lea. Six o' - clock! Six o' clock!

Pno. *f*

736

Lea. We must make more

Pno. *p ballabile*

745

Chr. *fmarc*

Lea. There's laun - dry here and iron - ing still... Puts him in the red hot o -

Pno. *8va*

752

Chr. - ven

Lea. more The soup has

Pno. *loco*



758 *ff*

Chr.

Lea. 

not been made

Pno.

764 *ff*

Lea. 

Stoke the fires

Pno. *p*

770 *f marc*

Lea. 

We are hope - less - ly de - layed! (d)

Pno. *ff*

777 *p*

Chr. 

Puts... him... in... the... red... hot...

Pno. *pp*

783

Chr. 

o... - ven...

Pno. *pp*

789

Chr. serves... him... to...

Pno. *pp* *pp* *p*

795

Chr. the... guests...

Pno. *pp*

801

Chr. in... stead!

Pno.

808

Pno. *pppp* *pmarc*

814

Pno. *rfz* *pmarc* *sfz*

Chr. *port.* Wa - ter's boiled, clothes

Lca. *f* Cold soak stick pokes

Pno. *pmarc* *sfz*

Chr. *port.* are soiled Scrub them,

Lca. Scrub them!

Pno.

Chr. *p* rub them Fling them, wring them,

Lca. Rub them! Smooth the grooves and hang them in the

Pno. *sfz*

Christine flings the laundry all over the place

842 *rfz*

Chr. *rfz*

Lea. *rfz*

Pno.

849 *mp* rather devoutly

Chr. *mp* rather devoutly

Re - mem - ber in the con - vent the song we used to

Pno. *ff* *ppp* *delicato*

857 *p* *semplice*

Chr. *p* *semplice*

sing? 'Wring, wring, wring,

Pno. *bisbigliando*

865

Chr. squeeze the cot-ton dry, Poke the lin-en

Pno. *mf* *sonoro*

873 *pp* *legatiss*

Chr. *pp* *legatiss*

with a stick, stab sis-ter in the eye.' An

Pno. *ppp* *murmurando*

882 *mf sonoro* 111

Chr. eye for an eye... An eye for an

Pno.

889 *rfz* Clock chimes again

Chr. eye... Sis - ter, please

Lea.

Pno. *p ballabile* *f* *f* *Red.*

895

Lea. Sis - ter, please six - o' clock! Spoiled frock! Guests will

Pno. *f* *f* *f* *p ballabile* *f marc*

902

Lea. knock!

Pno. *pppp* *p marc*

909

Lca. *f* <sup>2</sup>  
Knead dough

Pno. *rfz* *pmarc* *sfz*

916 *p con devozione*

Chr. Oh heav' - ly Fa - ther,

Lca. *mp*

Pno. *ppp legatissimo* *so slow* *pmarc*

927 *mp lugubre e pesante*

Lca. *port.* bad soup *port.* green gloup

Pno. *p* *sfz*

934

Chr. I pray for the slaugh - ter of thoses

Pno. *sfz*

946

Chr. wick - ed wo - men who did com -

Lea. Hog flaked

Pno.

*mf* *port.* *p*

955

Chr. mit such grave sins

Lea. Cakes baked Plate fish gar - nish

Pno.

*port.*

962

Chr. in the guise of po - ver - ty and chas - ti - ty...

Pno.

969

Chr. pro - tect us from their e - vil, pro - tect us from their

Lea. pro - tect us from their e - vil, pro -

Pno. *f* *pp* *delicato*

114

977 *wicked?/eternal?*

*mf cresc molto*  
*Marcato e ritmico*

Chr. dai - ly e - vil Bet - ter to skin than to be

Lea. tect us from their e - vil

*bisbigliando* *mp cresc molto*

Pno.

*Red.*

983

Chr. skinned (d) Bet - ter to skin than to be skinned (d) An

Lea. Skin them fling them skin them

Pno.

988

Chr. eye for an eye...

Lea. fling them skin them skin them

Pno. *ff* *8va*



995 *mf*

Chr. Bet-ter to skin than to be skinned (d)

Lea. *mf*  
Bet-ter to skin than to be skinned (d)

Pno. *p*

← . = . →

1010 *mp amabile*

Chr. Sis - ter, mon a-mour, mon cher se-cret, All my wa-king hours, I think of you, Long-ing for the

Pno.

1018 *p*

Chr. times we share a-lone, in our lit-tle room all the night... What is this,

Pno. *misterioso pp*

1025 *p*

Chr. — Le a, a-round your neck?

Lea. *p*  
No - thing, sis - ter, no- thing...

Pno. *pp*

1028

Chr. Give it to me... Give it to me... To A. Solo let \_\_\_\_\_

Lea. no- thing... no- thing...

Pno. *pp*

**Meno mosso**

1031 Christine opens the locket

Chr. — me see

Pno. *ppp lusingando*

Bells start ringing; Christine starts wailing; Lea backs away from her.

$\text{♩} = 147$

1038 *ffff*

Pno.

Pno.

*ff*

1042

Pno.

Pno.

Pno.

1046

Pno.

Pno.

Pno.

There is a bang -  
The lights go out

1051

**Vivace furioso** ♩ = 152  
*scorrevole*

Pno.

Pno.

1054

Pno.

Pno.

1057

Pno.

Pno.

Pno.

1061

Chr.

Mme.

Chris - tine! Le - a! Can - dles! Fetch!\_ Fetch!\_ Fetch!\_ Fetch!\_

Pno.

1065

Mme.

Fetch!\_ Can - dles! Fetch! Fetch! Fetch! Fetch!

Pno.

1067

Gen.

Mme.

Fetch! Fetch! Fetch! Fetch! Fetch! Fetch! Can - dles!

Pno.

1070

Gen. heard them go up - stairs, ma-man. The

Mme. Up - stairs?

Pno.

1073

Gen. door pulled hard and shut with the latch, with the

Pno.

1076

Gen. latch!

Mme. Where are they? Those sis - ters!

Pno.

1079

Gen. Up - stairs,

Mme. *p* Now where are they go - ing, pray? Up - stairs,

Pno.

1082 *mp sotto voce*

Gen. up - stairs to play. scur-ry-ing,

Mme. up - stairs to scu-rry-ing, *mp sotto voce*

Pno.

1084

Gen. scur-ry-ing, scur-ry-ing, scur-ry-ing,

Mme. scur-ry-ing... scur-ry-ing... scur-ry-ing...

Pno.

1086

Gen. ...when they should be pre - pa-ring your grande soi - rée!  
To A. Solo

Mme. ...when they should be pre - pa-ring my grande soi - rée!

Pno. *pp* *ff* *ppp murmurando*

1090 **CHRISTINE** *p sotto voce*


Chr. Ding dong ditch, Ge-ne - vieve's a snitch,


**LEA** *p sotto voce*

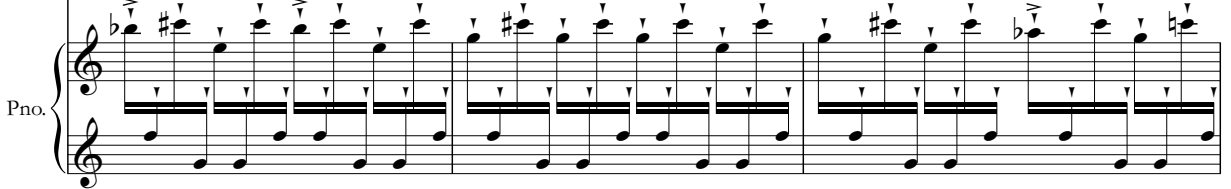
Lea. Ding dong ditch, Ge-ne - vieve's a

Pno.

1093 121

Chr. 

Lea. 

Pno. 

Genevieve lights a candle

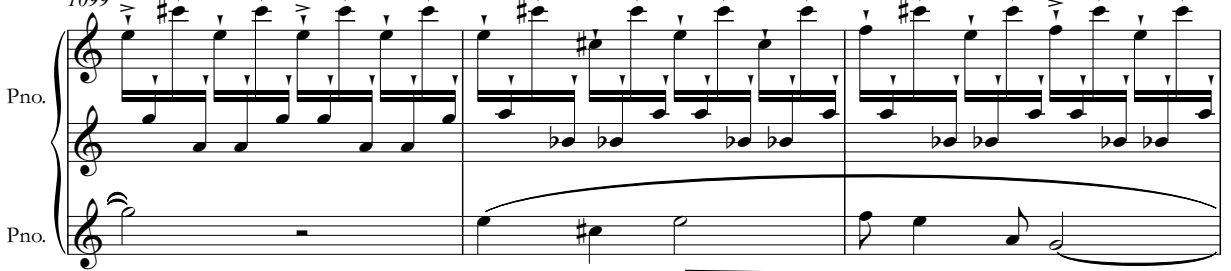
1096

Chr. 


Lea. 

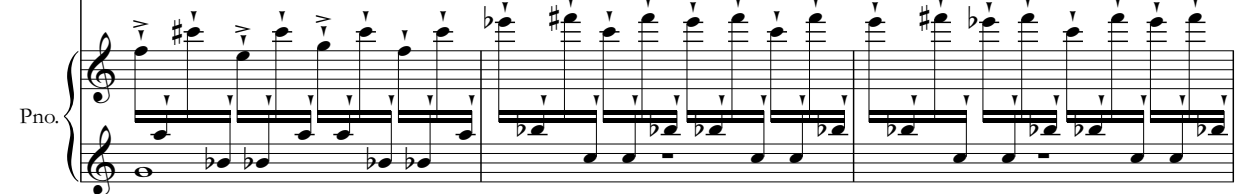
Pno. 

1099

Pno. 

1102 MADAME *mp sonoro*

Mme. 

Pno. 

1105

Mme. lead me up the stairs

Pno.

1108 *cresc. poco a poco*

Mme. Let me see what hap - pens in their sealed and fe - tid

Pno.

1111

Mme.

Pno. fair!

*ppp*

1114

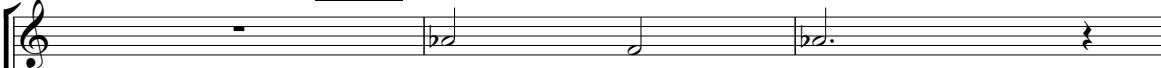
Pno. *p*

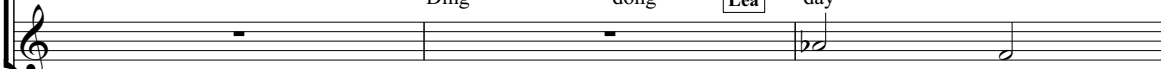
1117

Pno. *ppp* *murmurando*



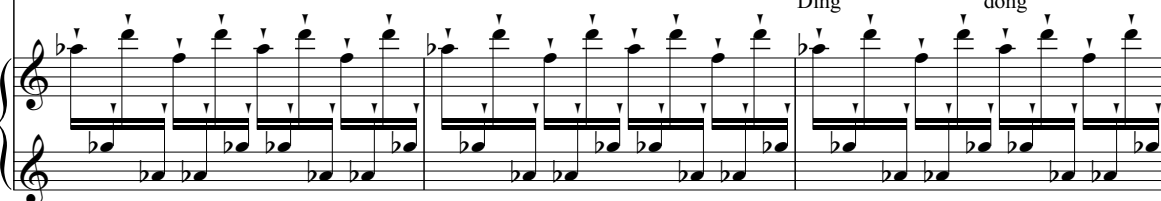
1120 Christine

Chr. 


Lea. 


Ding dong Lea day

Ding dong

Pno. 

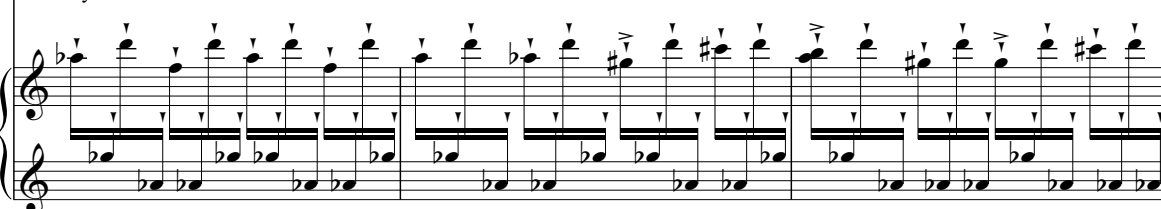
1123

Chr. 


Lea. 

Ma - dame's on her way


day Ma - dame's on her

Pno. 

1126

Lea. 

way

Pno. 

1129

Chr. 

Lea. 

We are in the slaugh - ter house

We are in the slaugh - ter house

Pno. 

1132

Chr. Come out and play

Lea. Come out and

Pno.

1134

Lea. play

Pno.

1136

Chr. We are in the slaugh - ter house

Lea. We are in the

Pno.

1138

Chr. Come out and play

Lea. slaugh - ter house come out and play!.

Pno.

1141 To S.  
Chr. To A. Solo  
Lea.  
Pno.

Madame is knocking on the door

1142  
Gen.  
Mme.  
Pno.

Out! Out! Out, I say! Je-ze-bels! Whores! Fil - thy pigs! Out I say! Out! Out! OUT!

Sound of opening door.  
The candle goes out

Meno mosso ♩ = 59

1143  
Gen.  
Mme.  
Pno.

*p plattif*

*p* Ma - man...

I can-not see you...

*misterioso*

1149  
Gen.  
Mme.  
Pno.

Ma - man... Ma - man...

Show your-selves at - tic

1153

Gen. *To A. Sol* Ma - man... Per - haps we should not...

Mme. a - ni - mals.

Pno.

A la gigue - Vivace

1157

Chr. **CHRISTINE** *f marc* *The dull thud of metal on skull*

Lea. At-tic a-ni-mals hunt to kill thrill to the spill **MADAME** *gliss.*

Argghhh!

Pno. *f ballabile*

*fff*

1163

Chr. *f marc*

Lea. **MADAME** *gliss.*

Argghhh!

Pno. *loco*

1169

Chr. hunt to kill thrill to the spill

Pno.

1175

Chr. *f marc* At-tic a-ni-mals hunt to kill

Lea. **LEA** *f marc* At-tic a-ni-mals hunt to kill

Pno.

1181

Chr. thrill to the spill Get to work!

Lea. thrill to the spill

Pno.

1188 *mp legato*

Chr. Limbs min -

Lea. Yes sis - ter

Pno. *pp*

1195

Chr. gle... Skin tin - gles...

Pno.

1202 *f marc*

Chr. At-tic a - ni-mal hunt to kill thrill to the spill Thrill to the spill

Lea. At-tic a - ni-mal hunt to kill thrill to the spill Hunt to kill

Pno. *f ballabile*

*ffff*

GENEVIEVE

1208 *port.* *f marc* 129

Chr. Ma - man! Thrill to the spill! At - tic a - ni - mals

Lea. Hunt to kill, hunt to kill!

Pno. *loco*

1214

Chr. hunt to kill thrill to the spill Hunt to kill!

Lea. At - tic a - ni - mals hunt to kill thrill to the spill Thrill to the spill!

Pno.

1219

Chr. Hunt to kill! A - ni - mals in the at - tic!

Lea. A - ni - mals in the at - tic!

Pno.

*fffff* howling like a fox at the moon

1225

Chr. Ai-ooo! *fffff* howling like a fox at the moon Ai-ooo!

Lca. Ai-ooo! Ai-ooo!

Pno. *fffff*

Ped.

1233

Chr. Ai - ooo!

Lca. Ai - ooo!

Pno.

Pno.



1238

Chr.

Lea.

Pno.

Pno.

This musical score page contains four staves. The top two staves are for voice: 'Chr.' (Soprano) and 'Lea.' (Alto). Both parts feature a melodic line with a long slur spanning measures 1238 and 1239, and a final half-note chord in measure 1241. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The right hand (treble clef) plays a series of chords, each marked with a 'v' (accents) and a 'b' (flats) for the notes. The left hand (bass clef) plays a triplet of eighth notes in measures 1238 and 1239, followed by a single eighth note in measure 1240 and a final half-note chord in measure 1241. A large bracket at the bottom of the piano part spans the entire section from measure 1238 to 1241.

## 15. Chorale and finale

1242 **Sereno** ♩ = 82

Pno. *p* *semplice dolce*

1249

Pno. *ppp*

1258

Chr. Now is the time to set our ta-ble, For you are our feast to - day, Knives are

Lea. Now is the time to set our ta-ble, For you are our feast to - day, Knives are

Pno. *mp legato*

1268

Chr. shar-pened, nap - kins rea - dy, Please be sea - ted step this way.

Lea. shar-pened, nap - kins rea - dy, Please be sea - ted step this way.

Pno.

1275

Pno.

*ppp*

1284

Chr.

Lea.

Pno.

*p* Our palms ca - ress your sta - ring eyes. No more they'll judge or watch or

*p* Our palms ca - ress your sta - ring eyes. No more they'll judge or watch or

*mp legato*

1293

Chr.

Lea.

Pno.

cry. We press/dig with fin - gers, pop them out, roll the/your blind orbs round a

cry. We press/dig with fin - gers, pop them out, roll the/your blind orbs round

1301

Chr.

Lea.

Pno.

a - bout.

a - bout.

*mf subito*

1308

Chr. *ppp*  
We

Lea. *ppp*  
We

Pno.

1315

Chr. lift your skirts and brand you there. Pat - tern thighs with zig - zag tears.

Lea. lift your skirts and brand you there. Pat - tern thighs with zig - zag tears.

Pno. *ppp*

1323

Chr. Pluck out nails and teeth and hair... Our *mise en place* is now pre - pared.

Lea. Pluck out nails\_ and teeth\_ and\_ hair... Our *mise en place* is now pre - pared.

Pno. *ppp* *ppp*

A candle is eventually lit and we see the maids standing, wrapped in a white sheet, one with Madame's gloves and the other with Genevieve's dress/locket and the candle. The lights get brighter and brighter.

1331

Pno.

1337 135

Pno.

1343

Pno.

1349

Chr. *mp semplice dolce*

Lea. *mp semplice dolce* Gleams bright,

Knife wiped, Jug cleaned,

Pno.

1355

Chr. Light sheen, Scoured stair...—

Lea. —

Pno. Shines there,

1361

Chr. Soiled glove...— Cleansed pair,

Lea. —

Pno. plunged, rubbed. Maids bare.

1367

Chr. *p*  
Crisp, neat.. *p* Deux bonnes

Lea. *p*  
White sheet, — *p* Deux bonnes

Pno.

1373

Chr. *pp*  
femmes *pp* Deux bonnes

Lea. *pp*  
femmes *pp* Deux bonnes

Pno.

1378

Chr. *pp*  
femmes *pp*

Lea. *pp*  
femmes *pp*

Pno.

1383

Pno.

1388

Pno.