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by

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ABSTRACT

Musical Theatre has long suffered the stigma of being perceived as a low form of art by scholars and critics alike. Derived from popular forms of entertainment such as revue and vaudeville, the musical is still dismissed by many as a frivolous form of entertainment. This has led to a lack of critical literature which explores the serious dramatic potential of this genre and the ways in which elements such as music and movement can be used not only to drive the narrative, but also to create a more layered and nuanced understanding of the characters and plot. The use of these conventions can also be said to have directly influenced the evolution of the ‘integrated musical’ where dance, song and the action are (ideally) used equally to assist the storytelling process with no single aspect overshadowing the others.

While the importance of song and dialogue cannot be denied, it is the inherently physical nature of dance which makes it perhaps the most fascinating (and difficult) to study. Unlike its counterparts, dance does not require words to tell a story. There are many instances where this has been exploited to marvellous effect in the musical genre, however in order to explore this phenomenon I have performed a case study of two important ‘integrated’ choreographic works. The first of these is “Night and Day” from The Gay Divorcee (1934) with the second being the dream ballet “Laurey Makes Up Her Mind” from Oklahoma! (1955)1. Both of these numbers are arguably important in the development and history of the integrated musical through their use of dance. In addition, the work done by their respective choreographers has greatly influenced my own practical research, comprising of the creation of choreography for two very different productions, a musical adaption of Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night and an original, collaborative piece Gesamtkunstwerk.

1 Due to the lack of footage from the original stage shows I have chosen dance numbers from stage musicals which were then adapted for the screen by their respective choreographers and retain much of the original choreography.
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INTRODUCTION

The early twentieth century was an era of great social, historical and technological change. Accordingly, the popular entertainment of the day also experienced a huge evolution in order to keep up with ever changing audience demands. This can be seen clearly in the development of the ‘integrated musical’, a permutation of the musical genre which indicates a clear move away from earlier theatrical forms. Where once song and dance numbers had been designed to showcase the specific talents of the headlining performers and often served little narrative purpose, there is a clear shift in the early to mid twentieth century towards musical forms where the story is told “through songs and dance, not despite them” (Mueller: 1984, p31). The ideologies which inform the integrated musical have been explored by many; however, the role of dance within the integrated musical is often diminished or overlooked entirely. This appears to be due to two predominant factors, the first being the inherent difficulty of trying to capture and analyse such an ephemeral art form and the second being the ongoing alignment of dance, musical theatre and most especially dance in musical theatre as ‘low’ forms of art unworthy of critical attention. For this reason my research has been directed specifically towards the development of the integrated musical and the important role that dance plays as a dramatic device within it, looking at the work of specific choreographers and scholars in order to better identify where this phenomenon came from and how it can be used to comment on the musical genre as a whole.

My initial research led me to John Kenrick, author of Musical Theatre: A History (2011) and administrator of the popular website musicals101.com (2004). The former is a general history of the genre which hearkens back to Ancient Greek and Roman Theatre and continues on into the modern day. Kenrick remains thorough but concise throughout the text and although he is predominantly concerned with musical theatre as a whole there is still a lot of important insights to be found regarding dance and choreography within the text. His website is not as up to date however it is easier to navigate, with a section set aside exclusively for dance. These two short essays give a clear historical outline of the role that dance has played in both stage and screen musicals, with Kenrick touching briefly on a variety of notable choreographers, performers, directors and productions for both. Perhaps most notable is the introduction to Stage Musicals where he laments the lack of
critical literature available which discusses the development of dance in musical theatre (Kenrick: 2004).

Kenrick is only one of many who shows concern at the lack of scholarly material in this area. In the article *Broadway Dancin'* Glenn Loney raises some very pertinent questions about the recording, reconstruction and preservation of dances from musicals, suggesting that the ephemeral and ever changing nature of dance does not endear it to those wishing to study it (Loney: 1979). Alexandra Carter, editor and contributor for *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader* (1998) and *Rethinking Dance History: a reader* (2004) speaks passionately of the difficulties facing dance scholars, with the beginnings of a tangible academic heritage only beginning to emerge recently as video recording technologies have improved. The difficulty of annotating or recording dance has led to what Helen Thomas calls a history of “lost dances” (Carter: 2004, p34) making it incredibly difficult to undertake a thorough critical examination of certain genres. The musical is one such genre, with the original choreography from many stage productions having been lost. Thankfully, the advent of the screen musical has helped to preserve shows which were adapted from the stage, often reusing the same choreography. John Mueller is one of the few scholars who has used this to his advantage and his work is virtually unparalleled in the field. His work on the integrated musical builds on earlier literature, designing his own parameters to categorise song and dance numbers based on their level of ‘integration’ (Mueller: 1984). He also provides an extensive analysis of the choreography from each of Fred Astaire’s screen musicals in *Astaire Dancing: The Musical Films* (Mueller: 1985). Not only does he present the reader with valuable synopsis and other important details about the film making process, he also uses multiple screen captures to highlight the detailed written analysis he has made on each and every one of the dance numbers in Astaire’s thirty odd screen musicals. In doing so, Mueller provides an in depth and fascinating look at Astaire’s choreography, much of which was adapted directly from the stage. In comparison the literature focusing on the work of Agnes de Mille in *Oklahoma!* – which according to many scholars was the first fully integrated musical – is remarkably poor. In the article *The Musical Play Expands* Larry Stempel speaks briefly about how the innovation of de Mille and other choreographers such as George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins helped to create the integrated musical tradition but there is simply
no space for detailed analysis in such a short article (Stempel: 1992). There are also several histories which explore the creation and proliferation of Oklahoma! including Max Wilk’s Story of Oklahoma (2002) and Tim Carter’s Oklahoma! The Making of an American Musical (2007) however both of these texts are disappointing in comparison to Mueller’s. For such a landmark production it is disappointing to see such a lack of critical engagement from scholars, especially in relation to its supposedly groundbreaking choreography.

The disappointing lack of literature on dance in the musical is somewhat alleviated by the emergence of critical texts which are now beginning to look quite closely both at musicals and at potential methodologies for analysing it. I have already spoken about John Mueller and the emergence of an ‘integration theory’ in the mid 1980’s however in the ensuing decades we can see other theoretical frameworks emerging. Stephen Banfield studies genre theory (amongst others) as a basis for analysing musicals in his article Five Ways of Looking at Musicals (1994). Barely a decade later and we see a return to the ideologies that were informing Mueller’s integration theories, discussed critically and in depth by Scott McMillin in The Musical As Drama (2006). McMillin’s text is fascinating because it examines musical theatre as an art form in its own right, not just as an evolution of previous traditions but as its own genre which may have actually moved beyond traditional methods of analysis. He poses many questions pertinent to my own research including, what are the conventions of the integrated musical? How do we classify them? And even, are integrated musicals truly ‘integrated’ at all?
Part One – Musicals and Analysis: An Ongoing Struggle

One of the many difficulties inherent in studying the musical form is its exceptionally long history. Specific conventions of the modern day musical have been traced back as far as the Dionysian festivals of Ancient Greece, and the dramatic possibilities of integrated song and dance were being explored long before the advent of what we have come to know as the integrated musical. At its basest level, scholars and critics alike tend to agree that a musical is a theatrical form in which song and dance are used to enhance or guide the narrative set out by the book (or libretto). The generality of this assertion quickly becomes problematic however, when we take a closer look at the many permutations of this genre which have emerged over time.

John Kenrick provides one of the most in depth and up to date histories of musical theatre, covering many eras and styles including (but not limited to); Ancient Greek theatre, commedia dell’arte, opera, operetta, minstrelsy, vaudeville, the ‘integrated musical’ and the modern ‘mega musical’ (Kenrick: 2011). Each of the styles explored by Kenrick have contributed in some way to the musical genre, some more directly than others. The sheer number of them however shows a worrying trend in which almost any theatrical performance which contains song and/or dance could arguably be categorised as a musical. Due to the specific focus of my research on the development of the integrated musical my focus will not be on the history and of these other forms. Instead I will be focusing on two main theories which have been used to analyse the musical as a whole, looking in particular at how they have affected the emergence of the integrated musical and its analysis. Finally I will investigate the working ideologies of Scott McMillin whose theoretical approach both draws from and arguably surpasses these earlier forms of musical criticism.

GENRE THEORY

The act of grouping texts into genres is a tool which critics suggest has historically been important both to “human meaning making and to the social struggle over meaning” (Frow, 2006, p10). As part of this struggle to create meaning, hierarchies of value or ranking have been created which work to inform the
ways in which we are positioned to read or interpret texts. The musical, for example, is generally seen as being of less merit than a straight dramatic play because of the links between the musical and earlier, light-hearted forms of entertainment. This is particularly important for my research because the stigma that musical theatre, dance and dance in musical theatre are all ‘low’ forms of art has led to a substantive lack of comprehensive research into these areas. Whilst this is unfortunate for the purpose of my thesis it also begs the question – is it possible that the application of genre frameworks may have led critics to overlook the importance of the musical by dismissing it as an area unworthy of study? Stephen Banfield believes that this is not the case, namely because genre theory does not concern itself with categorising groups of texts into a critical hierarchy. Instead all genres are equalised, with none being deemed more authentic than any other (Banfield: 1994, p223). For this reason, he suggests that genre theory is an ideal framework for looking at the musical, offering the ability to provide a framework within which a reader is able to “identify, select and interpret texts” (Chandler: 1997, p7) which does not concern itself with ranking them by their artistic credibility.

The difficulty with this theory is that while it is relatively easy to recognise specific genres, it is infinitely more difficult to define them. The mere existence of a musical genre assumes specific conventions relating to content and form which could be used as a means to align or differentiate it from other performance texts. But dramatic conventions are often utilised by many genres, and each new text within that genre has the potential to influence and change it, creating the possibilities of new genres or sub-genres in the process (Chandler, p3). The musical is a clear example of this, whereby various theatrical elements including drama, music and dance can be seen to “[shade] into one another, ranging on various axes from all-sung opera, through opera with spoken dialogue, operetta and the musical play to musical comedy, the play with songs, the play with incidental music, indeed the play with no music at all” (Banfield, p223). The breadth of interrelated sub genres within the musical genre as a whole is exactly what makes it both a fascinating and difficult subject to engage with. Without an organisational structure of some description it becomes impossible to engage critically with these texts, however the inherent complexity of the musical form means that the distinctions between it and other genres can easily become blurred and confused.
Who then decides what constitutes a musical? At its most fundamental level, the name alone suggests some form of inherent musicality. As I have discussed earlier, the inclusion of song and dance numbers is seen to be important if not crucial to the genre. These vital components aside however, there are so few rules and regulations regarding the classification and creation of musicals that it has led some frustrated scholars to suggest that the limits of the genre may as well be non-existent (Lockitt: 2012, p188). This dilemma has arisen, in part because of audience demand. Perhaps more than any other performance style, the musical has relied upon the changing demands of its audience to shape its evolution. Creators have found that the most carefully constructed musicals can still ‘flop’, proof that working with a framework which had previously been successful did not always guarantee you a hit show. Conversely, some of the most popular musicals have been those that broke dramatically from previous traditions. Although genre theory suggests a broad structure within which to work from, its limitations make it an ultimately problematic framework for the musical. Perhaps for this very reason, scholars have begun to look past traditional forms of analysis, searching for a theory specifically designed to look at the musical as an art form in its own right.

TOWARDS A THEORY OF INTEGRATION

The creation of a new theory designed specifically to analyse the musical has been hinted at for decades, with scholars consistently highlighting the importance of the integrated musical tradition and the need to study its conventions in more depth. As its name suggests, the integrated musical strives towards the blending of song, dance and action in order to allow a more natural narrative flow. Ideally, it uses song and dance as essential elements of the musical narrative, designed to further plot and expand characters in ways that the dialogue and action alone cannot. Beyond these vague suggestions of what makes a number ‘integrated’ however, few scholars have actively worked to distinguish the various ways in which song and dance numbers can be used within the musical. The exception is John Mueller who outlines six ways in which these numbers relate to the plot²;

² For further clarification see Fred Astaire and the Integrated Musical (Mueller: 1984).
1. Numbers which are completely irrelevant to the plot.

2. Numbers which contribute to the spirit or theme.

3. Numbers whose existence is relevant to the plot, but whose content is not.

4. Numbers which enrich the plot, but do not advance it.

5. Numbers which advance the plot, but not by their content.

6. Numbers which advance the plot by their content. (Mueller: 1984, p28-30)

These distinctions are incredibly important – particularly the final three – when looking at the ways in which choreographers have striven towards integrating numbers directly into the narrative. In many cases further critique has the ability to reveal that many dance numbers which have been said to advance plot or character merely work to reinforce earlier aspects of the action or dialogue. Additionally, the comparison of points 5 and 6 raises interesting questions about the importance of the content within numbers in relation to their level of integration. The conclusion drawn by Mueller is that the fully integrated number should advance the plot through its content, not in spite of it. I would argue however that we must be careful not to let this theory limit the texts which they choose to analyse, nor should we allow it to lessen the importance of unintegrated texts in favour of those which strive towards narrative integration. The musical is a diverse and ever changing form which has proven its ability to be informed by as well as building on previous traditions. The theoretical frameworks which have been used to analyse the musical can be seen to have followed the same path. The third and final theoretical framework I will be exploring here draws on elements of genre as well as integration theory in the search for a critical framework that embraces and celebrates the musical in all of its various forms.

DOUBLED TIME: A NEW CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE?

I have already spoken at length about the lack of a serious scholarly tradition in regards to musical theatre. Despite its position as a major performance style over the past hundred years, the musical has often been neglected if not outright ignored
by many theatrical critics. In recent years the emergence of critical frameworks specific to musical theatre has begun to alleviate the appalling lack of critical literature on the subject – at least to an extent. However there is still much work to be done before the musical can be recognised as an important dramatic form in its own right. The ongoing struggle to find meaning in the musical leads me into the work of Scott McMillin. He doesn’t question whether we should be studying the musical – its significance as a major dramatic form is clear. His primary concern is whether we are “able to use our methods of analysis – historical, musical, literary, philosophical – and still get this form of popular entertainment right?” (McMillin: 2006, p xi)

His question is a fascinating one, not least of all because the musical has been relegated to a position of such low artistic credibility for so long that those who have studied it critically have often been limited to the use of frameworks which have proven unable to cope with the complexities of the form. Even theories which have been specifically designed to analyse the musical also have the ability to fall short. John Mueller’s work on integration theory is one such example, in that it focuses on the importance of musical integration but does not explore the possibilities of exploiting un-integrated or partially integrated numbers in order to create dramatic effect. McMillin proposes the need for a new theory, based at least in part on the integrated musical tradition.

His definition of the integrated musical is one in which “all elements of a show – plot, character, song, dance, orchestration, and setting – should blend together into a unity, a seamless whole” (McMillin, p1). Whilst this is an attractive ideal, he also admits that it is ultimately problematic. As much as musicals may strive towards integration between book and number, the fact remains that in the ‘real world’ people do not break out into song or dance. As such there is always a certain level of friction to be found between the ‘reality’ of the dramatic action and what we might call the ‘heightened reality’ which contains the song and dance numbers in a musical. This is an issue that has plagued critics and creators alike for years and variety of explorations into how to bridge the gap between book and number have occurred both creatively and theoretically. One of the more notable creative instances was in nineteenth century opera, where dialogue was dispensed with altogether and productions became entirely ‘through-sung’ in an attempt to
lessen the disparity – especially between dialogue and song (McMillin, p3). Richard Wagner was a key figure in this movement, exploring the concept of a ‘Total work of art’ or *Gesamtkunstwerk* where all aspects of a performance would ideally blend together to create a unified narrative whole. For the sake of brevity I cannot go into great detail about Wagner’s work here, however the parallels between *Gesamtkunstwerk* and the integrated musical cannot be ignored.

The difficulties inherent in creating the correct balance of song, dance and plot to create a fully integrated musical show have already been investigated earlier. Close readings of texts previously thought to be integrated reveals that many of them are in fact, not. McMillin agrees with Mueller’s assessment that *Oklahoma!* was not so much a revolution as an extension of the work done by previous practitioners. Although there may be exceptions, McMillin suggests that many ‘integrated’ musicals still rely predominantly on the libretto to push the narrative while the presence of song and dance numbers create a pleasing motif of repetition (McMillan, p8).

Earlier I looked at the possibility of using Mueller’s integration theory as a guide for analysing the relationship between book and number, and the various ways in which song and dance can be used as a dramatic device to create meaning through their interaction with the narrative. Regardless of whether a number is integrated or not, the fact remains that the theatrical conventions which are brought together by the musical form have the ability, once combined, to reach an entirely new level of complexity quite unlike any other genre. The crux of McMillin’s theory is that this complexity is predominantly created through the inclusion of songs and dances. These ‘numbers’ exist within their own ‘second order of time’ which runs parallel to the main dramatic action. This dramatic convention comes from early Greek drama, where choral odes were used to intersperse the dramatic action (McMillin, p7). This dramatic technique results in a heightened sense of reality wherein an actor takes on a sense of ‘otherness’ by portraying a dramatic character. This ‘otherness’ is then taken a step further by the inclusion of song and dance, intensifying characters in a way “that that is not dialectic but lyrical ... they are changed by the music” (McMillin, p55). This shift in characterisation is arguably at the very core of musical theatre understanding; bringing the performers into a new space of meaning and allowing them the opportunity to explore their characters in new ways through music.
and movement. Even the most trivial characters have the ability to move beyond their dramatic selves when they take on a song and dance persona. This creates an incredibly “complex and sophisticated form of dramatic characterisation” (McMillan, p21) with the ability to fashion a new or altered version of the character for the audience to relate to.

The difficulty that critics seem to find with this incredibly complex and unique dramatic convention is that by expanding characters through song and dance numbers, the musical rejects the idea of linear, progressive time that is present in the majority of traditional dramatic texts. For some, the repetition created by un integrated or partially integrated song and dance numbers can work to create a pleasurable viewing experience for them. For others, this repetition merely works to highlight the ever present gap between book and number. Unable to reconcile the two, they struggle to accept the fact that it is exactly this difference which makes the musical such a complex and fascinating form of drama. It challenges us to believe that the dramatic action, the ‘real world’ is just as important and authentic as the dream ballets, the love duets – in fact all the ways in which song and dance can be used to enhance or guide a musical narrative. “They aren’t,” McMillin admits, “but we are glad to think they are” (McMillin, p67).

This kind of analysis has the potential to be groundbreaking in the field, allowing theorists to focus not just on the effects of the integration of book and number, but also the ways in which highlighting their differences has the ability to be used as a powerful dramatic tool as well. McMillin’s final suggestion seems to be that perhaps the term ‘coherence’ might be a better term for this – where “things stick together, different things, without losing their difference” (McMillin, p209).
Part Two – Dance in the Integrated Musical: A Case Study

*Dancing materialises the orchestra, gives it body and motion ... the omniscient accompaniment to the musical is being translated into visible bodies without having to pass through the strophic structures of song. Words and strophic song can be called upon, but they are not necessary – dance needs no explanations.* (McMillin, p141)

Critics and creators alike have long agreed that dance is an incredibly important convention of the musical genre – and perhaps one that has the ability to surpass other conventions such as dialogue and lyrics in terms of its dramatic function. Its inherent physicality means that while dance has the ability to use words, it does not need them. Some have even argued that dance has the ability to create, through the presence of a dancing body an “immediacy of action” which can be impeded by the presence of words (McMillin, p140).

The evolution from earlier ‘unintegrated’ musical forms has historically been linked to a select group of performance texts, many of which have broken new ground in their use of dance and movement. One of the most commonly cited texts in this group is Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *Oklahoma!* Early drafts of the libretto indicate that the dance numbers were envisaged as an essential component of the show, and the work done by choreographer Agnes de Mille is indeed one of the most important aspects of a production considered by many to be revolutionary (Carter: 2007, p121). The ‘dream ballet’ which takes place at the end of the first act of (sometimes called ‘Laurey Makes Up Her Mind’) has been touted by many as the first fully integrated dance number in a musical and several have even made the bold suggestion that there were no precedents to de Mille’s choreography, “it was all new” (Wilk, p116).

While there is no denying that de Mille’s work paved the way for many future choreographers who would use dance as an important narrative device within the musical, the use of narrative dance conventions such as ‘dream ballets’ had arguably been used to great effect long before Laurey and de Mille came along (Carter: 2007, p128). In addition, there are those who challenge the idea that *Oklahoma!* ever achieved the goal of musical integration that it was striving for.
Much of John Mueller’s research is devoted to the work of Fred Astaire, an accomplished choreographer and dancer who helped to pioneer the musical genre over a career which spanned much of the twentieth century. Insufficient critique of Astaire’s work has often led to his work being dismissed or overlooked by dance critics, however there is strong evidence to show that Astaire had been working towards a theory of integration long before the term had been invented. While not all of Astaire’s dances succeed in advancing the plot or developing characterisation, the romantic duet ‘Night and Day’ arguably does³.

In the following study, I will primarily be using Mueller’s integration framework as a basis for my analysis of these two dance numbers as a means to examine the ways in which dance can be used as an important narrative element of the integrated musical. Unfortunately the original choreography from the stage versions of these musicals is survived only by their filmic adaptations. *The Gay Divorcee*⁴ was released as a movie in 1934 with much of Fred Astaire’s original choreography being adapted for screen from the original Broadway show⁵. *Oklahoma!* was also adapted for the screen in 1955, some twelve years after the stage show but still retaining much de Mille’s original choreography. Although it is arguable that screen and stage musicals are quite separate genres, both of which have their own histories and specific conventions, Stephen Banfield suggests that they also contain a “great deal of crucial interconnection, of practitioners as well as specific shows and types” (Banfield, p223). Additionally, I would argue that despite their differences, musicals from stage and screen both have the potential to be classified as ‘integrated’ – or at least striving towards integration. For this reason my case study does not dwell on the distinctions between stage and screen musicals in favour of focusing on the ways in which dance can be used as an important dramatic device in the musical genre as a whole.

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³ To put this into a historical perspective, the stage premiere of *The Gay Divorce* was eleven years before *Oklahoma!*

⁴ The film was renamed by the censors at RKO who did not think that a divorce should be seen as ‘happy’.

⁵ Including ‘Night and Day’.
NIGHT AND DAY: THE GAY DIVORCEE

At its simplest level, The Gay Divorcee can be seen as a typical model of the Astaire/Rogers musical format. Described by Mueller as a “light, perky, unsentimental comedy” which focused predominantly on the story between the romantic leads, the content was designed to be “airy and amusing, but essentially serious – especially when the pair danced together” (Mueller: 1985, p6). The Gay Divorcee explores the relationship between the charming Guy Holden (Astaire) and the stand-offish Mimi (Rogers) who is unhappily married and seeking a divorce. With the help of her aunt she travels to England in order to obtain legal advice and by chance meets (and is initially quite irritated by) the irrepressible Guy who quickly becomes besotted with her. Unbeknownst to either of our romantic leads, Guy is friends with Mimi’s lawyer and a case of mistaken identity leads her to incorrectly assume that he is the professional correspondent who has been hired to facilitate her divorce. As with all romantic comedies, everyone is eventually set straight and when it is revealed that Mimi’s husband has been unfaithful to her everything is neatly resolved, leaving her free to divorce him and to marry Guy.

‘Night and Day’ is a very strong example of using dance to further the narrative where words have failed. One of only seven dance numbers present in The Gay Divorcee, it is also one of only two dance routines which appear to have survived the move from stage to screen. ‘Night and Day’ sees Guy (Astaire) attempting to woo Mimi (Rogers) first through song, and then dance. Although his singing does not appease her, Astaire’s superbly nuanced choreography arguably does. In Mueller’s detailed analysis of this routine, he identifies three different choreographic devices which can be seen to alter the relationship between the two characters. The first of these is Mimi’s repeated escape attempts. Initially Guy has to chase her, coaxing her back into the dance several times. By the end of the routine when she is afforded a clear opportunity to leave, she instead moves upstage where there is no escape route and waits for him to come to her. The second is a brief tap step introduced by Astaire and used at three separate points of the choreography. The first time Rogers responds with her own step, the second time she repeats it back to

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6 The other is the ‘table dance’ which closes the film.
him only to turn abruptly on her heel and leave. The third time she echoes it back perfectly – a show of surprising harmony from the previously aloof Mimi.

The third and final choreographic device is largely drawn from Rogers’s performance and the way in which she interacts with Astaire. At the beginning of the dance she moves stiffly but all too soon she becomes caught up despite herself. This pattern is repeated several times throughout, with Mimi seeming to come briefly to her senses only to be drawn back in by Guy’s attentions. Despite this, we can see her struggle to give in throughout. At one point she bodily pushes him away, and in one closely partnered section she lets her left arm hang stiffly at her side instead of placing it around him. By the end of the number however, Guy is confident enough in the thrall he has her under to turn his back on her for the first time. The dance closes with Mimi finally succumbing to his affections – they dance cheek to cheek, enraptured and holding each other close. Finally Guy dazzles her with a series of spins before settling her down on a nearby chair.

Consideration of the effectiveness of earlier dialogue and songs could see this number being placed in Mueller’s fourth category, whereby the number works to enrich the plot but do not advance it however I am inclined to agree with his assertion that ‘Night and Day’ ultimately achieves the goal of narrative integration. Although there is evidence that Mimi is attracted in Guy beforehand, it is the dance which works most effectively in wooing her. By the end of the number the relationship between the romantic leads is irrevocably changed – Mimi has clearly been won over, finally allowing herself to give in to Guy’s affections. The exclusion of this number, Mueller argues, would leave a noticeable gap in the narrative continuity, and it is this which cements its status as a truly integrated number.
LAUREY MAKES UP HER MIND: OKLAHOMA!

Set in Oklahoma Territory at the turn of the century, the plot of Oklahoma! focuses predominantly on the relationship between Laurey Williams and the two men who want to take her to the box social – happy-go-lucky cowboy Curly McClain and the surly farm hand Jud Fry. A secondary romantic subplot follows another, more innocent love triangle, with getting their happily every afters with their respective partners – except of course ‘pore Jud’ who just winds up ‘daid’7.

Considering its position as one of the most important musicals of the twentieth century, close analysis of its supposedly groundbreaking choreography is rare. For this reason I have used Mueller’s detailed analysis of ‘Night and Day’ as a reference to guide my own critical reading of ‘Laurey Makes up her Mind’, identifying specific choreographic choices and recurring dance motifs which have informed my reading of the number.

Agnes de Mille’s work on Oklahoma! was seen as revolutionary for many different reasons. She gained infamy in the initial casting process when she insisted on a chorus of trained dancers instead of the usual musical theatre darlings, performers who lacked the kind of training required to adequately execute her choreographic vision. She also used two different performers for each of the romantic leads, with specific ‘dance’ versions of Laurey and Curly8 taking on the roles for the duration of the dream ballet sequence in both the original stage show as well as the screen adaption.

The combination of dance styles she draws on is also unique, taking traditional balletic movements such as jetés and développés and then playing with them through the contortion of various body parts – especially the hips, knees, hands and feet. The chorus is also used to great effect. In the dream ballet segment they not only mimic Laurey’s emotions, they also act out her hopes and fears through two clearly definable sections – the dream and the nightmare. Because of the sheer length of this number it is impossible to go into great amount of detail however I will aim to

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7 Or, as in the screen adaption, badly wounded.
8 In the original stage production, the character of Jud was also danced by a secondary performer. It is unclear as to why this convention was not recognised in the screen version, perhaps because it would have lessened the impact of Jud’s sudden appearance only to be replaced by a second actor.
focus here on the main choreographic motifs which I have found important in my reading of it.

THE DREAM

The first section of the number begins with Laurey falling asleep and the audience finding themselves transported into the world of her dreams. This is signalled through a change in lighting and the presence of music as well as the appearance of the ‘dancing’ versions of Laurey and Curly who are introduced to the audience by their acting counterparts. The two take part in a graceful and joyous pas de deux with Laurey executing a series of balletic leaps and lifts supported by Curly. A choreographic motif is also introduced in this section which will be returned to throughout the number; Laurey is laid down gently on her side by Curly, pausing for a moment before pulling her back onto her feet and into his arms. The mood is gentle, sweet and romantic as the chorus begins to join the action. The stylised, fluttering movements of the female townsfolk are almost birdlike as the women applaud, call silently to each other and eventually gift Laurey with a wedding dress and veil. As she disappears briefly to change, the chorus continue to dance but now with more energy. Their jumps, kicks and spins move the choreography further away from classical ballet technique, allowing de Mille to bring in the remaining chorus members – the cowboys – who execute a short movement piece which comically mimics the act of riding a horse. Laurey then re-enters the performance space, surrounded and supported by the chorus as she walks ‘down the aisle’ towards Curly. As he removes her veil however, Jud Fry suddenly appears in his place and the dream ballet quickly becomes a nightmare.

THE NIGHTMARE

The change from dream to nightmare sees a dramatic shift in the entire mood of the number and the choreography follows suit. The chorus stand, immobile and unresponsive to Laurey’s obvious distress and when she finds Curly and falls upon him in desperation, he joins them in moving from her reach, leaving her abandoned and lying on the ground. Here Jud parallels the same choreographic movement from
her earlier pas de deux by pulling her to her feet. Unlike Curly however, there is no finesse or tenderness to Jud’s movements. Terrified, Laurey flees, quickly finding herself in a new performance space reminiscent of a saloon where the “cigarette card girls” (Wilk, p152) from Jud’s erotic postcards have come to life.

The movement style here shifts further into the grotesque. The high kick sections and frilled skirts create a suggestion of the Can-Can style and the posturing and posing of the cigarette card girls having distinctly sexual undertones that seem to both baffle and frighten Laurey. The movements here are often sharp and violent, including round kick laybacks and a lift which involves the women splaying their legs open to the audience. These kicks and lifts work to punctuate a section of partner work where the women are controlled like puppets, ultimately culminating in them being held aloft in varying grotesque positions. Their final energetic kick line completely overwhelms Laurey who has spent most of this section trying to escape and she quite literally runs into the final section of her own nightmare, her tentative développé subconsciously echoing the earlier movements of the chorus girls.

The final showdown between Jud and Curly is danced as if it is taking place in slow motion and although this convention may work well onstage, on the screen it comes across as being slightly overwrought. The chorus have little to do here except to rush about the stage and impede Laurey from interfering in the fight. Once Jud has overpowered Curly and choked him to death, he goes to Laurey and claims her in a triumphant lift. This echoes the first lift in this number where Laurey is held aloft by Curly in much the same manner, however the relationship here is clearly different. Jud is in control of Laurey, just as the women in the saloon were controlled by their partners.

For such a long and involved number, its importance to the narrative in Oklahoma! can be seen to be limited. Mueller firmly places de Mille’s dream ballet in his fourth category of integration, where the number works to enrich the plot but does not advance it (Mueller: 1984, p29). His justification for this classification comes from an analysis that the number does not further the narrative, but merely reinforces what has already been insinuated in the dialogue – namely Laurey’s fear of Jud and her attraction to Curly. Additionally, he suggests that the ballet could be easily lifted from the show without causing a gap in the continuity – though he does
concede that the audience is likely to be less appreciative of Laurey’s plight (Mueller: 1984, p29). In this instance I would suggest that by substituting the word ‘plot’ for ‘character’, one could also arguably position this number as an integrated piece, by merit of the change we see in the character of Laurey in following scenes. This link however, is tenuous at best and should be approached with some caution.

Using John Mueller’s integration framework as a guide it is possible to distinguish, to a certain extent, the ways in which a dance number can be integrated into the musical narrative. While both the numbers I have studied can, and have been argued to be integrated, there is evidence to show that this may not necessarily be the case. Of the two, I would agree with Mueller’s distinction that ‘Night and Day’ can be seen to be more important to the overall narrative than ‘Laurey Makes Up Her Mind’, however the significance of the latter in terms of character development may need to be unpacked in more depth.

CONCLUSION

Although this area is still lacking in critical literature, the few studies that look at the musical appear to be relatively well aligned, with scholars consistently highlighting the same shows, choreographers and performers as being linked to the emergence of the integrated musical style. They are also generally in agreement that further research into this major form of drama is both merited and long overdue. Current literature is tending towards the idea that the musical may in fact require an entirely new framework within which to work from in order to receive the critical attention it deserves. Using the few texts and tools afforded, this thesis aims to highlight the role of dance in musical theatre and in particular the importance that dance has had in shaping the integrated musical style – in the hopes that it might become one of many research projects to actually focus in on the gaps that have yet to be filled by other musical theatre theoreticians and historians.
Part Three – Meta Commentaries

The following papers are designed to reflect on the practical component of my thesis which resulted in the creation of two different musical productions. The first, a musical adaption of Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* was constructed as a medium through which myself and fellow Honours student Sarah Courtis could both gain a practical application of the creation of a piece of musical theatre through our involvement with the creative process that accompanied it. The second was an original work, *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a collaboration between myself and Sarah where she wrote the lyrics and I created the dance and movement. In the following commentaries I outline key decisions that were made in relation to the creation and ultimate execution of these performance pieces. I will also be focusing specifically on my role as choreographer, the challenges I encountered and my reflections on the final product.

**TWELFTH NIGHT: THE MUSICAL**

I was eager to work with at least one pre-existing text for the practical component of my Honours project from the beginning as the idea of creating an entirely new musical theatre production from scratch without any previous experience was a daunting prospect. The decision was made early on through mutual consent that it would be much more conducive to begin with a pre-existing dramatic script and adapt it into a musical. This would ideally allow Sarah and I to focus entirely on developing and honing our skills as lyricist and choreographer respectively without having to worry about writing a script. By creating our own musical from a pre-existing dramatic text we gave ourselves a framework within which we could work to explore the creative processes and practical application of our chosen areas of study more freely. For myself this allowed me a freedom I would not have had if I had worked with an already existing musical theatre text as my choices as choreographer would have to have been at least somewhat informed by the movement choices made by previous incarnations of the same show. Adapting a pre-existing dramatic text also afforded me a unique opportunity to work with
already established characters and situations, using dance and movement to help enhance and tell their stories in a new and exciting way.

I was already familiar with *Twelfth Night* and indeed many of the works of William Shakespeare both through previous study and various other interactions well before I began my Honours. The latter half of my Bachelor Degree had incidentally included engagement with quite a lot of Shakespearean texts – both through study and performance. These included *Twelfth Night* which I had engaged with critically through reviewing a live performance as well as interaction with the written text. Our familiarity with it was one of crucial deciding factors that led to it being the chosen text. Preliminary research into it also indicated that this was one of Shakespeare’s most musical plays. It is in fact, already framed by music, the opening scene inferring that a love song is played to the lovesick Duke Orsino and the epilogue being in part sung by the character of Feste.

There are many more songs within the text, as well as continual references to music and dance peppered throughout. With such a strong musical presence already within the text it came as no surprise to me that *Twelfth Night* has actually been adapted into a musical several times before. Research found no less than five different musical versions. Content that the text had the ability to be supported and enhanced by the presence of music and dance we set to work with an abridged script edited by Andrew Kocsis and Tiffany Wendt and supported by a team of talented actors eager to meet the challenge that we presented them with.

The first of these was deciding upon a historical setting for the play. The production team, myself included, felt that placing *Twelfth Night* in its original historical context had the potential to alienate our audience. It was risky enough hoping that a modern audience would appreciate a Shakespearean play adapted into a musical. To limit ourselves to the music and dance styles of Shakespeare’s time would also mean that I would be unable to gain a working knowledge into more contemporary styles of musical theatre which is what my focus was. Rather than veto the text altogether, we began to explore the idea of setting the play in a more contemporary setting, searching for an era which would enhance the themes we had drawn from our reading of the play. These included (but were not limited to) the idea of loving someone for the wrong reasons, and the ways in which love can be twisted
by perception. It was during a brainstorming session that I voiced the idea of making our production evocative of the 1940’s, drawing particular attention to the influence that the Second World War had on this decade. There was already a clear power structure between the characters within the play, not dissimilar to that of a military outfit and there are also several mentions of war. There was also the idea of loneliness and the separation or loss of loved ones – a theme that is explored in the text through many of the main characters.

The idea of loss and love resonated deeply with our understanding of this era. By framing the text thus we not only opened up to a fresh interpretation of the play text, we also created a wonderful framework for us to work within. We decided very early on exactly where and when dance and music might be used in order to enhance the text further and from there I was able to begin research into the styles and sounds of the era in order to beginning crafting our performance. The specificity of the era we had chosen gave me a very specific stylistic framework to work within as well as a point of reference for my movement and choreography. Many of the best known and well loved musicals came out of this era so in order to get a feel for the dancing style from this era I watched a lot of screen musicals from the 1920’s, 30’s and 40’s. I also looked at work of three performers in particular; Eleanor Powell, Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly. From this research and my own personal experience as a dancer and choreographer, I began to piece together a basic outline of what I wanted each dance piece to look like and the kind of mood that I wanted to evoke through them.

Perhaps one of the most interesting and rewarding parts of the process which followed next was the unique opportunity afforded to me by working with Sarah as our lyricist and Musical Director. Most choreographers are rarely given the opportunity to help create or shape the music for a show however in the process of creating *Twelfth Night: The Musical*, my pre-existing knowledge of music from this era as well as my own musical abilities as a singer and composer allowed the two of us to work separately on our individual projects whilst at the same time being able to come together and offer constructive criticism or brainstorm ideas with each other. For my part I devoted most of the preliminary stages of the process researching and brainstorming but not choreographing as it is next to impossible to do so without set music. It was in this time that I organised for a ballroom instructor to come in and do some work with the cast. I am less well versed in ballroom styles than I am in others
and having discovered the strong presence of ballroom dancing in movies from this era I was hoping to incorporate some of its stylistic features into certain parts of the show. I also took this time to teach the cast the importance of warming up before they began any form of dancing or movement. The majority of the actors involved in Twelfth Night were not trained in any style of dancing at all and whilst I knew this would provide me with a great challenge as choreographer, I was also confident from my early movement workshops with them that regardless of their level of training, my actors would give me the best of themselves as performers. It became then my job to ensure that I could create movement pieces and dance numbers that were not only visually effective and assisted in telling the story we wished to, but also to ensure that each performer looked as professional as possible, regardless of their level of skill.

It was around this time that Sarah’s initial plan of having all original music fell through and we spent a very short, intensive period laying out the score together utilising pre-existing songs from the era. In addition we worked collaboratively on the original song, *Blue Ashes*, the lyrics being fashioned by Sarah and the accompaniment by myself. For all of the other songs, Sarah wrote and adapted her lyrics and cut the music, allowing me to begin my work as choreographer. Interestingly, our working relationship as Musical Director and Choreographer continued to be complementary long after we had laid down the score. As the show evolved we continued to support each other in our separate endeavours by screening our work through each other first before presenting it to the group, and making sure that in the instances where music and dance were intrinsically linked our work complemented and enhanced each others. I will here endeavour to break down and reflect on each dance or movement piece as it appears sequentially in the play. My focus remains particular on my process, my intentions as choreographer and how I worked to enhance the musical themes we were aiming for through the use of dance.

*A Parting of Ways (Act 1, Scene 1)*

This opening scene was one of the very first choreographic pieces that was created. At this stage we had no music and were merely working with the actors bodies to try and create a visual representation of the twin’s separation. For me it
was of utmost importance that we introduce our audience to the idea that they were watching a musical from the outset of the piece, however the mood we were trying to evoke did not lend itself to a large scale song and dance number. We toyed very briefly with the idea of a whole cast number but quickly decided that the opening piece should be more intimate – a way of setting up the audiences expectations for the rest of the play and to introduce them to one of the most important narrative arcs of the play – the separation and eventual reunion of the twins.

In the original text, Sebastian and Viola are separated in the aftermath of a shipwreck. With the military setting we had chosen it was decided that the two of them would be a part of the Air Force and ultimately involved in a plane crash. The opening sequence intimated that the two commandeer a plane in order to go for a joy ride and accidentally end up getting caught up in the fighting by mistake. I began the twin’s opening routine at the top of the stairs in the audience, thus allowing them to dance their way down onto the stage. The number begins with Sebastian creeping down the stairs, and Viola sneaking up behind him. Their body language and movements were designed to highlight certain facts about their characters to the audience – including the fact that they are both quite obviously up to some form of mischief. This dance introduces them as both compatriots and siblings both through their playful interactions and through the mirroring of the two performers which takes place as they dance their way down the central aisle through the audience. Once there Viola playfully leaps onto her brothers back and the two ‘fly’ for a time before dancing together, again mirroring and complementing each other before ultimately ending in a clumsy quickstep. The two of them work to ultimately complement each other in this routine, they are always in close physical proximity to show the closeness of their relationship and how comfortable they are with each other. The song used, Nat King Cole’s *Straighten up and Fly Right*, worked to highlight the kind of mood I was aiming for with this dance and indeed with the entire opening of the play. Although the instrumentation and style of the song is light hearted, the lyrics infer conflict which comes about all too swiftly when the sounds of radio static and an air raid siren break the jocular mood between the twins.

The discordant mess of sirens, static and piano that followed created a deliberate contrast with the previous section. The clever engineering of these sounds and songs together helped to showcase the chaos of the twin’s separation, ripped
apart by forces beyond their reckoning. From an initially protective embrace, Viola and Sebastian are pulled bodily apart by Feste/Sea Captain and Antonio respectively – the characters who are their ultimate guides when they first alight on the shores of Illyria. As I was playing Viola I worked initially with the actor who played Feste in order to create a section of rolling, almost continuous partner lifts that we could execute. Whilst the choreography was not necessarily reminiscent of the era, the artistry of the movement was deliberately designed in order to show the violence of the twin’s separation and in this I feel that I succeeded.

Whilst these movements were suitable for use with Viola, the actors who played Sebastian and Antonio weren’t able to do the same kind of work due to their comparative height and weight. Instead I focused on having moments of capture and release with Antonio tugging at a wrist, an arm, always pulling Sebastian back and away. We also worked with their body weight, letting Antonio take Sebastian’s weight as he kicked out, struggling to get back to his sister. The choreographic process for this piece was highly experimental and it was from this starting point that I ultimately progressed until the final dances I taught which involved much less workshopping. We created and rehearsed both parts separately before putting them together, finding to my great pleasure that if we timed it correctly we had some lovely moments where the twins came close to touching only to be ultimately pulled away once again. The piece ends with Sebastian being pulled entirely offstage and Viola being washed ashore, having been spun dizzyingly around and laid down by Feste/Sea Captain.

The very final section of this opening dance and music sequence is not technically a movement piece. However since it helps to continue the thematic link of mirroring the twin’s positions onstage which I will return to later in regards to my choreography, I feel it is worth mentioning. When Viola awakens and discovers that her brother has been lost she breaks into the first song of the show. During the Twins Duet Viola sings from her position downstage and Sebastian is seen behind her, elevated on a rostra. Later their positions are reversed when they reprise the song together, Sebastian taking centre stage and Viola appearing on the rostra. The deliberate mirroring of the two characters was a motif that I deliberately used in my choreography in order to link the two characters and their separate journeys throughout the play.
Good E’en to You Sir (Act 1, Scene 2)

Set to the tune of *I Got Rhythm* by George and Ira Gershwin, *Good E’en to You Sir* is a more upbeat number designed to bring the audience back up again after the somewhat grim nature of our opening scenes. It also served as a way to introduce a new trio of characters to the audience as well as their relationships to each other. I really wanted to explore specific dynamics between the characters in this song – the friendship between Sir Toby and Sir Andrew, Maria’s initial reluctance to become involved with their tomfoolery, and the way that she consistently gets dragged back into the thick of things by her attraction to Sir Toby.

At this early point of the play, Maria is not entirely certain of her feelings for Toby and she is quick to label Andrew as a fool. I tried to play with her discomfort by having her begin the routine by physically separating her from the other two characters – an action she takes no less than four separate times throughout. Once at the beginning when the men are greeting each other, the second when Toby sends her flying into an unwelcome embrace with Sir Andrew, and finally as she extricates herself from Toby’s grip only to be reeled back in as he alludes to seducing her. The repetition of Maria being pulled back in time and again by Toby serves as a choreographic motif which is explored once again in the reprise of *Malvolio’s Madness* in Act Two.

The relationship between Toby and Andrew is less clearly defined by this dance, however the intention behind the choreography hopefully allows for a clearer sense of their individual characters. Sir Andrew shows his incompetence and foolishness by mimicking Sir Toby instead of leading the dance – when Toby and Maria dance together Andrew dances by himself. But there is a darker undercurrent at work here too. Whenever he is ignored or ridiculed by the other two characters, the ultimate loneliness of Sir Andrew is highlighted, albeit in a subtle way.

In contrast Sir Toby is brimming with confidence, full of flirtatious energy and mischief. His role in this dance is to bring the trio of characters together through the interactions he has with the other two – through the lyrics as well as his movements. At the end of the number when he sweeps Maria off the rostra and places her between himself and Andrew it is a very physical representation of these three characters being brought together. It also works to draw a neat comparison to
their next big scene and dance number. Whilst the interaction between the three of them together in Good E’en to You Sir is deliberately a lot less intimate than it is in What You Will, the final moments of this preliminary dance ultimately aims to set up a group dynamic between these three which I explored again later on.

Enter Cesario (Act 1, Scene 3)

Of all the dances this is probably the one which gave me the most trouble to choreograph. The song that we used was an alluring piano arrangement of Fascinating Rhythm and Someone To Watch Over Me – both by George and Ira Gershwin. This intriguing mixture of strong, rhythmic piece with a much softer, more romantic love song worked beautifully to complement the struggle Viola experiences between her own desires and her need to maintain the facade of her male counterpart, Cesario. Whilst the romantic, feminine part of the song is focused on later in the show when she laments over her unrequited love for Orsino, this segment touches only briefly on it before moving into an energetic movement piece.

This was one of few dance routines within the show where I was able to indulge myself fully as a choreographer as I was working only with myself and my own limitations. Originally intended as a soft shoe tap number, by the end of the run I was performing this number as a proper tap dancing routine. I initially felt that wearing them might take away from the scene and make it seem too staged. Ultimately however I agreed with the production team that it actually enhanced and added to the scene in more ways than it detracted.

For me a very important aspect of this dance was that it opened a whole new aspect of Viola’s character, not only to the audience but to me as an actress performing the role. That this character, transplanted as she was into a more modern setting, may have trained as a dancer is not entirely unfounded. I re-imagined her as a young girl, enchanted with the idea of performing on the silver screen and pursuing dance as a way to realise that dream in the years preceding the outbreak of war. The idea of Viola having a love of performing, for me at least, lends credence to the fact that she decides to dress as a boy in order to survive in Illyria. In a more modern setting where she is in the territory of allies it reads truer to me that she dresses up as
Cesario not only to protect herself, but also in order to amuse herself or even possibly as a form of mourning for her twin brother. It is only unfortunate that the ‘role’ she chooses to serve Orsino ultimately hinders her desires, evidenced by her frustration and her yearning for her master. We see this through the opening of the dance sequence whilst the rest of it was created to show Viola ‘getting into character’. She physically explores her body in its new masculine attire and attitudes, slipping back occasionally into her female persona including a cheeky little curtsy that punctuates the end of the routine. It is a playful dance, but ultimately one that belies the characters frustration that things haven’t exactly worked out as she might have wished.

**Twins Duet (Act 1, Scene 5)**

Whilst not technically a movement piece, the placement of the twins in this song is designed to mirror that of the opening number when they sing together. The blocking in this song brings back the idea of mirroring the twins through their movement and placement onstage.

**I left no ring upon her (Act 1, Scene 6)**

A very sparsely choreographed piece, the importance of this number is once again related to the placement of the characters onstage and how it draws comparison to later scenes and dance numbers – in particular Viola’s love song, *Fly Away Breath* wherein she is positioned centre stage on the central rostra and reposes upon it whilst pining after Orsino in much the same way as she does here.

**O Mistress Mine (Act 1, Scene 7)**

This piece was workshopped together between myself and the actors who played Maria and Feste. Both actors have worked together before in a similar capacity and had some wonderful ideas about the ways in which they wanted the movement piece to unfold and some of these we were able to work into the
choreography. Some of their suggestions gave it a more romantic feel and as this
didn’t sit quite right with the characters I spent much of our workshopping time
trying to make it less so. As charming as the relationship developing between Maria
and Feste was, in a play where unrequited love is the norm I couldn’t allow the
audience to become confused about Maria’s motivations or infer a romantic
relationship where we absolutely did not want one to be construed. The other main
concern I had with this piece was that the performers were focusing so hard getting
the movements to fit with their singing that they often looked too choreographed
where the number should have looked more spontaneous and natural. By guiding the
actors to try and act their way through the dance it changed the whole tone of the
scene – from a charming but obviously choreographed movement piece to something
which I felt as an audience member presented itself as more natural and truthful. In
particular I focused on Maria’s reactions to being coerced into the dance by Feste,
and how she allows herself to be drawn in for a time only to become serious once
more – just as she had done earlier with Sir Toby in *Good E’en to You Sir.*

**Fly Away Breath (Act 1, Scene 8)**

In our original brief of the script, this song was only supposed to have been
sung. However, in the last few weeks of rehearsals I began to enter into discussions
with the production team about the possibility of putting a second movement piece
for Viola into this scene. It seemed strange to have had her previous tap dancing
routine and then not ever follow it up with a second movement piece. It also seemed
a shame that I not have another opportunity to try and showcase my skills as a
dancer. This song being thematically and musically linked to Viola’s earlier dance
number, it made sense to link them both by dance as well.

Whereas that opening dance number is all about Viola breaking out into the
character of Cesario, this song and dance piece sees her breaking down her male
facade and returning to her feminine roots through her infatuation with Orsino. The
song is interjected by a short dream ballet where she imagines him dancing with her.
Through lighting and my own choreographic choices we worked to create a
dreamlike state where Viola never actually makes eye contact with Orsino, merely
allowing herself to be led through the space using the spectre of her would be lover
almost as a prop for her own fantasies. Whisked off her feet by her own daydream, Viola is then brought crashing back to earth by the crushing reality that as long as she has to maintain her masculine front, the man she loves won’t ever look at her the way she wants him to. The piece ends with her gazing longingly up at him whilst he sits composing his love letters to Olivia, ignoring Viola entirely.

What You Will (Act 1, Scene 9)

This second big number from Toby, Maria and Andrew intersperses a very important moment in the play – the infamous box hedge scene. Leaving Malvolio frozen in the moment as he peruses the forged letter from Olivia, Maria breaks out gleefully into song, expounding her own cleverness and that of her companions in setting the device on him. This number was designed to be the big show stopper to conclude the first half and marks one of the biggest emotional peaks of the play.

One of the specific choreographic choices I went with in this piece was to show these three characters reprising their earlier positions from the end of Good E’en to You Sir. Maria is front and centre for most of this dance, flanked on either side by Toby and Andrew in order to show the power that has shifted to her by being the main instigator of the prank on Malvolio. This is her moment to shine and the boys circle her, supporting her in movement as well as singing. I also made certain to use this comparison to the previous dance to show the marked difference in the levels of physical intimacy between these three characters – especially with Maria who was previously less than enamoured of Sir Andrew. There is rarely a time in this number when Maria is not touching one or both of the boys and instead of merely placing her hands over theirs when they walk, Maria links arms with them and generally appears much more comfortable with them in a physical capacity.

The Seduction (Act 2, Scene 1)

This was one of the first songs that was locked in by Sarah and as such, the dance that accompanied this scene was one of the first that was set down. Because the original song which we appropriated for this scene was a Rumba I particularly
requested in our ballroom dancing lesson that we be taught several basic Rumba
moves which I could then extrapolate and shape into a short routine based around the
lyrics. Of all of the dances this was the one which proved to be probably the greatest
challenge to me as a performer. The actress who played Olivia is an incredibly
strong performer who had difficulty not leading in the dance. While this worked well
for the character of Olivia, it did at times make it difficult for me as to try and reign
her in or steer her where she needed to be.

This dance undertook the most amount of hours of workshopping before we
were satisfied with the look and feel of the routine. We were constantly changing
and improving on it though in the end I still wasn’t entirely happy with the way that
Olivia spent most of it singing to Cesario and not out into the audience as I worry we
lost too much of the song. In addition we spent a lot of time playing around with the
dip as it never quite worked the way I wanted it to. It wasn’t until the final intensive
rehearsals that we finally discovered a way of preserving the movement whilst also
making it comfortable for both performers and aesthetically pleasing. But on the
whole I felt like the dynamic between the two actors meant that this dance worked
exceptionally well in illustrating Olivia’s overzealous feelings towards Cesario. It
certainly garnered a fantastic audience reaction and it was an incredibly fun routine
to do despite all of the bruises that were sustained because of it.

Malvolio’s Madness (Act 2, Scene 3)

The development of the movement in this scene was quite fragmented.
Initially it was blocked without the song as we didn’t know how it was going to fit
into the scene and it wasn’t until after Sarah had converted some of the dialogue into
lyrics and turned it into a truly integrated scene that I was able to begin working with
the actors in amalgamating both singing and movement together. Working from the
original blocking of the scene as much as possible I set down several specific
movement markers for the actors and then we worked together to fill in the gap. In
several instances throughout there were moments where I allowed them to improvise
and explore the kinds of movements that they felt their character would do. I then
offered constructive feedback and assisted in polishing their performance. This
controlled improvisation is what led to Malvolio’s hilarious hip-wiggling exploits,
which became one of the highlights of the number. I also deliberately played with
the opening sequence where Malvolio effectively backs Olivia into the corner and
attempts to take hold of her and dance with her. This was designed to draw a direct
line back to The Seduction and show Olivia’s reaction when she is put into the same
position as she placed Cesario.

My one regret with this number is that I didn’t have more of a chance to work
with my performers one on one. I would have liked to give more feedback on the use
of their faces as they sang – just as important in a routine like this as the actual steps
were. We also ran out of time to incorporate Maria and Olivia properly into the
dance, I would have liked to have had a little bit more movement from them.
Originally I had hoped to include Toby briefly in the scene as well, potentially
having Malvolio mistakenly try and dance with him thinking it was Olivia. However
with the time constraints and the way in which the song fitted into the scene it was
simply not a feasible option.

**They Can’t Stop Us/Malvolio’s Madness Reprise (Act 2, Scene 3)**

This song and dance reprise was designed to be a short, simple counterpoint
to the previous scene as well as the previous numbers with Maria and Toby. In this
reprise we finally see them coming together – in a more romantic sense than had
previously been explored. However, just as they are about to have their little
romantic dénouement they are interrupted by the untimely arrival of Sir Andrew.
Again I worked with the idea of Toby being the main instigator in the relationship by
having him chase after Maria at the end of the routine and drawing her in for a kiss –
much the same way he pulled her back in during Good E’en to You Sir.

**The Reunion (Act 2, Scene 5)**

The final reprise of the twin’s duet, this scene breaks with the previous
blocking of this song with one character being placed downstage and one upstage.
Instead it links back directly to the opening number and the final embrace that the
twins shared before being parted. This time however there is a coming together
instead of a separation and they stay close, mimicking one of their earlier steps when Sebastian gently spins Viola as he did in the opening number.

**One Thousand Mornings (Act 2, Scene 5)**

In keeping with the rest of the show, this scene was particularly designed not to be a big flashy number as it would not have gelled with the song used nor with the mood we were trying to evoke. The emotional climax having already been reached in the previous songs, this number is the last hurrah for the two pairs of lovers and it is appropriately intimate. Both couples are highlighted by two spotlights whilst they sing and dance, all four of them coming together in the final lilting strains of the music. I especially wanted to highlight the newfound intimacy between Viola and Orsino here by keeping them very close together as they danced and even coming close to a kiss as she finishes her vocal solo. The dance component here is very simple and designed to support the song and not detract from it.

**When that I was a Tiny Little Boy (Act 2, Scene 5)**

Taken directly from the original text, this song closes the play with the same slightly darker edge we aimed to evoke through the opening movement piece. The characters slowly move to their respective places onstage, splitting off into various character groups. For me the movement to these places was less important than the placement themselves. I had very specific ideas about where each character should end up so as to again draw back on previous visual motifs from my earlier movement pieces. Malvolio, Toby, Andrew and Maria for instance were positioned as they were at the beginning of *What You Will*. The lovers continue their mirroring from the previous song albeit upstage on the rostra and Feste takes centre stage as he did in most of his songs.
Final Reflections

Twelfth Night was a vital part of my research, not only because it gave me a chance to choreograph an entire show in lieu of my final performative assessment piece, but also because my research into the work of performers such as Fred Astaire helped to guide and inform the progression of my written research which would eventually focus on the idea of the integrated musical and the importance of dance as a storytelling device within the musical genre. I feel that there were certain aspects of Twelfth Night which would have been improved by further rehearsals and workshops however in the time that we had I was very pleased and proud of the work done by all of the performers – most of whom were not dance trained in any way and worked very hard to help me realise my choreographic vision. I would love to one day go back to this adaption of Twelfth Night and develop some of my choreographic ideas in more depth so that each dance could achieve a greater level of importance to the plot and to the development of character. In addition a cast of performers with a stronger understanding and ability to apply musical conventions would ideally be able to enhance the performance further.
GESAMTKUNSTWERK

The main performative assessment piece for my Honours was not on *Twelfth Night*, but on a second, more intimate production that was presented in the latter half of the year and at the culmination of my research into dance in musical theatre. The initial conception of *Gesamtkunstwerk* (a term coined by Richard Wagner which translates to ‘total work of art’) was very different to the way that it developed and was eventually performed. My initial idea when I began study was to create a one woman musical, however when fellow student Sarah Courtis joined me on my Honours journey and we saw how well we worked together on *Twelfth Night* it quickly became clear that a collaboration between the two of us could potentially be a much more productive venture. We also drew on our experiences from this earlier production to inform specific choices about the way in which he pieced the performance together. Most notably this included the use of pre-existing music for our score due to the difficulty of creating original music as well as the time constraints which we were working in.

Initially we discussed our respective fields of study, highlighting specific elements of them that we wished to explore in our final performance. For me this included choreographic styles and motifs (some of which I explored during our production of *Twelfth Night*) and the use of dance as an integral storytelling device in the musical. In keeping with these as well as Sarah’s research into lyrics and poetry, we began to develop a script that drew from many different theatrical elements, particularly drawing influence and inspiration from the work done by Richard Wagner. While Sarah was predominantly concerned with the methodologies and creative processes that informed his Operas; I had found a strong connection between Wagner’s ‘total work of art’ and the integrated musical which developed nearly a century later. The idea of a total work of art relates to the concept of an integrated musical, with an attempt to bring many different aspects of art and performance into a cohesive whole. As the script was developed, we worked hard to keep this idea of artistic cohesion at the forefront of our creative process and it is for this reason that we chose *Gesamtkunstwerk* as the title of our performance, a musical performance which included prose, poetry, song, dance and movement.
Another important element of our scripting which was introduced very early on was our decision to have both of us playing the same character, with Sarah playing the external personification of our unnamed heroine whilst I would play the brasher, internal voice. We wanted this performance to subvert the common misconception that musicals are essentially frivolous and explore the psychology of our as yet unnamed heroine. Sarah’s research had also led her to the work of Carl Jung and in discussions we came across idea of using the Ego (my character) and the Self (Sarah’s) to define the roles we had already cast ourselves in. We also created the ultimate structure of our play from Jungian terms. Originally we had started with nine sections which were then divided into three basic story segments;

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| 1 | • Introduction of the characters Ego (E) and Self (S)  
• Focus on the conflicts in their relationship  
• The initial triumph of E over S |
| 2 | • S realises that she has been trapped  
• S realises that she has been tricked by E  
• S works up the nerve to fight back |
| 3 | • The power balance shifts to S just as she begins to realise that she needs E to survive  
• The two begin to reconcile  
• The two come to a truce |

This structure ultimately proved too rigid for what we were looking to achieve however it served as an important starting point. Through careful rescripting the penultimate story became much more fluid, using many theatrical elements in order to highlight, complement and effectively link the ten stages of our Heroine’s journey;
1. Separation
2. Identification
3. Trials
4. Illusion
5. Betrayal
6. Initiation
7. Reconnection
8. Healing
9. Heart
10. Duality

These stages were used in order to show the development of the Self and the Ego and their relationship with each other. They were also used at times in an ironic way to reflect the action onstage. A prime example of this is in part seven which details the Self’s slow realisation that in order to make things right she must face her demons. The following moment of ‘Reconnection’ is not a gentle coming together of the two halves. Instead it consists of a violent movement piece designed to show the control that the Ego still has over the Self at this point of the narrative.

We had our characters now, and a rough idea of the kind of story we wanted to tell however we lacked the impetus to actually write it. In a brainstorming session where we were studying the construction of fairytales, myths and legends, we chanced upon a strong female voice. The myth of Persephone, the Greek goddess of flora tells of her capture and abduction by Hades, King of the Underworld. Tricked into marrying him, her absence from the world creates an eternal winter and eventually he relents and allows her to spend half of each year in the world of the living. The suggestion is that the cycling of the seasons is related to her comings and goings from the Underworld and this cyclic structure appealed directly to Sarah’s research into song cycles as well as being a rich, darkly layered myth with a lot of potential to explore the character of Persephone through the medium of song and dance.

Now we began to consider the inclusion of a third character – a male presence who could embody Hades. We felt that we needed this third character to act as a
catalyst or foil for the other two characters. His presence would also allow me much more choreographic freedom, giving me the opportunity to have moments using lifts and partner work which Sarah and I would have been unable to execute by ourselves without injury. This addition to our script was one of the final major changes that we made. With our scripting in its final stages we were able to look at finalising the music we had chosen, and setting it to the songs and poetry that Sarah had written. The backing music we used came from a variety of sources including *The Dresden Dolls*, the Jason Robert Brown musical *The Last Five Years* and the post-rock band *Explosions in the Sky*. We were aiming to create a soundscape through the music that would reflect the dark and slightly unrealistic world we had created through our script and as such we deliberately chose a variety of music with different instrumentations and styles in order to try and reflect the emotional and psychological journey of the characters with certain pieces reprised throughout to create links between different sections. The few moments where there was no music were carefully chosen in order to highlight the dialogue and its importance. For the most part however, we had music playing throughout in an attempt to make the music a vital component of the production.

With our script and songs finished and rehearsals underway we began to look at the logistics of our set. Our initial design which involved a much more complex set of properties than what we finally settled upon including a standing lamp, side tables and a large standing mirror. Time, budgetary restrictions and aesthetic coherence led to a much simpler design. Our performance space was created from an open workshop space with the stage set into one corner. Rectangular tables of 6-7 people were placed at the edge of the stage space, allowing the performers to move through the audience at key moments. This also allowed us to create an intimate, almost cabaret style performance. Due predominantly to budget restrictions the set was crafted from borrowed pieces of rostra which were placed together to form a set of large stairs. This was designed to draw the audiences gaze to a single black chair at the most upstage point of the stage. This chair served as the primary physical indicator that the stage was divided into two distinct sides, although there were two other motifs which were used. These included the placement of flowers in varying stages of decay and the use of lighting to insinuate the world of the living (stage right) and the Underworld (stage left). Our final and most effective use of lighting
was the use of a special gobo to create a dappled, water effect which flowed from the first level rostra and down into the spotlight at downstage centre. The water light was tinted green and orange and was intended to symbolise the river Styx. The lighting also worked to create a more obvious division of the stage between the warmth and brightness of the world of the living, and the blue tinted darkness of the Underworld. Two more chairs were placed stage right and stage left, the former being at stage level and the latter being on the first level rostra. This was done intentionally to show the power balance between the Self and the Ego at the beginning of the play and indeed all of the levels contained within the set allowed us as actors to position ourselves physically into positions of power above those who were weaker than us. The set was finished by two ramps which led down from the upper level of the rostra to either side, allowing us multiple entrance and exit points onto and off the rostra which we would take advantage of both during physical action as well as the movement and dance segments.

Because the songs and dances were so often performed simultaneously and certain choreographic elements permeated so many moments of the text which were not technically song or dance ‘numbers’ I have not conducted my reflections on each number but on the performance as a whole using our ten sections as a framework. Within this I have highlighted important aspects of the dance a movement, focusing in particular on my development of the choreography, my stylistic influences as well as the struggles that I faced as both choreographer and co-creator on this project.

**Part One: Separation**

The play begins with the Self (S) and the Ego (E) seated in the chairs on the ground SR and the lower rostra SL respectively. S is dressed conservatively and plainly, barefoot as she hunkers down in her chair, staring at the floor. E is poised and seductive, dressed all in black with fishnet stockings, black jazz shoes and a low backed top. As the music begins Hades/the Man (M) enters from stage left, positions himself upstage centre on the rostra and introduces the play, “The Heroine’s Journey in Stages. Part One: Separation”. He is wearing a black three piece suit and is also barefoot. Throughout the play he slowly removes his jacket and vest, finally rolling
up the sleeves on his shirt. This not only shows the paring back of his character from tyrant to lover, but also parallels the stripping back of S and E.

In our initial scripts we had drafted in a movement piece at the beginning of the play to show the separation of the E and S and to introduce the dance component to the audience. I had envisaged a grand movement segment not dissimilar to the separation of the twins in *Twelfth Night* that I had choreographed earlier in the year. In early drafts however we still had no Hades and with Sarah’s limited dance experience I worried that we would be unable to make such a movement piece as powerful or effective as I wanted it to be. As a result I omitted this movement piece in favour of a brief moment of song and then a scene where E welcomes the audience and introduces the show with some cabaret style patter and storytelling. With the addition of our male actor my options became much broader and we reinstated the dance.

The music used for this movement piece is an instrumental version of ‘My Love’ by Sia. It is a love song, but also a lament. The instrumental version is light and melodic with a dark undertone and a tentative ending which feels almost unresolved. We felt that this piece perfectly set the tone of the play, as well as providing a melancholy and slightly haunting soundtrack for the separation of the two parts of Persephone.

This dance segment was the first to draw on one of my primary choreographic motifs for this show – the use of mirroring bodies to create meaning. I had used this motif in *Twelfth Night* as well with Sebastian and Viola, but here the separation of E and S worked to show not only their separation from each other, but also the primary differences between the characters – physically as well as emotionally and psychologically. E, being the stronger of the two, has the more physically demanding steps whilst the movement of S is much more organic. Though her steps are simpler, I feel that the movement I created for this character still worked to retain an effective aesthetic for the audience.

The choreography in this, as with all the dances, deliberately exploited the physical differences between the two of us as actors in order to preface the rest of the play. The movement here not only highlights the differences between the characters, it also plays upon the strengths of Sarah and myself as performers. My portrayal of E
worked deliberately towards a physicality that took on the precise posture and movements of a dancer – to the point where my movement became quite unrealistic. This helped to highlight the fact that the E character was more other-worldly and less tangible than S, who was ultimately grounded in reality and thus moved in a more natural and less choreographed way. This also works to illustrate the fact that the world within the play is not designed to be realistic, but more like a heightened or alternate version of reality, perhaps even a dream world. This decision was made in part because we felt that the somewhat fantastical nature of the myth of Persephone did not necessarily lend itself well to a realistic style. This clash of realism and myth made for a fascinating framework to work within and allowed us the freedom to use multiple performative techniques and styles.

The style of dance which I used predominantly in this section is leaning very strongly towards lyrical and contemporary, with the body being used to tell a story to the audience without any words. There is a very clear physical separation of the S and E as well as an introduction to the relationship between the two of them and M. This relationship also showcases the first instance of another choreographic motif that I used a lot – the idea of one character manipulating or controlling the movements of another. This is used to show the power hierarchy between the characters as well as to highlight the fantastical nature of the script. Whilst both female characters are physically manipulated by M here, S is more easily controlled. She is easily carried away by M, her body lolling like a rag doll as he places her back onto her chair. E, whilst unsettled by him, is better able to cope and walks away from their brief encounter relatively unscathed. We see in the moment where E and M dance both her affinity with him and also her disgust that she relates so well to him. This dance is particularly important in its placement because it creates a bookend with the end of the play where I revisit the same choreography in order to illustrate the change in the characters and their role reversal from where they begin.

We are led here into the first instance of singing. ‘There’s A Girl I Know’ is a simple song, a repeated phrase sung *a capella* where E dogs the S and tries to get a rise out of her. This is one of the few moments without an instrumental accompaniment, done deliberately to highlight the importance of it and to create emotional resonance later when it is reprised. E quickly tires of teasing S and then turns her attention instead to the audience as though she has just noticed them,
welcoming them to the space and inviting them to listen to the story she has to tell. M then introduces the next stage.

**Part Two: Identification**

This section consists of a poem spoken by E in which she describes S accompanied by understated background music (Lagos Frías by Gustavo Santaolalla) which is reprised later at key points of the narrative. The instrumentation is deliberately very different from the opening number, with drawn out strings and long pauses giving tension to the sparsely used acoustic guitar. There is little dancing in this section but there is movement from both female characters which was deliberately choreographed to reflect and enhance the poem.

**Part Three: Trials**

The previous section moves easily into the first full length song, ‘Still Here’. Sung to the tune of ‘Still Hurting’ from the Jason Robert Brown musical *The Last Five Years* this song is also a lament for lost love, the string section being the main focus of the instrumentation with an accompanying piano line fading in and out at specific moments. The lyrics see S introducing herself and lamenting the struggle she has been experiencing in her journey to find herself. As she sings E dances, her movements designed to embody the lyrics of the song and expressing everything that S is unable or unwilling to. When she is not dancing, E stalks through the audience and watches S. The style in this section for E once again leans very heavily towards lyrical and contemporary dance styles, with a very strong influence of classical ballet in the stance, foot placement and arm lines. The segment where the two characters dance together is much more contemporary, designed to complement the two of us as performers whilst also allowing us to dance together. In this section we see the characters coming together briefly, however E is clearly in control and when S shows a desire to cross over to the side of the stage which indicates the Underworld, E denies her access and quietly manipulates her into returning to where she began, SR on the rostra.
The physical manipulation present in this dance show the return of an incredibly important choreographic motif – the physical controlling of one character by another which I return to several times. There are also brief moments where the characters are mirrored as they dance together only to be ultimately separated again. At first they dance together, first with the suitcase held between them and then as they circle each other with their shoulders almost touching. But after E has pulled S back from the brink she physically moves her to the box which is DSC and stands directly behind her. The lyrics here deliberately reflect the movement; with E splitting from behind S and placing a hand on the suitcase for the duration of the line, “I am but half, but I want to know that there is a chance / I could be...whole”. On this final word, S places her hand on the suitcase and E snatches hers away, facing upstage. There is a conflict here between the two characters which will be explored in more depth later, but the relationship as it currently stands is one of division. The final moments of this song sees S walking backwards to where she started whilst E does the same facing upstage.

Certain aspects of the movement in this segment felt very strong to me, particularly the interactions between S and E at the beginning of the partnered section and again at the end. I feel that the middle segment would have benefited from further development but as it stands I was pleased with how we integrated the singing and dancing together here, allowing both of us to showcase specific aspects of our work including Sarah’s lyrics and my choreography. The fact that I was able to dance while she sang also allowed me a chance to showcase my dance abilities properly for the first time in the show.

Moving on from the dance, we see a reprise of ‘Lagos Frias’ which underlies a short monologue from E and then a brief scene where she interacts with S for the first time through dialogue. E is rude and teasing but also troubled by the incessant questions of S who is annoyingly sweet by contrast. Their verbal sparring is smoothly interrupted by the announcement of the next part by M who is still lurking quietly upstage.
Part Four: Illusion

The remaining dialogue makes deliberate hints to the fact that both characters are avoiding what they really want to say to each other. Finally S snaps at E, effectively calling her a liar and storming off. E is amused by this and introduces the next song and dance piece. To the tune of The Dresden Dolls ‘Missed Me’, this number shows the two of them coming to blows as their verbal sparring escalates. The dance and movement here was consciously designed to mirror the tempo and rhythm of the song, a percussive, dramatic and repetitive piano piece which uses long moments of silence to create tension in a similar way to ‘Lagos Frías’. E in particular works to mimic the structure of the music with a combination of slow, smooth movements contrasted with moves which are sharper yet no less controlled. The style here could still be classified as contemporary however there is also a strong presence of modern jazz as well as a sly nod to the work of musical choreographers such as Bob Fosse through the use of chairs. The first part of the dance involves S and E circling each other and dragging their chairs, finishing by banging the legs down as a percussive exclamation point to their movements as well as the piano backing.

The second half of the dance involves E taking control of the situation, seen through her domination of the chair. Whilst S hides behind her chair, E clammers onto hers and later straddles it in a display of power. Having beckoned S to her and forcing her to sit, E stalks through a vaguely threatening dance section and then seats herself one rostra higher to confront S with a verbal barrage, reinforcing her power through her higher positioning. Terrified, S begins to retaliate only to be silenced by the scantest of touches from her counterpart.

This dance has moments of strength however I feel that the restrictions of the set worked to my disadvantage here. I was re-choreographing the chair routine for E right up until the actual performance and was still disappointed with it in many respects. The music in that section was simply not powerful enough to sustain the kind of dramatic movements I wanted to explore and the limitations of my own body meant that there were certain movements I would have loved to include which I would never have been able to execute without sustaining severe injury. In addition,
time constraints and the importance of dramatic pacing led us to cut the length of all of our songs right back.

‘Missed Me’ finishes abruptly with E becoming angry at being spoken back to. She decides to teach S a lesson and M introduces the next section immediately as the music blends seamlessly into the next song and dance.

Part Five: Betrayal

The most important dance in terms of the control motif, ‘Step Into The Darkness/Mr Ragman’ is modelled on ‘Half Jack’ – also by the Dresden Dolls. The use of two songs by the same artist one after another was done deliberately, not only because of the emotional resonance they create, but also because the two songs blend well together and we wanted these segments and indeed, the entire work to flow consistently. I worked a lot with the levels of our set in this section, always working to position E at a higher point of the stage than S. This is also the first time that M comes into play as a major choreographic point since the beginning of the play. Once E has finished manipulating S she invites her to step across the river, “Will you step into the darkness and / Have faith just wait and / Let all of your misconceptions float away?” however it soon becomes obvious that S has been tricked. Trapped between E and M she panics but it is too late. She is dragged to the front of the stage where M throws her about as though she is little more than a rag doll. Upstage on the central rostra E mimics his movements, orchestrating the entire thing from the highest position onstage to show the power she holds.

The final climactic moments of this dance uses physical manipulation as well, albeit in a more subtle way. E controls the movements of S from afar, leading her back towards M. The dance finishes with S falling into M’s arms. E watches gleefully, almost manic as she introduces the next section – the only part which is not introduced by M in the entire play. This is indicative of just how much power she holds at this moment and indeed this dance would arguably be one of the strongest in terms of the way it explores the power dynamics between the characters at this stage. The movements are often violent, with rare moments of control used to contrast the
unstable state of Persephone as she allows the darkness to overwhelm and ultimately control her.

**Part Six: Initiation**

Sub titled *The Seduction*, this piece was designed to show the terrifying lack of control S has whilst under the influence of both M and E. This scene was initially described in our script as “mostly danced, fast paced and steamy” and I tried to hold true to this vision as I created the movement for it. Once again I had to work to the strengths of the performers, particularly that of my fellow actors who had little to no dance training. In addition I struggled with the rhythm and style of the song, ‘Poison Sweet Madeira’ by Sophie Solomon. The instrumentation and speed suggested a Tango however the rhythm was more reminiscent of a Cha Cha. In order to do the music justice I used both my prior knowledge and new research to devise my own combination of stylistic features which would allow me to convey the kind of emotional intensity I was aiming for. The resulting choreography combined many different styles including ballroom, contemporary, modern jazz and even some steps taken from classical ballet.

Once again in this dance I used the performer’s bodies and their positioning within the space in order to comment not only on their relationships with each other, but also to suggest the balance of power between the three characters. S is dominated continuously throughout the dance by M and E in turns, and indeed most of the routine involves quick changes between dance partners with only occasional moments where all three dance together. This makes it perhaps one of the most complex routines in the entire show and it was the one which took the most amount of work to piece together with adjustments being made up to the day of the actual performance.

The path that E takes is the most energetic, in keeping with the fact that she is very much still in control of the story. Not only does she introduce this segment of the play instead of M, she also sings the opening and closing verses and has the most physically demanding dance steps. During the first two verses she stalks through the audience singing whilst M pursues S through a series of partnered movements which
bring them back and forth across the stage. This pattern of movement is repeated in the next segment when E returns to the stage. For now though, they are the physical focus point for the audience, thus the reason why E retreats into the audience at this stage. This affords the audience a clear view of the dance whilst still being able to hear the lyrics – particularly important as the two were designed to complement each other, the movement highlighting certain aspects of the lyrics and working to enforce the power that M courts with the weakened S.

By the time E returns to the stage space the other two are finishing up their partnered duo, M abandoning S downstage on her knees. This gives her an opportunity to take over the singing while E insinuates herself with M. The following choreography mirrors the earlier partner section in this dance with S and M, however now the steps are performed with much more sensuality and the balance of power clearly shifted from M to E. The dance between them in the instrumental break takes its inspiration from both classical ballet and ballroom, with the two of them moving across the stage together and back, interspersing travelling steps with spins and a dramatic dip as well as allowing a moment where E actually leads M and then allows him to touch her as she writhes with pleasure. The relationship of these two characters is entirely different to the opening number. Here E is in control and M is used to show her off as she revels in her newfound power as well as exploring the hidden, erotic side of Persephone through her movements and interactions with M. This is the most sexually charged moment in the show up until now, and as the two dance S begins to sing from her position on the lower rostra, mesmerised with a combination of horror and fascination.

This power hierarchy continues to be explored in the next section where M easily dominates S, assisted this time by E who is quick to bully her fragile counterpart both physically and verbally. Triumphant, E breaks into a brief jazz section which carries her to the top of the rostra. As she does this M scoops S up and then discards her so that he can return to E to initiate a similar lift. Whereas S is left alone and powerless after her interaction though, E is made all the more powerful by it – initiating a brief tango step with M before setting him back onto S. The dramatic conclusion sees E singing the final verse while the other two dance once more, S being slowly pushed DSR by the movements of M and E. Finally, she is physically thrown to the other side of the stage by E. Powerless and broken she curls up on a
chair with M lurking directly behind her. E, still in the greatest position of power moves to the chair USC and surveys them both during the next section which predominantly consists of dialogue from S.

This dance is the third in a rapid succession of numbers which have little dialogue between them and I would argue that they work to show the shifting relationship between the characters which would otherwise need to be explored through the lyrics and dialogue. The following moment of silence is jarring in comparison and works to shock the audience into examining what has just occurred – the breaking of the ‘Illusion’ of innocence, the ‘Betrayal’ of the Ego and finally the ‘Initiation/seduction’ of the Self. Although S appears broken and half mad at this point, it is from this place of darkness and self doubt that she begins to find the courage to push through the darkness and reclaim her sense of self again. In this instance we used a combination of poetry and straight dialogue to show her slow self realisation which allows the characters to move into the next section.

Part Seven: Reconnection

As S speaks of trust and self discovery, M carries E up to the top of the rostra where they perform a brief movement phrase. It is sultry and gentle, almost loving – a stark contrast to the sinister sensuality they exuded during the previous number. The movements are slow and controlled, drawing once again on balletic movements such as ronds de jambs whilst retaining the sensuality of a tango and incorporating an important moment where they place the palms of their hands together. From this point on the power E has gained will begin to disappear, this is the last time she will be on an equal footing with M until the very end. In fact the following number is her last hurrah to an extent.

The reprise of ‘Missed Me’ sees the two female protagonists finally coming to blows. This time though, they don’t fight with words but with actions. The majority of the number sees E still in control, easily manipulating S who seems loathe to fight back until the very end. Again there are constant allusions to previous choreographic moments; not only does E use S as a puppet she also throws her onto the box in a move reminiscent of the moment in ‘the Seduction’ where M does much
the same thing. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, is the way that S throws E to the ground, mirroring their roles at the end of ‘the Seduction’.

Although short, this dance sequence touches on many of the same choreographic motifs and themes explored in previous dances while simultaneously beginning to alter the relationship between the characters and disrupting the hierarchy of power. Perhaps a touch overwrought, the concept of this ‘fight’ dance changed little from its initial inception to the final product and I feel that it worked effectively to serve as a link between the previous and following sections.

Part Eight: Healing

In a painfully ironic sense, ‘Healing’ is perhaps the most excruciating part of the journey for all three characters. Having lost all of her power, E is now stalked and physically manipulated by the menacing figure of M and S, initially horrified by the change within herself responds to him with violence and anger. The tempo of the music used for this number ‘Entre Ciel et Fer’ combines a fast paced and urgent (if repetitive) piano line with a layer of strings which work to break the monotony of the song and build it to an almost discordant crescendo that finally stutters to a halt in time with the hyperventilating of the overwrought E. Throughout, the two female characters tend to mimic a particular instrument in their movements with S tending towards the rhythmic pattern of the piano and E ebbing and flowing with the pattern of the strings as they move from frantic to smooth and back again.

There is a clear shift here in the relationship dynamic between these three characters by the end of the number. E is relegated to a position of weakness but instead of being ridiculed by S she is protected, albeit somewhat violently. M assumes control at first, taking his opportunity to toy with E in an extended dance sequence where he continually manipulates and puppets her in much the same way that he and E have both done previously to S. In response, S takes control, physically attacking M and then dragging him downstage so that she can half drown him in the river. It is a violent moment for this character who has previously avoided conflict, allowing her to embrace the darker side of her personality for the first time and allowing her to find peace with it. E, understandably, is horrified to see herself
reflected in the actions of S and finally the two begin to realise that they are both vital components of the Persephone character, who now begins to emerge as the Self and Ego reconcile their differences.

**Part Nine: Heart**

The importance of the following sonnet is highlighted by the lack of background music and indeed, the presence of singing and dancing at all. This is left until after when the two reprise ‘Still Here’ and sing together for the first time. Though there is little dance in this section there are elements of the movement which were deliberately crafted to draw comparison with previous choreographic motifs – especially the mirroring of the two characters. There is also a movement here where E reaches down to run her hand through the river which is revisited in the final dance. Emotionally the characters are the closest they have been in the whole play, making their physical separation that much more painful. Having crossed the river during the song, E beckons S across but she refuses, stepping back and shaking her head. A gut wrenching pause follows as E comes to realise that S has been irrevocably changed, she is going to stay exactly where she is in order to keep the balance between the two of them.

The song concludes with them reaching out to each other one last time only for E to pull away and retreat far SR where she weeps quietly. As if to comfort her, S reprises ‘There’s A Girl I Know’. The tone is gentler now, hopeful and coaxing instead of confrontational and bitter. The two smile and they move into the final segment of the play and the dance which ties the entire piece together.

**Part Ten: Duality**

Together E and S walk downstage to deliver their final selection of dialogue, spoken over arguably the most layered song in the entire play. ‘Your Hand In Mine (w/Strings)’ is performed by Explosions in the Sky and while it is uplifting there is also a feeling of tentativeness in the way it builds layers of instrumentation on top of one another. We felt that it perfectly matched the ups and downs that were present in
the rest of the play and would afford me the opportunity to show these characters banding together in order to break out of the cycle of fear, isolation and depression which had plagued them. The choreography explores the basic blocking of the play through dance with specific focus given to key moments which are revisited in order to show the progression of the characters from the beginning of the play to now.

Beginning on their respective chairs as they did at the beginning of the play, E joins S on the path she took during ‘Still Here’ and together they reprise their movement piece from that section – the two of them now sharing the suitcase equally. This time however they leave it behind and continue on hand in hand, moving as one across the river with a flower for M. He has now softened and the three delight in a joyous, if brief dance where they exchange partners – hearkening back to the earlier numbers with all three of them but now with a softer, more loving focus. Finally, as the music begins to fade, E crosses the river, leaving S and M to begin the most important choreographic moment of the entire play.

The final sequence of this dance is a replica of the opening ‘Separation’ piece. This time however, the roles of S and E are reversed and the movements are executed backwards. S moves onto the lower rostra from SL and E is carried by M from the chair SR onto the lower rostra on SR. From here they come together, clasping their hands briefly before finishing in a complete mirror image of where they sat at the beginning of the play. Knee to knee, heads leant together, palms pressed together. This final use of mirroring and reversing the steps is a nod to the cyclical nature of the Persephone story and by swapping the placement of the two characters they are allowed the opportunity to break out of their previously self-destructive ways and come together once more. At peace now and finally complete, they are finally able to answer the question which has remained unanswered since their first dialogue together – what is her name? In unison, they respond, “Persephone.”

Final Reflections

The main difference in my creative process for Gesamtkunstwerk as opposed to Twelfth Night was the use of video recording. By reviewing this footage later I
was able to better realise my choreographic vision by highlighting issues as they occurred, allowing me to focus on the finished product and ensuring that what I created was communicating effectively with my audience. As a result of this, and my previous experiences working on *Twelfth Night* I found myself much happier with the execution of my choreography in *Gesamtkunstwerk*. While I attempted to highlight specific choreographic elements in the former I feel that I achieved a much higher level of success with the latter. The choreographic motifs have been threaded deliberately and with much greater consistency throughout my work here. With more rehearsal time and further reflection on the finished product I would love to one day come back to both of these productions and rework them. However, as they stand I feel that a comparison of the two shows a definite improvement in the quality of my practical work.
APPENDICES – Final Script: Gesamtkunstwerk

GESAMTKUNSTWERK – FINAL SCRIPT

[The stage is set into a corner with a series of levels leading down on either side. The set is split down the middle. Two chairs, two pedestals/tables with flowers. In the middle a chair, table and standing lamp. SR flowers are alive, colours brighter. SL is darker, more worn. Sarah/Self (S) sits SR, head down. Wanders the space staying mostly SL. The audience are seated at tables reminiscent of a dinner theatre style show. At the front of the performance space is a box directly in the middle of a down spot. Lighting FX indicate the river Styx. S is seated SL, Ellin/Ego (E) SR mirroring each other. The Man/Hades (M) enters and introduces the play.]

M: The Heroines’ Journey in stages: Part One – Separation

Movement Piece to My Love (Instrumental)

[S and E move to centre stage and sit side by side. They perform a partially mirrored movement piece designed to show the separation of the two characters. S is carried back to her chair SR by M. He then interacts with E briefly before leaving her SL.

M moves upstage to the rostra. Lighting change. E notices S and begins to sing a capella. She repeats the phrase several times, dogging S until she relents and echoes it back.]

Song 1 There’s a Girl I Know

E: There’s a girl I know x3

S: There’s a girl I know

E: There’s a girl I know!

[S hunkers down into the chair whilst E heads to the front of the stage and the box. During the following speech E interacts with the audience from her place on the box –picking up a volume of Greek Myths and Legends. Behind her, S slowly moves to the top of the rostra and curls up next to the arm chair.]

E: Good evening ladies, gentlemen all! Welcome. I’m so glad to see you all here. I’ve got a little story, you see, and I want to share it with you all. I do love telling stories. And this one is very dear to me. You see, there comes a time in each person’s life when they must take a journey. This is not to say they must pack up all their belongings and run away in search of adventure… although that would certainly be fun. No, this story isn’t about just any journey. This is the story of a
girl. A girl in search of something so rare, so precious, so dangerous that she would destroy herself to find it. How far would you go?

M: Identification

[As E speaks S packs a suitcase and then stands. M watches her but she seems oblivious to his stare.]

E: An Empty Child awaits the dawning day
She smiles and waits and never gets her say
An Empty Child greets both moon and sun
She is ready, ready to rise, ready to run

The Patient Girl watches as things come to pass
She crafts and paints and shatters stained glass
The Patient Girl waves at the passing train
She grasps on tight, holds onto the refrain

And while the child grows up
And soon becomes the girl
If nothing ever changes
Her life will fade away

M: Trials

[As S sings she makes her way through the audience and eventually back to the rostra where she started. E dances, drawing attention to specific aspects of the lyrics through her movements and at times moving through the audience to watch S.]

Song 2 Still Hurting

S: I tie up my shoes
And I paint on a smile
I put on a sweater
With holes in the side
I dance in the light and
I wave with the wind
What’s wrong with that?

Every day I take a new step
Every day like the one that I left
The past is behind me, before me today
Brighter than before

Why can’t I sing, tonight?
Why do the moonbeams dance away?
Why is it hard to breathe
In this empty space?
I cut all my hair and
I change my whole style
I try on a tattoo
Just for a while
The moonbeams are dancing
The wind made of hands
What’s wrong with that?

Try my best
To just be me
Just be me
But I can’t see past this cloud

Though I know
This should be enough
It’s not enough
Nothing’s simple
Nothing’s right

[The two dance, S unaware of the subtle manipulation of E who moves her gently and consistently away from SL.]

Give me a sign that there’s
Hope this is not all there is to my life
I am but half, but I want to know that there is a chance
I could be, whole

Every day I take a new step
Every day like the one that I left
The past is behind me, before me today
Brighter than before
Better than it was
Nothing can stop me now
I’m… Still here

[E heads downstage to the box and re-opens the book.]

E: There are many sides to a person. Some wear their colours like a mask. A different one for each occasion. Others...they’re a bit harder to read. But one thing you should know is that you should never, ever think that you will understand the book by looking at its cover.

[S, having made her way back up onto the rostra, now notices E and calls out to her.]
S: [Innocently] What is your name? [E ignores her]. What is your name?
Excuse me. What is your name?
E: [Cattily] What is your name?
S: What is your name?
E: I asked you first.
S: No you didn’t, I asked first! What is your name?
E: Don’t have one.
S: Everyone has a name.
E: I don’t.
S: But why?
E: Does there need to be a reason?
S: Names have a purpose. They tell you a thing’s nature…its being.
E: What do you think my name should be?
S: Something nice?
E: The world isn’t always nice, dear.
S: I don’t understand.
E: Of course you do.
S: But I don’t.
M: Illusion.
E: Let’s just say that there are choices in everything that we do. These
choices have consequences.
S: So if I were to take this flower and tear it apart, it would tell me its
name?
E: It doesn’t quite work like that.
S: But everything has a name and the name shows its meaning
E: I don’t think killing a flower – or even a whole field of them – would
get them to talk to you. [Beat] Why the obsession anyway? With the
flowers?
S: It’s pretty…
E: And?
S: And what?
E: It’s pretty and...?
S: Does it need to be anything else?
E: You’re avoiding the question.
S: Am I?
E: Yes. You’ve got that look. Yes. That one.
S: I’m not avoiding anything.
E: Neither am I.

[The two come to a stalemate, bristling.]

S: Flowers don’t lie

[S storms off to her chair SR. E retreats slowly to hers, SL. They both utilise their chairs during the next song/dance sequence using their movements to punctuate certain beats in the song.]

Song 3 Missed Me

E: [Gleeful] We see now the true nature of the beast! This creature. Hiding behind the guise of an innocent little girl in the hopes that nobody will see the darkness lurking underneath. But I can see it. It’s like looking in a mirror.

S: Look at me, Look at me,

See how clever I am

I must only want to understand this flower

So I’ll study hourly

Come cloud or shine or shower

For this flower it’s power

Is that it holds true delight

E: Right! So you will just play with this poor bouquet
And come what may and whatever I say
You will just act all blasé
Well do you know what I say? You…

S: You…will do nothing, no

[The two circle each other, banging the chairs against the ground to accentuate the beat of the music.]

S: Nothing, nothing, I mean nothing when I say it
Nothing, comes from nothing
So say nothing of what you see…. 

E: See!
You avoid the question
I am here for your protection
And you treat me with aggression
I just want a signed confession
And then I will let you be

[Both characters are now centre stage, E having overpowered S and pushed her into a seated position. Triumphanty, she struts across to her chair, now SR, and performs a brief movement piece whilst S looks on. She then abandons the chair and circles back around behind S, coming to sit on the rostra above her.]

E: Your obsession! In the health profession
What they call depression
A repression following secession
from your other half

Then I will use discretion

And will you give you a suggestion

That you halt possession

And I won’t call your transgression

A dis(ease)

S: Please…do nothing

Just say nothing (ahhh)

E: Do you really think you can bear it? The darkness?

M: Betrayal

[E manhandles S downstage and off the rostra. Standing behind her, E manipulates her with a series of movements reminiscent of controlling a puppet. At the top of the rostra M watches their progress hungrily and later comes down to join them in the dance.]

Song 4 Step into the Darkness/ Mr Ragman (Half Jack)

E: In the middle of the night

When creatures of the darkness

Step out of twisted shadows for a play

Hide under your blankets

Close your eyes to Mr Ragman

But his fingers will still pull you all the way – down

[E moves SL crossing the river and beckoning S who follows as if under a spell. M creeps in behind, trapping S between the two of them.]
E: When dog’s heads all are bawling
   Will you step into the darkness and
       Have faith just wait and
Let all of your misconceptions float away?

Pay your bride price to the boat-man
   Cover up your eyes with poison
       Chain your arms
           Right Now!
               Ahh

[S is dragged downstage to the box where she is puppeteered by M. US on the rostra
   E mimics the same movements.]

   Now the time is coming
   Don’t say I didn’t warn you
   Make a deal with the devil
       There’ll be hell to pay

[E hands S a bouquet of dead flowers.]

   Just watch you fade away
   Now that you can’t get away
   Lilies make a fine bouquet
       Ahh ahh!
[A twisted wedding scene. S walks as if she is fighting the whole way, stumbling forwards and backwards as E moves her closer and closer to M. When they reach each other S collapses awkwardly into his embrace.]

Watch her fade away
She fades a
Watch her fade away
She fades a
Watch her fade away
She fades a
Watch her fade away
She fades away

E: Initiation. The seduction.

[Music change. The mood changes into something darker and sultry. The following dance is fast paced, energetic and seductive – a mix of tango and cha-cha rhythms with both girls taking turns to partner M.]

Song 5 The Seduction (Poison Sweet Madeira)

E: Cobalt eyes
You stare, you stare
Breathe into me life
And let me see into your Eden
Here in Hades’ lair

You the fire can fill me up
Until I can take no more
And take me to Elysium
Garden of delight
S: Cobalt eyes
You stare, you stare
Breathe into me life
Here in Hades’ lair

[E and M dance. Smooth, flowing and fast. S, frightened, moves out of their way.]

S: Give me hope and fill me up
Break me down some more
Until nothings left of my life
From before

E: Push me far over the brink
Save me from the ledge
I will pull you after me
You shall fall instead

This is for forever
You cannot escape

S: What is it that brought me
Into such a fate?

[E break away into an energetic, triumphant solo while M manipulates S. After abandoning S he comes back to E who he plucks off the rostra and then does a brief tango with.]
E: Cobalt eyes
You stare, you stare
Breathe into me life
And let me see into your Eden
Here in Hades’ lair

You the fire can fill me up
Until I can take no more
And take me to Elysium
Garden of delight
Take me to the garden of delight

[E spins S into the chair SL. Dizzy, defeated and broken, S curls in on herself.]
M stands behind her. E moves to the chair USC and surveys them both.

S: These days and nights are all a blur
With egg shells for a heart
A writhing snake pit just below
How can I live in such fear and such uncertainty?
All is uncertain and in the end I am alone
With my fear and dripping yolk waiting for the poison to set in.
It’s so cold here. All the time cold. Cold and...empty. There is nothing. Nothing but waiting. Watching. Writhing, writing, waiting, baiting – no. No no no, waiting. Waiting and questioning and running and running and running.

E: And never getting anywhere.

Mary, Mary, quite contrary how does your garden grow?

Posies and Rosies and Lilac a’ Lilies

And skin that’s the colour of snow.

[M tries to take her flower.]

S: No! Mine! You can’t have it! Don’t touch me! Don’t. Touch. Don’t...don’t... [almost hyperventilating] This place is wrong, it’s so wrong. Why did you bring me here? I don’t...I don’t belong here I don’t...I don’t.

[E takes the flower from S.]

E: [Disdainful] Isn’t life so very fragile?

S: Maybe it is my fault I’m here. Maybe I wanted to be here. Freedom of choice right? First there’s me, then there’s you…maybe we can work something out.

[E moves to S slowly pulling the flower apart. S winces as if every plucked petal is a piece of her skin being picked away from her bones.]

E: [Mockingly] All is uncertain and in the end I am alone

With my fear and dripping yolk waiting for the poison to set in!

M: Reconnection

[M leaves, carrying E up to the centre rostra over his shoulder.]

S: What is the nature of betrayal? It assumes a trust. A trust of others, trust of self. Sometimes it is your own betrayal that cuts the most. Can betrayal be forgiven? These days and nights, all a blur, with eggshells for a heart. And I ask myself, how far can you go? I have travelled the sleepless plain, I have crossed the uncrossable river. There is one door yet to open but before I do I must face my demon. How far will I go?

Song 6 Fight “Missed Me”

[S steps up to challenge E and the two stage a choreographed ‘dance’ fight. M watches gleefully.]

E: Won’t you fight back you coward?
You’ll do nothing, just do nothing!

You are nothing! I mean nothing when I say it

Because nothing, comes from nothing

So say nothing of what you see….

[S rises from where she has been thrown onto the box and rushes E, overpowering her.]

S: You are me…but worse!

So say nothing

What can be expected when you’re nothing

To me!

E: Don’t say nothing

Don’t you call me nothing!

[E raises her hand to strike S but is easily blocked and then slowly run into the ground.]

S: You are dead to me

M: Healing

[S raises a hand to E who cowers. Realising herself, S steps away and begins to sing.]

As in ‘Still Hurting’ E is used here to dance out the lyrics through her movements. This time she is the one being manipulated and controlled by M.

Song 7 White Asphodel

S: River flows fast, river runs free

River of woe and wailing

Which is the choice for me?

Do I want forgiveness, is that tempting fate?

Will I drown in this fire or be swallowed up in my hate?

I see the way is open, I can see the gate

But I’m eternally dogged, by six stares unabating can my fear hold me back, desperate for escape?

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Will he ever give me up?

Tartarus, Asphodel, Elysium x4

What can these choices mean? x3

Black is black, white is white
So I’ve been taught, so it’s been written

What’s black without white and white with no black?
Can they exist by definition?

I paint using one, my boards empty and plain
I paint using both, they are one and the same

E: White Asphodel – the seed which is sown by the righteous
White Asphodel – roots watered by my tears
White Asphodel is the child of all these years
White Asphodel. White Asphodel

S: And so it can be that wrong equals right
And right equals wrong, twice bitten’s once shy
I can stand on my own and still feel no pain
But life without you
Life without you, my soul will die
Surely die

E: White Asphodel – the union of the righteous
White Asphodel – the mingling of our tears
White Asphodel is the taming of all our fears
White Asphodel – when good can’t conquer evil

White Asphodel – when you needn’t try

White Asphodel is the time for me to die

White Asphodel is the time for you to die!

[S, seeing that E is under threat from M comes to her defence. She fights him back, drowning him violently in the waters of the river Styx until he relents. E watches this, horrified, almost hyperventilating.]

E: White Asphodel is the time to die! x8

[S overpowers M and he retreats quietly back onto the rostra.]

E: [Broken] What is the nature of betrayal?

[S rushes to E and attempts to soothe her.]

S: The nature of betrayal is to forgive.

M: Heart

[M collapses onto the US rostra. E stumbles to the river and bends to touch it with one hand. S follows, slowly.]

E: There is a river, flows via countless worlds
Its many branches scattered across time
O’er which every soul must journey on.
My soul I counted ready, misconstrued
Thoughts scattered to the winds, alas not I,
For never prepared can you be.
No never, for my part was’t in error
You, I now perceive, had the right of it
And yet you had not perception nor
Knowledge enough to dream. I am []right
At least in this: The stream must be crossed
By all who shall not return lest they
By some means strange become the whole and take
Control of their destiny - - -
I shall never return

S: lest by some –

Untold miracle our hearts be mended
And all confusion and doubt ended.

Song 8 Reuniting, Reprise Still Hurting

E: [Bitterly] The world isn’t nice dear
    The world isn’t clean
    The song never rhymes dear
    That’s my confession to you
But when White Asphodel is all wilted and pale
  I’ll be here

S: There is a myth that’s inside of us all
    A tightly curled Dragon
    A Titanic Fall
    The sword ever sharp and the lance still as keen
    And I’ll be here

E: I know why I can’t sing
Know why the moonbeams dance away
Both: I know that I have said
      Things I regret
The world isn’t nice dear
The world isn’t clean
The song never rhymes dear
That’s my confession to you
But when White Asphodel is
Wilted and pale
I’ll be here

I tie on my shoes
I paint on a smile
There’s a girl that I know
She’s been here for a while
So when White Asphodel is all
Tattered and torn
I’ll be here

[E reaches out to S, beckoning her back across the river but S shakes her head and steps back.]

A gut wrenching pause.]

S: There is a myth that’s inside of us all
E: I might not be brave but I’m still standing tall
Both: I dance with the moonbeams
And sing with the stars
And what is wrong with that?
There’s nothing wrong with me
Now that I have found my place
I’ll be here

[S and E reach out one more time but don’t quite touch. E pulls back and retreats SR, weeping quietly. As if to comfort her, S begins to sing a capella.] 

S: There’s a girl I know x3
E: There’s a girl I know
Both: There’s a girl I know

Song 9 Hand In Mine
M: Duality

S: There comes a time in every girl’s life when she must take a journey. It may be one of distance, one of time, of spirit, of heart. But this journey is her defining moment. The one where she earns her name.

E: And the wonderful thing about this journey is that it isn’t the only one. It is only the first. There will be many more journeys for her, more defining moments in her life, all important, all memorable. But this first one is the heroine’s journey, so called because it is the beginning.

S: It is the start of time, the start of life. The start of the cycle.

E: It incorporates the beginnings of beginnings and the ends of ends. There isn’t always an earth shattering event.

S: Sometimes there’s not even a moment of realisation.

E: But this is the moment.

S: Where you find yourself.

E: When you find your name

M: What is your name?

S & E: What is your name? X5

[S and E dance their way through the journey of the entire play, but this time they go together, hand in hand. M is gentler now and they both dance joyously with him. As the music finishes E crosses the river alone, leaving S and M together on the other side. The opening movement sequence is repeated here but in reverse, and with the two female characters swapped in their roles. They finish by coming together in a complete mirror image of the opening dance, knee to knee, heads leant together and palms pressed.]

M: What is your name?

S and E: Persephone.
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