Scattered Across Time: Wagner’s Influence on the Contemporary Lyric in Musical Theatre

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for Honours in Theatre and Drama

Murdoch University

by

Sarah Courtis

31009701
This thesis is presented for the Honours degree in Theatre and Drama Studies at Murdoch University, 2012.

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Abstract

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Musical theory is a well-researched area of study which includes thematic devices such as leitmotivs, unfinished melodies, harmonic structure and many more in this vein. While he did not invent these concepts of musical theory, Richard Wagner’s creative advances and contributions to ‘Music Drama’ have greatly influenced musical theatre as we know it today. Wagner’s innovations in this area have led me to theorise that such musical devices can be applicable to the little studied area of lyrics. In order to explore this concept I have done a case study of Stephen Sondheim’s Into the Woods as well as experimented with the theories Wagner composed (in essays) by writing lyrics to two musicals: one an adaptation of Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night and another of my own devising via collaboration, Gesamtkunstwerk. By exploring an established lyricist's work, together with my own it is my purpose to demonstrate that lyrics can be studied from both a theoretical and a creative perspective and therefore can be respected by scholars and audiences alike.
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Introduction

Richard Wagner may be one of the world’s most well known composers, both for his unprecedented innovations to music theory and for his controversial personal life.\(^1\) His history and his work are so well known it would seem strange to devote any extra time to studying his life, works or methods. Nevertheless, he is still an excellent source for progressive thinking in music, even after nearly two hundred years. There has been very little academic study into the lyric and libretto as a developing technique of storytelling and emotional resonance and so I turn to Wagner and how his concepts have developed naturally over time.

Wagner might have been more devoted to music as an art form as it was his area of greatest achievement, not the libretto, and yet despite this he made many advances in the area of libretto and wrote several essays on the importance of poetry and prose in a performance to create a full or ‘total’ piece of art. It is my intention to discuss Wagner’s essays relevant to the lyric and the concept of ‘total artwork’ and discover how his concepts have been developed to create Musical Theatre. I shall also look into what are generally considered ‘musical’ methods of creation and suggest how the can be translated into the libretto to create a more well-rounded form of musical theatre. I will give evidence of this taking place naturally through a case study of Stephen Sondheim’s musical *Into the Woods*.

Of the texts I used to inform my research there were several of specific value. This includes a collection of essays written by Richard Wagner throughout his life. The one which I used as a basis for my dissertation was *The Artwork of the Future*, written in 1849. It was from this text that I discovered Wagner’s theory of Artwork of the Future’ and the necessity for art to be ‘free’ to grow. My reading of this text refined my knowledge of the relationship between mankind and the artwork created

\(^1\) Indeed, Wagner’s personal life was a sordid affair. He was kicked out of several countries, had affairs with many already married women and championed a campaign of hate against the Jews which, along with his music, made him a role model to Adolf Hitler. However, this does not negate his accomplishments as an artist and as it is not the purpose of this dissertation to either vilify or glorify the man there shall be few references to his personal life.
by man (or woman). I shall discuss Wagner’s theories found within his essays below and show how they can be developed for further use in modern day musicals.

As my focus is on Wagner and his life’s works I found much information to help me understand him as an artist through the works of Thomas May. His text, *Decoding Wagner*, gave me insight to what Wagner may have been thinking and how he came by his revolutionary ideas for the theatre. It also substantiated my theory that there was a link between Wagner’s opera’s and classical works such as *Beowulf*, *Shakespeare* and ancient Greek mythology. However, as I am also exploring the works of Stephen Sondheim I also looked at Scott McMillin’s book *The Musical as Drama*. This text links Wagner with modern musical theatre and gives an in-depth look at integration in musicals. This confirmed my theory that Wagner’s ‘artwork of the future’ has become an artwork of the present. The text gives great insight into the work of Stephen Sondheim and how he creates both the music and libretto for many of his shows. Finally, there was much insight to be found in Simon Yam’s dissertation: *Music and the “Emotional Sublime” in Musical Theatre*. This thesis highlighted for me the contrast between the focus of even contemporary academic work on the music of an extended work and the absence of such focus when engaging with the lyrics. It was Yam’s casual dismissal of the libretto as being of little importance which confirmed for me the idea that lyrics need to be brought to light as one of the three foremost works of art (according to Wagner). Lyrics make up a large portion of a musical theatre show, so they should be given due recognition as an important piece of art.
Part One – A Short History of Wagner’s Sources

Wagner’s Sources

Many studies in musical theatre refer to classic opera as a starting point for the genre; however, to properly understand where opera virtuosos, such as Richard Wagner, were coming from you need to delve much farther back, to the beginnings of drama, poetry, dance and music. Starting with the earliest of Wagner’s sources and inspirations there is classic Greek theatre. This was a mixture of worship and entertainment which included poetry recitals, plays and songs as the chief forms of devotion during festivals. There is evidence in Musical Theatre: A History (Kenrick, John, p 20) that music and theatre were often combined in Greek theatre, each to enhance the other. Wagner used Greek myth as a building block for some of his shows and later in life decided to create his own festival of the arts, if with a little more decorum than would be found at the festival of Dionysus. Another form of performance, which is not often mentioned in the context of theatre, is Anglo-Saxon epic poetry. Originally an oral tradition, some pieces were later written down and saved for future generations to read. Before the invention of the printing press it was very difficult to keep lengthy records and so songs, plays and poems were committed to memory by bards and other such experts. This ancient art form is important because of the mingling, once again, of drama, music and poetry and also because of the profound influence poems such as Beowulf and poets such as Snorri Sturluson had on Wagner’s later works. I will explore this more fully in the following chapters.

Following the development of the two previously mentioned performance styles come the works of Shakespeare. This is a well-researched area of academia and so I shall assume that the reader has more than a passing knowledge of the area. Wagner drew much inspiration from the works of Shakespeare and he admired the use of language found in his plays and his adaptations of older works into a new framework. Some of Wagner’s earlier operas were based on Shakespeare’s plays and he even developed some of his theories about verse and prose from studying Shakespearean texts. If Shakespeare was Wagner’s greatest literary inspiration then Beethoven was his greatest musical inspiration. It was due to the merging of both of these great artists that Wagner was able to create his theory of ‘total artwork’. The merging of complexity and simplicity found in Beethoven’s work inspired Wagner to
begin his journey into the world of composition and remained an important part of the rest of his life.

**Wagner’s ‘back story’**

As well as being an artist, Richard Wagner was a very controversial man. However, his politics were what made him a man and that is not the focus of my dissertation. At the start of his career Wagner had limited success as a composer with most of his opening nights being unmitigated disasters. Indeed the majority of his income came from working as a conductor in various opera houses and finding wealthy backers including King Ludvig of Bavaria. It was lucky he attracted such wealthy patrons as he lived an opulent lifestyle, which flowed into his music and artistic pride. Wagner was keen to prove himself a virtuoso of music and art, designing scores too grand for most companies to produce (resulting in disastrous performances and therefore limited success, especially in the early years) and eventually creating a new type of theatre and a festival to go with it, fully supported and paid for by Ludvig, by this time albeit grudgingly as Wagner became a drain on the resources of even the most wealthy. What Wagner most prided himself on and strove to achieve was a new form of art, moving away from the pomp of opera and providing a conduit for truly ‘free’ artwork. Despite his desperate attempts to disassociate himself from opera contemporary to his time, he failed in many ways. Indeed, his initial attempts at opera, *Rienzi* being the first one to be truly embraced by the public, were all blatant imitations of whichever popular operatic form took his fancy as a vessel to success at the time. However, during these formative years Wagner did begin to develop the style he later became famous for. *Das Liebesverbot* showed use of developing motifs and the mythic backdrop so crucial to his later works while *Rienzi* shows a move towards the use of leitmotivs. As the years progressed and after being barred from several cities, states and countries Wagner became truly disillusioned about the elitist artistic attitudes of the time and set out to create a full work of art, fighting against “the typical opera audience of his day” (Berger, p 6) of mindless socialites with their pretentious trappings and careless attitudes towards the art they were viewing. He would later go on to design and create his own theatre to house his festival in Bayreuth. Among other developments his theatre took down the house lights during shows so the socialites would be forced to watch the performance rather than each
other. Richard Wagner lived and breathed art and it is from his advances in the musical field that musical theatre was born.
Part Two - Wagner, the Three Humanistic Arts and Music Drama

In Wagner’s essay ‘The Art-work of the Future’ he describes “the three varieties of humanistic art” as the union from which is born truly complete and ‘free’ works of art. What he means by this is that each art form (dance, tone and verse) is not complete without the other two complementing it, “reuniting in blissful harmony” (Wagner, p 28) thus creating the idea of ‘total artwork’ where every element of art comes together into one. As Wagner states, “Man’s nature is twofold” (p 26) being able to comprehend art via the senses of hearing and vision. The vision, or what can be seen, being of outward comprehension “appeals to the outer man”(p 26), the hearing and what can be heard appealing to the ‘inner man’. Each sense may bring forth beauty and wonderment, but without a mixture of both outer and inner through the forms of dance, tone and verse they “can only carry on an artificially inbreathed and borrowed life;—not giving forth [her] sacred ordinances, as in their trinity, but now receiving despotic rules for mechanical movement.” (sic, p 28)Thus, it is recognised, by Wagner, that art must be combined in all its forms to create another form, the form which he believed was art at its highest and most pure, and the form of love: musical theatre.

Firstly, there is dance, an ‘outer’ or visual art form. On its own, dance is purely physical, a manifestation of the human spirit through visual means. Dance is measured by its rhythm and the limits of the human body. Through this ordering of motion, emotion and story can meaning be made, rather than having a random assortment of movements put together for no discernible reason and thus, “The arts of Tone and Poetry become first understandable in that of Dance, the Mimetic art,”(p 31). Dance is a legitimate form of art in its own right, creating story through pantomime and beauty through movement. One of the problems of dance though is that it cannot be reproduced once performed. Firstly, technology has been limited up until recent times, so there are no recordings of dances before the advent of the film industry. Indeed, this makes it difficult to prove or disprove the use of dance in Wagner’s work and all knowledge must come from more recent sources. Also, the majority of shows do not get recorded due to logistical problems. The other ‘issue’ of
dance is also part of its beauty. The human body is constantly adapting and changing, and no two bodies are the same. This means that even if two people do the same dance or one dancer does it many times, it will be different each time it is performed. The art of dance is limited to what is seen; the movement, changes of posture, the manipulation of limbs and cannot be fully complete without the addition of an aural mode of communication. This form is the music, or in Wagner’s terminology, the tone.

This second art form of music is something which connects with the ‘inner’ sense and forms a link between the two polar opposites of dance and poetry. The tone creates the rhythm by which the dance is measured; it gives a space or melody for the verse to fill and give shape to. In his dissertation *Music and the “Emotional Sublime” in Musical Theatre* Simon Yam calls music the “generating signifier in musical theatre” (p 32), in other words: the music brings the meaning of the show to life. This art form includes melody, harmony and the blending of music into a cohesive whole; it tells the emotional story of a performance. Of the three forms, music was the one which Wagner had the most affinity with and found the most inspiration in. Much of this inspiration can be found in the works of Beethoven. In his essay *The Artwork of the Future* he said: “It was Beethoven who opened up the boundless faculty of Instrumental Music for expressing elemental storm and stress.” (p 41) However, in order to fully comprehend artwork in its ‘holy trinity’ there is one final element to add to the equation.

Cut into segments the final art from is both the most and the least academically discussed subject in dramatic writings. It is the most discussed because this includes the writings of Shakespeare and the classical Greeks. It is the least discussed in that there are very few texts with discourse about the role of lyrics and the importance of their placement in musical theatre. This is of course the form of verse. In his later years Wagner had a great interest in philology and his use of alliteration, rhyme and punning was ground-breaking during his time. When discussing the role of verse as part of the greater whole he says: “In the Poetic art, the purpose of all Art comes first to consciousness: but the other arts contain within themselves the unconscious Necessity that forms this purpose.”(p 47) In the practical sense this shows that in Wagner’s theories without written text there is no story, no driving in depth plot to
teach audiences about aspects of humanity otherwise shut off from examination. If
dance is the body of a performance and tone is the soul, then the verse is the heart.

In modern times each of these three art forms can be seen in their own light or at
least with only one other form there to give it emphasis. Audiences enjoy watching
dance concerts and ballets, listening to music and reading poetry. However, it is not
until they are all brought together to form a cohesive story that they truly encompass
what Wagner referred to as ‘Gesamtkunstwerk’: total artwork. It is interesting to find
that Wagner had no true term to encompass this newly forming style of drama. His
contemporaries used the term ‘musikdrama’ to describe his works: not quite opera,
but not quite anything else either. It may be his vanity which led to him to describing
his work as “Bühnenfestspiel [stage-festival-play]”(p 7), but I feel a happy medium
between the two does describe what he was aiming to do with his art. He sought to
unite all forms of art into one cohesive whole, adding visual arts to the mix of his
main three. Such a grand design lends itself to a festival-like atmosphere, however,
this cohesion can also be found in the idea of a music drama, if on a slightly smaller
scale than Wagner would deem worthy.

The term ‘music drama’ comes from the idea of drama being set to music to
accentuate and punctuate key moments of emotion and plot. When discussing this
term in his paper ‘Musikdrama’ Wagner said that: “The reason surely lies in the fact
that the word music denotes an art, originally the whole assemblage of the arts,
whilst drama strictly denotes a deed of art” (p 6), therefore the combining of these
terms indicates an assemblage of arts shown through deed. This concept has been
around since classical Greek theatre and shows an inclination of the arts to merge
together to form an even more complex and meaningful piece of work.

The above concepts are all basic outlines for the building blocks of Wagner’s
theories. For the rest of this dissertation I shall be expanding upon theories within
these broad areas, with special attention paid to theories which relate to the
importance of the libretto within a musical theatre framework. With this in mind it
should be noted that despite a lifetime dedicated to art (and politics) Wagner never
fully achieved his ‘art-work of the future’. One instance of this is the lack of dance
and movement to be found in his shows. While I am unable to view the original
productions due to lack of technology at the time, the 1990 production of Der Ring
des Nibelungen was very static, with only vague movement by the Rhinemaidens in the first act. I believe Wagner attempted to put movement into his new art, nevertheless, the score still followed operatic conventions which means that the majority of the songs were performed by singers standing in place for long periods of time. Indeed, it has taken many years for theatre and dance to be fully incorporated as I will discuss in the next chapter. And while he may have said there should be “No separation between the word and the sound” (Berger, p 14) Wagner was never trained in lyricism (despite his advances in that field) making the majority of his focus to be on the tone, or the musical score. Another reason Wagner failed to fully realise his ‘total artwork’ dream is due to the time he lived in and the way he lived during that time. While Wagner professed to hate the form of Opera popular during his life and attempted to create new types of art he also required an opulent lifestyle. Because of this he was dependent on others and forced to work (much of the time) within the opera mould. Many of his earlier works followed the conventions of opera which took his fancy at the time and it wasn’t until his later years that he produced truly ‘Wagneresque’ productions. He was still pushing boundaries and bringing new concepts (including new ways to view the theatre) to his work but it was still uncontestably opera. For this reason Wagner’s Legacy was truly an “art-work of the future”, a future where opera would not be the dominant art form, a future where Wagner’s concept could come into fruition, not as a festival of art (which is another concept entirely) but as Musikdrama, or as it is more commonly know these days, Musical Theatre.

I would also argue that Wagner’s notion of what constituted ‘total artwork’ can be added to. There are other forms of art which are extremely important to a production including scenery, lighting, sound effects, special effects, costuming and make-up. As time moves on technologies progress, as do our concepts of art. Modern technology makes stage-craft much easier so that current productions of the Ring Cycle can literally fly Brunnhilde and the Valkyries across the stage if the director so

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2 Wagner managed to attract and drain several major backers during his lifetime in his quest to have the best of everything as Berger notes “he certainly compromised his honour in quest of financing, but he never once compromised his art” (p 44).
wishes. Modern culture is also developing a transmedia platform, broadening what can be seen and heard, opening up totally new forms of art. In addition to new ways of creating and viewing artwork there are also new ways to view old theories. I shall go into more depth below during my discussions of leitmotivs and how they can be used in a lyrical sense.
Part Three - Wagner’s Legacy: A case study of Wagner’s Method in Into the Woods

In the following chapter I intend to discuss how Wagner’s methods have progressed over the last century with specific focus on how this translates to the lyrics or libretto. I will be using a case study of Steven Sondheim’s Into the Woods and Wagner’s Der Ring Des Nibelungen (also referred to as The Ring Cycle) to give relevant examples to the matters under scrutiny. As there are many types of musical theatre including book shows, revues, musicals for children and many more evolving into new genre’s I am going to concentrate on the type which remained most true to Wagner’s work; namely the concept musical, made popular by Stephen Sondheim through the integration of musical techniques to follow a concept rather than a plot. There are other forms of music and musical theatre which show evidence of Wagner’s theories; however, Sondheim’s work comes the closest to being true to Wagner’s dream of a constantly evolving state of art.


Many theatrical forms emerged during the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries, including vaudeville, burlesque, revue and music hall. These types of theatre emerged as a method of entertainment, for the sake of entertainment, a worthy endeavour in itself, but lacked the component of plot to tie each act and number together. It wasn’t until 1943 that musical theatre became officially integrated with the elements of song, dance and drama forming one whole, comprehensible plot. This advent of the integrated musical was made famous by Rogers and Hammerstein when they released Oklahoma! and while there may have been other shows previous to this one to claim the ‘integrated’ title, this was the most successful and famous in its time. Over the following century many great names continued this tradition, constantly refining the process, bringing it back to Wagner’s initial dream of ‘Gesamtkunstwerk’. Luminaries in this field include Andrew Lloyd-Webber, Claude Michel, Cameron Mackintosh and Stephen Sondheim.
**Sondheim**

Stephen Sondheim is a composer and lyricist, rather like Wagner except with an equal focus on both of these areas, his work spanning over more than half a century and gaining international acclaim. His work has been described as a ‘concept musical’ where all of the musical elements are “integrated to suggest a central idea or image.” (Everett, Laird, p 207). This is reminiscent of Wagner’s ‘total artwork’ and as will be seen in the following, Sondheim does make use of many concepts developed by Richard Wagner including developing motives (or leitmotivs) and the theory of total artwork. Described by Cameron Mackintosh (*Les Miserables, Miss Saigon*) as “Possibly the greatest lyricist ever” (Fanshawe), Sondheim continues on the tradition of his mentor Oscar Hammerstein (*Oklahoma!, The Sound of Music*) with witty lyrics laced over a sweeping orchestral score and interspersed appropriately with dance and movement numbers. Perhaps it can be said that it is difficult to record the existence of fully integrated musicals as there are few ways of keeping written evidence of dance numbers, however, with more and more musicals being filmed either on stage or for the big screen it can be said in safety that Stephen Sondheim works towards his concepts with a fully integrated repertoire of musical techniques.

**Leitmotivs**

One of the most important techniques shared by Wagner and Sondheim is that of the leitmotiv. The term leitmotiv derives from the German *leiten* - to lead and the French *motif* – a dominant theme in music, so literally a “leading or guiding motif”. (May, p 27) While not strictly speaking a purely Wagnerian concept (and indeed when he put it into practice he referred to it as “Grundthema” or “basic theme”) it was brought into the light as a popular tool through Wagner’s Opera’s. While a motif is a repeated piece of music or theme, a leitmotiv is a theme, repetition or progression attached to a character, thing or place and an integral part of the plot. So while there may be a motif in *Die Walkure* to invoke fire it is an association only. When it is linked with
the leitmotiv attached to Valhalla this depicts the burning of that place, a rather important plot point.3

Wagner was constantly weaving his music together so that the story could be told through the tone as well as the verse. As he had many characters and places to depict he needed to give each one a theme so that they would be easily recognisable by the audiences. With each association formed the music is able to be subtly changed due to the circumstances the characters find themselves in. For example: Siegfried has a rather heroic, if a little melancholic, theme which is later morphed into a funeral march to depict his demise. Another example is the ‘Ride of the Valkyries’ theme which plays upon Brunnhilde’s first entrance and again when her destiny is mentioned, but is not fully realised until its reprise in act four of Die Walküre when it clashes with and is mastered by Wotan’s theme at the death of Siegmund.

The progression of the leitmotiv from the operatic/orchestral score tradition to something applicable in more modern musicals can be found in character themes, or reprises. Leitmotiv when translated literally means ‘leading theme’ which becomes the colloquialism of ‘theme’. Sondheim’s Into the Woods is littered with themes and reprises which link characters and action through slight alterations in music and lyric to fit a given circumstance. For example, both Cinderella and Rapunzel vocalise a progression of notes when they are introduced to the plot. This tune is later reprised by both of the Princes during the song ‘Agony’ wherein they describe their obsession for both of the women mentioned. This is used as a romantic link to tie the characters together and a comedic trope to overemphasise the Prince’s love. It is later revisited in a reprise of ‘Agony’ in Act Two when they describe their new conquests (Snow White and Sleeping Beauty) thereby sending up the idea of the ‘perfect Prince Charming’ and reminding the audience that they are cheating on their wives. The Baker’s Wife also uses the same list in her song ‘It Takes Two’ which is sung during ‘Agony’ thereby lyrically linking her with the princes and setting up for the song ‘Moments in the Woods’. This thematic device is used in a more serious way during the Witch’s storyline. During her song to Rapunzel ‘Stay with Me’, she begins with the first two lines of a later song ‘Children Will Listen’, except sung in a very bitter

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3 As can be seen in the video “Let there be Leitmotifs!”
manner. When the full song is performed at the end of Act Two the tone is softer, more melancholic as she understands the role of the parent to let go of the child and give them freedom to make their own mistakes.

The purpose of leitmotivs is to develop a rapport between the music and the characters using repetition and developing themes. Theoretically this could include lyrics, or verse, as well as tone, thereby being translated into the libretto. As translations of verse are often uncertain I shall only use *Into the Woods* as my lyrical example. The main theme of Sondheim’s show is first found in the prologue. This theme is the constant refrain of the words “into the woods” or variations thereof to characterise the journeys made by all of the characters. The following chorus is sung during the prologue, introducing the theme into the play:

> Into the Woods,
> It's time to go,
> I hate to leave,
> I have to, though.
> Into the woods--
> It's time, and so
> I must begin my journey. (Sondheim)

This is woven throughout the story until it is fully realised in the finale with the following variation:

> Into the woods to find there's hope
> Of getting through the journey.
> Into the woods, each time you go,
> There's more to learn of what you know.

This serves the same function as Brunnhilde’s theme in *Die Walkure* and the musical themes found in *Into the Woods*; to show development of character through variations of theme. Another simpler lyrical leitmotiv is the constant refrain of “I Wish” which is voiced by every character in the play. This starts as a theme of longing for the thing which each character wants but cannot get except through a miracle of magic. Once they have attained their wish they realise that they should indeed be “careful what you wish for, wishes come true” (*Children Will Listen*) and
the theme morphs into a melancholic wish for simpler times when wishes were mere dreams. This theme is so powerful it both starts and ends the play, bringing it full circle with the same character (Cinderella) voicing this theme. This brings into question whether or not events will continue with another round of disastrous wishes thereby continuing the cycle, rather like The Ring Cycle both beginning and ending with the ring in its proper home in the Rhine River. Musical theories are just as effective through words and potentially this shift towards lyrics can create a more layered meaning as music and lyrics are bonded once more.

Layering of Music and Lyrics

For the theory of ‘total artwork’ to be fully achieved music, lyrics and dance cannot just be physically put together to tell story, they must weave together, providing layers for the audience to enjoy simultaneously. In following with this theory it is not enough to have sad lyrics accompanying a sad tune. In order to create a performance with layered meaning then there needs to be a juxtaposition of music, lyrics, movement and situation as well as the same complementing each other. For example, the title song of Into the Woods takes on several meanings through shifts in the lyrics despite the music remaining the same. This can be seen in the lyrics seen above. The first rendition of the song is about the start of a journey; the tone is full of trepidation and the desire to conquer such feelings in order to ‘gain the thing worth journeying’. In contrast, the second version of the song is more hopeful. The characters have already been in the woods once and lived to tell the tale. The same sense of journeying remains through the reminder of the music, but the tone of the words changes the meaning to reflect the discoveries of the characters since the first song. Yet another layer is added when it is sung by characters that have died in the course of the story: this adds irony to the otherwise hopeful song.

This is only a very basic example of a complex technique. The meaning constantly shifts and is added to as more characters meld their voices and stories to the whole, creating a harmony of connotation as well as tone. This is merely an extension of what Wagner was exploring in his musical leitmotivs. The layers of meaning in his texts were musical, because the majority of his training was musical; Sondheim adds the extra layers through years of experience in the melding of music and lyrics and
extensive training by masters before him. In this he had the advantage as Wagner’s pride stopped him from admitting to any training or accepting much in the way of help.\(^4\) As it is difficult to be fully conversant with the ways of every art form this is when collaborations come in handy. Being able to work closely with a partner (or group) can lead to a deeply layered show in more than one area. Neither Wagner nor Sondheim was a trained choreographer and so the area of dance remains unattended in many of their shows, however, dance and movement is another way of layering meaning into a performance, weaving the three main strands of ‘total artwork’ even closer together.

**Unfinished and Developing Themes**

In order to fully understand themes and leitmotivs one must think of them as music in development. This is most easily explained by breaking songs (not just the music) into three sections: preprise, main song and reprise. The last two are well known terms and ways of thinking, however, the first is a philological invention of my own. I came about it by rearranging the order of music and needing a term to describe the short sections of songs found before the main song is fully explored. Logically if a reprise is a repetition or return to an original theme then a preprise proceeds or introduces this theme. It also plays on the word ‘prise’: to open, inquire, consider and esteem the music all at once. Having these three sections of song properly defined allows me to work structurally and properly discuss the development of themes and leitmotivs.\(^5\) The development of music and lyrics (and of course dance) adds to the meaning of a performance, giving it depth of emotion and story. Wagner could be both blatant and subtle with his music, depending on the needs of the piece, and when it came to the entwining of leitmotivs he was incredibly subtle. There were times when he would not resolve a musical phrase, letting it get cut off fade into another without truly finishing for most of the play. It would not be truly resolved until the end of the performance as a way of concluding character development. This

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\(^4\) Wagner wanted to be hailed as a prodigy and believed this meant he didn’t require, or shouldn’t be perceived to have had, any formal training.

\(^5\) Indeed the ‘preprise’ is not all too common due to the complexity of musical scores, however, it does become important in my own original work.
can be explained most clearly through an examination of his work on *Tristan und Isolde*.

The lovers were separated for most of the story either through distance or deception and so their theme reflected this. It came close to consummation just before the climax before being cut off by the action of the story keeping their love at bay. When they are finally in each other’s arms and all of the secrets have been revealed the music reflects this with the full musical resolution of their theme. In *Into the Woods* this can be seen in the songs depicting the relationship between the Witch and Rapunzel. There is a short preprise of their theme in ‘Stay with Me’, followed by the full song ‘Lament’ as the Witch pines for her life before the play started. However, the theme is not fully finished until the finale when she sings ‘Children Will Listen’ with the full cast and the lament forms meaning for every character and story shown over the previous two hours. Songs develop meaning over time as the story evolves and as the music and lyrics change to mirror this evolution; this then feeds back into the story creating extra layers of meaning depending on who is singing what and why. This can become quite complex and warrants a study in its own right.

The developing of themes through preprises (perhaps a form of foreshadowing), reprises, repetition and so forth creates patterns in the music and lyrics which turn into cycles of meaning. According to Nietzsche’s *Eternal Return* “patterns will occur but we do not return precisely at the point from which we began – if we use the consciousness which we have gained.” (May, p 171) Therefore, once the end of a performance has been reached, if the audience uses its consciousness to reflect upon what they have seen these patterns of music, lyric and dance inform what comes next, whether it is a repeat viewing or another story with complementary themes. What has been seen (and heard) cannot be un-seen (or heard) so while the story can start again at the very least the audience will carry with them the knowledge of what is to come, which changes the way they see the story, creating an entirely different viewing to the one before. This is literally shown in *Into the Woods* as the characters face the situation of going into the woods in both Acts One and Two. The second time they are burdened with the knowledge of what came before and this changes their decisions and reactions accordingly thereby changing the original fairy-tale story. This is also seen in *The Ring Cycle* as Brunnhilde decides to replace the Ring in its original home of the Rhine, thereby bringing it back to the beginning and
leaving the audience to wonder what would happen if another tried to take it and how the characters would react differently with the knowledge gained over the course of the story. The themes and lyrics in both cases have constantly been changing based on the action of the story, each time morphing into something slightly different, in a way learning from the earlier ‘action’ of the music. This gives it the feeling of being almost alive were it not crafted by the hand of man.  

Language Study

Many consider Wagner to be a forward thinker for his time, creating new styles and adapting and changing old ones to greater artistic effect. However, it must be noted that many of his ideas were inspired by his engagements with the great artists of the past. Some of his greatest influencers were Shakespeare, Beethoven and of course, Greek Mythology. These are all apparent throughout his operas, as shall be seen below; however; of great significance to the libretto of his Ring Cycle was the Anglo-Saxon epic Beowulf. This poem originated in the oral traditions before being put to paper at some point in the 600’s (Ringler). Much of the original manuscript was lost, but there are many translations available today. Wagner was inspired by a form of verse called the Stabreim Method which was made famous by the Beowulf poet. This method, translating to the English ‘alliteration’ can be traced to Snorri Sturlusen and the Prose Edda (or Younger Edda). It is “a kind of intensely alliterative verse based on stressed syllables” (May, p 113) which Wagner experimented with, creating a ‘pseudo-archaic tone’ for his Ring Cycle due to the poetic and linguistic conventions found within this style. This caused some controversy and confusion at the time as the libretto moved away from the traditional prose style.

The libretto of an opera or musical is an incredibly complex, and often underrated form of art. Many academics focus on the music and score of musicals, discussing

6 This use of the leitmotiv has also become more popular in modern times through orchestral scores for movies. Composers such as John Williams and Howard shore use this technique to great effect in epic films such as Star Wars and The Lord of the Rings trilogy. It is interesting to note how this is most effective in epics and broad sweeping legends rather than more contemporary stories.
the mathematics or emotional resonance. However, I see the libretto as being just as complex and important as the music it is sung to. When writing a song there are many different choices to make about the poetry and composition; these will affect the plot, character development and overall quality of a production. When Wagner decided to follow the Stabreim Method and experiment with punning, alliteration and other forms of poetry he added new dimensions to his operas and layers of meaning thereby adding tension and complicating his characters, giving the actors more than two dimensions to work with. These devices do not translate well from German to English so I shall draw upon the similar methods used in Into the Woods in the Witches rap below.

These days there are texts which outline the basic structures of songs found in musicals, although they generally have no explanation as to why the structure is important and how this affects the text: a large gap in current academia. Lyrics in songs generally follow a set structure or arrangement in order to tie in to the music and allow for the forming of rhyme, repetition and motif. Two common arrangements are ABAC and AABA, where the letter equals a stanza and (generally) eight bars of music. (Cohen, Rosenhaus, p 97) Once these rules are mastered they are able to be broken. One example of this is the Witches Rap during the opening number of Into the Woods:

[THE WITCH]

Greens, greens, and nothing but greens:
Parsley, peppers, cabbages and celery,
Asparagus and watercress and
Fiddleferns and lettuce--!
He said 'all right,'
But it wasn't, quite,
'Cause I caught him in the autumn
In my garden one night!
He was robbing me,
Raping me,
Rooting through my rutabaga,
Raiding my arugula and
Ripping up the rampion
(My champion! My favorite!)--
I should have laid a spell on him right there.
Could have turned him into stone,
Or a dog, or a chair,
Or a sn-- [drifts off into a momentary trance]
But I let him have the rampion,
I'd lots to spare.
In return, however,
I said 'Fair is fair;
You can let me have the baby
That your wife will bear.
And we'll call it square.'

The placement of the rap is a clever change in tone to highlight the difference between the Witch as empowered (at this point in time) as opposed to the Baker and his Wife, who are disempowered. It is fast-paced and highly alliterative and is the device which introduces the magic beans: a major plot point, leading to the deaths of many characters. This rap is only one part of a whole song which integrates storyline with verse and tone as well as dance numbers which highlight the connections between characters and their interlinking quests which lead them into the woods. The language also serves to create humour in a tense situation thereby adding to the character development as well as plot development. The tone in which the song (or any for that matter) is sung is another layer of meaning which is added during the rehearsal process by the actors and director.

Finally, choices in language style and word selections feed back into the concept of lyrical leitmotivs. Language is a part of world and character building and it is important for each character to speak, sing and dance in his or her own individual way depending on experience and location in the musical landscape. Therefore if words and phrases are echoed by characters we must assume it is for a reason. A phrase which is repeated by several characters - who do not interact - is especially important as they are connected for a reason, whether due to going through similar trials, learning similar lessons or foreshadowing a meeting and relationship. I shall
return to the Princes, Cinderella and the Baker’s Wife. In the song ‘Agony’ the Princes sing the following phrases:

[CINDERELLA’S PRINCE]
Am I not sensitive,
Clever,
Well-mannered,
Considerate,
Passionate,
Charming,
As kind as I’m handsome
And heir to a throne?

[RAPUNZEL’S PRINCE]
You are everything maidens could wish for!

[CINDERELLA’S PRINCE]
Then why no-?

[RAPUNZEL’S PRINCE]
Do I know?

[CINDERELLA’S PRINCE]
The girl must be mad!

This is echoed by the Baker’s Wife and Cinderella in the song ‘A Very Nice Prince’:

[BAKER’S WIFE]
Is he sensitive,
Clever,
Well-mannered,
Considerate,
Passionate,
Charming,
As kind as he’s handsome,
As wise as he's rich,
Is he everything you've ever wanted?

[CINDERELLA]
Would I know?

[BAKER'S WIFE]
Well, I know.

[CINDERELLA]
But how can you know what you want
Till you get what you want
And you see if you like it?

As can be seen the two songs match despite the Baker’s Wife and Cinderella’s Prince having not met before this point. There are many meanings here. First, this is a send-up of the princely stereotype of a charm and appeal. Both parties believe the same myth of Prince Charming which is later disproved by his infidelity. Secondly, the song foreshadows the meeting of the Prince and the Baker’s Wife during the song ‘Moment’s in the Woods’. Thirdly, the subtle differences in language between songs gives the audience a clue that it is not a match made in heaven after all; that Cinderella is not a fairy-tale princess to live happily ever after. These songs reflect the leitmotiv of ‘Royal Love’ and all the complications that come with it. The changes in lyric show the different choices being made. Indeed, this is linked with another choice theme, this time between the women. The final lyrics sung by Cinderella match those sung by the Baker’s Wife in ‘Maybe they’re Magic’:

[BAKER'S WIFE]
If you know
What you want,
Then you go
And you find it
And you get it-
The music may be different, but the lyrics match enough for there to be a link. This shows the differences in character and what they are each capable of doing in the pursuit of happiness. Freedom of choice and living with the consequences is a major theme of this play and is woven through most of the music and lyrics with subtle differences for each character as they come to each decision.

**Of Mythic Proportions**

As Wagner struggled to find the acclaim he felt he deserved he began to realise that the stories best re-cast into the music mould were ones which had stood the test of time as myths, legends and fairy-tales. The most famous example of this is *Der Ring Des Nibelungen* which was based on the Norse sagas. He also borrowed from famous stories such as the legend of *Tristan and Isolde* and the *Flying Dutchman* as well as some of the stories made famous by Shakespeare. Stories such as these provide a perfect framework for a musical (or opera) as the audience is already at least partially familiar with the text. This gives the composer and librettist more time to develop character without being bogged down in plot. *Into the Woods* follows this precedent by using several well-known fairy tales as the basis for a plot. It is assumed that audiences are familiar with *Jack and the Beanstalk, Cinderella, Rapunzel* and *Little Red Riding Hood*, enough so that once they are introduced by name their stories can be followed easily and adapted by the writers to create a whole new tale with little to no confusion. This is not to say that every musical must be based off an already existing story; there are many award winning original musicals which are structurally sound and entertaining; nevertheless there is a niche of music drama’s which do follow this framework, following the Wagnerian legacy in more than one way. Musical theatre creates a hyper-reality and the use of myths, legends and well known tales is a good base to add music to in order to heighten emotion and twist the tale to new ends. Using a pre-existing story also opens doors for extra layers of meaning as librettists and composers put in sly references to other adaptations or action which is not fully depicted on stage. The use of pre-existing texts is not necessary for ‘total artwork’ to apply; however, it does open certain doors to improvement and expansion using both old and new art forms, which is a part of the ‘gesamtkunstwerk’ theory.
Conclusion

Wagner felt that there should be “No separation between the word and the sound” (Berger, p 14) and that art should be free and total. He championed progressive thinking in the area of Music Drama and paved the way for previously existing concepts to be brought together to form the genre of musical theatre. It only follows that this progression should continue in the modern world, through Wagner’s true legacy: his writings about art and its future. It is through this that there can be found a vision for expansion and adaptation which was later taken up by musical theatre composers such as Stephen Sondheim to create a new and ever changing art form. Wagner’s legacy is not only his monumental additions to musical theory and the way theatre is physically viewed but the belief that all forms of art can be combined to create a new one. This in turn led to the development of musical theatre and opens up the realm of theory for more discussion on what total artwork can become and the importance of words and poetry as a musical device. There are few writings about the place of the libretto in musical theatre, an oversight as it makes up a third of ‘total artwork’. Lyrics, verse, the spoken and sung words are the heart of a show; they link characters and come together to form the story, they give it purpose. Without lyrics there would be no musical theatre. Artists such as Stephen Sondheim understand this and have followed very similar methods of creativity to Wagner to produce artwork which deserves the title of ‘total’. Whether it was Sondheim’s intent to develop the theories Wagner wrote about or not it is my belief that he has continued Wagner’s legacy as it was envisaged in its full form. The libretto is a complex and important art form and it is the nature of art to grow; this is the artwork of the future.
Part Four - Commentaries

The following are commentaries on the two productions I wrote the lyrics for over the research period. The first was used as a platform to decide which theories to focus on and took place in the first half of the process. The second is an example of putting the theories discussed in the dissertation into practice and took place in the second half of the process.

Twelfth Night: the Musical

*Twelfth Night: the Musical* was a research project primarily intended to develop skills of lyric writing and collaboration. As it was a test run I began writing with the intent to adapt previous work, both Shakespeare’s text and through the music. Before I started the writing process it was my idea to write completely new music for the show. However, due to time constraints this was no longer a viable option. As my focus was lyrics, I then made the compromise of using pre-existing tracks from the chosen era and placing my lyrics on top of them. This ended up being a constructive exercise as I was able to add extra layers of meaning through the choice of backing tracks and the way I could twist the meaning of the original songs. As it was an adaptation it was given the musical setting of the 1940’s, so the music and lyrics chosen had to be appropriate for that time period. During the song writing process I worked on a basic concept of theme’s and word play which I would later develop more fully in my second practical piece. For full reference the lyrics can be found next to their originals in Appendix A.

The Songs

As the Musical Director I selected the backing tracks, wrote the lyrics, arranged the music and taught it to the actors. The following sections will briefly describe the intent behind the songs and the choices I made when integrating music, lyrics and dance.
A Parting of Ways (Act 1, scene 1)

While this song is a movement piece and therefore technically not my department, it is the opening number and therefore important to the overarching musical narrative. It was decided to begin small and intimate with a visual explanation of the parting of Viola and Sebastian rather than having a glitzy group number. This decision was made to set up the darker aspects of the play which I set out to highlight in the subsequent musical numbers.

The backing music to this number is a combination of Straighten Up and Fly Right by the King Cole Trio and Fascinating Rhythm and Someone to Watch Over Me by George Gershwin. This is the only track with the vocals kept in. The piece begins happy, with Sebastian and Viola dancing together among the audience until there is the sound of an air-raid siren and the track morphs into darker tones. There follows an expressionist movement piece which portrays the separation of the siblings.

I wanted this piece to capture the relationship of the twins so as to enhance the grief they each feel at the supposed death of the other. I also needed to introduce the military aspect with them ‘flying’ around and set up the use of music from the forties.

Twins Duet (Act 1 scene 1)

The dream-state duet by the twins runs closely after the opening number. Written to the tune of They Can’t Take That Away From Me by George and Ira Gershwin it is a melancholic tune of loss and sorrow. The original song has a mixed message of past joy mingled with grief, however, my lyrics speak only of loss and the potential to meet only in the after-life: We may never, never meet again/ in the circles of this life. The irony of this is that the audience knows that Sebastian is still alive and so the original meaning of the song is in fact valid, for those who are familiar with it. This song is the theme for the twins and revisited several times throughout the play.

Good E’en to You Sir (Act 1 scene 2)

While the last song was mostly plot-driven this next one is purely character-driven. It serves to introduce the characters of Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and Maria and how they interact with each other. Based on a song from a slightly earlier era (Gershwin’s I Got Rhythm was released in the 1920’s) it gives a sense of innocence and fun that
wasn’t as prevalent in the post-World War Two era. It was important to place a comic song at this point so as to inject some fun energy into the play after the maudlin introduction. I tried to intersperse the songs this way so as to draw the audience in to emoting with the characters as well as enjoying a good song and dance number.

A lot of the set-up in this song revolves around Sir Andrew making a fool of himself. Whenever he tries to join in on a song he is cut off by the other characters in the scene, except for in one instance later on in the show. This also sets up the crueller hoax played on Malvolio.

This song integrates the script into the singing and involves music, dance and lyrics. In a self-contained scene this song demonstrates the full integration of ‘total artwork theory’.

**Enter Cezario (Act 1 scene 3)**

While this song is a dance number, it is an important musical link to Viola’s journey. This track is a mixture of the previously heard songs *Someone to Watch Over Me* and *Fascinating Rhythm* by Gershwin. *Someone to Watch Over Me* is Viola’s theme throughout the play, expressing her loneliness and yearning for something she thinks she can’t have. *Fascinating Rhythm* is her stronger theme which takes up the majority of this track. It helps tell the story of her transformation into a boy and thus begins her story-arc of yearning for Orsino.

**Olivia Mourning (Act 1 scene 4)**

Olivia is introduced through this interpretation of *Some Enchanted Evening* by Rogers and Hammerstein as being in a state of depression over the death of her brother. I have completely twisted the intent of the original song to show the negative aspects of love, especially possessive love. This song develops as a theme throughout the play with the final re-prise bringing back the original meaning of finding unexpected love. Each subsequent rendition of this song returns to the concept of developing love through possession and doing what it takes “to make him fall in love”.

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**Twins Duet (Act 1 scene 5)**

This is a reprise of the opening sung number, except it is reversed so that Sebastian is the focus of the scene. This serves to mirror the twins musically as well as physically and to remind the audience of the emotional stress of losing a loved one. It also emphasizes the point that Sebastian is alive. Lyrically, it stresses the concept of ‘flying’, a reminder to the audience that instead of being shipwrecked our characters crash landed in to a post-war era.

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

The track I chose as a backing for this song, *Fever* by Eddie Cooley and Otis Blackwell is a very seductive piece of music. While it is slightly out of the forties, having been written in the early 1950’s, this adds to the uncertainty of how far after the war this is set. I have taken the message of the eternity of burning passion and layered it into the story of Olivia and Viola. This brings up the possessive and somewhat erotic nature of Olivia’s love for Viola, who is also burning in a passion for Orsino. Furthermore, there is a layer of sexual ambiguity about the relationship between Olivia and Viola as can be seen in the lyrics: *we are both women*. This song is a minor theme for Olivia as she opens herself up to the idea of love once more. In a previous scene after she meets ‘Cesario’ the track can be heard as she decides that ‘he’ is the one she wants. It also returns to the concept of blending Shakespeare’s script into the lyrics.

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

This is one of the songs already present in Shakespeare’s text. As such, I worked with tunes already made for the songs and adapted those versions to the voice of the singer. The version I worked from was taken from Trevor Nunn’s 1996 film adaptation of *Twelfth Night*. I added a Maria to a few of the lines so as to develop her character-arc, but otherwise left the song as it was.

**The Drinking Song (Act 1 Scene 7)**

One of two purely original songs, *The Drinking Song* stands in as a reason to bring Malvolio on stage. It also develops the camaraderie between Feste and Sir Toby and emphasises Sir Andrew as a bumbling fool. The song is mostly filled with sexual
innuendo as the men try to out-testosterone each other and generally have a good
time. The song is percussive in nature and brings out the energy of the scene.

**Come Away Death (Act 1 Scene 8)**

*Come Away Death* is the second of Shakespeare’s songs present in the text. I
workshopped the version by Franco Battiati and cut the song in half for the sake of
timing; other than that this song remains much the same as directed in the text.

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

When I was writing this song I kept in mind that there was another song already in
the scene and that Viola was present for its performance. Because of this, I morphed
some of the lyrics from *Come Away Death* into this rendition of *Someone to Watch
Over Me*. This song is placed towards the middle of the show and is emotional
climax for Act One. It is also one of the longest songs as it incorporates a dream-state
dance section in partway through. The lyrics of *Come Away Death* were my
inspiration for this song in the way they spoke of lost hope and shattered dreams.
This spoke to me of Viola’s infatuation with Orsino and the seeming impossibility of
them ever being together at this stage of the story. I also used some repetition of her
dialogue with Orsino to emphasise her yearning and desire to have someone to watch
over her.

**What You Will (Act 1 Scene 9)**

The final song of Act One, this is the big show number of the play. I kept the
majority of the songs subtle and worked with emotions rather than glitz, however, for
the Box Hedge Scene Cole Porter’s *Anything Goes* was a perfect fit. This song
needed to be energetic, triumphant, comic, make reference to the title of the show
and incorporate several singers as well as tell the story of the plot against Malvolio.
As such it was the hardest song to write and wasn’t finished until after the script was
finalised. *Twelfth Night* is about the time of misrule, where the servants are smarter
than their superiors and have the upper hand in all the tricks that are played. I merged
this concept in with the military theme as can be seen in verse one: *Some months ago
we were in armies/had rules which we now discard/it’s all downhill/do what you
will!*
This ties in with the earlier song *Good e’en to you Sir!* As Maria, Sir Toby and Sir Andrew lay their trap for Malvolio. The song integrates song and dance together in a classic Broadway method which I have not used since.

**Olivia Pining (Act 2 Scene 1)**

Act Two opens in the same vein as Act One: two singers together on stage, singing the same lyrics, but with slightly different stories. However, the difference is that there is hope injected into this song. It is a reprise of Olivia’s theme of *Some Enchanted Evening* but with changes in the lyrics to reflect her being open to love, although not quite in an ‘acceptable way’ as is seen in her next song. She is joined at the end by Maria who is still running off the high of fooling Malvolio and yet is pondering how to get Toby to fall in love with her. A very simple opening, it brings the audience back to an emotional connection with the characters.

**The Seduction (Act 2 Scene 1)**

After a soft start to the act I needed something with energy and comedy to follow. Luckily the script naturally followed this progression, giving me a scene between Viola and Olivia to work with. Written to the tune of *Perhaps, Perhaps, Perhaps* by Osvaldo Farres, this is a mock-seduction performed with a rhumba. The original song is about wanting to know if love could be requited. In contrast my version of the song is about forcing love on the wrong person. It is also slightly ironic as Viola has an interjection of *And just what kind of woman falls star-struck in affection.* The irony being that she is dismissing Olivia’s, albeit misguided, love after falling so quickly in love with Orsino herself.

**Blue Ashes (Act 2 Scene 2)**

*Blue Ashes* is the only fully realised original song both musically and lyrically in the play (the Drinking Song having no backing music). Written rather late in the game, it is the song for the unrequited lovers. Originally I was going to place another re-prise of the twins’ duet in its place, but that felt like it would be overdoing the theme and I also wanted to flesh out the character of Antonio. This song was inspired from working on the final scene and watching the subtlety in the actor’s performance and being so moved by it that I had to write him some material to work with. Naturally I went through an extensive re-write and workshopping process and can credit the
majority of the music to Ellin Sears. While in the final rehearsal week I realised that the song was also a perfect fit for Sir Andrew whom I also wanted to have sing but for whom I had never found the place for. After looking at the script again and realising he was in a similar place of rejection I was able to workshop him into the song and turn it into a beautiful duet. As it was written specifically to match the vocal capacity of the original singer who has very raw tones, this became the most emotional song of the show. It has a very contained energy and tells the audience that not all the deserving are going to win in the end.

**Malvolio’s Madness (Act 2 Scene 3)**

Barely a page after the most depressing song of the show is the funniest. The contrast works on its own by bringing the audience from one side of the emotional spectrum to the other, but is made especially significant by the content of the songs. One is about the acceptance of love lost but with the potential for a moment of clarity while the other is about a certainty of love returned before the realisation of a mistake and eventual fall of a character to the very depths of despair. This song was written to the Cole Porter classic *De-Lovely*, a song of love and joy and innocence. I have completely twisted this original meaning to show Malvolio’s madness in expecting Olivia’s love and showing it to be motivated by lust. I adapted the dialogue from the cross-garter scene and placed some of it straight into the song thereby editing the script down and combining script and music as it should be in a musical where the lyrics are informed and in turn inform the plot. It also entwines the language of Shakespeare with that of the Post-War era.

**They Can’t Stop Us (Act 2 Scene 3)**

In order to fully realise the journey of the characters I reprised *De-Lovely* twice in a row after the main song. The first reprise is the victory song of Toby and Maria. They are at their peak at this point having been successful in their plot against Malvolio and now come to realise that they are a couple. This song is also a self-deprecating note from the writer. It is my way of saying that I am aware of what I am doing by using pre-existing music and the line I have to tread between parody and copyright issues. I finish the song on the line *it’s de-end of De-Lovely* as a nod to the audience and anyone listening closely enough to find all the meanings layered into the music.
Malvolio’s Madness (reprise) (Act 2 Scene 4)

Bringing the song in full circle is the final reprise of *De-Lovely*. Sung completely a-Capella are the opening lines to the song. Originally they were spoken confidently as an introduction to the main song. In this scene there is a complete reversal. Malvolio is locked away and calling for help from the very people who put him in a cell. He has fallen nearly to the depths and takes a moment to choke out the words of his humiliation before his tormentors return.

The Wedding (Act 2 Scene 4)

Another reprise with no backing, this is a hint of the joy to be found in the final lover’s song in the following scene. This is sung by Olivia during her wedding to Sebastian and shows that her love is superficial as she believes that she is marrying Cesario instead.

The Reunion (Act 2 Scene 5)

This is the final reprise of *They Can’t Take That Away*, the theme of the twins. This time it is sung in joy rather than sorrow and they are aware of each other while they sing. This completes the journey of this song and brings the show nearly in full circle.

One Thousand Mornings (Act 2 Scene 5)

Technically the final show number, this is the full rendition of *Some Enchanted Evening*, previously seen in snippets or pre-prises. Finally in its fully developed form it shows that the main lovers have indeed found a kind of love, even though it’s not what they expected it to be. This brings the themes to their happy conclusions, highlighting the joy of the lovers as they regain their place of power over their servants and their own desires. It’s not until after this song that the audience is reminded that it will not be a happy ending for everyone.

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

The last remaining song in the text I left it in its traditional place as the closing number of *Twelfth Night*. This is an interesting song as it stands apart from the rest of the show as a commentary by Feste on what has happened throughout the play and reminds the audience that there are many types of love and not all of them are given
a chance to blossom. I used the version performed in The Trevor Nunn 1996 film with the additions of two choruses. I also arranged a harmonic backing with the whole cast to be sung during the bows.

Reflections

This production was intended to be a sounding board as I worked on ways to enhance my written dissertation with a production. As such there were some ideas which worked, some which didn’t and many lessons learned about putting together a whole musical.

The Music

I needed to follow my instincts and keep a continual soundscape running throughout the show. This could have been done as a pre-recorded track or through live music. It was part of my original plan to have a live track running through the scenes to highlight the emotional content, however, due to changes in direction this was cut, and nothing was put in its place. While watching the footage I felt the lack of music and can therefore be sure to put it in any subsequent performances.

There also needed to be longer introductions to the musical numbers so as to present them organically into the text. Some of the songs had this introduction through the scene, but most of them started too abruptly: when writing my next musical there will only be silence when it is specifically crafted to the moment.

The Lyrics

There are several songs I would like to revise so as to have a better flow of ideas and meaning. The main song of concern is “What you Will” or Anything Goes. It was the last song finished and consequently the least polished. Two of the verses need to be re-written to reflect more on the scene so that the song flow with the scene rather than interrupts it. Most of the other songs worked, but could do with tweaking and workshopping.

The Process

During the rehearsal period there were many moments when we blurred the line too far as to who was in charge of what. There needed to be more communication between the Musical Director, Choreographer and Director so that meaning wasn’t
lost in the process. Having the Musical Director and Choreographer performing in the show also became an issue. If this show is ever revived I would make sure that cast and creative were completely separate so that proper perspective can be gained. As it stood both myself and Ellin needed to be in the performance as there were no other female singers to be found at the time. However, this meant that we could not judge scenes we were in or see the performance as a whole until we reviewed the film footage. This was the mistake which lead to every other point I have already mentioned and could have been avoided.

**Final Remarks**

As it stands I am proud of what we were able to come up with in limited time and with no experience. This show was a great learning curve and I am glad it happened the way it did as all the mistakes we made during this show are lessons to be taken on board for the next segment of assessment. If we hadn’t done this show then everything that went wrong during *Twelfth Night* would have gone wrong during the main assessment piece, and would mean that the full potential of my thesis would not come through. I have had a lot of positive feedback from audience members and constructive criticism from members of the staff which I can use for future productions.
**Gesamtkunstwerk**

This production was my primary practical application of the theories which I have discussed in the main thesis. I used this as a forum to experiment with the applicability of Wagner’s approach to musical theatre in a modern context, within the limits and bounds of a self-produced performance piece. In the following sections I shall be referring to plot points and songs, for full reference the script can be found in Appendix B.

**Gesamtkunstwerk the Musical**

The choice of this title comes from the German, meaning ‘total artwork’. As can be seen in the main thesis this is a term associated with Richard Wagner and his search for a ‘free’ form of art which incorporates the forms of dance, tone and verse (or movement, music and lyrics/libretto). This was chosen as the title for the piece as it ties in with my research on Wagner as well as my collaborator, Ellin Sears’ work on the integrated musical. This title is applicable to all aspects of this show for while the music was chosen for the general feel, if it was listened to without the lyrics the story would not exist. If the dances were seen with no backstory they also would lose meaning. It is not just plot which resides in the lyrics: it is the essence of the character.

**Collaboration**

As with the previous projects throughout the year I collaborated on this performance with Ellin Sears. Her focus was on the dance and choreography side of the show while I crafted the lyrics and poetry. The rest of the script was a joint venture and we were assisted in the acting by Andrew Kocsis who contributed a minor but significant role to the performance. As my concentration was on lyrics and Ellin’s was on choreography, the music was used as a crossover for us both and a forum for experimentation. As such we decided to use pre-existing tracks to work with. This was also due to time constraints, making a fully original score impractical and unnecessary in an educational setting.
The Heroine’s Journey in Stages

_Gesamtkunstwerk_ was an original script based on the Greek Myth of Persephone. I decided to follow Wagner’s influence as closely as I could, given the circumstances, by finding source material to work to and adapt. As this story is traditionally about identity I then borrowed from Carl Jung’s theory of self-realisation to create the layers of psychology and meaning I wanted to inform the plot.

The Plot

This forty minute production follows the journey of an unnamed (until the end) girl into the darkest recesses of her mind and out again as she fights temptation, seduction, death and herself. She is represented by two actors, each at odds with the other with the outside influence of a mysterious man-figure. This male figure has the double meaning of being connected to Persephone as the ‘male’ part of her identity, meaning that if this reading is accepted each character portrayed was truly one third of a whole. Taken literally this is the fall of Persephone into Hades and the eventual realisation that she must accept her role and life which eventually leads to redemption through love. As a metaphor it is the internal struggle which every person must go through if they are to fully reconcile contrasting aspects of their personality. This performance is about wholeness and acceptance of self; both the good parts and the bad, for one without the other means nothing at all. The style of the drama leans towards the absurd with layers of meaning being woven into the music, lyrics and movement, as Wagner’s theory of total artwork dictates.

Key Leitmotivs

The lyrics are littered with connecting themes of great importance to the characters. These include (but are not limited to) the concept of ‘the journey’, ‘nothingness’, the contrast of ‘back and white’ and constant reference to Greek Mythology.

The Songs

Each of the following songs represents an experiment with techniques located or discussed in Wagner’s work. There were restrictions due to a lack of original score and the performance being limited to forty minutes, however, there is a clear intention behind the choices of each song and lyric. As the characters were unnamed throughout the script I shall refer to them as _Hades, Ego_ and _Self_.

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There’s a Girl I Know Pre-prise (Ego and Self) - Original

This song is very short and sung a capella, intended to set up the ‘connection’ leitmotiv. It was originally envisioned to lead into a full song in the middle of the play; however, this was eventually cut due to its interference with rising tension. The theme, or leitmotif, is still present throughout the play, being woven lyrically into the song ‘Reuniting’ and re-prised in the final ‘There’s a Girl I Know’ as well as being referred to in the dialogue. With a fully original score this leitmotiv would be more present during pivotal moments; however, as it stands it is an example of a lyrical leitmotiv. This song sets up notions of identity as a leading theme to be explored throughout the rest of the text. It also remains unfinished, just like the two sides of Persephone if they remain in conflict.

Still Here (Self) – Still Hurting, The Last Five Years

The first full length song of the play, this is a melancholic piece which speaks of longing and unhappiness with life. This is the theme of innocence, which is striped from the character and never fully returned, as can be seen when the song is reprised. Because of the changes the characters go through, most of the lyrics in this song stand-alone until the reprise at the end of the play with their questioning of life as it stands. This is a plot song, intended to tell the audience what the character wants and what they stand to lose. In many musicals this would be the ‘I want’ song, however, the girl never says she wants anything lyrically, just pronounces a general unhappiness with life stating that “it’s not enough, nothing’s simple, nothing’s right.” One major theme explored in this song is that of a journey. Much of the dialogue of the show is spent discussing the journey (both inner and outer) which the character is on, as is reflected in the lyrics: 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. The character of ‘Self’ takes the initial steps to start the journey to self—realisation so it is only appropriate this leitmotiv shapes and changes around her both lyrically and through dialogue.

Confrontation Part One (Ego and Self) – Missed Me, The Dresden Dolls

The character of ‘Ego’ is by nature the more antagonistic side of Persephone and as such her language is more alliterative and cutting. Much of what she says also uses
unequivocal language to draw the line between black and white. During the first confrontation ‘Self’ tries to hide behind words of innocence while ‘Ego’ cuts straight through to the point and accuses her of being as much of a monster as ‘Ego’ is herself. This song plays with double meanings, puns and alliterative devices to show character. For example, assonance is generally associated with snakes, which in turn have negative connotations; so when ‘Ego’ is striking at self and battering down her defences every other word is an assonance: your obsession, in the health profession/what they call depression/a repression following secession/from your other half. These lyrics also make reference to the intended psychology behind the story as can be seen in the chosen words above. While this song is not part of the growing leitmotifs it is the ‘confrontation’ theme and is later revisited in a reprise.

**Step into the Darkness (Ego) – Half Jack, The Dresden Dolls**

‘Ego’ continues to pull ‘Self’ along on her journey with a twist on the leitmotiv: ‘Ego’ is twisting the previous words of ‘Self’ into a darker meaning, and yet ironically they hold more hope for redemption than they did in *Still Here*. While ‘Ego’ still deals in the black and white way of viewing things and stands on the side of darkness in the use of language much of the Greek Mythology comes out during this song. As well as continuing the journey theme with lyrics about stepping and falling and fading there are also references to Persephone’s symbolic journey across the River Styx and past Chiron the three headed dog. The inner, outer, mythic, symbolic, psychological and lyrical journeys can all be found in the lines: pay your bride price to the boatman/cover up your eyes with poison/chain your arms/right now. This addresses the mental state of both sides of Persephone and links with all of the previous themes, leitmotivs and links already set up. There are also ties to the dialogue as ‘Self’ ‘fades away’ just like ‘Ego’ predicted in the poem ‘An Empty Child’ at the start of the play. What the characters have yet to discover is that ‘fading’ is a necessary part of the journey to let misconceptions float away so that they can truly become one. However, what truly makes this more hopeful than *Still Here* is the tone. ‘Self’s’ song at the start of the play is self-pitying and speaks of the emptiness of her soul; ‘Ego’s’ song, while twisted and dark, is about moving on and making change.
The Seduction (Ego and Self) – Poison Sweet Madeira, Sophie Solomon

*The Seduction* is the first song for ‘Ego’ and ‘Self’ to be in agreement on anything. It marks the turning point of the show. It also shows the true duality behind the story. While there may be sexual connotations behind turning “Hade’s lair” into “Elysium, Garden of delight”, this was not the intention. Instead, what it shows is how different a situation can be depending on perspective. ‘Self’ is in hell, a captive of ‘Ego’ and ‘Hades’ as they drag her closer to her darker side. However, in Greek Mythology the Underworld is Tartarus, Asphodel and Elysium (Hell, Purgatory and Heaven) all at once; Persephone only had to decide to accept herself and her lot for Tartarus to become Elysium. Most of the undertones to this song were explored through dance and of all the songs this is the one where lyrics were secondary to movement and music to give meaning.

Confrontation Part Two (Ego and Self) – Missed Me, The Dresden Dolls

This second ‘confrontation’ between ‘Ego’ and ‘Self’ is mostly made up of aggressive movement; however, it climaxes with a sung section at the end. The tables turn on ‘Ego’ when she calls ‘Self’ a coward and throws her words about ‘nothingness’ from the original song back in her face. The constant repetition of the word ‘nothing’ in this section is a deliberate comment on where the characters are at and what they will be if they continue their separation. All of the words are barked out in short staccato bursts of anger as ‘Self’ fully takes on characteristics previously only seen in ‘Ego’. These lyrics are also reflected in the previous monologue by ‘Self’ as she realises that there is ‘nothing’. She believes she is in an ‘empty’ place, but in reality she is the empty one. This song is the answer to her question “how far will I go?” She needs to fall to the lowest she can go and turn on ‘Ego’, physically attacking her before she can begin her journey back into the light, to an inner place of ‘something’.

White Asphodel (Self and Ego) – Les Fragments de la Nuit, Entre Ciel Et Fer

Dovetailing straight from the last song, this is the moment of realisation for ‘Self’. Perceiving that ‘Ego’ is now the weak one ‘Hades’ turns his negative attentions to
her; ‘Self’ needs decide whether to continue the path to self-destruction and let her suffer or whether to “become the whole” and defend even the worst part of herself. *White Asphodel* continues the journeying motifs with imagery of running rivers and open gates. This song is the climax of the entire story as ‘Self’ decides which way to turn in her journey to self-realisation and the lyrics reflect this as they turn the tables on the attitude of “black is black, white is white” which ‘Ego’ has been holding onto. As ‘Self’ realises 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/my soul will die/surely die*, it can be seen that the lyrics pare down in length, but come closer to the point of the entire show. Up to this point the song is rather wordy as ‘Self’ debates whether her actions on the journey so far warrant forgiveness. There is also a continuation of references to Greek Mythology (as can be seen in the title) as ‘Self’ and ‘Ego’ both come to the realisation it “is time to die” in order to be reborn as Persephone. This song brings together all of the elements of journeying, Greek mythology, psychology and word games which have been found in previous songs as the characters finally understand their relationship with one another.

**Reuniting (Ego and Self) – Still Hurting, The Last Five Years**

A reprise of the mournful song *Still Here*, this song brings back the melancholia but this time it is for the loss of innocence rather than a sense of hopelessness. This time there is hope; hope that it was not all for nothing, that now Persephone can go forth into the world as a whole being and not an empty shell of a person. *Reuniting* brings back references to *White Asphodel* and concepts of myth. It also brings back lyrics from the original song in a different context to show how the characters have changed on their journeys. This is the final segment of the journeying leitmotiv and is a true reprise in every sense of the word. This is also the only time ‘Ego’ and ‘Self’ sing together for more than one line. This represents their final coming together in understanding as two halves of one whole as can be seen in the line “I’ll be here”. During this joining of parts ‘Self’ refers to the ‘connection’ leitmotiv as she sings *there’s a girl that I know/She’s been here for a while*. As the song comes to its conclusion with ‘Self’ and ‘Ego’ finally singing the same lyrics they also conclude the theme of ‘nothingness’. ‘Self’ sings “there’s nothing wrong with me” to ‘Ego’, thus laying to rest all of the words of the past and seeking peace. While they do come to the conclusion that they need to be together to survive ‘Ego’ has not yet forgiven
‘Self’ for choosing to remain the darker half on the ‘wrong’ side of the ‘river’ (shown in the action). In this way wholeness is not found until the conclusion of the original theme of the show.

**There’s a Girl I know re-prise (Self and Ego) – Original**

This is the final song of the play and therefore the most important in terms of tying together all of the final strands. This is the moment when both sides of Persephone accept each other as a force together and apart; they cannot exist without each other. This song also brings the play full circle, with one side trying to get the other to respond. This time the roles have been reversed, however, there is also an ending to the theme with the added line “who’s waiting”. This finishes the previously unfinished theme, symbolising the breaking of the cycle. Because of this acceptance and change the following (and final) dance can occur, reiterating the whole play with all of the characters working in harmony, creating a more positive story and ending.

**Bridges**

There are sections in the script which are spoken, usually with musical undertones, sometimes in silence to intensify the underlying emotions. Many of these sections were written in verse in an attempt to explore Wagner’s theories on the importance of language through poetry. Much of the poetry tied into the songs through lyrical leitmotifs while others expanded upon the plot and emotional journey. These poetic sections connect conceptually to the lyrical journey and explore the range of poetry from rhyme and free verse to a sonnet inspired by the works of Shakespeare.

**Reflection**

The creation of musical theatre is a complex process; one filled with pitfalls and dead-ends. However, I feel that the artwork which I have created gives adequate example to the concepts I have been exploring throughout my dissertation. In fact I believe that all of the shortfalls which can be found in my work are evidence that lyrics especially are an important part of the ‘total artwork’ process. My lyrics could be a lot tighter to fully portray the story of Persephone; however, I would still consider them to be well crafted and layered for an amateur production. Lyrics are an
art form which has been neglected in the academic and musical world. It is my hope that in the future more deliberation will be put into their placement in musical theatre.
Appendix A – Twelfth Night: the Musical

Comparison of originals and adaptations

The originals are located on the left of the page and re-writes are on the right in italics. The completely new songs and songs from the text are centred.

Twins Duet – They Can’t Take that Away from me (Viola and Sebastian)

We may never, never meet again  
Both: We will never, never meet again
On the bumpy road to love  
In the circles of this life
Still I'll always, always keep the memory of  
But you know I'll join you soon

The way you hold your knife  
We used to fly away
The way we danced till three  
We used to be so free
The way you changed my life  
But now you’ve turned to clay
No, no they can't take that away from me  
Why, why, won’t you come back to me?

No, they can't take that away from me  
Why won’t you fly again for me?

Good E’en to You Sir – I Got Rhythm (Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and Maria)

I got rhythm  
Toby: Why good e’en to you sir,
I got music  
It’s a wonderful do sir,
I got my man/girl  
So glad you could join me
Who could ask for anything more ?  
In drinking to wenches and life!

I got daisies  
Andrew: Why good e’en to you sir,
In green pastures,  
How do you do sir?
I got my man/girl
Who could ask for anything more?

So glad you could...
I don’t think I quite got that right....

Ol’Man Trouble,
I don't mind him.
You won't find him
’Round my door.

Toby/Maria: Take, her, hands
In your own
Then, you’ll, throw her
Then you will throw her the bone

Andrew (spoken): Bless you fair shrew
Maria: And you too sir...

Toby: Accost, Sir Andrew, Accost

Sir Andrew: What’s that?

Who could ask for anything more?
Maria (sung): that’s why he’ll be
forever alone.

Who could ask for anything more?

Toby and Maria: he’ll be forever alone

Toby (spoken): My niece’s chambermaid

Andrew: Good Mistress Accost

Maria: My name is Mary Sir

Andrew: Good Mistress Mary Accost

Toby: You mistake Knight. “Accost” is front her,

Board her, woo her, assail her,
I got daisies
Toby: Why good e’en to you ma’am
In green pastures,
I’ll drink to you ma’am
I got my man/girl
My dear Mary
Who could ask for anything more?
For drinking is life’s little gift

Maria: If you drink to me sir

What’ll I be sir

But a strumpet waiting in line for your
‘gift’?

Toby: Give your woman some romancing

I guarantee it you will end up dancing

**Olivia Mourning – Some Enchanted Evening (Olivia)**

Some enchanted evening
Olivia: There was once a time when
You may see a stranger,
I was filled with laughter
you may see a stranger
But now there’s no more

Across a crowded room
laughter

And somehow you know,
To be heard anywhere
You know even then
And nothing they say
That somewhere you’ll see her
And nothing they do
Again and again.
Will bring you, back to me
Again and again.
To say your farewells
Twins Duet – They Can’t Take that Away from me (Viola and Sebastian)

We may never, never meet again
Both: We will never, never meet again

On the bumpy road to love
In the circles of this life

Still I'll always, always keep the memory of
But you know I’ll join you soon enough again

The way you hold your knife
We used to fly away

The way we danced till three
We used to be so free

The way you changed my life
But now you’ve turned to clay

No, no they can't take that away from me
Why, why, won’t you come back to me?

No, they can't take that away from me
Why won’t you fly again for me?

I left no ring upon her – Fever (Olivia and Viola)

Romeo loved Juliet
Both: Methinks I feel this youth’s perfections

Juliet she felt the same
He got me as he came through the door

When he put his arms around her,    Viola:   I never left a ring upon her
He said Julie, baby, you're my flame.    I pray she won’t be wanting more

Thou givest fever
We are both women

When we kisseth
Olivia:   When we kisseth

Fever with thy flaming youth
Viola:   Hold to the proverbial truth

Fever, I'm a fire
Olivia:   Baby, I'ma ready

Fever, yay, I burn forsooth
Viola:   I pray that she holds back, forsooth
Everybody's got the fever
That is something you all know,
Fever isn't such a new thing
Fever started long ago
You give me fever
When you kiss me
Fever when you hold me tight
Fever
In the morning
Fever all through the night
What a lovely way to burn
What a lovely way to burn
What a lovely way to burn

Both: I know what I want, it's not here
Olivia: My lover I am ready to go
Both: If you want me, I'll be yours dear
Viola: if only somehow you did know
Both: He drives me crazy

Please just hold me
darling for you I yearn
Olivia: Hold me
Both: If you knew it
Oh my love would you return?
Oh My love would you return?
Oh My love would you return?
Oh My love would you return?

O Mistress Mine (Feste and Maria) – As in text

Feste: O mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O stay and hear, your true love's coming
Both: That can sing both high and low.

Feste: Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
Journey’s end in lovers' meeting,
Both: Ev'ry wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'Tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:

In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty;
Youth's a stuff will not endure.
Youth's a stuff will not endure.
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

The Drinking Song (Feste, Sir Toby and Sir Andrew) - Original

*Toby: Well I have an elephant stuck in my pants*

*All: with a hey nonny nonny no no*

*Feste: I tried to unstick it by starting a dance*

*All: with a hey nonny nonny no no*

*Toby: I was so good at dancing the instructor fell dead*

*All: with a hey nonny nonny no no*

*Feste: So I tried CPR with her in my bed*

*All: with a hey nonny nonny no no*

(pause)

*Andrew: I’ve a dancing elephant CPRing my head….*

*All: with a….no, just no…no*

Come Away Death – As in text (Feste)

Come away, come away, death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid.
Fly away, fly away, breath;
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
O, prepare it!
My part of death, no one so true
Did share it (too)

Fly Away Breath – Someone to Watch Over me (Viola)

There's a somebody I'm longin' to see
Viola: Just of your years and your
complexion

I hope that he, turns out to be
She with your face and love's
perfection

Someone who'll watch over me
He is the one, I want for me

I'm a little lamb who's lost in the wood
There’s no woman’s heart which
could ever hold

I know I could, always be good
this love so gold, so
uncontrolled

To one who'll watch over me
He is the one, I want for me

Although he may not be the man some
Won’t some good person be my
aide and,

Girls think of as handsome
Arrange for my coffin

To my heart he carries the key
For I know he won’t look at me

Won't you tell him please to put on some speed
Fly away breath you traitor to
me

Follow my lead, oh, how I need
he’ll never see, how it could be

Someone to watch over me
He is the one, I want for me

(dance break)

Although he may not be the man some
Won’t some good person be my
aide and,

Girls think of as handsome
Arrange for my coffin

To my heart he carries the key
For I know he won’t look at me

Won't you tell him please to put on some speed
I’ve been carried far be-yond
Follow my lead, oh, how I need  
Someone to watch over me  

**What You Will – Anything Goes (Maria, Sir Toby, Sir Andrew)**

Times have changed,  
And we've often rewound the clock,  
Since the Puritans got a shock,  
When they landed on Plymouth Rock.

**Maria:** See this man  
Can you tell that he's not that bright?  
He has fallen without a fight  
Let's sit back as our plans ignite

If today,  
Any shock they should try to stem,

Watch him preen  
Unbeknownst that our plans fulfilled

'Stead of landing on Plymouth Rock,  
Plymouth Rock would land on them.

In olden days a glimpse of stocking  
Was looked on as something shocking,  
But now, God knows,  
Anything Goes.

Good authors too who once knew better words,  
Good porters once would follow orders now

Now only use four letter words  

Every sea  
He'll never see, how it could be  
He is the one, made for me
Writing prose, Anything Goes.

What a thrill! Do what you will!

The world has gone mad today
And good's bad today,
And black's white today,
And day's night today,
When most guys today
That women prize today
Are just silly gigolos

All: it’s twelfth night tonight
It’s a delight tonight
And what was bad last night
Is all made good tonight
Because the rules tonight
Were made by fools tonight
And the ace is ours to play

Maria: Some months ago we were in armies
had rules which we now discard,
It’s all downhill
Do what you will!

In olden days a glimpse of stocking
Was looked on as something shocking,
But now, God knows,
Anything Goes.

Maria: Good porters once would
follow orders now
See how he clucks and

Chortles now
What a thrill! Do what you will!

Do what you will!

Good authors too who once
knew better words
Now only use four letter words
Olivia Pining – Some Enchanted Evening (Olivia and Maria)

Some enchanted evening  
Olivia: I can feel it coming
Someone may be laughin',  
I finally met that someone
You may hear her laughin'  
if only that special someone
Across a crowded room  
Felt the same for me
And night after night,  
I can’t force a thing...
As strange as it seems  
Well maybe...but then
The sound of her laughter  
If that’s what is takes
Will sing in your dreams.  
For him to love me

Who can explain it?  
Both: What does it take
Who can tell you why?  
To make him fall in love
Fools give you reasons,  
I wish I had a lifetime
Wise men never try.  
Just to take hold of....your hand

The Seduction – Perhaps, Perhaps, Perhaps (Olivia and Viola)

You won't admit you love me  
Olivia: I know I did abuse you
And so how am I ever to know?  
And so, I sent this to you, so I could
know
You always tell me  
If you could love me
Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps  
Oh dear good youth be mine
A million times I've asked you,  
You said you’re for Orsino
And then I ask you over again  
And so I beg, you never utter, his name
again
You only answer  
No please don’t answer!
Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps  
My dear good youth be mine
If you can't make your mind up
We'll never get started

And I don't wanna wind up
Being parted, broken-hearted

So if you really love me
Say yes, but if you don't dear, confess
And please don't tell me
Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps

Viola: And just what kind of woman
Fall’s star-struck? In affection?

Olivia: So please don’t run and scorn me,
my fool, I’ll be yours truly, if you
will promise to me
your heart, your soul, you’re mine!

Blue Ashes – Original (Antonio and Sir Andrew)

Antonio: Rolling, the waves are rolling,
The pages are turning,
And I know I’m young but,
These bridges are burning,
Until there’s nothing,

Sir Andrew: Nothing but Ashes

Both: Blue Ashes, Blue Ashes,
Scattered in the breeze,

Sir Andrew: And I can’t live without you
Antonio: breathe without you,

Both: walk across the dreamscape
Because there’s nothing,

Nothing but Ashes
Blue Ashes, Blue Ashes

Trailing behind me

Antonio: But you are rolling with the waves,
And all will turn, and all will turn
And all will turn
To Blue Ashes of you

Malvolio’s Madness – De-Lovely (Malvolio, Olivia and Maria)

I feel a sudden urge to sing
the kind of ditty that invokes the Spring
So, control your desire to curse
while I crucify the verse

Malvolio: I feel the sudden urge to sing
The kind of ditty that invokes the Spring
So control your desire for me
Until I’ve sung this melody
Me, me, me, me

Olivia: No, no, no, no

Maria: This worked better than I’d hoped

The night is young, the skies are clear
And if you want to go walkin’, dear
It’s delightful, it’s delicious,
it’s de-lovely
I understand the reason why

Malvolio: Be not afraid of greatness near
T’was well writ by you my dear
Just you tell me, that you love me
And say I do!
Well some achieve, their greatness
and
some have it thrust upon them

You're sentimental, 'cause so am I
It's delightful, it's delicious,
it's de-lovely

Olivia: No, no, no, no

Maria: This worked better than I’d hoped

Malvolio: Be not afraid of greatness near
T’was well writ by you my dear
Just you tell me, that you love me
And say I do!
Well some achieve, their greatness
and
some have it thrust upon them

You're sentimental, 'cause so am I
It's delightful, it's delicious,
it's de-lovely
You can tell at a glance
what a swell night this is
for romance
You can hear, dear Mother Nature
murmuring Low
"Let yourself go"

Remember who did observe,
That thy yellow stockings Were
simply superb!
And wished that you’d wear them
everyday

Maria: cross-gartered as well!

So please be sweet, my chickadee
And when I kiss ya, just say to me
"It’s delightful, it’s delicious,
it’s delectable, it’s delirious,
It’s dilemma, it’s de limit,
it’s deluxe, it’s de- lovely"

Malvolio: So go ahead for thou art made
that life is there if you are brave
won’t you tell me, that you love me,
Cos I want you, and you want me too
won’t you say it, won’t you do it
I know you want it, you want me!

Olivia: I’ve no idea, just how he got
His sporran tangled into this knot

This is madness, he’s delirious
he’s demented!
Maria please, take him away,
There’s nothing more that I can say!

Maria: This is crazy, he’s lost his head He is
mental See the way that he raves,
There is nothing to it but to lock him
away

Fetch the priest to perform some kind
Of rite

Malvolio: A wedding rite!
They Can’t Stop us – De-Lovely (Sir Toby and Maria)

So please be sweet, my chickadee
And when I kiss ya, just say to me
"It's delightful
it's delicious,
it's delectable,
it's delirious,
It's dilemma, it's de-limit,
it's deluxe, it's de-lovely"

Maria: Let’s settle down, We’ve done our bit
Our plan went off without a hitch
Toby: You’re delightful
Maria: You’re delicious
Toby: He’s delirious
Maria: We’re together!
Both: They can’t stop us! On a Twelfth Night
It’s de-end of De-lovely

Malvolio’s Madness (reprise) – De-Lovely (Malvolio)

I feel a sudden urge to sing
the kind of ditty that invokes the Spring
So, control your desire to curse
while I crucify the verse

Malvolio: I feel the sudden urge to sing
The kind of ditty that invokes the Spring
So control your desire for me
Until I’ve sung this melody

The Wedding - Some Enchanted Evening (Olivia)

Some enchanted evening
Someone may be laughin’,
You may hear her laughin'
Across a crowded room

Olivia: I can feel it coming
I finally met that someone
And now that special someone
Feels the same for me

The Reunion – The Can’t Take that Away (Viola and Sebastian)

The way you hold your knife
The way we danced till three

Both: We used to fly away
With you I am so free
The way you change my life
No, no they can't take that away from me
You've haunted all my dreams
And now you've come back home to me!
No, they can't take that away from me
You've finally come back home to me!

One Thousand Mornings – Some Enchanted Evening  (Olivia, Sebastian, Viola and Orsino)

Who can explain it?
Who can tell you why?
Fools give you reasons,
Wise men never try.
Some enchanted evening
When you find your true love,
When you feel her call you
Across a crowded room,
Then fly to her side,
And make her your own
Or all through your life you
May dream all alone.
Once you have found her,
Never let her go.

Olivia:  What does it take
To finally fall in love?
Sebastian:  I could give a lifetime
The kind that’s not dreamed of
Both:  For One thousand Mornings
I will sing with laughter
Across the seven sea’s
And I could fly
And hold onto you
And the rest of my life
Will be spent with you!!!!

Viola:  For I hear him calling
All:  This is what it takes
To find a kind of love
And now that we’re together
Nothing’s undreamed of!
When that I was a Tiny Little Boy – As in text (Feste; backed up by full cast)

Feste: When that I was and a little tiny boy,
With a hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
A foolish thing was but a toy,
For the rain it raineth every day.

But when I came to man's estate,
With a hey ho, the wind and the rain
'Gainst knaves and thieves men shut their gate
For the rain, it raineth every day
With a hey ho, the wind and the rain
For the rain, it raineth every day

But when I came, alas! to wive,
With a hey, ho, the wind and the rain
By swaggering could I never thrive,
For the rain, it raineth every day

But when I came unto my beds,
With a hey, ho, the wind and the rain
With toss-pots still had drunken heads,
For the rain, it raineth everyday
With a hey ho, the wind and the rain
For the rain, it raineth every day

A great while ago the world begun,
With a hey, ho, the wind and the rain
But that's all one, our play is done.
And we'll strive to please you every day.
Appendix B – Gesamtkunstwerk

Stage is set in 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 (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. Lights indicate the river Styx. S is SL, Ellin (E) SR mirroring each other. M enters and introduces the play.

Man (M): The Heroines’ Journey in Stages: Part One – Separation

Movement Piece to My Love (Instrumental)

S winds up SR on her chair, E ends up SL watching her. M moves upstage to the rostra. Lighting change. E moves in from SL 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 podium—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 wanders down to the end of the rostra. 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 the next song she makes her way through the audience and back to the rostra where she started.*

**Song 2 Still Here**

Sarah: 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

Dance
Give me a sign that there’s
Hope this is not all there is to my life
I am but half, 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
E comes down onto the box at the front 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 calls out, having noticed E.

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: I 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
Song 3 Confrontation Part One

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

Dance 2x8

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

Dance/movement 4x8

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

S is defiant but also fearful as E begins to manipulate her like a puppet. E steps over the divide in the floor and beckons S across it. At the top of the rostra M watches their progress hungrily and then comes down to join them in the dance.

M: Betrayal

Song 4 Step into the Darkness

E manipulates S across the river and onto the dark side of the stage. Leads her around and then puppeteers her across the lower rostra. Under her control, S flops over like a ragdoll whilst E leads down M to her. E straightens S out and gives her a bouquet of dead flowers as she 'marries' the two of them.

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: 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

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

Just watch you fade away

Now that you can’t get away

Lilies make a fine bouquet

Ahh ahh!

Watch her fade away

She fades a

Watch her fade away

She fades a

74
Watch her fade away

She fades a

Watch her fade away

She fades away

*Song ends with E ‘marrying’ S and M. S collapses into an awkward embrace, M holding possessively onto her. The mood changes into something darker and sultry.*

E: Initiation. The seduction.

**Song 5 The Seduction**

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

Dance

S: Give me hope and fill me up
And break me down some more
Until nothing is 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?

Dance
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 to the floor SL. Dizzy, defeated and broken, S curls in on herself. E heads up to the chair USC on the rostra and surveys her. M sits behind S in creepy fashion

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.

*Offers to audience until they try to take it.*

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: (laughs) 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.*
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 Confrontation Part Two

S steps up to challenge E and is dragged into a fight, M watches gleefully. S tries not to engage, fighting against the darkness until finally she snaps.

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: 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!

S: You are dead to me
S: River runs fast, river flows 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?
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
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 and M fight
E: White Asphodel is time to die! x8

S comes to E. She helps her up.
E: [Broken] What is the nature of betrayal?
S: The nature of betrayal is to forgive.

M: Heart

_E stumbles to the river, S in tow._

Ellin: 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 aright

At least in this: (Both) The stream must be crossed

E: By all who shall not return lest they

By some means strange become the whole and take

Control of their destiny - - -

Both: I shall never return

S: lest by some –

Untold miracle our hearts be mended

And all confusion and doubt ended.
Song 8 Reuniting

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

E: The world isn’t nice dear
S: I tie on my shoes and
The world isn’t clean
I paint on a smile
The song never rhymes dear
There’s a girl that I know
That’s my confession to you
She’s been here for a while
But When White Asphodel is all wilted and pale
So When white Asphodel is all tattered and torn

Both: I’ll be here

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

E: And what is wrong with that?
S: There’s nothing wrong with me

Both: Now that I have found my place
I’ll…

S: Be here

Song 9 There’s a Girl I know

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

*E crosses over the river and beckons S to come with her. S just shakes her head.*

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.
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.

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

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

Sometimes there’s not even a moment of realisation.

But this is the moment.

Where you find yourself.

When you find your name

What is your name?

What is your name? X5

S & E dance their way through the blocking of the entire play, but this time hand in hand. They beat back M together and finish facing each other across the water, coming together in a mirror image on the floor.

What is your name?

Persephone.
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**Gesamtkunstwerk Commentary**


