



“LASCIASTEMI MORIRE”
o farò
“LA FINTA PAZZA”

Embodying vocal NOTHINGNESS on stage
in Italian and French 17th century operatic
LAMENTS and MAD SCENES

BY
Elisabeth Belgrano

A Music Research Drama Thesis
in a Prologue and 3 acts



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

“LASCIASTEMI MORIRE”
o farò
“LA FINTA PAZZA”



Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Performance in Theatre and Music Drama
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PART I
LIBRETTO

PART II
IL CANNOCCHIALE per
“LASCIA TEMI MORIRE” o farò “LA FINTA PAZZA”
(A descriptive text following the contents of the Libretto)

Academy of Music and Drama
Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts
University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Abstract

This *music research drama thesis* explores and presents a singer's artistic research process from the first meeting with a musical score until the first steps of the performance on stage. The aim has been to define and formulate an understanding in sound as well as in words around the concept of *pure voice* in relation to the performance of 17th century vocal music from a 21st century singer's practice-based perspective with reference to theories on *nothingness*, the role of the 17th century female singer, ornamentation (over-vocalization) and the singing of the nightingale. The music selected for this project is a series of *lamentations* and *mad scenes* from Italian and French 17th century music dramas and operas allowing for deeper investigation of differences and similarities in vocal expression between these two cultural styles.

The thesis is presented in three parts: a *Libretto*, a performance of the libretto (DVD) and a *Cannocchiale* (that is, a text following the contents of the *Libretto*). In the libretto the Singer's immediate inner images, based on close reading of the musical score have been formulated and performed in words, but also recorded and documented in sound and visual format, as presented in the performance on the DVD. In the *Cannocchiale*, the inner images of the Singer's encounter with the score have been observed, explored, questioned, highlighted and viewed in and from different perspectives.

The process of the Singer is embodied throughout the thesis by Mind, Voice and Body, merged in a dialogue with the Chorus of Other, a vast catalogue of practical and theoretical references including an imagined dialogue with two 17th century singers.

As a result of this study, textual reflections parallel to vocal experimentation have led to a deeper understanding of the importance of considering the concept of *nothingness* in relation to Italian 17th century vocal music practice, as suggested in musicology. The concept of *je-ne-sais-quoi* in relation to the interpretation of French 17th century vocal music, approached from the same performance methodology and perspective as has been done with the Italian vocal music, may provide a novel approach for exploring the complexity involved in the creative process of a performing artist.

Title: "Lasciatemi morire" o farò "La Finta Pazza": Embodying Vocal Nothingness on Stage in Italian and French 17th Century Operatic Laments and Mad Scenes.

Language: English with a Swedish summary.

Keywords: voice, singing, nothingness, je-ne-sais-quoi, 17th century opera, pure voice, lamentation, madness, passions, emotions, nightingale, transformation, ornamentation, observation, improvisation, interpretation, vocal expression, embodiment, creative process, performance, repetition, movement, inner images, artistic research.

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Act III	
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“Only at the cost of losing the basis of all my certainties can I question what is conveyed to me by my presence to myself”¹

1. Merleau-Ponty, M. *Phenomenology of Perception*, Routledge, 2006, (1945, 1962), p.504.

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LA FINTA
PAZZA.

DRAMA

DI GIVLIO
STROZZI.

SECONDA IMPRESSIONE.

Con Licenza de' Superiori, e Privilegi.



IN VENETIA,
MDCXXXI.

Per Gio: Battista Surian.

Part I
Libretto



Argomento

To my most illustrious and most excellent reader...

Let me present to you a *music research drama thesis* in a prologue and three acts. The form of the thesis has been inspired by 17th century opera librettos, specifically the librettos of the operas *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*² and *La Finta Pazza*³. The thesis is divided in two parts: part 1. *Libretto* and part 2. *Il Cannocchiale per Lasciati morire o faro la Finta Pazza*.

The second part has been modeled on the text *Il Cannocchiale della Finta Pazza* from 1641. For the purpose of this thesis I see the *cannocchiale* as the tool it is: a telescope, or in this context a pair of theater binoculars, aiming to clarify, highlight, and describe the contents of the libretto to the reader, or even possibly confusing him or her. The *cannocchiale* ends with an Epilogue, partly modeled on a French 17th century source, *Les Entretiens d'Ariste et Eugene*, which is a performed dialogue or a witty conversation departing from a specific topic or concept.⁴ In this thesis the dialogue takes place between three singers, walking through the *Garden of the Senses* while discussing the *primitive passions*

2. Text by Giovanni Francesco Busenello and music by Claudio Monteverdi, performed at the Grimano Theater (also named Teatro SS Giovanni e Paolo) in 1642.

3. Text by Giulio Strozzi and music by Francesco Saccati, performed at Teatro Novissimo, in 1641.

4. Bouhours, Dominique *L'Entretiens d'Artiste et d'Eugene*, Amsterdam 1709, (1671). The form of *Les Entretiens* was a form of polite conversation, commonly used in the literary salons in Paris. Another example among many is: Maintenon, Madame de *Dialogues and Addresses*, ed. John J. Conely, S.J., The University of Chicago Press, 2004.

described by Descartes, namely wonder, love, hatred, desire, joy and sadness⁵. The quest presented, entered upon and performed throughout the drama is to better understand the meaning of *pure voice* with reference to *nothingness* – a concept addressed and debated in both Italy and France in the mid 17th century – from a practice-based perspective of a 21st century singer. The aim of the study has also been to explore and to search for a way of formulating in words the manners of vocal expression, vocal state-of-being and the use of ornamentation in both Italian and French laments and mad scenes. Much has been said about the music of the two different cultural styles in *theoretical* studies. It has been my wish to observe and address stylistic differences and similarities from a vocal *practice-based* perspective with reference to theoretical studies. One significant result in this study has been the practical application of the theoretical term *je-ne-sais-quoi*, a French concept related to *nothingness*, rarely used as a reference to 17th century vocal performance practice.

Through sounds, words and images I draw attention to and make visible what normally is hidden to the larger audience, namely, the process from a singer's first meeting with the vocal manuscript, until the first steps of the performance on stage.

My hope is that this research will inspire other singers to ask curious questions and to engage in a wider dialogue with anyone dedicated to the study of 17th century opera and vocal music.

I suggest a few possible ways to approach this thesis:

1. Select a specific lament or mad scene based on the role/scene. Find the music, as referred to in the bibliography, and make your own dialogue with the Singer and the Chorus of Other in the thesis.
2. Simply see the performances on the DVD: Acts I-III, all scenes one after the other, or select an act/scene depending on mood. Use the time in between to reflect.
3. Select pieces of the texts, a word, a phrase. Make analogies. Reflect in practice or in theory.
4. Enter the thesis through the prologue and allow yourself to become inspired to continue to read/listen to the thesis or to whatever might come to your attention.

5. Descartes, René *The Passions of the Soul*, translated to English by Stephen H. Voss, Hackett Publishing Company, Indiana, 1989, (1649) p. 56, article 69.

5. Enter the thesis through the Epilogue and go from there back into the material. Any of your choices will be accepted.

I have no intention to say that my way is the only true way, but rather to say that this is the way I have chosen to go – this being one among many possible ways to proceed. My hope is that other singers, or perhaps any other curious researchers interested in the topic will join me on my walk and then continue their own walks, expanding the field of researching the Art of Vocal Performance and Communication.⁶

Your most humble, affectionate and passionate servant
 La Curiosissima Cantante
 Elisabeth Belgrano

6. This work has been part of an interdisciplinary research project, *Passion for the Real*, conducted at the Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts, University of Gothenburg, funded by the Swedish Research Council (2006–2009).

Scenario

After the PROLOGUE, which introduces the topic of the study in detail and provides background information and a research context,

ACT I

Scene 1

presents the Singer's battle of *embodying transformation*. Nature and Art enters the stage preparing for the arrival of the Singer. Their words propose various Renaissance perspectives of whether Nature and Art are female or male, or perhaps both at the same time, through the embodiment of the female Singer. When she enters the stage she comes dressed as Deidamia, who at first appears as a soldier, calling out to all warriors, to all women, to herself, or to anyone ready to listen to her voice. She changes her being again and again becoming Helen of Troy, the most beautiful being on earth; then the abandoned lover, a person drowning in her own tears. At first she sings in Italian, but her languages vary throughout the drama⁷. She chooses the language best fitted to the moment. She carefully selects every word, at the same time as she ignores the language in itself. What matters most of all is her *presence* in the moment of the *present*, her *being* in the moment. She is her own sound – a sound that transforms along with her passions. She is male and female, strong and weak, mad and sane, representing extremes and op-

7. Mixing of languages as a sign of madness has been addressed and indicated by for example Rosand, Ellen *Operatic madness: a challenge to convention*, in: *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries*, ed. Steven P. Scher, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 241–287; and Fabbri, Paolo *On the Origins of an Operatic Topos: The Mad-Scene*, in: *Con che soavità. Studies in Italian Opera, Song, and Dance 1580–1740*, ed. Iain Fenlon and Tim Carter, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995, pp. 157–195.

posites, and highlighting a performance of paradoxes through the act itself. She is the Singer herself, dressed in her stage clothes, dressed as another being rather than herself, but always embodying presence nevertheless. Her acts are sometimes naïve, bending the rules out of shape. They are sometimes on the verge of madness. As an audience one can't stop asking: Who is mad? The Singer? The character she interprets? Is she in control or totally lost, or both at the same time, or none of these? Does she pretend or does she speak the truth? What is real and who is sane?

Scene 2

introduces a woman embraced by words expressing despair, hate, love, jealousy, sorrow and fear. The Singer, through the voice of Ottavia, tastes the colors of every syllable, transforming them into thoughts, passions and sounds. She carefully filters every vowel and every consonant through her memories and lived experiences. Being a queen who is lost and rejected her voice makes fear and sorrow vibrate: sometimes loud and sometimes buried in silence. Ottavia is never mad, but destined to lament and mourn her loss. But isn't her voice sometimes lost in madness? The affliction freezes her soul and she speaks about her prison: her own prison, her female body; she is dressed in another prison, her costume, which almost inhibits her from breathing; the prison of rules also lingers over any act she undertakes. She calls for help; she calls for revenge; she asks for freedom. Her voice becomes the voice of a rebel. In Rome she is trapped, scorned and finally banned to leave her land for a life in exile, just like the Roman 17th century singer Anna Renzi, who had to leave because of powerful rulers. The Singer on stage searches among her memories of loss: having to leave, taking farewell, saying good-bye to love and friendship, hearing the crowds screaming around her, leaving Rome escorted by men in uniform. She remembers and she sings as if she was Ottavia; as if she was Renzi who had to leave; as if being herself, missing and longing for the life she left behind. Taking farewell.

Let me die is what we hear on stage in

ACT II

Scene 1

Arianna is alone on the shore, on a rocky shore. Her words seduce the Singer, who walks obsessed out on her own rocks, following a red thread: the thread of Arianna. Act two allows the Singer to *find the pure voice through ornamentation, repetition, movement and improvisation*. She tries to understand the wish to die, something so far away from what she would ever imagine. She has learned along her walk with Deidamia and Ottavia that words

are strong but signs of vanity⁸. They disappear fast, into the winds and into the waves of the sea. Arianna provides her with the opportunity of meeting another woman: the Dancer. Together they embody the movements and sounds of Arianna. They go far from what is often expected of *early music* and of *performance practice*⁹ today. They stretch the rhetorical lines, becoming aware of new and, for them, unknown grounds. They don't allow anything to stop their acts. They become *one* in the voice of a lamenting woman and this makes them stronger in their expression, even in the city of Venice: in the first

8. "...the semantic 'weight' of words tends to evaporate...", Calcagno, Mauro *Signifying Nothing: On the Aesthetics of Pure Voice in Early Venetian Opera*, *The Journal of Musicology*, 20/4, 2003, pp. 461–497, p. 472.
9. This work is deliberately not addressing any specific historical performance practice, since that is a large field of research in itself, and something that in this artistic research process is of less importance. Though it is important to mention that the project is in debt of and would not be the way it is without the extensive research having been done over the years, especially on historical singing, for example: Ramm, Andrea von *Singing Early Music*, in: *Early Music* ed. J. M. Thomson, Vol. 4, No. 1, January 1976, pp. 12–15; Gérold, Theodore *L'Art du Chant en France au XVIIe Siècle*, Editions Minkoff, Genève–Paris, 1971; McGee, Timothy J., ed. *Singing Early Music, the Pronunciation of European Languages in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance*, with A.G. Rigg and David N. Klausner, Indiana University Press, Bloomington–Indianapolis, 1996; Durosoir, Georgie *La Musique Vocale Profane au XVIIe Siècle*, Klincksieck, 1994; Ranum, Patricia M. *The Harmonic Orator: The Phrasing and Rhetoric of the Melody in French Baroque Airs*, Pendragon Press, 2001; Maspip, Catherine *L'Art de Bien Chanter: Michel Lambert (1610–1696)*, Société Française de Musicologie, 1999; Gordon Seifert, Catherine Elizabeth *The Language of Music in France. Rhetoric as a basis for expression in Michel Lambert's Les Airs de Monsieur Lambert (1669) and Benigne de Bacilly's Les Trois Livre d'Airs (1668)*, Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1994; Dandrey, Patrick, ed. *La voix au XVIIe siècle*, Littératures Classiques, numéro 12, Janvier, 1990. On authenticity and performance practice: Kivy, Peter *Authenticities. Philosophical Reflections on Musical Performance*, Cornell University, 1995; Donnington, Robert *The Interpretation of Early Music*, Faber and Faber, London–Boston, 1989, (1963); Donnington, Robert *Baroque Music: Style and Performance, A Handbook*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York – London, 1982; MacClintock, Carol *Readings in the history of Music in Performance*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington–Indianapolis, 1979; Roley, Anthony *Performance. Revealing the Orpheus Within*, Element Books, 1990; Elliot, Martha *Singing in Style. A guide to vocal performance practices*, Yale University Press, 2006.

Venetian opera house – now a romantic garden next to a beautiful *palazzo*.¹⁰ Venice, the theater/garden and the palace amaze them. They ask themselves *where are we? – Dove siamo? Dove? Dove?* In the theater/garden they find themselves moving along with the strings of a theorbo, accompanied by water in the canal, by the slamming of morning dishes, the transportation of some carpentering tools, and the singing of birds. There they imagine the ornamented singing sound of the nightingale, often compared to the sound of the female singer.

The Singer and the Dancer explore the movements through improvisation, slowly finding different patterns. Patterns making them grow and learn that Arianna lives the moment her voice is heard.

Arianna is not only herself. She is in fact two. She has an alter ego in France, and she, Ariane, appears in

Scene 2

also standing alone on a seashore. But she is different. She balances on something different; on *je-ne-sais-quoi*, "*whose purpose is not to achieve a state of completion, but to aid an unfolding process of understanding and reflection*"¹¹. She seems strong and bold yet she doubts in her own right to cry or to love.

10. The Dancer and the Singer performed, rehearsed and experimented with the lamentation of Arianna in Venice, in April 2010. The theater/garden was the Teatro San Cassiano, where the first known public opera performance was produced in 1637, *Andromeda* by Benedetto Ferrari. For more information on the theaters in Venice see Rosand, Ellen *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice. The Creation of a Genre*, University of California Press, 1991; Day, Christine *The theater of SS. Giovanni e Paolo and Monteverdi's L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, *Current Musicology*, vol. 25, 1978, pp. 22–37; Zanon, Stefania *Lo Spettacolo di Giacomo Torelli al Teatro Novissimo*, dissertation, Università degli studi di Padova, 2010.
11. Scholar, Richard *The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi in Early Modern Europe. Encounters with a certain something*. Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 52. The concept captured through the word *je-ne-sais-quoi* (meaning *I-don't-know-what*) was mentioned in books in France already around mid 17th century. To some extent it couples with the Italian concept of *nothingness*. The concepts of *nothingness* and *je-ne-sais-quoi* are explored through vocal experimentation and reflective texts and essays, with references to text by Bouhours, 1709, (1671); Jankélévitch, Vladimir *Le Je-ne-sai-quoi et le Presque rien. La manière et l'occasion*, Editions di Seuil, Paris, 1980; Fader, Don *The Honnête homme as Music Critic: Taste, Rhetoric, and Politesse in the 17th Century French Reception of Italian Music*, *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 20, No.1, 2003, pp. 3–44; Ossola, Carlo, ed. *Le Antiche Memorie del Nulla*, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Rome 2007, (includes text by: Dall'Angelo, Marin *Le Glorie del Niente*, Venice, 1634; Manzini, Luigi, *Il Niente*, Venice, 1634); Heisig, James W. *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School*, University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu, 2001; Calcagno, 2003.

Her acts are *becomings* or *being-on-the-move*. Her voice embellishes the simple line. Sometimes she stands there with both feet firmly on the ground. Sometimes she is puzzled about where to direct her toes. She holds herself back, finding pleasure in suspension. The Singer experiences a curious moment perhaps signifying *nothingness*, though that word would never be spoken out loud. But every time sound comes through her mouth she makes her own controlled statement; her own balancing walk; her own ornamented and colorful embroidery. She looks for sounds around her, for sounds of waves and vibration; slidings and glidings reflecting her own images of sound.

The Singer and the Dancer follow her thread. They need to be even more careful in French than in Italian. Careful not to appear too much or too little. However the sensation is never less passionate in French than in Italian. Passion has only a different place within the voice of Ariane.

The voice of Armide flies in

ACT III

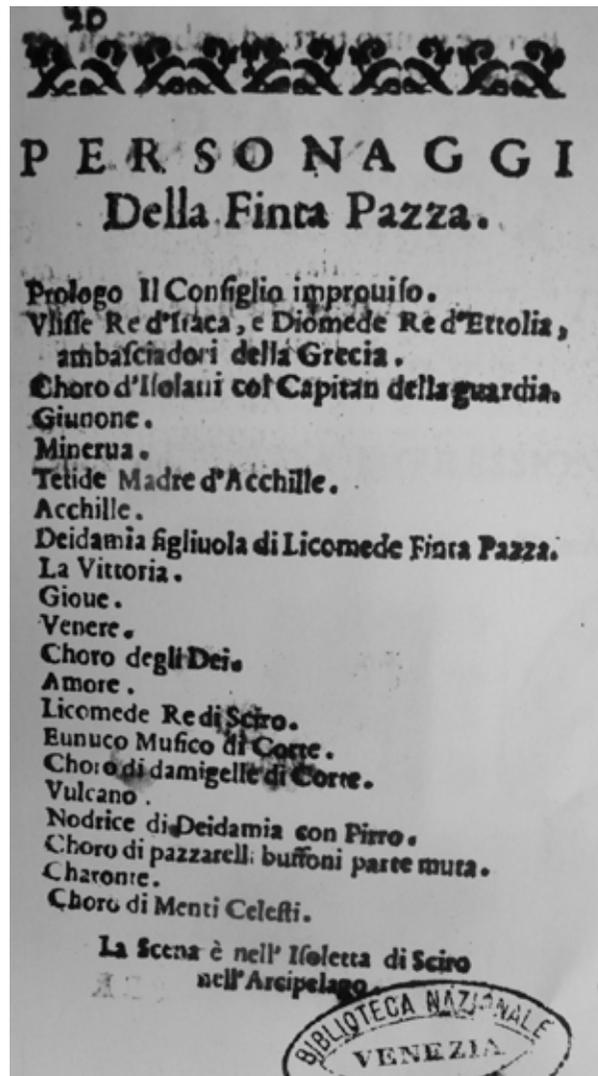
Scene 1

The voice doesn't know any other way of being. Loud sometimes and soft when the Singer needs it. She finds herself *in-between*. Or on her way towards something unspeakable, *performing je-ne-sais-quoi*, inside and through the vacuum of the voice. At first her language is Italian. She searches for Rinaldo. He has left her. The passions dance rhythmically. They follow a pattern clearly decided beforehand. They are not surprising as are the passions of Deidamia or Ottavia. What captures the Singer is the intensity in the line. It doesn't let go, but holds on to the invisible unknown. She speaks the words and doesn't hesitate to see their effect. They are there sounding and recorded for the future. But in her, she knows that nothing can be told for real, because reality can never be explained. Or rather, reality is everywhere. She learns more and more that everything she knows is true and real. But also that what she knows can always be changed into a different truth and a different reality, meaning that she has to balance herself into the unknown, learning to perform the unknown. Performing a *je-ne-sais-quoi*, for an audience who expect her to *become*, rather than *being*. Her meeting with Armide, first in Italian, then later in French, teaches her that no thing is there forever, except a continuous lingering around the source. It all resembles a riddle, a joke, a game moving around and around and around. And at the core of the riddle there are passions.

Finally in

Scene 2

the Singer opens the score of another Armide. It is an Armide sure about her *pure* sound. She is out there performing for the crowd. Violant and tearful. Fighting the demons of her mind, knowing she will win. She loves her betrayer, she cannot escape her feelings, but her way is to walk back and forth, back and forth, but never in the same manner. It is part of her being, and she knows that it will be this way. Like a lion in a cage she moves around. Enchanted by the sound of strings and rhythms she cannot stop herself from speaking about whatever her mind brings out of her. She is carried away on a wave of instrumental sound. In Armide's voice the Singer senses madness even more cruel than in Deidamia's. Armide is sure about her sound, not being able to leave her pain behind. Madness seemed to be hidden away from her in the French vocal style when she looked at the score the first time. But then in the end she sees it everywhere. Every singer she meets through the voice of Armide walks firmly along their lines, ornamenting the sounds, each one of them in their particular mood, and caring about their voices. Their roads cross but they do not really see one another. Each one of them haunted but their own invisible demons. This makes their voices pure and brilliant. Purified from vulgarity. They stand there right in the middle of what they know, or in what they do not know. In the middle of *je-ne-sais-quoi*.



Personaggi

I is the **SINGER**, the researcher and the author of this *music research drama thesis*, in first person.

In all acts the **SINGER** is embodied by her **MIND**, her **VOICE**, and her **BODY**. In the *Cannocchiale* she appears as the **SINGER** herself, referred to in third person. Finally in the Epilogue she appears with her proper name, **BELGRANO**.

The **DANCER/BODY OF THE CHORUS OF OTHER** represents movement and improvisation in ACT II.

The **CHORUS of OTHER** is the mixed choir of all references, be they theoretical, artistic and practice-based, or indeed any references that prove to be of interest and importance for the Singer's reflections, acts and decisions. Because of the potentially vast amount of references that could be applied to this study, it is important to emphasize that this thesis is totally based on a performer's perspective. Therefore references pointing towards different perspectives from other fields of research, have sometimes been omitted.

NATURE and **ART** opens the first ACT, Scene 1. They appear only once, but their presence is evident in every part of the thesis. It is one of many challenges for the Singer, to understand when Nature speaks the truth and when Arts takes over, making transformation invisible and visible to the audience.

Four women, of whom two are dressed in different vocal costumes:

DEIDAMIA is a Greek princess from Skyros, who discovers that her lover Achille will leave her and join the Greek forces for a battle against the Trojans. In order to convince him not to leave, she performs an act of feigned madness, starting with her call out for war: "*Guerrieri, all'armi, all'armi.*" Throughout the scene she transforms from at first being a soldier, to Beautiful Helen,

to an abandoned lover.

OTTAVIA is a Roman empress who is betrayed, scorned and exiled by her husband emperor Nero. In her state of despair she sings two laments, “*Disprezzata Regina*” and “*A Dio Roma*”.

ARIANNA/ARIANE is a princess from Crete, left by her lover Teseo on a shore on the island of Naxos. In her sorrow she laments his escape by singing in Italian “*Lasciatemi morire*” and in French “*Rochers, vous etes sourds*”.

ARMIDE is a sorceress aiming to kill the knight Rinaldo/Renaud. Instead she falls in love with him. She puts him under a spell, making him fall in love with her. He escapes, and leaves her in despair singing “*Ah, Rinaldo dove sei?*” in the early version, and in the later version “*Le Perfide Renaud*”.

ANNA RENZI and **ANNE CHABANCEAU DE LA BARRE**, two highly successful 17th century singers, appear throughout the thesis as partners in a dialogue with the **SINGER**. Their dialogue culminates in the Epilogue.

Prologue

Towards a deeper understanding and knowledge of
vocal expression and *pure voice*

*“The philosopher remains confined to schools, the poet to academies; and for the people what is left in the theaters is only **pure voice**, stripped of any poetic eloquence and of any philosophical feeling.”¹²*

12. Gian Vincenzo Gravina, member of *Accademia dell’Arcadia*, lamenting the separation between the philosophy, poetry and music in the culture of his time (1715). Cited in: Calcagno, 2003, p. 461.



A pure voice experience

“Music is gone and left is silence. Yet a vibrating motion is stronger than ever in the silent room. The harpsichord player hurries out with his face covered by his hands. My whole body and soul are one and I am alive. My voice is silent, but the movement in me is bursting with an overwhelming force. Silence, sound, quiet, movement – all is present in this room. I am at the center of NOW, in the middle of BEING. It is a moment capturing the absolute conviction that everything has been expressed. Sound is now embodied in a most profound sensation of existence.

The woman I interpret has lost her love. Her inability to transform her destiny forces her through a swirl of extreme emotion. Then suddenly she gives in. She lets go of her breath. We are one. My voice is part of hers. Everyone in the room is part of the vibration in this almost spiritual sensation.

Perhaps I exaggerate? But no... it was true for me. The frame of my reality is invisible. I ask myself if this isn't the sensation or ambition all (performing) artists strive towards in their attempt to present their art? To me this means reaching all the way into the borderland of fulfillment, and being eternally alive. A voice inside me tells me to sing again and again and again...”¹³

13. This text was composed for a course in *Writing and Practical Knowledge*, led by Prof. Anders Lindseth, at the Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts (University of Gothenburg), which I attended during the fall 2006. The text describes a moment of importance for my own vocal practice and it became the formulated point of departure for this research project.

Searching for *pure voice* in performance

The text above describes a point of departure to this project. It is where it all starts.

My curiosity to understand the *pure voice experience* has inspired me to study the abstract sources of the voice. The moment when nothing matters more than a voice streaming out of me, reaching out into infinity. In 2005 I found an article by Mauro Calcagno addressing *pure voice* in early Venetian opera¹⁴. Since then this article has then been my guiding star throughout the PhD project. Calcagno argues for the relevance of the emerging protagonist of opera production, that is, the female singer. According to him, she becomes a symbol for two important tropes associated with an intellectual discourse on the concept of aesthetics, referring to “*the pure voice and over-vocalization: the concept of nothing and the singing of the nightingale*”.

Nothingness

What does *nothing* mean? I get this question almost every time I talk about my research. I never know how to answer in a simple way, even if completely I understand its true meaning. It is so simple and yet so complicated. Is it a sign of *nothingness*, that is, when everything can be said, even in silence? A paradox. Could that be the answer to the question? I hope to be able to better describe and perform my understanding of *nothingness* and the *pure voice* with this thesis. I turn to my own vocal practice, to other voices and practices as well as to theories addressing the wonders of *nothing*, hoping to find more answers that enhance my own vocal skills and expression.

Accademia degli Incogniti: observers of *nothingness* and supporters of the Venetian 17th century opera

Throughout my project I battle daily with the fear of how to make my singing research valid and respected in the midst of traditional academia. There seems to be rather an uneasy relationship between *artistic research* and the academic world.¹⁵

14. Calcagno, 2003.

15. Borgdorff, Henk *Artistic research and academia: an uneasy relationship*, Autonomi och egenart – konstnärlig forskning söker identitet (Autonomy and Individuality – Artistic Research Seeks an Identity), Yearbook for Artistic Research, 2008, Swedish Research Council, pp. 82–97.

What makes the research of an artist so different from traditional academic, scientific and scholarly research? Is it the artist’s fear to become too theoretical or perhaps to loose touch with the art practice itself? Becoming too *academic*? Or is it perhaps the academia fearing a transformation of its perceived and performed status, which is usually defined by truth, objectivity and realism, when linked to *artistic research* which is often mysterious, subjective, unreasonable by nature. With the help of Calcagno I will examine the definition and essence of a specific academy more closely, namely the *Accademia degli Incogniti*, an academy directly linked to the first productions of the new opera genre in 17th century Venice.

Accademia degl’Incogniti seems to have been an academy striving towards total freedom and openness of mind. This academy has been described to have

“*created an intellectual style that depended on ‘conversation’. The most important activity was the oral presentation followed by debate. They created an ‘academic’ style that placed and enormous emphasis on the virtuosity of word selection and the power of language, not just for self-expression, but as an instrument for perception and deeper cognition.*”¹⁶

For the *Incogniti* everything could be turned inside out forever and ever no matter the topic. In their wordplay one could observe a sense of indeterminacy of meaning and a dynamic process of understanding. They *walked* through the words and transitioned themselves into unknown meanings, without any intention of finding a final explanation.

This academy observed the essence of *nothing* (il Niente) and in 1635 their theories of *nothing* were published. For its members,

“*celebrating the nobility of nothingness opened a door onto aesthetic and semiotic theory. Examining nothingness was a device for exploring the impossibility of representation in language, which led to a distrust of verbal language and to the cultivation of stylistic extremes for their shock value or, to put it in seventeenth-century terms, for the capacity of poetry to achieve novelty and produce the marvelous.*”¹⁷

16. Muir, Edward *The Culture Wars of the Late Renaissance: Sceptics, Libertines, and Opera*, Harvard University Press, 2007, p. 70.

17. Ibid. p. 79.

They searched for a space, where thoughts could be thrown into the air and played with by the academy members. The themes they explored ranged from the most trivial to the most serious. The members all shared the vision of a search for the unknown. In fact, the *unknown* explained their own identity: *Accademia degli Incogniti* (Academy of the Unknown). Their motto was *Ex Ignoto Notus* – known from the unknown. Their emblem pictured the river Nile, referring to the bizarre associations of the words Nilo (the Nile), Nihil, (in latin: nothing), Nulla.¹⁸ From a singer's perspective it is intriguing to notice that the emblem is shaped like an open mouth, as pointed out by Calcagno. Perhaps referring to the singing voice?



18. The *Accademia degli Incogniti* can be explored further in the following papers: Calcagno, 2003; Miato, Monica *L'Accademia degli Incogniti di Giovan Francesco Loredan*, Venezia (1630–1661), Leo S. Olschki Editore, Firenze, 1998.

Singing voices from the 17th century: the voices of
Anna Renzi and Anne Chabanceau de La Barre

I have been following one of the first opera singers, praised by members of *l'Accademia degli Incogniti* for her passionate interpretation on the stages in Venice. Her name was Anna Renzi. The following words were dedicated to Renzi by librettist Giulio Strozzi in 1644:

*“The action that gives soul, spirit, and existence to things must be governed by the movements of the body, by gestures, by the face and by the voice, now raising it, now lowering it, becoming enraged and immediately becoming calm again; at times speaking hurriedly, at others slowly, moving the body now in one, now in another direction, drawing in the arms, and extending them, laughing and crying, now with little, now with much agitation of the hands. Our Signora Anna is endowed with such lifelike expression that her responses and speeches seem not memorized but born at the very moment. In sum, she transforms herself completely into the person she represents, and seems now a Thalia full of comic gaiety, now a Melpomene rich in tragic majesty. I call her the fourth Grace...”*¹⁹

It is my opinion that the female singer from the 17th century can teach us all a great deal more about singing, acting and opera than what we already know. It can of course be said that nothing can be true, and that nobody will ever know for sure who the first opera singers *really* were, how they sounded or what stipulated their acts on stage, but I know that I need my illusions and

19. “L'azione con la quale si dà l'anima, lo spirito, e l'essere alle cose, deve esser governata dal movimento del corpo, dal gesto, dal volto, e dalla voce, hora innalzandola, hora abbassandola, sdegnandosi, & tornando subito a pacificarsi: una volta parlando in fretta, un'altra adagio, movendo il corpo a questa, hor a quella parte, raccogliendo le braccia, e distendendole, ridendo, e piangendo, hora con poca, hora con molta agitazione di mani: la nostra Signora Anna è dotata d'una espressione sì viva, che paiono le risposte, e i discorsi non appresi dalla memoria, ma nati all'hora. In soma elle si trasforma tutta nella persona che rappresenta, e sembra hora una Talia piena di comica allegrezza, hora una Melpomene ricca di Tragica Maestà. Io la chiamarei la quarta Gratia...”, Strozzi, Giulio *Le glorie della Signora Anna Renzi Romana*, Venice, 1644, Surian, p. 8–9. This quote, except the last sentence, has been translated to English by Ellen Rosand: Rosand, 1991, p. 232. For further reading about Anna Renzi: Glixon, Beth L. *Private Lives of Public Women: Prima Donnas in Mid-Seventeenth Century Venice*, Music & Letters, Vol. 76, No. 4, Nov. 1995, pp. 509–531; Sartori, Antonio *La prima diva della lirica italiana: Anna Renzi*, Nuova rivista musicale italiana, 2, 1968, pp. 430–452.

fantasies. It is very much about creating images based on no other evidence than what has been left behind in documents. Still, this can be compared to the creative process of preparing a performance. I have a score, I have a context, I have experience of communicating emotions, but I need to let my wonder and my curiosity for the amazing and unrealistic visions and inner images come alive, otherwise my performance will have no meaning at all. Anna Renzi, along with the French 17th century singer Anne Chabanceau de La Barre²⁰ has accompanied me throughout the project²¹. They are the two singers I turn to when I emerge into the words, into the music, into the phrasing and into the gestures. Together with them, my mind creates images, which are then represented and embodied by my voice and my performing acts. These women, representing to me a female sound in 17th century opera, created new tools to achieve what was so much desired, namely to touch, enchant and move the souls of the audience.

Renzi's portrait has served as a model for creating a costume for my project. During research and discussion with an expert on 17th century fashion in Venice, an observation of her costume confirmed important matters related to her appearance on stage. It was a costume realizing both male and female aspects: she was wearing a male *casacca*, which is a type of coat or shirt, un-

20. Between 1996–2004 I did research the life and career of Anne Chabanceau de La Barre. The result was the CD *Eclatante Amarante. A portrait of The French 17th century Singer Anne Chabanceau de La Barre (1628–1688)*, EB 2004. For more information: www.elibel-grano.org; See also: Tiersot, Julien *Une famille de musiciens français au XVII^e siècle les de la Barre*, *Revue de musicology*, Vol 8, No. 24, Nov. 1927, pp. 185–202; Tiersot, Julien *Une famille de musiciens français au XVII^e siècle les de la Barre*, *Revue de musicology*, Vol 9, No. 26, May 1928, pp. 68–74; Brenet, Michel *Les concerts en France Sous l'Ancien Régime*, Da Capo Press, New York, 1970, (1923).

21. These women can be considered as two of the first prima donnas in the history of opera. Texts were published during the seventeenth century dedicated to Anna Renzi (Strozzi, 1644) and Anne Chabanceau de La Barre (Loret, Jean *La Muze Historique ou Recueil des Lettres en Vers contenant les Nouvelles du Temps, écrits a son Altesse Mademoiselle de Longueville, depuis Duchesse de Nemours, 1650–1665*, vol. 1–4, 1857) highlighting their important roles in the development of the new operatic genre. These texts celebrate Renzi's and La Barre's passionate interpretations and glorious performances. On a more general level, these historical texts also provide us with highly significant and direct information about the performing qualities of female 17th century singers and their manners of expressing the passions. Another interesting piece of information is that throughout the texts both women embody some of the attributes closely related to a philosophical discourse concerning the *paradoxes of nothing*, for example the singing of the nightingale (Calcagano, 2003; Loret, 1857).

derneath which is a slashed doublet upper body with paned sleeves. Across her chest a ribbon can be observed, possibly holding a sword hanging on the side. Her curly hair fell down on her shoulders and she had a fashionable short fringe, which was a typical hairstyle in the 17th century. The female attributes in the portrait were the hairpins, earrings, brooch and necklace. Her costume proves to fit perfectly well with Renzi's highly celebrated interpretation and performance of paradoxical mad scenes, demanding her ability to rapidly transform into male and female characters.²²

22. I am most grateful to Prof. Doretta Davanzo Poli (Facoltà di Lettere e di Filosofia, Università Ca'Foscari, Venezia) for her advice, interesting discussion and for her generosity in providing me with laces for the costume.



Selecting music manuscripts

Enchanted with the melancholy so often present in 17th century vocal music, and especially after many years of work on French 17th century *airs sérieux* and the passions beyond this genre, I was often tempted to create a concert/performance of only lamentations. But when I reconsidered the outcome of such a concert, I decided there would be too much of sorrow for the ears and hearts of the audience. However, spending four years doing research on lamentations for a PhD project seemed fully acceptable.

After some time I realized there was another scene much appreciated in earlier opera and which was linked to the lament, this was the mad scene. They both shared the “antithetical digressions’ and ‘stunning transformations’ – i.e., those abrupt deviations between opposing states of mind”²³.

The *lamento* and the *plainte*

The two following quotes describe the essence of the lament as a genre in itself very well, clearly succeeding in its purpose to move the affections of the audience.

“The lament scene is a scene of desperation, imprecation and self-pity on the part of the heroine; a monologue, it comes at a critical point of in the drama; for the protagonist, it represents the culmination of various inner conflicts raised in the course of the preceding action”²⁴

“The lament was different for the other operatic conventions. It came to opera as an entity in its own right, with a distinct definition and a generic integrity of its own. [...] Throughout its history the lament asserted its independence, standing somewhat apart from its situation. An emotional climax followed by resolution of whatever action was involved, it was a soliloquy, a moment of particularly intense expression for the protagonist, the affective crux of a narrative structure. [...] As a clear demonstration of music’s power to move the affections, the lament embodied the operatic ideal...”²⁵

23. Bianconi, Lorenzo *Music in the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, (1987), p. 218.

24. Ibid. 216.

25. Rosand, 1991, p. 361.

The lament was an entity in itself, as well as the climax of an operatic drama as a whole. It was a form prepared for the protagonist to shine in all her excellence, as well as a way of moving the listener into a perfect state of beauty.

In France the sound of the moaning voice had also become a style in itself. Elaborated ornamentations, signifying the style of *air de cours* and later on the *airs sérieux*, often expressing languish of suffering and pain caused by something exterior to the subjective body, were often used. The ornaments were the means transporting and moving the passions of the listeners. “... *The God in heaven listens to the groans and the moaning of the afflicted ones. Lovers send their moaning towards the echos and the rocks*”²⁶. The *plainte* then found its way through collaborations between Lully and composers such as Michel Lambert in various ballets, into the French opera where it appeared to have been more influenced by the Italian flair and found a different range of colors and expression.²⁷

Apart from the 17th century fashion of the lamentation in Italian and French vocal music, the lament can be traced back in history: for example to the Greek tragedies and to Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. The lament was closely related to the female voice and to her “*dialogue with the dead*”²⁸ and it was part of funeral rituals and the wailing songs of traditional women mourners from Mesopotamia, Greece, Saudi Arabia, Finnish and Russian Karelia as well as other cultures and regions.²⁹

26. “PLAINTE. f.f. Témoignage de douleur ou d’affliction qu’on rend exterieurement. Ce peuple est si malheureux, qu’on luy defend jusqu’à la plainte. Dieu entend du ciel les plaintes & le gemissemens des affligéz. Les amants font leurs plaintes aux echos & aux rochers. Ces Mot vient du Latin Planct us.” Furetière, Antoine *Dictionnaire Universel*, 2nd ed. La Haye-Rotterdam, 1690.

27. Some other examples of French *Plaintes* except the ones examined in this project: *Plainte Italienne* “*Deh, piangete...*” from Lully’s opera *Psyché*, 1678; “*Quel prix de mon amour*”, from *Medée* by Marc-Antoine Charpentier, 1693.

28. Holst-Warhaft, Gail *Dangerous voices. Women’s laments and Greek Literature*. Routledge, 1992, p. 3.

29. For information on female lamentation in folk tradition, see: Cooper, Jerrold S. *Genre, Gender and the Sumerian Lamentation*, *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, Vol. 58, 2006, pp. 39–47; Tolbert, Elizabeth *The Voice of Lament: Female Voice and Performance Efficacy in the Finnish-Karelian itkuvirsi*, in: *Embodied Vocality: Representing Female Vocality in Western Culture*, ed. Leslie C. Dunn and Nancy A. Jones, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 179–194; Segal, Charles *The Gorgon and the Nightingale: The Voice of Female Lament and Pindar’s twelfth Pythian Ode*, in: *Embodied Voices: Representing Female Vocality in Western Culture*, ed. Leslie C. Dunn and Nancy A. Jones, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 17–34.

The *mad scene* and the *scene of fury*

The mad scene can be found in Italian and French drama from around mid 16th century. It appears in comedies and pastorals, but also in tragedies.

“in the *commedia dell'arte*, mad-scenes were regularly presented as bravura pieces, required by convention to be ridiculous in whole or in part.”³⁰

An example of a mad scene from the *commedia* tradition comes from *La forsennata principessa*, where Alvira

“...speaks of the grief she feels for her murdered lover and of the joy of seeing before her the head of her enemy, and contrasting these various thoughts she becomes mad: frantic and delirious, tearing her hair and rending her garments she runs outside the city towards the sea...”³¹

Another example performed by *commedia dell'arte* actress Isabella Andreini, who was particularly famous for her interpretations of mad scenes, comes from *La Pazzia d'Isabella* (The Madness of Isabella)³². In her acted state of madness, overcome by pain, she gives in to the confusion of passions inside her and she runs out in the city speaking and singing in Greek, French, Italian and Spanish. Everything is out of proportion.

“Io mi ricordo l'anno non me lo ricordo, che un Arpicordo pose d'accordo una Pavaniglia spagnola con una Gagliarda di Santin da Parma, per la qual cosa poi le lasagne, i maccheroni e la polenta si vestirono a bruno, non potendo comportare che la gatta fura fusse amica delle belle fanciulle d'Algieri; pure, come piacque al califfo d'Egitto, fu concluso che domattina sarete tutti duo messi in berlina.”³³

30. Fabbri, 1995, pp. 160, translated to English from the original version in Italian: Fabbri, Paolo *Alle origini di un topos operistico: la scena di follia*, in: *Il Secolo Cantante: Per Una Storia Del Libretto D'opera in Italia Nel Seicento*, Bulzoni Editore, Rome, 2003 (1990), pp. 341–381.

31. Ibid, p. 160; see also a transcription of the play in: *I Canovacci della Commedia dell'Arte*, ed. Testaverde, Anna Maria, Giulio Einaudi editore, Torino, 2007, pp. 139–150, Alvira's mad scene, p. 146.

32. One of the most famous interpretations was Isabella Andreini's performance of *La Pazzia d'Isabella Andreini*. See MacNeil, Anne *Music and Women of the Commedia dell'Arte in the Late Sixteenth Century*, Oxford Univ. Press, 2003, and MacNeil, Anne *The Divine Madness of Isabella*, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, Vol. 120, No 2, 1995, pp. 195–215.

33. See transcription of *La Pazzia d'Isabella* in: *I Canovacci della Commedia dell'Arte*, ed. Testaverde, Anna Maria, Giulio Einaudi editore, Torino, 2007, pp. 110–123.

Since this text is an important proof of how the mad scene evolved while it was performed, I have made an attempt to translate the words straight into English, just to point out the chaotic and unreasonable use of language:

“I remember the year I don't remember, when a harpsichord was tuned for a Spanish Pavaniglia with a Galiarda by Santin of Parma, for that something then the lasagne, the macaroni and the polenta was dressed for mourning, not being able to suffer that the Gatta Fura³⁴ was a friend of the sweet girls from Algeria; clearly, as the caliph of Egypt prefer, it was concluded tomorrow morning both would be placed in pillary”

Everything became exaggerated. Passions mixed in a fast tempo, using senseless words and vivid articulation: it all broke up with the baroque ideal of affect, rhetoric, control and reason. Words and gestures lost their references as soon as they had been pronounced. The mad scene came to play an interesting role since it was very much esteemed by the audience, while at the same time it came to represent an upside-down anti-rhetorical opposition to Renaissance ideals supported and powered by the Catholic church.³⁵ It is also interesting to note that the mad scene in a way embodies a paradox of perfection claimed by the republic of Venice itself.³⁶

The first known evidence of madness in the opera genre was the planned opera production of Giulio Strozzi's and Claudio Monteverdi's *La Finta Pazza Licori* (The Feigned Madwoman Licori), a comic opera most likely never performed. Here again, the emphasis on words become evident when Monteverdi in a letter to Alessandro Striggio writes:

34. a delicious tarte (possibly from the region of Liguria)..

35. I would like to point out that even if the tradition of the mad scene was mostly female there are examples of men acting mad, such as Orlando's mad scene in *Orlando furioso*, see *I Canovacci della Commedia dell'Arte*, pp. 329–352. I will also mention Ophelia's mad scene in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as an English answer to the baroque phenomenon. Ophelia's performance also includes singing in her monologue, which is a sign of madness in itself in the context of the drama. See Rosand, 1992, p. 241. On madness and folly, see: Kromm, Jane *The Art of Frenzy. Public Madness in the Visual Culture of Europe, 1500–1850*, Continuum, London-New York, 2002; Guidorizzi, Giulio *Ai confini dell'Anima. I Greci e la Follia*, Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2010.

36. Sperling, Jutta, *The Paradox of Perfection: Reproducing the Body Politic in the Late Renaissance Venice*, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 41, No. 1, January, 1999, pp. 3–32.

“In my opinion, the story is not bad, nor indeed is the way it unfolds; nevertheless the part of Licoris, because of its variety of moods, must not fall into the hands of a woman who cannot play first a man and then a woman, with lively gestures and different emotions³⁷. Therefore the imitation of this feigned madness must take into consideration only the present, not the past or the future, and consequently must emphasize the word, not the sense of the phrase. So when she speaks of war she will have to imitate war; when of peace, peace; when of death, death and so forth.”³⁸

According to these words by Monteverdi, there would be only one way to go: to imitate, respond and express the impulse of each word, in its present appearance. For this to be done one would have to set aside any other impulse. Furthermore, since the laws of rhetoric were so deeply imprinted in human behavior at this time, the reasonable gestures would of course be visible; but they would have had to have been challenged by the intuitive impulse of a female body.

In France the way Italians used the passions was often considered acts of bad taste, vulgarity and extravaganza:

“The Italians have a false, or at least outrageous expression, because they do not accurately understand the nature or the degree of the passions. They break out laughing instead of singing when they express some joyful sentiment; if they want to sigh, one hears sobs that are violently formed in the throat rather than sighs that escape se-

37. According to Fabbri, 1985, Monteverdi used the word ‘*passioni*’.

38. This letter from Monteverdi to Alessandro Striggio, dated 7 May, has been translated to English in two different publications, though they are interestingly enough identical: *The New Monteverdi Companion*, ed. Dennis Arnold and Nigel Fortune, Faber & Faber, London/Boston, 1985, (1968), p. 64; and Fabbri, Paolo *Monteverdi*, p. 200–201 (translation to English by Tim Carter) Since I have noticed some differences in the English translation from the version published by Fabbri in Italian in 1985, I have included it here in this footnote: “*La inventione non mi par male, né men la spiegatura; è vero che la parte di Licori per essere molto varia, non doverà cadere in mano di donna che or non si facci omo et or donna con vivi gesti e separate passioni, perché la immitatione di tal finta pazzia dovendo aver la consideratione solo che nel presente et non nel passato et nel futuro, per conseguenza la immitatione dovendo aver il suo appoggiamento sopra alla parola et non sopra al senso de la clausula, quando dunque parlerà di guerra bisognerà immitar di guerra, quando di pace pace, quando di morte, di morte, et va seguitando, et perché le transformationi si faranno in brevissimo spatio, et le immitationi. Chi dunque averà da dire tal principalissima parte che move al riso et alla compassione, sarà necessario che tal donna lassi da parte ogni altra immitatione che la presentanea che gli somministrerà la parola che averà da dire.*” in: Fabbri, Paolo, *Monteverdi*, Edizioni di Torino (E.D.T.), 1985, p. 262–263.

cretly from the passion of an amorous heart; from a painful reflection they make the strongest exclamations; tears of absence are funeral lamentations; the sad becomes the gloomy in their mouths; they cry out instead of complaining in sadness, and sometimes they express the languor of the passion as a weakness of nature.”³⁹

Their own use of passions was performed with grace and subtlety. The emotional intensity was hidden in between balance and moderation. The calculated movement of a phrase could never be repeated; it had to stay simple but never below a certain level of *politesse* and elegance. It was a performance for an audience attracted by *something-never-to-be-touched*.

Although this controlled vocal ideal was evident in France, something changes with the first operas of Lully. The voices of furies are heard through female personalities such as *Medée* and *Armide*. Both of them walk out of what is vocal normality. Their voices exhibit violence and are animated by passions of strong character in a completely new manner. In the end, however, it is *logos*, measured and pure, that cleans the musical and vocal disorders, and leads the sound towards a *state-of-being* that can only be seen as a continuous purification of the pure. The pronunciation of the words wins the battle and the music conforms instead to the metrical calculations, conveying the structure of *pathos* into a *state-of-becoming* rather than *state-of-being*.⁴⁰

39. The words are by Saint-Evremond, *Sur les opéra à Monsieur le Duc Bouquingant* in: *Oeuvres en prose*, translated to English by Don Fader in: Fader, 2003, pp. 32–33.

40. See more information on the female role and her vocality in French *tragédie lyrique*: Nancy, Sarah, *Chanter l'invective: scène de fureur dans la tragédie lyrique*. In: *Invective – Quand le corp reprend la parole*, Presse Universitaire de Perpignan, 2006, pp. 187–201; on development of French 17th century opera see: Prunière, Henry *L'Opéra Italien en France avant Lully*, Paris, 1913; Beaussant, Philippe *Lully ou le Musicien du Soleil*, Gallimard/Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, 1992; Powell, John S. *Music and Theater in France, 1600–1680*, Oxford University Press, 2000; Nancy, Sarah *The 'Deaf Ear' of Classicism: Searching for the Female Voice in French Tragédie Lyrique*, Theatre Research International, Vol. 31, No. 2, pp. 117–128; Nancy, Sarah, *Les règles et le plaisir de la voix dans la tragédie en musique*, Dix-septième siècle, Vol. 2, No. 223, 2004, pp. 225–236; Cowart, Georgia *Of women, sex, and folly: Opera under the Old Regime*, Cambridge Opera Journal, Vol. 6, No. 3, 1994, pp. 205–220.

Singing and observing: a method

“She silently observes the actions of others, and when she is called upon to represent them, helped by her sanguine temperament and bile, which fires her (without which men cannot undertake great things), shows the spirit and valor learned by studying and observing.”⁴¹

In simple words, this quote describes a method applied by a singer from the 17th century. She observed. She observed the context of her surrounding, the voices, the gesture, the passions and affections. Based on this quote I formulated my own research method: to observe the context where the music was performed for the first times; to observe myself in those surroundings in a contemporary context; to observe my own inner images when studying the manuscripts; observing the vocal reactions to the previously mentioned observations and to formulate the thoughts and reflections otherwise kept in secret from a wider audience. All observations were then filtered through the concepts of *nothingness*, *je-ne-sais-quoi* and *passion*.

Affection, passion, feeling and emotion, with reference to rhetoric

These four words have been subjects for study and debate for as long as we can remember. In the baroque era, the two most commonly used words were *affection* and *passion*. They referred to the inner movements and agitations that occurred when stimulated by an exterior act or an inner sensation. Descartes pointed out wonder, love, hate, desire, joy and sadness to be the primary passions.⁴² It has been said that *passion* was a word more often used in France, while *affection* was the word used by the Italians.⁴³ It has also been stated that *affection* was a more active movement, thus directly linked to the body, while *passion* made mind suffer passively.⁴⁴ In the 17th century the passions were associated with body liquids moving through the human system, affecting the character and personality of a person. Rhetorical treatises

41. Rosand, 1991, p. 232, translation to English from Strozzi, 1644, p. 10–11.

42. Descartes, 1989, (1649).

43. Murata, Maragret *The Baroque Era*, in: *Source Readings in Music History*, ed. Oliver Strunk, W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1998, (1950, 1978) p. 516.

44. Palisca, Claudio, *Baroque Music*, 3rd edition, Prentice Hall, Inc. 1991, (1981, 1968), p. 4.

on speech, gestures and music were formulated in order to inform, persuade, delight and entertain the public in a controlled manner.⁴⁵ The purpose was to affect the soul of the listener.⁴⁶

Concerning gestures in the mad scene, I have asked myself on a number of occasions how far I could stretch the rhetorical gestures, and have come to the conclusion that in the state of madness the gestures escaped what was normal and considered to be acceptable. In madness the person would have moved furiously and in an agitated way through desperate acts, stretching the arms both high and low, and screaming louder to show a growing anger. Madness took a different standpoint from the rhetorical tradition and I suppose it was not without reason that a book by Ferrante Pallavicino, with the title “*La Retorica delle puttane / Composta conforme li precetti di Cipriano. / Dedicata all università delle cortigiane più celebri*” (The Rhetoric of the Whores/composed based on the outline of Cipriano / Dedicated to the university of the most celebrated courtesans) was published with the support of Accademia degli Incogniti in Venice in 1642, based on a rhetorical treatise by the Spanish Jesuit Cipriano Suarez.⁴⁷

The word *feeling* in English had been associated with the sensation of *touch*, coming from the Italian word *sentire* meaning “to feel, to hear, to smell, to

45. On 17th century rhetoric, see: Ripa, Cesare *Iconologia*, TEA Arte, 2008, (1992); Verschaeve, Michel *Le Traité de Chant et mise en scène Baroques*, Edition, Aug. Zurfluh, 1997; Nässén, Eva *Ett yttre tecken på en inre känsla. Studier i barockens musikaliska och sceniska gestik*, Doctoral Dissertation, Institution of Musicology, University of Gothenburg, 2000; Tarling, Judy *Weapons of Rhetoric. A guide for musicians and audiences*. Corda Music Publications, 2005, (2004); Gualandri, Francesca, *Affetti, Passioni, Vizi e Virtù. La retorica del gesto nel teatro del '600*. Peri, Milano, 2001; Harrán, Don *Towards a Rhetorical Code of Early Music Performance*, The Journal of Musicology, Vol. 15, No. 1, Winter 1997.

46. On history of affects and passions: Cockcroft, Robert *Rhetorical Affect in Early Modern Writing. Renaissance Passions Reconsidered*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003; Paster, Gail Kern ed. *Reading the Early Modern Passions. Essays in the Cultural History of Emotions*, with Katherine Rowe, Mary Floyd-Wilson, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2004; Meyer, Michel *Philosophy and the Passions, Towards a History of Human Nature*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Pennsylvania, 2000; Gaukroger, Stephen, ed. *The Soft Underbelly of Reason, The Passions in the Seventeenth Century*, Routledge, London-New York, 1998.

47. Coci, Laura *La retorica della retorica: Ferrante Pallavicino e Cipriano Suarez*, Sul romazo secentesco, ed. Rizzo, Gino, Pubblicazioni del dipartimento di Filologia Linguistica e Letteratura dell'Università di Lecce, 4, 1985; an English adaptation: Ferrate Pallavicino, *The Whore's Rhetoric Calculated to the Meridian of London and Conformed to the Rules of Art, in Two Dialogues*. General Book, 2009 (1683); Muir, 2007, pp. 90–95.

taste, to perceive, to conceit. Used also to approve, to allow, or to yeeld consent unto.”⁴⁸ Therefore, *feeling* becomes synonymous with a concept of sensation.

The last word *emotion* is a more recent word stemming from the word *motion* (*muovere* in Italian). *E-* comes from *ex-*, meaning *out*, which gives *emotion* the sensation of a movement directed out of the body.

In 1994 Antonio Damasio suggests that emotion and feeling “provide the bridge between rational and non-rational processes, between cortical and sub-cortical structures”.⁴⁹ His comment appears as a natural link back to the topic of my thesis, where my intentions have been to be aware, while exploring the bridge between the rational and the non-rational sounds and actions of the lamentation, the mad scene and *nothingness*.

Seeking vocal *nothingness* & *je-ne-sais-quoi*
by applying mindful awareness

Accademia degli Incogniti played an important part in productions of the first public operatic events in the republic of Venice around 1640; their philosophical discourse around the concept of *nothingness* has been an essential topic for my research. As a singer I used *Incogniti's* “device for exploring the impossibility of representation in language” aiming to create “stylistic extremes for their shock value” testing the natural vocal sound or “to achieve novelty and produce the marvelous” by applying various ornaments and vocal decorations.⁵⁰ Based on a dialogue with a dancer, with instrumentalists, other singers and researchers, who all share the common interest in 17th century culture, I have studied my own vocal sounds and paradoxes along with theories of *nothingness*.⁵¹ I understand this process to represent moments of absolute awareness.

At the end of 19th century William James made a remarkable breakthrough, arguing that emotion was an ongoing process, starting with a stimulus that caused the body to move and thus experience an emotion. His statement es-

48. Florio, 1611, search on the word *sentire*.

49. Damasio, Antonio *Descartes' Error. Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain*, Penguin Books, 1994, p. 128.

50. Referring to the earlier quotation by Edward Muir, 2007, p. 33, footnote 17.

51. My references to theories of *nothingness* include for example: Manzini, Luigi, 1634; Merleau-Ponty, 2006, (1945, 1962); Heisig, 2001; Cavalcante Schuback, Marcia Sá *Lovtal till Intet*, Glänta Produktion, 2006; Olsson, Anders *Läsningar av intet*, Albert Bonniers Förlag, 2000.

tablished the foundation of a theory of emotions.⁵² Today there is an increasing interest in the history and science of emotions, and scholars and scientists try to understand what impact sensations and passions have on our state-of-being. The singer's paradox consists of allowing the voice its intuition, to be expressive and passionate on stage, yet attempting to remain within in conscious physical and emotional control. There is a need for the singer to become aware of the *self* in this balancing act. Where is *I* on stage? What does *I* mean when *I* interpret the voice of another being?⁵³ In my research I have linked the experiences of my vocal practice to the theories of emotion, mindfulness, embodied cognition and embodied mind pronounced by neuroscientists such as Francisco Varela and Antonio Damasio.⁵⁴ Both Varela and Damasio explore a non-Western philosophical tradition that derives from a Buddhist method of examining experience called *mindfulness*, which means “that the mind is present in embodied everyday experiences”⁵⁵. Through a dialogue between this non-dualistic method and cognitive science Varela addresses factors that can be directly juxtaposed with phenomenological arguments by Merleau-Ponty for example. In my practice I also apply the Alexander Technique, which is another method used by many performing artists, and which allow the mind to acknowledge habits in everyday experience, and in this way obtaining, through practice, an awareness of the self as a whole.⁵⁶

52. On history and theory of emotions: Rolls, Edmund T. *Emotion Explained*, Oxford University Press, 2005; Kagan, Jerome *What is Emotion? History, Measures and Meanings*, Yale University Press, 2007; Wulff, Helena, ed. *The Emotions. A Cultural Reader*, Berg, Oxford-New York, 2007.

53. There are two interesting text on the *Self* in early opera, both by Mauro Calcagno: *Performing the Self*, *The Opera Quarterly*, Vol 24, No.3-4, pp. 247-274, and “*Imitar col canto chi parla*”: *Monteverdi and the Creation of a Language for Musical Theater*, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 2002, Vol. 55, No. 3, pp. 383-431.

54. Varela, Francisco J., Evan Tompson & Eleanor Rosch *The Embodied Mind. Cognitive Science and Human Experience*, MIT Press, 1991; Damásio, António *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*, 1999.

55. Varela et al. p. 22.

56. Alexander, F.M. *The Use of the Self*, Published by Victor Gollancz, 1998, (1932, 1985); Alexander, F.M. *Constructive Consious Control of the Individual*, STAT Books, 1997 (1923); Macdonald, Patrick *The Alexander Technique as I see it*, Rahula Books, 1989; Valentine, Elizabeth R., David F.P. Fitzgerald, Tessa L. Gorton, Jennifer A. Hudson, Elizabeth R. C. Symonds *The Effect of Lessons in the Alexander Technique on Music Performance in High and Low Stress Situations*, *Psychology of Music*, 23, 1995, pp. 129-141; Valentine, Elizabeth R. *The Fear of Performance*, in: *Musical Performance: a guide to understanding*, ed. John, Rick, Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 168-182; Tinbergern, Nikolaas, *Ethology and Stress Diseases*, *Science*, Vol. 185, 5 July, 1974, pp. 20-27.

Over-vocalization and the singing of the nightingale

For a contemporary analysis on the phenomenon of *pure voice* with regard to other historical periods, Calcagno refers to Lawrence Kramer, who calls the moments when the voice surpasses the textual meaning “*overvocalizations*”. Another formulation is provided by Nietzsche, when he describes the melismatic act as a “*musical excitement that comes from all together different regions*’ than does poetic excitement.”⁵⁷

These theories have met my own understanding of ornamentation. From the composer, singer and voice teacher Benigne de Bacilly, I learned the importance of *animer* with regard to the voice, that is, to animate and make the voice come alive.⁵⁸

When a word has been sung, the voice has made a vocal statement; from then on any sound could happen or be allowed. The voice goes on living apart from the text or the word. This developed during the end of the 17th century into a style where the voice transformed into something extraordinary or *virtuoso*. The singer became the *diva* or as Gian Vincenzo Gravina pointed out, a *pure voice*⁵⁹, losing to some extent the curious tension connected to the text. It is interesting to try to understand why this division between word and sound happened, while at the same time every sound was a reflection of the sensation of the words. This is again a paradox, bringing the nightingale back into the picture. The male singing bird was perceived as a female. His/her sound enchanted the listeners with its own rhetoric. Ovid transformed Procne and Philomela into birds, depending on different versions, to nightingales. The folly of Procne appeared after having killed her own son and cooking him as a meal for her husband, who had molested her sister Philomela by rape and by cutting out her tongue, so that she wouldn’t speak the truth. In

57. Calcagno, 2003, p. 462.

58. Bacilly, Bénigne de *Remarques curieuses de Lart de bien Chanter*, 1679, (1668), Edition Minkoff, Genève, 1972; edited and translated to English by Austin B. Caswell: *A Commentary upon the Art of Proper Singing*, The Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1968. Other sources of information on ornamentation of importance for this project: Caccini, Giulio *Le Nuove Musiche*, 1601, SPES, Florence, 1983; Modern edition: A-R Editions Inc., Madison, Wisconsin, 1970; Tosi, Francesco Pier *Observations on the Florid Song; or Sentiments on the Ancient and Modern Singers*, Minkoff Reprint, Genève, 1978; Hitchcock, H. Wiley *Vocal ornamentation in Caccini’s Nuove Musiche*, Musical Quarterly, July, 56/3, 1970, pp. 389–404.

59. see quote on page 29, footnote 12.

the end these sisters, Procne and Philomela sang as nightingales, as they sang their songs of lamentation and madness. Their sound became stronger than ever. Their sound washed away the darkness of the night and made way for the morning light. These female singers went out on stage, making way for mad songs full of passions. Across the whole world their voices rang, coloring the minds of all humans who heard them singing. They made way for an army of amazons, Divas, who would enchant, tease and seduce on opera stages around the world up to the present day.⁶⁰

Creating a *music research drama thesis*

I started to write a *pure voice experience* with only one intention: to deliver and express my thoughts straight into words without any rewriting. I wanted to describe, as simple as possible, the sensation of an experience that proved to be something significantly valuable to my profession as a singer and a performer. It was a description of my driving force, which provided my being with the desire to communicate.

Then, as a second step my aim was to explore the first text and continue to research the meaning behind the words, its images and its sounds. It became obvious to me that I needed to keep my senses open and try to understand what the affects, passions and emotions behind the words could tell me.

My work with this thesis has been done in a similar way. I decided to keep the *pure voice experience* as an introduction to my research as well as the Prologue, since it has been my driving force since the day it was written. After that my research began and what I found I have collected in the three acts of this *music research drama thesis*.

It is a collection of impressions and inner images, recorded both in sound, with film cameras and still images, and in words. I had to collect it all by myself in order to be truthful to my research. The collection and the curating of my material could never be truthful to my own acts if left it in the hands of another person. I am a documenting and collecting singer, nothing else.

Every act follows a different lament or a mad scene. My choice of music is based on instinct, but I was also trying to follow Anna Renzi and her

60. For references to the singing of the nightingale see: Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Oxford University Press, 1992, (1986). pp. 134–142; Segal, 1994; Chandler, Albert R. *The Nightingale in Greek and Latin Poetry*, The Classical Journal, Vol. 30, No.2, Nov. 1934, pp. 78–84; McKusick, James C. *The Return of the Nightingale*, Wordsworth Circle, 38, 2007, pp. 34–30.

repertoire in Venice. She was the first one to perform the roles of both Deidamia and Ottavia.

Since I wanted to explore both Italian and French vocal music I had to find two lament based on the same character composed both in Italian and French. I had always wanted to work on the *Lamento di Arianna* but had never really had the chance to go deep enough into the piece. Now I had the perfect opportunity, since I knew the *Plainte d'Ariane* from my long project working with music connected to Anne Chabanceau de La Barre. *Plainte d'Ariane* by Michel Lambert is not a typical French operatic air, but on the other hand it captures all what French music is about: charm, therefore it is a perfect match to the *Lamento d'Arianna*. At first I was hesitant, since I knew the *Plainte d'Ariane* extremely well after years of singing, performing and recording it. I thought that would be a problem, but then I didn't let this stop me, and looking back I am very sure the music has grown into something quite different. I have come to see Ariane in a new light, which I will tell more about in the Epilogue.

For Act III I decided to turn to the fury scene of Armide, trying out an early version from a ballet by Lully, from 1664, connecting it with the same scene from his opera *Armide* from 1686. In this act I investigate the development happening musically between the first piece and the second piece. It is also interesting since the first piece is in Italian with a French musical context and the later version is all in French.

The model of making my thesis into a libretto and a performance of the libretto presented on a DVD has of course been taken from the opera genre itself. The libretto was normally published as a tool for the audience to follow the lyrics performed on stage. If a production was successful, the libretto was printed in many editions, and they circulated all over Europe. In this libretto the audience will find texts, translations and footnotes.

When considering the best form of presenting this specific project I was inspired by the opera *La Finta Pazza*, from 1641. The reason was in fact a second volume published along with the libretto, entitled *Il Cannocchiale della Finta Pazza*. The aim of this text was to explain, highlight and describe the libretto and the opera performance in more detail, even to the people who never had the chance to see the actual performance and all the wonders of this opera.⁶¹ For me the form of a *Cannocchiale* seemed perfect, since I could use such a text as opera glasses or a pair of theater binoculars, in order to

61. The Italian word *Cannocchiale* means a telescope or an optical instrument for observing.

further explain the *mad* ways, thoughts and acts of a singer's process from the first sight of the musical manuscript towards a performance.

My curiosity about the power of the voice and all the possible colors and shades available in the art of communicating vocally, draws my attention back in history to a period that musically has been especially interesting for me, that is, the last 15 years. I didn't strive to enter into my research as a musicologist, but as a curious, researching singer. What I hoped to achieve with my research was to assemble different facts and stories presented by scholars and artists who specialized in the 17th century, adding my own practical experience of *baroque singing*.

As a performer I can choose whether to make my road easy or more difficult. I can turn directly to a modern contemporary printed edition and just sing. Or, I have the choice to look for more. I decided to choose the second option. I searched for original sources along with the modern editions. I searched for the unspoken truths not apparent on the page in front of me, not printed in black on white. I went to archives searching for other manuscripts and other writings related to the 17th century prints. I asked myself: who held this paper in his/her hand before me? I noticed my thoughts, and imagined the thoughts of the singer who interpreted the same music for the first time ever. Who was she? How did she live? How did she sound? What did she see, hear, feel, smell and taste?

But why did I need to know all this if I intended to do my own version? What was the purpose of all the searching? Obviously, one might argue that all this information would not make any significant difference to the sound of my voice? Well, maybe not. Nevertheless, I suggest that the new knowledge and experience I gained throughout my research, does indeed affect the sound of my voice. A singer learns her way to sing through images and sensations. Her sound grows with time and along with her perception of life. Books are available, but the master can never be substituted with a written textbook. The search for a meaning in a song is based on experiences, both technically and emotionally. For a singer this is an essential truth in the aim to achieve new ways to touch the soul of the observer and listener. It is my belief that these lived experiences can be stimulated and supported by theories of all kinds, if one allows the singing mind to be free, curious, aware and open to any possible truth or to one's imagination.

My way of describing my singing state-of-being is totally subjective and might appear irrelevant for any further academic research. Yet it is a moment signifying all what I need in order to be a singer. These glowing moments

rising out of the awareness of *pure voice* fire my desire. Their appearance seduces my mind with amazement, wonder and curiosity. What I learn in my practical research on the powerful qualities of the voice gives me courage and energy to be open to expression and communication with my surroundings. The voice inside me encourages me to be bold and not afraid of what I might find. It is this openness that draws me towards fascinating encounters on all levels: such as when the voice meets the word, and, together, accompanied by images and thoughts, find a variety of sounding and spoken melodies; such as the meeting between the vocal instrument and the costume: the sensations of close physical tension and the restriction of a 17th century corset used in an experiment 12 hours a day for 2 weeks, creates a totally new perspective of air and space; or the meeting between my voice and a 17th century theater, now transformed into a romantic garden, yet confined to the limited space (700 m²) that the theater once occupied. All these experiences and many more to be described in the *Libretto* and the *Cannocchiale* allows me as a 21st century singer to explore the transformations of sound and of my instrument as a whole, and to imagine and intuitively follow the most fantastic scenarios in the art of *being pure voice* – a flowing voice – *a voice of nothing*, “that includes in itself all that is possible and that is impossible”.⁶²

Act I Embodying Transformation

Scene I DEIDAMIA

Nature & Art are waiting for the entrance of the Singer. They trust in her power of embodying the paradoxes of *Every Thing* and *No Thing*. Words celebrating their existence are rolled out as a red carpet, preparing for the Singer’s appearance

CHORUS of OTHER

“...Artusi [...] invite an interpretation of consonance as both natural and masculine and dissonance as unnatural and feminine.”⁶³

CHORUS of OTHER

“...Nature is feminine and art is masculine...”⁶⁴

CHORUS of OTHER

“...Puteanus associates creativity and aesthetic value with man by way of Latin etymologies, and so Andreini, by virtue of her art, is a man.”⁶⁵

62. “E pure il Niente include in sé tutto che ciò ch’è possibile e tutto che ciò ch’è impossibile”, words by Luigi Manizini, 1634, translated to English by Mauro Calcagno, 2003, p. 468.

63. MacNeil, Anne *Music and women of the commedia dell’arte in the late sixteenth century*, Oxford Univ. Press, 2003, p. 125.

64. Ibid, 125.

65. Ibid, 125.

MIND

“By bringing together humanistic ideas and aesthetic values, her madness on stage made space for it all...”

CHORUS of OTHER

“...playing at the boundary of decorum and excess.”⁶⁶

CHORUS of OTHER

“...you speak extemporaneously, [...] with such richness and fullness that, when nothing can be added, nothing remains unaddressed – with such gestures that I could imagine your fingers themselves were speaking – with such a voice that I could suppose that the harmony of the Sirens sang within you – with such propriety and, finally, success, that by your nod and authority, you can hold the reins of a full theatre.”⁶⁷

The Singer appears as

a soldier

embodied by MIND, VOICE & BODY

VOICE

*Guerrieri, all'armi, all'armi;
All'armi, dico, all'armi,
Ove stolti fuggite?⁶⁸*

66. Ibid, 125.

67. Ibid, 311.

68. Warriors, to arms, to arms; / To arms, I say, to arms. / Where are you fleeing fools? (Deidamia's mad scene has been translated from Italian to English by Ellen Rosand, unless otherwise mentioned. See, Rosand, 1992, pp. 246–247). I am grateful to Prof. Lorenzo Bianconi for providing me with his transcription of the music score of Deidamia's mad scene.

MIND

*I am dressed. Ready for war.
In consonance, I sound like a trumpet of war.*

VOICE

Guerrieri, all'armi, all'armi;

MIND

*Ready to use my weapons.
And I call for you all. Women. Follow me. Come on.
Where are you going? Don't go away. Come along.
O God, you are so girly and so foolish
Look at me.
As a man, I am ready.
Dressed in a male costume.
As a real soldier I am dressed for the battle.
Ready for a battle of words and gestures.
A rhetorical battle.
I know this game.
A game of male authority,
But I have my secret weapon that none of them can use.
Only my strength can move my sword.
Come on. Listen. It is time for us all to move on.
Scream, shout and make noise.*

VOICE

Armi, all'armi, ALLARMI, ALLARMI, all'armi!!!

MIND

*Noise! To arms!
Fight for something better.
For something real and important.
Fight now and for the moment of action.*

In action.

(Laughing to herself)

Am I not clear?

Perhaps not.

But I do understand myself.

That is a key.

And I am convinced my words are the right ones.

You may choose for yourself.

Choose the ones you find the best,

The most touching, or why not,

The ones that makes you more upset,

Because they don't make any sense at all.

That is in fact the whole point.

I know every word I utter,

Every one of them carefully selected.

Selected,... yes, that is the word I like to use.

And I repeat them again and again...

*RepeatandREPEATANDREPEATANDREPEEATEVENLOUDER
ANDLOUDERANDLOUDERANDLOUDER*

That makes sense

CHORUS of OTHER

“Io di te canto più forte

Perche amo più di tè,

Perche amo più di tè,

Chi risente un mal di morte

Più chi può

Più chi può grida mercè

Più chi può grida mercè.”⁶⁹

69. In a dialogue between the Italian and French Music, “*Gentil Musica Francese...*” (composed by Jean-Baptiste Lully for his *Ballet de La Raillerie* in 1659), the Italian Music proclaims these words: *I sing louder than you, since I love more than you. The one who feels the pain of death, cries loudest for mercy.* (Translation to English my own).

VOICE

La fiera d'Erimanto,

L'Erinne Acarontea,

Il Piton di Tessaglia,

La Vipera Lernea,

Ci sfidono à battaglia ⁷⁰

MIND

Ha ha, they are all there.

Senseless phrases.

One looking worse than the other.

Monsters of men – powerful men.

Words.

Controlled, stiff and correct.

Should we play their game?

Yes, lets go to war and pretend we believe in every word they say.

VOICE

Mugge il Toro di Pindo,

Rugge il Nemeo Leone,

Udite, udite Cerbero che latra.⁷¹

MIND

Where is the truth in this?

The truth is in my sound.

What about if I continue in Swedish?

Would that make more sense?

Ja, varför inte?

Ni förstår... att jag älskar pesto!

Ha ha... Det är fulkomligt sant!

Den intensive kombinationen av basilika, vitlök, parmesan och...

Nej. Jag vet. Detta hör inte hit. Men vansinnigt ärlig får jag vara.

70. The wild beast of Erymanthus, / the Acarontean fury / the python of Thessaly / the Lernean hydra / challenge us to a fight.

71. The bull of Pindus bellows, / The Nemean lion howls; / Listen, listen to Cerberus who barks.

Och jag talar om något som jag fullkomligt ÄLSKAR!
 Och om jag pratar svenska
 Så är det inte alla som förstår,
 Utan lyssnar till mitt tonfall.
 Ja, ordet pesto förstås säkert.
 Det ordet känner väl världen till vid det här laget.
 Men i ett slag, in a battle, skulle man mycket väl kunna göra pesto av varandra.
 Att slå varandra i bitar. Hugga varandra i bitar.
 Jag förstå mat, men inte krig.
 Helt enkelt.
 Krig, en manlig vansinnesakt.
 No...
 No...?
 Je vais continuer en française...
 Vous comprenez pas?
 The language doesn't make any difference.
 The sound is what counts. Yes.
 The accent and the mad way in which I claim I am right.
 Only if I know what I say
 And mean every word of it.
 I tell a truth.
 I tell a lie
 Never be sure.
 Or be sure, you know the truth yourself.
 The truth is NOW!

CHORUS of OTHER

“...madness must take into account only the present and not the past or the future, therefore it must be based on the single word and not on the sense of the phrase; when, therefore, war is mentioned, it will be necessary to imitate war, when peace, peace, when death, death, and so on. And because the transformations and their imitation happen in the shortest space of time, the person who takes the principal part, which should arouse both laughter and compassion, must be a woman who can lay aside every sort of imitation except that which is dictated by the word that she is saying.”⁷²

72. The words are by Claudio Monteverdi, translated by Ellen Rosand in: Rosand, 1992, p. 244.

CHORUS of OTHER explaining the word *Pazzia*

“Pazzia, folly, fondness, madness, dotage”⁷³

CHORUS of OTHER

Ciacconna (sounding reference)⁷⁴

MIND

Madness...PAZZIA... FOLLY...FEMALE FOLLY...

CHORUS of OTHER explaining the word *Fondness*

“Warm affection or liking. See synonyms at love
 A strong inclination or preference; a taste: a fondness for sweets; a fondness for travel.
 Archaic: Naive trustfulness; credulity.”⁷⁵

MIND

I say a word, and believe in what I say.
 Could it be so simple, and still, in this I will be considered mad?
 If I say a word and PRETEND to mean what I say, how can that be sane?
 Being naturally truthful would be my preference.
 By imitating something which I don't believe in at all,
 And yet to be truthful, would it mean that I need to trust in my dishonesty?

CHORUS of OTHER

Ciacconna (sounding reference)⁷⁶

73. Searching for the word *Pazzia* in Florio, 1611.

74. Lislevand, Rolf *Nuove Musiche*, ECM Record GmbH, 2006, track 16, *Ciacconna*.

75. Searching for the word *fondness* <http://www.answers.com/topic/fondness> (June, 2010).

76. Lislevand, 2006.

MIND

*It sounds mad.
The melody comes again and again.
Repeated, but slightly changed every time.
Decorated.
Ornamented.
Illustrated in more and stronger colors.
Overdone perhaps
But real in every new sound.*

CHORUS of OTHER

Ciaconna (sounding reference)⁷⁷

MIND

*La Finta Pazza,
The False Mad.
What would be the opposite?
The Honestly Clear and Sane?
Immediately I see both male and female images.
Both in one.
Just like in my dress.
Male and female.
Sane and mad in the same person.
The key is to know where the boundaries are
Between the two extremes.
Or to know
That there are no boundaries to remember.
Just to be.*

77. Ibid.

CHORUS of OTHER

*“What melodies are these?
Tell me. New Theaters,
So many scenes
Appearing in Sciro?
Also I would like to
Work beside,
Since I don’t lack the art
That of a single whistle
Changing in hundred different variations of stage settings
Of feigned seas, of erected mountains,
Beautiful shows of the Skies and of the Stars:
Openings for Hell, and on the graveled strand,
Shaping hell and roasting.”⁷⁸*

CHORUS of OTHER

“An easy step it is from feigned follies to true madness”⁷⁹

CHORUS of OTHER

*“Today, the stars,
After much work, are set up bright and new,
The Architecture rains,
And also I would like to explain,
Excellent and beautiful machinery,
Risking to break the necks of hundreds of Orfei.”⁸⁰*

78. Deidamia’s words in the middle of the third act, second scene, libretto *La Finta Pazza*, p. 75: *Che melodie son queste? / Ditemi? che Novissimi Teatri, / Che numerose scene, / S’apparechiano in Sciro? / Voglio esser ancor’io / Del faticare à parte; / Ch’a me non manca l’arte ad un sol fischio / Di cento variar scenici aspetti, / Finger mari, erger monti, e mostre belle, / Far di Cieli, e di Stelle: / D’aprir l’Inferno, e nel tartareo lito / Formar Stige, e Cocito.* (Translations to English my own in footnotes 78–82. My aim is not to be poetic, but to find an honest meaning of every word).

79. Nodrice replies to Deidamia’s words just presented here above, and their dialogue continues until note 82. *Un facile passaggio / E’da finte follie / a veraci pazzie.*

80. Deidamia: *Hoggi, che da le stelle, / Per tante opere ornar illustri, e nove, / L’architettura pi-ove, / Anch’io spiegar vorrei / Macchine eccelse, e belle / Da far romper il collo à cento Orfei.*

CHORUS of OTHER

*“Rimes, machinery and singing
Are acts that makes
The wisest Prophetess mad:
And if you add
Amorous affect,
There is no wonder
If this woman
Has lost her reason.”*⁸¹

CHORUS of OTHER

*“Let’s try, let’s try:
Help me on with the wings,
Tie them tight, tight,
I want with eager courage
To fly along the roads of the wind.”*⁸²

MIND

*There she goes, Deidamia.
Bye bye, and see you soon!
She came out of nowhere,
Straight on to the stage.
Like she left, just right now.
With the winds.
What do I know about winds?
That they can be strong,
That they make waves.
That they make me dizzy.
That they come out of nowhere,
Followed by clouds.*

81. Nodrice: Versi, macchine, e canto / Son atti à render pazze / Le più saggie Sibille: e se v’aggiungi / Un amoroso affetto, / Meraviglia non è, se da costei / Partito è l’intelletto.

82. Deidamia: Alla prova, alla prova: / Applicatemi l’ali, / Strette, strette, annodatele, ch’io voglio / Con feroce ardimento / Varcate le vie del vento.

*Isn’t THAT amazing!
The warrior became HERSELF.
Herself – the Singer in her own shoes.
Shoes made for her feet.
Shoes fitted and formed in the softest leather.
Look at my feet.
Are they not amazing?
High up in the air I raise my head.
On golden heels.
Isn’t it amazing?
Imitated and made like in the old times,
But made new, for now.
I embody history in golden shoes.*

VOICE

*Volete, che v’insegni,
Ingeniosi discepoli di Marte,
A brandir l’asta, à maneggiar lo scudo?
A ferir, a vibrar, di punta, in giro,
Di dritto, e di rovescio,
Questa fulminea spada
A farsi piazza e strada
Sovra i corpi nemici? Ecco un fendente
Come in testa si dona.*⁸³

MIND

*Ha, ha ha...
Don’t you follow me?
Here, look here. Yes, up here.
No, I mean down here. Look at that. Follow my hand. Puff!
All gone! Where did it go...?*

83. Should I teach you, / resourceful disciples of Mars, / to brandish your lances, to handle your shields? / To wound, to wield head on, in motion / frontwards, backwards, / this flashing sword? / To clear a place and path / over enemy bodies? Here’s a downward stroke / to be given in the head.

*Oh, right in your chest.
I am so sorry, I didn't mean to hit so hard.
My tongue is fast and I know
How to twist it around in my mouth.
Like a snake, I am ready to hit.
Or like a scorpion.
Stinging.
My words hit you as hard as a stone.
You trained me to speak and to sing,
And now you found your new master.
I stand here in front of you.
Follow me!
Stand straight in a line!
Noses up, and feet on the ground.
Don't forget to let the neck to be free,
And to let the back to be long and wide!*

VOICE

*Sù, sù stringete le file,
Formate lo squadrone,
Abbassate le picche.
Soldato dormiglione,
Camerata d'Acchille,
Destati, destati ch'il nemico
Di qui poco è lontano.*

*Armi, armi, armi, armi alla mano,
Armi alla mano,
Armi, armi, armi, armi alla mano
Armi, armi, armi, armi alla mano.⁸⁴*

In this moment the soldier becomes a beautiful woman. Her hand gestures as if she is holding a sword.

84. Come, tighten the lines, / form a squadron, / lower the swords; / Sleepy soldier / Achilles's comrade / wake up, for the enemy / is little distant from here. / Arms, arms, arms in hand.

Helen of Troy

VOICE

*Fermate, o là, fermate.
Oh Dio, silenzio, oh Dio
Tacete, homai, tacete,
Chetatevi, chetatevi, che chiede
Il traditor perdono.
Della schernita fede.
Schernita, della schernita fede.⁸⁵*

MIND

*Look up,
See your master.
A woman makes your tongues silent.
Like a God I reign.
Silence at last.
Listen to the wind.
And look, there flies Deidamia,
High above. She waves to us and laughs.
In silence.
The soldier speaks to you through me.
He asks you kindly to forgive him
For becoming a woman.
Though proud he stands here inside me.
Proud to be me,
To be myself.
I tell a lie when I ask forgiveness.
But I tell it well
And you will think I am honest.
Think whatever you want.
Listen to her voice.
And to your own.
She tells her true name.*

85. Stop, hey, stop / Oh god, silence, oh god, / be still now, be still. / Hush, hush, for / the traitor asks pardon / for his betrayal.

VOICE

Elena⁸⁶ bella io sono,
 Tu Paride Troiano
 Sù, rapiscimi sù, Ladro melenso,
 Stendi, stendi,
 Stendi stedi la mano.
 Tu picchi? Ti rannicchi? T'incrocicchi?⁸⁷

MIND

I am here.
 I am real.
 Look at me.
 Take my hand.
 What happens?
 Are you not feeling well?
 You fall over? You shrink?
 Is it the power of my hand that makes you fall?
 Are YOU afraid?
 Or do you only want to be left alone?
 I thought you wanted ME, La Belle Helen!?
 I wanted you and no one else. Not even a God.

VOICE

Giacer io volea teco,
 E lasciar il mio Giove,
 Ch'ogni notte stà meco,
 Ma stanco dal lunghissimo camino,

86. Searching for meanings of the name HELEN: Gender: Feminine, Usage: English, Greek Mythology (Anglicized), Pronounced: HEL-ən (English) [key] English form of the Greek Ἑλένη (Helene), probably from Greek ἑλένη (helene) torch or corposant, or possibly related to σελήνη (selene) moon. In Greek mythology Helen was the daughter of Zeus and Leda, whose kidnapping by Paris was the cause of the Trojan War. <http://www.behindthename.com/name/Helen> (1 February, 2011).

87. I am beautiful Helen, / You Trojan Paris, / Come, carry me off, come stupid crook, / Extend, extend your hand. / You hit yourself? you crouch? you crisscross?

Ch'èi fà dal cielo in terra,
 Mi riesce sovente il gran tonante
 Un sonnacchioso Amante.⁸⁸

MIND

Yes, I wanted to be with you.
 Not to be seen with a God.
 I wanted human love.
 And I thought he, the GOD,
 Would be something out of this world.
 Something amazing.
 But I was cheated.
 The love I craved he couldn't give me.
 Not at all.
 He turned weak in private.
 No power left for anything at all.
 Couldn't give me pleasure, like you.
 He fell a sleep, like a log,
 And turned into NOTHING.
 So tell me the truth.
 Do you love me?

With these words Deidamia is transformed into

the abandoned lover

VOICE

Deh, dimmi, dimmi il vero,
 Se lo dicesti mai:
 Che fissa pecoraggine ti assale?
 Di che ti maravigli?
 Cutrettola, Fringuello,

88. I wanted to lie with you / and leave my Jove / who stays with me every night / but tired out from the long journey / that he makes from heaven to earth, / the great thunderer often turns out to be / a sluggish lover.

*Oca, Frusone, Barbaggianni, Babusso:*⁸⁹

MIND

*I don't want to hear, I don't want to hear!!!
No no no no... don't tell me...
Oh,...well...
Tell me then, tell me. I can't wait.
Don't keep me waiting.
Oh, come on.
Tell me the truth.
God, you are worse, than God himself!
Goodness me.
I cant believe I am soooooo unlucky?!!!*

VOICE

*Non sò, per quale influsso,
Nèmiei segreti amori,
Urto ogn'ora in soggetti
Più stolidi, e peggiori?
Non si può più parlare,*⁹⁰

MIND

*No point to say a word.
I am surprised though.
At first there were words.
That was the truth then.
I had to learn how to declaim.
You gave me compliments on my performances.
I made it your way.
But then when I knew how to speak,*

89. Alas, tell me, tell me the truth, / if ever you told it, / what fixed stupidity assails you? / Why are you surprised? / Yellow wagtail, chaffinch, goose, hawfinch / Barn owl, idiot,
90. I don't know from what planetary influence / in my secret loves / I collide always with subjects / ever duller and worse? / One can't speak anymore.

*You were all so taken by wonder.
I remained the only one knowing how to talk.
You had all lost your tongues!
So strange!?*

VOICE

*Ognun, à quell ch'io sento
Hoggi mi vuol glossare,
Mi vuol far il comento,
A stride quiete, dunque,
Ad intendersi à cenni,
Alla muta, alla muta,
pronta man, occhio presto,
Quel che diria la lingua,
Quel che diria la lingua,
Esprima il gesto.*⁹¹

MIND

*Your spoke with your hands.
Made your hands your tongues.
Now I speak it with my hands.
I talk with my whole body.
I remember the touch.
The touch of your cheek close to mine.
Your back next to mine.
Your hand in mine.
We were two, but one.
Oh Teseo.
I drown, in my own sorrow.
Oh... no, help, help HELP!!!! HEHEEEELP!!!!*

91. Everyone, from what I hear, / wants to gloss me today, / to comment on me. / Let's be quiet, then / and communicate with signals, / mutely, mutely, / Ready hand, quick eye, / what the tongue would say / let the gesture explain...

VOICE

Aita, aita, aita.

Ohimè quest'onda, ohimè,

È l'ultima per mè.

Dunque pietade in voi non hà più luogo?

*Non vedete, chàffogo, affogo, affogo?*⁹²

MIND

It's the end.

Your touch and the gesture took me too far out.

The sea is deep

Now it will end. I will die.

I WILL DIE.

HEEELP ME SOMEONE!!!

VOICE

Ah sò ben io

Qual di racchiuso pianto al mesto core

*Fa lago al mio dolore.*⁹³

Verga tiranna ignobile

Recide altri papaveri;

Per questo io resto immobile,

tra voi sozzi cadaveri.

Il foco mesto ardetemi:

Il sepolcro apprestatemi,

Donne care,

Donne care, piangetemi,

*Pace all'alma, pace all'alma pregatemi.*⁹⁴

92. Help, help, help... / Alas, this wave, alas, / is the end for me. / Has pity no place in you then? / Don't you see I'm drowning?

93. Alas, I know too well / while the tears are coming to an end / at my heart / a lake is made out of pain. (my own translation).

94. Tyrannic, ignoble rod / cuts down tall poppies; / For this I remain stationary, / among you loathsome corpses. / The funeral fire, light for me; / Ready my sepulchre: / Dear women, weep for me. / Pray for the peace of my soul.

MIND

I will forever mourn,

Standing there, left on my own

In the field I will cry until my tears are all gone.

I will burn, be consumed by the flames.

In a grave I will be roasted.

Turning into ashes.

I will call for you before leaving.

Asking for your prayer.

Asking you to be close to me.

To caress me.

To look after me.

Slowly, slowly, I disappear, into another world.

Give me peace.

Give my soul peace

HELP ME!

I don't want to go.

You, my closest,

Come and help me.

HEEEEEELP

I don't want to loose myself.

HELP ME!!! HELP ME!!! HEEEEELP ME MY FRIENDS

...help me.....

VOICE

Son forzata, o vicini,

Il mio honor è perduto;

*Aiuto, aiuto, aiuto, amici, aiuto!*⁹⁵

95. I am being violated, o neighbors, / My honor is lost. / Help, friends, help.

MIND

*For some I am despised
 For others I come with something new.
 For some I am a scorned queen,
 For others I am a true victorious Queen.
 To myself a queen without a land,
 — a landless queen.
 A queen of NO-MAN-LAND.*

CHORUS of OTHER

“And if we turn to politics, you see that its aim is nothing else than increasing or augmenting the magnitude of the wonders of Nothing. If politics teaches us how to add to the greatness of one Prince, you’ll see in it a great master in annihilating the greatness of another one.”⁹⁹

MIND

*So then, I am all,
 And always a queen.
 So I will sound like a queen
 I will move like a queen.
 In all, I will act like a queen.*

CHORUS of OTHER

“ what makes Ottavia so unusual is not solely a result of her insistence on speaking rather than singing”¹⁰⁰

MIND

*If you despise my acts,
 Then allow me to be different.*

99. The words are by Marin Dall’Angelo from the discourse published in 1634, *Le Glorie dell Niente*, in: Calcagno, 2003, p. 470.

100. Heller, 2003, p. 153.

*By applying another mode of speaking,
 Moving and performing through an opera,
 I embody the essence of nothing.
 You want me not to speak, but to be silent.
 So I will speak in song.
 I will sing the flames of my heart;
 My fear for being alone;
 My anger for being wrongly treated;
 My love for the one I once loved;
 My hate for the one who stole your heart;
 My sorrow for having to leave.*

VOICE

*Disprezzata Regina
 Regina Regina disprezzata
 Disprezzata Regina del monarca Romano.*

affitta

VOICE

Afflitta afflitta moglie¹⁰¹

MIND

*I was your wife,
 How did that change?
 I trusted in you,
 Like I trust in my own words.
 And now,
 I lost trust in you,
 And in every word you speak.
 Your act has made me fall,
 As well in the trust of MYSELF.*

101. Wretched wife.

CHORUS of OTHER

“...the Incogniti aesthetics, [...] reveals a profound distrust of verbal language – words, in their view, are as unsubstantial as the outside world which they mirror and to which they refer.”¹⁰²

MIND

*If I can not trust in you or in myself,
What is then left?
Speaking singingly
Parlar cantando.
Cantar parlando.
Singing speakingly.
There are two sides.
In that I could trust, if I dare.
And in my affliction
I have two choices:
To lay down on the ground, never rising again.
Or to stand up, and walk out of my trouble.*

CHORUS of OTHER

“In contrast with the humanistic ideology predominant in the Renaissance, the author claims that the disciplines of the Trivium (grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric), far from empowering man in his search for knowledge, teach him nothing else than to embellish ‘those voices that serve only as midwives to the vain products of our imagination, delivering them perfect into the air in order to vanish into Nothing’.”¹⁰³

MIND

*So then I have nothing to loose.
After having learned to control
Through grammar, dialectic and rhetoric
I will now move towards a free will of expression.*

102. Calcagno, 2003, p. 471.

103. Ibid, p. 470.

*And this free will include total control
As well as total freedom.*

VOICE

*Afflitta...
(exploring control and freedom)*

MIND

*Ottavia, your voice came to me
Through the heavy silent reading room
In the old library in Venice.
You gave me a performance of consonants,
Spitted out of your body.
They made me close my eyes and only listen.
But who did I hear?
Who did I hear?*

CHORUS of OTHER

“Ottavia’s unique manner of expression is apparent in the nature of that recitative: a terse, angular, often colorless recitative, sometimes dissonant, other times forbiddingly consonant, but devoid of sensual chromaticism.”¹⁰⁴

Ottavia lends herself to “countless subtle variations. The result is a highly nuanced reading of Busenello’s text that easily accommodates Ottavia’s alternation between outspoken rebellion and stilted depression.”¹⁰⁵

MIND

*If the score made your voice look colorless
And devoid of chromaticism,
I didn’t hear that in you performance.
Chromaticism lay between the written notes.
They were invisible to the eye,*

104. Heller, 2003, p. 153.

105. Ibid, p. 154.

*Yet audible to any attentive ear.
They were sliding and drawing the contour
Of affliction, regret and pain.*

VOICE

Afflitta moglie

MIND

*I am trapped inside the prison of cotton and laces.
It pulls tight around my chest and it is impossible
To catch breath like I normally do.
God, it feels as if someone wants me to stop breathing all together.
Stop living freely.*

VOICE

*Disprezzata Regina,
Afflitta, afflitta afflitta moglie.*

MIND

*Just let me out. I need to be free.
Freed from all rules and restrictions of how
I should be and what I ought to do.
Free to be myself and just to fly
With my own wings.
High above all of you
Who think you own all power on this earth.*

che fò, ove son, che penso? che penso?

VOICE

*Che fò, ove son, che penso? Che penso?*¹⁰⁶

106. What should I do? Where am I? What do I think? What do I think?

MIND

*What?... Oh no... I shouldn't say
No, God I fear everything...
Freedom,
Is it worth it?
How could I even think about leaving?
My senses told me to follow my own voice,
Thoughts and desires,
And my way will be happy.
I will find real love one day and forget...
Yes, forget...
Forget something that once was important.
There are too many options.
Freedom scares me.
Where should I go? What direction?
Direction.
I should allow myself to be tall
And to be wide.
Space in between my ears and hips.
In fact in my prison,
In my corset I sense a freedom where I didn't sense it before.
My hips can move,
How strange, it is as if my hips connect to my jaw.
Freedom around my jaw
Means freedom around my hips.
But only if I keep thinking long and wide.
And if I think Queen, I grow long and wide.
I become the woman who owns the stage and the theater.
Yes, the entire the world.*

ò delle donne miserabil sesso

VOICE

*Ò delle donne miserabil sesso:*¹⁰⁷

107. Oh, women of a miserable sex.

MIND

*I pity you all.
 As I pity myself.
 Yes, it is true.
 We are neglected.
 But just because of the neglect,
 We should look out for something different.
 You, women on earth.
 I will pray for you and for all your daughters.
 I am also a woman, a slave destined to mourn my own life.
 Sob and cry, SOB and CRY!!!
 Cry out love, because I loved and now I am forgotten.
 Like words.
 Reduced into air.
 Into nothing.*

VOICE

*Se la natura, e'l cielo
 Libere ci produce,¹⁰⁸*

MIND

*Just like NATURE HERSELF is free do give new life.
 So will I.
 I can choose this meaning for my sound.
 But I am not hear to preach,
 I am here to cry
 I think:
 If life only would be like this freedom,
 Like the freedom of Nature
 but no...*

108. If nature and heaven sets us free, the marriage chains us as slaves. We conceive the man,

VOICE

*Il matrimonio, il matrimonio c'incatena serve.
 Se concepimo l'huomo
 O delle Donne miserabil sesso
 Al nostr'empio tiran formiam le membra,
 Allattiamo il carnefice crudele
 Che ci scarna, e ci svena,¹⁰⁹*

MIND

*No, I am born to nurture a monster at my breast.
 To give birth to A MONSTROUS MAN!!
 Il carnefice crudele
 THE CRUEL MEAT!
 He,
 He will suck milk from my side.
 That is our destiny.
 Oh... I am cold.
 I can't move.
 FROZEN...*

fabricar la morte partorir la morte

VOICE

*E siam costrette
 Per indegna sorte
 A noi medesme fabricar la morte.¹¹⁰*

MIND

*Frozen and freezing,
 I know that I am forced*

109. O miserable women. To our own tyrant we shape the limbs. We nurture the cruel torturer, who will flay us and let us bleed.

110. And we are constrained, by an outrageous fate, to create our own death.

*To create my own death.
To make my own death.
Make it out of steal or metal.
It makes me think about making a car
Or a set of knives in stainless steel,
No,
There is another version:*

VOICE

*E siam forzate
Per indegna sorte
À noi medesme partorir la morte.¹¹¹*

MIND

*Our destiny is to give birth to monsters.
To give birth to our own death.
I say these words with heavy throat,
Though I know
They mean nothing.
Its only a play.
A game of power, where I have the role of the lamenting woman.
The powerless and colorless woman
The sorrowful queen.
Please, will anyone put up the heating?
I can't move, the cold has frozen my heart.
It's as if all feeling have left me.
I am ignorant of any passion.
Cold and frigid.
I would need someone to hold me,
Caress me and warm my heart,
To the passions I once knew.*

111. And we are forced, by an outrageous fate, to give birth to our own death.

Nerone empio Nerone

MIND

Nerone, are you there?

VOICE

Nerone, Nerone empio Nerone¹¹²

MIND

*No sound.
But your name makes the blood heat in my body.
I will leave, if you just talk to me once more.
Where are you?
Where are you?
Alas, let me see you!*

VOICE

*Nerone, Nerone empio Nerone
Ò Dio ò Dio
Marito bestemmiato pur sempre
E maledetto dai cordoli mie
Dove ohimè dove sei?¹¹³*

in braccio di Poppea

MIND

Oh... so now I see you

112. Nero, wicked Nero.

113. Nero, wicked Nero, to God, farewell, forever cursed husband, cursed by my suffering.
Where, alas, where are you?

VOICE

*In braccio di Poppea
In braccio di Poppea, di Poppea tu dimori
Felice è godi, felice è godi,¹¹⁴*

MIND

*How could you?
Leave me for her?
A whore?
Is she what you want now?
Oh god!
OH GOD!
I feel disgusted...
I feel dirty...*

pianti miei miei martiri

VOICE

*E in tanto
Il frequente cader de pianti miei
Pur v'è quasi formando un diluvio di specchi,
In cui tu miri dentro alle tue delizie
I miei, i miei, i miei martiri.¹¹⁵*

MIND

*So all my tears will flow
And make a lake,
Where you can watch
My pain.
But why should you care?*

114. In the arms of Poppea, you are staying with Poppea. Enjoying happily.

115. While the continuous flow of my tears, almost forming a liquid mirror, in which your delights and my distresses are reflected.

*I mean Nothing to you.
I am alone.*

destin punir fulmini t'accuso t'incolpo

VOICE

*Destin, destin se stai là sù
Giove ascolta mi tù.¹¹⁶*

MIND

*I am calling for help,
Help from the Gods.
I pray,
Giove, please come and help me to punish*

VOICE

*Se per punir Nerone
Fulmini fulmini fulmini fulmini fulmini
Tu non hai,
D'impotenza t'accuso,
D'ingiustitia t'incolpo,¹¹⁷*

MIND

*If you don't come
I will revenge myself.
I will scream loud and make a noise.
I will accuse you for everything.
You will be the one to blame.
You, the great God of all men.
But incapable of ruling men.*

116. Fate, if you are up there, listen to me, Jupiter.

117. For punishing Nero, you haven't any thunderbolts, I will accuse you of impotence. Accuse you of injustice.

*They ignore you,
Like they ignore words, feelings and everything else.
If you don't set the world on fire
I will myself.
I feel the strength coming back
Through my hate,
My disgust
And my wish for revenge.*

mio lamento mio tormento

VOICE

*Ahi trapasso tropp'oltre, e me ne pento
Suprimo, e sepelisco
In taciturne angoscie
Il mio lamento.¹¹⁸*

MIND

*Oh, it took me too far,
The feeling of revenge.
I should not have...
For my own sake
I will say no more.
I will be quiet.
But my reaction came,
And will not be forgotten.
I know it stirred you all,
You came with me into
The hall of violence.
Let's take a break and close the door.
It means nothing in the end.
It is already forgotten.*

118. Ah, I have gone too far, and I repent. I will suppress and bury in silence my languish.

à Dio

MIND

*Leaving.
Never really belonging to a normal life.
To a life with a home and a kitchen table.
A common way of living.
Always leaving friends behind.
Always feeling guilty
For not being close as before
And keeping contact with the passed.
Sorrow of living away from family.
A feeling so sad that it hurts in me.
Painful.
A painful longing.
Longing and missing the land of birth.
The land where I was born*

*Longing and missing.
Memories comes to me.
Faces and landscapes,
I know my pain caused by longing.
Her sorrows I will never know.
Only mine.*

VOICE

À à à Dio Roma¹¹⁹

MIND

*A note a pause
A note a pause
A note a pause
I could just sing the letter A,*

119. Farewell, Rome.

*Give it strength and intensity,
 But the pauses inhibits me
 From forming a normal singing sound.
 With 'normal' I mean a sound
 Being placed on a specific tessitura.
 The note is indicated and composed
 On a specific place of course,
 Though in this context I see it
 More as an indication for me
 To perform the passion behind,
 Rather than the actual written note in the score.
 To God I go
 Farwell, my life,
 I will take leave,
 And long forever*

VOICE

*À à à Dio Patria
 À à à amici, amiiiiiiiIIIIIIiiici
 à Dio
 ammmmmmmmmiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii 120
 ccciiiiiiiiii*

MIND

*I am leaving you my friends.
 And I wont
 Come back.
 No, never. I wont see you faces any more,
 And I am drowning in my own sorrow.
 God, help me be strong. I turn to you.
 FRIEEEEEEENDS stay with me.
 Hold me and be with me.
 Oh God,*

120. Farewell my homeland, my friends o God, farewell friends.

VOICE & BODY

*A à à Dio Patria
 A à à amici, amiiiiiiiIIIIIIiiici*

vado

MIND

*On my way, I trust.
 I learn to trust.
 In the chromatic movement,
 I let myself go*

VOICE

*Vado à partir l'esiglio in pianti amari*¹²¹

MIND

*I am leaving.
 I have to raise myself up from the ground
 And be strong and bold.
 I will be exiled and I will cryyyyyyyyy bitter tears.
 In all this emotion, I see myself in a bubble, all alone.
 Like being in a emptiness
 Not really understanding what happens.
 It's quiet and I don't dare to stir.
 My tears come in silence.
 They tremble and again, intuitively,
 I alternate the sound of the tone,
 Like the motion of a wave.
 Like a really slow tremolo*

121. I am leaving for exile in bitter tears.

disperata

VOICE

*Navigo disperata disperata i sordid mari,*¹²²

MIND

*Hwe..... This cannot be stopped.
The waves grow
Into a storm.
And on top of it I sail fast and lost.
I have never been a sailor,
But I have been in high waves.
Out of control inside the strong force of a mighty sea.
I cry loud
But there is no chance the sea will hear my despair.
Even the loudest sound will be ignored.
The fury of a stronger force has become mad
And my being is again forgotten.*

CHORUS of OTHER

*“Excellent and divine maiden,
Whose voice and great appearance
Will make you loved everywhere,
I say a thousand times farewell!
I believe that on Neptune’s waters,
You will face no danger,
For if the winds and mutinous waves
wanted to tease you there,
your songs, your charms, your face, would soon calm the storm”*¹²³

122. I will navigate desperately across the deaf seas.

123. Words are by Jean Loret, in a poem dedicated to the young singer Anne Chabanceau de La Barre, Lettre Trente-Huitième, 29 Sept. 1652: *Je te dis mille fois adieu! / Je croy qu’aux climats de Neptune / Tu ne courras nulle fortune, / Car, si les vents ou flots mutins / Vouloient faire ille les badins / Tes chants, tes apas, ton vizage, / Auroient bien-tôt calmé l’orage.*

cor mio baciari mura

MIND

*If my voice can enchant the sea,
I will try to calm the waves.
I will ask the winds
to bring my name with love and kisses
back to the stonewalls of my home.*

VOICE

*L’aria che d’hora in hora riceverà i miei fiati,
Li porterà per nome del cor mio
À veder à baciari le patrie mura,*¹²⁴

MIND

*Air. Winds and breath.
I can hear them.
In fact it is breath from inside me.
It comes from inside and it travels out –
Towards my home.
Even my whispers are loud now.
Stronger than the storm inside me.
The sea has no chance any longer.
My tears are gone.
The sea is calm
My voice brings my heart
Towards anyone with ears.
The moment this happens I sense the spine.
There is a freedom leading right through me.
Every vertebra is floating on air and
Flexibility allows me to grow out of my body itself.
The words transforms to thoughts.*

124. The winds that from time to time receive my breath, brings the name of my heart, to see and to kiss the walls of my homeland.

*If I remain open to these thoughts
They have a direct impact on my physical directions.
I see:
The walls,
The house,
Where I slept;
Where I ate;
Where I bathed.
The garden where I played.
I can dream of these places.
And I will kiss everything.
There is a physical awareness in my mouth.
Of sweetness.
My lips tastes the word 'baciari' bbbbbb –
The space inside my mouth is round
Embracing and preparing
For the next vowel
— aaaaaaaciiiiiaaaaaaaar.*

io solinga pianti passi

VOICE

*Et io
Starò solinga*¹²⁵

MIND

*Me
Io
Self
Again I battle with who I am.
But here in this place it doesn't matter who I am.
Myself.
Self and alone.
Staying with the strong awareness of my spine,*

125. And I will remain alone.

*Creates a secure landscape for the voice to be in one place.
Not loud, not weak, just there.
I will stay there
On my own.
Aware of my rooted feet and my whole growing being.*

VOICE

*Alternando le mosse ai pianti, ai passi*¹²⁶

MIND

*Here I start to move from one side to the other.
In search of something.
Something I cannot see since my eyes are so full of tears.
Again, a mist.
The feet move anywhere,
But I don't know where.*

VOICE

*Insegnando pietade ai freddi sassi*¹²⁷

MIND

*In this state I can teach you to be vulnerable.
Look at me.
I am here even if I am weak.
You, cold stones, look at me.
It hurts, but I don't die of it.
I will live and I will feel alive.*

126. shifting my moves between tears and walking.

127. Teaching the cold stone to have mercy.

sacrilego duolo

VOICE

Remigate, remigate, remigate
Oggi mai perverse genti
Allontanarmi, allontanarmi ¹²⁸

MIND

Move, move, MOVE,
Don't just stay there.
ACT now.
Get me out of here.
Take me away from this cold and unfriendly place!!!
Yes, away. I want to leave.
Here is no love at all.
Just cold stones, ignoring any feeling.
Wanting to kill...
To disrupt life.
To disrupt any feelings.
To hurt.
It hurts me right into my sacred soul.

VOICE

Dà dà dà gl'amati lidi ¹²⁹

MIND

Yes, I said, far away from the shore
Out at open sea.
Sobbing, I am sobbing out these words.
D d d da
The D comes as a punch.

128. Row, row, row today, you perfidious men. Take me away, take me away.

129. From my beloved shores.

Gl – a soft movement at the back of the gum
Prepraing for Aaaaammmaaaati lidi.
I know of so many lovely sea shores.
Shores where I played as a child.
Shore on the other side of America.
The sound of waves hitting the rocks in the north;
Or shaping the stones on a shore in the Mediterranean Sea.
The familiar sounds of boats and playing children,
People calling for someone.

VOICE

Ahi, ahi, ahi sacrilego duolo,
Tù tù tù m'interdici il pianto
Quando lascio la Patria ¹³⁰

MIND

You steal, my holy soul.
I am so full of wounds.
The pain, the pain, the PAAIIIN,
It doesn't want to go away.
And you won't let me cry.
Can you not see my feelings?
Can you not feel yourself?
Or perhaps your feelings are too strong to face.
Are you listening to me at all?

VOICE

Interdici il pianto quando lascio la Patria
Ne stilar una lacrima poss'io
Mentre dico ai parenti e à Roma ¹³¹

130. Ah, ah, ah sacrilegious pain when I leave my home you forbid me to weep.

131. you forbid the tears when I leave my home, not even a tear may fall when I say to my family and to Rome.

MIND

No, you don't.
 So what is the point to try to convince you?
 I see you have decided.
 So I will cry for myself.
 Quando lascio la patria
 I need to say it slowly to understand.
 It seems like a foreign language.
 What, how, no, yes, no
 But yes, it is so.
 I will leave.
 And while I take farewell from my parents and family
 And from Rome
 Not one tear will fall.
 And I will say, farewell.
 A Dieu,
 With Gods will
 I go.

VOICE

Ne stilar una una lacrima poss'io
 Mentre dico ai parenti e à Roma
 À Dio.¹³²

132. not even a tear may fall when I say to my family and to Rome farewell.

Act II
 Finding *pure* voice through
 ornamentation, repetition, movement
 and improvisation

Scene I
 ARIANNA

VOICE uses the ornament *trillo*, while exploring the opening phrase of Lamento di Arianna

*Lasciatemi morire...*¹³³

MIND

The sound draws me
 Closer and closer
 To a source I can hear in the distance.
 I walk on a red line.
 Following the shape of the rocks.
 I cannot think of anything else
 Than your opens sounds,
 Open wounds,
 Of pain and sorrow.
 I feel close,
 But also foreign
 To the feelings you express.
 The sound confuses and confirms,

133. Let me die (translation to English: <http://www.wwnorton.com/college/music/hill/>, March 2011).

*I stand in the middle.
 I follow the line into the sound,
 And I find myself being.
 But what brought me here, really?
 Who brought me here?
 Myself?
 The place?
 Your voice?
 The score?
 What did I do to arrive here and now?
 I laugh and I cry.
 Now.
 And I want to understand.
 Or should I just stop asking?
 Lay down,
 Let go of all my thoughts.
 What do you bring me,
 You, Body from the Chorus of Other?
 Let us follow together.*

VOICE, BODY and a BODY from the CHORUS of OTHER

*Lasciatemi morire
 E che volete voi che mi conforte
 In così dura sorte,
 In così gran martire
 Lasciatemi morire,
 Lasciatemi morire.¹³⁴*

MIND

*My back rests against yours.
 Rests but not without energy.
 It is alive more than ever
 Sensing your motion,*

134. Let me die, let me die; and why do you want to comfort me in such a harsh fate, in such a great martyrdom? Let me die.

*Awake and aware.
 I see through my spine.
 We follow one another.
 I sound, you react.
 You lead and
 I follow you
 Into the next sound.
 I enjoy.
 You stretch your arms,
 I sigh,
 And shiver.
 The sigh grows into a cry.*

VOICE, BODY and a BODY from the CHORUS of OTHER continue to improvise

*Lasciatemi morire...
 O Teseo, o Teseo mio
 Si che mio ti vo' dir,
 Che mio pur sei
 Benche t'involi
 Ahi crudo
 A gli occhi miei.
 Volgiti Teseo mio,
 Vogiti Teseo
 Oh Dio¹³⁵*

MIND

*I arrive, and I see only the horizon.
 Sounds are embracing me.
 I am right inside
 You.
 Languish.*

135. Oh Theseus, oh my Theseus, although I want to call you mine more than you are really mine, although you have vanished, ah, cruel man! from my eyes. Come back, my Theseus, come back, Theseus, oh God!

*Your breath is in my neck
 This time you fly high above my head.
 Like a bird or a spirit
 Leaving my dead body.
 I embrace the ground
 And search for new energy to raise my head again.
 I call for you Teseo.
 I remember your kiss.
 Don't go,
 Don't go,
 Don't go,
 Don't leave my sight.
 Don't leave me
 Don't leave me
 ...or just go,
 Go away,
 Just leave!!!!*

VOICE alone

*Volgiti Teseo mio,
 Vogiti Teseo
 Oh Dio
 Volgiti indietro a rimarar colei,
 Che lasciat' ha per te la patria e' il regno
 E in questo arene ancora cibo di fere dispietat'è crude
 Lasciera l'ossa ignude.¹³⁶*

MIND

*Leave!
 Come back to me...
 I won't live without you.
 I left everything for you.*

136. Come back, my Theseus, come back, Theseus, oh God! Come back to see again she who gave up her homeland and reign for you, and on these sands, once more, you will leave the bare bones of foods for the wild beasts.

*Everything!!!!
 EVERYTHING!!!
 CAN YOU HEAR ME!
 EVERYTHING!
 AND NOW YOU LEAVE ME HERE
 To be consumed by evil.
 Alone!
 Alone to decide for my self.
 To live
 Or to die
 On my own?
 To stay on my own?
 Without a guide to comfort me
 When times are hard,
 Or to laugh with me in joyful moments.*

*Oh,
 If you could just see my thoughts...
 If you just knew...
 Here, on the cold rocks,
 I call for your attention
 Please listen to me!*

VOICE alone

*O Teseo,
 O Teseo mio
 Se tu sapessi, oh Dio
 Se tu sapessi, ohimè
 Come s'affanna la povera Arianna
 Forse forse pentito
 Rivelgeresti ancor la prora al lito.¹³⁷*

137. Oh Theseus, oh my Theseus, if you but knew, oh God! if you but knew, alas! how poor Arianna suffers, perhaps, perhaps you would repentant, and turn you ship's bow toward the shore.

MIND

When I say your name
 I see your face.
 Your eyes looking into mine.
 I see you.
 I see you.
 I see you
 I see my love.
 I see love and caresses...
 Yet you leave
 For glories elsewhere.
 Do you really think
 You can find a better love somewhere else?
 A more loving being next to your side,
 That would be ready to walk beside you
 Just like I have done.

I gave up my roots.
 I gave up my roots.
 I gave up my roots...
 I found you,
 Together we travelled.
 Together we created something new.
 Something that was ours.
 Something new and ours.
 Something new and only ours.

VOICE

Ma con laure serene
 Tu te ne vai felice
 Et io qui piango
 A te prepara Atene liete pompe superbe
 Et io rimango cibo di fere
 Insolitarie arene.
 Te l'uno e l'altro tuo vecchio parente stringerà lieto
 Et io più non vedròvvi

*O madre, o padre mio.*¹³⁸

MIND

Don't you care for what we found?
 Don't you care for what we found?
 No, I suppose not.
 Instead you search your own roots for happiness.
 Were you afraid perhaps?
 I look for excuses.
 But your friends and family,
 Are they more important to you
 Than me?
 So important that you cruelly could leave me like this,
 On a deserted beach,
 while sleeping?
 So mean of you.
 So careless,
 Careless,
 So careless,
 and so cruel.
 Where did trust go?
 Trust?
 Trust.
 A trust you so lovingly promised me!

VOICE, BODY and a BODY from the CHORUS of OTHER

Lasciatemi morire...

MIND

I lean and I fall.

138. But with soft breezes, you sail away happy; and I stay behind. For you Athens prepares a superb celebration, and I stay behind as food for beasts on the deserted sands. One and another old relative will happily embrace you, and I will no longer see you, oh mother, oh my father.

A fall
So strange,
A fall
That truly changes everything,
A fall
Allowing me to forget

VOICE, BODY and a BODY from the CHORUS of OTHER

Lasciatemi morire...

MIND

We start again.
I fall
Though this time I fall consciously towards you.
And then I grow
Into the fall.
I have to say it again and again:
Falling
Falling
Falling and growing
Because it means everything to VOICE
Since VOICE follows BODY
Together they grow into and out of a fall.
At the same time.
Letting go
And holding on.
Amazement in a detail.
An observation of something crucial
For everything that follows.
Your hand lifts me out of my own sorrow.
I see my own bewilderment
Around me everything is so different.
Where?
Where?
Where?

VOICE, BODY and a BODY of the Chorus of OTHER

Dove,
Dove è la fede
Che tanto mi giuravi?
Così ne l'alta fede
Tu mi ripon degl'avi?
Son queste le corone
Onde m'adorni il crine
Questi gli scettri sono,
Queste le gemme e gl'ori
Lasciarmi in abbandono
A fera che mi strazi e mi divori.¹³⁹

MIND

Did things make you feel better?
Things?
Objects!
I hate objects.
They cannot give me the joy of love.
I smiled when you gave me the crown.
I was happy,
But not for the thing in itself,
But for your act
Of love.
The bracelet was so beautiful,
But now,
Now,
Look at me,
It chained me to this island.
You chained me in the bracelet you gave me.
Chained me to these rocks.

139. Where, where is the promise that you swore to me? Thus, in heaven, you put me away with your ancestors? Are these the crowns with which you adorn my head? Are these the scepters, are these the jewels and the gold: are you leaving me abandoned to the beasts, which tear me apart and devour me?

*Chained me to death.
Alone
Yes,
I will die,
Here, for you.
Consumed and teared apart.
Broken and in pieces.*

VOICE, BODY and a BODY from the CHORUS of OTHER

*Son queste le corone
Onde m'adorni il crine
Questi gli scettri sono
Ahi Teseo, ahi Teseo mio
Lascierai tu morire
In van piangendo,
In van gridando aita
La misera Arianna
Chà te fidossi,
E ti dia gloria e vita.¹⁴⁰*

MIND

*I will cry, Teseo.
Teseo,
Teseo,
My love,
My looooOOOOOVE
I WILL SCREAM FOR MERCY
HEEEELP!!!!
HE HAS LEFT ME!!!
Poor me
Povera me
Povera me*

140. Are these the crowns with which you adorn my head? Are these the scepters, are these the jewels and the gold: are you leaving me abandoned to the beasts, which tear me apart and devour me?

*Poor.me...
...who trusted
Who trusted
Who trusted in you,
And in life.*

VOICE, BODY and a BODY from the CHORUS of OTHER

*Ahi che non pur rispondi
Ahi che più d'aspe' sord'a miei lamenti
O nemi o turbi o venti
Sommergetelo voi dentro a quell onde
Correte l'orchè ballene
E de le membra immonde
Empiete le voragine profonde.¹⁴¹*

MIND

*Where are you?
Are you not there any longer?
You don't answer!
Your don't care
Care
At AAAALLL
Not at all,
NOT AT ALL!!!
So suffer then,
Die,
Drown in the waters of the ocean.
Drown and die.
All powers of the sea
Will make sure you meet a cruel destiny.
Your own ocean, the ocean you trust.
Like that,*

141. Alas, he does not even respond! Alas, he is more deaf than a snake to my lamentation. Oh clouds, oh storms, o winds, sink him beneath those waves! Hurry, orcas and whales and with his impure body fill up the deepest abyss.

*You will perhaps understand
THE MEANING OF TRUST!
TRUST
Ha!
Something that does not exist!*

VOICE

*Che parlo,
Ahi che vaneggio
Misera ohimé, che chieggio?
O Teseo, o Teseo mio
Non son, non son quell io
Che i ferì detti sciolti
Parlò l'affanno mio,
Parlò il dolore.
Parlò la lingua sì
Ma non già'l core.¹⁴²*

MIND

*But what do I say?
Who am I,
Commanding the Gods,
To act?
I am so sorry, I am so sorry so sorry so sorry so sorry
Forgive me, please, forgive me
I did not mean
I did not want to say those horrible words
Or think such awful thoughts.
My heart
Could never...
Never
NEVER*

142. What am I saying, alas! How am I raving? Miserable, alas! What do I ask? Oh Theseus, oh my Theseus, I am not, I am not she; I am not she who releases those beasts: My anger was speaking, my sorrow was speaking, my tongue spoke, yes, but not my heart.

*BE SO CRUEL?!!
What happens to me?
Have I lost my senses?
Only death can end the fire of love.
End my fire of love,
Fire of love,
Fire of love.
I say it over and over,
Without understanding.
What does it mean?
Love?
Love!
I have lost trust
In love.*

VOICE

*Misera ancor da loco
A la tradita speme e non si spegne
Fra tanto scherno ancor d'amor il foco?
Spegni tu, morte o mai le fiamme indegne
O madre, o padre del'antico regno
Superbi albergi,
Ovèbbi d'or la cuna
O servi, o fidi amici, (ahi fato indegno)¹⁴³*

MIND

*Enough, enough, ENOUGH, ENOUGH
I still think of love and pain,
When I should turn away and leave it all behind.
I,
I,*

143. Wretch! I still give in to my betrayed hope, and it is not extinguished. Amidst such scorn still the fire of love? Extinguish, oh Death, those unworthy flames. Oh mother, oh father, oh lofty palaces of the ancient realm, where I was raised! Oh servants, oh faithful friends (alas, unworthy fate!).

*I will end this battle
 In victory.
 Die, flames of love,
 DIE and I will live on.
 Look at me,
 Look at me,
 Yes,
 Look here, at me.
 I was betrayed,
 In love.
 That is how life is.
 Betrayed of my trust.
 I need to see life anew.
 To live on,
 TO LIVE ON,
 TO GO ON AND LIVE AGAIN
 This is life!
 This is how it goes
 If love and trust takes over.
 If love and trust wins the battle.*

VOICE, BODY and a BODY from the CHORUS of OTHER

*Mirate, ove m'ha scorto empia fortuna
 Mirate, di che duol m'han fatto erede
 Lamor mio,
 A mia fede,
 E l'altrui inganno.
 Così va chi tropp'ama e troppo crede.¹⁴⁴*

MIND

*I hear you, voice,
 And I see,*

144. See where cruel fate has brought me! See the sorrow I have inherited from my love, my faithfulness, and the betrayal of another. That happens to her who loves too much and believes too much.

*I see my fate.
 I see that my fate will be to follow love.*

VOICE

*Naqui regina, e ne l'antica Creta
 Fu bel' il viver mio
 Mentre al ciel piacque
 Tempo è ch'io mora al mio voler t'acqueta.¹⁴⁵*

MIND

*A queen I was,
 A queen I will remain,
 I will stand here and listen to my fate,
 And if my fate is to die.
 I will die
 And leave in silence.*

VOICE

*Vivo
 Moro o vaneggio
 O pur son larva od ombra
 Lassa che far debb'io, che creder deggio?
 Ma che sian di Teseo chi m'assicura
 Ancor pensi nudrir gli aspri dolori
 Speranza iniqua ah mori
 Non cercar, Arianna altra ventura.¹⁴⁶*

145. I was born a queen, and in Crete of old my life was beautiful while it pleased heaven. It is time that I die. According to my wish I appease you.

146. Do I live, do I die, or am I delirious? Or am I merely a ghost or a shade? Alas! what shall I do, what shall I believe? But about Theseus? Who will reassure me? Are you still thinking of nurturing your bitter sorrow, your wretched hope? Ah, die; do not seek another destiny, Arianna.

MIND

Am I dead?
Or alive?
I am thrown between words and passions.
What do I trust?
Not in the words, not in passions.
Now, I am here.
That will be my answer.
Here in front of you.
Flesh and bones in front of you,
Singing on a stage.
Standing on a beach.
Singing to a rock,
Singing to my love.
Speaking my feelings,
Singing my passions.
Repeating to understand.
Ornamenting trust and love.
Moving with the waves of the sea.
Hearing the sounds of Arianna.
Now,
Here and Now.

VOICE, BODY and a BODY from the CHORUS of OTHER

Io sono, io sono contenta,
Scorgimi ov'è te piace
Ma che mi lasci e spregi
Or torni e mi raccolaga è folle speme
Non si lieve i pensier cangian i regi.

MIND

In this
I am content.
The facts are placed in front of me.
Even if he leaves me

And comes back again,
I need to trust right now.
To be what I am,
Here and now.
To follow the path and to live.
Here and now.

Scene 2
 ARIANE

VOICE

Rochers
Vous etes sourds
Vous n'avez rien de tender
Et sans vous ebranler
Vous m'écoutez icy
L'Ingrat dont je me plains
Est un rocher aussi,
Mais hélas il s'en fuit
Pour ne me pas entendre.¹⁴⁷

BODY, MIND and VOICE walk out through a door, passing houses and boats. They are following a path towards the sea. It is winter and the air is freezing cold. Like a siren the voice of Ariane seduces their motion.

VOICE

Rochers vous etes sourds...

147. Rocks you are deaf. You have nothing tender about you and untouched you listen to me here. The ungrateful one about whom I complain is also a rock, but, alas, he has fled in order not to listen to me. (Translation of Ariane's lament to English is my own. See also: <http://www.elibelgrano.org/recordings.html>, 1 February, 2011).

MIND

You,
 Rock,
 Over there,
 Yes,
 I point to you, not to myself.
 I don't want to talk about me
 Only you.
 What do you have
 That could possibly be measured
 With such greatness?
 You are firm,
 Solid and forever there.

I am weak,
 Moving,
 And not always here.
 Always on my way somewhere.
 Always in the air.
 Coming and going.
 Far away from stagnation.
 Never to be trusted.
 Not like you,
 A rock,
 Looking down at me from above.

VOICE searching for a way through words and sounds

Rochers vous etes sourds...

MIND

Nothing.
 Rien.
 You ignore me now.
 Ignore me.
 I think of ways to make you listen.

*Screaming and calling out loud would never help.
 Too vulgar,
 Too barbarous.
 To be ignored.
 But I know that you listen,
 Inside you.
 If I turn my voice around you,
 Lingering forever,
 Unpredictable.
 I will find a way.
 I won't let you escape,
 Even if that is what you intend to do.*

VOICE, BODY and a BODY from the CHORUS of OTHER

*Rochers vous etes sourds...
 Helas t'avoir aimé
 Toujours si tendrement
 Etoit une raison pour n'être plus aimée* ¹⁴⁸

VOICE mumbling on the rocks, then continues to sing alone

*Ces vœux que tu faisais
 Et don't j'étois charmée
 Que sont ils devenue
 Lache et perfide amant?* ¹⁴⁹

MIND

*Can you see?
 Can you remember?
 Long, long ago,
 When I first met you
 Your voice made me dream,*

148. Alas, I did love you always so tenderly. Was that a reason for not being loved anymore?

149. Those vows that you made and by which I was captivated what has become of them, you cowardly and false lover?

Your passion made me into a lake of love,
 You found love in me
 And we burned together, and every kiss...
 Was just like fire
 Dangerous, strong, painful, soft and close.
 Those charms we shared are still inside me.
 We walked together on that line,
 So pure, so fine.
 We knew we could walk above all troubles
 Because our love was pure and cared for.
 We gardened the flowers of our love
 Gave them water and shelter
 From all commotion around us.
 In our garden we were safe,
 Far away from the fields of wilderness
 Purified in a heaven of love.
 So why
 Did you leave?
 Why did you betray the harmony we shared?
 Was it not enough for you?
 What teased you?
 What teased you to open the gate
 And walk out of all I could give you?
 Did your desire for the love outside
 Become too heavy for you to bare?
 Was my tenderness not enough?
 Was my fire too weak?
 I tried to make you feel new in every word I said,
 In every thought I thought,
 In every sigh I sighed,
 In every tone I sang.
 I held your hand and looked at you.
 I teased your tongue to sing along with mine.
 I taught you new words.
 Was this perfection?
 Fulfillment?
 Yet lacking something?
 I call you betrayer, because you left me.

Your departure made me wonder
 Ask for answers.
 Was it your purpose
 To leave me with questions unanswered?
 In eternal wonder?
 Questioning forever
 The essence of life?

VOICE, BODY and a BODY from the CHORUS of OTHER

Rochers vous etes sourds...

MIND

O God,
 Why?
 Can I never expect to live again?
 Love again?
 Trust in life?
 Was your purpose to leave me in lovesickness forever?
 Do you not trust I could love someone else?
 Perhaps you know the answer.

VOICE

Rochers vous etes sourds...

VOICE and a VOICE from the CHORUS of OTHER ornamenting together¹⁵⁰

VOICE, BODY and a BODY from the CHORUS of OTHER

Rochers vous etes sourds...

150. Levy, Yasmin *La Juderia. Ladino & Flamenco*, Conncting Cultures Records & Publishing, 2005, track 9. *Keter* (Crown).

MIND

*I will always fly
 Searching for the end of the road
 Knowing I will never find it.
 But never giving up.
 Forever wondering
 Forever loving,
 Forever asking,
 Forever suffering,
 Always in pain,
 Always in love,
 Always in desire
 Boldly searching for truth.
 Sighing
 Slowly
 Sometimes laughing about the memories I care for,
 Sometimes remembering.
 Sometimes wanting to follow you out in the world.
 Travelling,
 Leaving my roots
 Do what you did
 The words are all I have left
 And when the words are gone
 The tones will remember every letter,
 Every consonant,
 Every utterance,
 Every suspension,
 And they will sound on their own.
 Pure.
 They will be lingering softly
 In the absence of everything else.*

VOICE

*...pour nêtre plus aimée.*¹⁵¹

151. An article based on the material in Act II has been published: Belgrano, Elisabeth *Sounding Arianna's Sorrow*, ArtMonitor, 9/2010, pp. 299–308.

Act III
 Performing *je-ne-sais-quoi*

Scene I
 ARMIDE
 (1664)

VOICE

Ah...

MIND

*Hold,
 Even longer,
 No I don't dare to go on,
 Pleasure of holding
 Fear of loosing
 Dizziness after holding...
 And finally setting down my feet on the ground.
 It is not really true,
 That I am in the air,
 Because I tell BODY to grow
 From my heels
 Into the soil.
 And at the same time to grow
 Into the air with all my spine.
 It is a joy of hanging on to what was,
 While dying to go on*

Forwards

Into what will be the next,

What follows.

But the essence is in the second just before

I dare to be.

I dare to be.

It is then I ask myself

What will come?

And what did I leave behind?

CHORUS of OTHER

“This in-between describes the actual moment of transformation, rather than a ‘something’ that transforms from one state of being to another, or from one position to another. Like that the content is empty and without details. It is a Nothingness.”¹⁵²

MIND

Yes, a sensation of peace,

Fullness,

The BODY strives to move backwards

While I, MIND, keep rushing into the future.

VOICE sits there in between,

Stretching itself to its limits.

Without hurting.

VOICE

Ah Rinaldo e dove sei

E dove sei?¹⁵³

152. “*Detta mitt-emellan beskriver själva övergångens skeende, snarare än ‘något’ som övergår från ett tillstånd till ett annat, eller från en position till en annan. På så vis är det tomt på innehåll och preciseringar. Det är en intighet.*” Cavalcante Schuback, 2006, p. 159. (Translation to English my own).

153. Ah Rinaldo, where are you? (Translation to English my own).

MIND

Where are you, my love?

Where can I find you?

Will I ever find you again?

eeeEEEEEEee is suspended forever...

Loosing itself into a sigh,

Deep down

The word sei sets off into the sky

Imitating the previous feeling of Being.

It makes a turn – a volt

Comes back to reality

Back to safe grounds,

Landing on both feet.

Full of grace.

Dove sei? – where are you?

The words are hers

But also mine.

She searches for him,

And I search for myself,

My whole self.

MIND, BODY and VOICE,

The feeling of fullness and NOTHING

Surprises and makes me ask the question:

What? Where? How?

An answer I find:

Je-ne-sais-quoi.

Je-ne-sais-quoi.

VOICE from the CHORUS of OTHER

“La maniere dont je chante

Exprime mieux ma langueur

Quand ce mal presse le cœur

*La voix est moins éclatante.*¹⁵⁴

MIND

*Slowly,
I climb
Up with one foot at a time,
Feet slightly touching one another.
Sneakingly moving on.
Moving like a cat
Ready to surprise.*

VOICE

*Pur da me partir potesti,
Partir potesti
Nel mio duol
Nei pianti miei
Posson far ch'il passo arresti
E questa è la mercè che a me tu dei.*¹⁵⁵

MIND

*When I finally arrive,
I still have to wait on neeeeel;
Stepping on to the small stone of miiiiio,
Before getting to duooooOOOOL
Where I dare
...to grow*

^{154.} *My manner of singing/expresses better my languishes;/ When the bad presses the heart/The voice is less shining.* In the dialogue between the French and the Italian Music (see Act I, page 58, footnote 69), the French Music ends the first phrase with the following words according to the libretto : *Mon chant fait voir par sa langueur / que ma peine est vive et pressante;/ Quand le mal attaque le cœur / on n'a pas la voix éclatante.* My own translation to English is: *My singing shows through languishes/ That my pain is alive and pressing;/ When something bad attacks the heart / The voice has no power to shine.* The words are different in the libretto and in the score.

^{155.} You could then leave me / Not even my suffering, neither my tears / can stop your steps. / And this is the mercy / that you give me.

...and grow

...and groooowwwwWWWWWWWinto POSSONFAAAAAAAR CH'IL PASSO ARRESTI.

To make it all extremely clear

A final statement brings the piece back to where it started with Ah!...

VOICE

*Ah Rinaldo, e dove sei;
E dove sei, e dove, e dove sei.*

MIND

*This comes to an end and the first chapter is closed.
Now, a new color is there,
In a faster pace,
With a more intense character.*

VOICE

*Ahi che sen vola lunghe da me.*¹⁵⁶

MIND

*Again, the exclamation is finding je-ne-sais-quoi,
Though this time much faster.
The last word ME is leaving me in wonder again.
Strong with a hint of accusation.
Indirectly.*

VOICE

*Ed io chi sola,
Ed io chi sola
Scherno rimango di rotta fé.*¹⁵⁷

^{156.} Ah, you are then flying far away from me.

^{157.} and I remain here alone / I remain ridiculous, after a broken promise.

MIND

Me,
 Alone,
 ME ALONE!
 Io qui sola.
Broken hope, broken hope, BROKEN HOPE,
Repeating, and repeating,
Even if it is said that it shouldn't happen in French Music.
Repetition.
But here, it is French,
And Italian.

VOICE

Ferma, ferma Rinaldo o Dio.
Se morta e la tua fe,
Morta son io.
Se morta e la tua fe,
Morta son io.
*Morta, morta son io.*¹⁵⁸

MIND

As if calling for the moment to freeze.
Ferma, stop, stop, stop...
Stay don't go,
Don't move!!!
My trust is in you,
Moment of je-ne-sais-quoi.
If you are gone,
I will die.
If you are dead,
I will go as well.
If trust is gone,
I will die.

158. Stay Rinaldo, Oh my God, / If your trust is dead / I am dead as well.

VOICE

Dunque il bel foco che t'arse gia
Ceduto ha'l loco, ceduto ha'l loco
*A duro ghiaccio di ferita*¹⁵⁹

MIND

Gone is the fire,
Even if fire fights to burn on,
But it is finished.
No way back.
The wound is cold as ice

VOICE

Deh torna,
Deh torna,
Idolo mio,
Se morta e la tua fe, morta son io.
Se morta e la tua fe, morta son io.
*Morta, morta son io.*¹⁶⁰

MIND

Come back, come back
My Idol,
My love,
My everything.
MY EVERYTHING...
And Nothing.
Again I will die,
If you are gone.
If you are gone I will die.

159. So the beautiful fire has already burned you / has left for the place / where the wound has become hard as ice.

160. Oh, come back, my love / If your trust is dead / I am dead as well.

VOICE

Ahi che spargo indarno gridi; ¹⁶¹

MIND

*How do I dare,
To cry out so loud?...
May I, or may I not?
But it is in vain, my cry,
I should be silent
Shouldn't I?*

VOICE

*Voi che soste ond'io mi moro
Del mio ben, del mio Tesoro
Ciechi amore custodi infidi.* ¹⁶²

MIND

*Through chromaticism I move down and up again as if not knowing what to do
And where to go...?
Should I cry or should I fight?*

VOICE

*Sparate, svanite, fuggite da me
Sparate, svanite, fuggite da me
Fuggite da me
Sparate, svanite, fuggite da me
Fuggite fuggite da me
Fuggite fuggite da me.* ¹⁶³

161. Ah, I cry out in vain.

162. you who remain will be part of my death / over my beloved, my treasure.

163. Disappear, go away, flee from me...

MIND

*Go away,
Leave me
I am fighting you away.
Let me be,
Just be, don't disturb me
Your fast notes, and your repetitions.
I don't want you to interrupt my
State of being.
I want to die on my own.
To die forever...
On my own.
And you, invisible powers,
Spirits of grace and fulfillment...*

VOICE

*E voi moli incantate
Ch'èl fuggitivo non arrestase il pie,
Ch'èl fuggitivo non arrestase il pie.* ¹⁶⁴

MIND

*You, who never want to stop,
But always want to be,
You, spirits of nothing
Leave me,
I cannot anymore.
Split in two, I can't go on.
I am too tired
Of growing.
Just leave!
I will try to sing the phrase till its end,
But then I am gone.
It is over.*

164. And you enchanted powers / that on the run won't put down your feet.

VOICE

Sparite, svanite, fuggite da me
Sparite, svanite, fuggite da me
Fuggite da me
Sparite, svanite, fuggite da me
Fuggite fuggite da me
Fuggite fuggite da me.

Scene 2
 ARMIDE
 (1686)

VOICE

Le perfide Renaud me fuit,
Tout perfide qu'il est mon lâche coeur le suit.
Il me laisse mourante,
Il veut que je perisse,
A regret je revoy la claret qui me luit;
L'horreur de l'éternelles Nuit
Cede à l'horreur de mon suplice.
Le perfide Renaud me fuit,
*Tout perfide qu'il est mon lâche coeur le suit.*¹⁶⁵

MIND

This time I know he has gone.
Ah...
He has left me and I know
It is no point to find him back.
But I pity myself.
I hate him and I hate myself.

165. The false Rinaldo flies from me; perfidious as he is, my cowardly heart follows him. He leaves me dying, he wants me to perish. In regret I see the light beckoning to me; the horror of eternal night, surrenders to the horror of my torment. The false Rinaldo has left me... (Translation to English my own).

Because he leaves me to die.
And I am boiling with anger and violence.
Darkness dwells in me,
As it dwells all around me.
I sense a light,
But I refuse to live.
I want to see only death.
Oh...
Renaud is gone,
And my heart goes with him.
And for this I curse myself.
And pity my whole being
Walking in.
Walking out.
Forth, back
And forth
Always the same patterns,
All has become bigger, and more oppressive,
But all has also a counter-balancing Other
Holding on tightly not to loose control.
It must be like that...

VOICE

Quand le Barbare estoit en ma puissance,
Que n'ay-je crû la Haine & la Vengeance?
Que n'ay-je suivy leurs transports.
Il mèschape,
Il s'ésloigne,
Il va quitter ces Bords,
Il brave l'enfer & ma Rage;
Il est déjà près du Rivage,
*Je faits pour m'y traisner d'inutiles effort.*¹⁶⁶

166. When the barbarian was in my power, why did I not trust in Hate and Vengeance? Why did I not follow their urgins? He escapes me, he retires, he leaves these shores. He defies Hell and my fury. He is already near the shore, my efforts to reach it are in vain.

MIND

*Why did I not listen?
 No point to ask.
 Their advice had to be heard,
 But the self had to go through the pain.
 It was destined to happen.
 He is gone, yes,
 I knew he would,
 But only now
 I can react.
 Forth and back and forth again
 Let him go you may say.
 And leave it.
 But no,
 The form has to be fulfilled.
 The form of languish.
 Eternal languish.
 Real languish.
 I fear the word: REAL,
 And still I use it, because I can't find another one.
 A better one.
 Real is in all.
 In every move.
 In the accusation,
 In love.
 Here on stage
 I live it all.
 In the pages of a score.*

VOICE

*Traître, atten...
 Je le tien...
 Je le tien son coeur perfide.
 Ah! Je l'immole à ma fureur,
 Je l'immole à ma fureur.
 Je le tiens... je le tiens son coeur perfide.*

*Ah! je l'immole à ma fureur,
 Je l'immole à ma fureur.¹⁶⁷*

MIND

*Betrayer.
 NOW! WAIT! Stop.
 I do dare to make you stop!
 To call out and to make you really stop now.
 Set down you feet at this moment.
 Not in the air.
 But in the second I say TRRRR-AI*

*The moment of silence
 After my first calling out
 Is of course affected.
 You turn your heads towards me
 To see what happened.
 What made me change?
 What made me scream so loud?!
 I am not always silent.
 I know how to make noise.
 I know how to scream and vibrate.*

VOICE

*Lasciatemi morire...
 Que dis-je?
 Où suis-je?
 Hélas! Infortunée Armide!
 Où t'emporte une aveugle erreur?¹⁶⁸*

167. Traitor, wait, I hold him, I hold his treacherous heart, Ah, I sacrifice him to my rage...

168. What am I saying? Where am I? Alas! Unfortunate Armide! Where does this blind error lead you?

VOICE from the CHORUS of OTHER

*Que dis-je?
Où suis-je?
Helas! Infortunée Armide!
Où t'emporte une aveugle erreur?*

ANOTHER VOICE from the CHORUS of OTHER

*Que dis-je?
Où suis-je?
Helas! Infortunée Armide!
Où t'emporte une aveugle erreur?*

MIND

*Purified from the vulgar?
Is that how one may describe my acts?
Voice – a tool for purified expression.
A colorful show for the critical ornamental massive thinking around me
Forward again...*

VOICE

*L'espoir de ma vengeance est le seul qui me reste.
Fuyez plaisirs, fuyez, perdez tous vos attraits.
Dmons détruisez ce palais
Fuyez plaisirs, fuyez, perdez tous vos attraits.
Dmons, demons, détruisez détruisez ce palais.
L'espoir de ma vengeance est le seul qui me reste.
Partons, & s'il se peut que mon amour funeste
Demeure ensevely...¹⁶⁹*

169. The hope of my revenge is all that remains to me. Fly pleasures, fly, loose all your charms. Demons, destroy this palace. Let us leave, and if it can be let my disastrous love remain buried...

MIND

*Only hope of revenge
Anger again, built up throughout the whole scene
Is now coming to an end.
And again, I will die,
Sacrifying my life
For the pleasure of languish
And beauty.
It is my duty
To die in agony
To embody the pleasures of pain.
To live on stage the acts of revenge and fury.
A madness destined to the actress,
Who in the end is mad on stage,
But sane in life in general.
What is then real?
Where does reality find its energy and drive?
In the steps back and forth,
And back, and forth again!*

VOICE

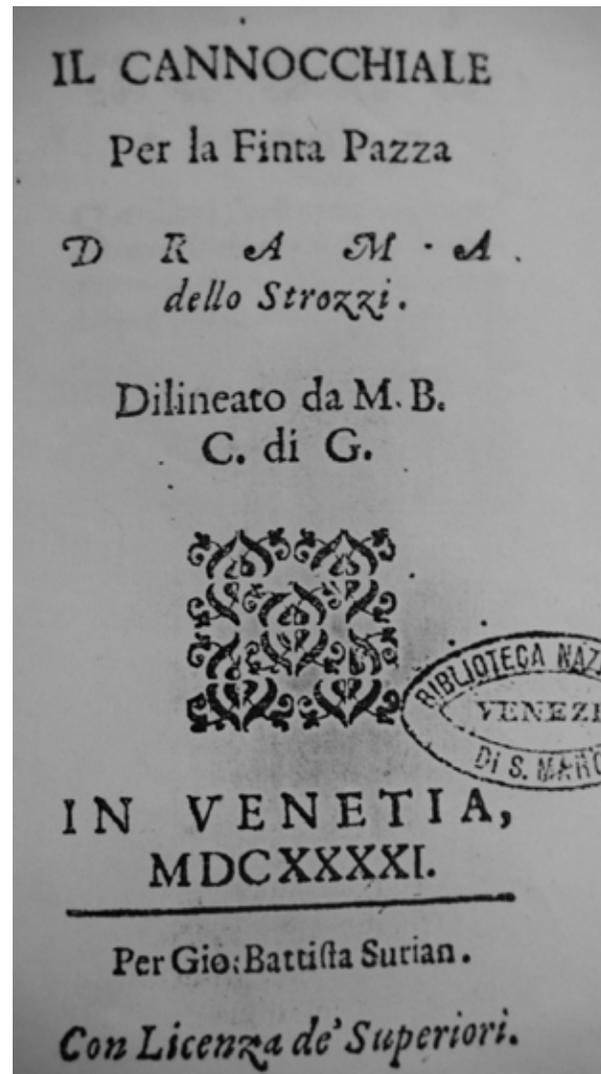
...dans ces lieux pour jamais.¹⁷⁰

CHORUS of the OTHER

(Instrumental)¹⁷¹

170. in this place forever.

171. The research opera ends its final act with the last measures of Lully's opera *Armide* (1686) from the following recording: *Airs Baroque Français*, Patricia Petibon, Les Folies Françaises, director Patrick Cohën-Akenine, EMI Records Ltd/Virgin Classics, 2001, track 9.



Part II
Il Cannocchiale

Act I

Embodying transformation

Scene I DEIDAMIA



Voice, where is your source?

Voice, where is your source?
Tell me,
From darkness,
Or from deep down below the neck and throat?
From above my belly?

Are you air?
Are you movement,
Or are you just a vibrating chord?

The tongue protects the entrance,
And the soft palate is your guard.

I can not see you,
But hear your sound and sense a breath,
Touching my skin the moment you sound.

Observing the inner images: a singer's method

'Imagine yourself...', her teacher said, and she had done so ever since.

At the beginning an image had been given to her in words and movements by someone else.

She had slowly developed an eye and sharpened her attention to absorb details that had previously been neglected or ignored. She had achieved an increased sensitivity towards everything she met, including both mental and physical experiences.

In her research she had expanded her collection of imagined images, by physically experiencing the recreated space of these imagined images.

The song, the melody or the vocal production was always part of the inspiration for her reflective method. In her research project the manuscript and the musical score were the primary points of departure.

Imagining images was perhaps nothing unique, but the Singer transformed the images into vocal movements, which moved the process to a different level. The images came alive vocally and could meet and touch an audience if successfully delivered and expressed.

Now, nobody told her to imagine any longer.

There was no more a need for spoken words.

Words were already clear in her mind, though abstract in the direct physical reality.

The effect of the unspoken image became physical. It touched the emotions and the muscles.

A vivid terrifying image tensed her whole body, and she would freeze. Become cold and absent. An indulging sweet image would make her whole *being* melt into the air.

Vanish.

Turn into no-thing.

A voice in the distance

Somewhere in the distance, she heard a sound.

The sound of a singing bird: pointed tones sometimes soft and longing, sometimes irritated and enervating, insisting and curious, equilibristic and performing, ugly and teasing. The sound was accompanied by other birds, but also the sound of a flowing river.¹⁷² An image appeared inside her. A landscape in nature – green, wild, untouched and unspoiled. A place left alone far away from human beings.

It was a nightingale's singing, performing a song from nature. His song was not beautiful, as normally she had imagined it to be. There was something unpredictable in his sound. Honesty, she said to herself. The sound was honest and direct. True. Pure. Perhaps one could call it *artless* as a critic once had said about her own singing. Not consciously manipulating, trying to touch. It was a sound speaking for itself, not caring about the opinions of others.

It was a continuous sound. But never the same. New in each moment. She could hear how the gurgling sounds came rolling out across the branch, ready to transform into a clear open beautiful tone. Teasingly.

Could she learn from this? Could she make her voice be inspired by a nightingale?

The nightingale and the Singer

Her father had heard him on his nightly bike rides to work. Just after crossing the bridge. She always remembered him talking about the nightingale's voice. Perhaps it was her first vivid memory of that bird. She imagined the picture of her father biking, enchanted by the sound, just around midnight. She felt the light of the moon and the salty taste of the sea was in her mouth. She had never seen the nightingale for real, with her own eyes. It remained a mystery bird.

Then the day came when she stepped into the garden situated right in the middle of Venice. It was a closed space, framed by a stone wall. An oasis. There time had lost its importance.

She had listened to the sound hiding in the green leaves above her head.

She had listened...

172. Rossignole Philomèle, Pierre Palengat / Jean C. Roché CD *Concert au fils de l'eau*, 2010.

*“To hear a musical monster: oh what a wonder,
one that is heard, yes, but only a little bit,
how it now breaks its voice, and now recovers,
now stops it, now twists it, now soft, now loud,
now murmurs lowly, now thins it,
now makes of sweet groppi a long chain,
which always, whether it scatters it or gathers it,
with the same melody it ties and loosens.”*¹⁷³

When talking about the nightingales singing in relation to the female voice, Calcagno refers to the poet Giovanbattista Marino's novel *L'Adone* from 1623. He tells about “the episode of a contest” between a poet (an abandoned lover) and a nightingale.

*“Marino creates a powerful narrative symbolizing the birth of written poetry out of the death of singing: it is necessary for the nightingale to die in order for the poet to start writing (earlier he only improvised). That is: if music and poetry are indeed sisters (as Marino claims at the beginning of the canto), the latter can exist only insofar as the former sacrifices her very essence, although music does survive within poetry as a memory, an absence (i.e., a nothing)”*¹⁷⁴

It was the image of the nightingale's death followed by a lament that followed the Singer. If the voice died, the words would still remain. She didn't agree that the voice would die. Voices she knew were there in her memory. Silent, but sounding at the same time.

Another description Calcagno provides was one by the Latin poet Pliny the Elder. Here the Singer almost felt her own throat working while she read the description of the nightingale's ornamentation:

*“the sound is given out with modulations, and now is drawn out into a long note with one continuous breath, now varied by managing the breath, now made staccato by checking it, linked together by prolonging it or carried on by holding it back; or it is suddenly lowered, and at times sinks into a mere murmur, loud, low, bass, treble, with trills, with long notes, modulated when this seems good – high, middle, low register.”*¹⁷⁵

173. Poem by Giovanbattista Marino from his novel *Adone*. In: Calcagno 2003, p. 477.

174. Ibid. p. 477–478.

175. Ibid. p. 479–480.

It was a lesson in natural singing, pointing out all the changes and jumps between specific registers, dynamics and characters.

She walked with the text of Calcagno into her studio, and sampled the sounds described in his paper, set to the words of Deidamia. The sounds made justice to madness.

Out there – on stage – performing her observations

“She silently observes”.¹⁷⁶

Two more steps and she would be out there, on stage. She was so close to this other world. She felt a thrill in her body. Secretly, behind the velvet curtain in the dark, she was herself – herself in her own privacy, a self that no audience would ever know unless she herself decided to share it with them. Out there she was an object for the crowd. An object observed, celebrated, envied, laughed at, adorned, loved and hated. Out there she transformed. She became the person or the emotion she found in herself and she merged with the moment without reflection.

In her performance she would meet a soldier, the beautiful Helen, and an abandoned lover. They were characters she had observed, imagined and listened to. She heard them in their own contexts. She knew them well. She knew their words and lines by heart. But how they would come out in the moment she spoke and sang their lines would differ from one time to another. It all depended on everything. And she had to be prepared to respond to her own acts, and her voice would be natural and artful at the same time.

Observing Nature & Art through scores of lamentation and madness

They were part of everything everywhere, Nature and Art. But how could she define them? Would Nature be pure? And Art – was it *something-from-outside-this-world*, something added and *not* pure?

Confused she looked into her score. It consisted of tearful notes and words in Italian and French. She had selected the scores based on simple curiosity about how the voice would sound in these two different languages and styles. The scores reflected music she loved. She adored the melancholy of a 17th century lament.

176. See page 46, footnote 41.

She had once considered creating a concert of laments, but reconsidering the outcome, she decided it was not a good idea. It would be too heavy and too sad. But a research project would be the perfect alternative. Four years of lamentation, sorrow, and tears. What a pleasure! Soon she saw the tight connection between the lamentation scene and the mad scene, and she decided her study would include both these types of scenes. In her vocal scores she would search for *pure voice*, based on reflection of Nature and Art, real and unreal, truth and falsity. She would search for her own *pure voice* in the vocal line of the 17th century.

By chance she had found a book of prints by Cesare Ripa and had started to look closer at the two ladies, Nature and Art¹⁷⁷. Soon she realized that these women were closer to her than she had imagined earlier. They were with her on stage, part of her acts, inside her being, like they were part of everything around her. Two figures with serious names, both of them powerful and enchanting, always expecting her to perform their qualities with pure honesty. They seemed familiar and foreign at the same time.

Watching them in secret from beside the stage, she wondered who they really were.

In her eyes they could be one and the same person. Nature-Art. A person with a set of different characteristics and attributes, never fully divided. They could even be herself in disguise.

177. Ripa, Cesare, *Iconologia*, A cura di Piero Buscaroli. Prefazione di Mario Praz, 1992, TEA S.p.A., Milano, 2008, (1618, 1992): Natura p. 311 & Arte p. 29. See images on the following page, Nature above and Art below.



Nature

“NATURE.

A naked woman, with swelling breasts full of milk, & with a vulture in her hand just like one will see in a medal of The Emperor Hadrian. Made to be a woman, naked, and dividing this principal actively and passively, actively noted with the breasts filled with milk, because she nurtures and sustains all things created, as with the breasts of a woman who nurtures and sustains the children. The vulture, the bird eager for the prey shows the other principal that little by little destroys all what is corrupted.”¹⁷⁸

Her mind translated the description of Nature:
Nature stood there on stage, naked – yes – looking into no-thing in particular. Knowing the audience was looking, but not really caring. The bird on her left arm was waiting. Expecting to meet death. Soon.
The Singer stretched her body in front of her working mirror. She looked herself straight in to her own eyes. Seriously. She observed a gaze filled with pride, ignorant of any other being. It was an unpleasant selfish being. Was that Nature in herself?

Back to Ripa’s image:

Nature’s whole being was like a curve. No signs of straight lines. There was a bend in every joint. Even the ground where she stood was bumpy and uneven. Even the leaves and branches on the small tree behind her presented themselves with a certain feeling of roundness. Her legs, arms, breasts, hair, fingers, hands and face – penetrating sweet round vibrations.

Suddenly the Singer knew that her voice would have to be the same, round, wavy, and all natural. The roundness had shaped earth and Nature. Her voice needed to find the same roundness. Wholeness. Curves.

“Allow the space in between your ears to grow”¹⁷⁹

Allow, allow, allow, let go and allow, and everything will change by itself.

178. “Donna ignuda, con le mammelle cariche di latte, & con un’avvoltoire in mano, come si vede in una Medaglia d’Adriano Imperatore. Si farà donna, & ignuda, e dividendosi questo principio in attivo e passivo, l’attivo si nota con le mammelle piene di latte perche nutrisce e sostiene tutte le cose create, come con le mammelle a donna nutrisce e sostiene i fanciulli. L’avvoltoire Uccello avidissimo di preda dimostra l’altro principio che strugge à poco à poco tutte le cose coruttibili.”, *ibid*, p. 311. (Translation to English my own).

179. Words she had learned to repeat to herself from Alexander Technique lessons.

By her thoughts and directions. Round and whole, allow, to grow, round and whole.

This mantra was always there, repeating itself in her head. Like a spell it gave impulses for her to react on.

Improvising on Lucia's madness

Recently, she had been part of a music drama production at the school. She had brought her own search for *pure voice* into the project and her aim had been to observe her own reaction of the emotions meeting her on stage. Her body had been alert to the other singers and their acts and she had improvised on their sounds and words. Strictly following any impulse coming to her attention.

She was free. Tremendously free. She had to let go of any evaluating and critical thought.

This letting-go had been her fear before. Of not being able to know what the outcome would be. Now, the freedom gave her the opportunity to experiment with mad sounds.

She had seen a knife on stage in the hand of a smiling woman.¹⁸⁰ She looked at the knife and saw the blood coming from the wound where the knife had cut deep, deep. Her voice tensed and stuttered, in pain and in shock. Coldness spread in all her veins and the fingers could almost not bend anymore. Her head tilted forward and her eyes were just on that weapon in the woman's hand. Then something made her look up. It was the voice of the other woman.

'Now, he is quiet' she sang with a smile on her face. The woman looked at the knife and smiled. She saw that the knife had made him calm, a victim, her husband. And she smiled.

The smile spread in her face and now she could only see the smile. It was an honest smile ignorant of any harmful acts, a smile that could go on and on, as if she existed inside a bubble ignorant of the rest of the world.

The Singer had watched the smiling woman and she started to laugh. She saw herself in that other woman. That was her role – to be the *emotional inside* of the other. Making her audience believe she was the woman on stage, while

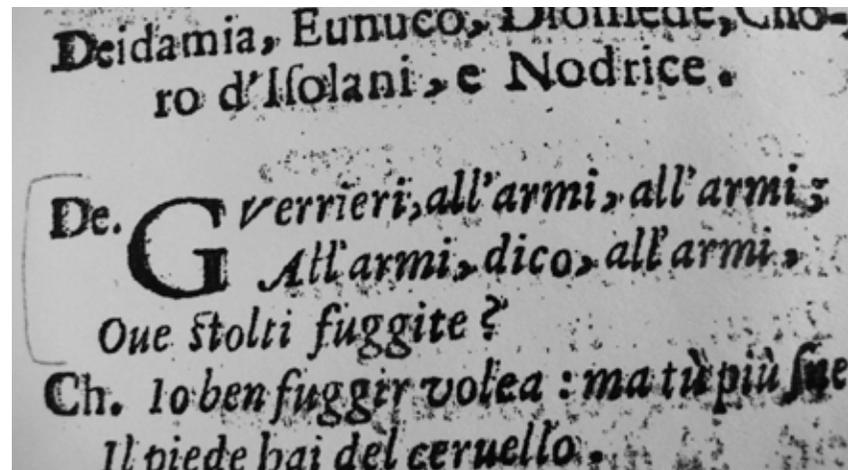
180. *Lucia möter Pajazzo* was a performance created and directed by Prof. Gunilla Gärdfeldt, at Academy of Music and Drama, October 2010. The Singer had performed an improvisation based on the Lucia's mad scene from Gaetano Donizetti's opera *Lucia di Lammermoor*, from 1835.

she was the woman she was in her own shoes. Confusing but simple at the same time. The movement of the other woman's hand in front of her was her own movement, and she moved her hand and looked at the invisible knife she was holding. She had taken over the other being and they were not two on stage any longer, but one. Her task was to exaggerate, to over-vocalize the moment and to ornament the smile of the other woman. Giggles, bubbles and sparkles filled her body. Prosecco. Prosecco from Venice. In a high tessitura her voice jumped into the air like the cork popping from the bottle. The laughter grew out of her body and filled the hall. She saw nothing else than the jumping high sound that came out of her and out of the smile.

Leaving intellect behind. She had done so in this experiment. Left reason and conscious reflection on the chair in the audience, from where she had started her move on to the stage. The stage had transformed her reasoning to unreason and it happened in the motion of bodies: moving hands, expressive facial muscles, vibrating vocal chords. These were sources for her own reactions.

*"To free the voice is to free the person, and each person is indivisibly mind and body. Since the sound of the voice is generated by physical processes, the inner muscles of the body must be free to receive the sensitive impulses from the brain that create speech. The natural voice is most perceptibly blocked and distorted by physical tension, but it also suffers from emotional blocks, intellectual blocks, aural blocks, spiritual blocks. All such obstacles are psycho-physical in nature, and once they are removed the voice is able to communicate the full range of human emotion and all the nuances of thought. Its limits lie only in the possible limits of talent, imagination or life experience."*¹⁸¹

181. Linklater, Kristin *Freeing the natural voice*. Drama Book Publishers, New York, 1976, p. 2.



The soldier (and a woman)

She walked straight out on stage. Firm and bold in her steps. Her spine grew long and she screamed at all the men resting on the ground.

She had met him many times, the soldier, on TV, on posters, on films, as sculpture, in books, in paintings. She knew how he looked, the soldier, ready for the fight, in full control.

Him.

And her.

In her eyes, male or female made no difference on stage at all.

She held the same power as him. Absolutely.

It might only be reflected a little different. It might seem as if she was out of control.

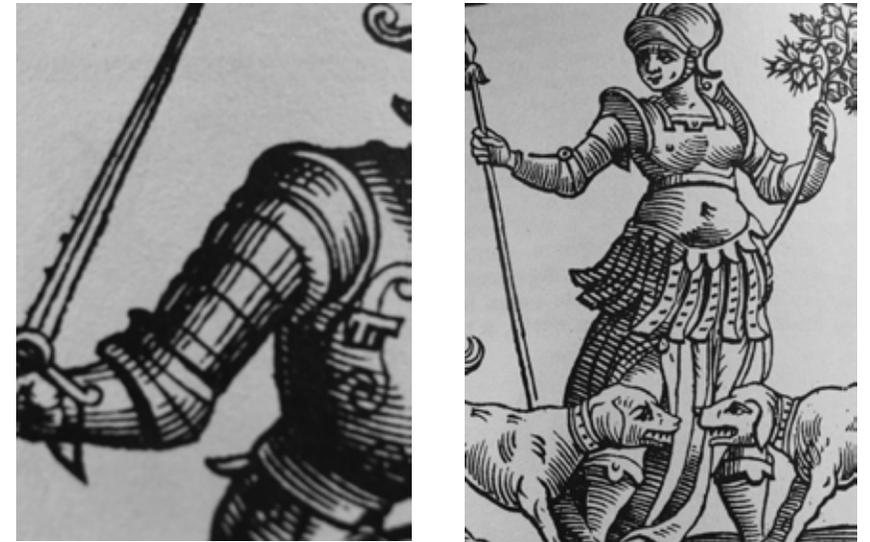
Being a woman in a costume from the 17th century.

But this was her point.

She was a woman and that was her weapon in the game for power.

She would seem insane, but her feigned insanity was her conscious intension.

She played a double game, a game with many faces.



Art & Nature – male & female – or all in one

Stepping in and out of personalities in a fast tempo seemed quite odd. How could mind follow throughout the transformation? What happened with the role? Who was she when the voice turned dark and unlike anything in her own personality? Male? Female? Or if she knew she was to enter the role of a man, what happened to her voice, to her body and to her thoughts?

All'armi, all'armi...

all'armi, all'armi

To arms to arms!

Make noise make noise!

The panic. Sound of fear, it could not be ignored,
the fear of a scared human being,
a female fear, a woman screaming as if haunted.

Male or female made no sense to her. She was a woman, with physical signs of a woman. She tried to imagine herself being haunted by men for being a woman. Placed and directed by powerful men to follow certain rules and regulations.

Before setting down her feet on stage she considered her next step.

Every act had been rehearsed and prepared for the moment of display.

Her every day habits were part of her act, but they have been polished and surveyed, colored and sharpened into the mold of the role she embodied.

Curiously she questioned the simple and consonant behavior in all what normally was expected to *be*. The line between Nature and Art was perhaps thinner today, than in the 17th century. The male act called for consonance and control. How could that be? Nature would equal control? That seemed to her to be an obvious paradox.

Nature is wild, she thought. Unpredictable. Unexpected. Always there, like the line of the horizon. Always right in between the sky and the ocean or the desert.

Art seemed to control and define.

Both opinions were pronounced in the Renaissance. Paradoxes and word games. Though truth could be found in the fact that the mass considered the female being to be less competent and should always be placed somewhere below in the male power structures.

In the performing spaces in Venice, these rules were challenged. These rules, which traditionally decided what was accepted and not, became the floor of the stage. A firm wooden floor stepped upon by women in golden high heeled shoes. A ground beautified by women in colorful dresses. A simple floor artfully exposed by a beam of light. A light that was there just to expose the gestures of a moaning human being. A floor essential to the drama since it provided the ground and a resistance. A floor made of granite, firm and hard and cold and ignorant.

The traditional static, controlling rules lost their absolute power during the enactment. Only movements became visible. Human movements were inspired by a meeting between Nature and Art – or let's say by facts and fantasies.

The Singer had decided to ignore the rules and rather to be alert of anything catching her mind. If it would be a gender issue she would follow it out in her arguments, but only if it was the most important topic. If not she would leave the gender aspect for others to expose. She would display her calculating mad mind through her performance. Set an issue in focus. Point it out. If her acts triggered any questions in her audience, she would have achieved her goals and she would respond to their concerns. If no questions appeared, and if none opposed her statements, her performance would not have fulfilled her hopes and aims. Her work would be left behind and quickly forgotten.

Rehearsing the Amazon on the roof

Loud, loud she cried into the sky. She has decided to see what *volume* would make of her voice.

She put her hand to her mouth and called the loudest she could.

She knew that volume made no difference, only the intensity of her motions. If she became too loud she might hurt the ears of someone, but she could not break a heart just with loudness. The scream meant something else. The scream meant intensity. The scream meant power and destruction. The scream meant that love was broken and forever dead. The scream meant fear and hate, also inside the one who screamed.

Her mouth touched the imagined trumpet and her breath transformed into a call, visible though invisible, sounding but silent. There she stood high up above all noise of the city. Looking out, searching for her army.

She remembered the image from Paris.

She had seen her from the bus window on her way towards the south side of the river. By chance her eyes turned upwards. On the roof of the old opera house a woman caught her sight. She was there trying to assemble her warriors, making people on the ground hear her melody. It was a melody aiming to touch the Gods in the sky. The female warrior had been standing there in between the ground and the sky.





The kabuki dancer

She had been visiting Kyoto, as a tourist.

She had walked along the river running right through the city.

On the shore she noticed a statue of a woman. It was a proud and powerful looking woman.

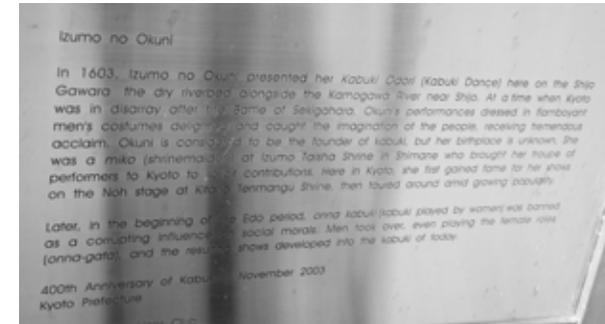
At the base of the statue she found the following inscription:

"Izumo no Okuni

In 1603, Izumo no Okuni presented her Kabuki Odori (Kabuki Dance) here on the Shijo Gawara the dry riverbed alongside the Kamogawa River near Shijo. At a time when Kyoto was in disarray after the Battle of Sekigahara, Okuni's performances dressed in flamboyant men's costumes delighted and caught the imagination of the people, receiving tremendous acclaim. Okuni is considered to be the founder of kabuki, but her birthplace is unknown. She was a miko (shrinemaideen) at Izumo Taisha Shrine in Shimane who brought her troupe of performers to Kyoto to solicit contributions. Here in Kyoto, she first gained fame for her shows on the Noh stage at Kitano Tenmangu Shrine, then toured around amid growing popularity.

Later, in the beginning of the Edo period, onna kabuki (kabuki played by women) was banned as a corrupting influence on social morals. Men took over, even playing the female roles (onna-gata), and the resulting shows developed into the kabuki of today.

*400th Anniversary of Kabuki, November 2003
Kyoto Prefecture..."*



What a coincidence. A woman performing in male clothes, being banned for "corrupting social morals" and replaced by male performers playing the female roles. It could have been a description of Anna Renzi, being one of the first female opera singers, banned by the Pope from Rome, replaced by male singers disguised as women. And the years when the performers had been active was amazingly close to one another, 1603 and 1641, with Izumo being active before Renzi.

She looked up at Izumo's face observing her head, directed with such dignity, power and boldness. Ignorant of any disruption, she handled her sword. Like a man would have done in the act of war.

The fan in the right hand balanced the sword in her left hand. These were two attributes confirming her ease in portraying both male and female acts. She performed without much reflection, enchanting the crowd with her steps and sounds. Burlesque and seductive was her appearance.

Izumo teased the Singer to dream about a meeting between the Far East and West. Between merchants, artists, poets, women and men. In Europe exoticism influenced both art and trade. It did not seem strange to her if creators of Venetian opera had seen the birth of Japanese sound and drama. It was all speculations. Her dream continued and she knew she had more to search for in Japan in the future.¹⁸²

182. Her visit to Japan had occurred in December 2008. After that she read as much as she could about Izumo. She contacted Prof. James R. Brandon, a specialist of Kabuki theater from the University of Honolulu. He suggested her to read his English translation of Ari-oshy Sawako's *Izumo no Okuni (The Kabuki dancer)*. Since the book was difficult to find, she decided this would be saved for a future performance project.



The calling woman by the wall

Every day they met. They greeted one another and smiled. Finally. They had never noticed each other before the stormy day in October. She had been walking towards her office in the school, expecting a day of solid work, seminars and talks. She stopped...

...and turned around.

Who was there? Someone had been calling. Impossible. Her eyes absorbed the space from where she had come. No one had been walking behind her and the street was empty. Unusual. Then she noticed someone to her right. A woman's face caught in the act of calling for somebody. Her hand was close to her mouth. Made out of stone, but with a voice so alive.

From that day, they greeted one another and both knew that voices could be heard even through silence.¹⁸³

Guerrieri all'armi – or observing a hand, that will never kill

*“Armi alla mano...
fermate, o là, fermate...”*

Right in between these two phrases she sensed an immediate transformation, which she tried to explain to herself in words. The first phrase ended

183. The woman in the wall was one sculpture in a series of four, by J.A. Wetterlund, located at Göta Källare, Hotellplatsen, in Gothenburg. The names of the sculptures: Navigation, Agriculture, Trade and Industry.

abruptly and the second took over in a state of overwhelmed surprise.

Perhaps it was not at all that difficult to understand. She had looked at her hand when she pronounced the word *mano* (meaning *hand* in Italian), and with a warlike sound of *Armi alla mano*, she saw a woman's hand never able to touch a weapon. At least never a weapon meant to kill.

In between boldness and fear – finding the theater and a baron

She decided to call. Now, nothing would make her change her mind. His name was there on her computer. She had found it on-line on the yellow pages. A real baron.

No, perhaps she ought to wait. And reconsider.

Perhaps he would be offended? How could she just think of calling a stranger, a baron, asking him if she could visit his garden?

She hesitated for another minute, but then she picked up the phone. She had absolutely nothing to lose. She dialed the number.

— Buon giorno Signor. Mi chiamo Elisabeth Belgrano... Volevo chiederle se sarebbe possibile visitare il Vostro giardino, per favore?

— Sì

She could not believe what she heard. She was so close to her goal. She would enter the theater, just as she had dreamed about. She had found the key to the gate of Teatro San Cassiano. Its owner had said yes when she asked if she could visit his garden. A yes, without hesitation.

When fear took over, her body tilted forward. She sensed herself closing up her chest and as always in this situation, her left arm tended to lose its circulation. Her left hand turned white and cold. The day she became aware of this physical reaction, she understood why it all happened. If she had ignored it all, she might eventually hurt terribly. Closing off and fencing in the chest and the upper part of the body meant she could protect her heart and her feelings. But this would only increase the physical effects of fear that would be even more difficult to deal with.

Instead she imagined her self as a proud and bold being inside a closed off space, inside a frame where she was in power. Here inside she could be open and free. She could carefully control this space from outside, but when inside she had no limits to consider. She would ignore fear, cold control, worries and pride. There inside she had not to be afraid. Not at all.¹⁸⁴

184. November, 2008.



Curls in Venetian red

Nobody could possibly tell the color of her hair. The portrait of Renzi was in black and white. So the Singer had decided to choose the color herself.

She arranged for a visit with Signora Carlotta, one of the best wig makers in Venice. Late in the afternoon one day in November 2008 she had stepped into Carlotta's studio in the area of *Castello*. She had brought the picture of Renzi with her and Carlotta looked at it.

They had tried out different colors and in the end found the right one. A red one.

She looked at herself in the mirror. She had been alone in Venice for ten days and had talked to Renzi so much that she almost lost herself when she saw the woman with red curls in the mirror. It was Renzi. The hair was hers at least. They smiled to each other. The Singers' own hair had started to fall off so eventually she might have to wear this wig for real one day. That would be something, if she came to the local store on the island, dressed in a red wig. It would surprise.

Astonishment and surprise was what she was looking for. Disguising herself, becoming somebody else. In Venice it was nothing strange. A cashier from a supermarket in Paris became the most enchanting countess once a year, inviting all her friends to a most remarkable feast. Who knows who the friends were? When the feast was over, she would return to her *normal* life. Return to a common life without much excitement, far away from the glamour of Venice. She lived a double life and her disguise was all that counted. The blue uniform made her accepted in one city, while the softest velvet and laces opened the doors to fabulous palaces in Venice. And it was real. Not a show for others. She made it for herself. The disguise was her code. A code for transformation.

She looked herself around in the studio. There were wigs all around. Wigs that signified change. They were meant to hide away something, to recreate something from the past, to renew, and to complement.

They made a new appointment from the next Saturday. The wig would be ready then. She opened the door and walked out into the street. She thought about her own codes. Codes that opened up new doors.

Her wig was one of her codes. It changed her identity.

Beautiful Helen of Troy

Elena bella io sono...

*“There is nobody else that can more certainly explain to us the glories of Nothing than Beauty: she, the glorious hand that in the great painting of the universe brushes for us the wonders of Nothing; she herself is the vague and most gracious Nothing..., the first mother of the glories of Nothing.”*¹⁸⁵

She had been called the most beautiful woman on earth. That title had pleased her. But she knew that it meant something different to them. There was something more hidden in their words. The coin has two sides. Always.

She was their beauty – a beauty that would disappear in vain. It was so obvious and that was why she could flower right there in front of them. She could tell them everything and they would be amazed. She had no fear and nothing to cry for. So she would cry, to seduce their hearts. They would never leave her, but instead talk to her and honor her for any of her acts.

And if everything would go wrong, she would start looking for others who would listen. That was her life, the life of the performer.

She saw their eyes and heard their words. They spoke about death and beauty and since she was in the room with them she could observe their faces. Turned slightly to the left, all of them in a long row. Looking at her. Giving her applause, smiling, looking at each other.

The Singer had opened the book.¹⁸⁶ They all looked the same to her, all these men. Printed in black and white just like Anna Renzi. They had decorated the pages with words about themselves. The book told everything about the members of the *Academy of the Unknown*. Like that, they were not at all that unknown. Already there, an obvious paradoxical statement.

They had formed a cluster, a group exchanging words, thoughts and ideas. She had been invited to their meetings. She wasn't sure they saw her as one of them, or just as a temporary visitor, invited for her beauty, or for her vocal beauty. Another paradox? Who knows?

She had invited herself. Searched for the palace of Lorenzo Loredan, the

185. *Le antiche memorie*, 125–126. Translated by to English by Mauro Calcagno, in: Calcagno, 2003, p. 474.

186. *Le Glorie degl'Incogniti*, Venice 1647, see Muir, 2007, p. 77.

founder of the academy. He was a witty man and a brave person. She would argue that he himself was a sign of *nothingness*, a beauty, just like her. He and his academy transformed beautiful words into *nothing*. And when she would be gone, their words would still be there. Printed. Her voice and beauty would only be mentioned in their books, but her sound would disappear. No matter how passionate it was. Her voice could never be printed in black on white, just like her expression. It could not be described, because it would not be real. Words were not voices.

So what did she try to do? Researching *pure voice*? Why? Vanity? A researching artist, finding answers in theories. Did she need those answers?

She knew what she needed. She needed to reflect. With others, let it be through books or with living people. She would never accept to go on singing just for vocal beauty. For tones floating out of her being just for the sake of themselves. She needed the verbal space to take in and absorb her situation.

Silenzio o Dio¹⁸⁷

Fermate o là fermate O Dio

Silenzio o Dio

Tacete omai tacete

Che tatevi che tatevi che chiede

Il traditor perdono della schernita fede!

In silence something changes. It is when something important could happen. Who knows what will come? What the next moment will exhibit? Silence is a waiting, a suspension of interest and desire.

She had sung her lines, had dropped off her words, and had left them aside.

Listening for sound to come back: to enter stage, to create noise and fullness, opposite absolute *nothing* of silence.

Only the God would be able to speak, as a betrayer of peace and silence. He would make his statement, use his power and turn the page to a new topic, creating a logos, embellishing the page in front of her.

Her own voice would be speaking in silence. Or if she wanted she could chose to speak again. Or sing, without words. In that way her voice would succeed against all obstacles around her. It would be in her hands.

187. This text on *Silence* was inspired by a text of Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Music and Silence*, see: Jankélévitch, 2003, pp. 130–155.

Fermate o là'

silence after *o là'*.

She would slide down with her voice just before ending her line. The sliding motion, curved as Nature had taught her, could not be avoided. It had to be. On her way down she took her time. Sailing inside the sound.

There was sensuous temptation in this silence. And the pause, which followed, became more and more dense, misty and mysterious. After an opening with a chaotic warrior calling for order, *she* had entered. The woman, who with her silence made everything stop. Reasoning and logos disappeared out from the stage, and as the woman she was, she held the audience in her arms. There was a force in her silenced sound, charged with a gesture that nobody could neglect. A force louder and more overwhelming than anything.

Then, when she got everybody's attention she spoke of herself:

Elena BELLA io SONO.

The accents came on *Bella* and *Sono*, *Beauty* and *Being*. She stood there in the center and she hypnotized every ear and soul. With a spell she pointed her hand towards them and exclaimed:

Tu... Paride Troiano.

She put a spell on them and they remained frozen and unable to move away from her. They burned into their seats and could do nothing else than listen.

As if speaking words of divinity her whole being had changed. When did that happen?

During the moment of silence? Just before she stated her phrase *ferma*. A chord introduced her entrance.

At that point, she knew she was someone else

?

She had put a question mark in her notebook, since she couldn't understand it fully.

Silence created many words, and many words desired nothing else than silence, a paradox as everything else in her.

Sometimes when two thoughts met, or when a thought met something outside of her, her mind started to move.

...Alla muta, alla muta

Pronta man, occhi presto,

Quel che dirà la lingua

Esprime il gesto.

Everyone talked, they praised her actual *being* over and over, but she called for them to become silent, and told that in silence she would move them even further, into a different state of mind. Without using the sounding explanation she made them understand, each one of them in their own way. It was her gesture that expressed it all.



The abandoned lover

The moment she called for death, her body slowly fell to the ground. She lifted her hand towards her head and she covered her eyes. Searching for darkness. In darkness she would forget and ignore what was left outside. Her soul was in a state of emptiness.

“There is a vitality of the Neutral: *The Neutral* plays on the razor’s edge: in the will-to-live but outside of the will-to-possess”¹⁸⁸

In desperation she screamed out her anger and despair. Help me! Help me! Every sound was alive and she needed to hear it with her own words. She needed to recall her sensations. If not, she would be lost, gone. In the *will-to-live* her voice whispered, searching for minimal concentration of life. Searching as a magnifying glass. Trust must be hidden in this *will-to-live*. Somewhere she had to find it. She would not give up...

She held on to the air inside her,
air that held her whole body together.

Air lifted her up, supported her. Someone was holding her under her arms. Space and air were the only two she could trust. In them she could rest, without them she was *nothing*. With them she was *neutral*, with a fair chance to go on.

Scene 2
OTTAVIA

Words, words and only words

It was them she saw first, when she opened the score. Words arranged in a continuous line telling the reader a story. Together with the melodic line they told even more about the details, the lies, the secrets, the whispers, the contrasts. But in the end the contents of the story was the same.

Every word brought its own subconscious story individual to every reader. Every one of the words had an emotional impact. Even small words like ‘and’, ‘with’, ‘perhaps’, ‘yes’, and ‘no’. If they stood alone, one by one, on empty white sheets, the reader expected something more, or perhaps made her own story connecting ‘and’ to her own thoughts and words.

The singer tasted all of these words, one at a time. She fitted them into her mouth and her mind, connecting them to her inner images. She tried the out deep down in a low register or then suddenly searching for a higher range. Sometimes her body followed. A hand reached out, without having been told to do so. It was an instinct deeply rooted inside her bodily system.

188. Barthes, Roland *The Neutral*, Columbia University Press, 2005, p. 73.

Words and contradictions

“If there is any meaning to opera at all... then that meaning is to be sought out in contradiction itself.”¹⁸⁹

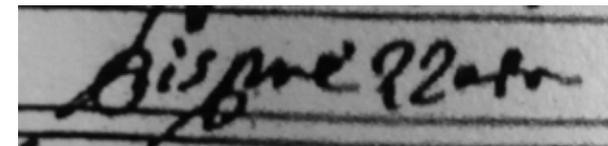
It was her duty to perform contradictions. And it was not difficult for her. Contradictions were to be found in between the stories. In between words and the letters. Even consonants and vowels spoke about extremes and contradictions. A soft vowel was eaten by a bursting consonant. These details had to be sought out by her, enlarged and emphasized. She had to forget the line. Forget. One connection would quickly make a new connection. She lived temporarily in the micro contexts belonging to each one of the words.

Of course sometime it was inevitable to neglect a sentence. But then her contrast had to be reflected even stronger when the sentence came to an end.

Disprezzata cried for its life; while *Afflitta* knelt under heavy weights of troubles;

Che fô? ran in circles smiling without sense and reason; while *Vado* gently moved across the stage in modesty; *Pianto* looked into the eyes of her audience, searching for their empathy; and *Lamento* was the title of the ritual she was expected to perform with dignity and gestures they all knew by heart.

The words told stories about life and about nature. And in the Nature of herself and the world around her, the Singer found the textual contexts.



Scorn transformed though a flow of air

Her neck was stiff,

It all seemed impossible.

She had been safe just now, and suddenly all was gone.

The air, normally transported along her spine and in between the vertebrae, must have frozen. She felt the cold around her bones. And she couldn't move.

189. Adorno, Theodore W. *Sound Figures*, Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 24.

She couldn't do anything. Not even cry. She felt more dead than alive.

Her power had been destroyed and she was an outcast in her own country.

Finally she fell to the ground, to her knees. Alone in the room she was crying on her bed.

How could he? Was she not worth more than this? Didn't he know her after all these years?

The singer sat there on the bed, bending her body forward, with her head in her hands.

The room was silent except for the heating system, which echoed around her. Water was flowing through the pipes.

Slowly, slowly she started to wake up. Looked at her self in the mirror. Realizing that somehow she had to react.

She remembered how the air felt when it moved inside her body. Just like the water in the pipes of the heating system. No pains, no ache. Only energy.

If she could just play along, mourning, cursing and rejecting, then she would find her life back.

She knew it wouldn't help to tell her self to start breathing, but to take air.

She looked at her self in the room.

"Allow air to fill you body."

The words were part of her continuous mantra.¹⁹⁰

"Give new life to every vein and every muscle.

Allow one power to give in to another."

Because you are a queen, a woman, a singer, a living being.

*"Doing what comes naturally requires no conscious effort of will. Isn't living something that comes naturally to all living things? Why, then, does one need to use one's will or to be determined – to live? One doesn't unless there is a wish to die."*¹⁹¹

190. Words inspired by her Alexander Technique lessons. Most of the time incorporating the word *allow*.

191. Lowen, Alexander *The voice of the body. The role of the Body in Psychotherapy*. Bioenergetics Press, Florida, 2005, p. 248.

She looked at herself again. She knew she would stay, stay with her body. Stay alive until the body itself ordered her to give in. No command from another being would make her leave. She was sure about this.

Dying was not her desire. Screaming, yes, and calling out hateful words, making noise and opposing rulers, yes, this was more a part of her life. She had learned it from friends. Italian friends. Friends who never stepped back from passions. That which to her had seemed mad, was normal to them. And she had learned.

So she stayed on and acted in her own special manner. This was important to add. She would act like a woman of dignity. Her way became law. And she had no intension now to listen to any body. She would walk across the stage, with her head high and with plenty of space behind her jaw.

She felt the air filling up under her arms. Arms flowing out of her body. She allowed her neck to grow long and she felt her feet finding the ground.

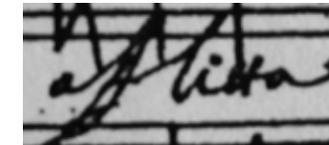
She would fight and love. She would speak in song.

She smiled to herself in the mirror.

Her body had filled up with air.

She dropped her jaw

Disprezzata Regina...



Trust

She had walked into the rehearsal room at the school with her camera, a tuning-fork, her iPod with an attached microphone and her book, were she carefully had glued all the copies of the 17th century Venetian manuscript.

She had planned to be with Ottavia for one hour and she knew she was about to vocally explore *TRUST*.

She opened the book.

Trust was important. She generally had a deep trust in people and most of the time also in things. That was the way she had been brought up and the way she had lived all her life. Believing that words told by a person meant what they sounded. Perhaps it was naïve. Of course she was aware of distrust and

the effect distrust and lies had in life and society. In fact when she considered the world around her, trust was something rare. But her intention was yet to be honest in whatever she decided to do. Make people trust at least in her words.

Then something had happened.

Someone close to her had made her appear false.

She felt ashamed and over a long period she battled with anguish. Was she really to blame? Had she not kept the promise she had made to herself?

What had happened? Why?

Her words had been hard, yes, and she had been very angry. But she was not the only one. And there were reasons to be upset.

The phone had been put down in her ear. Something she had never expected to happen. Since then they never really spoke again.

Communication did not work this time. It was painful to accept. Communicating with people was normally something she truly enjoyed. So why had it not worked this time?

At first she had tried to find her way back to the lost trust. She had apologized for her anger and hard words, hoped things would return to what they had been.

Or what she thought *had been*.

But looking back, she learned that she had seen something that had never really been there.

After years of mourning the loss of the ones she had cared for with such great love, the sorrow started to give her physical pains. Then she decided to stop. Stop accepting her own languish.

She had to live herself and to go on with her life.

She had left the city. She had travelled far, by boat. She still remembered her parents the day she left. Her mother, hiding her face, trying not to show her tears.

They trusted in her.

She arrived one day in the city build on water, in sparkling place, like a crown full of jewels.

She had passed the marketplace. Spices, herbs, bread, meat, fish,...

With the smell of fish still in her nostrils she found her way to the palace where she had been promised a room.

It was her first day. Her senses were filled with wonder and amazement.

She entered the room where she would stay. There was a bed next to the wall on her right side. She placed her suitcase next to the door and looked into the bathroom. It was clean.

The windows were made of Venetian glass. She could hear the sound of water outside.

With the head on the pillow, she closed her eyes and thought of all she has left behind.

Here she could start again. Find new friends and family. Build a new structure around her self and sing again.

She had to learn to trust in her own directions and in her self. Her body and mind had joined fully. Helped her to leave and make things change. They had followed together and learned along the way. Learned to leave and to let go. Leave the troubles behind.

The note was struck with violence. Then it almost disappeared into no sound at all. When it was almost gone, it started to grow forward again. Flying across the score placed on the harpsichord. It had nothing to lose. Stretching out in full lengths, longer and longer. The motion was part of her room.

“Movement is thus one of the principal ways by which we learn the meaning of things and acquire our ever-growing sense of what our world is like. This learning about the possibilities for different types of experience and action that comes from moving within various environments occurs mostly beneath the level of consciousness. It starts in the womb and continues over our life span. We learn an important part of the immanent meaning of things through our bodily motions. We learn what we can do in the motions by which we learn how things can be for us.”¹⁹²

The longer she became, the more trust settled inside her.

The spine widened.

The consonants flew all over the room. Vowels sliding up and down the walls.

The echo rang through out the whole room. Slowly upwards then fast down again, playful and mourning. The suddenly she got stuck.

She looked up in the ceiling. One of the laces in her corset had hooked itself in the gorgeous chandelier. How annoying! With her whole body she tried to get out of her difficult situation, but the corset was tightly tied to her back. It seemed impossible to get out.

She was trapped in her own corset, trapped, hanging from the ceiling.

The light came on. Anyone below would think it was part of the performance. A woman singing, like a spirit or an angel, an unearthly creature, unreal, not to take for real or to be trusted.

192. Johnson, Mark *The meaning of the body. Aesthetics of human understanding*. The University of Chicago Press, 2007, p. 21.

Her legs and arms moved. It was an extreme situation and her gestures grew out of proportion. Left arm stretched out much too high, not coordinated at all.

It had all been prepared for. The show. She would sing from the chandelier attached to the ceiling in a 17th century palazzo. A mad scene never seen before. A success!

The lace broke and she fell.

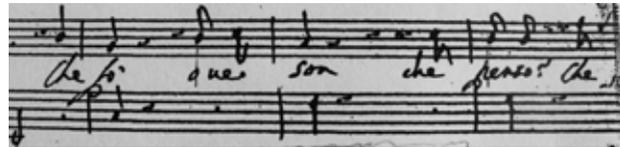
Down, down, down.

She landed with her feet firmly on the ground.

She had been taking photographs. Observing. Holding the camera with her right hand and the tuning fork in the other. Catching the moments while *trust* grew within her body.

Click, click, click,

Sound was recorded on her iPod: her singing and the noise from the camera, every time she took a photo.¹⁹³



The hidden chapel

She walked into the darkness of the church next to the Rialto Bridge. The humidity found its way straight through the clothes, right through her skin and in to her bones. It was a cold autumn day and she had planned to meet with Ottavia that day.

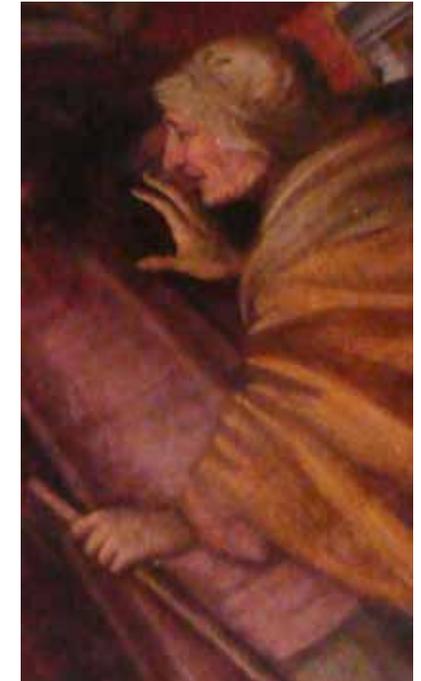
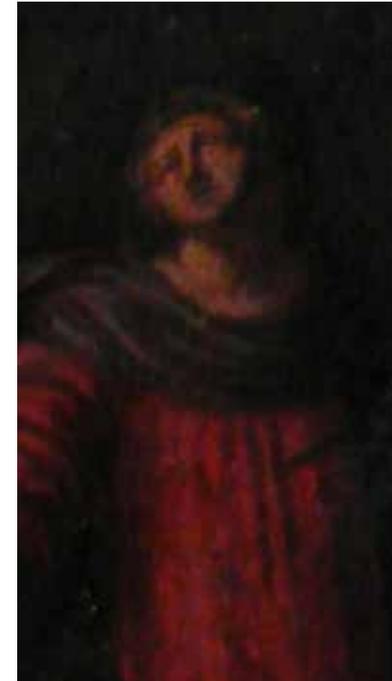
Anna Renzi had joined her on the San Marco side of the bridge. On their walks through the city they would discuss their work and lives. What had made them start to sing? How they had found themselves in Venice etc. Renzi would normally practice in the theater, in her own residence or in the house of one a patron of the theater.¹⁹⁴ Today they were going to a new rehearsal space, in a church.

She looked herself around. It was quiet and different there inside the church, compared to the bustling commerce right outside. They had entered an oasis of silence.

Someone was coughing at the front of the church. She listened and followed the trace of a cold.

193. The rehearsal happened at the end of the Summer 2008. The Singer and Ottavia met, and the fine line between them was completely erased. This was the line between real and unreal.

194. Glixon, 1995, p. 513.





— Buon giorno, signora. I am coming to rehears.

The lady stood up and indicated her to follow. They walked into a small room on the right hand side. It was hard to see anything in the darkness. The lady bent next to the wall, lifted up the seat in a wooden bench and pushed with one hand on to the wall. A secret door opened up and she observed a very steep stairway leading into an even darker place somewhere above.

They walked up the stair in silence and when they reached the last step, the lady found the light switch.

In wonder and amazement she sensed herself gasping for air.

They had arrived in a small chapel with walls all covered with frescoes. The red, blue and yellow colors came rushing out of the walls and moved straight into her reference catalogue. She had not expected a sight like this. She had not imagined such a place to be hidden behind the Rialto Bridge. And here she was, with a harpsichord at her disposal right in the middle of the room.

— Make sure your turn the lights of when you leave, the lady said and left the room.

— Grazie mille, was all she could say in response.

Alone she walked from image to image:

a wedding ceremony...

a farewell...

a woman posing in yellow, with her back towards the observer...

hands...

gestures...

spiritual ecstasy...

She took her coat off and hanged it across a chair next to a the walls.

The harpsichord was closed. She had to open the lid.

Carefully she touched the keyboard, and sound met her ears.

She could not have imagined.

She opened her score, and looked at the image of the woman

taking farewell.

*A Dio, A dio...*¹⁹⁵

195. It had kindly been arranged in advance by Marco Rosa Salva, director of the *Scuola di Musica Antica di Venezia*, for her to access the schools rehearsal space in Chiesa di San Bartolomeo, next to the Rialto Bridge.

The angel and Ottavia

“TEATRO DEI SANTI GIOVANNI E PAOLO, CANNAREGIO, CALLE LARGA BERLENDIS

*Was built around 1635 by the Grimani di Santa Formosa family and immediately reconstructed, in a nearby location in 1639. The opening was celebrated with the production of La Delia by Paolo Sacrati. The Grimani collaborated with Claudio Monteverdi (in 1639 and in 1641 Adone and Le Nozze di Enea con Lavinia were performed, from which not even a fragment has remained; in 1642 L'incoronazione di Poppea, from which a signed manuscript is conserved at Biblioteca Marciana)”*¹⁹⁶

She had finally found a copy of Aldo Bova's book. It had more than she could expect, with even a map indicating all the musical venues in Venice during history.

She put on her boots, wrapped the coat around her and rushed out of the hotel. In the *Castello*, there she would find the theater where Renzi had become Ottavia.

Up and down the bridges, swirling in between tourists covered in cameras. Her own was in her bag. She would use it in a little while. When she got to the theater. Crossing San Marco, her feet flew above the stones. The pigeons didn't bother her this time, like they normally did. Normally she would hate them. They were everywhere. Part of Nature, yes, yes. But she just didn't like them.

She knew her roads quite well, but was still hesitating a little. Venice was a labyrinth. It was easy to get lost. Finally she found the road of the theater. She looked at Bova and Prandi's map. Hard to say where exactly the theater would have been located. Could it have been in the house with the gate and the garden? Perhaps the stage itself had been inside the garden. A large wall kept curious walkers away from what was hidden behind. Only the closed gate gave a glimpse of the space she was searching for. She waited a little before she decided to ring on one of the bells. Someone opened the gate from inside. She pushed on the door and it opened.

196. “Fu costruito intorno al 1635 per conto della famiglia Grimani di Santa Maria Formosa e fu subito ricostruito, a poca distanza, nel 1639. Per l'inaugurazione si mise in scena La Delia di Paolo Sacrati. I Grimani ottennero la collaborazione di CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI (nel 1639 e nel 1641 furono eseguiti Adone e La Nozze d'Enea con Lavinia, delle quali non ci è rimasto neanche un frammento; nel 1642 L'incoronazione di Poppea, il cui manoscritto autografo è conservato alla Biblioteca Marciana)”, Bova and Prandi, 1995, p. 85.

Every time she entered a space of importance to her, she felt her body shiver a little. She walked into history and her heart was beating. Now, the music of Monteverdi was her reference, background music to her thoughts and impressions. She looked around and someone called. She looked up.

‘Boun giorno Signora, I am looking for an old theater. From the seventeenth century,’ she heard herself saying. The lady looked perplexed and called for someone else in the house. Another woman. Soon this other female figure turned up in a window on the second floor. And not even a minute later she saw a third face in the top floor window. Nobody seemed to know anything about the theater. They were all tenants in flats of the condominium. ‘Un teatro? Beh!? No,... niente’

She had entered stage and looked herself around. The audience, who had found their places, were looking down at her. Only women today. The scenery was a garden.

High above she felt the eyes of an angel. Guarding her movements. It listened quietly.

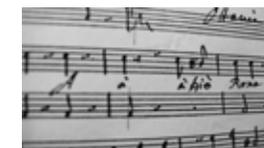
The place was so silent. The sound that broke the silence was her sigh. A staccato sigh, hesitating and longing.

Sorrow-filled.

a...

a...

a...



Taking farewell

“the most black languish has a language in staccato, the sentences [...] are short, as if strained”.¹⁹⁷

197. “Den svartaste sorgen har ett stakatospråk, meningarna [...] är korta, liksom krystade.” the quote is by Carola Ekrem, referred to by Sandberg, Christina *Vi talade aldrig om att hon dör. Om hur känslor får uttryck i en familjs berättelser om döden*, in: Marander-Eklund, Lena, ed. *Känslornas koreografi. Reflektioner kring känsla och förståelse i kulturforskning*, med Ruth Illman, Gidlunds förlag, 2007, p. 176.

A lump in her throat made it difficult to breath. Air didn't find its way into her body...

She had to leave again,

Leave them all, her friends.

To take farewell.

This had to be the last time. Moving. She couldn't do it again. Travelling away. Starting all new. Finding new walks, new friends, new schools, and a new living.

Her hope had been there, hope for a job, for a stability and peace, especially after all these years when they didn't know where to settle.

After her move to the last place, after a long flight (twenty four hours) and a long drive (four days), she had fainted in the bathroom. Lucky enough she didn't hurt herself badly. Only a sore left shoulder. But it was a beginning of exhaustion.

Sorrow became physical pain.

A dio...

'Why did you not refuse to go?' someone had asked.

She answered with silence. She had no words...

She remembered the sea. How hard they must have worked to move the ship with their oars. Their pain must have been so much worse than hers. She had been sitting on deck holding on to her knees. Tears mixed with salty water. She knew she would not be alone when she arrived. They waited for her. The theater would be there. She would walk on stage and sing.

How would the city be like?

She had so many questions. Right between sorrow and desire, she found wonder and joy. Wonder about herself; the way she would be reacting.

Or not reacting.

Become... become...

Or being?

Being. Becoming...

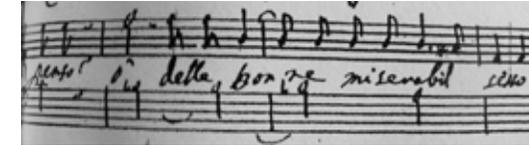
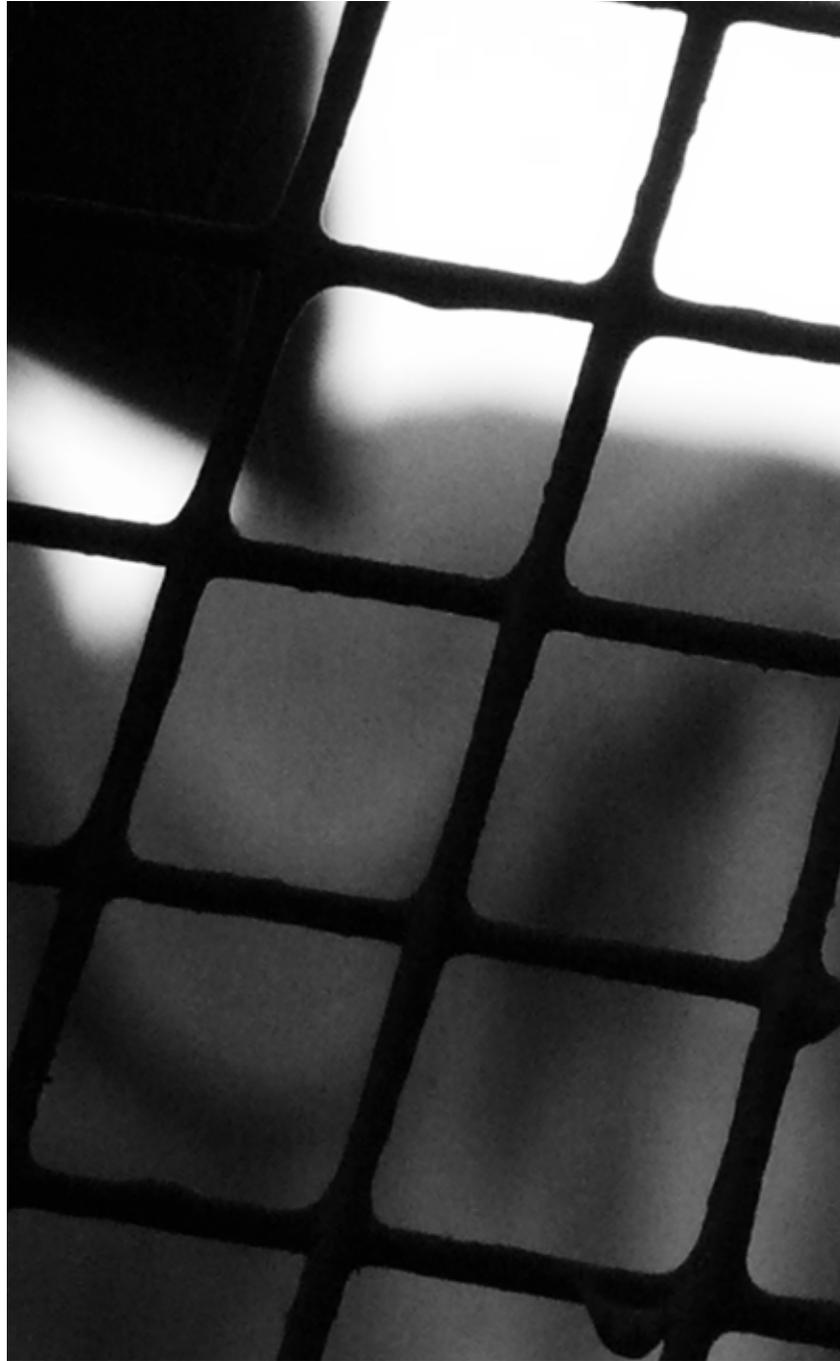
'But you never told me that you had been rejected as well?' said Ottavia.

She looked at the Renzi and her self, who looked at each other. And after that they had to laugh. It was too much... too much languish.

Giggling came from thier throats. A jumping, giggling, nervous laughter. At first not synchronized, then after a while they found the same frequency and three voices became one voice.

They walked out of the theater,...

laughing loud!



Report from a corset

Tightly, tightly it was strapped around her body. The corset felt like a prison. It held her back in a straight even line. Inside there was no chance to breathe the way she was used to do. At first she had borrowed a corset made for someone else who was much taller. After that experience she knew she had to find someone to make one for her. Fitted for her body.

The corset had to be based on a 17th century model. An assistant to the stage costume tailor/designer at the school agreed to work with her.

The Singer planned for an experiment. Since she had never worn a corset for longer periods of time (maximum time would have been for concerts) she would see what happened to her breathing and posture if she was wearing it every day for two full weeks. The experiment would take place in Venice during her field trip

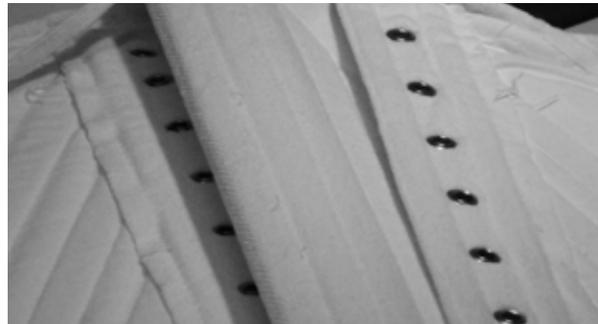
The result was described in her diary in the following way:

"It is a pain to get it in to this prison. I am alone in the hotel and cannot ask for assistance. Embarrassing! If I manage to let the lace be loosely tied I can get it on and tighten it to my body from the front, then I squeeze it around my body so that the final knot can be made at the top of the back. It takes me about 20 minutes every morning and it is definitely no pleasure. So what experience do I receive? At first it was just awful to breath. Lower breathing is impossible. The chest won't move. But something gave her a positive surprise. I felt an enormous freedom around my shoulder and higher chest. Also around the hips, since the corset was cut very high. So plenty of space around the hips and below."¹⁹⁸

She had suffered from pains in her back and in her left arm and shoulder. After one week in the corset these pains were gone. She had also developed a better posture by stretching out her back, thanks to a better understanding of high and low breathing.

Strangely enough, she started to feel at ease.

198. 4 November, 2008.



Vivaldi's *putte*, their fenced balcony and a glimps of the shadows of Teatro Novissimo

In her search for more information about *Teatro Novissimo* in the *Castello* area she had been suggested to contact Signor Giuseppe Ellero, responsible for the archives at the *Church of Ospedaletto* with its special music room. The hospital was located right on the same spot where the theater once must have been located. The Singer had in fact walked around in the hospital trying to get a closer look, but she didn't feel so comfortable humming on Deidamia's mad scene while strolling through the corridors. So close but so distant, she thought when she walked out of the hospital.

The Church of the Hospital, *Chiesa dell'Ospedaletto* or *Santa Maria dei Derelitti*, located next the hospital and *Basilica dei Santi Giovanni e Paolo*, was famous for its singing girls and this she had not realize until she met Signor Ellero. He took her to the beautiful music room on the third floor and even more interestingly, to the choral balcony from where the girls had been performing. They were all orphans, having found a shelter in the church. There they had been trained and educated in music by the composer Antonio Vivaldi.

The girls were to be heard but not seen. Therefore they were placed behind on a fenced balcony. Standing there on the balcony that afternoon made an impression on the Singer. Heard but not seen. Beautiful young women were of course a threat, but not there voices apparently. Hiding them behind bars would surely have helped, she thought and smiled.

She looked at the chairs placed along the wall. It was as if the girls would be expected to arrive there at any time, walking in, each one of them finding her chair. A shiver passed along the Singer's spine.

On the way down from the third floor Signor Ellero turned to her and pointed towards a place outside a window.

'Il Teatro Novissimo. It was located right there, next to the hospital.' He told her to open the window and take a close look.

The view was not very pretty. It looked rather messy, with a shed, perhaps used for equipment for the hospital garden. It was the place where Renzi have performed her feigned madness during the carneval 1641.¹⁹⁹

Et io – a performing self.

"... a man is a self-performing animal – his performances are, in a way, reflexive, in performing he reveals himself to himself."²⁰⁰

Her notebook had been in front of her on the table and with a pen she formulated her thoughts on the white empty paper-space:

So who am I when I perform?

Where do I find myself in the acts of sighs and laughter?

When my hands are raised towards the sky?

Whose feet are standing firmly on the ground?

Who owns the lungs filling up with air?

Physically everything belonged to herself in her performance. It was impossible to leave this fact aside. But every act occurred inside a frame, where the *self* melted into pure *being*. Such a frame protected the framed object from losing itself between all *beings*. In the frame the person could allow herself not to *act* any being in particular anymore, but she could simply just be. And it was safe. Without the frame it all bordered to *real* madness. It became dangerous.

The Singer had entered a game with the audience. Where *I* become a *being* speaking in the moment while at the same time observing her surrounding.

199. I am very grateful to Signor Ellero for his kindness of showing me around in this very special place.

200. Words by Victor Turner, referred to by Beeman, William O. *The Performance Hypothesis. Practicing emotions in Protected Frames*, pp. 273–298 in: Wulff, 2007, p. 273.

She listened to her memories and performed them simultaneously; she looked into the eyes of the listeners and heard their silent voices speaking through their bodies.

*"We listen to singers while mentally echoing their words with our own inner voice; but singers engaged in a musical dialogue onstage do the same while waiting for their turn to begin their part; moreover, they listen to themselves in the act of singing."*²⁰¹

et io staro solinga...

When she spoke of her solitude, she was alone, while being surrounded by others. Physically she would never be alone on stage, but she was alone inside her act. She took her own decisions of when and how. In Ottavia's words she found herself at ease. They had been placed in her mouth by the one who knew that meanings had many different levels. She spoke for all lonely people. Through her languish they all cried out there solitude. Looking at her gestures everyone saw their own bodies move. And it all came through the words.

Words performed in a lamentation.

Words, longing for peace

and...

Silence

Lost in word.

She had trusted and soon lost trust

and now she didn't know what to believe,

but to remain *in silenzio*.

Silence of her own free will.

*"→ Neutral = postulates a right to be silent – a possibility of keeping silent."*²⁰²

201. Calcagno, 2009, p. 252.

202. Barthes, 2005, p. 23.

Act II

Finding *pure voice* through ornamentation, repetition, movement and improvisation

Scene I ARIANNA

The sounding line

*“Appearances were all confused; he led the eye astray
By a mazy multitude of winding ways”*²⁰³

She left all the music on the table in her studio and walked out, puzzled by a sound coming from the sea. Arianna had been with her for already some weeks and she was worried that she started to hear her voice for real. A seducing voice coming from the sea.

She had locked the door behind her, just to make sure nothing bothered her privacy and sanity.

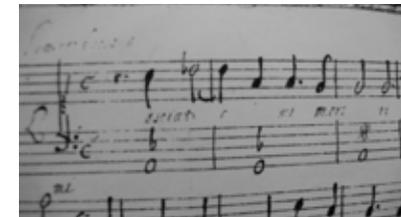
She passed houses she knew since childhood, stonewalls built in a traditional manner, fencing off the properties. Frames, she thought to herself, frames for people to control themselves within. Inside they had their privacy and could do whatever they wanted, but if they would come up with the idea of walking out, behaving as they liked, someone might consider them strange, yes, even mad. And that would not be acceptable. The island had its unwritten rules.

She looked herself around. It was so empty. No human life. No activity. Only herself. With her camera, which she had taken along, just in case Arianna actually sat there on a rock somewhere.

203. Ovid, 1986, p. 176.

She got to the point where the street became a narrow path. The softly shaped rocks started to show themselves more and more. The landscape changed into wild fields with low vegetation.

The voice continued to sound. It went on and on and on.



Trillo – experiencing change

She closed herself into a small room and decided to allow a vocal ornament to take her out into the unknown. The walls of the room closed out any external object or energy from disrupting her experiment. She stood in the middle of the room with a harpsichord next to her side. She had decided to use the *trillo* described by Giulio Caccini. The ornament would be applied to a text from her material and she decided to use the opening line of Lamento d'Arianna – *Lasciatemi morire*. The combination of a cry for death with a beating throat ornament would be an interesting combination for a vocal experiment. She had a feeling that the movements of lamentation and madness were not that far away from one another, in the sense that tears and laughter could easily meet on the same floor, in the same breath; in the same body; in the same sigh; in the same instant. What she was looking for was the actual point where tears transformed into laughter. What triggered the passions to change direction?

Although the result of the experiment came as a surprise, she knew she had expected a similar outcome.

As soon as her throat started to vibrate by the flow of her breath, sound pushed itself out into the room. First regular and controlled, as suggested by Caccini:

*“... to begin with the first quarter-note then re-strike each note with the throat on the vowel à up to the final double-whole-note”*²⁰⁴

204. “...il cominciarsi dalla prima semim:nima, e ribattere ciascuna nota con la gola sopra la vocale ‘a’ sino all’ultima breve...”. From Giulio Caccini’s *Le Nuove Musiche*, 1601, SPES, Firenze, 1983. English translation in: Caccini, Giulio, *Le Nuove Musiche*, A-R Editions Inc., Madison, Wisconsin, 1970, p. 51.

She smiled to herself. It felt a little odd to consciously follow an ornament. It gave her a feeling of walking into herself. Into a winding maze similar to the one in Crete. She noticed that her sounding smile started to sound ironic. Irony filled her face and her throat, and her whole body grew into sarcasm. It was ridiculous the whole thing. The laughter continued on an inhalation. Full control, without any doubt. *Morire*. Yes, death was the word she spoke and it had no real meaning to her, as the person she was. Not to her, not at all. But then each puff of sound struck her memory. The tessitura became higher and the word changed into *lasciate mi* – let me, let me, LET ME... She held on to the second *a* in *lascia-*, and her body responded with openness. Her jaw dropped and her spine grew out of the ground while her toes and heels lengthened and made her feet longer, providing the body with more stability. The physical beating of her vocal folds seemed to be the key to something else different from any sarcasm or irony. The sound insisted in staying on. At last there was nothing more to give, and an exhausted sigh relaxed her body into grief. Silence filled with energy and soft trembling was all that could be heard before – *temi... moriiiiiree* finally passed her lips. She took a deep breath and set off again. Fueled by the previous seconds, she left her purpose behind. She had left all far behind and was inside her own sound. This time the *a* trembled more metallically and her body knew the beginning of laughter. Accelerating in tempo and pitch, the sound blew up into the ceiling, in order to drop fast into the lower register. Up and down. Reason was all gone. For a minute laughter reigned, just to let go for a cry and a sob to pick up the line. Up and down. Up and down. Each beat penetrated the walls of the room. She enjoyed the sound tremendously and danced into her own motion. As soon as the air was gone her whole body withdrew into itself and she bent forward holding on to her stomach. The movement slowed down. As if in pain sound kept on changing directions. Sobs of joy and sorrow were all in one. She had forgotten her ground, even if she still kept on observing. Controlling her space.

It all took her by surprise, really, and in the end she gave in to the world outside and she decided to step out, overwhelmed by the experience.

Exhausted, and in wonder.

So, what did she learn?

She had studied the musical sample in Caccini's text and theoretically understood the meaning of his description. But after physically studying the acts of the body while practicing vocally the actual movement of the orna-

ment she came to a new understanding. Caccini had not mentioned the amount of emotions behind that one single note. Behind the essence of grace and elegant negligence a crude and revealing nature could be found. Inside the note in the score, behind an elaborated reflection of an embellishment she had seen herself transform in the shortest time. Not because of words. Neither was she throwing herself between the passions, but rather being thrown by something bigger than herself. The beating movement explained by Caccini looked simple and uncomplicated but it withheld a complexity of factors leading on to varied expressions.

*"In a musical work [...] there is a structure and pattern of temporal flow, pitch, contours, and intensity (loudness/softness) that is analogous to felt patterns of the flow of human experience."*²⁰⁵

She had experienced with all herself that, which had been described by Johnson in his book of bodily experience, just because she allowed herself to be aware. This *allowing* was one of the keys to her vocal flow. It had again struck her mind that by ignoring the destructive patterns in her thinking her voice and her body were liberated from all tensions unconsciously part of her living. These were patterns that she normally would not have noticed. Because of a growing awareness about herself and her voice, she experienced her bodily acts differently and this at the same time had an impact in the reversed sense. The new understanding of her body caused her voice to truly engage in expression she had only rarely experienced in the past. Now she was able to allow vocal freedom to exist within her own *mindful* control. Embodied change would occur whenever she perceived or recalled the right internal or external object.

The red line

The voice was like the red thread of Arianna. It teased her to follow. As a fish on a fishing line, she was hooked on Arianna's thread, and she could only follow.

The line was only in her head. It was there as a mental line. This mental line gave her the idea to set it all up for real, to make an experiment on the seashore. She would create the situation of Arianna on her island. Recreate or make new.

205. Johnson, Mark, p. 238.

She packed everything in her bag: her camera, the golden shoes, the iPod with its microphone and last, her daughter's watercolors and a painting brush. She started to film already from the beginning. It was important to see the whole walk towards the rocky shore.



The rocky shore

She loved the rocks. For many years she had been living far away from these shores, but now she was back and the rocks were there as always. Round, soft and shaped by the ice. Nature shaped by Nature. She used to walk down there in the early spring and lay down. Sensing the shape following her back. The sun warmed her and she would feel like staying there forever, allowing her whole body to melt in to the stability of the granite.

In the summer she would do the same, and then she would feel the heat from the rock spreading through her body. Heat, accumulated during a whole day of lovely sun.

Together with a dear friend, they would come out on the rocks late at night. They would bring some sparkling white wine and some cheese, take a late night swim and then watch the sun slowly, slowly disappear into the water. Then they would find their way home in the dark.

The rocks shaped her home. She loved them, walked on them, and trusted in them.

The people on the island were sometimes like the rocks as well, hard and rough, sometimes impossible to communicate with; stubborn and weathered by salty winds from the North. She was one of them. (Though she also had Karelian blood in her veins.)

But the people on her island knew when they had to support one another. You could lean back on them and they would be there for you in hard times. They knew hard times, and perhaps the women knew it better than others. They supported each other when all men were out at sea.

The rocks would support her always.

They would be there underneath her skin when she would wake up in the morning.

Like they had been when Arianna woke up on Naxos.

When she woke up, realizing that things had changed.

That she was left behind.

Alone.

Touching – feeling – hearing

Their backs touched one another. Their eyes didn't know what they looked like, but they could feel.

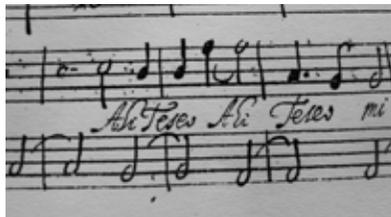
Their first meeting was based on improvisation. They had no intention to follow any theories of authenticity, often considered to be part of a *historically informed performance*. They didn't have any rules. They wanted to explore the movements of lamentation, by allowing a free communication between two bodies: a Singer and a Dancer

They started back to back. The voice whispered the first words. Slowly they followed the energy in the room. The result became a sensuous dance between two bodies reaching for life and death in their extremes.

After whispering the first word, the Singer started to sing. Also here she had decided not to sound in a specific manner. She would allow the ugly to make room for the sad and for the longing.

She sang the line of Arianna, with her back towards the Dancers back. They grew. And walked. Following the other. Leading the other. The camera recorded this first meeting and afterwards they saw how the flow in them allowed the dialogue to go forwards. They had stretched out both vocally and physically.

Arianna was in the room with them that first time. She had walked in through the door, and had joined them. The Singer wasn't sure when, but she knew it had happened.



Teseo mio

There was tenderness towards him, even if she should have forgotten all about what had happened. It would have been the best.

But how could she? She had sensed his head against her neck. And the memory of this would be printed on her skin.

Ooooh Teseo Oooooooo OOO TESEO MIO

The Dancer and Teseo had been the same body, leaning and curving one around the other.

"O Teseo, O Teseo mio..."

She felt the softness from his skin next to hers. Her body melted in to his and she stood there completely still. Never wanting the moment to end. Followed his movement in any direction. Glued to him.

The Dancer stood next to her, leaning the head towards her neck. It was the first time she sensed such an intensive presence since they had started to rehearse. Their bodies had met through Arianna's words and melody in various ways, but when his name was mentioned it seemed as if they had found Teseo's whole being in the room. Just next to them. Touching them. Being them. With her voice she caressed his face. Her voice tangled up in his curly hair. She understood the beauty of being together, being one with another being. And she trusted. Trusted in his strength and in his body. She trusted in herself and in her breath, a breath both solid and constant. A breath that made herself grow into her own body, expanding by the warm sensation of absolute presence.

Trust was the answer to what she knew. What she had just experienced physically with another human being, the motion of that other person, had printed something on her skin and inside her soul. The other person was a Dancer. A woman she knew well, since the age of thirteen. They had sung together. Laughed and cried together and they were real friends, trusting one another.

But in the moment when Teseo came into the room with them, something different occurred. He was not there in person. Only through the music and the words. He had appeared the moment she took his name in her mouth.

Teseo, Teseo mio, Oh,...oh, Teseo

The first *T* on her tongue was like an explosion. It broke out of a silence. *T*. There it was, flowing in to the other letters about to form a word of Love and Desire. It was the beginning of a word that signified trust and meaning. She closed her eyes and allowed her head to meet the round shape of his head. Leaning on him with all her weight.

The arm of Latona

She had been visiting Versailles in the spring of 2009. She had walked through the palace and its gardens. It was in the garden she saw a woman stretching out for something or someone invisible. She had a crown on her head and her face spoke of longing and hope. It was Latona.



This statue came to her mind when she stood there on the rocky shore. Latona's arm had been stretched out as if calling for someone. This woman became Arianna in her memory, a woman calling with her arms.²⁰⁶ Her fingers were slightly curved and she remembered how she had learned that a perfect baroque gesture would never have any straight lines in it. The hand of Latona was a perfect sample. Latona's hand became her own gesture for longing, for waiting, and for demanding.

Demand. How could demand have a curved posture? She would naturally stretch her body, slightly forced in her behavior and then asking straight forward for what she wanted. It would sometimes be done in fear.

The siren

"As the myth of the Sirens teaches us, song is heard as naturally feminine, just as speech is naturally masculine. Destined to substantiate themselves in the semantic, men's voices tend to disappear in the mute labor of the mind, or thought. By modulating themselves in song, on the other hand, women's voices come to show their authentic substance – namely, the passionate rhythms of the body from which the voice flows. In this sense the woman who sings is always a Siren, or a creature of pleasure, extraneous to the domestic order of daughter and wife. The female singing voice cannot be domesticated; it disturbs the system of reason by leading elsewhere. Potentially lethal, it pushes pleasure to the limits of what is bearable."²⁰⁷

She had been considering the fact that the mad scene, performed mainly by female singers, would bring the female voice out of the traditional rhetorical patterns, often referred to in historically informed performances today. Could it be true that when the female singer came on stage in Venice in 1640 performing her mad scenes, the rhetorical patterns were ignored and reason had been left behind? Creating a real mad scene, by going beyond the "limits of what is bearable"?

In Venice the female voice on stage was honored and glorified. Like in Paris. But the Pope feared female emotions and banned women from stages in Rome. What did he really fear in the female voice? The female bodily flow, the sinful, the emotive, the seductive, or what? Would the female voices turn

206. *La Fontaine de Latone*, by André Le Nôtre (1613–1700).

207. Cavarero, Adriana *For more than One Voice. Toward a Philosophy of Vocal Expression*, Stanford University Press, 2005, p. 118.

the world upside down and disrupt the power of the church? Or would the tearful singing voices touch what shouldn't be touched? A mysterious forbidden touch?

*"Of the five senses, touch was the most 'immediate', at once resisting temporal stasis and having no spatial 'medium' between the body and the touchable world (be it in the form of objects, bodies, textures, or temperatures)."*²⁰⁸

The touch of the Sirens voice enchanted anyone with its immediate force, or non-force. An articulated whisper could have the same affect. This could be a danger for anyone in power.

She whispered his name,

Teseo mio – come back to me...

The horizon

She found the line intriguing. Something tempted her to touch it and make it into something different. The color had been similar the day when she had been with Arianna on the shore. The mist was heavy and it was hard to see the exact point where the sea met the sky. Or where the sky met the sea. Nothing disturbed the simplicity. Only small waves moved around giving the picture a feeling of life, so pure and so distant. Untouchable. She couldn't get enough of it.

She had seen a similar line when she had lived in a desert. That line had saved her then. It was the line that had reminded her at least a little of the sea. But in the desert it all seemed dead, at least to her eyes from a distance. By the sea she felt the wind in her face, and sometimes a bird would pass by and laugh at her. But for the rest it was calm. Perhaps this sight gave her the confirmation of infinity and how she was a part of it, from her distance. Because she was there, watching and guarding. Nobody could steal it from her. It was a free entertainment: watching the horizon. She allowed her fingers to draw something on the line. She could do whatever she liked. No body would tell her to stop. Her fingers moved one. Her voice followed and together they colored the horizon. Made it a room for improvisation on a continuous baseline.

208. Mazzio Carla, *Acting with Tact: Touch and Theatre in the Renaissance in: Sensible Flesh. On touch in Early modern Culture*, ed Harvey, Elizabeth D., University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2003, p. 166.



Don't leave me behind!

Something curious had happened when she stood there watching. She had been holding the music in one hand, while singing and filming. She had come to the line

Vogiti Teseo mio – Fly away Teseo.

She stopped singing and couldn't believe her eyes. He was leaving. Really leaving right in front of her eyes. Escaping out at sea. Not caring about the cold winds that made her cry. He was going out without her, leaving her to mourn, just like Ovid had been writing.

*"That cruel prince abandoned her, and she, abandoned, in her grief and anger found comfort in Bacchus' arms."*²⁰⁹

A boat had left the harbor, and she saw it moving towards her baseline. Just at that moment. Could fate have overheard her singing? He was really on his way out at sea. Leaving her.

She smiled.

209. Ovid, 1986, 176.

He had left, and he didn't know that someone was watching him. That someone was standing there on the rocks looking for him already for a long time, lamenting her own situation, as he was gone. He didn't realize that she stood there watching and singing at the same time.

A girl from the island stood there on a rock crying for him.
Like fishermen wives and women had done for years and years.
Longing for their beloved.



She stretched out her arm trying to reach for him.
Calling for him.
Teseo come back, don't leave me here behind!
If she had called those words loud, *they* would have called for an ambulance.
Out of her mind! they would have said.
Standing there in the cold wind, calling for someone she called Teseo? Saying she loved him!? Who could she mean? Well, something must have gone terribly wrong in her life, poor girl. Probably someone must have left her. Someone had perhaps left her for another. He had probably left in his boat. That was what she had said.
Did she say Teseo?
No, we don't know anyone with that name here on the island. But he could well be one of those new people, who had moved out to the island recently.

Herself in the other

"Performance is the Arena of Activity that Allows Humans to Practice the Display and Reception of Emotional States in a Protected 'Framed' Environment".²¹⁰

In her search for the sound of Arianna, she used the image of a woman on an island. This meant both herself as well as Arianna. The performing frame, addressed by Beeman, made her realize that she could in fact construct a performing research frame by assembling two separated time frames, two islands, two different women and a set of emotions. As the audience when entering a theatre performance mirrors themselves in the acts on stage, she set out to mirror herself in the acts and emotions of Arianna in a physical performance experiment on her own island.

She lived on an island, just like Arianna. She saw the rocks every day. She was surrounded by rocks. Sometimes even human rocks, indifferent to strong emotions and expressions, shadowed by the religious traditions so deeply rooted on the coast.

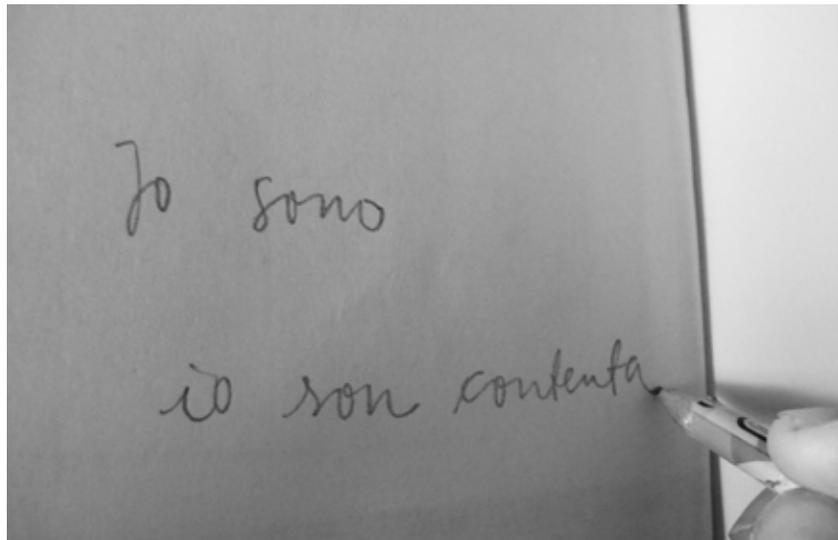
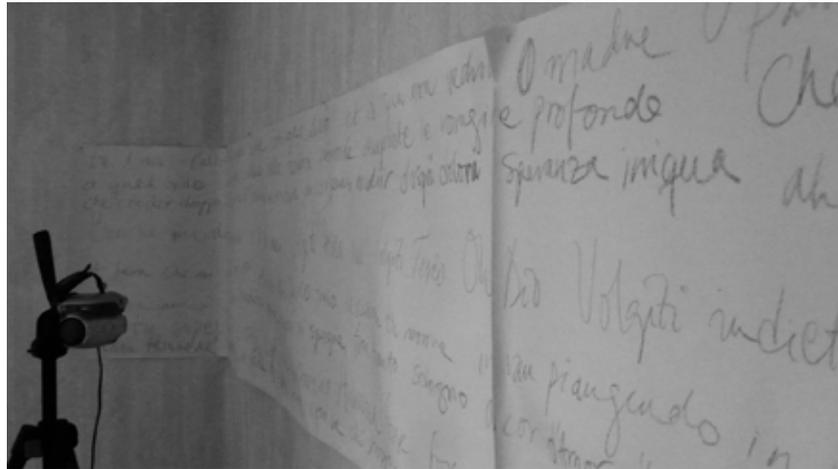
She walked out on the rocks on the island, pretending to walk along with Arianna.

It was a meeting, between her own self and the self of the other.

Before leaving her home, she had been drawing the words of Arianna on the walls in her study. She had been following the waves of the melody on paper. The movement of the arm when drawing the contours of the words helped her to feel the motion of the music even more physical in the body.

Tasting, seeing, hearing, touching and absorbing the motion of sound was in her focus.

210. Beeman, 2007, p. 286.



From death to joy

Bacchus had arrived. He had taken her as his wife and given her comfort. Made her one of his women.

She had been wondering if this was the reason for Arianna to suddenly broke out in a smile, singing:

io son, io son contenta

It was a strange end, and one very rarely performed. She had found the manuscript in Florence. Later on she discovered both a modern edition of that same manuscript as well as a complete translation for the whole piece on-line.

I am, I am happy

She looked at the audience with a smile and felt joy in all her body. She had been complaining about a man who didn't want her and she had arrived to the point when she had to let go. She had found something else. Something better. She never sang that Bacchus came for her, but if he did, this could have been the beginning her madness. A bacchic madness.

The moment she pronounced the word *contetna* sorrow was gone.

It had disappeared and was never seen again.

Scene 2
 ARIANE



The rock

He was just like a rock, hard and unreachable.
 She would tell him so.
 Why did you leave?

She had seen him the first time in Paris. His arrogance had at first put her off. His air had been so acid, contaminated with a pompous arrogance.

Then he had seen her and something in him had changed. They had met again, more than once. She learned that his arrogance was a shield he would use with strangers.

They became lovers. And it was like a dream. They would enjoy their picnics in gardens all over Paris. They would travel to the coast and eat crepes and drink cider. They would wait for the tide to go out. She was happy and in love.

He made her promises. He gave her all what she could dream of.

And now...

He had left, and he ignored her voice.²¹¹

Suspension until the end

The ornaments had been written out as a guide. The only thing she had to do was to taste them. If she held them long enough in her mouth

they would attach themselves to her tongue.

Then she could choose what to do with them. She could hold on

and never let go.

Helas!

While she was holding

his face would return in her mind and she would remember.

Remember all his kisses and his love. She would still hold on, because she didn't want to lose him.

But in the end she ran out of breath and she had to let go. And gone he was, until she held on again. That time he would give her a different message.

And she would hate to see him disappear.

He left every time she had to breathe in. And she stopped taking breaths.

She stopped to breathe.

Fear, *nothing* and physics in the air

She sat down in her seat on the plane. A man passed through the narrow corridor looking at his boarding card. He looked at the numbers and found his seat. Next to hers.

At first there was silence. She was afraid. She hated to fly, to be locked in a cabin with others high above the clouds. What if she fell down, right in the middle of the Alps?

She loved travelling, and had been flying so many times. But her fear grew worse. It was funny to think that she could have been working as an airhostess. She had passed all the interviews except the last one. They had asked "but how can you fly if you intend to sing?" Now, these words sent a message to her

211. The statue that came to signify a rock in her memory was the equestrian statue of Louis XIV by the entrance of the Louvre in Paris, next to the Pyramide.

brain telling her how well she would do if she flew and sang at the same time! That was what everything was about. Singing and flying.

A conversation had finally opened up.

He said he had been to a scientific meeting. He was a physicist. She had replied that she had also been away for research. She had been looking for *nothing* in Venice. Vocal *nothingness*.

'NOTHING!?' he replied, turning his head towards her, looking deep into her eyes.

'Yes, NOTHING, right.'

She started to tell him about Anna Renzi and about the costume that had been made based on Renzi's portrait. She had told him that Renzi had been referred to as a symbol of *nothingness*.

She had felt a little strange telling him all this, and thought he might take her for crazy.

Most of the people who asked about her research would wonder what she meant with *nothingness*. She expected the man next to her to ask her the same question.

His eyes grew in size and he said.

'I do understand! How interesting! So we are researching the same subject, *nothing*. You from an artistic perspective, me from the field of physics.'

She couldn't believe her ears.

It was not to believe!

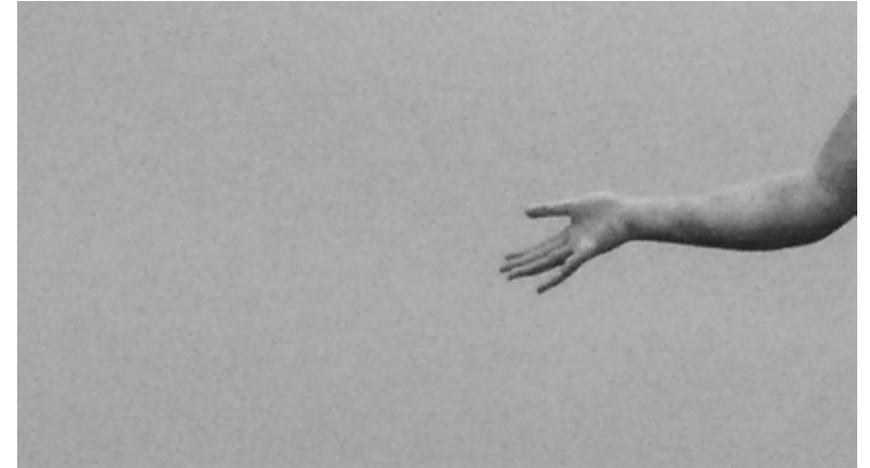
They were excited both of them, and they continued to speak all through the flight.

And when they finally arrived they continued to speak while leaving the plane.

It was not to believe. It was wondrous and amazing.

And she had forgotten all about her fear.

Just because of *nothing*.



Sweet tenderness

She held the score in her hand and had just started with the second verse, the ornamented verse. The fast moving dots in the score were like small shiverings. Another voice followed her into the verse. They decorated the melody together.

They didn't share anything else, except the ornaments. Not the language and not the melody, only the string of pearls attached to a simple line.

It didn't fit at all but at the same time she loved what the other was doing. It was all what she wished for to be added into her own song. The sweet languishing tones reflecting the loss, the kisses, and the melting-together in an embrace. The *porte-de-voix* sustained her longing with swelling excitement.

Her longing had brought tears to her face. She had been in a *moment-of-pure*.

Considering the *self* through the personal and the private

*“True emptiness is nothing less than what reaches awareness in all of us as our own absolute self-nature. In addition, this emptiness is the point at which each and every entity that is said to exist becomes manifest as what it is in itself, in the form of its true suchness.”*²¹²

212. The words are by Nishitani Keiji, cited in: Heisig, 2001, p. 222.

How private could she be in her expression on stage? Would her own feelings ruin the performance if the audience revealed them in her? Would the audience become disgusted, leave and never come back? She had heard other singers talk about always being in control of their feelings in a performance. Never leaving it all to the audience.

It was a conflicting message to herself. She never considered her privacy on stage. The private part of her would always be in her act. She could never get away from that. It was part of nature. But she had learned to disguise herself. To hide the private underneath a veil of different personalities, including her own. Like that she could be both private and personal in the same act, and it would be impossible for the audience to know when she transformed from one to another. These were plans she thought of in the rehearsal room, never on stage. On stage, she totally gave up everything she had planned, because on stage everything would be part of her absolute awareness. So she could never claim that she controlled her emotions, because she never did. They were controlled unconsciously in her. On stage her voice would sound raw and pure, and hurt inside the listeners. Make them feel uncomfortable perhaps. Make them ask who she was, and if she was herself in the act – the Singer? She knew that the moment she considered her performance to be too private, everything would be visible. If she forgot about herself the private would become the true expression of her personality.



Complexity

The complex structure of minerals in the rocks on the island was *extreme*, she had been told by a geologist. She could not understand the details but she had studied the visible patterns. They were not like anything else she could remember. In and out of each other the lines and curves mingled. They formed shapes of faces, animals, figures and abstract motions. What about if she tried to sing by following the lines?

It was not only the colors that changes and mingled. The structure was also a micro landscape, with bumps, divisions and interruptions. She would have to consider also this structure if she decided to sing the lines of the rocks.

She wondered how it would sound.

She sat there and thought of her shoes and how they would meet the surface of the landscaped rock, her golden shoes, made in Venice.

Balancing in golden high heels on slippery rocks

She always had to be alert and prepared, knowing that the unknown could happen at any time. If she kept her eyes open she knew when everything would change. But if she feared the fall her body would hurt and she would have to fight hard to come back. She knew because she had been there. But now she looked straight forward, being prepared for anything.



Gone

The shoe had been left behind. It was there on the shore longing for her/Ariane to come back.

It felt alone and abandoned.

Nobody knew were she had gone. Barefoot?

Or in another pair of shoes?

It had travelled all through Europe to reach this shore, and now what?

The moment seemed cut out of a structure and placed in a completely different environment, disassembled and confused. But it had learned that things would be fine if one stayed alert and attentive.

So it listened for anything to happen.

Listened and waited.



Act III

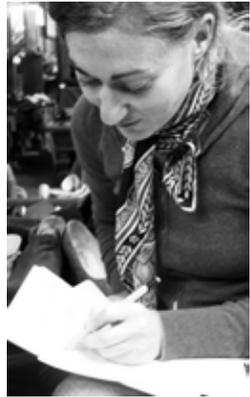
Performing *je-ne-sais-quoi*

Scene I
ARMIDE
(1664)



Flying above and letting go

Her shoe was hanging in the air,
as if afraid of touching the ground.
She had no intension to step down,
or to walk around like everyone else.
She felt at home
in the air.
Her voice was free.
In the sky, her troubles seemed far away
and nothing could stop her from choosing her own direction.
Being part of the air,
and one with the winds.
She opened her mouth and allowed her lungs to fill...



A pair of golden high heel shoes

She had found the shoemaking girls in a workshop next to a bridge crossing a narrow canal. Every time she had to visit the workshop she got lost. They all looked very much the same, the bridges and the canals. It was next to impossible to find the right street, and even harder to make a shortcut. Impossible.

Venice was a place made to loose oneself.

‘Mi scusi per favore, dove...?’

(‘Excuse me, but could you please tell me where...?’)

She had called to arrange for a meeting over the phone from Sweden

The day of her first appointment had been terribly rainy. She had walked too much, got lost again, and in the end there had been no time to get back to the hotel for changing her socks and shoes. Her socks were soaking wet. It was really embarrassing.

The shop-window was filled with amazing shoes: funny ones with little bells, others in beautiful leather with strong and vivid colors.

Two young women were waiting for her: the shoemaker, owner of the workshop, and her assistant.

‘Buona sera... I am so sorry... for my wet feet...’

They smiled and said that they could see her boots were not made for rain, neither for flooding.

But they are usually very comfortable, she had replied.

The owner went to the back of the shop and returned with some paper and a tape measure. She had to measure and draw the shape of her foot in order to make a mold.

She had explained the purpose of the shoe and showed them the picture she had found of a pair of Italian 17th century women shoes. It had been really hard to find the picture since women tended to hide away their feet under big heavy skirts when ever they were posing in front of a painter. Or else, they had dropped all shoes and posed naked. Rarely showing their shoes.

They continued to meet every two days, for trying and measuring. They had to decide the shape and the size of the heel as well as the material and color of the shoe. In the end she decided she wanted a soft, gold-colored calf leather, and a heel with the height of 85 mm. It would suite the rest of the costume created in a turquoise-colored velvet, ornamented with gold, a dress modeled after the portrait of Anna Renzi.

After two weeks, the shoe mold was ready. She had to leave Venice since

the fieldwork study had come to an end, and they had decided that the shoes would be sent to her home when finished. To the island in the North.

Three months later, the Italian yellow postal package was delivered to her post office at the petrol station.

When she came home she opened the box. The shoes were extraordinary. She took off her wool socks and tied the shoes on to her feet.

It was a pair of shoes transforming her grandmothers woven carpets into an old wooden stage-floor at the heart of Venice.

Empty chairs in *Jardin du Luxembourg*

The garden was empty and grey. She didn't remember having experienced the garden so lifeless and quiet before. It was nothing strange in this of course. Every garden in the world would be the same during a grey day at the end of the winter. But the chairs caught her attention. They had been placed and directed by someone. They were waiting chair. Chairs longing to be used, filled with people: dreaming people, angry people, anxious people longing for leaving the chairs in the garden for a better place somewhere else. Providing anyone a physical moment of rest, it was the duty of a chair.

She walked up to one of them and sat down. It was a little wet, but she didn't mind drying it off with the end of her coat.

She had bent her knees and had given in to the weight of her body to fold and find the right weight in the chair. Comfortably she leaned back and looked up in the sky. She had the best view. Except that clouds now covered up what normally should be blue.



The garden was waiting like the chairs. Waiting for meaningful discussions, or useless ones. Conversations about all what seemed important to someone and less important to someone else. There would be quarrels between husbands and wives. Children would be crying for having dropped their ice creams, or for just not wanting to leave the garden for a waiting dinner table at home.

The purpose of the chair was to wait and please without intruding or participating.

Now she looked at the chair, not as a designer, whose eyes would make a totally different story (something that in the end also was part the life of the chair). She allowed her eyes to see a place providing comfort for reflection.

A place with a view.

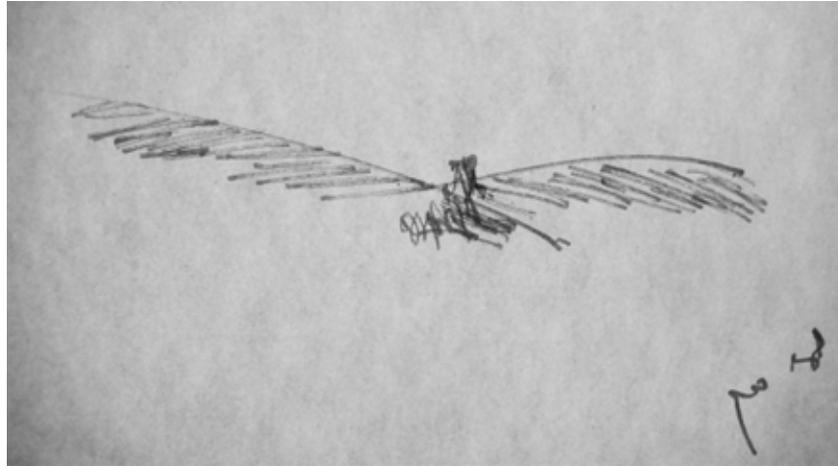
A basic physical structure in iron – of no importance at all.

A place for beginning new ideas and new thoughts.

A place like all other places.

Of no importance at all.

Just a place.



Growing wide in Switzerland

At the end of his lesson he had brought out his notebook and made her a drawing. It didn't say much at first. She used to keep it on the wall in her kitchen. Throwing an eye at it from time to time.

But lately the figure spreading its wings across the sheet told her more. It was an image of her self in moments of joy, in the air, stretching out, with a small head and large wings with plenty of air underneath them.

He was the Alexander Teacher she had been longing to meet for a long time. She had often heard his name being mentioned. He seemed to be a controversial man, someone who spoke his true mind.

Finally the day came when she had to travel via Switzerland. She decided to try to arrange for a meeting with him. She called him up and he made her an appointment for two continuous lessons.

In his studio he worked with her like the other teachers she had met over the year. He was sure of his knowledge. He spoke with a Hebrew accent. She had many memories of that accent, memories of incidents that had affected her life deeply.

Her body had been tired. She always tried to do a lot. Too much, accomplish things and finish projects. She liked it that way and that was how she liked her life to continue. But when the tiredness came, she pushed herself even harder. Tried to make her body to be long, by pushing it up. Stubborn as she was she practiced her breathing, until she felt that her whole body locked itself rather than releasing.

He told her to stop doing. She laughed inside since this she had been told by all teachers she had met. To stop controlling and to stop *doing* so much.

'It will come to you without the effort.'

Impossible she thought. But she knew he was right.

At one point he *did* something as well. He made a fast twist to her neck and she was caught by surprise. No one had ever done this to her in a lesson. It used to be a calm experience.

Allowing was the key to Alexander Technique. *Non-doing* and *allowing*.

His fast action had brought her out of control for a while. Had made her stop. Had made her forget about everything except his movement and her neck. She focused on the neck and wonder brought air to the spine.

'Goodness me', she thought. What happened?

The meeting with the teacher had happened about 5 years ago. He had drawn the image she now kept on her kitchen cupboard and it reminded her about her neck. Looking at the figure, she knew that her body would allow itself to grow out through the arms, as if flying in the air, in between everything that kept on circling around her.²¹³

In-between moments: *nothing* and *je-ne-sais-quoi*

*"This in-between describes a moment of transformation, rather than a 'something' that transforms from one state-of-being to another, or from one position to another."*²¹⁴

She was thinking about moments. Loooooong moments lasting for four years for example.

A lament was a moment of languishes. Within this moment were many moments of fear, panic, isolation, despair etc. In these moments were words and sentences speaking the moment, as well as notes sounding the moment. The moment of silence took over after the sound was gone.

It was just as if nothing had happened.

Nothing.

But something had truly happened. The one that had heard or performed

213. The meeting with Alexander Teacher Mr. Noam Renen, happened in Dec. 2007.

214. Cavalcante Scuback, see page 122, footnote 152.

a lament had been part of a movement, an emotional journey, a *state of being* rather than a *something*. They had travelled from point A to point B. Along the way much had happened. Many words had been spoken and many tears had flown, laughter had sprung through the walls of their rooms.

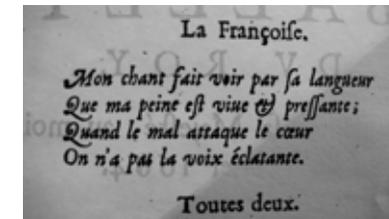
So when the sound finally had given in to silence, sound was still there, but not heard.

She tried to think of what happened in-between tears and laughter. And it was hard to explain. Tears did not normally shift into laughter just like that. Something triggered her to cry or to laugh. Something outside. And her crying was not a thing. It was a moment. For her moments usually overlapped gradually.

She remembered listening to a conversation from a distance. It was an Italian family talking across a kitchen table. They had been screaming and talking very loud and aggressively. In her room she had been wondering what had happened. She was not used to this kind of talking from her own home in Sweden. They must have an incredible quarrel, she thought to herself. It went on for a long time. And then it all ended. Things had calmed down and she decided to walk into the kitchen to join the others. What met her in the door was not what she had expected. They were all smiling and laughing. No trace of a major quarrel, not at all. It was as if they had the best time in their life.

This moment stayed with her. In her research she tried to understand the Italian moments of transformation in vocal expression and the scene in the kitchen seemed more or less like a mad scene. There she had a real example of a complete cut from one state of being to another. And it was not mad at all. Not to them. It was just normal. But to her it was all madness. Something she would never be expected to do in her own country.

In her performance she took this with her and tried to make music of it, since her work was to observe differences between an Italian and a French *in-between*, and how that could be vocally understood and performed.



In Lully's dialogue between the Italian and the French music, the French music sang:

'... When the pain attacks my heart, one has not a bright-shining voice.'

On n'a pas la voix éclatante, that is, a voice lacking the sparkles and the glitter. The passions in Lully's French music were not less intense. Not at all, on the contrary. There were passions that pulled the listener into the sound. Pulled them towards something unspoken. It was a sound requiring no screaming or crying. Not in the Italian way. When ever that heart was breaking the tone silently burned of languishes. A silent languish full of charm and *agrément*. A languish to be adorned for its beauty. Performed to touch and to enchant, but with something added to it, something almost impossible to define. It came with a certain grace and charm. The voice should perform the passions through *agrément*.

Richelet's dictionnaire of 1680 defined *agrément* as "*an agreeable manner*" and "*a delightful relation between a person's traits and his or her qualities.*"²¹⁵

*"However, [the agréments] that are the most necessary and that are to be sought out the most are those that go directly to the heart and are appropriate at all times, like acquitting one's self with good grace in everything that regards life and society. It seems to me that one cannot apply oneself enough to that."*²¹⁶

215. Dictionnaire François, contenant généralement tous les mot tant vieux que nouveaux et plusieurs remarques sur la langue françoise,... par Pierre Richelet, Amsterdam, 1706, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k58593308>, p. 31: AGRÉMENT, s.m. Prononcez agréman. C'est à dire, bonne grace, air qui plait dans une personne, manieres qui agréent en quelcun. Un agrément singulier, particulier, grand, inexprimable, un agreement charmant, touchant. Elle a dans toute sa personne un agrément qui enchante. Scar. rom. Rien n'approche de son agrément. St. Evremont, opera. Dire les chose avec le dernier agrément. Madame Gomes Vasconcelle, mari jaloux. Donner un agreement humain à des paroles toutes divine. On fut touché des agrémens qui paroissent en toute sa personne. Vasconcelle, Arioste, T.I.

216. Fader, 2003, p. 12.

The words were many for describe this manner, but at the same time it was hard to understand and define the essence. It was important for her to try to define this inexplicable term so she searched for answers elsewhere. It had to do with charm and how could one define charm?

“Charme is what makes sure that tedious perfection will not be left as a dead letter: when awakened, activated, animated dead perfections become capable of arousing love, and only then are they alive... In opposition to every definite thing (res), is charme not the very operation of beauty, the poetic influx through which beauty – far from remaining exposed, passive and quiescent, like a wax statue under the gaze of the spectator – will enter in a transitive relation with the human?... Charme makes beauty not only actual but efficacious. Plotinus had a term to indicate inefficacious beauty, perfection that does not act, and that is literally as ‘perfect’ as the passive past principle. He called it [...] lazy beauty.”²¹⁷

She continued to read the texts by Jankélévitch. He talked about the “*fluid continuity in becoming*”. His manner to formulate the essence of charm corresponded to her own perception of what she searched to perform, something that in the end made the French expression different from the Italian. There was a fluid continuity that had to convince the audience, which in the 17th century had a special relation to the words *charme* and *espirit*. The singer looked at various French seventeenth century texts and found dialogues that never seemed to end. Gracefully they continued in to infinity. They went on and on, and the words were of greatest charm and importance, but in the end, they were like ornaments, just aiming to please. *Agréments*. Because in the end no thing mattered really and nobody turned around, but it all flowed on without disruption. This was all so difficult to formulate in a simple manner, and since the term *nothing* had become a clear statement in Italian, its French counterpart would have to be named after its indefinable *je-ne-sais-quoi*.

The silent pause

Ah...
Da me...
Qui sola...
Ferma...

217. Jankélévitch, 2003. p. x.

Deh
Mio...
Gridi...
Moro...
Fuggite da me...

The words left a space behind them.
Silence.
What would come?
Where would it all lead?
Who would be there?
Death or life?

A longing of being was in every pause.
A longing for mercy.
A longing for peace.

She lifted her hand and air flowed in under her arms.
There was the pause again.
Hanging in the air.
Again.

Her head was flowing along.
With grace.
In to the air.
Out of her body.

The beauty in the graceful.
Not too much.
Not too little.
Just...
there...
She smiled...
high above her neck...
In-between...
her ears...
and her hips...



Fury

leave my palace...

Love...

spirits fly away...

Let myself...

Let me morn...

Betray...

Heavens...

I am filled...

With hate and truthful revenge...

Spirits leave my palace...

Let myself...

Betray...



Scene 2
ARMIDE
(1686)

Chiaro-scuro: from simplicity to complexity and back again

light / dark
weak / strong
black / white
life / death
and so on...

The image of the score was so simple. Black on white, sharp contours lined and controlled by the printers and their setting.

But the words contained so much more, so many other details.

The cursing of a man; the urgency of power – of a regime that destroyed a weakened figure.

It was all about extremes and their opposites. They competed continuously. Vulgarity with grace, grace with revenge, revenge with fear...

For Armide, darkness was her palace. Darkness controlled her tone and her position.

In the brute moment of the rehearsal, all faults and failures were heard, her forces and her strains, and her weak moments of distrust in her own voice.

But in the darkness hope appeared. A hope of light. A light that frightened but also drew her onwards. Pulled her body out in to a field of instrumental sounds. The form had invited others to join and the image changed. Her body opened up. Became a longing being. Longing for the light.

With the camera she searched her way forward. It traveled deep down into the darkness of her throat looking through the skin of the mouth from the inside. She wanted to see the vulgarity, to be in the ugly. Absorb the horror of darkness.

It was early morning hour when she left her home. The ten to four ferry.

Darkness surrounded the car and she looked out through the window.

Darkness.

She was excited. At the end of the day she would travel across another sea, to another island. Venice. She was longing.

There were lights out there as well, lights telling the captains where to go. Informing about dangers. Showing the way. They were bright and clear.

Reflections sparkled in the water. Light that would soon disappear, only to return again when darkness returned

Battling with fluidity

Tears of tiredness. Tiredness to explain. Tiredness to go on with words.

She felt she couldn't make her self more clear. Clear for an audience who waited to know all about themselves. They expected words they thought would clarify mysteries and their whereabouts. Her own learning was clear and poetic. That was her way of thinking. Did they not understand that she could not be different?

Here she stood fighting for her right to love, to hate and to revenge on stage. She would revenge on all norms around her. Tell them the truth about her work in her own rhetoric, with her own gestures. It was what they all did, the Armides around her. At least they ought to do so. Sing in their style. Following their maps.

These maps could bring valuable indications, indications clarifying the where about of ornaments and intuition. Most of the time explained in words, because no one had kept the sound of the 17th century. Only text remained.

The texts were fluid documents of meanings and opinions. Or as in poet-ics, they would perform the unspeakable in words. Gesture their directions.

In written dialogues words left each other space to fill in, to hook on to, to attach to or just listen to.

On stage she made her point. Saved it in a final document.

What would *art* be, if not a view of new images,
and of new voices.

Repeated, but always aiming to make a difference.

Aiming for a personal point of view.

Desire

*"The passion of Desire in as agitation of the soul, caused by the spirits, which disposes it to will for the future the things it represents to itself to be suitable. Thus we desire not only the presence of absent good but also the preservation of the present, and in addition the absence of evil, both what we already have and what we believe we might receive in time to come."*²¹⁸

218. Descartes, p. 66, Article 86. The Definition of Desire.

Hate mixed with a longing for revenge and love. Dizziness blurred her mind. And she searched for her spine, which would always make the stability return.

She was sitting on the bus looking out through the window. Nobody around her knew what happened inside her. Only she knew. Desire was driving her forwards, towards her goals – her dreams. She wanted to catch her lucky days ahead and preserve them, hold on to them and put them in a jar, so that she easily could look at them and say to her self: Look how lucky I am. I've got what I wanted.

But in a way she knew she did not really care. She knew that hear day dreaming resulted in a feigned desire. She was in fact perfectly happy as she was. Desiring only the current moment. What else could she do?

She took out her notebook and wrote anything that came to her mind. The pen decorated the page with little flowers. She used to start like that. In the end she would have at least seven pages of words she would never read again. They had come to her and they had been printed, but would never echo live in the future. She would always keep these notebooks. Never throw them away. Their presence satisfied her. They were part of her collection. She had to have them close to her. Her notes were part of her desire and her longing, reflecting the moment of living. And the words assisted her to remember. The roundness of the letter *e*, the pointed *r*. She wrote them in agitation, careful not to make mistakes. She played with the rhythm of the pen against the paper.

Ta-taam....ta-ta-taam... she-would... ob-tain ... her-goal...

Short-long... short-long Short-long... des-ire... for-love... a-tends...

Short-short-long..... short-short-long.... In-é-gale... ce-pa-lais... de-trui-sez... les- demons... short-short-long...

*“Inegal: m. ale: f. unequall, uneven; different, ill-matching, unlike.”*²¹⁹

She turned her head towards the front in the bus. While looking at the road ahead she understood why she had always loved being on the road, on her way. Being still, but always on the road, going somewhere. Like *being* in life itself.



Following the path of a singer

“Il faut partir adorable amarante”

Her eyes were so dark. Looking at her from the middle of the painting. It was as if they knew each other from before. Their eyes knew.

In the eyes of the other she found a safe heaven.

Hypnotized she had gazed.

Their eyes had met for the first time at *Musée de Louvre*, in one of the rooms with 17th century French art.

The painting was so tiny that she could have passed it without any notice.

The information next to the painting told her that it was most probably made by Antoine le Nain. It was called ‘*La Reunion Musical*’ or ‘*La Reunion de La Famille*’. In the middle there was the young girl in a yellow dress holding a book. She was singing.

The young girl lightened up the whole painting with her white face and bright dress, like a light in dark room.

Was this Anne? Anne Chabanceau de La Barre? A singer so loved by queen Christina that she was invited to perform at the court in the North.

The Singer had looked through the catalogues of the museum, looking for all possible information. Nowhere did she find a name of the family in the picture. But the time of the picture matched perfectly. Painted around 1640.

So, she decided it was Anne, the girl in yellow. They had looked at each other and they did not have to say anything more. The eyes of Anne became part of everything. Her eyes had looked at the Singer's audience when she later on performed the music collected in Paris. The same eyes always observed her from a wall in her working studio.

They followed the map invisibly drawn into the scores they performed. They jumped from word to word, searching for its meaning. On every note they had a wide view of the landscapes around them. Nothing stopped them,

219. Searching for the word: *Inégal*, Randle Cotgrave's 1611 French-English Dictionary.

even if their roads were bumpy and uneven.²²⁰

They used their voices to explain the mysteries of life. Never explaining everything at once, but always little by little.



Following her vision as an act forwards, was her choice. It was promoted out of pure desire for knowledge. She learned as she walked. The obstacles were many, but they never succeeded to disrupt her decision to go on. She didn't ask herself what she was doing? If it was right or not? Not then. She kept on walking.

Only later did she ask herself questions. What was she doing? Where was she going?

Que dis je? O suis-je?

Haunted by the inexplicable in her work she placed herself constantly in the corner of *wonder*. The moment of wonder was the only way for her to see and become enlightened. To see her own journey behind her and to look at her faults and errors. But her looking backwards didn't bring her back to her journey into the future. She had to consciously tell herself to stop worrying and wondering about the past. Forwards and backwards, they were her destiny. In the present she would always ask again and again:

Que dis je? O suis-je?

220. For nine years the Singer had followed Anne Chabanceau de La Barre. Obsessed she had collected material – texts, articles, and music – creating a concert dedicated to the 17th century Singer. The result was a recording: *Eclatante Amarante. A Portrait of the French Singer Anna Chabanceau de La Barre*. EB 2004.



Voices on a map

Que dis je? ...

O suis-je?

Helas!

She looked herself around. Heard nobody else than herself and her own words. Her toes carefully touched the ground in front of her...

Carefully looking back.

Was she alone?

No.

Not at all.

There were voices all around, all of them singing the words of Armide. They came from different continents, from different cultures and languages, different rules and habits. But they all had Armide in common.

Among these singers she had hoped to find a discussion on how to adopt the music of the 17th century. She had invited them to a meeting in Paris, to a dialogue. But the singers never came. They were too busy singing.

Instead she had an interesting meeting with theorist from various fields on the topic of *pure voice*. They had talked for four hours. An interesting discussion flowered around the table, ornamenting the two words, *pure voice*.

In the end the dialogue was reduced to two questions that kept on ringing inside her.

'Pure voice? Or Purified from what?'

The statement of *pure voice* had become a question, questioning purity in itself. The fact that it became a totally different linguistic form puzzled the Singer.

*"Purity is impure if it is not purifying"*²²¹

This she translated into: a *pure voice* would be impure if it wasn't a purifying voice.

After writing down this statement she saw the lines drawn in a new manner. The French sound was purifying that which was normally vulgar and horrible exaggerated.

But the line of Armide was nevertheless filled with harshness and horror. Would she dare to push the expression outside the limits of politeness?

221. Jankélevitch, 2003, p. x.

Could she find a manner of crying, screaming, and accusing being *fiery* (over-expressing) and *savant* (difficult or technical), without losing the effect of *gentleness* and *naturalness*?

Did singing in itself stand closer to fury, than speech?

Cries, howlings are evidently closer to singing than the rational order of logos.

What about, if the rationality of logos, was limiting the Singer from expressing the passions of the music?

Limitations of logos

*"It appeared last month an air with these words, which was an apology from the French Music and not a satire against the Italian music. One wanted to show that the French does not support repetition in the way the Italian language admits, and doesn't allow the same game. This specific air is the proof, possibly it is acceptable in Italian words, but it is ridiculous in French..."*²²²

She looked at the music in front of her, two songs by Michel de La Barre, both in French but set in two different musical styles. She sang them to herself.

The Italian musical style:

"Jay fait, Jay fait, Jay fait ce que j'ay pû ce que j'ay pû dans mon maleur extreme dans mon maleur extrême extreme extreme Pour vous cacher le feu, cacher le feu, le feu qui m'alloit consumer, qui m'alloit consumer, consumer;..."

The French musical style:

"Jay fait / ce que j'ay pû / dans mon maleur extreme / Pour vous cacher le feu / qui m'alloit consumer;..."

222. "Il a paru le mois dernier un Air sur ses Parolles, c'estois une Apologie de la Musique Française et non pas une Satire contre la Musique Italiene. On a voulu faire voir que la Langue Française ne souffre pas le repetitions que la Langue Italiene admet, et ne fournit pas le même Jeu; l'Airs en question en est la preuve, il seroit, peut-estre passable, sur des Parolles Italiennes, il est ridicule sur des Paroles Française...". La Barre, Michel de Recueil d'airs sérieux et a boire de differents authers, imprimé au mois de juin 1703, Paris, C. Ballard, 1703.06. (Translation to English my own).

It all seemed ridiculous, indeed. She couldn't really tell why it all seemed so strange. The French style was simple, without any extras. Just all words mentioned once right through, while the Italian style repeated itself on and on, like a machine. The two songs didn't mean to insult one another. Those were the words of the composer, who was French. Rather, he had meant to demonstrate a proof, that the French language was lacking the spirit of the game played by the Italian.

Figures of fury and madness in French

"When anger fills the soul, he who feels this passion has red and inflamed eyes, the pupils restless and shining, the eyebrows now lowered, now raised and contracted against each other. The forehead will appear deeply furrowed, forming wrinkles between the eyes; the nostrils will be open and enlarged, the lips full and turned out and pressed against one another with the under lip raised over the upper, leaving the corners of the mouth slightly open to form a cruel and disdainful grin."²²³

...and the details were telling everything about Fury. It was over-explaining something that would have been natural, but which had become vulgar and averting. By applying all the descriptive words, fury was kept inside a frame of normality. Controlled. And it would not be free to act by its own. Rather it would flower in a beam of a sentence. Who knows what would have become of fury if left on its own? A revolution. That had happened. Forever the aim was to never set down the foot, but to always be in the air, prepared for any possible impulsive action. If... it decided to take a new course, the words would be there, alerting the surrounding about what was about to happen, and...

Wonder, infinity and *nothing*

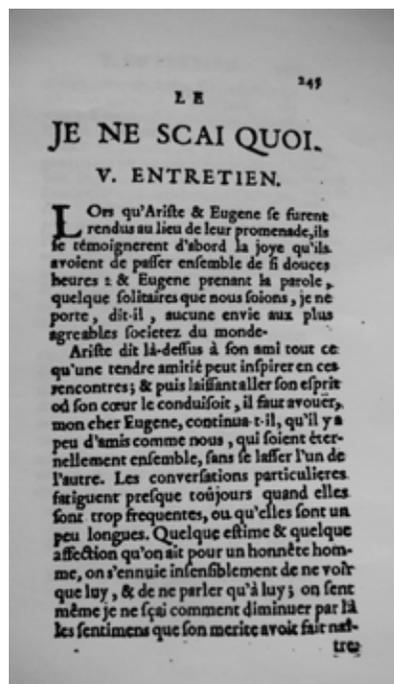
Silence rings in my head,
Words are no where to be found,
Yet I make words come out from inside
It is a wonder.
I cannot believe.
In black on white these words
Are visible on the screen.

223. Charles le Brun's words translated by Jennifer Montague in: Kromm, 2006, p. 44.

And I know that behind every word
Is an infinity of others words,
Each one of them surrounded by a world,
A real world.

When I try to grasp all these worlds,
Trying to make the visible on my screen,
Make them understood,
I realize the impossible task.
Frustration at first,
Then I look at myself.
The only way to reach into infinity
Is to go on singing.
The wordless song is a prism of all the worlds
Inside of me.
The worlds might not be understood to every one, the way I see them.
But when the wordless song is heard,
New words appears,
And they spread into a void.

Entretien: m. Intertainment, maintenance, means, nourishment; also, complement, complementing, or intertaining of one another with courteous speeches.



Epilogue

Entretiens de les trois chanteuses Renzi,
de La Barre et Belgrano ²²⁴

WONDER

They had agreed to meet after the performance. They had planned to take a walk in the garden of the *Palace of the Senses* ²²⁵. It was a beautiful garden they all loved and cared for. It was there they had found their love for Pure Sound. A sound that came with the river, which was flowing gently through the garden. The source of this river was unknown, but it was of less importance, since in this garden there was no need to know, only to sense moments of pleasure.

They came to the garden to exchange some thoughts on the Passions. Passions they knew from their own voices; passions they had learned to live with and mindfully nurture in their hearts. Their meeting would be a conclusion of what they had come to understand.

'I stood in wonder that day', said Belgrano, 'when I heard the words of Pure Voice. My head spun a web of meanings around the words and every meaning appeared as an image. I truly understood that it would only be by asking that I would come closer to what I didn't know.'

224. This text can be described as an internet dialogue between the three singers, Renzi, La Barre and Belgrano but which, as noted from page XXX, *entretien* also includes entertainment and performance.

225. The Palace of the Senses appears in Canto VII in Giovanbattista Marino's *Adone*, in which Venus educates the young Adonis about the pleasures of the senses. See Calcagno, 2003, pp. 475-483.

‘You speak in riddle as always,’ said Renzi. ‘It is not so strange as you make it all sound. You have the word and you sing it, with the understanding you have. The moment the word is uttered, it touches, if your meaning is the right one.’ ‘Yes,’ replied Belgrano ‘but how will I know if I have the right meaning? There seem to me not to be a simple answer to this.’ She looked at Renzi waiting for her to answer.

‘There will be as many as you can imagine. Each one of your thoughts is a start of something new, and you must never mistrust your intuition, by which you find your own desire and intention to go forward. As someone said, “*all meaning lies in intention, and if intention is altogether lacking, meaning is altogether lacking too.*”²²⁶ When you start to linger around, and question the intention behind a word too much, you lose some of your drive. In the voice, you will find the power of the word. But this will never have to stop you from repeating the word again and again and finding new intentions behind the word. Every time you say the word, it carries a meaning, a meaning that can never be wrong.’

Belgrano looked at de La Barre and saw that she was thinking, in silence. ‘I am not so sure,’ she finally added. ‘If I sing out my meaning over and over, then meaning loses its value, and splendor. The listener will become tired and so will I. I have to be aware of their presence as much as of my own.’ She looked at the others for a moment to see how they responded to her spoken thoughts. Their ears seemed to listen. ‘You might think I am *less* in everything compared to both of you. My voice less pungent, less forceful, less expressive, and more introvert perhaps. This might be how you perceive me. But I can tell nothing is more important to me than to express my meaning passionately. I will linger in the moment, hold on to my sound, and reflect in the pauses. All of this I will do again and again, but not for the sake of doing it again and again, for what has been expressed can not be taken back.’

‘I agree with you,’ said Renzi. ‘But still we sound different.’

‘Perhaps we do, perhaps we don’t,’ La Barre answered.

‘But when does amazement catch your soul?’ asked Belgrano. ‘Because it seems to me that wonder is the birth to all new sounds.’

‘Amazement, as you call it – I would prefer to say *wonder* – or *merveille*. It is there in everything I do, continuously. It is the base of all my acts. Sometimes

226. These words are by Friedrich Nietzsche from his *Will to power*, cited in: Kierans, Kenneth *On the unity of Nietzsche’s philosophy*, The Canadian Journal of Philosophy and Humanities, Animus 14 (2010) www.swgc.mun.ca/animus (February 2011).

more and sometimes less but always there preparing a ground for every sound.’

‘Wonderful’ said Belgrano, ‘I think I can understand’. For four years she had been marveled by all words she had heard. She had been amazed to see how her own voice had found confidence through words. Perhaps her love for the French sound was hidden in the fact that she had no wish to arrive at a conclusion. Not at all. But to go on in the midst of all the marvelous words around her. There was something superior in the French vocal expression. An enlightened marvel, created only by looking up into the sky, ignoring cruelty and disasters normally to be found everywhere on the ground. It was not that she admired this kind of marvel, but it was something in the self-absorbed narcissistic air that interested her. ‘La France,’ she thought in silence.

Then Renzi could not be quiet any longer. ‘**Me-ra-vi-glia**’ she said. Four sounds in varied characters, different and colorful. All of them based at the front of my mouth. They are there and they speak for themselves. They are open sounds, open for improvisation. When you stayed with me in Venice we observed these clear sounds together: in the garden, in the theater, in your costume, and in the decorations. We were amazed. Fine. That was all remarkable. But then we ran from one end to the other looking for details even more *meraviglioso*. We found them in every leaf, in every stone, in every step and in every motion of a hand. These details were our material for building our sounds. The brick and the marble both impressed us. They sounded different in our voices. Just like love and love could sound different from one second to another.’

She had become agitated, both in her voice and in her gestures. De La Barre looked at her, and she smiled. ‘I can see we are making progress’ she said and gave Belgrano a friendly touch on her arm. ‘We have already entered our second topic I believe, or what do you think?’

DESIRE

Renzi, who first had to calm herself before she could go on, realized that their dialogue would be an embodiment of the whole thesis, and she started to laugh. She was in fact always close to laughter, even in her most sorrowful moments. It was part of her character. Belgrano walked in between her friends. She felt close to them both and was happy. She trusted in them, and in all their differences.

‘Yes,’ she said, ‘we have seen what desire does to a human being. The desire to express an opinion. The desire in my voice is heard by its animation and

vibration. Would it be right to say that?' Here de La Barre spoke. 'Vibration yes, of course, it is a means whereby we managed to touch.' She stopped and searched for more words. But they didn't seem to come to her. Renzi looked at her with tenderness. She raised her hand and gently caressed cheek of De La Barre. 'It is in the movement of our hands when we reach for something. We do the same with our voices. If they remained without vibration they would be cold and dead.' Belgrano thought of the day she had been standing with Arianna on the rocks on her island. It was so cold and icy. But this cold had touched her as well, so then how could that be? 'Because you were there,' Renzi said, as if she had heard her thoughts. 'You stood there with your vibration, moving in the space with your own memories. These memories moved into your being and this caused you to feel. Perhaps these were memories of cold rocks, and they caused you to feel sorrow. But if you had been ignorant of your own memories, you would not have been touched. Desire is a little like wonder. They are passions that create other passions. Without desire you will be cold. And you will never find Pure Voice.'

'Desire is an active direction' said de La Barre suddenly. It is a transfer zone between two states of mind or two things. And it is in this transfer zone I like to place my voice. Just like with wonder, as you so clearly stated, Renzi. Desire is a passion that has no opposite. It is a force leading us into both love and hatred, as well as into joy and sadness.²²⁷ So let us continue straight into the active passions since at this point I can't see much difference between our ways of perception. What becomes crucial is when love appears. Then we react differently.'

LOVE

They had arrived at a place in the garden where a statue of LOVE had been placed. It was a woman seated on a stone. She had a face so full of tenderness. All three of them had to stop and look closer. They sat down on the lawn in front of the woman.

'She loves someone who is far away,' said de La Barre. 'Far away but also there inside her head, so close. Distant but close. Two opposites as usual, sensed in the same moment. I would sing her love with longing in my voice. Careful longing. Every word would be a part of a continuous longing and hoping.'

227. Descartes, 1989 (1649), p. 66.

'What about if her love had to be hidden?' asked Renzi. 'If her love would bring shame on her and her family, would the sound be different then?' 'No, it would not. It would perhaps be a little softer, quieter, because someone might hear her, but on the other hand, it would not change the sound. Longing would still be there. Though a difference would be heard in the rhythm of the text. The *suspensions* would be more significant. The fear would be heard in the in-between silences. In every pause, the sighs would be shorter and with more accents. And this would mean a different result. There would be one or two other passions present, such as fear and sorrow.'

'Yes, also for me the words would build the sound, but I would not hold back. In me, there would be anger and opposition, because who can forbid me to love? A rebel inside me would wake up. I would rather shut the doors to my room, than to sing with less volume. If my love is so strong, nothing can keep it away from me. On stage, I would stand up; not passively lean back in longing. I would find ways to be close to him, rather than wait. Of course fear would appear. It would sound for a second or two. The fast movement between these passions would be explosive and burning. No dreaming can get me to him faster than my real action. I move and act and without ever considering what anyone would think of my acts.'

Belgrano had been listening. She tried to understand their differences. The intensity of Love would be strong in both her friends. She thought of the music they had been exploring in her research. It stretched over almost 60 years. In these years the Italian vocal sound seemed to develop into more distinguished and calculated virtuosity, while the French who had been virtuous in ornamentation from the beginning, had developed a more conscious dramatic style. She said so to her friends and they could to some extent agree.

HATRED

Was the next passion to be touched upon. Renzi stood up and dusted off her skirt. 'Yes, hate should be heard in every consonant. A fact nobody could ignore, of could you, de La Barre?' De La Barre replied immediately. 'Hate is ugly, and the ugly is something I try to avoid. If someone kills my love, then I will be angry, but I will mourn my loss more than being struck by hate. The loss will take my life away and I will imagine all that could have been; all happiness we won't share any more. So hate will be less important in me. But look at Armide, who was a sorceress, she had every right to throw her spells and she would be expected to do so. She would not hate, but show her power and

strength. There would be an evil desire in her act rather than hatred.' Belgrano couldn't stop herself from commenting. 'Hatred in Italian would be an evil desire in French?' A performance of Lully's opera *Armide* on-line had come to her attention and she told her friends about it. Renaud's kiss. It was by the act of his kiss, that Armide was as if consumed by the evil desire you just described. She looked out at the audience in wonder mixed with cruel desire. Wonder forced her to react through longing, sorrow and horror. She spoke the word *haine*²²⁸, but her voice and body expressed evil amazement and shock rather than revenge.' The more Belgrano recalled this interpretation, the more she saw the wondrous longing for revenge inside her. It was outstanding. She had been carried away by the beauty of Armide's reaction and action.²²⁹

'Yes, it is the longing and the desire that are the forces in my style' said La Barre, 'and all my ornaments, pronunciation, suspension, breath and so on, they are my tools. Longing and desire mixed with oppositions such as love and hatred.'

Renzi looked to the ground. She was tired. She had been performing every night during the last week, and she was tired of words. She wanted to sing. Only to sing. Not to talk, but she knew that Belgrano was happy. She seemed to have understood something essential and that had been the purpose of her research.

'You must not forget one thing just. Definitions are dangerous. They lock you up, and if you are not aware enough, you will be trapped in words, which, in the end loses their ability to sound. When the unspeakable have been defined and catalogued, you will have an archive of words, but where will the sound be?' Renzi looked straight into her eyes. Something in her look made Belgrano realize that she spoke an important truth.

She had only recently come to love the stage with her whole self, because of a senseless curiosity for Nothingness. On stage she had found it and she was desperately trying to describe this Nothingness. Battling day and night she had searched for words. Words that she found everywhere in her books, describing the indefinable. She was exhausted, deep down into her soul.

'You have to search elsewhere.' Renzi had seen in Belgrano's face that she had reflected on the danger of clear definitions. 'You have to walk around the

228. 'Hatred' in English.

229. The performance of *Armide* was interpreted by Stephanie d'Oustrac; a performance by Les Arts Florissant and conducted by William Christie. I would have included this scene in my thesis, with the kind permission I received by Les Arts Florissant, but the performance on line is an illegal copy, and an authorized film will not be available until May 2011.

topic. That's the way you will find it. You will know without clear definitions. And your voice will be a sounding proof. So just let it be for now and let us turn to the next passion.

JOY

Belgrano looked up and suddenly her fears were all gone. Her troubled mind, constantly haunted by her task of defining vocal Nothingness, had found new light. She could look at joy and laugh at herself for her stubbornness, which she could be so grateful for, but at the same time, so furious with. It made her walk courageously, and eager to overcome any possible difficulty. However her stubborn character was often excessive.

Here, a good laugh was needed in the midst of all her stubbornness, tears and her fury. Renzi laughed as well, louder than both of the others. De La Barre smiled and started to hum a tune. Ornaments decorated every inch invoking joy to also be full of a desiring sound, and full of longing.

Belgrano, who never liked to repeat herself, started to feel like a parrot. Using the same words over and over. But she was not going to repeat herself in French anymore. No. Longing and desire had now to be mentioned once and for all, and after that it would be as though they were printed in the background structure. After that all other passions would caress the background structure and ornament it in their own particular way. And always with charm and an eye directed to the ears of the audience.

The Italian voice didn't have this background of passions so profoundly integrated as the French, but rather, all passions jumping around hazardously, risking going too far, and in madness it would certainly happen.

Renzi started to hum a tune as well. It was a dance, with plenty of rhythms. The baseline was stable, but above she invented a line of division, like pink flowers ornamenting a cherry tree in spring. Renzi took Belgrano's hand and lifted her from the ground. Her voice became stronger and louder and she sang with such passions that Belgrano felt her heart was on the verge of exploding. Around and around they turned on the lawn. Their dance didn't stop until the last word had been sung. Both of them fell to the ground, empty and dizzy by the circling movement.

La Barre had looked at them and slowly she raised herself onto her feet. She had felt happy looking at them, clapping her hands and singing along, but now she had returned to a more serious mood. She raised her arm gracefully into the air, not a single muscle was straight. Just as Belgrano had learned how

it should be. Slowly, slowly she moved her body around the axis of her arm, as though her arm was the center of the universe. The line of her body spoke of 'becoming', of a 'coming-into-being'. Her body moved around as though in a state of trance, then the circular movement transformed into a search led by her arm. It was no search really, because the arm knew its direction. It followed a quiet sound, unheard by the human ear, but only by the human heart. The arm found its way to Renzi and Belgrano. La Barre did not touch them with her hand, yet they followed her, enchanted. A sorceress had stepped into her body and they were under her spell. They moved on towards the path and then de la Barre found herself again. Her arm found its normal position and she looked as though she had become herself. Her dance had made them speechless. It had been a soundless dance. Her voice had been embodied by her silent body.

SORROW

They had one more passion left. It was the passion of sorrow.

They had been moved to tears by de La Barre, and she had danced the last prelude for them, before leaving and taking farewell. Belgrano understood that something really important had finally happened in her, during their dialogue. It was as though her four years of researching *pure voice* truly had come to a conclusion. It would end, and she knew she had reached a point when she would be transferred into something new. She had finally understood the essence of *pure voice*, and she no longer needed to continue further on this quest. Instead she would make sure she remained true to its value. And that would be her next research task; maintaining the *pure* within her own voice. Her sorrow that the end was approaching was now mixed with her desire for what was to come.

Renzi and de La Barre were both specialists on sorrow, and they both had their extreme manners of performing this passion. 'You might think that this is the end,' Renzi said, 'but it is not. We will continue, even if we will part for some time. We will cry and we will languish because that is part of our life. And for those who cannot cry, we will cry as well. That is one of our duties.' 'Yes,' said La Barre, 'I have known you for many years now and we have cried all the time. Therefore we won't go deeper into sorrow. It has been part of every one of our acts. We know the tearful sounds of lamentation. Not least from the second Act.'

Belgrano looked at them and said, 'Will you wait for me a little longer? I have one more thing to do before I end this project.'

'Of course we will. Go and finish what you have to do. We will wait for you at the gate.'

Belgrano walked back to a place she had found earlier on their walk, not that far away from the gate. It was an almond tree, standing all alone in a corner of the garden.

She took out a letter paper and a pen from her bag, and sat down under the tree.

Garden of the Senses, February 2011

Gentilissimo Signor Gravina,

Since I heard you mention PURE VOICE, I couldn't think of anything else.

I was touched. Touched by something I had to understand. Something I thought I knew, but that I couldn't explain. I searched for answers and words about this 'something' I wasn't sure how to define at all. Yet, I was obsessed to know everything about it.

Your words of PURE VOICE forced me into lamentation and madness. I sang and spoke in French, in Italian, and in English – far from perfect (forgive me my errors). But the words I used were the ones I know, and I had to be satisfied with them, since they explained all that I know about PURE VOICE today. My own language, Swedish, could not explain it better.

So you might wonder, 'what did she find'? You might perhaps be as curious as I was.

Let me see how I can make it short and simple.

— I had been in moments of Pure Voice, but only sometimes. I was hoping to find it again whenever I needed to, through a definition expressed in words. I have now learned that the moment of PURE VOICE will occur only when NOTHING takes over my being; when I can let go and be aware, both at the same time; when I can see my own paradoxes in the face and accept them with all my being, without commenting; when I can sense all 'that is possible and all that is impossible'²³⁰ – in me – all at the same time and say nothing.

— I have learned that the Italian 'being' and the French 'becoming' served me to literally define vocal 'nothingness' and 'je-ne-sais-quoi'. To use simple words (which I know will never be enough to describe the complexity of this topic), I have understood that in lamentation and madness (or feigned madness) the Italian passions are based on fast changes and separations, while in French the passions will move in a continuous flow above longing and desire. In Italian the Self is concerned only with the Self-in-the-moment, while in French the voice

230. Referring to Manzini's comment, footnote 62, p. 54.

will always strive to perform for the sake of the charms, may it be the charms-of-the-Self or the charms-of-the-Selves-of-the-listeners.

*— The Nightingale taught me about vocal variety and madness; it showed that transformations occurred suddenly and with mindful intuition; it pointed out that the body would then respond automatically in absolute NOTHINGNESS; where **no** question would find **no** answer. It also taught me that*

— over-vocalization is the means whereby I will arrive in a state of nothingness. Ornaments showed me that Wonder will open my mind to awareness, which in the end will give me the experience of even more detailed ornaments hidden by Art and Nature.

And all this I would never have learned unless I would have been part of and not separated from an Academy open to everyone who, in his or her specific manner, would touch on the PURE, an Academy allowing extreme opposition and absolute curiosity to be its motto.²³¹

Carissimo signore Gravina, I am so grateful for your inspiration. All that I have told you now may be of no importance to this world at all. My words have been written and illustrated through fragments: pictures and films recorded by myself (a layman without any knowledge in the art of photography or film); senseless texts, which will most probably be perceived as naïve, written in vain. But these fragments had to be assembled (this could not have been done differently at this moment) and they have changed me and my voice into something new. And with this new knowledge I will continue. My mind is already prepared for exploring the world behind the ornaments hoping to better understand how far into infinity I can reach through vocal 'touch'. But that is another chapter.

So finally, please forgive me for having stolen your precious time.

*Your most humble, affectionate and passionate servant
La Curiosissima Cantante
Elisabeth Belgrano*

231. The academy I refer to here is not only one but a combination of three academies: the Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts; the Academy of Music and Drama at University of Gothenburg; and the academic field of Artistic Research.

Belgrano folded the paper and put it back into her bag.

She looked at the pen in her hand and thought to herself that the pen had been one of her means of coming to understand the voice. She had to hold on to it also in the future. Always while singing.

She stood up and looked into the network of branches and flowers above her head. The scent of spring was in the air.

The beginning of something new was on its way.

She walked to the gate where her friends were waiting for her.

They opened the gate and walked out together.



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DVD

The three acts in the *music research drama* have been recorded live in gardens and palaces, on rocky beaches with plenty of wind, in a practice room with a lot of traffic outside, etc. Technique and tools for recording have been of the most *simple* kind: at the beginning, an iPod with a microphone was used, easily connecting to a computer, and eventually as the project developed a ZOOM Q3HD video-recorder became the main recording tool. The purpose has always been to catch the immediacy of the singer's thoughts and inner images – first considering 'timing' rather than focusing on sound quality.

Films have been shot by Elisabeth Belgrano and Monica Milocco, and then edited by Elisabeth Belgrano.

All photos have been shot by Elisabeth Belgrano, unless otherwise credited.

The musician and dancer participating in Act II are Anders Ericson (theorbo) and Monica Milocco (dance/movement).

Voices from the Chorus of Other in Act III are represented by Patricia Petibon and Guillemette Laurens, as well as Les Folies Française directed by Patrick Cohën-Akenine.

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Swedish summary

Denna avhandling beskriver en sångerskas konstnärliga forskningsprocess från det allra första mötet med det musikaliska manuskriptet, fram till stegen ut på scengolvet och stunden då föreställningen kan börja.

Syftet med avhandlingsprojektet är att formulera, definiera, analysera och skapa en djupare förståelse av begreppet *pure voice* – den rena rösten, den klara rösten – utifrån en sångerskas praktiskt gestaltande perspektiv. Praktik och reflektion sammanfogas i en dialog med teorier rörande begreppet *Intet*, ett begrepp som livligt debatterades i akademiska kretsar i både Italien och i Frankrike under 1600-talet, samtidigt som operagenren började få den form som vi idag kan uppleva på våra operascener. *Intet* kom att nära förknippas med den kvinnliga sångerskan, hennes rena röst, men också hennes förmåga att utsmycka och ornamentera en musikalisk komposition. Detta jämfördes även med nakna galens förunderliga tonspråk. Den virtuositet och de ljudklangsideal som vi idag möter på operascener världen runt, bottnar i 1600-talets förhållande till vokal ornamentering. När operaformen tog sina första steg på scengolvet handlade det mer om att med röstens musikaliska möjligheter forma *ordens* innebörd till oväntade paradoxala verkligheter och överkligheter, medan många sångare i dag oftast lägger större vikt vid att skapa klanger och ljud som blir viktiga i sig själva. Denna förändring kunde upplevas på operascener redan under 1700-talets början.

Formen för avhandlingen hämtas ifrån den musikdramatiska traditionen. Gestaltningssprocessen står i centrum som ett musikaliskt drama, här i en prolog och tre akter följt av en epilog. Det musikaliska dramat presenteras på en DVD, och dialogen kan följas i *Librettot* (del I). Till detta *libretto* följer ytterligare en text, *Il Cannocchiale* (del II), som fungerar som en slags teater-

kikare där föreställningen fördjupas, utvecklas, förklaras, belyses, problematiseras och kanske till och med får publiken att förbryllas. Modellen med att skapa en teaterkikartext hämtas ifrån operaföreställningen *La Finta Pazza* (Den Falska Galna), uppförd i Venedig 1641. I anslutning till dess operalibretto publicerades *Il Cannocchiale della Finta Pazza*.

Det musikaliska materialet består av sex scener från italienska och franska musikaliska dramer från 1600-talet. Scenerna har alla klagosången och vansinnesscenen som sin gemensamma nämnare. Dessa scenformer beskrivs i musikvetenskapliga källor som operauppsättningarnas absoluta glansnummer. Scenerna kom dessutom oftast att gestaltas av sjungande kvinnliga skådespelerskor. Kvinnornas gestaltningar hamnade i ett retoriskt gränsland där regler och mönster fick tillåtelse att sträcka sig i de mest oväntade riktningar. Det vansinniga agerandet satte sin prägel på den intellektuella debatten i Venedig så till den grad att dessa *prima donne* kom att betraktas som gestaltande symboler för begreppet *Intet*. Målet med denna avhandling har varit att hitta nya sätt att praktiskt och teoretiskt formulera skillnader och likheter mellan de italienska och franska gestaltningssformerna utifrån begreppet *Intet* (Nothingness). Studien har resulterat i en fördjupad förståelse för ytterligare ett närliggande begrepp som bättre kunnat beskriva *intets* motsvarighet utifrån ett franskt vokalt perspektiv, nämligen 1600-tals begreppet *Je-ne-sai-quoi* (Jag-vet-inte-vad).

ARGOMENTO – SCENARIO – PERSONAGGI

En kort inledning i brevform under titeln *Argomento* beskriver syftet med avhandlingsprojektet. Detta brev ger även en antydning om hur text- och filmmaterialet kan användas av andra forskare och intresserade. Ett *Scenario* beskriver akternas handling och förlopp, medan överskriften *Personaggi* förklarar karaktärerna och personerna som gestaltas i föreställningen:

- **Nature** och **Art**, utmanar sångerskan in i dramat och låter henne hitta sig själv i deras närvaro;
- sångerskan själv blir i dramat dialog synonym med **Mind**, **Body**, och **Voice**;
- en kör av referenser, både teoretiska och praktiska uppenbaras sig i the **Chorus of Other**;
- en **dansare** infinder sig i dialog med sångerskan i andra akten och deras samtal fördjupas i en studie av rörelse och improvisation;

- sångerskan tolkar fyra kvinnoroller från sex olika musikdramer: **Deidamia**, **Ottavia**, **Arianna** / **Ariane** och **Armide**.
- två sångerskor från 1600-talet, den italienska **Anna Renzi**, och den franska **Anne Chabanceau de La Barre**, samtalar i Epilogen om passionernas roll i gestaltningsprocessen. Deras tankar och reflektioner tillsammans med den nutida sångerskan **Elisabeth Belgrano**, formas utifrån Descartes sex grundpassioner: förundran, längtan, kärlek, hat, glädje och sorg.

PROLOG

I Prologen presenteras bakgrunden och forskningskontexten till avhandlingsprojektet, liksom de teorier som tidigare behandlats *teoretiskt* inom olika forskningsområden, och som i detta avhandlingsprojekt förs in i ett metodiskt och konstnärligt vokalt *praktikbaserat* experimenterande. Prologen inleds med en beskrivning av upplevelsen av den *rena rösten*, som en drivkraft in i ett absolut *vara* på scenen. Kan denna upplevelse ha att göra med 1600-talsbegreppet *intet*? Detta blir den primära frågeställningen som leder sångerskan vidare in i studien.

Den akademi som låg bakom många av de första operaföreställningarna i Venedig i mitten av 1600-talet ägnade mycket tid åt att formulera sig om vad *intet* kunde innebära. Deras beskrivning kom att belysa den kvinnliga sångerskan som en symbol för just *intet*, med hänvisning till hennes fallenhet för att utsmycka och ornamentera. Hennes tolkningar kom även att jämföras med näktergalens förmåga att trollbinda och överraska sina åhörare.

Den kvinnliga sångerskans höjdpunkter på operascenen i Venedig var klagoscenen och vansinnesscenen, vilka inlevelserikt skildras i historiska källor. Dessa scener var redan vanliga inom *Commedia dell'arte-traditionen* och fick på sätt och vis ny energi genom sitt intåg i en musikdramatisk kontext. I Venetiansk opera tillät man sångerskan att hänge sig åt sin extrema sorg, där karaktärens mest intima känsloladdningar uttrycktes med både suckar och rop. När övergången till vansinne var ett faktum, fanns där ingen tid att tveka. Orden rusade ur hennes mun och allt verkade fullständigt osammanhängande men trots allt rörande och högst verkligt. Allt skedde i stunden och hämningarna hade för länge sedan försvunnit ur hennes medvetande.

I fransk vokal kammarmusik från 1600-talet (*airs de cour* och *airs sérieux*) finner man ofta klagosånger s.k. *plainte*, där extrem ornamentik blev ett verktyg för gestaltning av passion och känsla. Den franska musiken syftade inte till att chockera sin publik, utan snarare till att locka den närmare sig, få den att

längta och att trollbinda den vid något som aldrig skulle kunna uttalas, formuleras eller namnges. När denna lockelse fördes in på den musikdramatiska scenen i Frankrike, blev gesterna större, men aldrig vulgära och utmanade som den italienska. I den franska stilen fanns ständigt en uppvisning av starka passioner, alltid upplysta av charm blandad med längtan och förundran.

Observationer av de vokala experimenten som alla utgår från det musikaliska materialet i avhandlingen dokumenteras i skriftliga reflektioner. Alla tankar och texter berör den intimitet som uppstår mellan den professionella närvaron i gestaltningen och den personliga och ofta outtalade privata medvetenheten i all rörelse och allt agerande med hänvisning till begreppet *mindfulness*. Detta begrepp har behandlats i både neurovetenskap och känsloforskning och kan enligt denna studie även knytas till Alexanderteknik, en metod utvecklad av F.M. Alexander i början av 1900-talet för att medvetandegöra mänskliga vanor och ovanor, med syfte att medvetet hitta en balans i både kropp och själ.

Sångerskans inre bilder i tre akter

Efter prologen följer själva dramat. De tre akterna för åskådaren rakt in i sångerskan inre bildvärld, i stunden då hennes ögon möter notbilden. Tankarna som föds i mötet med noterna, melodin, orden och dess handling synliggörs i *librettots* tre akter, medan den tysta verksamheten *inom* drar henne in i ett kaos av ord och upplevelser som utkristalliseras i *Cannocchiale*-delen, föreställningens teaterkikare. I

FÖRSTA AKTEN

problematiseras och granskas temat *att gestalta förvandling* (Embodying Transformation). I

Scen I

går sångerskan in i Deidamias vansinnesscen från operan *La Finta Pazza* (den Falska Galna) komponerad 1641 av Francesco Saccati med text av Giulio Strozzi. Scenen inleds med att *Nature* och *Art* förbereder scenen för sångerskan. Deras ord speglar ett paradoxalt förhållningssätt som indirekt beskriver syftet med vansinnesscenen, där motsägelser och ytterligheter möts i stunden och på så vis överraskar åhörarna och försätter dem i ett till-

stånd av både osäkerhet och oförklarlig förundran. Dediama skildras som både man och kvinna. Klädd som en krigare skriker hon åt sina soldater att ta till vapen. Orden är bestämda och hon gestaltar den fullkomliga upplevelsen av varje ord: enkelt men samtidigt komplext, då varje ord genomströmmas av en mängd olika förståelser. Hennes första ord *Guerrieri all'armi* tolkar hon både som *Soldater till vapen* men också som *soldater för oväsen*. Detta är bara ett exempel på de ordlekar som uppstår i sångaren inre. Ordens förhållande till de sjungna meningarnas helhet kommer i skymundan och orden för istället sångerskan in i världar som fogas samman med personliga och privata upplevelser och erfarenheter. Från att ha varit en soldat, förvandlas Deidamia till Sköna Helena, världens vackraste kvinna. Skönheten sätts i relation till gudarna, och Helenas makt visar sig vara högre än till och med Jupiters, som all sin storhet till trots är en riktigt usel älskare. Helena dominerar scenen fram till dess att hon förvandlas till en övergiven älskarinna, på gränsen till att drunkna i sina egna tårar. Hennes klagan fyller scenen och hon ber desperat om sina vänners hjälp. Hela denna scen speglar snabba skiften mellan sångerskans många jag och många identiteter. Utan minsta tvekan kastar hon sig mellan språk, tal och sång. Detta var ett av kännetecknen för vansinnesscenen som även gestaltar begreppet *intet* då denna scen utgjorde "*allt som är möjligt och allt som är omöjligt*" (Calcagno, 2003). I

Scen 2

tränger sig sångerskan in i *ordens betydelse* utifrån Ottavias två klagosånger från operan *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (Poppeas kröning) komponerad 1642 av Claudio Monteverdi med text av Francesco Busenello. Hon smakar på vokaler och stavelser och förvandlar dem till tankar, känslor och ljud. Allt filtreras genom hennes egna personliga minnen och erfarenheter, men också genom andras forskning. Hon söker sig genom sina egna minnen av förluster och avsked och väver in dessa i Ottavias förtvivlan och sorg. Längst in i hennes röst finns den privata tonen, som aldrig förverkligas offentligt, men som trots allt gör gestaltningen möjlig. Den gör henne levande och öppen för att ta steget in i andra roller: in i rollen som Ottavia, in i rollen som 1600-talssångerskan som tvingas lämna sitt hem för att få agera på scen, in i ordens och tonernas roll.

ANDRA AKTEN

Scen 1

skildrar sångerskans sökande längs med den röda tråd som Arianna lämnat efter sig. Musiken är från Claudio Monteverdi's opera *Arianna*, komponerad 1623, och det är Arianna själv som uttrycker sin sorg med orden *Lasciate mi morire* – låt mig får dö. Här följer sångerskan nyckelorden *ornamentik*, *repetition*, *rörelse* och *improvisation* in i en förståelse kring sitt eget uttryck. Genom sina vokala ljud blir hon varse den fåfänga som varje ord bevisar. Orden uttalas, ljuden klingar, men de försvinner in i ingenting, som om de aldrig ens existerat. Tillsammans med Dansaren rör Sångerskan sig längre in i sina egna tankar och mönster. Deras kroppar arbetar sig samman och musklerna upplever nya möjligheter som sätter sin prägel på allt agerande. Tryggheten och lyhörddheten i mötet med den andra ger den egna rörelsen ett större spelrum utanför normer och förväntningar. Inom ramen av deras kroppar, som sångerskan stundom uppfattar som en kropp snarare än två, finner sig Arianna. Hennes steg rör sig fysiskt och mentalt in i den historiska miljö där operan på 1600-talet formade sin musikaliska egenhet. Ariannas kropp går bokstavligen in genom porten till den venetianska teatern, där nuet påminner henne om all ny teknik, om närvaro och om förunderlig fågelsång. Arianna frågar sig: *var är vi? – dove siamo?* Sångerskan och Dansaren frågar sig: vilka är vi? Orden och frågorna gör dem ännu mer lyhörda inför nuet som uppstår i improvisationen om och om igen.

Den italienska Arianna får ytterligare en dimension genom sitt franska alter ego Ariane i Michel Lamberts tolkning av Ariannas klagosång (också framförd i Jean-Baptiste Lullys *Ballet de La Naissance de Venus*, 1665), denna gång på franska. Ariane framträder i

Scen 2

där hon lockar Sångerskan till sig. De balanserar hela tiden på gränsen till det uttalade. I hennes gestalt behandlas inte *varat* på samma sätt som i Ariannas, utan hennes *jag* uttrycker ett ständigt pågående, ett tillkommande och ett tillblivande. Ingenting blir upprepat i det hon gör. Hon lägger i stället till, vrider om, vänder ut och in på, och finner njutningen i att förhålla sig till allt och inget. Sångerskan vandrar ut på klipporna som hör till hennes privata *jag*. Varje steg på dessa klippor påminner henne om Ariannes första ord *Ro-*

chers, vous etes sourds – Klippor ni är döva. Förstelnad och täckt av snö och is reser sig graniten i sångerskans synfält. Utsmyckad, fast, formad och bestämd men kylig. Sångerskan trevar sig in i melodin. Behagfullt slingrar sig sången in i klippornas komplexa mönster, och tillsammans med Dansaren balanserar de längs Arianes röda tråd, väl medvetna om att aldrig gå för långt ifrån trådens verklighet.

Armide flyger in i

TREDJE AKTEN

Scen 1

Musiken är hämtad från Lullys *Ballet des Amours Déguisés* från 1664. Här flyger hon högt och lågt som om hon befinner sig i ett mellanrum. Hela tiden med en riktning, gestaltande *je-ne-sai-quoi*. I denna scen agerar hon utifrån italienska ord, men på en bädd av fransk rytm och musik. Hon söker efter Rinaldo, och i hennes sökande dansar passionerna tillsammans med rytmen. Ingenting överraskar, emedan hon följer ett tydligt mönster. Vad som fångar Sångerskans uppmärksamhet är riktningens intensitet, som aldrig släpper taget om det osynligt okända. Hon uttalar orden och tvekar inte inför att observera deras effekt, men samtidigt är hon medveten om att ingenting förklarar verkligheten, eftersom verkligheten faktiskt inte kan förklaras, eller snarare, verkligheten finns alltid närvarande. I mellanrummet inser hon mer och mer att allt hon vet är verklighet, att det är där hon finner sanningen. Men det blir också påtagligt att allt det hon vet kan förändras till nya sanningar. Allt hänger på hennes förmåga att kasta sig ut och tro på sin föreställning av *je-ne-sai-quoi* inför en publik som förväntar sig att uppleva ett ögonblick av *tillblivelse*, snarare än ett *vara*. Armide visar sin publik att allt är ett ständigt irrande kring källan, många gånger likt en gåta som aldrig får sitt rätta svar, men som alltid har passionen och riktningen i fokus.

Så förvandlas Armide till en helt fransk upplevelse i

Scen 2.

Notbilden är återigen komponerad av Lully, denna gång hämtad från hans opera *Armide*, komponerad 1686. Här är Armide helt säker på sin röst. Hon är där för att visa upp sig, i all sin våldsamt och sorg. Hon kämpar mot sina inre demoner, med vetskapen om att hon kommer att vinna. Hon älskar den

som har bedragit henne och kan inte komma undan sina känslor. Som ett lejon i sin bur går hon runt, runt. Förtrölad av ljudet av orkesterns stråkar och rytmer kan hon inte låta bli att tala. På en våg av ljud förs Sångerskan in i Armides röst, där det franska vansinnet blir ännu vansinnigare än det italienska (falska) galna. Sångerskans funderingar om huruvida vansinnet fanns närvarande i den franska musiken eller inte, förlorar sitt värde. Alla de som tar sig an Armides röst uppslukas av sig själva och av uppvisningen av den rena rösten som i nuet blir renad från den naturliga rösten (*purified from the pure*), och renad från det vulgära. Alla Armides röster stå där mitt i vissheten om att de befinner sig i något som inte kan beskrivas.

EPILOG

För att sammanfatta hela denna studie, vandrar så tre sångerskor in i *Sinnenas trädgård*. Deras namn är Renzi, La Barre och Belgrano. Precis som i de franska 1600-talssalongerna och i publicerade 1600-talsdialoger, samtalar de tre kvinnorna runt ett tema. Här rör de sig kring den *rena rösten* i det vokala uttrycket och gestaltningen av passioner och känslor. De jämför sina stilar och prövar sig fram genom orden. När de gått igenom de sex grundkänslorna, stannar de till och Belgrano slår sig ner för att skriva ett brev till Gian Vincenzo Gravina, som 1715 uttalade sig om den *rena rösten*. Det var hans citat som fick Sångerskan att börja sin forskningsresa in i röstens mörka rum.

Brevet sammanfattar hennes uppfattning av studien som lett henne in i en fördjupad kunskap om *den rena rösten*. Denna kunskap har gjort det möjligt för henne att uttrycka en väsenskillnad mellan italiensk och fransk vokalmusik, som kan knytas till begreppen *intet* (nothingness) och *jag-vet-inte-vad* (*je-ne-sais-quoi*). *Intet* har introducerats av musikvetenskapen som ett begrepp direkt knutet till den kvinnliga sångerskan i venetiansk 1600-tals opera. Tillsammans med dess franska motsvarighet, *jag-vet-inte-vad*, har de i och med denna studie satts i direkt samband till det praktikbaserade gestaltandet av 1600-talets vokalmusik. Förhoppningen är att denna kunskap kan leda till nya intressanta studier och gestaltningar bland både forskare, artister och forskande artister.

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This music research drama thesis explores and presents a singer's artistic research process from the first meeting with a musical score until the first steps of the performance on stage. The aim has been to define and formulate an understanding in sound as well as in words around the concept of pure voice in relation to the performance of 17th century vocal music from a 21st century singer's practice-based perspective with reference to theories on nothingness, the role of the 17th century female singer, ornamentation (over-vocalization) and the singing of the nightingale.

As a result of this study, textual reflections parallel to vocal experimentation have led to a deeper understanding of the importance of considering the concept of nothingness in relation to Italian 17th century vocal music practice, as suggested in musicology. The concept of *je-ne-sais-quoi* in relation to the interpretation of French 17th century vocal music, approached from the same performance methodology and perspective as has been done with the Italian vocal music, may provide a novel approach for exploring the complexity involved in the creative process of a performing artist.

