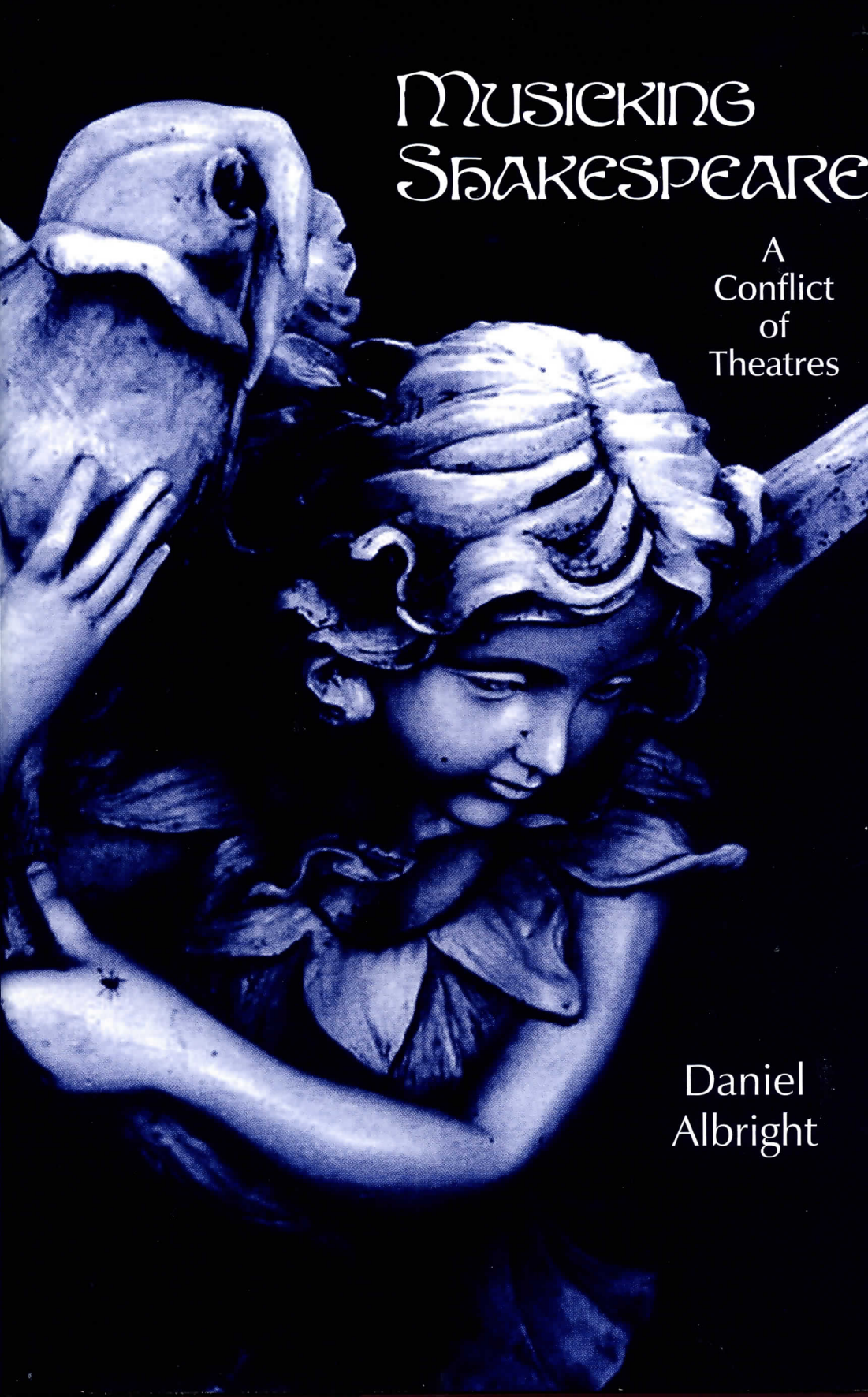
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A Conflict of Theatres
Daniel Albright

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Musicking Shakespeare

A Conflict of Theatres

DANIEL ALBRIGHT

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Shakespeare did not overvalue music. It is true that he sometimes wrote about music in his loftiest, most chryselephantine manner:

> How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
> Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music
> Creep in our ears. Soft stillness and the night
> Become the touches of sweet harmony.
> Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
> Is thick inlaid with patens of bright gold.
> There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
> But in his motion like an angel sings,
> Still quiring to the young-ey'd cherubins;
> Such harmony is in immortal souls,
> But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.
> Come ho, and wake Diana with a hymn,
> With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear,
> And draw her home with music.
> *Jess.* I am never merry when I hear sweet music. *Play Music.*
> (*Merchant of Venice* 5.1.54–69)[1]

Here Lorenzo, the second-string lover in *The Merchant of Venice*, instructs Jessica with a short course in music appreciation—and in Lorenzo appreciation. He is also coaching the audience: we hear this on stage, and are supposed to feel, ah young love! ah elation! ah music! But perhaps it would be good to regard this scene with a suspicious eye. The poetry itself is pretty thick-inlaid—slathered on in a self-consciously impressive fashion; and the tactile language (*touches* of sweet harmony; With sweetest *touches pierce* your mistress' ear) may suggest that Lorenzo is less concerned with aesthetics and Plato's philosophy of sirens on crystalline spheres than with sex—Jessica seems on the verge of an auricular insemination. Furthermore, the cue to an actual musician (the clown Stephano)

shows us that the whole scene is a setup: in the Renaissance, music couldn't be procured simply by turning on a radio, but required careful preparation. Lorenzo and Jessica are cuddling together according to the script of a scenario. Music is a delight, but a staged delight.

Music meant many things to Shakespeare. It could cue moods—erotic or warlike or contemplative. It could be the source of high-flown metaphors: for example, the unanimity of soul mates could be expressed as sympathetic vibration: "Mark how each string, sweet husband to another, / Strikes each in each by mutual ordering" (Sonnet 8). But most of all, music meant money: Shakespeare, like any experienced man of the theatre, knew that musicians are expensive. It is perhaps no accident that Shakespeare's most memorable hymn to music occurs in a play about buying and selling, in the context of a dialogue between a businessman and a usurer's daughter. Yes, Lorenzo and Jessica swoon over music insinuating itself into the moonlit landscape; yes, the lovesick Duke Orsino commands, "If music be the food of love, play on" (*Twelfth Night* 1.1.1); but elsewhere musicians, with their ceaseless demands to be paid, are annoying. In *Othello* a clown compares the sound of wind instruments to the nasal diction of Neapolitans whose noses have been eaten away by syphilis: "Why, masters, have your instruments been in Naples, that they speak i' th' nose thus? . . . masters, here's money for you; and the general so likes your music, that he desires you for love's sake to make no more noise with it" (3.1.3–4, 11–13). Shakespeare's generic musicians tend to be slightly doltish fellows—buffoons, but not such talented buffoons that they can be entrusted with really good comedy. Shakespeare's idea of the sort of joke fit for a musician can be seen in a passage from *Romeo and Juliet* where a musician, not very impressed by the fact that the wedding to which he's been summoned has suddenly turned into a funeral, notes, "I say, 'silver sound,' because musicians sound for silver" (4.5.134–35).

Shakespeare's elevated passages about music have often attracted serious composers of later generations: Henry Purcell composed three settings of a song (not by Shakespeare, but adapted from him) that begins *If music be the food of love, play on*; one of Stravinsky's *Three Songs from William Shakespeare* is a setting of Sonnet 8; and in *Serenade to Music*, Ralph Vaughan Williams set, to music worthy of the text, Lorenzo's speech—a self-consciously gorgeous delirium. But I suspect that Shakespeare liked his music lo-falutin; he might have agreed with Noël Coward, "Extraordinary how potent cheap music is."

A rough catalogue of Shakespeare's singing characters might be organized into four categories: anonymous, clowns, villains, and madmen/madwomen.

Anonymous

Many of Shakespeare's most memorable songs are sung by nobody in particular. In *Measure for Measure*, Mariana, seduced and abandoned, enters with a Boy, who first sings a song appropriate to her condition (*Take, O, take those lips away*—4.1.1) and then promptly leaves the stage; in Henry VIII, Queen

Katherine asks a stray wench to sing (*Orpheus with his lute*—3.1.3), and then turns her attention to weightier matters. This relegation of song to specialists reflects the well-known fact that, most commonly, actors can't sing and singers can't act; but it also may reflect a certain disjunction between drama and music in Shakespeare's imagination. Drama pertains to the *dramatis personae*, but a song is somewhat impersonal, no one's property; and so Mariana's music is displaced onto an inconsequential figure on the lyric margins of the play. If Mariana were to grow too absorbed with her own song, she would turn into the rigid, nearly psychotic creature that Tennyson imagined in "Mariana"; but Shakespeare's Mariana only lends half an ear, so to speak, to the sweetly forsworn lips and the vainly sealed kisses and the other beauties of the song—instead of engrossing herself in the melody of abandonment, she takes decisive action to get a husband. A song tends to freeze the singer into a single feeling-state; theatre, on the other hand, relieves feelings less by expressing them than by changing the circumstances that caused them. Shakespeare's art is no sense a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, an integrated dramaturgy of words and music; the music is extrinsic to the play, or intrinsic only in that it offers tantalizing glimpses of an alternative construction of the whole feeling-situation that the play entails—a parallel universe in which the characters do nothing, just sit hypnotized in the general ravish of sound.

Clowns

Some of Shakespeare's songs were written for his star comedians—especially Robert Armin, who evidently created Touchstone in *As You Like It*, Feste in *Twelfth Night*, and the Fool in *King Lear*. Armin entered Shakespeare's company in 1599 or 1600, replacing Will Kemp, a buffoon who liked pratfalls and comic jigs; by contrast, Armin—elegant, word-driven, ironic, musical—was one of the revolutionary comedians in the history of the drama. It wouldn't be quite right to say that Woody Allen had replaced John Belushi or Benny Hill, since it's hard to imagine Woody Allen as an accomplished and moving singer, but something along those lines had taken place. Shakespeare's plays changed radically under Armin's influence. To think of *Twelfth Night* is to remember the curtain, when Feste, delicately, touchingly, shivers away all artifice, dissolves the spectacle with the rain and tears and tosspotting of *When that I was and a little tine boy*. (Armin was to sing the same song again in a later play, *King Lear* [3.2.74], where the heigh ho the wind and the rain seem at once to embody the storm and to offer a hint of aesthetic relief from it.) I hear this song in my inner ear, its famous melody (ascribed to Joseph Vernon, first published in 1772) sung by Alfred Deller with an expressionless grave grace. Again the lyric and the dramatic jar against one another instead of cooperating to a single effect: here the lyric seems less the culmination of the drama than the antidote to it—a spell to disenchant all the brittle ludicrosities of cross-dressing love that the play set in motion. Perhaps even in *When that I was and a little tine boy*, the issue of paying

the performer is close at hand: its last lines are "our play is done / And we'll strive to please you every day" (*Twelfth Night* 5.1.407–8)—a blatant plea for applause, if not an actual passing around of the hat.

Villains

Shakespeare may write of the music of the spheres, and may otherwise evoke refined timbres, such as those of the viol consort; but his imagination often seems more specifically engaged with the problems of music drama when music deals with earthier matters, muddier vestures. Shakespeare's music is, if not itself vicious or crazy, often found in conjunction with vice and madness. At the end of *Twelfth Night*, Feste sings *When that I was and a little tine boy*, simple and wise and desolate and forgiving; but not long before, Feste sang this:

> I am gone, sir,
> And anon, sir,
> I'll be with you again;
> In a trice,
> Like to the old Vice,
> Your need to sustain;
>
> Who with dagger of lath,
> In his rage and his wrath,
> Cries, ah, ha! To the devil;
> Like a mad lad,
> Pare thy nails, dad.
> Adieu, goodman devil. (4.2.120–31)

Feste is playing Vice only to mock Malvolio, not as a sober announcement of his evil character. But it is nevertheless true that Iago himself quite likes to sing ("And let me the canakin clink, clink"; "King Stephen was and-a worthy peer"—*Othello* 2.3.70, 89); whereas Othello not only fails to sing, but can find no worse term of abuse to spit on Desdemona than "Admirable musician! O, she will sing the savageness out of a bear!" (4.1.188–89). Iago's drinking songs are controlled, calculated: he wants to encourage Cassio to get drunk and to disgrace himself. But some of Shakespeare's drunkards spew out songs as if music could be the equivalent of vomit: for example, the ironically named country justice, Silence, drowns out much of the dialogue with an endless string of leering songs and Robin Hood ballads, until at last Falstaff orders him carried off to bed (*2 Henry IV* 5.3.129). Falstaff himself, of course, is farced with old songs—"Let the sky rain potatoes; let it thunder to the tune of 'Green-sleeves' " (*Merry Wives of Windsor* 5.5.18–19)—for flesh seems to organize its desires in the form of music.

Madmen, madwomen

In Shakespeare's drama there is no surer symptom of insanity than compulsive and disjointed singing. When Edgar, in *King Lear*, wishes to feign madness, he starts to quote old rhymes ("Fie, foh, and fum, / I smell the blood of a British man"—3.4.183–84) and to lurch into unprovoked song ("Sleepest or wakest thou, jolly shepherd?"—3.6.41). A madman doesn't have words of his own; he patches together a universe of discourse by means of quotation, just as he patches together his costume with scraps of old clothes. Here the impersonalness of music becomes a sign of the disintegration of personality. "Edgar I nothing am" (2.3.21), Edgar announces at the end of the soliloquy in which he resolves to assume the role of madman; and to enter this nihil, this absence of being, he needs to abandon (or to seem to abandon) all control of the vagrant words and tunes that run around in his head. "I think there must be a place in the soul / all made of tunes, of tunes of long ago," the American composer Charles Ives wrote in his song *The Things Our Fathers Loved*; and a madman's intelligence is like Ives's *The Fourth of July* (1912), which evokes marching bands, placed at various distances, playing *Columbia the Gem of the Ocean* and *Yankee Doodle* and *The Girl I Left Behind Me* all at the same time—an incoherent polyphony of brain. A relevant example closer to Shakespeare's time is Biber's instrumental *Battalia a 10* (written in the late seventeenth century) in which a gang of rowdy drunken soldiers is illustrated by a dissonant string consort in which each instrument bawls its own tune. A madman has a ten-part music battle continuously taking place in his head.

The divisions between Fool (mentally handicapped), Madman (epistemologically handicapped), and Villain (morally handicapped) were not always perfectly clear in the Elizabethan theatre. What *was* clear was the distinction between the Jester and any of these three:

> Natural Fools are prone to self-conceit;
> Fools artificial with their wits lay wait
> To make themselves Fools, liking the disguise
> To feed their own minds and the gazer's eyes.[2]

This is from Robert Armin's jokebook, *A Nest of Ninnies* (1614)—Armin was an author and playwright in addition to being a professional clown. Armin's tales about his favorite fools—often accompanied by a little biographical poem recounting the interesting physical defects of each fool (large asymmetrical ears, not many teeth)—suggest that the funniest follies are those involving various failures of *recognition*. For instance, one of Armin's fools, overhearing a nobleman praising the virtues of a hunting hawk, misinterprets the word *good* as referring to good flavor, and so he gobbles up the hawk, feathers and all. A madman, by contrast, might behave identically, but only if he mistook the live hawk for, say, a juicy beef roast: the fool's error pertains (in this case) to the verbal system,

whereas the madman's error pertains to the perceptual system. The (natural) fool knows that a hawk is a hawk; he simply doesn't know what hawks are good for. Another difference between fool and madman is that natural folly is innate, whereas madness is often acquired: you can go mad, but you can't go fool, except as a deliberate act of feigning.

The fool and the madman are useful to the playwright for many reasons, not least for their capering on the knife-edge between recognition and misrecognition. Aristotle thought that the essence of theatre lay in *anagnorisis* and *peripeteia*, recognition and reversal; and a fool or madman is a whole living theatre comprised in a single character, in that his existence is a continual stumbling through misrecognitions. The mad Orlando, in Ariosto's epic, *Orlando Furioso* (1532), is so befuddled that he fights empty air, thinking that his enemy is right before him; and nothing is more dramatic than a character who disagrees vehemently with other characters about the constitution of the space around him. If a number of characters were to gesture at the same vacant space as if it were occupied by a person, the audience would simply assume that someone was in fact there, though for some reason he or she wasn't being shown (it might be someone difficult for an actor to impersonate, such as Paul Bunyan, or Tinker Bell, or the End-of-the-World Octopus). But if Macbeth points to a vacant space, crying to Banquo!, when nobody else can see anything, then the stage is starting to disarticulate excitingly into a dissonant set of competing theatrical spaces. If Hamlet's father's ghost is visible and audible to some characters, but not to others (such as his widow Gertrude), the audience is unable to resolve this duplex, duplicitous theatre-space into a "correct" and an "incorrect" version—is Hamlet insane? are Horatio and the others who see the ghost also insane, the victims of mass hysteria? or is the ghost really there, with Gertrude physically blind and deaf as a reflex of her moral deficiencies? The madness seems to lie in the theatre itself, not in any of the characters. Since the performing area of the Globe was itself a more or less vacant space, with few props and no painted scenery, the fool and the madman point to the ludic character of the theatre, in which there exists only a fragile agreement that the rod in the "king"'s hand is in fact a scepter—since in the madman's eye, the rod might become Aaron's rod, queasily transforming itself into a snake. Such impermissible acts of imagination are difficult to distinguish from the permissible, indeed indispensable, acts of imagination on which the theatre itself is founded.

The mad characters in Shakespeare, then, move through a poorly constituted space, full of endlessly deforming objects, and open to sudden novelties—is this a dagger that I see before me? (The same could be said of the sane characters, from the point of view of an audience that refuses to suspend disbelief.) But some of them do have a strategy for organizing their perplexed psychic worlds: music.

Queen. How now, Ophelia?
Oph. "How should I your true-love know *She sings.*

From another one?
By this cockle hat and staff,
And his sandal shoon."

Queen. Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

Oph. Say you? Nay, pray you mark.
"He is dead and gone, lady . . . " . . .

Song.

King. How do you, pretty lady?

Oph. Well, God dild you! They say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. . . .
"Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's day. . . . *Song.*
Let in the maid, that out a maid
Never departed more." . . .

Laer. A document in madness, thoughts and remembrance fitted.

Oph. [*To Claudius.*] There's fennel for you, and columbines. There's rue for you, and here's some for me . . . I would give you some violets, but they wither'd all when my father died. They say'a made a good end—

[*Sings.*] "For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy."

Laer. Thought and afflictions, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favor and to prettiness.

(*Hamlet* 4.5.22–29, 41–44, 48, 54–55, 178–82, 184–89)

Ophelia, unable to accept a reality in which her lover has murdered her father, retreats into music. She quotes from the *Walsingham* ballad and *Bonny sweet Robin*; scholars suspect that all her songs are derived from preexistent material familiar to the Elizabethan audience. She sings of the governing themes of her present life: true love, and a quiet grave, and a deflowered maiden—soon she will be literally deflowering herself, unburdening herself of pansies and daisies and violets.

Madness plays everywhere through this scene. Ophelia places great stress on the word *know:* "How should I your true-love *know*?"; "we *know* what we are, but *know* not what we may be"—appropriate to an intelligence increasingly clouded with unknowing. The feigned madman Edgar announced that he was nothing Edgar, as if he were turning into nobody; and Ophelia, knowing not what she may become, seems headed in the same direction. Her music is everybody's music and therefore nobody's music: in the course of two or three minutes Ophelia sings music appropriate to a faithful lover, a desolated mourner, and some fellow in a tavern laughing at how easily women can be seduced and abandoned. The convention of musical madness lies exactly in this abrupt juxtaposing of contradictory moods—this squash of lovesong, lament, and bawdy ballad. (Purcell's *Bess of Bedlam*, from the end of the seventeenth century, follows a similar recipe; and long afterward Richard Strauss, in his *Three Ophelia Songs*, still obeys the convention that madness is unmodulated abutment of conflicting

musical material.) Ophelia's head buzzes with snatches of familiar melodies, songs that seem to occupy all the room normally given to processes of perception, cognition, conation, memory; in a sense she's committed suicide even before she drowns, in that she's depersonalized herself, abdicated in favor of an incoherent bundle of lyrical masks.

On the other hand, Ophelia is using music, using madness, to make a point. There's a distinct aggressiveness to her behavior in this scene: she may be pretty, and frail, and pitiable, but she plays the role of a fury, stirring the conscience of those who have wronged her. By handing out columbines—symbolic of ingratitude in flower language—she is making an accusation; and her songs similarly speak of matters of which a young noblewoman would have difficulty speaking by other means. Shakespeare's extravagantly musical madmen and madwomen anticipate the relations between music and madness developed in the twentieth century. The neurologist Oliver Sacks, in *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* (1985), tells the case history of Dr. P, a famous baritone, whose Alzheimer's disease took the form of prosopagnosia, literally face-not-knowing, or radical misrecognition. To mistake your wife for a hat is a sort of limit-point of the recognition-errors that create terror or pity or amusement (or all three) among those who watch Shakespeare's fools and madmen:

Fool. Come hither, mistress. Is your name Goneril?
Lear. She cannot deny it.
Fool. Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint-stool. (*King Lear* 3.4.5–52)

This is the professional folly of an artificial fool, but its likeness to Sacks's case history is striking. Sacks noted that Dr. P ordered his day-to-day existence by means of musical cues: "Dr. P built for himself a system in which music acted as a substitute for his lost visual cognition—a musical map for locating himself in time, space, and social relationships. As Mrs. P relates, Dr. P evolved a " 'track' for him to shave to, dress to, eat to, and so on."[3] When Michael Nyman turned this case history into his opera, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* (1986), he took skeletal harmonies from one of Dr. P's track-songs, Schumann's *Ich grolle nicht*, in order to embody the cybernetic musical force that impelled Dr. P's physical actions. Perhaps we can imagine the deranged Ophelia as using her lute-singing to impart structure to her movements, to endow her feeling-states, her gestures, with a transitory focus and purpose, in the few moments before some other song comes along to pull different strings.

The other famous singer among Shakespeare's heroines is Desdemona. Desdemona is not a madwoman, but she is, after Othello's public accusations and assaults, at her wit's end. There is possibly a certain recalcitrance, a self-assertion, in her singing the Willow Song: if Othello has mocked her as an admirable musician, she will prove, even if only to herself, that the term is correct. But the flavor of the Willow Song is self-abandonment, a lapsing into a

world of quoted feeling. The old song is instinct with death—not only did Desdemona's seduced maid Barbary die while singing it (4.3.30), but in the full text (Desdemona sings only the beginning) the lover speaks of dying from love: "Write this on my tomb, / That in love I was true." Desdemona sings of salt tears softening the stones (4.3.46), and indeed her whole life is trickling away in the song's steady lachrymal flow; as so often in Shakespeare, music is a defunging, an undoing of character and of drama itself.

Part of the effect of the Willow Song comes precisely from its *inappropriateness*. Desdemona is not a maid whose lover has proved false; she is a married woman accused of falseness by a faithful husband. It is commonly noticed that Shakespeare reversed the genders of the pronouns in the original song, which concerns a man abandoned by a false woman; *Willow, willow* is exactly the song that Othello should be singing, as he fantasizes about his presumed sexual betrayal. In her ecstasy of sorrow, Desdemona has weirdly usurped a male song pertaining to her husband's state of mind and turned it against its singer. The strangest moment in the whole role of Desdemona comes at the end of the song:

> "I call'd my love false love; but what said he then?
> Sing willow, willow, willow;
> If I court moe women, you'll couch with moe men." (4.3.55–57)

As far as I know, Shakespeare simply made up the last line: no old text of the Willow Song contains it. The timbre of Iago is insinuating itself into Desdemona's voice: earlier in the play, Iago told Desdemona that an ideally fair and chaste woman was, in the end, fit only to suckle fools and chronicle small beer (2.1.160); and now Desdemona seems on the extreme verge of disillusionment, as she pushes *Willow, willow* toward a prosaic cruelty not in the original.

Shakespeare wanted a song for Desdemona; but her revising, her misremembering, is more important than the song itself. The significance of *Willow, willow* has less to do with willows and soft stones than with the long chains of will ow will ow will ow will ow—I mean that the cantabile, the la la la, is the chief thing, the deliquescence of grief into descant. The power of the more famous of the two sixteenth-century melodies comes from the way in which the descending scales slink away from D minor, first to D Dorian, then to D major. Desdemona is herself a modally unstable being.

Shakespeare's singers range from anonymous specialists to major characters who render themselves anonymous by means of song. Yeats wrote powerfully of the self-surrender of Shakespeare's tragic heroes, their enlargement of vision, their impinging on the storm-beaten threshold of sanctity, their tendency to generalize their personal circumstances into all men's fate.[4] I think Yeats was to some extent right in believing that at the catastrophe, Shakespeare's characters tend to lose their speech-prefixes and to become interchangeable with one another: one may say "the readiness is all" (*Hamlet* 5.2.222), another may say "Ripeness is all" (*King Lear*

5.2.11), but what matter who says which? Music can assist in this loss, this radical dilation of being. Mad Ophelia, maddened Desdemona, cast off the markers that individuate them, turn into favorite pages from the Elizabethan songbook.

The Tempest as a Virtual Opera

At the end of his career, Shakespeare's attitude toward the dramatic possibilities of music seemed to change. Shakespeare was a little too old, and perhaps a little too wedded to older models of the theatre, to embrace wholeheartedly the new dramaturgy of the court masque (made possible by the accession of James I, a monarch far less stingy than Elizabeth with respect to personal entertainment), with its rigidly scripted panegyrics, its proscenium arch, its extravagant and wandering stage machines, its spare-no-expense musical accompaniment. But although Shakespeare never wrote a masque—Ben Jonson was to be the great investigator of the possibilities of this genre—Shakespeare did include brief masque-like scenes in some of his later plays, especially *The Tempest*. Prospero stages two formal entertainments: one in which a banquet of shadow-food is spoiled by Harpy-Ariel in order to teach the conspirators a lesson; the other in which Ceres, Juno, and Iris come to offer a spectacular blessing on the marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda. These quasi-masques have a somewhat detached, diffident quality, a slight chill of the didactic and celebratory; they are rarely regarded as high points of Shakespeare's art. The bucolic speeches, full of turfy mountains and nibbling sheep (4.1.62), seem to present masque writing as a placid, ovine sort of art, far from the thrashing and crashing, the severed limbs, mutilated tongues, snake-bitten breasts, the whole unpredictable ruckus of the theatre in which Shakespeare had grown up. (It is possible that the formalized overgentleness of the wedding masque is slightly barbed with satire against Jonson's court masques.) The music for the little masques in *The Tempest* is lost, but the stage directions contain several cues for dances and soft music, as well as instructions to sing. The effect would not have been far from that of the Italian pastoral *intermedii* that had, in Florence and Mantua, just turned into the newfangled art of opera.

But of course the whole of *The Tempest* is full of music; and the music for two of Ariel's songs, both ascribed to Robert Johnson, survives from an early production, possibly from the first production: *Full fadom*[5] *five* and *Where the bee sucks*. The first song, especially, has long been admired, for both the text and the music. It bears little resemblance to the other songs associated with Shakespeare's plays: it is not based on quoted or alluded-to material, as is the Willow Song; it does not seem like a folksong or an original simulation of folksong, such as *When that I was and a little tine boy*; it does not exist for the sake of an artful keying a mood, as does *Take, O, take those lips away*. Far from being nostalgic or ancillary, *Full fadom five* is performative: it *causes* action, by completing the task (begun by Ariel's first song,

Come unto these yellow sands) of "Allaying both their [the waters'] fury and my [Ferdinand's] passion" (1.2.393). Ariel uses music as a control resource, even an enslavement resource. He accompanies himself on a stringed instrument, and the instrument's strings are in effect puppet strings, pulling the characters this way and that. This compulsion-by-music can be seen throughout the play, for example, when Ariel charms Caliban and his comrades into wading into a puddle of horse piss—Ariel reports that they "lifted up their noses / As they smelt music" (4.1.177–78), as if music appealed to all the sense organs. (Perhaps music engages the lower sense organs of lower men.) If the nose is susceptible to musical manipulation, the eye is even more so: the characters in *The Tempest* are like dolls with counterweighted eyelids, effortlessly put to sleep or awakened by means of Ariel's lullabies (2.1.184*sd*) and rousing songs (2.1.308). Ariel, with his Orpheus- or Arion-like power to compel nature to dance to his tune, is an operatic character waiting for opera to come into existence. Just before Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest* in 1611, Claudio Monteverdi composed *Orfeo* (1607), the first great success of the embryonic genre of opera, begun in 1598; and, during the Restoration, a hybrid, much-altered version of *The Tempest* (1674; based on an earlier adaptation of 1667) would become one of the first English operas.

Charm, incantation, magic spell—these had long been features of Shakespeare's art. The fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* sing a charm to protect Titania from snakes and hedgehogs and spiders (2.2.9); the witches in *Macbeth* brew their famous soup while intoning a charm (4.1.1)—and then, in a probably spurious passage, Hecate and her private trio of singing witches sing a lyrical version of a similar spell (4.1.43*sd*). But no play before *The Tempest* was so plot-driven by music. Shakespeare's brief career as a music dramatist is hard to study, because so little of the music survives—but the whole canon of Jacobean stage music, though it survives only in patches, permits some guesses about what *The Tempest* might have sounded like.

Music drama is efficient to the degree that the dramatist can rely upon, or create, a code for interpreting music. Much of the musical accompaniment to Shakespeare's plays depends on quite elementary codes, such as those for warfare (trumpet fanfares), hunting (horn calls), or lullabies (soft strings). But *The Tempest*, with its flarings of sound, its hypnoses, its eerie dances, calls for more sophisticated codes—and composers were indeed providing them. Such music needed the skills, not of Bob Dylan, not of Noël Coward, but of Wagner, Debussy, or Strauss—composers gifted with the power of semantic specificity by purely musical means; as it happened, Shakespeare's time was an age of great resourcefulness in code development, and had its Wagner in the person of Monteverdi. Monteverdi, of course, had no direct influence on the music of Shakespeare's theatre; but it might be good to begin with Monteverdi, in order to see how *thinking* about the art of dramatic music was developing during the age.

Monteverdi (1567–1642) was an almost exact contemporary of Shakespeare, though he enjoyed a much longer creative life. In the preface to his fifth book

of madrigals (1605), Monteverdi and his brother defended the new monody on the grounds that its deviations from accepted practice were inevitable, since it was a word-driven, rather than a harmony-driven, sort of music: in the work of the older composers, the *prima prattica*, the music was "not the servant, but the mistress of the words"; in the new style of music, the *seconda prattica*, harmony is "not commanding, but commanded"—the words are "the mistress of the harmony."[6] Near the end of his life, in the preface to the eighth book of madrigals (1638), Monteverdi justified his creative achievement in terms of code-creating—he had gone farther than all previous composers in discovering the proper musical rhetoric of feeling:

> I have reflected that the principal passions or affections of our mind are three, namely, anger, moderation, and humility or supplication; so the best philosophers declare. . . . The art of music also points clearly to these three in its terms "agitated," "soft," and "moderate" [*concitato, molle*, and *temperato*]. In all the works of former composers I have indeed found examples of the "soft" and the "moderate," but never of the "agitated," a genus nevertheless described by Plato in the third book of his *Rhetoric* [399A] in these words: "Take that harmony that would fittingly imitate the utterances and the accents of a brave man who is engaged in warfare." And since I was aware that it is contraries which greatly move our mind, and that this is the purpose which all good music should have . . . I have applied myself with no small diligence and toil to rediscover this genus.
>
> After reflecting that in the pyrrhic measure the tempo is fast, and, according to all the best philosophers, used warlike, agitated leaps, and in the spondaic, the tempo slow and the opposite, I began, therefore, to consider the semibreve which . . . should correspond to one stroke of a spondaic measure; when this was divided into sixteen *semicrome* [sixteenth-notes] and restruck one after the other and combined with words expressing anger and disdain, I recognized in this brief sample a resemblance to the affect I sought.[7]

It is not clear what Monteverdi meant by *stile molle*, except that it seems to be the opposite of *stile concitato* and has something to do with humility and supplication. It is possible that he meant simply something like *relaxed*; but the argument makes more sense if we assume the words have to do with states of abjection and misery, the subject of the great lamentations, often chromatic and contorted, that were a specialty of Monteverdi and his contemporaries. (And for the rest of this book I will assume that this is the meaning of Monteverdi's term *stile molle*.) If so, Monteverdi's codebook is based on a simple tripartite scheme of the soul:

mania	reflective sobriety	depression
elation	neutrality	abjection
inflicting pain	calm	suffering pain

He considered, quite justly, that he had written music that spanned the whole gamut of feeling, from the heights to the depths. The notions of high and low

vary considerably from century to century: for Plato in the *Phaedrus*, high means upward to the divine, and low means downward to the clambering world of the senses; for Freud, high means obedient to the internalized father who demands virtuous behavior (the superego), and low means obedient to the foul unspeakable desires of the unconscious (the id); but across the span of Western culture a tripartite model of the psyche—high, middle, low—has often held sway.

The preface to the eighth book goes on to say that the *stile concitato*, the angry style, was first created in *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* (1624), a staged setting of some stanzas from Tasso—a curious sort of narrated opera, in which most of the singing is done by a tenor *testo* (the text personified), with a few interjections in direct dialogue by the warrior protagonists themselves. The narrator describes the clashing of swords, the quick ring of mighty blows, in an ecstatic vocal drumming of sixteenth-note figures. Monteverdi may have thought that he had created the musical equivalent of *virtus*, maleness: a species of heroic manly rhetoric opposed to the endless series of pitiful women—Ariadne, Olympia, Queen Mary Stuart—found in the madrigals of d'India, Bertali, and many others, including Monteverdi himself, who in fact had started the vogue in 1608 with his *Lamento di Arianna*. This last piece was the climactic aria from an otherwise-lost opera; in his sixth book (1614), Monteverdi published it in the form of a five-voice madrigal. Madrigal and early opera bleed into each other in odd ways, and the codes of affect seem completely interchangeable between the two genres.

Monteverdi describes the *stile concitato* purely in terms of rhythm, as a fast light distinct pulse, and indeed his *concitato* passages are sometimes sung on a single note: melodic and harmonic inflection grow faint so that rhythmic inflection may be felt strongly. He gives no firm definition for *stile molle* or *stile temperato*, but it is possible to infer from his practice what they are and how they operate: sometimes scholars point, as an example of *stile molle*, to *Lasciatemi morire*, Let me die, from the beginning of the *Lamento di Arianna*, a chromatically tortured melodic shape; the *locus classicus* of *stile temperato* is the placid beginning of the madrigal *Hor che'l ciel e la terra* (book 8), in which the calm surface of the sea is described in a few slow, almost immobile chords. It is important to note that the three *stili* seem to pertain to different aspects of the art of music, rhythm in one case, melody in another, prolongation of gesture in the third; because anger and dejection pertain to independent musical variables, Monteverdi could move quickly from one to another, could even make brief superpositions of one on another, a sort of dissonance in the realm of affect itself. As Monteverdi said in the passage quoted above, "it is contraries which greatly move our mind," and he felt it a great advantage to have at hand a variety of musical materials interpretable as contrasted feeling-states. The great theme of the Renaissance madrigal is the rapid change from exultation to despair, fire to ice; in this it resembles the mad song, but instead of erratic abutment of contrary feeling-states, the madrigal depended on elegant, carefully pivoted swerves from one to its opposite.

In a sense the motto of the whole of Monteverdi's eighth book is given in the *incipit* to one of its most ambitious madrigals, *Ogni amante è guerrier*—every lover is a warrior. Many madrigals are musical elucidations of such Petrarchan oxymorons, and some of Shakespeare's plays are dramatic elucidations of Petrarchan oxymorons. Romeo, contemplating the fact that he's fallen in love with a girl from a family at war with his own, exclaims

> Here's much to do with hate, but more with love.
> Why then, O brawling love! O loving hate!
> O any thing, of nothing first create!
> O heavy lightness, serious vanity,
> Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms,
> Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health.
> (*Romeo and Juliet* 1.1.175–80)

Romeo would rather not fight Tybalt, but in the end every lover must be a warrior, both in metaphor and in real life.

The three *stili* of the preface to Monteverdi's eighth book are only the rudiments of the seventeenth-century musical code book. There is the obsession-code of the *ritornello*: in Monteverdi's last opera, *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (1643, shortly after the composer's death), the first act begins with an aria by Ottone, so smitten with the faithless Poppea that he stands outside her palace before dawn, hoping that she will appear at her balcony and shine her sunlight on him: *And still I keep coming back here, like a line to the center, like a fire to its sphere, like a stream to the ocean.* Forces just as powerful compel Ottone to return to his standing-place, so the orchestra keeps returning to a single refrain, an emblem of the paralysis of Ottone's emotional state. As Ezra Pound wrote of the villanelle form, "the refrains are an emotional fact, which the intellect, in the various gyrations of the poem, tries in vain and vain to escape."[8]

And there are comic tropes as well, such as the freak-code that characterizes Demo in the most influential opera of the whole seventeenth century, Francesco Cavalli's *Giasone* (1649). Early in the opera, Orestes, looking for Jason, comes across a hunchbacked zany, who boasts in a novelty song of his skill at war and seduction:

> I'm hunchbacked, I'm Demo,
> I'm handsome, I'm brave,
> the world is my slave . . .
> If I dance, if I sing,
> if I play on my lyre,
> the girls burn with fire,
> yes, yes, yes, they lang, lang, lang, lang . . . (1.6)

Orestes supplies the missing word *languish*, and Demo at last gets it out of his mouth. The stutter characterizes Demo throughout the opera. I wonder if Cavalli might not be smirking here at Monteverdi's *stile concitato*, which usually has a strong quality of stutter. By literalizing the rapid notes on a single pitch as a vocal defect, Cavalli deforms the gesture from the domain of the hero to the domain of the *miles gloriosus*.[9]

Now we come to something remarkable: most of the Italian codebook was implicitly in place in English theatre music, quite independently of Monteverdi. Monteverdi had one English pupil, Walter Porter, but English vocal music of the early seventeenth century was informed not by Monteverdi but by earlier Italian madrigalists, particularly Marenzio, and by various native traditions. No English theorist came along to give catchy names to the various styles, but in England it was well understood that chromaticism meant anguish—the basic premise of the *stile molle*:

> Come, woeful Orpheus, with thy charming lyre,
> And tune my voice unto thy skillful wire;
> Some strange chromatic notes do you devise,
> That best with mournful accents sympathize:
> Of sourest sharps and uncouth flats make choice,
> And I'll thereto compassionate my voice.[10]

This is William Byrd's madrigal, *Come, woeful Orpheus* (1611)—a late work by the grand old man of Elizabethan music. The same theme can be found in John Danyel's *Can doleful notes* (1623):

> No, let chromatic notes, harsh without ground,
> Be sullen music for a tuneless heart.
> Chromatic tunes most like my passions sound,
> As if combined to bear their falling part.

Where the text wants chromatic notes, the composer obliges.

Of course, this use of chromaticism as a code for dark moods, for extreme torsion of soul—for wit's end—had been a standard feature of European music since the Middle Ages; indeed there's an Easter celebration (*Diastematica*, from a thirteenth-century English songbook) in which the text commands *absit chromatica*—let chromaticism be absent (during this time of harmonious rejoicing). Chromaticism was not the only method of attaining a *stile molle*: another method, the insistence on melodic phrases based on a descending minor tetrachord (for example, in A minor, the notes A–G–F–E) was something of an English specialty. John Dowland, born the year before Shakespeare, in 1563, composed in the 1590s a lute piece full of such phrase-droops, a piece that became stupendously

popular all over Europe. In 1600 it appeared as a song, set to words by an anonymous author:

> Flow my tears, fall from your springs,
> Exil'd for ever let me mourn
> Where night's black bird her sad infamy sings,
> There let me live forlorn.

Dowland, of course, didn't invent the descending tetrachord, but he fixed it in the form of a prolonged first note followed by a rapid decline, as a kind of code for a sob. In 1604 he published *Lachrymae, or Seven Tears*, consisting of seven pavans for lute consort. Each pavan starts with the falling minor tetrachord, as if the tetrachord were a direct translation of a tear into music—a figure so saturated in emotional humidity that it itself weeps, trickling down a fourth.

Dowland struck his contemporaries as an extraordinarily crabby, gloomy fellow—indeed he never got a job worthy of his merits until late middle age, in 1612, when James I appointed him lutenist to the king, at which point he promptly stopped writing music. But Dowland's fascination with deep melancholy—*Semper Dowland, semper dolens*, as one of Dowland's titles has it—was another aspect of the age's fascination with all expressive extremes. When Shakespeare's characters seem stuck in unrelievable grief, grief that ceaselessly feeds on itself, grief that grieves all the more at the spectacle of its own grieving, they seem to enter a Dowlandesque state of being.

With an abundance of gifted melancholics, England was ripe for *stile molle*. It is more surprising that Jacobean composers made use of something very like *stile concitato*, since Monteverdi claimed that he'd invented it in 1624. Robert Johnson, the most talented composer of Jacobean theatre music, wrote *Arm, arm* for John Fletcher's *The Mad Lover* (1616—eight years before Monteverdi's *Il combattimento*), in which an old soldier recalls an exciting battle:

> Arm, arm! the scouts are all come in,
> Keep your ranks close, and now your honours win.
> Behold from yonder hill the foe appears;
> Bows, bills, glaves, arrows, shields and spears:
> Like a dark wood he comes, or a tempest pouring;
> Oh, view the wings of horse meadows scouring.
>
> The vanguard marches bravely. Hark, the drums!
> They meet, they meet; now the battalia comes.
> Dub-a-dub-a-dub!
> See how the arrows fly,

That darken all the sky;
Hark how the trumpets sound!
Hark how the hills rebound!
Tara-rara-rara! . . .
Brave Diocles is dead,
And all his soldiers fled,
The battle's won, and lost,
That many a life hath cost.

The singer impersonates a tattoo (Dub-a-dub-a-dub) and a fanfare (Tara-rara-rara) with rapid syllables on a single note, as if he himself were the drummer and the bugler, as well as the archer and the cavalryman—like Monteverdi's *testo*, he assumes the imaginative burden of the whole battle. An especially Monteverdian touch occurs at the end, as the music switches from *stile concitato* to *stile molle*: mournful descending scales toll the passing bell for Diocles and the rest of the dead. Johnson was also sensitive to the special kind of *stile molle*, based on a descending tetrachord, that Dowland had developed: in *Orpheus I am*, another song from *The Mad Lover*, Orpheus's lament drips with lachrymae-figures straight out of Dowland.

But Johnson's wit in *molle* and *concitato* is only the beginning of his expertise in the new codes of music-drama. In his *Baboons' Dance* from Chapman's *Memorable Masque* (1614), Johnson investigates the semantic possibilities of disruption: phrases begin strongly, then stop, dangle in midair; when the dance gains momentum, it gets interrupted by evasive chord progressions, like grimaces—mopping and mowing made audible. In the famous song from Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613), *O let us howl*, Johnson builds an astonishing vocal slide across a minor third into the syllable *howl*: the song is part of a conspiracy to drive the duchess insane, and presents itself as a sort of phonic lycanthropy: part music, part ululation. Johnson may have been especially attracted to the fantastic, the macabre, the grotesque: he wrote songs for Charon (*Charon, O Charon*), Orpheus (*Orpheus I am*), a corpse (*'Tis late and cold*), and, as we shall see in a later chapter, the witches from the Hecate scene spliced into *Macbeth*. All semantic codes in music arise through deviant behavior, for only deviance is salient enough for the ear to register as *significant*; and Johnson had the daring and composure to follow Shakespeare, Webster, and their comrades into the wilderness of much-meaning.

We are now ready to imagine the nonexistent *Tempest* opera that might have been produced in James I's or Charles I's England. Two songs for *The Tempest* by Robert Johnson survive (the earliest surviving musical manuscripts, ca. 1660, ascribe them to John Wilson, Johnson's successor as theatre-composer, but Wilson himself ascribed them to Johnson): they are *Full fadom five* and *Where the bee sucks*. The former (see ex. 1) is one of the finest English examples of *stile temperato*, as the music creeps by Ferdinand on the waters, allaying both their fury and his passion:

Example 1. Music for *Full fathom five*, ascribed here to John Wilson, though Wilson himself ascribed it to Robert Johnson. Robert Johnson, "Full fathom five," from Folger MS V.a.411, fol. 11r. By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

> Full fadom five thy father lies,
> Of his bones are coral made:
> Those are pearls that were his eyes:
> Nothing of him that doth fade,
> But doth suffer a sea-change
> Into something rich and strange:
> Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
> *Burden.* Ding-dong.
> Hark now I hear them—ding-dong bell. (1.2.397–405)

La vague et la cloche. The melody of the stanza is a set of surges, rests, fall-backs, and resurges. This pattern of flow and ebb is itself wave-like: the often-stepwise motion of the vocal line, falling into crests and troughs, and the larger pattern of the long notes at the line-ends, both suggest that Johnson is tuning his song to the liquid rhythm of slow waves overlapping still slower waves. The final calming is accomplished by the *ding-dong bell* refrain: Johnson lengthens the basic pulse from quarter-notes to half-notes, as if the waves were halving their speed; and instead of surges and ebbs, Johnson eases the melody into smooth scales descending a

fifth—the most amiable death knell possible. It is a lamentation unlamenting itself, turning into a lullaby, grave and impartial, unfeeling, a pure neuter in the semantic code. It is as if Ariel were singing not a particular song but Song itself.

From this still point, this *temperato*, the music might diverge into all sorts of intemperate styles. There is a strong sense in *The Tempest* that no one except Ariel has mastered the art of music: when Stephano botches his "Flout 'em and scout 'em" song, Caliban remarks "That's not the tune. *Ariel plays the tune on a tabor and pipe*" (3.2.124). Then Trinculo remarks, "This is the tune of our catch, play'd by the picture of Nobody." Ariel is the play's invisible tuning fork, continually trying to correct false music, to establish a tonic that will organize into harmony the grotesque dissonance all around him. Caliban, like Stephano, gets drunk and sings in a slurred, broken fashion:

Cal. (*Sings drunkenly*) Farewell, master; farewell, farewell! . . .
'Ban, 'Ban, Ca-Caliban
Has a new master, get a new man. (2.2.178, 184–85)

There is a hint here of Demo's fake-*concitato* stutter, four decades before Cavalli's *Giasone*; and in the earliest setting of Caliban's song that I know, J. C. Smith's 1752 version, the composer supplies a peasanty galumphing song, with a nicely goatish bray in the stammered line. This song comes from long after Johnson's time, but Johnson had plenty of comic tropes at his command. The splayed, spoofy, discombobulated hot-foot of Johnson's baboon-dance might easily be adapted to Caliban; and the recitative-like authoritarian style that Johnson used for Hecate or Charon might easily be adapted to another spirit-master, Prospero—in fact, Johnson's *Where the bee sucks* is just the sort of lithe tripping tune that Hecate's witches sing as they ride in the air when the moon shines fair.

Enough Jacobean music survives to allow a speculative outfitting of the two masques in *The Tempest*—the harpy-spoiled banquet and the wedding masque—with appropriate music.[11] In the chapter on Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* we'll look more closely at the aesthetic of the masque, but for now it will be enough to note that at the time of *The Tempest*, the two basic modes of drama were the public play and the masque: the public play was still often performed outdoors on an almost bare platform surrounded with seats, as in the old Elizabethan days, although experiments with indoor, candlelit theatres were beginning; the masque was a court entertainment—far from being performed on a bare platform, the masque had expensive scenery and stage mechanisms, and was so designed that only one chair—the king's—had full access to the lavish special effects. The greatest writer of masques was Ben Jonson, younger than Shakespeare and perhaps a cleverer panegyrist than he; as Jonson developed the genre, the masque started to separate into two halves (as in *The Masque of Queens*, 1609), in which the second part, the main action, was a formal display of the monarch's prepotent generosity and wisdom, culminating in a dance by the court nobles in costume, while the first

half—the antimasque, as Jonson called it—was a display of witches, satyrs, and other deformed sinister things, whose black revels would be put to flight before the glorious sun of majesty. Jonson and his set designer, Inigo Jones, used professional comedians in the antimasque, and the dancing may have been more virtuosic than that in the masque proper, performed by the nobles.

In the light of this history, *The Tempest* looks like a meditation on the technical evolution of the stage. At the beginning, Prospero is in charge of an Elizabethan, quasi-improvisatory sort of stage, the island itself, a malleable, indeterminate place, a domain of suggestibility, compulsory suspension of disbelief, where all discourse is at least provisionally valid. It is a topological oxymoron, at once fresh and stale, fertile and withered: "fresh springs, brine-pits, barren places and fertile" (1.2.338); "fresh-brook mussels, wither'd roots and husks" (1.2.464); it is full of crab apples, jay's nests, marmosets, filberts, young scamels (whatever scamels might be), nomers and misnomers of every sort (2.2.167–72)—it's a universal prop-house. Speech keeps creating new realities, vertiginously, for the motto of the island is the motto of the Elizabethan stage, or Pirandello's stage, It is so if you think so:

Adr. "Widow Dido," said you? You make me study of that. She was of Carthage, not of Tunis.
Gon. This Tunis, sir, was Carthage.
Adr. Carthage?
Gon. I assure you, Carthage.
Ant. His word is more than the miraculous harp.
Seb. He hath rais'd the wall, and houses too.
Ant. What impossible matter will he make easy next?
Seb. I think he will carry this island home in his pocket, and give it his son for an apple.
Ant. And sowing the kernels of it in the sea, bring forth more islands. (2.1.84–94)

(The silly talk of widow Dido may come from a rhyme: according to John Hart's phoneticized spelling guide of 1569, the long i was pronounced eh-i.) The island accommodates itself effortlessly to any scenario proposed—you can put it in your pocket, or make it sprout new islands through a kind of geographical mitosis. Its very appearance simply reflects the looker's mood back at him:

Adr. The air breathes upon us here most sweetly.
Seb. As if it had lungs, and rotten ones.
Ant. Or, as 'twere perfum'd by a fen. . . .
Gon. How lush and lusty the grass looks! (2.1.47–49, 53)

This is almost a parody of the incoherent ubiety of the platform stage. In the prologue to *Henry V*, we hear of that wooden O that can hold the vasty fields of

France; but a platform stage is in desperate condition if some characters keep insisting, We're in France, while others cry, No, we're in Illyria . . . or, No, I think it's the seacoast of Bohemia—You fools, we're in a desert near New Orleans.

The Tempest, then, starts in Globistan, the endlessly, effortlessly mutable stage of the Elizabethan theatre. In charge is a master wizard with his ingenue-soubrette daughter; their sidekicks are two extraordinarily versatile clowns, one an acrobat, quick-change artist, and drag queen specializing in harpy and sea-nymph roles, the other a comically angry hunchback who does barnyard animal impressions and excrement jokes. Until the shipwreck, Prospero and his troupe lived in a perpetual backstage, idly waiting for a script. But when the script arrives, it turns out to be more than Globistan can handle; it requires the services of another theatrical domain, Masqueland; and Prospero, bored but reasonably content in the role of Shakespeare, has to become Ben Jonson and master a new sort of art, a challenge for which he's poorly prepared by temperament and by training.

The Tempest begins with a storm that could be considered a sort of antimasque, but it feels more like something suitable for a platform stage: instead of a machine-tooled storm, in which the ship visibly splits into marvelous pieces and sinks below hand-cranked waves, we have a storm of human voices, barking, yelping, cursing. "Keep your cabins; you do assist the storm," the Boatswain says (1.1.14), but perhaps the voices do more than assist the storm: they *are* the storm, in the absence of a mechanical storm-contrivance. Toward the end of the scene, a stage direction calls for *A confused noise within* (1.1.61), with some suggestions for cries—presumably other cries were ad-libbed by the cast backstage. Within, without, what matter?—the storm consists of whatever confusion the cast can produce. Shakespeare may well have imagined this scene as performed with little help from spectacular devices beyond the noisemaker (*tempestuous noise of thunder and lightning*) specified in the opening stage direction.

On the other hand, this storm is a contrived thing, stage-managed by Ariel, and as such is parallel to the later masque scenes. From the point of view of those on the ship, it is confusion; from the point of view of Prospero and Ariel, it is a ceremony of confusion. Jonson's antimasques provide methods for making confusion ceremonious; and one method was to play a special sort of music. In Robert Johnson's antimasque music (as we've seen), disrupted textures stand for disorder; as Peter Holman has written, "the seventeenth century preferred to illustrate bizarre stage movement by dislocating rhythm rather than melody or harmony."[12] But despite Holman's statement, the Jacobean playwrights contemplated the possibilities for a far more advanced kind of musical incoherence. Ben Jonson, in *The Masque of Queens*, devised an antimasque as a sort of negative inversion of the masque proper: instead of beautiful queens, ugly witches—"Joyn now our Hearts, we faithful Opposites / To *Fame* and *Glory*." Anti-creatures, they dance an anti-dance:

> with a strange, and sudden Musick they fell into a magical Dance, full of preposterous change, and gesticulation, but most applying to their *Property*; who at their meetings, do all things contrary to the custom of Men, dancing back to back, and hip to hip, their hands joined, and making their circles backward, to the left hand, with strange phantastick motions of their heads, and bodies.

And, as Jonson specifies in a gloss to the text, the anti-dance should be accompanied by anti-music:

> Nor do they want *Musick*, and in strange manner given them by the Devil, if we credit their Confessions in *Remig[ius]. Dæm[onolatria,* 1595*]. lib.* 1. *cap.* 19. Such as the *Syrbenæan Quires* were, which *Athenæus* remembers out of *Clearchus, Deipnos. lib.* 15. where everyone sung what he would, without hearkning to his Fellow; like the noise of divers Oars, falling in the water.[13]

This is as close as the older world could get to the world of John Cage's perfectly uncoordinated polyphony, imitating the general randomness of things—the noise of divers Oars, falling in the water. Cage has merely reversed the plus and minus signs, turning the music of hell into an image of the divine inconsequence of natural process.

An interesting study might be written on pictures of chaos in the older music. The chaos-music at the opening of Haydn's *Creation* (1799) is by far the most famous; but it is perhaps less radically chaotic than some of the experiments that preceded it. In Telemann's oratorio *Der Tag des Gerichts* (1762), there is a passage in which the singer describes how the planets whirl out of their orbits on the Last Day—and the music also charges dizzyingly out of its proper tonal orbit. Still stranger is the percussive-aggressive cacophony, *Le cahos*, at the opening of Jean-Fery Rebel's ballet *Les élémens* (1737): Nicholas McGegan and Simon Shaw quote from Rebel's preface: "I dared to undertake to link the idea of the confusion of the elements with that of confusion in harmony."[14] But closest to Ben Jonson's specification is an instrumental piece from the late seventeenth century, Heinrich von Biber's *Battalia a 10*: one section describes eight drunken musketeers bawling their favorite songs all at the same time, with no regard for one another—*hic dissonant ubique.* Biber was writing some sixty years after *The Masque of Queens*, and in another land, but he at least provides evidence that the seventeenth century could conceive noise-music exactly along the lines that Jonson wished.

If *The Tempest* had mutated into a quasi-opera during Shakespeare's lifetime, it might have begun with dissonant music equivalent to the panicky cries of the voyagers—a Masque of Storm. From one point of view, *The Tempest* looks like a series of masque-scenes loosely connected by the patter of a master of ceremonies; from another point of view, *The Tempest* looks like a bulging, puzzled, quasi-improvisatory play that occasionally stiffens into set vaudeville numbers. Everywhere in the text, the masque-like and the un-masque-like aspects are in tension with one another: the action can be placed on an old platform stage, or

on the proscenium stage of the court masque, but it doesn't perfectly fit either model of theatre.

As a director of masques, Prospero labors awkwardly to constrain the clowns and the villains to the script; if he succeeds, he succeeds only by building into the masque proper some of the anarchic energy of the antimasque. The harpy masque is in fact the retrograde of a Ben Jonson court masque: instead of an antimasque opening out into (and dismissed by) a masque proper, it is a masque proper eaten up by an antimasque—as Spirits, to *Solemn and strange music* (3.3.17sd), present to the false nobles a banquet of shadow fruit, a banquet that vanishes with one clap of Ariel's wings. When they carried the table in, the Spirits looked like fitting attendants for a regal ceremony; when they carry the table out, they *dance, with mocks and mows* (3.3.82sd), exposing themselves as clown-antimasquers. In the court masques, the stage machinery—a globe, a fairy castle, a chariot dropping from the sky—opens out into some still more spectacular display; an adaptation of such practices for the public stage can be found in *Cymbeline*, where *Jupiter descends in thunder and lightning, sitting upon an eagle; he throws a thunderbolt* (5.4.92sd). But in the harpy masque in *The Tempest*, the machinery simply fizzles into the void, like Jean Tinguely's *Homage to New York* (1960), an elaborate contrivance made of a bathtub, scraps of the American flag, bicycle wheels, a piano, a radio, a saw, and so forth—powered by fifteen engines, it shook itself to pieces in its unique moment of operation.

The elaborate wedding masque for Ferdinand and Miranda also deflates, dispels, dislimns itself: *Enter certain Reapers, properly habited: they join with the Nymphs in a graceful dance, towards the end whereof Prospero starts suddenly, and speaks; after which, to a strange, hollow, and confused noise, they heavily vanish* (4.1.138sd). The disruption of the graceful dance sounds like the technique of Johnson's antimasque music writ large: the whole masque is an effortfully stitched-together thing—at one point *Juno and Ceres whisper* (4.1.124sd), as if they have lost their place in the script, and Prospero worries that "our spell is marr'd" (4.1.126). The sober theme, the lofty language, the presence of Juno descending in a mechanical conveyance (4.1.74sd) all give the sense of a masque proper; but the texture is that of an antimasque, since the masque is falling apart before our eyes, even before the actors floomph down the trapdoor and the sets, if there are sets, fall flat.

Since G. Wilson Knight identified the tempest vs. music polarity as a defining feature of Shakespeare's dramatic architecture, *The Tempest* has often been read as a rainbow-arc, beginning with a storm and ending in reconciliation and harmony—music. But there is a countermovement at work too, in which music keeps unharmonizing itself, turning into noise. The wedding masque terminates in a hollow and confused noise; the harpy masque, it seems, also fails to end on a perfect cadence; the most musically intense scene in the play is not in the fifth act, but in the first; and in fact the very last thing we hear, if Prospero's prayer to be set free (Epilogue 20) is a covert plea for applause, is the noise of clapping. It is not that noise resolves into music, but that music and noise are strangely