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Chapter 9
Emotion as Multiple: Rehearsing *Voyage to the Moon*

Joseph Browning

Abstract: *This chapter presents an ethnographic study of the process of rehearsing* Voyage to the Moon*, a modern-day pasticcio opera. Drawing on observations of the rehearsals and interviews with the production team, it explores rehearsal room cultures that often remain hidden behind closed doors. The article uses several musical numbers within the opera as windows onto major elements both of this production and of wider operatic culture – voice, movement and gesture, staging and costume, and instrumental music – in order to describe a creative process that was idiosyncratic and contingent, yet governed by far-reaching normative ideas about opera, artistry, professionalism, and expressive culture. The central aim of the article is to show how the* Voyage *rehearsals incorporated several contrasting attitudes towards emotion and music. The creative team brought to the production a variety of ideas about what emotions are and what they do, their historical and cultural specificity, and their place within contemporary operatic culture. I argue that it was through the rehearsal process that these ideas – often tacit, as much a matter of practice as of discourse – were brought into relationship, overlaying and re-inflecting each other in ways that had significant consequences for the final production.*

Runs and notes: Emotional multiplicity and Ethnographic Narration

This chapter builds an account of emotion and creativity in opera by following the day-to-day activities of the creative team involved in a production called *Voyage to the Moon*, which toured throughout Australia in early 2016. As a rare modern-day example of a *pasticcio* opera, *Voyage to the Moon* (hereafter *Voyage*) combined pre-existing arias with newly-written recitatives, overlaying these with a new libretto based on the voyage to the moon episode in Ludovico Ariosto's epic poem *Orlando furioso*.[1] With its new take on historical literary and musical sources, *Voyage* offered a distinctive opportunity for thinking about modern-day engagements with past musical cultures.

Chapter 9 Emotion as Multiple

In this chapter, I focus on the *emotional multiplicity* of the rehearsal process and the *Voyage* production. The opera used a cast of only three singers: Emma Matthews (soprano) played both Orlando, a warrior driven mad by love and betrayal, and Selena, guardian of the moon; Sally-Anne Russell (mezzo soprano) played Orlando's friend Astolfo; and Jeremy Kleeman (bass baritone) played the Magus, a wise man who accompanies Astolfo on his journey to the moon. Yet it brought together numerous other creative practitioners including composers, librettist-director, production staff, and a small, onstage chamber orchestra (other individuals are introduced below as the narrative requires). So, like any such relatively large, creative project, *Voyage* incorporated multiple artistic contributions and agendas, which combined to shape the affective dimensions of the production. Although the whole artistic team conceived of working with emotions as important, if not central, to the production process, they approached this task in different ways. These varied approaches can be usefully understood, in line with recent theorisations within history of emotions scholarship, in terms of distinct emotional "styles" or "practices." Gammerl intends the former to encompass "the experience, fostering, and display of emotions, and oscillate between discursive patterns and embodied practices as well as between common scripts and specific appropriations."[2] Thus participants in *Voyage* drew on training in various expressive arts to work with the emotions in distinctive ways. Following Scheer, I examine how, during rehearsals and performances, musicians and others "mobilized their bodies in certain ways, cultivated specific skilled performances, and debated emotional practices among themselves."[3] Combining these theorisations with Hunter's discussion of "historically informed performance" in opera, I highlight the different senses of historicity and ontology at stake in practitioners' emotional styles; that is to say their varying ideas about what the emotions *are* and what they *do*, and whether the emotions have historical and cultural specificity.[4] In the case of *Voyage*, these ideas – what could be called *vernacular* histories or philosophies of the emotions – were largely informal and sometimes ambivalent, and they grew from and fed into practical engagements. As we will see, emotional styles were extremely varied, encompassing pathos and entertainment, humour and drama, realism and metatheatre, historicism and anachronism. It was through the rehearsal process that these multiple styles and ideas were overlaid, conflated and mutually re-inflected in ways that had significant consequences for the final production. To anticipate one example discussed below, such multiplicity patterned the make-up of the *Voyage* "orchestra," a seven-piece ensemble comprising instrumentalists with both specialist Baroque and more mainstream musical backgrounds, all of whom played on modern instruments. As such, it accommodated diverse attitudes towards music, historicity and the emotions.[5] In this

and other ways, then, the idea of *pasticcio*, or the collage of disparate elements, is an ongoing theme here, both as a feature of the show itself and, more broadly, as a way of thinking about creativity, collaboration and emotion that highlights multiplicity.[6] As will become clearer below, the self-consciousness of the *Voyage* production makes it an especially interesting setting for exploring this issue.

In order to credit the complexity described so far, I play with the parallels between the production of *Voyage* and the production of ethnographic texts by borrowing from the vocabulary of rehearsals to structure my narrative.[7] The term "run" or "run-through" was ubiquitous in rehearsals as a way to describe the repetitive performance of units of various sizes, from fragments of a single musical number to the whole opera.[8] Used to devise, test, adjust, refine and memorise the singing and stage movements, these "runs" felt intensely cyclic, but meant that each number gradually accumulated layers of detail and significance over time. I adopt the term as a device for presenting ethnographic sketches of the work done on one musical number across multiple occasions to evoke the multiple layers of meaning and practice underlying what eventually cohere as singular performative moments. Another important rehearsal term was "notes" – the comments (usually from the director and musical leaders) and discussions that followed a run. Similarly, my "notes" step back from the action and comment on the issues that emerge when multiple runs of a number are considered together. The result is a narrative that tacks between, and zooms in and out of, specific moments, like the rehearsal process itself. As Michael Gow, the *Voyage* librettist and director, explained:

> [Y]ou keep finding points in the show then moving out from it. It's kind of like Venn diagrams of it, rather than starting here [at the start] and getting to the end. … It's just that sense of stitching it together, but not in order, so that internally it somehow is linked.[9]

The article presents multiple "runs" of several specific musical numbers in the order in which they appeared in the opera, thus retaining the arc of the plot and the linear progress of the rehearsals while also conveying the sense of cyclic repetition. I use these numbers to exemplify broader issues – concerning the voice, gesture and stage design, and the orchestra – which I see as relevant to wider rehearsal and operatic culture. My narrative also follows the order in which elements appeared in rehearsals: work often moved from singing to

movement; staging elements and the orchestra appeared later in the process. In crafting this multi-layered, pastiche-like account of the production process, I hope to evoke the atmosphere of the rehearsal room and the sense of change and activity across multiple scales and artistic domains. If the narrative is occasionally disorientating, this matches my experience of the rehearsals and my sense of how they felt to others: intense, repetitive, juggling multiple possibilities and production elements, yet always moving towards the pressure and promise of opening night.

[NOTE 10 In these "runs" I use given names to refer to members of the creative team in order to lend immediacy to the ethnographic scenes; in "notes" I use surnames to reflect the move to a more analytical register. I use single quotation marks ('...') to present speech that I noted down during rehearsals and double quotation marks ("...") for speech recorded during interviews. Where I use single quotes without attribution to a specific person, these are phrases that I noted were in the air during rehearsals. When referring to musical numbers, I follow the creative team's terminology: "2R," for example, is the recitative preceding the second aria of the opera.]

Run: Starting work on Recitative 2R[10]

Picture the scene. Emma and Sally-Anne are standing roughly in the centre of a large hall, singing. They're dressed in everyday clothes, but carry large metal swords. Phoebe [Briggs, Musical Director] accompanies from the piano behind them. Michael, Luke [Hales, Production and Stage Manager] and I sit in front, with the three covers off to one side. On the left, as we look out, a cluster of music stands represents a "ruined temple." On the wooden floor, a large, irregular ring of yellow tape marks out the stage of the Melbourne Recital Centre; a smaller perimeter in green tape indicates the stage of City Recital Hall, Sydney; underneath, the floor is crosshatched with faint marks from tape laid down for previous shows.

When the music stops, Michael enters the stage space to give directions. He asks that they use simpler gestures, saying that the performance should 'feel like a presentation or re-enactment, rather than realistic.' As they talk about the characters, names are in flux: sometimes Emma gets called or refers to herself as "Orlando"; sometimes Sally-Anne is "Astolfo"; and, because they are playing male characters, both women are "he" almost as often as "she." Phoebe calls out details of phrasing and emphasis from the piano.

The singers begin another short run. Emma strides on stage, slowing with the

ritardando at the end of the overture as though exhausted; Sally-Anne follows behind; they arrive centre stage and sing the opening recitative again. Day 1 of the rehearsals and the first scene is slowly coming together.

Notes: Multiplying Times, Spaces and Roles

This brief scene helps to expand our sense of the multiplicity of the *Voyage to the Moon* rehearsals. The rehearsals for the show took place during three weeks in January and February 2016 in the main hall of the Victorian Opera buildings in central Melbourne. Yet they also took us to other spaces and times: backwards to the quasi-historical time of the story, set somewhere remote and unspecified on the Earth as well as on the Moon; backwards too to the operatic cultures of 18th century Europe; forwards to the venues of the upcoming tour. The virtual "stage space," marked on the floor, was an area that most people, except the singers and Michael Gow as director, would avoid entering during rehearsals. The rehearsal room prefigured the spatial organisation of future performances; instrumentalists were positioned upstage, while a row of silent observers faced the singers, directly in front of the downstage space. As well as carrying out our main roles (such as director, stage manager, covers and ethnographers), we acted as a small, substitute audience – watching, listening, applauding – helping to make the rehearsals thick with moments in which audiences were imagined.

Roles, characters, and staging exhibited a similar multiplicity. Both Emma Matthews and Sally-Anne Russell played male characters and Matthews also switched between two roles (Orlando and Selena). The switching between gendered pronouns and between performers' and characters' names in rehearsal conversation was part of the process by which professional artists took on fictional roles. As the days went by, the singers incorporated more and more costume elements – stage shoes, corsets, capes, sword belts – into the rehearsals, gradually layering the fictional on top of the everyday. Yet some props and staging elements that appeared – music stands, instrument cases, music notation and road cases – folded the world of the rehearsal room back into the *Orlando furioso* storyline, unsettling any clear distinction between the imagined and the real.

This layering of diverse times, spaces and roles adds another dimension to this article's account of the multiplicity of the *Voyage* rehearsals. Here, this emphasis on multiplicity

pushes back against some central clichés surrounding opera and the performing arts more broadly: ideas about singers "inhabiting" their roles or celebrations of opera as a "unified" integration of multiple art forms, as "magical" and capable of "transporting" listeners to another world. Such notions obscure the practical and performative work involved in pulling together a sense of coherence from disparate materials and ignore the ways in which opera is embedded in particular artistic, institutional, and economic settings. I want instead to highlight the creative team's imaginative work in simultaneously grappling with multiple times, spaces and roles and to acknowledge what Shelemay, writing about the Early Music scene, calls "the reality of divergent perspectives even in the face of seeming unanimity."[11] In line with other rehearsal ethnography, I see the *Voyage* rehearsals "as complex sites of social reproduction, mutual coordination, and creative agency".[12] They mediated between disparate concerns at once mundane and magical, pragmatic and creative, and professional and dramatic.[13] Building on recent re-thinking of opera production in terms of "collage" and "bricolage",[14] I foreground the historical and artistic tensions underlying the art form.[15]

Runs: Singing, Marking and Ornamentation in Recitative and Arioso 3R

.... *Day 2* begins with work on 3R, a complex recitative and arioso that traverses many different moods as a desperate Orlando laments the apparent abduction of his beloved Angelica, discovers several love notes that suggest she has in fact eloped with Medoro, and so becomes enraged. Emma sings through the number, standing by the piano, as Phoebe accompanies and Michael listens close by. The focus is on the music and Emma sings with her eyes on the score, her body language introverted and concentrated.

They turn to staging, experimenting with movements and musical details, stopping often to discuss the emotional logic of the number. When Emma sings an anguished version of the phrase "'Angelica,' my beloved's name" – agitated gestures and facial expression, an intense vocal colour – Phoebe asks if it should be 'not sinister yet, here? Michael suggests not: the line can be 'puzzled,' at this stage Orlando still thinks Angelica has been abducted and the note may contain a clue to her whereabouts. They try again, Emma adjusting her gestures and adopting a more sighing timbre.

Elsewhere, she sketches in the rough contour of an ornament to intensify the unresolved cadence on "Medoro! Traitor!" Almost every phrase is weighed in this way as they invent motivations for the number; gradually physical movements as well as subtleties of timing, ornamentation, timbre and dynamics emerge. Later that day, Emma runs sequences of movements whilst "marking" in order to refine and memorise the stage action.

…. *Day 6*. During a "cover run" – a session in which the covers practice their parts – I watch Kate Amos, Emma's cover, work on 3R. Kate stayed away from rehearsals yesterday with a cold, but catches up quickly. After singing through at the piano she tries the blocking (the movements of the performer on the stage), emulating the gestures devised by Emma and Michael a few days earlier, singing the same lines but sounding, inevitably, different. I'm struck by the amount of work that covers put into learning a part they may never perform.

…. *Day 10*. The first run of the whole show and the singers have turned up the volume. Sitting directly in front of the stage space, I am rarely more than a few metres from them and when Emma reaches 3R, her first major number of the opera, the power of her voice is viscerally stronger than in earlier rehearsals, her gestures more expansive; the first, introverted sing-through on *Day 2* is a distant memory.

…. After the orchestra join rehearsals, the expanded instrumental colours transform 3R further. During an orchestral rehearsal on *Day 14* Rachael [Beesley, violin, orchestral leader] comments that the orchestra should play with 'more air in the sound' in bar 31 to echo Emma's breathier singing on the preceding line, "Was she lying?" And she suggests an increase in dynamics on the semiquavers in bar 33 to match Orlando's growing anger (see [Figure **1**).

[Figure 1, Voyage to the Moon, Recitative and Arioso 3R, "Astolfo my loyal friend," bars 30-33 (composed and arranged by Alan Curtis and Calvin Bowman)].

When they rehearse with the singers the colour and dynamics of other figures are adjusted: the chord before "'Angelica,' my beloved's name" at bar 50 should be 'warm'

to fit Orlando's recollection of his beloved (and matching the shift in singing style decided on *Day 2*); the presto semiquavers at bar 56 should feel like an 'interruption,' switching the mood before Orlando sings "Medoro! Traitor!" By this stage, Emma's ornamentation of the cadence is fixed and impressive, reaching a high D.

Notes: Emotional Logic, Vocal Power and Vulnerability in *Voyage*

> [W]e must think twice before presuming to know just who expresses what as a singer portrays for us a dramatic role.[16]

The development of 3R highlights several important dimensions of work on the voice during the *Voyage* rehearsals. The operatic voice has been extensively theorised,[17] but an ethnographic perspective can extend and ground certain theoretical issues. One important point is to note that the distinctive privileging of the "voice" over other elements in discourse on opera was manifest in various mundane features of the rehearsal process. First, work on a number almost always began with singing at the piano before devising the staging, suggesting that the music was in some way more fundamental than movement. Second, the score was changed relatively often in order to make numbers more "sing-able" or better suited to a particular singer's voice. This grew from Gow's willingness to change the libretto and the flexibility of the *pasticcio* form, but also reflected a pervasive emphasis on the voice in discourse surrounding the production: for example, Gow commented in the opening Design Meeting that the contrast between the simple stage design and elaborate costumes was intended to focus attention on the singers. Third, discussions of the orchestral music often emphasised a need to reflect or augment the tone colours and sentiments of the vocal line. These features highlight the voice's distinctive and much valued (although not simply primary) place within the production.

Three practices noted in the Run provide further evidence of a prioritising of voice over movement or staging. "Marking" – singing at reduced volume or down the octave – was relatively common in the rehearsals, partly because the small cast meant that there were large quantities of challenging singing for all involved. As a way of "saving" the voice from injury and maintaining its condition for all-important performances, marking highlights the value of the voice both as a professional resource for individual singers and as a crucial commodity within the economic system of the production. The employment of covers, the flip side of this

economic equation, stems from this vocal vulnerability and the need for what Matt Thomas, who covered the role of the Magus, described as 'insurance.' Efforts to keep the cast healthy, including avoiding rehearsals when feeling unwell, point to similar concerns. All this is not simply to point out the obvious – that voices are important in opera – but to note that the vulnerability, prestige, and expressivity of the voice often become entangled. Hopes and fears surrounding voices were manifest on a daily basis in the *Voyage* rehearsals, products of the wider institutional setting and evidence of the considerable labour both stars and covers invest in learning specific roles and operatic vocal technique in general. The fetishisation of the operatic voice proceeds via this combination of labour, value, and vulnerability, and helps to generate its multi-faceted power, encompassing volume, technical ability, and, most importantly here, *expressive* force.

Rehearsal practices suggested two main ideas surrounding the emotional power of the voice: that singing communicated a character's internal emotions and that singing could move both the audience *and* other characters within the opera (although not always in the same way). As Atkinson observes, operatic rehearsals often centre on "a relatively protracted…collective exploration of how words and music can be motivated in order to create plausible characters and possibly meaningful situations from the texts that are provided."[18] Such an approach – sometimes protracted, sometimes fleeting (as in the vignette above) – was commonplace in *Voyage*. The search for motivations implied a process of exploring each character's internal life so that the singers could then find sounds, gestures and movements that would persuasively demonstrate an appropriate emotion. In contrast, for the covers, "character building must be constructed primarily from the outside" by copying the work of the main cast.[19] This difference between the working methods of cast and covers (and the division of labour between them) is instructive: the rehearsal process prioritised the singers' task of uncovering (seemingly prior and interior) motivations, while the covers' job of learning to perform the outward signs of those emotions was secondary.[20] In *Voyage*, the primary arenas for such emotional externalisation were the many "madness" or "rage" arias (including 3R, despite its unusual status as recitative and arioso), in which relatively prescriptive emotional types were linked to highly stylised musical features such as fast tempi and extensive coloratura, and so exemplified an almost one-to-one relationship between internal state and external (especially vocal) performance. The team brought a different approach to another type of aria, in which characters sang to soothe or influence other characters. Gow highlighted this idea of the voice as *effective* through references in rehearsals to the idea that,

quoting Congreve, 'music has charms to soothe the savage breast.' This idea of the voice as emotionally persuasive – a widespread idea in diverse settings[21] – gave the production a certain self-consciousness about the emotional power of music and the voice (discussed further below).

Rehearsals were also full of moments in which singers sought other kinds of expression, less connected to character and plot, particularly through ornamentation. These rely on what Halliwell calls the "autonomization" of the operatic voice, especially in moments – such as cadenzas and high notes – where emotions intensify and the voice "silences" the text, making it incomprehensible.[22] Describing "the tension between the presence of the performer and the representation of the character they embody," Halliwell argues that

> Opera, perhaps more than any of the other performance arts, foregrounds these moments of disjunction; it is as if the performer steps out of the character to engage directly with the audience.[23]

The singers' work on ornamentation speaks to these issues of autonomization and disjunction: they wanted not only to play a part, but to offer a virtuosic performance. In rehearsals, Matthews would often comment that an important cadence or moment 'needs something' and would return at a later date having decided on ornamentation. Her efforts to do so, in 3R and elsewhere, demonstrate an awareness that audiences were coming to see Emma Matthews-as-Orlando, not simply the character Orlando.[24] Recognising this tension between character and performer, Matthews explained in one interview that, although she has sometimes experienced her character's emotions "too deeply" when playing Romantic operatic roles (e.g. Lucia di Lammermoor), she considered the music in *Voyage* to be "more…about virtuosity than emotions, so…it will be interesting to find that balance [between technique and expression] I think."[25] So, while rehearsal talk often centred on characters' motivations, singers' attention to vocal virtuosity demonstrates a more abstract notion of the voice as a quasi-independent medium of impressive and pleasurable display,[26] partially detached from the particular emotions at issue within the libretto.

Such detachment highlights how performers constantly tack between contrasting, almost opposed, conceptions of the voice. These include more self-effacing tropes, as in Jeremy Kleeman's assertion that "it's not about the performer, it's about the performer as an

instrument to transmit the work to the audience."[27] Where concern with virtuosity is undergirded by a culture of prestige (and hence predicated on social boundaries and performers' elite status), vocal expressivity is understood as communicating across social, historical or cultural differences. Consider Matthew's comment that:

> [E]specially because my first scene is a mad scene. …they're not going to get to see my character really normal; I just go straight away mad. That…does bother me a bit because I think "Ok, how are they going to like me?" and you want to be liked by an audience as a performer…. [T]hat's going to be a real challenge for me…as an actress to find that emotional state like that [clicks fingers] and maintain it, without having the journey to get to it.[28]

While opera as a genre is of course home to many unlikable characters, Matthews's concern with being "liked" perhaps stems from her extensive experience playing sympathetic female leads and also speaks to the issue of vocal "autonomization" introduced above; specifically, the possibility that an audience can appreciate a performer for their "good" portrayal of even a "bad" character. Whatever its motivation, her statement demonstrates the accepted importance in modern operatic productions of capitalising on what Hunter terms "the audience's…capacities for identification," capacities often grounded on a "universal" or "transhistorical" approach to characterisation.[29] This is further demonstrated by Kleeman's comment that, for him, the value of the unamplified operatic voice is its ability to forge "a raw, primal connection with the audience."[30]

What both Matthews's and Kleeman's comments share is a framing of opera's emotional power as immanent rather than historically contingent. But more than this, Matthews's anxiety over the lack of preparation for Orlando's madness is, arguably, an example of a modern psychological notion (the emotional "journey") rubbing up against the more stylised emotional conventions of both the *Voyage* story and the pasticcio genre. She also describes her approach to the role as a process of "finding your own truth in what's on the page." Such comments support Hunter's observation that opera singers typically conceptualise their characters via "a thoroughly modern and psychological, rather than historicized and social-political, sense of human nature."[31] The fact that, by the end of the rehearsals, a strong sense of the emotional "journey" of all four characters had indeed asserted itself is testament to the strength of this emotional logic in the rehearsal process. It is clear, however, that no single principle-oriented ideas and practices surrounding emotions and the voice in *Voyage*. Instead, we see a distinctive privileging of the voice via multiple means: its synergetic combination of

vulnerability (marking, covers) and power (volume, expressive force), of emotional communication ('music has charms', being liked) and self-reflexive display (coloratura, high notes), and its apparently transhistorical, even "primal," expressivity. These features remain central as we trace the collage of emotions and histories at play elsewhere in the production.

Runs: "Baroqueish Gestures," Moonwalking and Music Stands in Recitative 7R and Aria 8[32]

…. As *Day 3* ends, I notice Michael playing with two large music stands, as if considering whether they are suitable for something. Work on Aria 8 the following morning reveals the purpose of his deliberations – the music stands will be used to represent the chariot in which the Magus and Astolfo travel to the moon; they are not temporary props, but will be used in the actual performances. The performers run one section, trialling the blocking: Jeremy and Sally-Anne twist the music stands right, then left, then right again with each sequence in Jeremy's coloratura, as if steering the chariot through turbulence. In another passage, with each cluster of semiquavers, Jeremy points upwards, gesturing at the "blazing stars" and "heaven's sacred fire" mentioned in the libretto. They pause and retake a section. Michael suggests that Jeremy holds his pose at the end of one phrase, explaining that he is "pushing Baroqueish gestures." Most striking is the da capo repeat of the A section, in which Jeremy, improvising, almost dances around the stage. Michael and Jeremy both seem taken with the humour emerging in this number, and later in the aria the Magus even moonwalks. From the laughter and comments afterwards it is not clear whether this is a joke or will actually be part of the stage movement – or indeed where the idea came from in the first place – but the run prompts enthusiastic applause before we break for lunch.

.... *Day 7*. Amid the usual morning chatter, Michael talks to Jeremy about his character, the Magus. Gradually more people fall silent and listen. iPad in hand, he reads long passages from the Wikipedia page on "The Magician (Tarot Card)" and riffs off connections between the article and the *Voyage* story: the Magus guides Astolfo to the moon and so "bridges the gap between heaven and earth"; he "brings about change or transformation" in Orlando, returning him to sanity; and where the appearance of the Magician card "points to the talents, capabilities and resources at the querent's disposal,"

the Magus brings out Astolfo's loyalty and bravery.[33] When Michael gets to the "pop culture" section, noting the Magus' appearance in video games and Japanese *anime*, Jeremy asks, 'Do we have a time period in mind?'

> Michael: "No. Only in the way that in Shakespeare's day they would dress up in old clothes to be in a different time than contemporary."

The conversation spins wider: Jeremy mentions his interest in ancient maths; Michael talks about the magi (three wise men) present at Christ's birth, Isaac Newton, alchemy, Haydn and Mozart's masonic associations, sketching a long tradition of intertwined mystic and artistic knowledge. The frame of reference is eclectic, informal, and fun. At the same time, it's a strange outpouring of occult thought at the start of the working day.

As they restart work on staging 7R and 8, a detail of symbolism described and depicted in the Wikipedia article ("In the Magician's right hand is a wand raised toward heaven…while his left hand is pointing to the earth") provides the inspiration for a gesture in the recitative. Jeremy points upwards with his right hand and then downwards with his left as he sings, "I am familiar with all the regions, above and below." As they run 8, the da capo repeat becomes more restrained than the energetic staging of a few days ago: instead of dancing, the Magus moves downstage, as if addressing each repetition of "the earth now lies below us" to individuals in the front row. Michael suggests that Jeremy should then 'strut' to centre stage, as if holding onto the lapels of his cloak: 'kind of academic, so the aria's like a lecture to the audience.' The moonwalk remains in the play out of the aria – a 'big moment,' expected to get applause or laughter from the audience thereby contributing to the multiplicity of responses Gow is striving to achieve as the opera proceeds.

.... *Day 14*. Wearing the Magus' cloak for the first time, Jeremy plays with spinning around and sweeping it outwards as he moves, showing off the lustrous gold and purple material.

…. *Day 17.* Preparations for the "General" (an Australian term for the "dress rehearsal" drawing from the German tradition) include multiple runs of Aria 8 to try different lighting options. With a dramatic flick of his hands Jeremy "magically" turns on the sconce lights on the music stand-chariot. After a few tries, the coordination with the

> actual mechanism – operated offstage by remote control – is working nicely. As he gestures towards the "blazing stars," the lighting technicians' experiment with different ways of spot-lighting glitter balls in order to scatter star-like patterns on the walls and ceiling. Another conjuring gesture causes the moon to light up and rise from behind a large pile of road cases; it is beautiful; a large sphere, glowing yellow-white as if by magic, its surface finely patterned with craters.

Notes: Gesture, Staging and Meta-narrative in *Voyage*

During the *Voyage* Design Meeting on *Day 1*, Gow mentioned what he called the "game" of the production – a self-referential quality that was, at that stage, only dimly discernible in design ideas about historically eclectic costumes and the use of music stands and instrument cases as props. It was only as stage movements were devised and more set and costumes arrived in rehearsals that several "game"-like metatheatrical layers – stories and subtexts surrounding both the *Voyage* plot and the show itself – became a tangible part of the production.

Although the conversation about the Magus on *Day 7* was unusually extensive (Gow usually made much briefer interventions), other features were representative. The frame of reference was eclectic, incorporated pop culture and took pleasure in the magical. This then informed Gow's and the singers' work as they devised gestures, drawing on what Atkinson calls "an idiolect of gesture – a personal repertoire of physical style and body language that can be deployed…to create different roles."[34] The intended humour of Aria 8 emerged, in part, through the practical interplay between Gow's vision of the Magus as a mysterious, fantastic figure, Kleeman's youthful and confident physicality, and their readiness to borrow images from both tarot cards and Michael Jackson (the moonwalking turned out to be Gow's idea – and luckily Kleeman could already do it). Atkinson calls this process of assembling a performance from diverse, readily available resources "bricolage" and finds it characteristic of much operatic staging work.[35] This "bricolage" had particular implications for the emotional and historical significance of *Voyage*'s gesture and movement. On the one hand, the show drew on a stylised gestural language common to much opera, supporting the expressivity of the voice through conventionalised relationships between movement and emotion. On the other hand, Gow's decision to have performers break the "fourth wall" (the invisible barrier that separates the audience from the performers), and, as he put it, 'lecture'

the audience, and 'claim' applause at the end of certain arias situated *Voyage* within opera's self-reflexive tradition of what Tomlinson calls the "staging of the act of singing,"[36] thus rearticulating the disjuncture between emotional expression and vocal display discussed above. Work on gesture also brought a humorous and historically eclectic approach (exemplified in the moonwalk) that contrasted with the more serious topics and emotions (love, betrayal, rage) at issue in the work on singing (discussed above) and the more "historically-informed" approach of the orchestra (discussed below). As Gow framed it in the rehearsal, even historical elements were playful "Baroqueish" approximations rather than attempts at authentic recreation. Explaining that he found performances with authentic gestures 'kind of dull,' he commented to Kleeman: 'We don't know how to read the gestures anymore. So, we can make it up, rather than trying to be authentic, but still use them and reference them.' In light of Gow's telling comment that they had no specific time period in mind for the production, the show's gestural language should be understood as historically hybrid, rather than historically situated.

The show's stage design played a similar game. The costumes, although at first glance conventionally "historical," in fact combined features taken from several distinct historical styles. For Gow and Christina Smith (the *Voyage* set and costume designer), this collage of period elements was intended as a deliberate parallel for the *pasticcio* form of the opera. Indeed, the costumes proved to be a microcosm of the broader pasticcio-like design of *Voyage*, through which several interconnected meta-narratives hovered around the production. I have already noted the show's "music has charms" subtext and on various occasions Gow also emphasised the production's status as semi-staged; at once concert and opera. During the Design Meeting he described a related idea: that the show would look like a performance by a touring company that improvised its stage design from standard touring equipment such as road cases, music stands and instrument cases. This was in a sense true – the design was partly a practical response to budget constraints and the realities of touring. Even the moon was a neat technical response to practical concerns: inflatable, several feet in diameter, illuminated from the inside, and so large enough to make a visual impact, but also easy to pack down for touring. Together with the rich costumes, the moon catered to an expectation of operatic spectacle. Yet the "touring" conceit was also a playful theatrical device: the staging was carefully designed, not improvised; and Gow's directions to singers that they should think of their performance as a 're-enactment' (see above) brought this meta-narrative into the rehearsal room.

The composite design of *Voyage* did not simply entail a contrast between spare, “touring” stage elements and lavish “period” costumes. The use of music notation, artificially aged with tea (used as a prop and so visible to the audience), as well as carefully selected old-fashioned music cases folded “period” elements back into the “touring” design. Layered on top of this was a “sci-fi” narrative, again present from early on: Gow’s interest in the “moon episode” in *Orlando furioso* grew from his love of sci-fi as a genre. So the music stands in Aria 8 not only represented an “ancient chariot” and added to the “touring” conceit, their appearance and the movements they provoked (e.g. miming turbulence) also had a distinctly sci-fi feel, suggesting the dashboard of a spacecraft. In rehearsals, diverse and often humorous allusions to these frames – via everything from the theory of relativity to Harry Potter – provided the team with more-or-less shared reference points for collectively devising and evaluating gestural work in a way that wove historical ambiguity into their embodied practices and so into the show’s aesthetic.

It is important to note, however, that none of these meta-narratives – concert, touring, period, sci-fi, magical – were strongly foregrounded either in rehearsals or in the promotional material surrounding the show. Rather they were occasional yet persistent reference points superimposed onto the underlying *Orlando Furioso* story, often motivated by practical factors, harnessed as imaginative resources for rehearsal work, and aimed at creating the show’s distinctive, if ambiguous, design aesthetic and theatricality. Although it is tempting to analyse these metatheatrical layers, especially the idea of the show as a ‘re-enactment’ by a touring company, in terms of emotional ambivalence and distance, such ideas were not conspicuous in rehearsals.[37] Humour and entertainment were much more prominent concerns, in keeping with Gow’s idea of the “game” of the production. After the show opened, he reflected on the audience’s reaction:

> [I]t’s just good to hear that they do laugh and…there’s such an interesting thing that happens at the beginning: …it starts with an “Oh, it’s a musical recital,” and then there’s a slow sad aria, and “Oh, it’s going to be hours of this,” and then there’s the mad scene, and they kind of go, “Oh, that was exciting.” So you can see them relaxing into it and by the time the Magus arrives and is moon-walking and the moon’s risen, they’ve kind of got that it’s not entirely a serious evening of period music.[38]

This comment suggests that the various meta-narratives surrounding *Voyage* should be

understood as an attempt to play with, subvert and ultimately enrich audience experiences not only of the show itself, but the wider category of "serious" period music (whether as opera or recital). And, importantly, they reframe the other main creative contribution to the production, that of the orchestra.

Runs: "Sweetness" and Semiquavers that "have something" in Aria 12

.... *Day 12.* For much of the rehearsal period, musical accompaniment comprised some combination of piano, harpsichord and cello, but the "Orchestra Day" brings all the instrumental musicians together to rehearse, without Gow or the singers. On Rachael's request, to start the day, Phoebe talks through the plot of the opera, number by number, so that they can understand the different 'affects,' and after some time work turns to Aria 12, in which the Magus pleads with Selena, guardian of the moon, to allow Orlando's lost sanity to be returned. After playing through, they pause and Rachael emphasises that this number should have an 'imploring' affect, prompting Kirsty McCahon (double bass) to add that the semiquavers in the bass line should feel "active." They work through the number again, with Rachael suggesting details here and there: 'more sweetness' at one important cadence, a 'small breath' in the phrasing of a chromatic violin line. As the higher strings try things out, Molly Kadarauch (cello) and Kirsty discuss bowing for their part; the bass line, often moving in chromatic semiquavers, is tricky, but also one reason why the musicians like this number. More conversations start up and fade out: the tempo at the end of the A section repeat, more on bowing, clarifications of how the aria fits into the story line. Kirsty comments, 'In this key, this is one of the few B sections the bass can play in,' suggesting it may suit the 'dark feeling' of the aria. Phoebe responds that the new text is not dark – even though the original was – so the bass should be tacit. When the group switches from talking back to playing, the atmosphere remains highly interactive – glances pass between them, gestures spontaneously coordinate. Most of them play with great animation, visibly performing the varied textures of the music with their bodies, emphasising accents or important countermelodies with arm or upper-body movements.

.... *Day 13.* Playing the piece with the singers for the first time, they pause for a discussion: the tempo feels wrong. Kirsty suggests that maybe the problem is 'an affect thing,' the bass semiquavers should 'have something,' and she plays a fragment of her

part. They try again, fractionally faster. Talking to Jeremy later that day, it becomes clear that the orchestra's arrival has added a new dimension to his experience and that work on the pacing of the instrumental bass line in Aria 12 is feeding into his sense of the vocal part:

> [T]uning in to these little counter melodies and things, …I've been really looking forward to being able to do that, …especially the double bass line in that…aria. It's…just constantly going, it's a great movement and it links really well with my part.[39]

…. *Day 16*. Molly and Kirsty have clearly been working on that bass line, which now sounds dramatic and sinewy; Rachael, Zoë Black (violin) and Simon Oswell (viola) are giving new power to the opening chords, their emphatic, synchronised bowstrokes adding to the spectacle of the first moments of the number. The piece is sounding suitably polished given that the next rehearsal is the "General," yet small details are still being refined and revised. Kirsty asks how the orchestra should phrase bars 17 and 18. After some discussion, Phoebe and Jeremy decide that the phrasing should 'go to the half bar, not the first beat,' as this matches the emphasis on the half bar in the vocal line on the words "mercy" and "softened" (see [Figure **2**). They play again, the altered bass phrasing adding new intensity to these key affect-laden words.

[Figure 2, Voyage to the Moon, Aria 12, "Goddess, I stand here humbly," bars 17-18 (adapted from Handel's "Gelido in ogni vena scorrer mi sento il sangue" from Siroe, HWV 24 [1728])]

Notes: Collaboration, Affect and Variety in the Orchestral Music of *Voyage*

Work on the instrumental music for *Voyage* proved an especially elusive ethnographic subject: rehearsals often involved multiple simultaneous conversations between different sub-sections of the ensemble; communication moved rapidly between playing or singing passages and verbal discussion;[40] attention focussed largely on small and fleeting musical details; and where subtleties were verbalised the language used was sometimes fragmented or seemingly highly abstract (e.g. Kirsty McCahon's "have something" above). Equally complex was the orchestra's relationship with Early Music and historically informed performance. The *Voyage*

programme described the ensemble as comprising “some of Australia’s finest period instrument specialists, chosen for their knowledge of Baroque style,” yet their specialist knowledge often remained unspoken amid the fluidities and practicalities of group rehearsals.[41] By turning these ethnographic challenges into areas for analysis it is possible, however, to discern some important characteristics of the orchestral rehearsals and their significance within the broader production.

Most strikingly, the fluid, multi-modal and poly-vocal nature of the group’s approach to rehearsals signalled a wealth of often unspoken yet visibly embodied specialist knowledge, born of considerable musical training, and gave a powerful sense that the group sought to actively and collaboratively shape the musical material. The relatively small (seven person) instrumental ensemble seemingly heightened the musicians’ sense both of responsibility and of entitlement to contribute (compared to the stricter hierarchies of a larger orchestra), which was no doubt intensified by individuals’ investments in specialist knowledge of their particular instruments. Indeed, like the singers’ vocal prowess, the instrumentalists’ specialist knowledge was, I suggest, subtly deployed as another charismatic feature of the production. This was evident in a series of decisions – made over the course of several months – that led to the musicians being visibly present in a central, upstage position, rather than in a pit or off to one side of the stage. It was also visible – during rehearsals and, later, in the performances – in the group’s physically animated and interactive playing style, which clearly performed their identity as individually differentiated musicians, as distinct from the more constrained, anonymous body language associated with larger orchestras.

Such practical and performative dimensions of the orchestral work often overshadowed ideological concerns typically foregrounded in much literature on Early Music. Interviews and informal conversations made it clear that musicians were aware of the critical debate surrounding Early Music, and at least partially invested in ideologies of historical reconstruction – as evident, for example, in McCahon’s comment about the need to ‘listen with 17th century ears’ – while remaining ambivalent about its implications.[42] Thus, although Historically Informed Practice (HIP) precepts no doubt shaped musicians’ approaches to the music, such issues were largely absent from actual rehearsal talk. Indeed, the words “authentic” or “historically informed” were rarely – if ever – heard. Instead, the musicians engaged in “emotional practices,” which drew on training, habit and implicit knowledge;[43] their creative decisions were informed more by a “feel” for Baroque music cultivated over

years of practice, than by overtly articulated historical principles (regarding, for example, correct ornamentation), and, where they did turn overt, rehearsal discussions were animated by two main concerns: affect and variety.

Rachael Beesley's opening request – that Phoebe Briggs talk through the different 'affects' of the *Voyage* story – indicates the importance of the first of these concerns for the orchestral musicians. Perhaps the most pervasive reference point for discussions of affect was the voice: musicians often commented on the importance of 'supporting' the singers' expression, bringing out the emotional content of the libretto, or simply finding an orchestral accompaniment that best afforded a clear and audible vocal line. The decision mentioned above – to have the bass tacit in the B section, since the new text was not "dark" – illustrates that the libretto was prioritised as an emotional reference point and that the affective implications of musical features (here the key, allowing inclusion of the bass) were secondary.

Where musicians referred directly to "affect" or "emotion," their discussions were not especially formalised and rarely echoed Baroque practices associated with the "doctrine of the affections" (e.g. attributing particular affects to particular key signatures). Instead, naming practices were informal and practice-oriented; they provisionally coined terms that caught the "feeling" at issue ('imploring' above) to situate a number within the emotional course of the storyline. As Scheer argues "putting a name on our emotions is always bound up in a bodily practice," so musicians often moved rapidly between such talk and practical attempts to evoke a feeling in sound.[44] Indeed, as with McCahon's comment above on the tempo of Aria 12, "affect" was itself deployed in the abstract as a shorthand for musical and emotional characteristics that were better conveyed through performance than described in words. This tendency to informally characterise and practically demonstrate musical moods and possibilities reaffirms the point that, for the *Voyage* orchestra, certain highly naturalised performative approaches took precedence over overtly articulated historical knowledge when making creative decisions. No doubt this was partly a result of the practical imperatives of putting on a show, but it is also perhaps one legacy of several decades of interaction between scholarly critique and modern-day traditions of Early Music performance.[45] As a result, there is, today, no straight line from discourse into practice; reconstructionist ideologies and specialist musical knowledge do not simply inform creative decisions, rather Early Music performance practices draw on still-fraught ideological debates in flexible and ambivalent

ways. Take, for example, McCahon's comment to the group in one rehearsal that they needed 'to do more extreme phrasing [on modern instruments than with gut strings] because our [modern] instruments want to make everything [sound] similar.' This brief statement articulates a (discursive) distinction between period and modern-day instruments and instrumental technique, yet also, paradoxically, undercuts any strict opposition by (performatively) "translating" an Early Music aesthetic onto those same modern-day instruments.[46]

Importantly, this translation pivots on a concern with musical *variety* (i.e. not making "everything [sound] similar") that ran through the instrumental rehearsals. Much time was spent on details of dynamics, phrasing, articulation, and timbre, as well as making fine adjustments to tempi. The relative lack of articulation and dynamic markings in the *Voyage* score – partly a feature of the original scores from which *Voyage* was assembled and their sometimes partial remediation through the Sibelius scoring software – compounded the sense that many expressive details of the music had to be re-found or conceived afresh. As orchestral leader, Beesley played a particularly important role in this regard, repeatedly encouraging the group to play with maximum nuance and to craft varied musical textures at the level of individual notes and phrases. In this way, the orchestral music for *Voyage* was a clear example of what Hunter identifies as "a highly articulated and nuanced style of instrumental playing on modern instruments that derives directly from more self-consciously revivalist" practices.[47] By pursuing this aesthetic, the *Voyage* instrumentalists subscribed not only to a widespread Early Music ideal of (orchestral) sound as highly variegated, but also to a discourse which seems to highlight both the inner life of the music itself and performers' collective creative agency, indeed *responsibility*, in shaping the sound from moment to moment.

In these ways, the *Voyage* orchestra occupied a relatively distinct creative and emotional world that ran parallel to those discussed in previous sections. It provided, in particular, an entry-point for the "penetration of the historically informed into the mainstream" of contemporary opera performances, adding another element to the overall collage of the production.[48] At the same time, it demonstrated a particular approach to historically informed performance that finds creative energy in distinctive embodied practices and in a stylistic orientation towards "affect" and "variety," thereby allowing the group to negotiate between various training backgrounds (both period and mainstream) and perpetuate established

aesthetic features of Early Music while side-stepping tricky critical debates and entrenched notions of authenticity.

Run: The General

> .... *Day 17*. After a long afternoon, the team return to the Melbourne Recital Centre at 7.00pm for the General. The run-through follows the show's now familiar progression – the overture, the appearance of Orlando and Astolfo, then the Magus, in Scene 1; the meeting with Selena in Scene 2; the climactic rage arias and return of Orlando's sanity in Scene 3 – but some things are different, more formal and spectacular, yet also occasionally more fragile. The orchestra wear black concert clothing for the first time. The singers project out into the large auditorium while cautiously checking the positions of the video monitors used for taking cues from Phoebe. Those of us scattered across the auditorium floor clap enthusiastically after key arias, helping the orchestra judge the cues that happen after these hiatuses for applause while also encouraging the singers who have the strange task of performing to a nearly empty hall. As she strides across the stage as Selena, Emma's cape catches on a music stand – something it has not done since the early costume runs – and Luke steps in to release it. The moon rises over the stage in fits and starts – calibration of the winch has been a technical concern all day – but then shines beautifully as the show continues. The bold lighting adds new drama to the onstage action, but occasionally shifts clumsily as the design is finalised. Despite these small problems and uncertainties, the run is largely confident and continuous, one of few uninterrupted runs of the whole show, and afterwards spirits are high. The production process is finished, and opening night awaits.

Notes: Coherence and Multiplicity, Alterity, and Identification

As the final event in the production process, the General functioned in part as a ritual validation of participants' work so far, a step towards the celebratory atmosphere of opening night.[49] It also served as a performance of the coherence of the show despite its multiplicity and performative fragility; running without stopping, even when problems did occur, helped those involved consolidate a "feeling" for the production as a whole and demonstrated that it would "work" in context. As such, the General represents the culmination of a process by

which participants moved from awareness of the production's varied possibilities, through innumerable creative choices, to a sense of it as a finished entity, to which they could commit emotionally and artistically.[50] This is not to say that what I have called the multiplicity evident in the rehearsals simply disappeared, but that the show came to cohere as a particular and relatively fixed set of relations between multiple elements, which were felt to fit together, albeit in a contingent rather than systematic way. By this stage, certain musical numbers were clearly understood as emotionally powerful while others were entertaining, moments of vocal display were pre-determined, and the various metatheatrical frames came in and out of focus at fixed points. So, although small details of the production were changed throughout the tour, the overall character of the show was finalised by the General and remained intact thereafter.[51]

In its finished form, *Voyage* represents a relatively straightforward example of the interpolation of the historically informed and mainstream within a single show, supporting Hunter's critique of binary divisions between historically "informed" and "uninformed" operatic productions.[52] A broad sense of its stylistic and historical collage would have been apparent to most audience members familiar with the art form within the first few minutes. In paying attention to the vast amount of hidden work that is only dimly perceptible in the final production, an ethnographic perspective can raise further questions about the emotional and historical multiplicity at stake in modern operatic culture. An important starting point is Hunter's description of the "complex combination of ideologies" evident in some opera productions when "'[h]istorically informed' instrumental…music collaborates with what we might call a 'historically rethought' visual dimension….[and a] set of historically 'uninformed' attitudes to characterization."[53] This is an apt description of *Voyage*: the production process was characterised by the interaction between several relatively distinct domains (vocal, visual, instrumental), each with its distinct emotional style and particular attitude towards historicity. Importantly, though, each domain was also itself internally complex. The expressivity of the singing was born of the tensions between emotional communication and self-reflexive display that are central to contemporary operatic culture. The affective dimensions of the staging and gesture grew from a largely playful metatheatrical game, which both supported and subverted the thrust of the main storyline. In this the show continued a tradition of metatheatre associated with both contemporary theatre and opera, especially *regietheater*, and prominent in Gow's other work.[54] The orchestral contribution was grounded on a more historically-oriented approach, its lively sonic and

embodied practices pointing to an affect-oriented take on emotion aligned with Early Music culture, yet one that, in its informality and collaborative ethos, avoided a strongly authenticity-based ideological stance. In short, *Voyage* exhibited a collage-like and often ambivalent attitude towards emotion and history across multiple scales. The ideological multiplicity *within* each domain is suggestive of tensions that extend into other subcultures of contemporary Western performing arts (most obviously mainstream vocal practice, contemporary theatre, and Early Music).

Through the rehearsal process, the elements of this collage mutually reinflected each other such that, although certain emotional practices were broadly aligned with particular people or production elements, they in fact came to pervade multiple domains. Gow, in particular, was highly involved in both crafting an emotional "journey" for each of the characters and re-inflecting these performances as re-enactments; he moved subtly between emotional identification and Brechtian distanciation. The onstage orchestra supported the shifting moods of the libretto, but, in its relocation from the pit, also became part of the playful "touring" aesthetic. A single prop could be a music stand, ancient chariot, and spaceship all at once, simultaneously part of the "main" story and standing outside it. Several implications of this pervasive, scale-crossing multiplicity are worth noting.

First, it is important to square this feature with Hunter's argument that:

> "[M]ore important to opera's unique version of historical performance than its multidimensionality is its explicitly human content and its frank reliance for meaning and effect upon the manipulation of the audience's sympathies and capacities for identification.[55]

Hunter argues that one profoundly important basis, in many modern operatic productions, for such manipulation is the creation of characters that are "transhistorically human" and thus "emotionally plausible in the world of the audience."[56] Although, as noted above, this approach to characterisation was of central importance in *Voyage*, the pervasive emotional multiplicity evident in rehearsals meant that this emphasis on emotional communication and identification was very hard to disentangle from a contrasting dynamic of defamiliarisation or de-identification. Most obviously, what I have called (drawing on Halliwell) self-reflexive vocal display – moments in which singers actively sought to draw attention to their virtuosic ability as professional performers rather than their status as characters – did not contribute in any straightforward way to the communication of the story, yet was an important concern in

rehearsals and so made the voice much more than an agent of emotional identification. This approach to the voice is simply the central example of a tension that pervaded attitudes towards the historicity and expressivity of all elements of the production: the wide-ranging historical references in the show's gestural style, for example, both promoted (through forms of embodiment that were seen as natural and intrinsically human) and subverted (through bodily movements that were variously hyperbolic, distancing and anachronistic) a sense of the characters as "emotionally plausible." Although complex attitudes towards historicity are increasingly normal in contemporary opera production, this complexity was especially heightened in *Voyage* for several reasons.[57] Its status as a *pasticcio* brought an intensified self-consciousness about the collage-like nature of the production, evident in various features, from the historical pastiche of the costume design to Gow's eclectic approach to gesture. The use of the mythic *Orlando furioso* narrative, and its additional metatheatrical reframing as futuristic sci-fi, further intensified this self-consciousness. Hunter suggests that operatic productions based on mythic storylines permit "less possibility of historical collage," since myths "exist… outside the frame of history."[58] A lack of historical specificity did not, however, render *Voyage* historically neutral: Gow's comment that *Voyage* was not intended to evoke a particular time period, only 'a different time than contemporary' (see above) still emphasises historical *difference*. And the "touring" conceit playfully commented on the possibility of historical reconstruction itself. Through the contingencies of the rehearsal process, these attitudes opened the production to an amorphous and anachronistic collage of references to past, present, and future times. Further complexity came via the production's reflexivity about the power of music, which intensified both the defamiliarising metatheatricality of the production and its reliance on conventional strategies of emotional identification; it encouraged musicians' performative investment in the emotional power of music, while also framing the production as a comment on that power. Indeed, Gow went as far as to say that "I keep coming back to the fact that for me the whole show and the reason for doing it is about the power of music."[59] An opera that is "about" the power of music is hardly unfamiliar and, indeed, positions *Voyage* within a long tradition of operatic reflexivity, but its emotional implications are complex.

The implications of this reflexivity are best exemplified by one particular staging direction that emerged during rehearsals of number 17, the instrumental music played as Orlando's sanity is restored. On *Day 9* Gow suggested that, during this number, Orlando's "journey" should be that he opens the box containing his sanity, then turns towards the orchestra and

slowly walks around the musicians, as if healed by the music. The action developed during rehearsals into an extended, if subtle, interaction between Emma Matthews and the four members of the orchestra playing the music (a string quartet), with Matthews touching Molly Kadarauch on the shoulder (as she continued to play cello) and looking intently at the musicians and their notation. This staging built on Gow's previous directions to singers to 'break the fourth wall' by singing to the audience, as well as his idea that Matthews should look to the orchestra for encouragement during Orlando's final rage aria, as if energised by the music. By crossing into the orchestra's space and interacting with the musicians, Emma Matthews-as-Orlando broke another conceptual "wall," blurring the boundaries between the main *Orlando furioso* storyline, the "concert" and "touring" frames and the "real" *Voyage* production. In addition, this stage direction crystallised the "music hath charms" idea, which although repeatedly referenced in rehearsals, might otherwise have remained hidden to audiences; it inserted into the plot of the opera a visible performance of music as powerful, persuasive and healing. Number 17 thus became both intensely metatheatrical and – because Matthews played it "straight," with anguished facial expressions and gestures – intensely emotional (paradoxically inverting the playful intent of the rest of the show's metatheatre).

Because it appears late in *Voyage*, number 17 was among the last musical numbers to be rehearsed. As such, it built on work done earlier and so perhaps represents the culmination of the opera's distinctive aesthetic, as well as encapsulating many of the issues traced throughout this chapter. More than this, it adds another dimension to our understanding of the relationship between emotional identification and alterity in *Voyage* and operatic culture at large. The ethnographic perspective on the *Voyage* rehearsals presented here certainly supports Hunter's argument that the defamiliarising potential of "historically informed" approaches is economically risky, in that they might undermine opera audience's (i.e. patron's) emotional identifications with the characters onstage.[60] As we have seen, the *Voyage* creative team relied heavily on emotional identification and stopped short of a strongly defamiliarising aesthetic. Yet, at the same time, following the production process teaches us that modest defamiliarisation – rethought as humorous entertainment and even as metatheatre that can paradoxically enhance the production's emotional power (as with Matthews's 'journey' around the orchestra in number 17) – can also serve economic ends, in attempting to play to the complexity of audience expectations. As Hunter notes, "The arguments for …[opera's] juxtaposition of historicities [and, we could add, emotional styles] are a rich mixture of commercial realism, historical justification and "timeless" performative

contextualizing."[61] In *Voyage*, Gow's artistic vision for the production depended on the interweaving of emotional identification and alterity, of timeless familiarity and historical difference. Its reflexivity was intended to be playful yet leave the heart of the story intact; as Gow put it: "we're not afraid of moving people at all."[62] Yet there was no unified creative vision here. Rather, a flexible or capacious idea of "moving the audience" provided all participants with a common goal that bridged between sometimes divergent approaches. The result was not a synthesis, but a distinctly hybrid emotional style dependant on a multiplicity of affective agendas. The singers worked to move audiences through their performances, yet their elaborate, distinctly non-present day (if historically eclectic) costumes and displays of vocal prowess also helped to create a clear distinction between on and off stage, aimed at satisfying audience expectations of operatic virtuosity, difference and spectacle. The laughter and lightness surrounding the show's historical juxtapositions was balanced by an emotional depth brought both by particular dramatic moments and by the pervasive presence of "serious" classical music and prestigious performers. The use of metatheatre at once helped to accommodate, connect, and even intensify these various affective agendas, while also revealing their differences and so risking the show's aesthetic fragmentation. These complex accommodations were crafted in rehearsals as the team repeatedly recalibrated their sense of the emergent production against imagined audiences that they sought to move, impress, entertain and gently provoke – all within one show.

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[1] For background on *Voyage*, see the previous chapter in this volume. On the *pasticcio* form, see Price, "Pasticcio."

[2] Gammerl, "Emotional Styles," 163.

[3] Scheer, "Are Emotions a Kind of Practice," 215.

[4] Hunter, "Historically Informed Performance," 606–26.

[5] The instrumental ensemble consisted of Phoebe Briggs (harpsichord), Emma Black (oboe), Celia Craig (oboe for the Adelaide performance only), Rachael Beesley and Zoë Black (violins), Simon Oswell (viola), Molly Kadarauch (cello) and Kirsty McCahon (double bass).

[6] For a theoretical account of multiplicity that influences my thinking here, see Law and Mol, "Complexities: An Introduction," 7–11.

[7] This strategy is inspired by Meintjes' use of terms such as "takes," "cuts" and "mixes" to shape her ethnography of a South African recording studio. See Meintjes, *Sound of Africa!*. See also Browning, "Assembled Landscapes," 72.

[8] See McAuley, *Not Magic but Work,* 116–17.

[9] Michael Gow, interview with the author, Melbourne, 30 January 2016.

[10] In these "runs" I use given names to refer to members of the creative team in order to lend immediacy to the ethnographic scenes; in "notes" I use surnames to reflect the move to a more analytical register. I use single quotation marks ('...') to present speech that I noted down during rehearsals and double quotation marks ("...") for speech recorded during interviews. Where I use single quotes without attribution to a specific person, these are phrases that I noted were in the air during rehearsals. When referring to musical numbers, I follow the creative team's terminology: "2R," for example, is the recitative preceding the second aria of the opera.

[11] Shelemay, "Toward an Ethnomusicology of the Early Music Movement," 23.

[12] Dueck, "Jazz Endings," 93.

[13] See McAuley, *Not Magic but Work*; Paul Atkinson, *Everyday Arias.*

[14] See, respectively, Hunter, "Historically Informed Performance" and Atkinson, "Making Opera Work," 3–19.

[15] See Bull, *The Musical Body*, 161–4, 229.

[16] Tomlinson, *Metaphysical Song*, 3.

[17] For an overview, see Halliwell, "'Voices within the Voice'," 254–72.

[18] Atkinson, "Making Opera Work," 13.

[19] Atkinson, *Everyday Arias*, 102–3.

[20] For further discussion of interiority in classical music, including its classed dimensions, see Bull, *The Musical Body*, 232–62.

[21] See, for example, McCallum, "Beguiling Voices," 93–115.

[22] Halliwell, "Voices within the Voice," 258–9.

[23] Halliwell, "Voices within the Voice," 259.

[24] See Halliwell, "'Voices within the Voice'," 272; also Atkinson, *Everyday Arias*, 51.

[25] Emma Matthews, interview with the author, Melbourne, 25 September 2015.

[26] Stokes, *The Republic of Love*, 6–7.

[27] Jeremy Kleeman, interview with the author, Melbourne, 25 September 2015.

[28] Emma Matthews, interview with the author, Melbourne, 25 September 2015.

[29] Hunter, "Historically Informed Performance," 616–17.

[30] Jeremy Kleeman, interview with the author, Melbourne, 25 September 2015.

[31] Hunter, "Historically Informed Performance," 616.

[32] Changes to the structure of the opera sometimes resulted in idiosyncratic numbering of musical items. In this case, Recitative 7R immediately preceded Aria 8; there was no Aria 7

[33] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Magician_(Tarot_card).

[34] Atkinson, *Everyday Arias*, 89.

[35] Atkinson, *Everyday Arias*, 89; also, "Making Opera Work."

[36] Tomlinson, *Metaphysical Song*, 4.

[37] Seeing some connection with Brecht's *verfremdungseffekt* is, however, reasonable here. *Once in Royal David's City*, Gow's most recent play before his work on several operas including *Voyage*, both directly references Brecht and draws heavily on Brechtian theatrical devices, including a "lecture" that recalls Gow's direction to Kleeman during their work on Aria 8. See Gow, *Once in Royal David's City*.

[38] Michael Gow, interview with the author, Melbourne, 18 February 2016.

[39] Jeremy Kleeman, interview with the author, Melbourne, 9 February 2016.

[40] See Bayley, "Ethnographic Research," 385–411; and Williamon and Davidson, "Exploring Co-Performer Communication," 53–72.

[41] Anonymous, "The Instrumental Ensemble," in *Voyage to the Moon: A brand new opera of love, loss and hope*, programme, Paddington, 2013, 13.

[42] See Shelemay, "Toward an Ethnomusicology of the Early Music Movement," 21–22.

[43] Scheer, "Are Emotions a Kind of Practice," 202.

[44] Scheer, "Are Emotions a Kind of Practice," 212; for two distinct, yet similarly language-focussed discussions, see also Abu-Lughod and Lutz, "Introduction: Emotion, discourse," 1–23; and Reddy, "Against Constructionism," 327–51.

[45] On that recent history see, for example, Wilson, *The Art of Re-Enchantment*. A central critical text is Taruskin, *Text and Act*. For a review of the extensive literature, see Fabian, "The Meaning of Authenticity," 153–67.

[46] Hunter, "Historically Informed Performance," 607–8.

[47] Hunter, "Historically Informed Performance," 607–8; 614.

[48] Hunter, "Historically Informed Performance," 608.

[49] See McAuley, *Not Magic but Work*, 142, 222.

[50] See McAuley, *Not Magic but Work*, 218-20; also, Atkinson, "Making Opera Work," 11.

[51] See Atkinson, "Making Opera Work," 11.

[52] Hunter, "Historically Informed Performance," 608, 622.

[53] Hunter, "Historically Informed Performance," 616.

[54] See Gilbert, *Sightlines: Race, Gender, and Nation*, 100–104; and Fischer and Greiner, eds., *The Play Within the Play*.

[55] Hunter, "Historically Informed Performance," 616.

[56] Hunter, "Historically Informed Performance," 617, 621.

[57] See Hunter, "Historically Informed Performance," 615-6.

[58] Hunter, "Historically Informed Performance," 622.

[59] Michael Gow, interview with the author, Melbourne, 23 September 2015.

[60] Hunter, "Historically Informed Performance," 619.

[61] Hunter, "Historically Informed Performance," 615.

[62] Michael Gow, interview with the author, Melbourne, 23 September 2015.