R. MURRAY SCHAFER'S *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:*

A PRODUCTION ANALYSIS
by

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Abstract

Opera Breve is a chamber opera company that was initiated by three students during a seminar in operatic literature at the University of British Columbia. During the four years of its activities, the company has distinguished itself by producing one-act chamber operas in unconventional settings. Co-artistic director John Juliani has had a large influence on the company's presentational style, incorporating important aspects of his theatre aesthetic to the operatic art form. R. Murray Schafer's work *Beauty and the Beast* was chosen for the third main season, and represents the culmination of the company's artistic endeavours. The main focus of this dissertation is an analysis of Opera Breve's production of *Beauty and the Beast.*

The opening chapter defines the genre of the one-act chamber opera, briefly traces its development to present day, and articulates why Opera Breve adopted the form as the mainstay of its repertoire. The second chapter describes the conception and artistic goals of the company. John Juliani's philosophy of free theatre and its application to Opera Breve's past productions are discussed. The third chapter presents Schafer's philosophy of Music Theatre as exemplified in his cycle, *Patria.* The influence of Jungian archetypes in the symbology of *Beauty and the Beast,* and its musical representation are presented. The fourth chapter focuses on Opera Breve's 2001 production, discussing performance issues that arise from the work. The synergy between Juliani and Schafer's philosophies, and the production's fulfillment of Opera Breve's artistic goals are summarized in the conclusion.

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To Dennis, for his love and support

Chapter 1

The One-Act Chamber Opera:

A brief history, and Canadian organizations that produce them

The term chamber opera has been used to describe a large number of sub-genres before the twentieth century. The *pastorale* and *masque*--courtly entertainments combining dialogue, singing, dancing and stage effects--are identified by Donald Jay Grout to be the 16th Century predecessors of opera. (Grout, 1965, 24-25, 30)   The *masque* in England developed later in the century under composers such as Thomas Campion, Matthew Locke and Henry Lawes. Advancements in the form can be seen in John Blow's *Venus and Adonis*--a pastoral opera with continuous music. Further English developments led to works such as Henry Purcell's seminal one-act chamber opera *Dido and Aeneas* in 1689.

The period of *opera seria* in the first half of the 18th Century saw the rise of smaller counterparts, such as the *intermezzo.* Intended to be inserted between the acts of larger *opera seria* works, the single-act *intermezzi* were comic, with economical musical and production requirements. Giovanni Battista Pergolesi's *La Serva Padrona* (1733) is the most widely known example of this then popular genre. It is scored for two singers (soprano and bass), a third mute character, and an orchestra of strings and continuo. This form was the direct predecessor of the *opera buffa.*

French opera in the first decade of the 18th Century was largely dominated by *tragedie lyrique*, and later the reform operas of Christophe Willibald Gluck. Comic forms consisted mostly of vaudevilles that often employed parodies of existing popular songs. During the mid 18th Century, a series of comic opera performances in Paris sparked the "War of the Bouffons"--an argument contesting

the merits of Italian music versus French music. French composers were inspired to raise the popular vaudeville into a more refined and expressive form with original music. Early examples of this new national *opéra comique* include single act works such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Le Devin du Village*. Written in 1752, it shows the influence of the vaudeville in the *ariettes,* but follows the Italian style of continuous music with recitatives.

The *Singspiel,* a form featuring spoken comedy interspersed with lyrical songs sometimes in the one-act form, rose in prominence throughout Germany and Vienna in the mid 18th Century. Gaining prominence in the Viennese court opera, single-act works such as J.B. Schenk's *Der Dorfbarbier* enjoyed great popularity. Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf, a leading composer of the Viennese *Singspiel,* wrote works that showed the influence of the Italian *opera buffa.* W.A. Mozart's earliest compositions included *Bastien und Bastienne,* written at the age of thirteen. *Der Schauspieldirektor,* a parody on opera singers also in one-act, was written nearly two decades later.

One-act operas continued to be written during the Romantic period. Felix Mendelssohn's output of one-act operas include *Die Beiden Pedagogen*, written at the age of 12, and his only published *Singspiel, Son und Stranger.* Georges Bizet wrote only two short operas: *Le Docteur Miracle* (for a competition of new *opéra comiques*), and the unsuccessful *Djamileh.* Towards the latter part of the 19th century, composers began to extend the one-act opera format to include longer works of continuous music that were no longer chamber, demanding large resources to be performed in full theatres. The short-lived *verismo* period generated operas such as Pietro Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Ruggiero Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci.* Richard Strauss' *Elektra, Salome, Ariadne auf Naxos, Daphne* and *Capriccio* are extensive single-act works of several hours in

length. Alexander Zemlinsky's one-acts are of shorter duration, but require full orchestras. Arnold Schönberg's *Erwartung*, composed in 1909, is an atonal expressionistic monodrama for soprano and large orchestra.

It is during the mid-twentieth century that the one-act chamber opera as an independent genre was established. Gustav Holst's *Savitri,* composed in 1909, was one of the first works, which began to give definition to the form. It is a half-hour opera for three characters, women's chorus and a small chamber ensemble, set outdoors or in a theatre without a proscenium stage. Opera by the 20th Century had become a "formal entertainment for a socially limited audience". (*A History of Opera*, 1989, p. 265) The trend against Romanticism and economic restraints contributed to the development of smaller theatrical forms. European composers began to create works of limited resources and facilities that would enable touring. Political or philosophical views were reflected in works such as Alfredo Casella's right-winged *Il Deserto Tentato* or Paul Hindemith's satirical *Hin und Zurück.* French composers such as Jacques Ibert and Darius Milhaud wrote shorter works in a neo-classical style. Francis Poulenc's *La Voix Humaine* is a monodrama based on the Parisian *theatre de pôche,* (Lockspeiser, 1960, p. 528) *and Les Mammelles de Tiresias is* a one-act surrealist opera influenced by the French *opera bouffes.*

Exponents of the form in England included Ralph Vaughan Williams and Benjamin Britten. Britten's *The Little Sweep* was written as part of a larger piece for adults and children, *Let's Make an Opera.* Other one-act pieces include the children's piece *Noye's Fludde,* based on a miracle play, and the series of opera-like church parables: *Curlew River, The Burning Fiery Furnace* and *The Prodigal Son.* Peter Maxwell Davies established a new form in the 1960's, which he called "Music-Theatre", creating more than a dozen small-scale works of a single act. His

specialist ensemble, initially called "Pierrot Players" and later "Fires of London", performed his and other composers' works, combining various theatrical elements such as lighting, speech, mime and projections. (*The Penguin Opera Guide,* 1995, p. 93)

In the United States, Giancarlo Menotti was a leading composer of opera for decades after the World War II. His *Amelia goes to the Ball* entered into the operatic mainstream when it was programmed at the Metropolitan Opera in a double-bill with Strauss' *Elektra* in 1938. (Ibid., p. 224) Subsequent works such as *The Old Maid and the Thief* and *The Consul* enjoyed great success, and the double-bill of *The Medium* and *The Telephone* was produced on Broadway. In an *Opera News* article, (1997, p. 13) Joel Honig describes the surge of chamber opera in the 1950's as music conservatories and the media of radio and television began to commission works. The NBC Opera Theatre produced works by Boshuslav Martinu and Lukas Foss. One-act chamber operas became the staple repertoire of American universities and affiliated smaller companies. The Opera Workshop of Columbia University produced at least one new opera yearly, and until 1958, provided training opportunities for composers, librettists, stage directors and musicians. The form by this time had become defined as a small-scale work for about twelve musicians and a small ensemble of soloists, with the goal of creating an intimate relationship with the audience. Musical characteristics included subtle and delicate writing, and a renouncement of vocal virtuosity in favour of intimacy and power of expression. Leading composers included Douglas Moore, Jack Beeson, Samuel Barber, Seymour Barab, Ned Rorem and Thea Musgrave. Works were also written for amateurs or children, including Kurt Weill's *Down in the Valley,* and Menotti's *Help, Help, the Globolinks!*

Established composers such as Violet Archer, John Beckwith, Lorne Betts,

Walter Buczynski, Gabriel Charpentier, Harry Freedman, Barbara Pentland, Tibor Polgar and Harry Somers have contributed to a small repertoire of Canadian chamber operas. (*Canadian Operas*, 1999) The next generation of composers has made efforts to re-define the genre, experimenting with avant-garde techniques. Michael Bawtree, a former faculty member of Simon Fraser University, Artistic Director of the theatre program at the Banff School of Fine Arts between 1978-1987, and author of *The New Singing Theatre,* has been a long-time advocate of contemporary music theatre. He speculated on the future of opera in an article published in *Opera Canada.* (1985) He articulated the need for commissioning and producing new operatic works rather than the re-interpretation of pre-20th Century repertoire. In 1975, he established the COMUS Music Theatre with Maureen Forrester and Gabriel Charpentier in efforts to meet these goals. Through the course of their work, it became apparent that training opportunities were necessary for new generations of composers and librettists to develop their writing skills, and for singers to extend their performing abilities to include dance and speech. Subsequent training programs were set up by COMUS in 1979 and 1980, and an integrated Music Theatre training program was established at the Banff School of Fine Arts in 1981. Bawtree envisioned an ideal future in which most major Canadian cities would have a small theatrical venue where a music theatre company could reside. A team of composer and librettist, and an ensemble of six to eight singer-actors could be established as residents of the company. The presentation of new works would range from accessible to challenging, and productions would be able to tour or be exchanged with other companies. Other objectives included collaborating with radio and television networks, developing outreach programs to schools, and employing local artists.

Although Bawtree's challenge has not been completely met, valiant efforts

made by smaller companies to fulfill some of these goals in the last several decades are outlined in a 1997 *Opera Canada* article (McLean, p. 21): Tapestry Music Theatre develops, premiers and remounts contemporary works, often in collaboration with other companies; Vancouver New Music Society commissions and develops new works; Prairie Opera in Saskatoon performs two contemporary works by regional composers every year, and tours in public schools; composer/conductor Neil Weisensal and librettist/director Michael Cavanaugh's now defunct Middle Distance Creations developed and mounted their own works; the Chants Libres of Montreal commissions and produces experimental works, restages productions and produces recordings; Autumn Leaf Performance provides professional training, workshops, and international exchanges; and Queen of Puddings produces new works emphasizing the combination of music and movement.

Although most of the companies listed above have produced one-act chamber operas, they prefer to focus on full-length works. Canada Opera Piccola has been the sole organization committed to producing only one-act chamber operas. The Vancouver-based company was founded in 1978 by renowned singers Pierette Alarie and Léopold Simoneau. The husband-and-wife team produced and directed at least two one-act operas per season, frequently touring western Canada. Calling themselves "Canada's affordable touring opera" they would travel with small casts of singers and in some seasons, a "mini-orchestra" of about a dozen players. (*Opera Canada,* 1981) Their repertoire consisted of traditional and accessible pieces, including works such as Haydn's *La Canterina,* Wolf-Ferrari's *The Secret of Suzanna,* Bizet's *Don Procopio* and Thomas Pasatieri's *Signor Deluso.* After successfully operating for a decade, the organization dissolved in 1988 due to cutbacks in government funding.

The one-act chamber opera repertoire offers a long list of existing works traversing musical periods. Additions to the list are constant, as younger composers are attracted to the shorter form and the likelihood of performances and remounts. The fact that it has embodied numerous sub-genres throughout the history of opera without adhering to established conventions, gives rise to the possibility of flexible structures and experimentation with its presentation. It was an appropriate choice, therefore, for a new aspiring opera company to embrace the genre as the mainstay of its repertoire.

Chapter 2

Opera Breve

2.1 The Development of Opera Breve

During the mid 1990's, audiences for opera seemed to be increasing in Canada. Despite the financial losses that the Vancouver Opera Association was suffering at the time, more than 40,000 seats had been sold during the 1996/97 seasons. The VOA and the Modern Baroque Opera were the only two opera companies in Vancouver with regular seasons. These facts contributed to a cultural climate, which implied possibilities for a wider variety of operatic production in the city.

Opera Breve is an organization that I co-founded in 1996 with two other graduate students at the University of British Columbia, with the idea of providing ourselves with artistic and managerial opportunities. Michael Groberman, a Master's student in the Department of Theatre, had an interest in pursuing an arts management career. Having acquired a background in arts journalism, but with very little knowledge of operatic literature, he approached two singers in the Master of Music program to form a new company: myself, and mezzo-soprano Emma Turnbull.

The lack of performing opportunities is a problem faced by many young artists nearing the end of their training. Our first objective was to offer roles that would showcase emerging artists and challenge their musical and dramatic skills. Secondly, with the goal to distinguish ourselves from other smaller companies, we endeavoured to apply freer forms of theatre to the opera. Our search for repertoire uncovered a wealth of one-act chamber operas that were performed infrequently.

Not only were these small-scale works realistic to produce, they also offered possibilities for novel programming and presentation. As most professional companies were producing full-length operas, serious interest in single-act chamber works had remained within universities and workshops. Our research revealed that since Opera Piccola, there were no professional companies solely producing this repertoire. We made the decision, therefore, to produce and commission one-act chamber operas exclusively. A supportive Board of Directors was formed: Professor Nancy Hermiston from the School of Music, Professor Ron Fedoruk from the Department of Theatre, retired professor and co-owner of Bridges restaurant Nathan Divinsky, arts administrator Donna Wong-Juliani, and theatre director John Juliani. Opera Breve was registered as a non-profit arts organization.

Our first presentation was part of a festival of events hosted by the Department of Theatre and performed in the Telus Theatre of the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts. The program included Samuel Barber's nine-minute opera *Hand of Bridge,* Francis Poulenc's monodrama, *La Dame de Monte Carlo,* and an excerpt from Georges Bizet's *Docteur Miracle.* Although the presentation of unknown operas was a novel idea, we realized the need for a performing style that would be compelling enough to attract the general public. Coming from a theatre background, Groberman was enthusiastic about recruiting theatre directors to work on the productions. This resulted in the engagement of UBC theatre graduate Valerie Methot to direct the first promotional performance. Methot adopted various directing techniques normally associated with non-musical theatre, including improvisation and in-depth character study. Feedback from audience members revealed that the performance was perceived as original and accessible. Despite the success of the presentation, however, we became aware of some disadvantages that surfaced from the rehearsal process. Although initially the

approach was undertaken with enthusiasm, experimentation and improvisation were taken to the extreme, resulting in a lack of structure and long rehearsals that proved to be exhausting for the singers. Furthermore, the sole emphasis on acting detracted from their ability to execute musical phrases with comfort. I realized that the stage director, while challenging singers to act, should also be aware of the specific needs required to produce sounds with technical proficiency.

Following our inaugural performance, we began to search for the means to fund our first main season of complete one-act operas. An affiliation with the Listel Vancouver Hotel was made, providing the company with substantial sponsorship and patronage. The director of public relations was seeking performing events that would attract more patrons into the hotel restaurant. In exchange for their ballroom as a main season venue, they requested that we perform weekly opera cabarets in their restaurant. They paid us a small remuneration, which we supplemented with donations from patrons. Although the cabarets didn't generate much income, they enabled singers to become more confident with performing in unconventional venues. Furthermore, the novelty of performing opera regularly in a hotel restaurant attracted media attention, providing us with valuable publicity.

The creation of an intimate venue was vital to the main season productions. The hotel ballroom was converted into a salon-style space with chairs and low tables, allowing audience proximity to the performance. The season consisted of Poulenc's *La Voix Humaine* and Bizet's *Le Docteur Miracle*, both performed in English, and running in repertory. Veteran theatre directors John Juliani and Kico Gonzales-Risso were engaged for the two works respectively. Although neither director had worked extensively in opera, their broad experience in theatre minimized previous problems. The performances were well received by the audience and Opera Breve was established as an alternative organization to the

mainstream opera companies. The season ran on a budget of $20,600, covered by revenue from fund-raising performances, memberships, box office and donations in cash and in kind. All performers, musicians, stage directors and stage managers were paid equal honorariums.

The second season began with a turnover in the company's administration. Emma Turnbull, whose main objective was to perform with the company rather than share administrative duties, resigned early in the season. Michael Groberman resigned shortly before the main season due to illness. A newly formed team of Donna Wong-Juliani as Executive Director, and John Juliani and myself as Co-artistic Directors was established, and continues to operate the company's activities to the present day. An experienced producer and arts administrator, Wong-Juliani has contributed largely to the company's establishment in the cultural community of Vancouver. My primary roles have been to offer knowledge of the operatic literature, supervise casting and musical direction, and perform in the productions. Juliani has exerted a substantial influence in helping the company realize its initial goals. An exploration of his aesthetic and its application to the direction of the organization will illustrate Opera Breve's development.

2.2 John Juliani's Philosophy of Theatre

From his groundbreaking work in the 1960's and 70's, Juliani is considered to have been a revolutionary of Canadian theatre. A classically trained actor, he graduated from the National Theatre School of Canada. His early work as a director, experience in acting and avid studies of theorists and directors such as Gordon Craig, Adolphe Appia and Antonin Artaud, contributed to the formulation of a philosophy about the purpose of theatre. Favouring emotional effect over intellectual perception, he believes that theatre should have a visceral impact on the audience. It should provide life-altering experiences by immersing the

spectator in the drama, resulting in a fusion of art and life. The practical application of his philosophy was initiated during his teaching term at Simon Fraser University.

Simon Fraser was founded in 1965, and initially attempted to incorporate new ideas about university education that had been developing in previous years. The design of the campus on top of Burnaby mountain rejected the separation of departments and emphasized the "universality of the university rather than the specialization of knowledge" (*SFU's Architecture*, p.2) An experimental interdisciplinary department named the "Centre for the Study of Communications and the Arts" was implemented, and many of the teachers were hired more on the basis of professional merit rather than academic distinction. The original faculty consisted of a television producer, a psychologist, an engineer, a biologist, a musician and a theatre director. John Juliani was hired originally as a sabbatical replacement for Michael Bawtree, but was asked later to remain on faculty. The musician was composer R. Murray Schafer.

The interdisciplinary nature of the program was reflected in the team-teaching of the Communication 100 class--an introduction to interrelations between the arts, technology and society. Juliani collaborated with Schafer on performances of Stravinsky's *L'Histore du Soldat* , and Schafer's *Threnody.* During the three years of Juliani's term, Schafer formulated his philosophy of music theatre, and completed the first two works of *Patria, a* cycle of theatrical works. Juliani was sympathetic to Schafer's theories about sound perception, and the two shared ideas about combining different theatrical elements such as music, movement and production. The program offered Juliani the structure and some of the resources necessary to apply and develop his own artistic ideas. Concepts supporting his aesthetic of "free theatre", including flexible seating and staging, and

the idea of "process as product"[1], were put into practice. It was at Simon Fraser that Juliani's theatre company, *Savage God*, was conceived. William Butler Yeats employed the term to describe "a new era of iconoclasm in art". (Juliani, p. 6) Adopting the title, it provided a way of identifying Juliani's objectives in theatre. The company continues to reflect the dichotomy of its name by juxtaposing or fusing opposite theatrical elements, and exploring ways of communicating to the audience.

Despite Juliani's efforts to break down the barriers between the various divisions in the Centre, they remained primarily compartmentalized. The stimulating environment that had been established at the initiation of the Centre began to break down, with a gradual change in the programs towards a more formal and conventional structure. Juliani left the university in 1969.

In 1974, he accepted a position at York University in Toronto, where he implemented a graduate program in theatre for actors, directors and writers. Highlights of subsequent artistic activities include a yearlong research tour of theatre in Europe and Asia funded by the Canada Council, the establishment of "KICKSTART", a developmental program for young directors, and the making of a feature film "Latitude 55" which received five Genie nominations. In 1982 he was appointed as the Executive Producer of Special Projects for CBC Radio, and commissioned and produced radio dramas for over ten years.

After retiring from the CBC, Juliani resumed directing and acting in Vancouver. Groberman and I approached him initially to direct *La Voix Humaine,* and subsequently invited him and his wife to join our Board of Directors. His

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[1] Interview with John Juliani, May 31, 2002. "Free Theatre" refers to non-traditional, alternative theatre that rejects boundaries and categorization. "Process as Product" is an element of Free Theatre, breaking the assumption that the performance is a final product--an example is the experimental, spontaneous 'happening' in a public place, encouraging audience interaction and feedback.

involvement with Opera Breve sparked an interest in opera that was established early in his life, and enforced by his son Alessandro's pursuit of vocal studies at McGill University. His role as Co-artistic Director offered an opportunity to apply innovative approaches to opera.

Many contemporary theatre directors, such as Michael Bawtree, share Juliani's criticism of traditional productions. Operatic performing conventions may have their place, but there is definitely a need for different approaches to maintain the vitality of the art form. Experimental techniques, avant-garde procedures and concept productions have long been practiced in European houses.[2] North American theatres have followed suit gradually in the last several decades. There has been a growing emphasis on the singing-actor as directors are increasing their demands on performers, and models have been established by singer-actors such as Teresa Stratas. Juliani's preference is to push the boundaries of conventions, and create a novel performing style that is meant to be an alternative complement to traditional opera. Coming from a classical background, he admits the importance of learning a solid technique and being well-versed in the rules before the decision can be made to bend or discard them. He envisions, as his ideal for the art form, a wedding of classical with avant-garde procedures.

In keeping with his ideas about providing the audience with a vital theatrical experience, he believes that opera should maintain the flexibility required to reach the audience effectively. Generally, whatever technique makes a piece more accessible is for the good of the experience. Some works may require a traditional proscenium wall; others would benefit from breaking this down and having a more

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[2] Nancy Hermiston, Professor of Voice and Opera at the University of British Columbia offer some insights on this subject. As a resident artist at the Nürnberg State Opera for thirteen years, she attended and performed in avant-garde productions are dependent on upholding the importance of music as a dramatic force, and maintaining characterization. Adopting the concept at the expense of portraying character relationships usually results in unsuccessful productions. (Interview, July 26, 2002)

interactive approach. Another technique is to counterpoint different elements in a piece: speech and singing can be superimposed, or an emotion can be depicted by contrasting physicalization. The resulting effects can be jarring, but are often closer reflections of real life. An overview of some of the company's past productions will illustrate how some of these concepts were applied and received by the spectators.

2.3 Opera Breve's Productions

La Voix Humaine by Francis Poulenc is a setting of Jean Cocteau's monodrama for solo soprano. It is a naturalistic work, depicting a woman's torment as she engages in a final discourse with her lover. As the lover's voice is never heard, the dialogue is presented as disjointed fragments of a one-sided conversation. The vocal writing mostly employs a declamatory recitative, setting the text in exact syntax. Several sections expressing greater emotion, such as the description of her suicide attempt, use a more lyrical *arioso* style. Important to the work is the incorporation of silence, which Poulenc called *points d'orgue*. As a naturalistic effect, they serve the practical function of allowing time for the other side of the conversation, and also building dramatic tension and suspense. The story unravels in a linear fashion; through-composed without divisions into conventional arias.

I played the role of "Elle", accompanied by pianist Sonia Kim in Poulenc's own transcription. The work was a challenging choice for the opera company's first main season. Sustaining the audience's attention through forty minutes of emotional intensity in a non-lyrical style requires imaginative direction. Poulenc does not stipulate any stage directions in the score. Juliani chose to explore fully the moments of silence, portraying the woman's reactions through sustained or rapidly shifting emotions. There were numerous examples of counterpointing the

aural and visual--the tone of voice and the content of the text were often in direct contrast to the facial or body expressions, revealing many aspects of the woman's character. Supporting the realistic style of the work, I was engaged in various pieces of business during the conversation, such as reading her lover's letters, taking sips of wine, or applying make-up for the last time before swallowing an overdose during the final *point d'orgue*. The production requirements were considerable, as a full set with heavy furniture and a period costume was necessary to support the naturalistic style of the piece. The centre of the ballroom was converted into the woman's dressing room with the audience placed in-the-round. The lighting was achieved using footlights and reflecting the light off the mirrored ceiling directly above the stage. The result for the audience was an experience of voyeurism, as the woman's suffering and unglamorous vulnerability were displayed less than a metre away. A critic from the Vancouver Sun felt discomfort with the proximity, claiming, "when the sight of the other audience members intrudes on that private bedroom...the audience looked stiff and embarrassed." (Dykk, 1998, p. C7) Other audience members, including local author Evelyn Lau, were enthusiastic about the style of presentation and felt very moved by the experience. (p.c.)

The second main season consisted of four comedies, again performed in the Listel ballroom. *Bon Appetit* by Lee Hoiby is an *ad verbatim* setting of a Julia Child cooking show in which she makes a chocolate cake. A mono-opera for a singer and pianist, the instructions, ingredients and show-patter are sung in a declamatory style with illustrative musical effects in the accompaniment. Mezzo-soprano Mireille Rijavec was cast in the role, with music direction by Donna Falconer. The set consisted of a fully equipped but non-functioning kitchen, and the spectators were asked to assume the role of a studio audience. Audience interaction was

engaged, as Rijavec frequently approached individuals, involving them in comical situations. The proximity was no longer an issue for the Vancouver *Sun* critic, as he enthusiastically endorsed the presentation of this lighter piece featuring his favourite cooking celebrity. (Dykk, 1999, p. E16) The production was remounted later in the season in a bookstore containing a functional kitchen, hosted by television personality Vicki Gabereau. This situation perhaps better epitomizes the novelty of opera being performed in an unlikely venue. The chocolate cake was pre-made by a professional chef, and served to an enthusiastic audience immediately following the performance.

The Secret of Susanna by Ermano Wolf-Ferrari is a voyeuristic look at a young couple's attempts to deal with conflicts which arise in their relationship: the husband, noticing the odour of cigarette smoke on his wife's clothing, suspects her of infidelity, and the wife attempts to hide her smoking addiction with the help of their butler. Late romantic in style, it is a turn-of-the-century piece scored for soprano, baritone and a mute actor. The cast consisted of Andrew Greenwood as the husband Gil, Tony Previte as the mute butler Sante, and myself as Susanna. Pianist Donna Falconer acted as musical director, and performed as the accompanist. Essentially a number opera, the vocal writing progresses in a fluid alternation between accompanied recitatives, duets and arias. As the plot relies heavily on the code of manners typical of the period, it was decided that a more traditional production would be appropriate for the piece. The set was comprised of vintage furniture, period properties, and a pair of screens that gave the impression of additional rooms. The audience was seated at low tables in front of the set. The focus in the direction was to achieve a balance between the period mannerisms and a naturalistic acting style. The comedic nature of the work was capitalized by contrasting minimal and exaggerated gestures.

The Secret of Susanna was programmed with Giancarlo Menotti's *The Telephone.* Directed by Kico Gonzales-Risso, the latter was set in current times and featured a broader comedic style. The two works comprised a balanced evening of entertainment, garnering positive reactions from the audience. Some serious restrictions of the ballroom, however, became apparent as a result of producing an extensive season of four different productions. The considerable demands of set changes and storage between the shows exhausted the resources of the company and the tolerance of the hotel staff. Furthermore, the low ceiling and heavy carpeting limited acoustical possibilities. Although previously the intimate nature of the ballroom was an advantage, the space was too confined for works that required fuller sets and costumes, more extensive movement and big singing.

The third season was distinctive due to the company's decision to not perform a main season of one-act operas, in order to strengthen its administrative and financial infrastructure. A second important decision was to switch our venue to Christ Church Cathedral, located on the corner of Burrard and Robson streets. There were many advantages--the church sanctuary, containing a Steinway grand piano, is acoustically desirable for concerts; and the performance space is flexible, with movable pews in the sanctuary and the possibility of isolating the chancel area to create a smaller venue. A well-known supporter of the arts in Vancouver, the Dean of Christ Church, Peter Elliot, had agreed to shelter Savage God as the resident theatre company since 1995. The invitation was extended to Opera Breve.

We decided to expand and develop artistic ideas through smaller projects. With the objective to explore ways of fusing opera with straight theatre, a series of performances called *Theatre/Opera on the Axis was* produced as a joint effort between Opera Breve and Savage God. Parallel scenes from the play and operatic

versions of *La Voix Humaine,* (Poulenc/Cocteau), The *Bear* (opera by William Walton, play by Anton Chekhov) and various works by Shakespeare were programmed. To represent singing and speaking versions of each character, an ensemble of both singers and actors was established. Juliani describes the exercise as another exploration of relating stories effectively to the audience. The process resulted in a fluid arrangement of spoken text and singing- alternation, fusion, and reversal (with singers speaking and actors singing), while always sustaining the emotional line. In the excerpt program of Shakespearean plays, songs and opera, a seamless narrative was achieved. Juliani considers the applause between the numbers in performances of classical music to be disruptive; his impulse with music theatre is to create a single, unbroken experience. Opera Breve's modest audiences that season were appreciative, and critics were enthusiastic about the experimental format. (Hughes, 1999, p. 82) Singers were challenged to discover different ways of communicating the text without singing, and benefited greatly from the opportunity to work with professional actors. The actors found that music greatly enhanced the drama, and gained confidence in their singing techniques.

In three seasons, Juliani's artistic direction contributed significantly to the realization of Opera Breve's initial goals. With Christ Church Cathedral as a performance venue, increased financial resources and the artistic advancements acquired through experimental projects, the company was ready to embark on another main season of chamber opera productions.

Chapter 3

Beauty and the Beast

3.1 The *Patria* Cycle

Beauty and the Beast is R. Murray Schafer's only chamber opera in one act. Composed in 1979 for Maureen Forrester and the Orford String Quartet as a commission from the Ontario Arts Council, his intention was to incorporate the work into the third composition of the *Patria* series. Several aspects of the philosophy behind this cycle of theatrical works are important to the interpretation and performance of *Beauty and the Beast.*

In the article "Opera and Reform", (1965) Schafer articulates his objections to traditional concepts of opera. Feeling the necessity to create a new form of musical theatre, he consolidates his ideas into what he calls the "Theatre of Confluence". In applying these concepts, Schafer hopes to offer more possibilities of dramatic expression, making the art form more vital to modern audiences. He notes that traditional opera maintains a hierarchical arrangement of art forms, with music predominating over speech, movement and production. Schafer advocates a flexibility in which any element of a work could dominate, as the situation requires. The elements could be fused together, creating a form of "co-opera", or they could be separated and counterpointed. The range of vocal expression has been greatly expanded in his works, categorized as: stage speech, domestic speech, parlando, sprechgesang, syllabic song, melismatic song, vocalism and electronic transformation. Schafer expresses distaste for the cult of the prima donna, and claims that long melismas, extreme registers, wide leaps and rhythms against syntax exceedingly lessen the intelligibility of the text. The spoken text,

therefore, has been elevated in importance during scenes of dramatic action. *Beauty and the Beast* alternates sections of spoken narration with sung vocal characterizations. The differing personalities of each character are articulated by vocal expressions ranging from syllabic and melismatic song to short passages of *sprechgesang* and vocalism. The result is a fluid arrangement of vocal sounds, complemented and counterpointed by evocative effects in the string accompaniment.

Another important aspect of Schafer's philosophy is the redefinition of the role of the audience. In his earlier writings, he describes his ideal of a flexible theatre with moveable walls and platforms, and the concept of a three-dimensional space. Manifested in his set designs for the first two works of *Patria,* he suggests that by placing the audience in unusual positions, a rapprochement between them and the events on stage could be achieved. His interest in experiential possibilities lead to the eventual abandonment of the theater in favour of alternative performing settings, and the utilization of techniques to engage the audience into a more active participation.

Patria 3, entitled *The Greatest Show,* contains numerous vignettes and short performances, including *Beauty and the Beast.* The work introduces the concept of an itinerant audience, enabling the possibility of a wide range of listening perspectives, and a blurring of the distinction between audience and performer. *The Greatest Show* takes place on the grounds of a fair. The audience is free to wander, participate in games, interact with street performers or watch structured performances. As described by Schafer, the event offers both traditional and "elastic" theatrical atmospheres, both of which can be dissolved at the choice of the audience. (1991, p. 125) The resulting effect is a soundscape of direct and peripheral musical sounds, and the sound-spill from audience/performer interaction.

The show begins and ends in the "Odditorium", which contains the biggest stage in the fair. The opening act features the disappearance of a character named "Wolfie", and the dismemberment of "Ariadne" through a traditional magic trick gone wrong. The audience then wanders the grounds, meeting characters such as the "Dog Boy" who sits in a chair talking to spectators and lapsing into barking fits; or "Hvar Mullin, the semaphore flasher". Concerts of works such as *La Testa d'Ariadne, The Crown of Ariadne, Gamelan, Tantrika* and *Beauty and the Beast* take place in separate tents. After several hours, the audience is called back to the Odditorium where an attempt by magicians to bring back Wolfie from the beginning of the show results in the conjuring of the "Three-horned Enemy". An incarnation of the Minotaur, this character appeared in a previous work, *The Princess of the Stars,* and disappeared to the bottom of the lake. The Three-Horned Enemy proceeds to chase the audience away and destroy the fairgrounds. Two productions of *The Greatest Show in* 1987 and 1988 in Peterborough, Ontario were successful, and described by a *Toronto Star* critic as: "...highly charged theatre". (Hambleton, 1988)

Although a vital performing environment was created, on later reflection, Schafer expressed reservations regarding the appropriateness of some of the indi-vidual works. (1991, p. 130) He attributes the use of subtle nuances in his writing as an immature understanding of the soundscape context. He confesses that *Beauty and the Beast* is possibly too refined a work to be performed in a carnival atmosphere. If it were lifted from the circus text context, the production possibilites obviously would increase, as the audience's attention is no longer diverted.

3.2 *Beauty and the Beast:* Origins and Symbology

Betsey Hearne (1989) offers a comprehensive exploration of the legend's origin. She speculates that it may have descended from the *Cupid and Psyche* of Greek mythology, with many variations existing from Asian, African, Amerindian and European folklore. The first literary version was a novel by Gabrielle de Ville-neuve, which undoubtedly laid the foundation for the more popular version by Madame Le Prince de Beaumont in 1756. A tutor and writer of education and moral books, Beaumont simplified the plot and characters, condensing the story into seventeen pages. It is this version that Schafer identifies as the source for his rendition of the story. There are, however, some notable discrepancies between the two. Beaumont's version contains two sisters whose maliciousness greatly contrasts Beauty's goodness. Schafer eliminates Beauty's siblings entirely from the story. Beaumont's Dream Queen assumes a minimal role, and Beauty has her own premonition of Beast's suffering and death that prompts her to return. Schafer expands the dream comforter/advisor role to two characters--a Greek Youth, and the Queen. Although Schafer makes no reference to it, a later version by Andrew Lang in 1889 appearing in the *Blue Fairy Book* resembles his rendition more closely, including the Beast's magic horse as well as the two dream advisors.

From numerous versions of the fable spanning from the 18th to the 20th Centuries, Hearne extracts certain objects and symbols that constantly appear. The rose plucked by the father, causing outrage in the Beast, can be seen as the emblem of his suffering, love, and possible redemption. In the Classical and Christian traditions it represents love and the suffering born from it, often associated with the Virgin Mary. It is therefore a fitting offering from the Beast to the virgin who will redeem him. Magic is a feature that appears consistently in the stories-- it enables the pony to fly, and provides luxuries for Beauty at the castle. Symbolic,

however, is its irrelevance to the outcome of the plot. The Beast possesses magical powers, but he cannot use them to solve his dilemma. Only Beauty's change in perception and acceptance of him achieve the final transformation. Schafer remains faithful to these traditional aspects of the story. Despite the emphasis placed on internal themes, Schafer maintains the 19th Century narrative surface, thereby assuring the work's success with a broad range of audiences.

3.3 Archetypal Symbolism in Schafer's *Beauty and the Beast*

Schafer describes the main characters of *Patria* as archetypes rather than real people in naturalistic situations. (1991, p.201) Three different myths provide the basis for the characters: the Greek legend of Theseus, Ariadne and Minotaur in the labyrinth, an original Amerindian-inspired legend, and the tale of *Beauty and the Beast.* In his dissertation, Kirk McKenzie illustrates the strong Jungian influences in Schafer's symbolism of *Patria.* (1991) The principle motives surface as "animus" and "anima" symbolized as male and female characters; the shadow as the beastly aspect of the hero, and the individuation process of the hero and heroine.

Schafer makes reference to the symbolism of *Beauty and the Beast in* the preface to his score. (1983, p.3) Beauty, upon leaving the protection of her father, encounters a threatening personality; despite his attractive qualities she flees back to her father. Figures in her subconscious mind inspire her to return, and by accepting Beast's "brutish masculinity", he is tamed and transformed into a prince. Marie-Louis von Franz clarifies the Jungian context of the legend. (1964, p. 206) Beauty's gradual acceptance of Beast is a process in which her animus becomes conscious and integrated, involving sacrifice and suffering. Beauty can now be endowed with the positive "masculine qualities" such as: "initiative, courage, objectivity, and spiritual wisdom." (Ibid., p. 208) The transformation of Beast to the Prince

is a successful integration of the shadow and ego, or the animus and anima.

The archetype of the "shadow" is also a prominent theme in the story. It represents the primitive or dark side of man's nature that must be accepted and balanced with the "ego". The character of Beast is the Prince's dark side, symbolizing the conflict between animality and humanity. Beast is savage towards the father, but sensitive and gentle to Beauty. His courtship of Beauty begins by using her devotion to her father as a means of entrapment, but then reveals his vulnerability to inspire her sympathy. It is the combination of power and weakness that wins Beauty's compassion and subsequent attraction. The confrontation between Beauty and Beast triggers the universal fear of seeing the shadow in oneself. As Beauty's acceptance of Beast guides him toward individuation, on a universal level, it offers the balancing of inner beauty with human ugliness, and the possibility of unconditional acceptance. This concept of the duality within oneself as manifested by two characters is enforced by Schafer's choice of having one performer alternating between them. A musical analysis of the work will further illustrate Schafer's emphasis on archetypal symbolism.

3.4 Music and Symbolism

Schafer's musical language for *Beauty and the Beast* is neither tonally functional nor melodic; it consists of a web of motives structured from various groups of collection types. The musical trajectory is driven mostly by the representation of characters, their objects, and evocative effects in the strings. The whole tone scale, chromatic scale, triadic or chordal structures, and associative intervals derived from them, provide the musical foundation for a continuous stream of musical narrative. Below, a study of motivic relationships will substantiate the archetypal symbolism in the story. The dominant features of each character will be described, to illustrate the immediate linkage of the musical language. This will be followed by a

more detailed analysis with musical examples.

The "persona" of Beauty is a sheltered virgin, unaware of her animus until she leaves the protection of her father. Beauty's music is based on two collections of the whole tone scale moving mostly stepwise along either collection. The resulting sonority, devoid of angularity or tonal tension, well reflects Beauty's pure and naive character. Departures from the step-wise motion in the form of larger intervals occur to follow word syntax, or are symbolically significant. These will be described in the analysis.

The tritone is the predominant interval used by Beast. It is a distinguishing feature of the whole tone scale, as three are contained in either collection. This link with Beauty takes on an unusual prominence as the tritone is superimposed over a perfect 5th. The dichotomy between the stability of the perfect 5th and the angular tritone is suggestive of Beast's Jungian dilemma. His quest for wholeness through Beauty's anima figure results in borrowing from her musical material, and the resulting harmonic tension represents the struggle between Ego and Shadow.

The Greek Youth's appearance in Beauty's dream is an important representation of the animus in her psyche. It is this heroic figure that subconsciously guides her towards awareness. The Queen can be seen as representing Beauty's state of individuation, or the goal of her psychological development. Both characters employ the whole tone scale, but also have their own distinguishing intervals. The Greek Youth's accompaniment is inundated with stacks of perfect 4ths. His vocal line consists of whole tone fragments that are broken by perfect 4th leaps.

Beauty's process towards individuation involves the mediation of tension between the opposites: the perfect 4th interval interestingly lies between her interval of comfort that she has in common with her father--the major 3rd; and her interval of struggle as adopted by Beast--the tritone. The Queen's vocal line similarly

uses the same procedure of disrupting whole tone movement, but uses the perfect 5th or octave intervals. The perfect intervals represent the wholeness of these characters. Their adoption of whole tone fragments links them as dream figures in Beauty's psyche. Distinctive is the absence of the tritone, disassociating them with the struggles experienced by Beast.

The Father's music, consisting mainly of triadic figures, is distinctly disparate from that of the other characters. Predominant are the diminished 7th chord, half-diminished 7th, and alternations between major and minor triads. The major third, contained in the whole tone scale, is used occasionally by Beauty to follow word syntax--rising or falling as necessitated by the text. This linkage with Beauty is often countered by an immediate lowering of the interval into a minor third. This semitonal descent could symbolize the Father's weakening power to protect and provide. Augmented triads, forming a minor 6th that is also present in the whole tone scale, occur only when references to Beauty or Beast are made. In the ensuing musical analysis, I will identify and label additional musical motives, and interpret their significance.

3.5 Musical Analysis

Beauty and the Rose

As discussed previously, Beauty's vocal line moves mostly by step along the whole tone scale. A flourish of ascending and descending whole tone scales in the higher strings often accompany and precede Beauty's lines, employing the same collection. This figure is established in the introduction as Beauty's identifying motive.

The first larger interval in Beauty's vocal line appears in the description of the rose in page 8 of the score with the leap of a minor 6th. This is accompanied by the Rose Motive, which is given prominence in the piece by its frequent repetition.

Derived from Beauty's whole tone scale, it is an augmented triad in alternate note pattern:

figure 3.1

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Beauty's most dramatic moment occurs on page 41, upon her discovery of the dying Beast. She exclaims, "I killed him" three times. The first statement is an anguished outline of a minor seventh. The remaining two statements features major thirds followed by falls of the tritone interval. This vocal line, rather than being ac-

companied by a whole tone figure, is superimposed over a drone of a Perfect 5th. Beauty's line is uncharacteristically angular, resembling Beast's music with the repeated tritones--his interval of suffering.
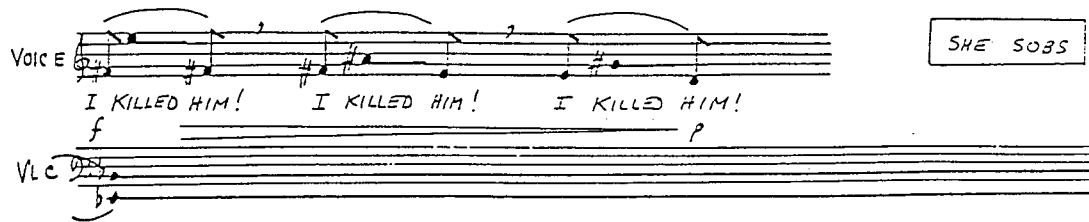

figure 3.2

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In each of these examples, all of the intervals are derived from the same whole tone collection. Another technique used to illustrate dramatic or emotional moments is the juxtaposition of fragments from the two different collections. On page 18, upon learning about her father's hardships, Beauty invites him to the fire. The interval of a half step (a#-b) results as a fragment from the second whole tone collection precedes a short phrase from the first collection. This diminution of her usual whole-step movement reflects her remorse for causing her father's hardship.

figure 3.3

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The minor 2nd is used again near the end of the piece on page 41 when Beauty believes that Beast is dead. The first note of the phrase completes the preceding fragment from the first collection (f to e) followed by a dramatic leap of a minor 7th in the second whole tone collection:
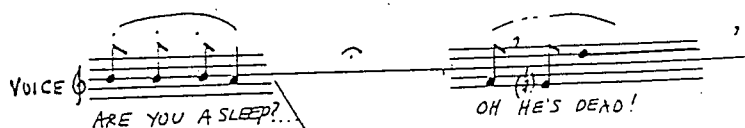
Another dramatic example occurs on page 34, as Beauty pleads with Beast to allow her to visit her father. The interval of a tritone (f#-c) contained in the second collection is immediately followed by the Perfect 5th--the only time that this interval is used in Beauty's vocal line. This results from the immediate switch of collections, although the accompaniment doesn't follow suit until the E^b. (figure 3.5) This brief juxtaposition of these intervals, as reference to Beast's struggle motive, could be reflective of Beauty's internal struggle, or the awakening of her animus.

The climax of the story on page 43, in which Beauty finally accepts Beast, features a departure from the above technique. A foreign note is inserted into the first whole tone collection, resulting in a perfect 4th followed by a semitone. (B^b-F-E) The per-

fect 4th, as reference to the Greek Youth, could signify the beginning of Beauty's integration process.

figure 3.6

Beauty's final statement resembles the vocal gestures found in the Queen's music, with the decorative melisma and octave leap. This represents the completion of Beauty's integration to wholeness--her fully matured state.

Beast and his Properties

Beast's growl, which introduces him on page 12, consists of a series of tritones in the vocal line. The accompanying strings have a rising trajectory, outlining a major augmented chord. As discussed previously, the tritones are superimposed over a series of Perfect 5ths in the cello.

figure 3.7

Beast's properties also contain collections created by the tritone and perfect 5th. The motive that identifies the castle, first appearing in the instrumental intro-

duction, consists of a perfect 5th drone in the cello, with a semitonal figure in the first violin. The rising semitone gives a brief outline of the tritone against the upper note in the cello. In the presentation of the Castle Motive on page 10, (figure 3.8) the second violin adds an additional augmented 4th above the bass:

figure 3.8

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The Magic Pony Motive combines a perfect 4th interval within an outline of a perfect 5th, resulting in two tritones a half-step apart. It is typically played rapidly *sul ponticello,* as on page 5, in alternation between the upper strings, and accompanied by the lower strings with the motive in augmentation. The perfect 4th could be a reference to the "heroic" attributes of the Pony.

figure 3.9

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Upon completion of Beast's first growl, his line continues on page 14 in angular patterns of the tritone and octave. A new motive is introduced in the strings as Beast contemplates the Father's fate. This Thinking Motive initially outlines the Magic Pony's set extended by an additional augmented 4th, and then continues with a series of chromatic notes surrounding descending tritones.
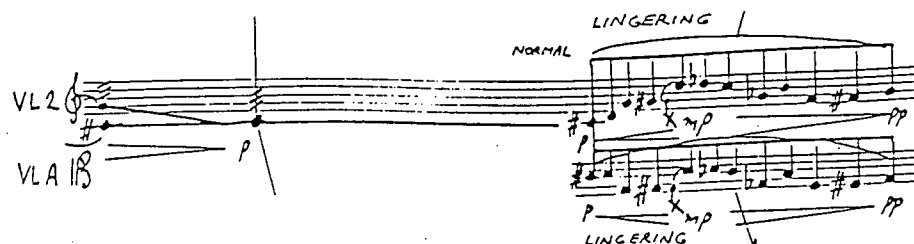

figure 3.10

The semitones introduce an additional feature in Beast's vocal lines--the chromatic scale. Fragments are used to link the tritone and octave intervals, or are used independently in his calmer, more contemplative moments. Chromatic scales are used to a great extent in Beast's longest exchange with Beauty on page 30, creating a calmer sonority than the angularity of tritones. The accompaniment consists mainly of sustained pitches in the viola, progressing through augmented 4ths.

figure 3.11

Greek Youth

The introduction to the first dream sequence on page 24 features a series of perfect 4ths in the cello, followed by the first presentation of the Prince Motive in the upper strings (figure 3.12).. The motive contains a series of perfect 4ths that are placed a minor third apart. Repeated in the next line in a transposed version, the voice adds an extra 4th above the first note of the motive. (C#-G#, figure 3.13)

figure 3.12

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figure 3.13

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When Beauty awakens from her dream on page 27, an altered version of this motive is presented in a gigue-like melody representing the Prince's magic (figure 3.14). The structure of two perfect 4ths a minor third apart remains, but is extended with additional notes. Each figure now implies fragments from two pentatonic scales, affirmed by their harmonization (figure 3.15).

figure 3.14

figure 3.15

The Greek Youth's vocal lines consist of whole tones interspersed with perfect 4ths, as previously discussed. A pattern is established on page 24, in which perfect 4ths generate changes in the whole tone collection.

Collection 1

AH BEAUTY, WHY SO SAD?

figure 3.16

Collection 2

HERE YOU WILL BE REWARDED FOR EVERYTHING YOU HAVE SUFFERED ELSEWHERE.

The third return of the Prince Motive on page 25 is emphasized by its doubling in the voice part. The voice continues in a series of 4ths as the accompaniment becomes increasingly agitated. With the words: "Do not desert me...", the strings begin to add a tritone to the Perfect 4ths. The climactic $F^{\#}$ in the voice ("You alone can save me!") highlights the last presentation of the motive. This is pitted against the continuing tritone movement in the strings, in an obvious reference to the fact that it is Beast whom Beauty is being asked to save. With the words: "You alone..." the tritones resolve back to Perfect 4ths and continue their series of perfect 4ths a minor 3rd apart (see figure 3.17).

figure 3.17

Queen

The second dream sequence, starting on page 37, also features stacks--this time, perfect 5ths are aligned vertically. The Queen's melody moves stepwise in whole tones, with frequent jumps of perfect 4ths, 5ths and octaves.

figure 3.18

With the text "...to return to the castle" on page 38, perfect 4ths begin to appear prominently in the voice and the accompaniment--a possible reference to the Prince's music. This is affirmed by an appearance of the Prince's Magic Motive at the end of the phrase:

figure 3.19   © 1983, Arcana Editions
                               Used by Permission

Beauty responds to the Queen in whole tone collections, preceded by major-augmented triads played pizzicato. The Queen's final statement on page 39 combines a perfect 5th with whole tones accompanied by a figure from the same collection.

Father

      The Father's music forms some tonal centres, although triadic and chordal figures don't function in a traditional sense. The opening section of his first entrance on page 7 centres on E. The lowering of a major to minor 3rd forms corresponding major/minor triads and a diminished 7th chord. The 1st violin anticipates the lowered 3rd in the voice, with a descending semitonal motive that musically suggests the Father's weakening power. The accompaniment consists of a sustained E minor 7th chord, which changes into an augmented chord as the cello moves down a semitone to an E^b.

figure 3.20

      The daughter responds in whole tones starting on B, but her progress downwards to the E^b results in a modulation of the Father's next phrase to E^b. A chromatic alteration at the end of his phrase forms an augmented chord, preparing the daughter's next whole tone entry. The downward trajectory continues to D, and the opening section ends on an unresolved D7 chord.

On page 10, a Baroque-style motive is introduced, representing the room with a cosy fire. It is distinguished by a very traditional tonic-dominant structure, establishing a B^b tonality. The 16th-note rhythmic pattern quickly begins to permutate, changing from four notes to three or two.

figure 3.21

The Father's next section begins on the supertonic chord of the established B^b tonality. The voice progresses in a series of diminished 7th chords, with an insertion of an augmented chord as a reference to Beauty. The accompaniment continues with the drawing-room 16th note pattern that begins to mutate chromatically and rhythmically. The harmonic progression is outlined in figure 3.22.

Cosy Room (p.10)   "This is most strange"(p.10)   "Then it must be..."(p. 11)   "I'll go at once..." (p.11)

I   (II)   (VII°⁷)   (I aug⁵)

"But first..."(pg.11)   "There were some..."(p.11-12)

VII°⁷   VII°⁷

Rose Motive

figure 3.22

Traditional Musical Narrative

Despite the emphasis on the story's internal themes, Schafer's work maintains aspects of musical narrative that reflect back to traditional opera. The motives and evocative effects illustrate the story in an immediately accessible manner.

The music of the scene in which the Father searches for his fortune, discov-

ers the castle and encounters the Beast is an example of effective scene painting. The solo cello (Page 9) reflects the futility of the Father's wandering, with shifting tonalities. The string tremolos evoking fear of the darkness and subsequent figure in high tessitura for the rising of the sun are common scene-painting techniques in music. The perfect 5th in the Castle Motive (Page 10) gives a hollow, ancient sonority, while the harmonics in the high strings lend a mysterious quality. The Cosy Room Motive, which might normally be considered cliché, is a surprising element in an otherwise non-harmonic piece.

Beauty's scene in which she discovers the Prince's magical properties is also rich in word and scene painting. The Prince's Magic Motive is bright in its pentatonic structure and the gigue-like rhythm in 10/8 time. The chirping of the birds is indicated by graphic notation of indeterminate pitch and rhythm (p. 27)--the only time that this style of notation is used in the piece. The musical instruments (pp. 27-8) play a traditional Minuet that dissolves smoothly into the Pony Motive.

These effects and many others appear to have been designed to ensure its accessibility to a broad range of audience

Chapter 4

Opera Breve's *Beauty and the Beast*

<u>4.1 The Production</u>

Opera Breve's production of *Beauty and the Beast* was presented in November of 2001. I performed as the soloist, with dancer Jocelyn Parr and the resident ensemble of UBC--the Borealis String Quartet. Preceding it was *In a Garden* (1951) by American composer Meyer Kupferman on a libretto by Gertrude Stein. The whole program was entitled "Fall Fables", and the operas were separated by a short intermission.

Taken out of the context of *The Greatest Show,* the production possibilities for *Beauty and the Beast* are greatly increased. It becomes an exciting challenge to both director and performer to tell the story in a compelling manner, and make the characterizations credible. Schafer intended the piece to be performed with masks in keeping with the carnival atmosphere of *The Greatest Show,* and suggested placing them on a lectern or table to be used as required. He also mentioned other possible modes of presentation, such as a mime-dancing or using solely facial expressions if the performer is capable.

Opera Breve's production resulted in a combination of the above possibilities. I memorized my part in order to incorporate as much movement as possible. To facilitate the changing of masks, it was decided to involve Parr as the second performer. Although the original intention was to the have her shadow my movements, and hand me the masks as required, the idea developed to increase her dramatic importance. Parr performed the multiple tasks of orchestrating the mask changes, illustrating the narration by movement, and playing different characters opposite me. I distinguished each character physically as well as

vocally, and established a direct communication with the spectators by moving among them during the narration of the story. In this manner, Schafer's "Theater of Confluence" was evoked, with movement, spoken text, singing, masks, and instrumental music fluidly deployed. The elements were fused, separated, counterpointed or brought to the forefront as the situation required.

Vancouver's Christ Church Cathedral was the venue for the performances as well as for the staging rehearsals. In keeping with the intimacy of the work, and to facilitate a set that would inspire the maximum possibilities for audience proximity and engagement, the chancel was isolated as the theatrical space. The audience sat on three sides with passageways through and behind the rows, and in the raised choir pews. The string quartet performed on a raised platform at the front of the chancel. Two podiums placed in front of this platform on either side served as a resting place and display area for the masks. There was also a smaller platform in the middle of the space, facilitating sight lines for the rows of audience placed on the ground level. Throughout the piece, the dancer and I travelled through the passageways, across the raised platform in the centre, and up onto the front platform (see Figure 4-1).

Local designer Mara Gottler, known for her period costumes for Bard on the Beach and the Vancouver Playhouse, designed the costumes. The prominent use of masks in the opera inspired a design with a strong Japanese influence. A loose fitting kimono-style robe was made for me, made of black silk with gold embroidery. The robe was worn open at the front, revealing a black bodice and pants underneath. The desired effect was an androgynous look that would facilitate the transformations between male and female characters. Parr was dressed in a jacket and a flowing skirt made of a colourfully embroidered black silk, complimenting the singer's costume. The skirt was open at the sides revealing

Figure 4-1. Set design for *Beauty and the Beast*

X   X

X   X
STRING QUARTET

AUDIENCE

AUDIENCE

AUDIENCE

AUDIENCE

PLATFORM

AUDIENCE

AUDIENCE

AUDIENCE
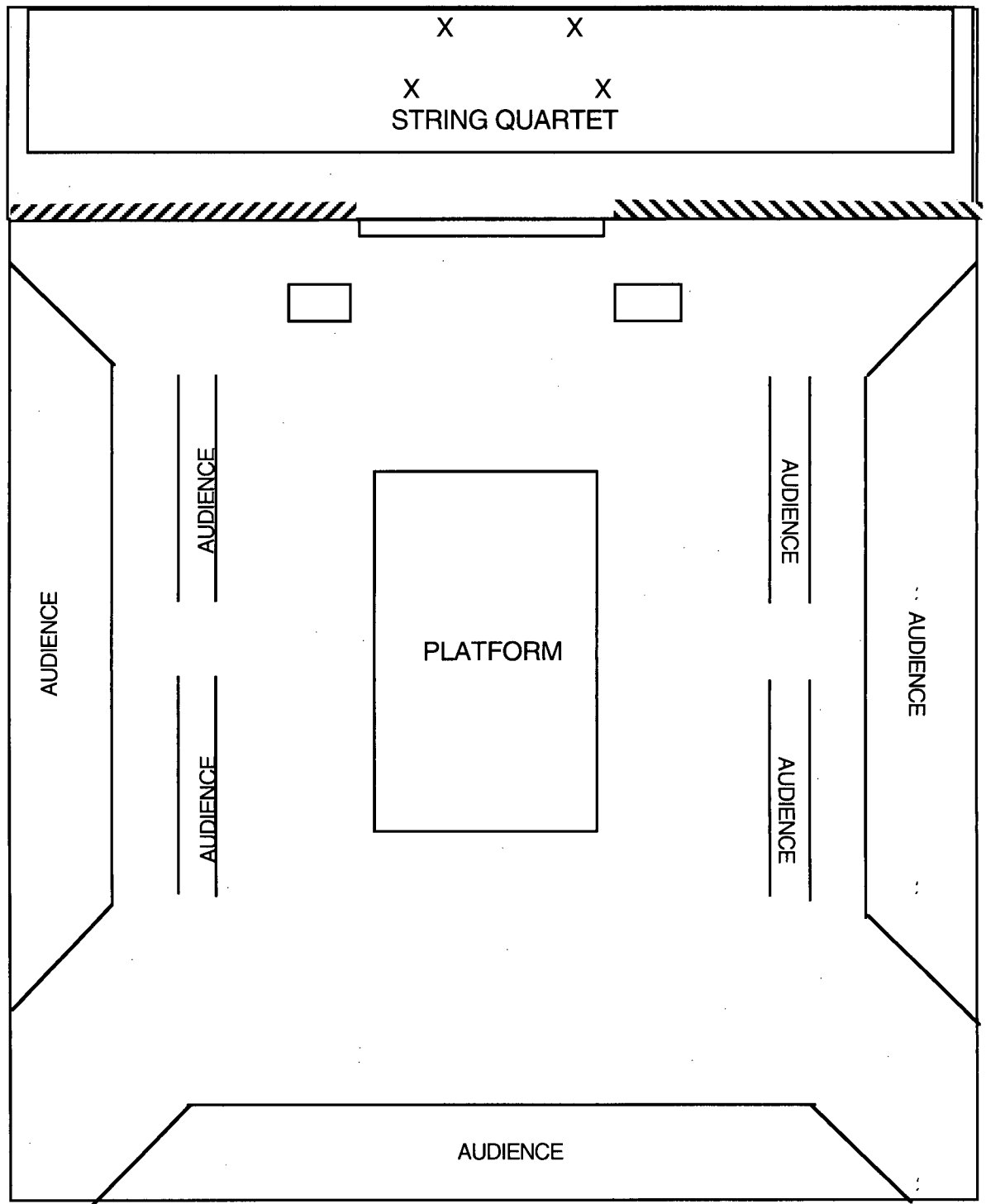
Aerial View

black leggings, also creating an androgynous effect. Both of us remained barefoot, with Indian-style gold jewellery worn around the ankle and toes of one foot.

Local artist Kim Hunter built the five masks. She decided to construct hand-held masks with optional elastics that could be placed over and around the back of the head. The masks, made of paper maché and painted gold, were very classical in style and reflected an ancient Greek influence. Rather than contrasting the masks by using different colours and widely disparate features, they contained uniformity in facial construction, distinguished by details such as the headdress or small embellishments in the eyes, nose and eyebrows. The Beast mask was the most dissimilar, but despite the exaggerated characteristics in the ears, snout, eyebrows and horns, the overall effect was one that contributed to the homogeneity shared by the other masks (see Figure 4-2). This uniformity supported the characters' Jungian linkage, and enabled physicalization to be equally important in the interpretation of each personality.

The set was bare excepting the podiums displaying the masks. The only required property was a magic wand constructed in the same style as the masks. The technical requirement for sound was a hand-held microphone. It became clear during the rehearsal process that the spoken voice projected over the instrumental accompaniment was not sufficient for a clear understanding of the text. Despite the further complications that a hand-held microphone presented to the two performers who were already negotiating difficult mask exchanges, the decision was made to amplify the narrative sections so that the audibility of the story-line would not be sacrificed.

The rehearsal process ran for three weeks before the production. At first, the staging was conducted separately from the music. Juliani worked extensively with me alone, developing the physicalization of each character without the masks

Figure 4.2
Mask Design by Kim Hunter, 2001
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while reciting the sung portions of the text. Attention was given to the transitions between the characterizations, varying the tempo of the movements as necessitated by the music. I assumed exaggerated postures, varying the stances from upright for the Queen and Greek Youth, slouched for the Father, and distorted for Beast. A slanting head position, and soft feminine movements mostly characterized beauty. I incorporated decisive hand gestures for the Greek Youth and the Queen. Juliani greatly encouraged facial expressions during the stage before the masks were incorporated. They proved to be useful during the transitions when the masks were off the face, and additionally influenced the vocal characterizations. Parr was incorporated during the second week. The mask and microphone exchanges were carefully choreographed, with an effort to create a seamless continuity between the movements. Her dramatic function varied from dance-miming the narration, assuming the character of the magic pony, displaying the rose or wearing the masks and depicting the characters of Beast, the Father and Beauty. The musicians were brought in during the third week, and exact timings were determined as the movements were co-ordinated with the music. A brief overview of the production will further illustrate Juliani's directing techniques, and describe the fluctuating relationship between singer and dancer.

During the instrumental introduction, Parr enters with the masks of Beauty and Beast. After placing one on each podium, she displays the remaining masks in turn, and then seats herself on the front platform with the Beauty mask in hand. The intention is to introduce each personality as the musical motives associated with the characters are played. Following the narration, I play the Father opposite Parr masked as Beauty. A transition occurs in which the Beauty mask is handed to me, after which I interpret both characters in the ensuing dialogue. Parr steps back and assumes the role of a spectator. During the transformations of the characters, the

music offers opportunities for some extended transitions. As I change masks, I maintain the facial expression of the previous character, allowing for a smoother line of progression as the audience perceives the continuation of the character before the next mask is put on.

The beginning of the second section features extended narration, and Parr is brought back to the main focus as she assumes the role of the Father by wearing his mask. She mimes the events of the narration, enters the gates of the castle located at the foot of the front platform, and ends by sitting at an imaginary table in front of the string quartet. The next transition occurs as I seat myself in her lap, take the mask, and assume the role of the Father. The introduction of Beast is initiated by Parr opposite me as the Father, but the mask is immediately handed over and she steps into the background. She reappears to display the rose that Beast gives to the father, and then assumes the role of the magic pony. With the mask of the father held over her head, the travels of the pony are depicted with dance movements. The following two sections feature similar transitions and exchanges.

Beauty's first dream sequence (p. 24) features the only time that the mask is placed over my head, leaving both hands free. The heroic stance of the Greek Youth is important to portray here, to contrast the distorted posture of the Beast. His youthfulness is depicted by a few economical but strong hand gestures. Parr, for the first time, turns away from the audience, and stands back to back with me. At the end of the section, we exchange places with a ninety-degree turn, and I take the focus as Beauty. The narration is illustrated as Parr moves through the area, discovering the new things promised by the Greek Youth. The string quartet takes on a physical importance as she indicates the players as the instruments discovered by Beauty.

The extended dialogue between Beauty and Beast in the next section (pp.

28-35) is the crisis of the drama. Some elements of Japanese Kabuki will be described, as they figure prominently in this next scene. Juliani's studies of Asian theatre have resulted in a strong influence of Kabuki and Noh techniques in his directing style. His aesthetic of fusing art and life, and counterpointing different elements such as sound and movement are important components of Japanese theatre. Kabuki techniques are especially apparent during the mask exchanges in this section. This highly dramatic scene can be compared to the *kyu* section of Noh theatre. Benito Ortolani, in his overview of Japanese theatre, explains the tripartite structure of Noh drama. (1990, p. 44) Called *jo, ha, kyu,* the *kyu* corresponds to the climactic section in which the tempo of the music and intensity of the drama escalate. A relationship develops between the two characters in which Beauty becomes sympathetic to Beast--he proposes to her; she declines and asks to see her father; Beast agrees, but asks her to return to him after one month. The dramatic tension mounts during the argument, as the phrases become shorter, the delivery of the text faster, and the musical transitions between the characters become more punctuated and brief. Juliani varies my dramatic technique during the transformations in this section. His direction reflects stylized Kabuki movements, in which statuesque positions are interspersed with pauses until a freeze occurs in the climax. Kabuki movements can be categorized into *aragoto, an* intense, masculine style; and *wagoto,* a more graceful, feminine style, and these distinctions are used to contrast Beast and Beauty. Rather than the more gradual transitions in which facial expressions extend the characterization initiated by the masks, I employ abrupt changes, using only physical movement. Spatial differentiation in the character transitions, introduced for the first time in this scene, facilitates the movement and allows for a clearer distinction. As the musical tempo increases, the changes by necessity become sharper and more dramatic,

contributing greatly to the escalating tension.

In his essay "The Theatre of Confluence 1", Schafer makes reference to the contrapuntal nature of Kabuki theatre. (1991, p. 31)   He explains that in Japanese theatre, different artistic elements are not always brought together in parallel motion--the rhythmic relationships between mediums can be contrasted.   This observation can be applied to the Kabuki movement: *mie.* The climactic point in the sequence of Kabuki movements, mie, involves a sudden freeze in which the intensity of emotion reaches its maximum point. The convention stipulates that the actor assume a striking body position, rotate the head slowly, and with a final snap freeze the expression into a stare, called the *nirami.* This pose is always performed to a musical accompaniment called *tsuke,* consisting of rapidly beating wooden clappers upon a wooden board. In Schafer's score, the climax of the scene described above occurs with the text: "Very well, but you must return at the end of one month! Otherwise my fate will be more miserable than you can suppose". During this dramatic moment, Schafer abruptly ends the music that has been escalating in textural density and rhythmic movement, and has the viola play a series of rapid thirty-second notes on one note, marked *fortissimo* and "with great force". The sequence is then repeated *sul ponticello,* creating a more percussive effect. The traditional accompaniment for the *mie* is evoked with the maximum rhythmic density, counterpointed by the soloist's frozen position. Juliani's interpretation of this moment is an allusion to, rather than a strict representation of the Kabuki style. Having been engaged in the dialogue between Beauty and Beast, I keep the Beauty mask in hand as Beast's final lines are delivered. Arriving at a stationary position in the centre and in front of the platform, Beast's first line is articulated with the mask on. During the second sequence of rapid notes in the viola, I reveal my face, maintaining the facial expression of Beast. As the second

line is delivered, with arms outstretched and holding a mask in each hand, I slowly descend until a kneeling position is fixed. This frozen position is synchronized with a facial glare maintained during the ensuing cello drone. The intensity is relieved as Parr takes masks, and after rising slowly, I resume the narration.

Following the second dream sequence, Beauty makes the decision to return to the Beast in order to save him from his terrible fate. Parr makes an entrance as Beast, and collapses onto the centre platform. Beauty's trajectory in searching for him takes me through the audience passageways until I discover him on the platform. Rather than me taking over both masks, and consequently both characters, I play opposite Parr, exchanging masks as the dialogue requires. A new technique is employed for these exchanges, involving very slow and gradual movements. Seated opposite each other, we suppress facial expressions as the masks come off. The unmeasured quality of the music is exploited in these transfers, making full use of the sustained drones and pauses in Schafer's score. The desired effect is a surrealistic scene of suspended time. Her rising from the seated position, and incorporating movement as a contrast to the static nature of the previous exchanges emphasize the important moment in which Beauty fully accepts Beast. Beast's marriage proposal happens with both of us kneeling on the platform.

The concluding section is prompted by the magical transformation of Beast into the Prince. Parr moves away with the Beast mask, and assumes a kneeling position at the foot of the front platform, with her back towards the audience and the Greek Youth's mask in hand. I quickly move into place, hand Beauty's mask to Parr, and complete the remaining exchange between Beauty and Prince as she holds both masks for me. The ensuing narration is illustrated by her moving towards the masks of the other characters and displaying them as they are

mentioned. The opera ends with a tableau of us both on the front platform, masked as Beauty and Beast.

4.2 The Vocal Characterizations of *Beauty and the Beast*

The portrayal of five different characters by one voice presents many challenges for the singer--a successful performance demands imagination and ingenuity to create a distinctive interpretation for each personality. Furthermore, a careful pedagogical approach is necessary to deal effectively with technical issues. Modern vocal pedagogy divides the female voice into three registers: chest, middle and head, with further subdivisions of the middle voice into upper and lower sections. In *The Structure of Singing,* Richard Miller provides charts displaying the range of each register in different female voice types. (1986, pp. 134-135) These registers are identified by distinguishing tone qualities and timbres. One of the main objectives in classical vocal technique is to create a uniform sound by achieving gradual transitions through the pivotal points between the registers. This approach does not provide enough vocal contrast to depict the five characters in *Beauty and the Beast.* Registral separation was used to maximize disparate timbres for some characterizations.

A discussion of my technical approach illustrates how registral events were utilized. Furthermore, although Schafer does not stipulate a specific voice type in the score, the part was written originally for contralto Maureen Forrester. The soloist has been interpreted by prominent sopranos such as Rosemarie Landry; however, the work presents some challenges to higher voice types. The discussion identifies the problematic sections with lower tessitura, and suggests how they can be approached by a soprano.

The Father's low tessitura may be easier for a contralto or mezzo to negotiate; however, a soprano with a strong lower register can successfully

interpret the character. The "open chest" technique is possible between F#3 and Eb4, characterized by a strong masculine timbre, and involving heavy action from the thyroarytenoid muscles. Although this technique could be useful in the portrayal of a male character, overuse would result in fatiguing the voice and debilitating the middle register.[1]   There are two places, however, where the extension of the lower range and the loud dynamics in the strings necessitate the exploitation of the open chest sound, and it was used briefly without vocal detriment:

> 1) Page 9: "Dearest, dearest Beauty." The phrase descends to F#3 which is
> difficult for the soprano voice. Switching to open chest from C to A
> on the first "Dearest" facilitated the approximation of the bottom
> two notes, and allowed the sound to project.
>
> 2) Page 18: "Inhabited by a monster!" The descending A-E-C is accompa-
> nied by a *glissando* that rises in dynamic to *forte*. Switching to chest on   C

projected the note over the strings, and coloured the word "monster".

The Father's character should employ a tone quality which reflects his weakening strength in the opening dialogue with Beauty, and his fear and vulnerability in the exchange with Beast. "Chest mixture", which involves mixing a small portion of head tone[2] into the lower and middle registers, produced a suitable sonority for the character. Through the first transition, or *primo passaggio,*[3] the amount of head tone should increase to ensure vocal health. To maintain consistency in the characterization, I continued a darker sound by covering slightly through the passaggio and beyond, resulting in the sensation of a widened pharynx. A slightly

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[1] According to Miller, the lower middle section in the soprano voice encompasses Bb to C5, and the upper section C#5 to F#5. The interval between Bb3 and Eb4 overlap between chest and lower middle, and can be sung in several ways. (Miller, p. 134)

[2] The characteristic quality of the upper register involving lighter mechanism

[3] In the lyric soprano voice, the *primo passaggio* would be Eb4.

tremulous quality was incorporated to depict the Father's fear.

Beauty's range lies mostly in the middle section of the soprano voice, extending to the head register during climactic moments. To reflect her purity and youthfulness, a light tone with reduced vibrato was appropriate for the character. I achieved this by carrying the head voice down into the middle range, and using only the lighter mechanism in the middle voice. A slightly raised position of the lips and cheeks facilitated this whiter tone. To ensure the projection of sound from the upper to the lower range, I maintained a forward placement and clear diction. This was especially applicable to the phrase on page 34: "Oh yes, anything...rest of my life."

Towards the end of the piece, Beauty's process towards self-awareness and integration was reflected by changes in tone quality. To portray the dramatic emotion in the phrase "I killed him!" on page 41, I increased the vocal intensity and vibrato. In the phrase: "And I will never leave you again" on page 42, I incorporated mixture into the middle register, resulting in a richer, more mature quality. For the acceptance of the Prince's proposal on the following page, an evenly integrated sound resembling the Queen's characterization was utilized.

Beast's vocal range encompasses the middle register of the soprano voice, focusing mostly on the lower section in the dialogue with Beauty. Contrasting Beast and Beauty is a challenge, as the tessituras of the two characters are often similar. A shrill and strident quality was needed to reflect Beast's aggressiveness. To achieve this aim, head mixture was maintained with the addition of nasal resonance, involving the placement of the voice towards the facial resonators. The shrillness was maintained in the upper middle section by raising the cheek and lip muscles as the pitch ascended.

The initial exchange with the Father and the heated conclusion of the

discourse with Beauty presents the need for a more aggressive tone. The open chest was useful in some isolated places in the chest register, such as the bottom of the *glissando* on the word "death" (page 13), and the last word in the phrase "otherwise my fate will be more miserable than you can suppose" (page 35). Its usage in the middle register, however, was completely avoided in performance. The use of open chest in the register above the *primo passaggio* results in a technique called "belting", which is characterized by a forceful yell-like quality and used extensively in non-classical singing. Although some modern pedagogues advocate the proper use of this technique as legitimate and unharmful,[4] I discovered empirically that its usage for Beast was greatly debilitating to Beauty's characterization. The increased thyroarytenoid activity made the immediate transition to a lighter mechanical action almost impossible. Instead, I maintained the excessive use of nasal resonance, and incorporated a heavily articulated *marcato* style with aggressive consonants for the angry passages, and a *martellato* [5] style for the calmer, chromatic passages.

The Greek Youth's tessitura is similar to Beauty's. The vocal quality I used consisted of a mixed voice with a predominance of head tone throughout the middle register. I minimized the use of vibrato, especially at the beginning and end of the dream sequence, creating an ethereal, hollow effect. His youth and authority were depicted by energetic *martellato* phrasing, especially leading to the climax: "You alone can save me!" Important words such as "will", "loneliness", and "grateful" were accentuated and slightly prolonged.

The Queen's vocal lines are distinguished with the highest tessitura and

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[4] See articles "Belting 101" by Robert Edwin and "Comparing Belt and Classical Technique using MRI and Video-fluoroscopy" by Lisa S. Popeil, both in the *Journal of Singing*.
[5] *Martellato* is a style that involves an impulse for each note within a continual breath flow, or articulating through a *legato*.

range of all the characters, encompassing D4 to G5. Her music is the most operatically written, with melismatic figurations, and stepwise melody alternating with dramatically wide leaps. The ideal tone quality is a mature, full sound with free vibrato, and an even timbre from top to bottom. This necessitates the use of registral blending with smooth transitions, and an equal balance between head tone and mixture. In phrases ascending through the second transition,[6] I used the technique of vowel modification involving a shift of vowel sounds from lateral to rounded as the range extends to the upper extremity. This allowed the warm quality of the middle register to continue into the upper voice.

Lastly, some reference should be made to the spoken narration. The vocal technique required for projected speaking is often neglected by singers. As narration is a prominent feature in this work, I coached the speaking sections extensively with Juliani. Although the microphone greatly facilitated the audibility of the text over string accompaniment, clear delivery was dependent on a fully supported speaking tone with mask resonance. Juliani also encouraged emphasis and tonal inflection of the words.

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[6] The second passaggio occurs around F#5 in the lyric soprano voice. (Miller, p.134)

Conclusion

The production of *Beauty and the Beast* is the culmination of Opera Breve's artistic goals. The story's depiction by masks, movement, music and narration created a unique theatrical experience for the audience. The thrust-style theatrical space with passageways through the seating enabled a closer relationship between performers and spectators. Interviews with selected audience members revealed reactions that ranged from discomfort from the proximity of the performers, to complete immersion into the drama.

The description of Schafer and Juliani's aesthetics has revealed a synergy of many common aspects of their philosophies. *Beauty and the Beast*, containing important elements of Schafer's ideals, provided Juliani with the opportunity to apply free forms of theater to sung drama. Schafer said:

"This is the first task: to fashion a theatre in which all the

arts are fused together, but without negating the strong and

healthy character of each." (1991, p. 28)

Directorial choices such as the incorporation of a dancer, extensive physicalization of each character, incorporation of Japanese theatrical elements, and audience placement all attempted to evoke the "Theatre of Confluence".

Opera Breve continues the goal shared by many small opera organizations: to contribute to the vitality of opera by offering alternative theatrical experiences. The next project realizes another objective--the commissioning of a new one-act chamber opera. In a collaborative process with Canadian composer Brian Current and librettist Anton Piatorgsky, the piece will be workshopped and produced in the 2003-2004 season.

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R. MURRAY SCHAFER'S
BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
A PRODUCTION ANALYSIS

A Lecture Recital in partial fulfillment of a
Doctorate in Musical Arts

MARI HAHN, SOPRANO
BOREALIS STRING QUARTET
JOCELYN PARR, DANCER

Sunday, September 8
7:00 pm
Christ Church Cathedral
690 Burrard St. at Georgia

Opera Breve and R. Murray Schafer's
Beauty and the Beast:
A Production Analysis

1. Lecture

<u>Background of Opera Breve</u>

1. Origins
2. Objectives
3. First and second season
4. John Juliani's philosophy of theatre

<u>R. Murray Schafer</u>

1. Description of Beauty and the Beast
2. Theatre of Confluence
3. The Greatest Show
4. Jungian archetypes in Patria
5. Symbology of Beauty and the Beast

<u>Beauty and the Beast</u>

1. Music and symbolism
2. Vocal characterization
3. The production

BREAK

2. Beauty and the Beast

Soloist..Mari Hahn

Dancer..Jocelyn Parr

Borealis String Quartet.. Patricia Shih
Yuel Yawney
Joel Stobbe
Nikita Pogrebnoy

Director..John Juliani

Masks..Kim Hunter

Costumes..Mara Gottler

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