Class 1 : Our Revels Now

A. Musics in The Tempest

1. Class title 1 (RSC masque scene)
2. Section title A (Johnson *Country Dance*)

Musics, plural? Yes, because there are different kinds. That was a dance by **Robert Johnson** (1583–1633), who played the lute at the premiere of *The Tempest* by **William Shakespeare** (1564–1616) in about 1610. Here are two more examples of music from the play; I'll ask you afterwards about all three.

3. Johnson: "Where the bee sucks, there suck I"
4. "Our revels now are ended" (David Threlfall)
5. — text of the above

What did you think? Two clips—a dance and a song—in which you heard obvious music, and another that seemed to have no music at all. But didn't it? The most basic place where you find music in a Shakespeare play is in the poetry itself, and the voice of a talented actor, and **David Threlfall**, the speaker here, most certainly is. It is a point I can make only once, since the title of my course, **Music on the Stage**, really refers to music that is played on instruments or sung. And that was the point of my first two clips; these are the two principal forms that music can take in performance: dance and song. I would go so far as to say they are the two forms in which human beings express themselves musically. **Dance**, which relates to the the pulse of the heart and the rhythm of the step, is the most basic. And **Song**, producing sound from the open throat, comes a close second. And if we say that Prospero's speech is musical, we partly mean that it has a rhythm and it plays with sound.

6. Waterhouse: Miranda (1916)

This course will be no means confined to music for plays, but it will deal more generally with music as a dramatic ingredient. So in this first class, which is a kind of sampler, I thought it would be useful to take an actual play—Shakespeare's *Tempest*—and look at what functions music performs in this original context, and how these have been developed or even altered in later productions and adaptations. I chose *The Tempest* because it is clearly Shakespeare's most musical play; a quick count gives 5 songs by Ariel, 3 by other characters, and at least 5 calls for music in the stage directions. I'll start with productions of the play itself, beginning with Ariel's songs, then looking at the masque which forms the climax of the fourth act. Then in the second hour, we'll turn to adaptations in the Restoration theatre, in the opera house, and the ballet stage. As I have taught *The Tempest* before, about 50% of this are clips I previously used in my 2021 **Shakespeare Legacy** course, with new stuff added, and all reorganized; this will be the only class to rely so heavily on old materials.

B. Ariel's Songs

7. Section title B (open book against music background)
8. A print illustrating of the opening scene

Back-story: **Prospero**, the former Duke of Milan, has been usurped by his unscruplous brother in league with the King of Naples. He has fled with his infant daughter **Miranda** and a selection of his books to a deserted island, where he has used his magical powers to dominate the inhabitants. Now, many years later, he sets the stage for the denouement. He gets his spirit **Ariel** to conjure up a storm to wreck a ship carrying his brother and the King of Naples, and cast everybody up on shore, unharmed, but believing that all the others have been drowned. The first of the survivors we see is the handsome **Ferdinand**, heir to the throne of Naples. Unseen by him, Ariel enchants him with a pair of songs. Let's hear the scene, rather bizarrely, in an Audiobook recording that uses no music at all. As you listen, think what you would want the music to do if you put it in.

9. Shakespeare: *The Tempest*, Ariel and Ferdinand (audiobook)

So what do you think this music should sound like? Dramatically, what does it need to **do**? As it happens, we have a setting of the second song by **Robert Johnson**, the only composer known to have composed music for stage performance in Shakespeare's plays. The singer is **Stephanie Sheffield** with the **Chicago Early Music Consort**.

10. Johnson: "Full Fathom Five"
11. Roger Allam as Prospero and Colin Morgan as Ariel in The Tempest (Globe, 2013)

Does that cut it? It's certainly better than having somebody simply read the text, but it rather sits there like a lump, doesn't it? However, note one important thing: Ariel is marked as **invisble,** so the music appears to come from nowhere. If you add a few instruments to the accompaniment, the effect could be quite magical. Music does not function solely as an added element in a play, but as an adjunct to the scene-setting, to create atmosphere. And in a magical play like *The Tempest,* it needs to create magic of its own. I am going to give you two versions of the scene on stage in fairly recent British productions. The first is from the Globe Theatre in 2013, directed by **Jeremy Herrin**. The Globe, as you know, is a replica of Shakespeare's original, so modern special effects are not even under consideration. We only have the actors—**Colin Moran** as Ariel and **Joshua James** as Ferdinand—an onstage musician, and a couple of singers. Very much as Shakespeare might have had it, except that this Ariel is in plain sight (though presumably invisible to Ferdinand. The music by **Stephen Warbeck** is modern, but calls for nothing that would not have been available to Shakespeare. We'll discuss it after I have shown both.

12. Shakespeare: *The Tempest* (Globe 2013), Ariel/Ferdinand scene
13. Simon Russell Beale as Prospero and Mark Quartley as Ariel in *The Tempest* (RSC, 2016)

The other production is as different as could be. Coming from the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-on-Avon, it is of course produced for an indoor space. The director, **Gregory Doran**, went into partnership with **Intel**, who created all sorts of computer-generated effects. But equally to the point, he

worked with a composer, **Paul Englishby** (1970–), who understood exactly what the music would have to do; I think it would work even without the effects—though Doran also adds dancers. Here is the full scene; the singing, dancing Ariel is **Mark Quartley**; **Daniel Easton** is Ferdinand.

14. Shakespeare: *The Tempest* (RSC 2016), Ariel/Ferdinand scene
15. — stills from the two productions above

I'd love to hear what you thought about that. Later in the course, I'll be getting on to a common modern approach to musical theater, which seems to be all about piling spectacle on spectacle, and this would certainly qualify; it's a far cry from perfomances at The Globe. But I do think it is basically Shakespearean at bottom, in that it uses music and effects to create the atmosphere of magic essential to the play.

C. The Act IV Masque

16. Section title C (masque scene sequence)
17. Masque designs by Inigo Jones

The most elaborate use of music—and the most dramatically essential—in *The Tempest* is the **Masque** that Prospero summons in Act IV, inviting the godesses **Juno**, **Ceres**, and **Iris** to bless the betrothal of Ferdinand and Miranda. The video you have just scene shows the scene in five productions in our lifetime, accompanied by roughly Shakespearean music. Although I have been featuring a performance at the Globe, *The Tempest* would not originally have been performed out of doors, but at court, and elaborate masques—vaguely classical fantasies with music and dancing—would have been a staple feature. Generally, they called for some magnificence, but here is a short clip from a performance by a group called The Lord Chamberlain's Men (after one of Shakespeare's original companies), obviously touring with a limited budget, and pressing male actors in the company to don dresses and appear as the goddesses. In an odd way, I think it works.

18. Act IV masque, excerpt; Lord Chamberlain's Men
19. The masque in the 2013 Globe production

The 2013 Globe production is not quite as shoestring as that; it can spare two singing actresses for Iris and Ceres, but Ariel has to take the part of Juno himself. And when she calls for dances, the promised Nymphs and Reapers are taken by the six actors themselves. The comic premise in this production is that although Prospero knows that Miranda is right for Ferdinand, he cannot bear to give her up—hence the emphasis on all references to preserving her virginity until after the actual wedding. Note that this scene ends with the beginning of the "Our revels now" speech with which we started.

20. Act IV masque, ending, Globe 2013
21. The Act IV Masque in the 2016 RSC production of *The Tempest*

As you can imagine, the masque in the **2016 Stratford production** is a more lavish affair altogether. Not only does **Intel** come up with a full bag of electronic tricks, but composer **Paul Englishby** has written some quite symphonic music, calling for real singers in the Goddess roles. And when Juno summons the **Nymphs and Reapers**, by George we get them! I will have more to say on this element after the break.

22. Act IV masque, Stratford 2016
23. Robert Dudley: *The Tempest*, Act IV, the fairy banquet

In filling the stage so lavishly in that production, **Greg Doran** was going back to an aesthetic that was in vogue in the later 19th century and the start of the 20th. One reason why artist **Robert Dudley** crams so much into his 1900-ish painting of a scene from the play is that this is what theatergoers would have seen onstage. It is not my intention to give a history of Shakespeare productions, so much as the music that goes with them, but this enables a brief mention of yet another category, neither songs nor dances, but **incidental music** intended to accompany the action, often calling for a full symphony orchestra in the pit! The period saw several such scores of incidental music, for example by **Arthur Sullivan**, **Ernest Chausson**, and **Jan Sibelius** (1865–1957). So here, to end the hour, is a montage of two pieces from the Sibelius suite of 1925, accompanied by illustrations by **Edmund Dulac** (1882–1953).

24. Sibelius: excerpts from *The Tempest*, with Dulac illustrations
25. Class title 2 (RSC production)

D. Restoration—and How!

26. Section title D (Globe to Drury Lane)

Everything I did in the first hour had to do with performances of the play itself; in this hour, we deal with adaptations of one sort and another. Starting with the changes wrought by the **Restoration**, following the shuttering of the theaters by the Puritans between 1649 and 1660. Although *The Tempest* and other Shakespeare plays might still be performed under the same title, many of them were in fact considerably rewritten, and much of this rewriting involved greatly increasing the role of music—bringing them, in fact, closer to opera. This was made possible by the fact that theatre had largely moved indoors, where much finer control of acoustics and scenic effects was possible. (To be fair, *The Tempest* was probably written for indoor performance also, but on a more intimate scale.)

27. Dryden and Davenant: *The Enchanted Island*, 1667, opening stage direction

So when *The Tempest* (or a version of it) was given again in 1667, it had a new script by **John Dryden** (1631–1700) and **William Davenant** (1606–68), who claimed to be Shakespeare's natural son. They retained much of Shakespeare's verse, rewriting some of the more obscure speeches, but they added numerous new characters, so there were three or four love interests in the play, not just one—and this

time around, the female parts were played by real women! Above all, they added opportunities for music. Look at this opening stage direction: it begins by specifying not only an orchestra, but also its instrumentation. For some reason, they go into great detail about the architecture of the theatre, but when they go on to describe the actual scene, it is full of special effects that would have been quite impossible in Shakespeare's time. Alas, we have no pictures of this, but we do have some of the music, composed by **Matthew Locke** (1630–77) for a slightly later version; I have accompanied it with excerpts from the stage direction, plus shipwreck paintings from the same time.

28. Locke: *The Tempest,* Second Curtain Tune

Actually, Locke's music was not written for the Davenant/Dryden original. Within a decade of the 1667 premiere of their version, another poet, **Thomas Shadwell** (1642–92), came along to turn their text into an opera, commissioning music from Locke and two or three others. To give them scope, he did not confine himself to the existing songs by Shakespeare, but added masque-like interludes for the Devils who conjure up the storm, the Sailors who almost drown in it, and so on. This compound Dryden/Davenant/Shadwell version was the one in which *The Tempest* was performed for the next century and a half, until **William Macready's** production of 1838, reverting to Shakespeare's text. But different music would be put in to suit changing tastes; I'll give you two examples. One of the many revivals had a score previously attributed to **Henry Purcell**, but now thought to be by **John Weldon** (1676–1736). The most famous number, "Arise, ye subterranean winds," is not even for a character in Shakespeare, but one of the new Dryden/Davenant/Shadwell additions, the Second Devil. Here it is, sung by **Sinan Vural** in a strange open-air production in Holland.

29. Weldon: "Arise, ye subteranean winds!" Holland Opera, Sinan Vural

Six or seven decades later, roughly at the time of Mozart, another English composer, the 22-year-old **Thomas Linley** (1756–78), wrote a set of music to slot into the Dryden/Davenant/Shadwell script. It obviously comes in the same place, and the opening line, "Arise! ye spirits of the storm," is virtually the same, but the text is new, probably composed by Linely's brother-in-law, the playwright **Sheridan**; it seems that you could provide not only your own music, but the words to go with it! Here's the opening in a concert performance in Saint Petersbug; I think the music is exciting enough to carry the day.

30. Linley: "Arise, ye spirits of the storm!"
31. Purcell, Weldon, and Linley portraits

A few months after writing this, still only 23, Linley died—ironically by drowning when his rowing boat was caught in a squall on an ornamental lake. Now here's a question: which of these pieces do you think is the most operatic? To me, it is the earlier one, the Purcell/Weldon. Linley may have stirring music, but writing for chorus makes it disembodied, rather like the orchestra. The essence of opera is giving voice to *solo* characters, who can not merely sing the roles but *personify* them. But in these adaptations, the singing roles are almost all minor characters or invented ones. Not until Prospero, Miranda, Ferdinand, and Caliban are given singing voices would any *Tempest* adaptation be a true opera.

E. Two Calibans

32. Section title E (Paul Woodroffe: *Caliban*, 1906)
33. Shakespeare: *The Tempest*, "Be not afeard, the isle is full of noises."

Caliban, the monster whom Prospero enslaves. You might think him the least poetic and thus the least operatic of all the characters, but in fact Shakespeare gives him the greatest speech about music. So any true opera setting has to include that. Here it is in a 1986 opera by American composer **Lee Hoiby** (1926–2011); I directed its *deuxième*, but the only recording I have is audio, sung by **Jacques Trussel**.

34. Hoiby: *The Tempest*, "Be not afeard, the isle is full of noises."
35. Caliban's aria with Meredith Oakes' text

It is not just the tune that makes Hoiby's music work; he also has that gentle rocking accompaniment, and the choir of unseen sopranos that create the radiant atmosphere within which Caliban sings. When British composer **Thomas Adès** (1971–) attempted a *Tempest* in 2004, he did not even use Shakespeare's text, but got the Australian poet **Meredith Davies** to rewrite it. It looks as flat and unpoetic as you could imagie, but both Adès and Oakes recognized a truth: that in opera, it is not the words that set the mood or provide the connecting syntax, but the music, which wraps you in its own magic. Here is **Alan Oke** singing it at the Met.

36. Adès: *The Tempest*, "Be not afeard, the isle is full of noises."

[Adès' realization that it is the music that creates the magic in an opera, not the text or the staging, enables him to end in an unusual way. After all the visitors have left the island, Caliban is left alone there with Ariel. Whatever happened is just a memory, perhaps even a dream. And as the lights go out in the theater that director **Robert Lepage** makes his setting, only the music still lingers. Here is the very end.

37. Adès: *The Tempest*, ending]

F. When You Do Dance

38. Section title E (Reapers' dance in the RSC production)

I'm repeating the picture of the dance from the RSC production that we have already seen. All companies include the three goddesses, with whatever grandeur the budget allows. But the RSC production is one of the few not to ignore that stage direction "*Enter certain reapers, properly habited*"; after all, this is supposed to be a deserted island. But Shakespeare knew what he was doing; blessings from a goddess are one thing, but for the love of Miranda and Ferdinand really to take root it had to touch the ground, and that is what the country dance does.

39. Perdita and Florizel in *The Winter's Tale* (c.1782)

The Tempest was not the only play in which Shakespeare poses a terrible situtation that takes many years to resolve; he includes the idea in each of his last four plays. In the one before this, *The Winter's Tale*, he ends the first half in despair. A king has gone mad, accused his wife of adultery, and ordered that her infant daughter be left out in the elements to die. A faithful retainer instead smuggles her to Bohemia; unfortunately, he is killed by a bear, but the baby is found by a shepherd and adopted. Now there is a gap of 15 or 16 years. The girl, **Perdita**, meets a young shepherd, **Doricles**, and they fall in love. What we know, but she doesn't, is that "Doricles" is in fact **Florizel**, the son of the King of Bohemia, escaping from the palace in disguise. So Princess meets Prince, though both think the other to be a simple peasant. Shakespeare uses both the rustic setting and the dance that is the core of the scene for therapeutic purposes, as a touchstone of naturalness and simplicity. Here is the scene in an earlier production by **Gregory Doran**, this time without the help of Intel. The lovers are **Ryan McCluskey** and **Emily Bruni**. The bearded man looking on and talking to the shepherd is Florizel's father, come to spy on what his son is up to. Note that, at the very beginning, when Florizel praises Perdita, he does so in terms of her dancing, the most natural quality she couls possible possess.

40. Shakespeare: *The Winter's Tale*, scene from Act IV

Back to *The Tempest.* Turning it into a ballet is not impossible; there are several versions out there, but unfortunately I can illustrate them only by trailers. Here is one from 2016, by **David Bintley** (1957–) of the Birmingham Royal Ballet. I'll show the trailer; tell me if it works for you.

41. David Bintley: *The Tempest*, trailer
42. — still from the above

What did you think? I don't know that I have any right to comment on a ballet I have seen only in snippets, but I imagine that it would tell the story pretty well. However, it seems reduced by being so closely tied to ballet form: the point shoes, the *attitudes*, the ballet dresses. Even if I could get it on DVD, I'm not sure that I would want to. But here's a *Tempest* ballet that I really *would* like to get, created in 2014 for the Dutch National Ballet by **Krzysztof Pastor** (1956–).

43. Krzysztof Pastor: *The Tempest*, trailer
44. — still from the above

How did that work? To my mind, there is a much greater complexity herem a greater range of emotion, and an awareness that *The Tempest* is a complex work, about a lot more than its outline story and a bit of magic. [I don't know that we have time, but this three-minute documentary with Pastor may explain a little more—but then again, it may not.

45. Krystof Patsor: backstage with *The Tempest*]

F. Beyond the Fringe

46. Section title F

Everything we have been doing today has been derived more or less directly from Shakespeare's play. But in the course, I will be looking at numerous other uses of music onstage other than in the service of some existing text. I can't illustrate them here, but I can at least show two productions of *The Tempest* which get pretty far out. [The first is a trailer from a more recent Globe Theatre production, 2022.

47. Shakespeare: *The Tempest*, Globe 2022, trailer]
48. A scene from Derek Jarman's *Tempest* (1979)

There are many reasons *not* to show my last clip, from *The Tempest* by **Derek Jarman** (1942–94). First, it is a film, and our course is confined to music *on stage*; but it would not be hard to envision it as a stage production. Secondly, although it uses Shakespeare's text, he chops it up, rearranging the order and adding entire sequences such as the one you are about to watch. Thirdly, it is as campy as you could possibly imagine, and then some, reveling in deliberate bad taste. Jarman, a gay activist who was also capable of some work of exquisite sensitivity and balance, obviously took delight in using this project to flaunt a blatant queer aesthetic: clashes of period, wildly overelaborate detail, homoerotic implications everywhere, and a fascination with aging divas—**Elizabeth Welch**, the singer who comes in at the end, was 75 at the time of filming. But all these are also reasons *to* show it; it has to be seen to be believed! I have cut it off before the end, but you will get the gist.

49. Jarman: *The Tempest* (1979), ending
50. Class title 3