

Moving “Choreomusically”: Between Theory and Practice

Entre la théorie et la pratique : le mouvement « choréomusical »

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Article abstract

Since the late 20th century, we have witnessed the development of a new interdisciplinary field called ‘choreomusicology’ or ‘choreomusical studies’. In this article, consideration is first given to the histories of the two disciplines music and dance. Their respective lineages are discussed in terms of how each is different, yet how together, they inform the new field. The focus then is on choreomusical analysis, using examples from western theatre dance. Frameworks for analysis are discussed, first, how intermedia research can inform choreomusical theory, then rhythmic strategies, when a flexible concept of parallelism and counterpoint is illustrated through two Stravinsky settings: Pina Bausch’s – *Das Frühlingsopfer* (*Rite of Spring*, 1975) and Bronislava Nijinska’s *Les Noces* (1923). Following discussion of musical embodiment through dance, the theory of conceptual blending is outlined and used in analysis of the Lament from Mark Morris’s setting of Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas* (1989).

PROLÉGOMÈNES/
PROLEGOMENON

Moving “Choreomusically”:
Between Theory and Practice¹

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During the five years prior to the Montréal conference “Dance and Music: Moving Dialogues,” there were no fewer than seven international conferences crossing music and dance—an astonishing figure—while the Congress on Research in Dance (CORD) staged yet one more with the American Society for Ethnomusicology later the same year.² At the 2005 “Sound Moves” conference hosted at Roehampton University London, the opening keynote speaker Marian Smith mused on her lonely past as a musicologist in the early 80s. She felt a sense of shame that she had to be secretive about researching dance and music written for dance (Smith 2005), and she remembered a 1989 review by Ulrich Weisstein of the German *Pipers Enzyklopädie des Musiktheaters* which dismissed as a mistake the inclusion of articles about dance. Weisstein wrote that “truly musicodramatic pieces otherwise qualified for inclusion [presumably meaning opera] had to be sacrificed on the altar of Terpsichore’ because so many pages were instead ‘dedicated to the kings of fancy footwork’” (Weisstein 1989, 196). Hopefully, no one would write like that today, some twenty years later.

For Smith, who has undertaken seminal work on nineteenth-century ballet music and its values as narrative and speech, the eye-opener was Roland John Wiley’s work on Tchaikovsky’s ballets, culminating in his book in 1985. Here, he made a matter of fact announcement that the attractions of concert music could actually be defects in ballet, and a particular statement undermined the basic assumption that ballet music simply supported dance. Nineteenth-century ballet composers, he suggested, worked for:

an inverse relationship between interest in music and interest in dance, whereby music makes its strongest impact when solo dance is the least commanding, and vice versa. The climactic moments of pure music and pure dance almost never coincide, a fact which should give pause to the analyst who seeks to judge ballet music only for its sounds (Wiley 1985, 6).

In other words, we had to look at music and dance music together and in dialogue with each other in order to make any sense of either. In her 2005 “Sound Moves” paper, Smith also stressed very firmly the problems of lack of understanding between music and dance specialists—different vocabularies, different uses of the same words, different ways of counting, the same issues approached on very different terms.

There is a degree of fear of the Other from each side, Music and Dance, perhaps sometimes something stronger than fear. It is also fascinating to note that, not so long ago, within the profession as well as the critical fraternity, there were very clear rules about how the two art forms should relate, rules that were broken and replaced, but rules all the same. There was talk in dance about music visualisation as an ideal (now dance appropriating existing music, even German symphonies—horror of horrors), happy marriages, or some kind of useful struggle between media, or partners behaving badly, and about “musique dansante,” what should be danced and what should not. Some writers had a shot at discussing “musicality,” but unsurprisingly, nobody got anywhere near defining precisely what that meant.

Then, for avant-garde modern dance artists, music was a major problem as regards their own autonomy. Both American and German modern dance pioneers, such as Martha

¹ This article draws in part from the following publications by Stephanie Jordan: ‘Choreomusical Conversations: Facing a Double Challenge’, *Dance Research Journal*, 43/1 (Summer, 2011), pp. 43-64 [DRJ is the journal of the Congress on Research in Dance (CORD)]; ‘Mark Morris Marks Purcell: Dido and Aeneas as Danced Opera’, *Dance Research*, 29/2 (Winter, 2011), pp. 167-213 [see www.eupjournals.com].

² Conferences embracing the subject are: *Sound Moves, An International Conference on Music and Dance*, Roehampton University, London (2005), *Die Beziehung von Musik und Choreographie im Ballett* [The Relationship between Music and Choreography in Ballet], Hochschule für Musik und Theater, Leipzig (2006), *Tanz im Musiktheater – Tanz als Musiktheater*, Hochschule für Musik und Theater, Hanover (2006), *Movimento et Volumina* (marking the 125th anniversary of Stravinsky’s birth), University of Salzburg (2007), *Dance, Timing and Musical Gesture*, University of Edinburgh (2008), *Movements Between Hearing and Seeing: Music, Dance, Theatre, Performance and Film*, Forschungsinstitut für Musiktheater, University of Bayreuth, Thurnau (2009), *Dance and Music: Moving Dialogues*, McGill University, Montreal (2011), *Moving Music/Sounding Dance* hosted jointly by The Congress on Research in Dance (CORD) and the Society for Ethnomusicology, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (2011).

Graham, Doris Humphrey and Mary Wigman, made dances in silence, to percussive sounds, or to music composed after the dance. Later, Merce Cunningham was praised by no less than the mayor of New York for having “freed contemporary dance from the tyranny of music” (quoted in Goodwin 1977, 28) while Yvonne Rainer simply pronounced “I am a music-hater [...]. The only remaining meaningful role for muzeek in relation to dance is to be totally absent or to mock itself” (Rainer 1974, 111-2). Today, there is undoubtedly a more easy pluralism amongst artists and a huge variety of approaches to consider and write about.

We will first look briefly at the history of the two disciplines and their respective lineages, in terms of how each is different, yet how together they are beginning to inform what is coming to be called “choreomusicology” or “choreomusical studies”—to use the term “choreomusical” coined by Paul Hodgins (Hodgins 1992). The two fields have both become more permeable in their workings. The focus here is on choreomusical analysis (not history) and with some examples from western theatre dance.³

The Background: Two Disciplines Compared

Through much of the twentieth century, Western musical analysis has been equated with formal analysis, “close readings,” based on scores, leaving just a little room for interpretation and meaning. Analysis of temporally-based form and pitch-based structures seems to have been especially important, far less so rhythmic analysis, with timbre hardly acknowledged at all. Many musicologists shared the belief that a musical work is a unified, organic conception and a closed, autonomous entity, and that model forms, like sonata form, can operate as standards against which works can be measured.

From about 1985, suddenly, there was major questioning of the assumptions upon which analysis had been based for many years. This was influenced by other disciplines—literary theory (e.g. semiotics, post-structuralism and intertextuality), the social sciences (e.g. cultural and gender studies), and ethnomusicology which, with its broad cultural remit, challenged western hegemonies of many kinds. The New Musicology had begun. Yet, recently, while acknowledging music’s capacities for emotion and meaning and the fact of its social construction, a number of musicologists have suggested ways of coming to terms with their “old” analytical heritage and of using it as a liberating rather than constraining factor.

Sharing the same period as New Musicology, the field has been increasingly influenced by work in the discipline of cognitive science, including psychology of music. This

work has focused on the processing of music as sound construction. With this, the emphasis on musical scores has given way to a focus on matters of perception and performance. There are now doubts that traditional, specialist music theory always tells us what we actually hear from music, and currently under consideration is that basic cognitive capacities which we use in understanding the world also help us to understand music (Huron 2007; Zbikowski 2002). Today’s musicologists also more readily admit the central role that our bodies play in understanding music, allowing the fact of music as visceral experience.

Compared with music, there are relatively few analyses of dances, and here, the term “analyses” is used generously to include, alongside academic writing, some of the more detailed, insightful accounts of dance critics. From within this body of work, there is surprisingly little of what in any sense might be called formal analysis. Most interestingly, this occurs when there is a musical connection, for instance, when scholars borrow from musical methodologies in choreomusical explorations. Hodgins did this when, in 1992, he presented an early methodology in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic relations and parallel components between the media. Since then, there has been a body of work in twentieth-century theatre dance, combining structurally-based methods with interpretation, discussion of broader issues such as aesthetic and gender implications and acknowledgement of historical context (Damsholt 2008; Duerden 2003; Joseph 2002; Mawer 1997; Preston 2000; Schroedter 2010). There is also a significant body of analytical work integrating an account of relations with musical forms, in dance ethnography, beginning in the 1950s in Eastern Europe (International Folk Music Council Study Group for Folk Dance Terminology 1974; Kaeppler and Dunin 2007), and in baroque and early nineteenth-century dance (Hammond 1997; Okamoto 2005; Pierce 2002; Schwartz 1998; Withereff 1983).

From the latter half of the 1980s, dance scholarship as a whole experienced theoretical and methodological shifts similar to those in music. It moved rapidly towards interrogation of the interrelations between dance and culture. If anything, it has moved further away still from analysis dealing with the detail of movement and its organisation within a dance. But, as already suggested, the disciplines have recently come much closer—there is now a sound meeting ground—and cognitive science, empirical studies of how we process visual as well as aural information, could be an important new direction to pursue.

³ For a more comprehensive discussion of the methodological aspects of the disciplines see Jordan 2011.

Intermedia Research and Choreomusical Theory

Choreomusical analysis offers additional opportunities to consider common ground between the two arts, and reference to intermedia theory is a useful starting point. One fundamental concept lying behind this approach is that there is always some kind of relationship when music and dance are put together. Allen Fogelsanger and Kathleya Afanador have observed that we tend naturally to conceive of music and dance as seeming to go—or not to go—together (Fogelsanger and Afanador 2006, 6). We even sense a number of *apparent* formal equivalences, like up and down in space (literally in dance, metaphorically in music), that have settled as conventions over the centuries and that have led us to imagine, quite problematically, that music can be “visualised.”

But we need to bear in mind that relationships of opposition are relationships too, as much as relationships of equivalence or conformity. The composer-theorist Barbara White adds the point that there is never, in any case, one without the other. There is always an element of simultaneous opposition, not in the least due to the disciplinary incongruity—both similarity and difference (White 2006, 81–82). White breaks down the hard binary between going and not going together and tries to get us to move towards a more fluid multi-dimensional model. Words like similarity and difference often seem hopelessly inadequate. As White suggests, we have to go to precise examples within precise contexts in order to spell out these dilemmas and pleasures in any meaningful way, to go beyond the question of *whether* music and dance meet each other or not, to ask *where* or *how* they meet (White 2006, 73–74). A further fundamental concept is that music and dance operate in dynamic interaction, an idea that has been put forward by film music theorists such as Claudia Gorbman and Michel Chion (Chion 1994; Gorbman 1980, 183–203). Thus, dance and music, like sound and film, are seen as subject to change rather than static entities, operating within a mechanism of mutual implication and interdependence. We are dealing with a new composite form, music and dance.

Rhythmic Strategies

My first port of call in developing my own choreomusical methodology was rhythm. In the area of structural processes of rhythm and formal organization through time, it still seems useful to hold on to a flexible notion of parallelism and counterpoint. But I am indebted to music rhythm theory as the basis for the concepts that I propose for choreomusical analysis: the field is far more developed than in dance.

Turning now to some examples for illustration of method, and application of rhythmic strategies in particular, I

suggest that a broad choreomusical approach offers a new way of understanding, or line through, Pina Bausch’s *Das Frühlingsopfer* (*Rite of Spring*, 1975). The focus here is on the highly regularised rhythmic sections that constitute the trajectory of power through this work, pressing towards the event of annihilation, the sacrifice of the woman victim. Passages like this, with pulse a fundamental impetus for movement, dominate with their presence, and Bausch takes advantage of the driving tendency within the music, exaggerating it when she uses it. Certainly, we perceive of music and dance going together here, but in a very particular way.

The first half of “Augurs of Spring,” for instance—featuring a group of women in unison and some breakout solos along the way—comprises a series of passages, each made up of exactly repeating units of material (of 4 or 8 counts), all of them emphasising the pulse and regular 2/4 musical metre. The movement for the opening 4 count motif is as follows (and see Ex. 1) :

Example 1 *Le Sacre du printemps*, “The Augurs of Spring,” opening, women’s dance motif (Igor Stravinsky/Pina Bausch).
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Tempo giusto ♩ = 50 (+ horns on accents)

strings *f*

Dance counts: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4
drop open to bob strike etc. etc.
right second

A step to the right, drawing in the left leg, the upper body and head dropping over the knees, hands crossed over the thighs, count 1;

The left leg opens to second position plié and the dancer looks upwards, hands reaching down in opposition, count 2;

The dancer bobs in the same position, count 3;

Hands are clasped above the head in preparation for the main dynamic accent on count 4, a striking action down the front of the body, pulling the torso and head down with it.

Through remorseless repetition, Bausch tends to settle us metrically, taking attention away from the most unsettling syncopations in the music. Thus, too, she exaggerates the underlying image of the machine in the music. More than Stravinsky, she emphasises plain repetition. We also have a heightened awareness of Stravinsky’s motor pulse because Bausch shows it so emphatically: she distracts us from other musical detail in order to achieve this aim.

Bausch’s next big dance “machine” occurs during the “Ritual of the Rival Tribes.” The women perform an arm phrase, characterised by an elbow pulling sharply into the

body, and a swing driving downwards, grouped as 3 times 3 counts, seen in all nineteen times and cut off with the twentieth elbow pull. The phrase traces a 3/4 drum beat thud (against the main 4/4 metre of the music, see Ex. 2), which is barely noticeable in many performances, although the women could be seen as pinned down by the drum, trapped and brutalised like a herd of animals. We can see the accent, more than we hear it. I also read that the women’s pulse is literally dominated here, crushed by the rest of the music and movement during the brutal climax (including the men’s music and movement—which is much more four-square, acknowledging the 4/4 of the music).

Returning to the concept of interaction, Bausch makes us hear better the least emphatic layer in the score which, in this unusual context, we also understand to be overpowered. Bausch interacts with, and changes our perceptions of, the music. Some aspects of it indeed, through mutual highlighting, become especially powerful. Thus, choreomusical analysis suggests a way of rationalising the accumulation of power in Bausch’s *Rite*, and its awful tension, between desperate human spillage—sweat, dirt, dishevelled hair, panting—and increasingly regimented mob. It also encourages us to hear Stravinsky in a new way.

Examples of a different way in which music and dance “go together” come from Bronislava Nijinska’s setting of Stravinsky’s *Les Noces* (1923). First, in Tableau 1, “At the Bride’s House,” during the central Allegro section, there is a passage where the dance follows a background 2/4 bass ostinato in the piano part, and not the irregular barring in the score that matches the foreground vocal line (from [12]: 2/8, 3/8, 2/8, 4/8, 2/8, 3/8, 4/8, etc.)

This is a typical strategy for Stravinsky, and Nijinska’s approach is cunning: she follows the under-part so that we hardly notice the metrical connection between music and dance, and there is a strong sense of counterpoint. The movement articulates the quarter-note beat of the bass line: there is one sharp movement articulating each beat, with hardly any decoration to disturb the plainness, flat-footed steps, isolated arm gestures, and jumps on and around one spot. Significantly, dancers tend not to notice the connection between music and dance either. Christopher Newton, who is now responsible for staging the work for the Royal Ballet, has described the movement as “seeming to go on relentlessly regardless of what the music is doing” (Newton 2005).

Another example comes from Tableau 4 where, at [94] in the score, a pair of shouts ‘Oy! lay!’ marks the first occasion when the entire mass of men and women join in one thrilling unison block.

Everyone jumps to articulate the first shout, and then steps forward, raises a fist defiantly and closes back to first

Example 2 *Le Sacre du printemps*, “Ritual of the Rival Tribes.”

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Musical score for Example 2, *Le Sacre du printemps*, “Ritual of the Rival Tribes.” The score shows two systems of music. The first system (measures 64-65) features tenor and bass tubas (mf, molto pesante) and a bass drum (secco, mf). The second system (measures 65-66) continues the tuba parts. The bass drum part consists of a steady quarter-note pulse.

Example 3 *Les Noces*, Tableau 1, “allegro,” unison group (Igor Stravinsky / Bronislava Nijinska).

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Musical score for Example 3, *Les Noces*, Tableau 1, “allegro,” unison group. The score shows two systems of music. The first system (measures 12-13) features a soprano part (f) and a piano part (pianissimo staccato). The piano part includes a dance rhythm notation: a series of quarter notes with stems pointing down. The second system (measures 13-14) continues the soprano and piano parts. The piano part includes a note with the instruction “(hold and curve to earth)”. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 120.

position during the next. They repeat these moves throughout the passage up to [95]+2, with two jumps instead of one the third time through. Nijinska follows the look of the score, shifting between 2/4 and 3/8. The first move fits the 2/4 bars, with an accent in the air on count 1, and a bigger accent on the landing from the jump on count 2 (exactly with the first shout). The second move fits the 3/8 bars, the fist on count 1 and close back to first position on count 3 (the second shout is on count 2, but the overall effect is of choreomusical synchrony). The dancers count a slow 2 and fast 3 correspondingly. There is nothing extraordinary about the passage when seen in silence, just a touch of irregularity at the double jump point and with the alternating metres. Yet, when the music is put to the choreography, the complexity seems extreme: the musical accentuations are irregular and, after initial clear mutual reinforcement (dance moves meeting shouts during the first two bars), the musical support drops out, returns (just one shout), disappears again,

Example 4 *Les Noces*, Tableau 4, unison “Oy!” passage.

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94 (Allegro ♩ = 120) *tenor solo*

chorus
Oy! Oy! Oy!

Dance rhythm:
Dance counts: 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 etc.

↑ jump up
↓ land

step forwards with fist
close first position

The movement repeats with the repeating count / rhythm patterns

95

Example 5 *Dido and Aeneas*, “Dido’s Lament,” part 2 (Henry Purcell / Mark Morris).

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DIDO

Re - mem - ber me! re - mem - ber me! but ah!

for - get my fate, re - mem - ber me! but ah! for - get my -

fate, re - mem - ber me! re - mem - ber me! but ah!

for - get my fate, re - mem - ber me! but ah! for - get my -

viola violin 2 violin 1

and then comes back, two shouts again for the final pair of moves.

This is highly revealing: here the relative simplicity of the dance rhythms is totally erased by musical irregularity and we might feel jostled, pulled about, on edge, as a result of the two media rubbing shoulders so brutally. Again, there is a strong sense of counterpoint. It is as if Nijinska “adds value” to Stravinsky’s contribution, by adding a line or “voice.” Rhythmic interplay constitutes the liberating force within Nijinska’s *Noces*. It unleashes a kind of Dionysian charge, or what might be called the “body” in the work.

Do we experience two distinct lines of activity here, music and dance? Probably we do not experience lines, rather two voices or forces crowding in on each other. There are many other, more obvious examples of this phenomenon, which I can do no more than touch upon here, like dance and music in metrical counterpoint, as we find regularly in the work of George Balanchine, and the extreme case of independence—no pulse relationship whatsoever—in both the creative process and resulting work of Merce Cunningham and John Cage.

Dancing into Choreomusical Analysis and Embodiment

Turning now to a point about analytical process: we might try to experiment with movement, or actually “do dance,” getting into our bodies as part of this process.⁴ Embodiment highlights information that we do not necessarily acquire from looking at often inadequate resources, video and film, that are frequently of poor visual and sound quality, distorting the live theatre experience. Even through “sketch learning,” we can find the drama within counter-rhythms, between what we do and what we hear. We might even “interpret,” working in the spirit of a creator, a participant in the process of bringing into being the work analysed, discovering points of relationship that might be emphasised and that are minimised in film. It is pertinent that many music analysts naturally edge towards the piano in their work and, today, increasingly, they view performance itself as an analytical act (Rink 1995).-

But there are occasions when, in watching dance, we sense music and movement giving body to each other and infusing our own bodies too. Here, the issue concerns mutual absorption rather than two-way dialogue, the effect of a dancer inhabiting and being inhabited by a musical line. These ideas resonate with Barthes’ theories (in his well-known essay “The Grain of the Voice” [1972]), that “body” in music can be transmitted directly from the body of the musician performer to become an embodied musical

⁴ Preston-Dunlop and Ana Sanchez-Colberg (2002) also advocate studio practice as a central part of their analytical process.

feature. Listen to how he discusses piano music: “I know at once which part of the body is playing – if it is the arm, too often, alas, muscled like a dancer’s calves, the clutch of the fingertips [...] or if on the contrary it is the only erotic part of a pianist’s body, the pad of the fingers whose ‘grain’ is so rarely heard” (Barthes 1972, 189). He contrasts hard surface with a pliability leading to the inside of the body, favouring the latter. These ideas also resonate with a range of writing today that refers overtly to the body in music. There is, for instance, Elisabeth Le Guin’s book *Boccherini’s Body: An Essay in Carnal Musicology* (2006) and Nicholas Cook’s suggestion that we “might speak of the feel of the sounds in the fingers or gut” (Cook 2001, 188). Such carnality is hard to explain in words – and science, at least currently, cannot help us—yet it can be powerfully concrete and deeply ‘known’ within our bodies.

One particular dance theatre genre makes the point about the “body” in music with special force, the kind that introduces the doubling of singers and dancers in the same roles. For here, there is an unmediated link between the body of the dancer and the body of the musician. As the American choreographer Mark Morris once said, justifying his unusually large repertoire of choreography to vocal music, and wanting more body, “Singing is like dancing. It’s the body, the body in the world, with nothing in between, no instrument between” (Acocella 1993, 82). Indeed, singing has an intensely visceral edge, emanating from inside the body. Morris’s setting of Purcell’s opera *Dido and Aeneas* (1989) is a useful example here, and the effect is especially strong because the singers are visible to the audience. Now, the doubling device, even though there is a sense of visual separation – voices literally seen as outside as well as speaking through the dancers – has the potential to forge quite the opposite, a powerful empathetic connection. In the case of *Dido*, the bond between the singing and dancing Didos deepens the sense of physicality and its erotic potential, and presence is enlarged (literally doubled).

Conceptual Blending as Choreomusical Theory: Analysis of the Lament from Mark Morris’s *Dido and Aeneas*

Analysis of Dido’s Lament, her final aria prior to her death, suggests the potential influence of cognitive science on choreomusical methodology, as another strand that could be useful. This influence comes via the linguistic theory of metaphor first proposed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) and leading to the theory of conceptual blending developed by the rhetorician Mark Turner and linguist Gilles Fauconnier (Turner and Fauconnier 1995;

Fauconnier and Turner 2002). There are especially insightful applications to music by Nicholas Cook in his *Analyzing Multimedia* (1998)—he puts forward a theory of how potentially *all* media—music, words, moving pictures, dance—can work together, and by Lawrence Zbikowski in *Conceptualising Music* (2002), here in most detail within the context of nineteenth-century lied, crossing music with text.

To summarise the theory in relation to dance and music, we might first consider a simple example (to which I will return), the commonly understood metaphorical link between pitch and spatial patterning, in terms of “up” and “down.” The conceptual metaphor at the root of this link between pitch and spatial patterning is: PITCH RELATIONSHIPS ARE RELATIONSHIPS IN VERTICAL SPACE.⁵ This conceptual metaphor is grounded in our everyday bodily experience (Turner 1987). Our natural capacity to stand upright leads to embodied experiences when seeing upright objects—like trees and poles, or moving objects like escalators or water; or moving our own bodies, as in climbing up or going downhill; or, via kinaesthetic empathy, watching the rise and fall of dance movement on stage. Conceptual blending is a more complex framework, comprising the blending of concepts from different domains or input spaces (two or more, like music and dance) to create a further, new, domain, and forming a conceptual integration network. Blending, by its nature, means something more than the sum of parts, and the network structure is also highly interactive.

Turning now to “Dido’s Lament,” the focus of analysis will be on examples from its second part, to the words:

Remember me, but ah! forget my fate.

First, in the music shown in example 5, there is a five-bar ground bass working against Dido’s voice. Dido opens the second part of her aria pleading *Remember me!* twice, holding on to a high D, then leaping up a fourth to G for a third utterance, the climactic moment in the Lament. The whole sequence is repeated. Dido the dancer first runs to plead with the chorus on each side of the stage, repeating her movement with the musical repetition, plucking one hand from the other, then extending the arm overhead and arching into a fall backwards. (Morris explains that this movement—which is seen for the first time in the Lament—derives from the American Sign Language word for “learning,” as if “taking information from a book,” so there is an additional edge here to the textual meaning.⁶) From both sides, the chorus take three steps in towards Dido, hinting at their previous relationship to the ground bass in the introduction to the Lament, when they “became” the ground, tracing with their

⁵ Zbikowski (2002), 66. Zbikowski points out the convention that conceptual metaphors are represented in capital letters.

⁶ Interview with Morris, July 23, 2010.

steps its short-long rhythm pattern. The line of Dido's upper body and her pathway side to side across the stage also reflect the level pitch and corresponding look of the score. At the G climax, in contrast, she hastens close to Belinda centre stage, facing the audience, so we see the same 'remember me' arm gesture primarily as a pulling upwards. This works against a counter-pull down through the other hand stretched towards Belinda's bowed head. Here is a clear "visualisation" of the rise in pitch and a sudden assertion of the vertical, but the image is also like the opening of jaws in a scream, or a painful reaching from the depths of Belinda's brain.

The words and choreography are now repeated, but not exactly. The first two accounts of *Remember me* are further contracted, Dido's body and arms appear crumpled, and our eyes are suddenly drawn in towards physical detail. She is yet more anguished. She traverses less of the stage now that the chorus have started to move in towards her, and reveals a new, halting progress that, while not articulating the vocal rhythm, suddenly draws our attention to the separation of notes and their pattern. Dancers Amber Merkens and Bradon McDonald remember Morris's image of "giving up" at this point.⁷

Now there is a twist. The final *Remember me* is a colossal moment, much larger than anything we have seen before. Dido reverses her movement, rushing upstage and on to the balustrade (the fourth and last point of the compass⁸), now primarily reaching *up* to the "gods" with her *front* arm, her *back* arm pulling *down* behind her as the counter-force. This is a major shock. The whole space has suddenly re-opened, and the gap, or rather stretch, between the extremes of "up" and "down" (and across the two women) is unprecedented. S/he is huge and heroic aloft, definitely a woman-man. The effect, however, is especially devastating because in this, her supreme resistance to earth, Dido is also vulnerable – there are the clear "death" implications of arching and falling backwards into the dancing space. (The film of *Dido* by Barbara Willis Sweete, 2000, which is commercially available, treats the moment very effectively but quite differently, cutting to a shot from above and behind the balustrade, so we see Dido reaching up to us, the audience.) This moment on the balustrade also shows concepts relating to size (large), distancing with acceleration, and height all working together towards the same powerful end.

Finally, Dido's song ended, the violins rise as if to enfold her. The dancing chorus return with the ground bass as it escorts Dido upstage to her death, although now, the sinking

back in the step pattern also reflects the falling semitones in the upper strings. She walks in a reverse version of their step pattern, facing them – McDonald explains that her step forward (up and over) while the chorus sinks backwards is like "Dido's weight pushing them back."⁹ Still there is a small resistance. Meanwhile, her 'fate' arms slowly descend, marking her readiness for death.

Conceptual blending theory will now be applied to analysis of the Lament, and first, the choreography "fleshes out" the music (and especially the vocal and bass lines) as a conduit for human subjectivity. Not only does Dido now become a moving human being, but the bass line is the speech of courtiers, cupids and conscience. Then, by reflecting melodic contour and phrasing, the choreography increases the pressure for Belinda not to be troubled and the emphasis on remembrance as an alternative to the finality of Dido's physical death.

Meanwhile, Morris illustrates choreographically the metaphorical connection between pitch relationships and vertical space. The up-down/ascending-descending paradigm is especially strong in the Lament, stronger than anywhere else in Morris's *Dido*. In this context, the connection between dance and music stresses the tension between living and dying (for which vertical space is yet another metaphor).

At the end of the Lament, Dido and the group illustrate the resolution between voice and accompaniment, completing the blend as it were.¹⁰ As her song concludes, Dido's vocal line parallels the descending bass. The violins continue the theme of descent during the postlude, now reflecting the falling semitones in the bass, finally echoing, appropriately, the diatonic conclusion of her song. From the choreographic point of view, Morris uses the integrated musical structures to underscore Dido's resignation and the group's agreement to support her (which the choreography makes clear): in other words, *their* integration. As Dido's arms descend throughout the postlude, connecting most obviously with the violins, she and the chorus also begin to step in tandem with each other, and in harmony with both upper and bass lines.

Yet there is still a compelling, pervasive element of resistance within this blend that has already been touched on, even during the postlude. While there is musical enhancement of the feelings of sadness and anguish suggested in the text, I propose that the choreography takes this further in the form of a double resistance, not only to the bass ground, but also, on some noteworthy occasions, to the voice of the singing Dido. This is immediately clear from the choreographic

⁷ Interviews with Bradon McDonald, April 16 and September 14, 2010 and Amber Merkens, September 16, 2010.

⁸ Macaulay (1992) referred to Dido directing the same gesture to 'east, west, south and north' in his review of Morris's choreography.

⁹ Interview with McDonald, September 14, 2010.

¹⁰ Zbikowski explains that the topography of a conceptual integration network guides three operations: composition (the first stage), completion and elaboration (2002, 80).

enlargement, which is not matched musically, during the repeat of part 2. There are also the bursts of movement that work against the fundamentally slow tempo of the music, in the running to the chorus on each side of the stage, and finally up on to the balustrade.

As for the up-down/ascending-descending paradigm, the dance movement not only draws attention to pitch change (or lack of it), it is also influenced by that change. Sometimes, it works in opposition. As Dido's song descends towards completion, she holds her arms upwards with determination—they reach their downward completion later, with the orchestra. As for the point about enlargement, that other kind of resistance, there is even a momentary sense of triumph after the mighty effort to achieve the remarkable image on the balustrade. The movement is at one with the upward direction of the voice, but now enhancing and expanding upon it, and upon what we saw previously. We feel a sense of utter transformation, something that no singer, however much she modifies her own repeat, is likely to achieve. The effect is so powerful, we may be under the illusion that the musical interval has expanded as well.

Of course, different choreography could have brought out (or counterpointed) different features in the music, but that only highlights the aptness of Morris's decisions in this particular dramatic situation. Morris's choreography confirms not only that pitch relationships are relationships in vertical space but here, that they are literally a matter of life and death.

Conclusions

Thus, in this single Lament, there is an extraordinary complexity of congruence and opposition, and of meanings assembled from both the music/text and dance and their interaction. Analysis of this dance-song has also demonstrated the usefulness of applying frameworks from cognitive science and linguistics, specifically metaphor theory.

In choreomusical analysis, as we have seen, various methodological strands can be drawn upon and modified for different purposes, in the manner of an analytical toolbox, as we consider engagement and interactivity between the two media of music and dance. Some methods draw on specialist, traditional skills, and some of those assembled from music have long been applied, while others grasp new ideas about embodiment and cognitive science/linguistic theory. All can be valuable and used in conjunction with each other, even within one dance, so long as they are appropriate to the particular intermedia context. The two disciplines have much to teach each other. The field is wide open for further exploration.

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