The "operatic of opera" in music history pedagogy – exploring the temporal narrativization of opera[1]

Liisamaija Hautsalo & Heidi Westerlund
Affiliation: Sibelius Academy – University of the Arts Helsinki, Finland
Contact corresponding author: liisamaija.hautsalo@uniarts.fi

Abstract

This study suggests that the pedagogy of music history for the professional training of musicians – including opera singers and future opera composers – could benefit from applying narratology to operatic analysis and acknowledging the "operatic of opera" in the organization of the artistic materials as one possible pedagogical approach. By breaking with the canonized forms of music history pedagogy, the subject content of opera history can be explored for instance through the architecture of temporal narrativization, as made possible by the multiple media types incorporated into opera. The study demonstrates this temporal narrativization through examples grouped into three main categories: "temporal sameness", "temporal incongruence" and "non-linear temporality". While most of the examples are drawn from the classical-romantic repertoire, the analysis also shows that new pluri-medial ways of dealing with temporality and narration have been emerged in contemporary opera. The study argues that by analyzing and illustrating the architecture of temporal narrativization as one form of the "operatic of opera" in Western operatic practice, students will gain a better understanding of the special nature of the pluri-medial nature of opera.

Keywords: *opera history pedagogy, temporality, operatic of opera, opera, music history*

Introduction

Although interest in Western opera as a topic of music history research has increased over the last twenty years, opera history pedagogy is still a relatively unexplored scholarly

---

field, as C. Matthew Balensuela's (2010, pp. 61–66) bibliographical review in the *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* shows. Moreover, if existing music history text books reflect current teaching practices in conservatories, colleges and universities, then opera is taught in the same way – or at least with similar perspectives as to what counts as knowledge – as other musical practices, a way which does not take into account the uniquely multi-artistic nature of opera. As is already recognized by some scholars (Maiello, 2013, pp. 71–108; Unkari-Virtanen, 2009), the organization of the content of music history curricula tends to be deeply rooted in the Western music canon (Dahlhaus, 1983, 1989; McClary, 1991; Goehr, 1992). Despite the expanding diversity of perspectives in contemporary musicology, the older "methodolatry" of music history, as James Vincent Maiello (2013) puts it, is still "emphasizing form, structure, biography, the so-called 'great works' of music belonging to the canon, 'great' composers" and "the formal and stylistic elements of music and their historical 'development'"(pp. 71–108). Accordingly, the salient features of teaching opera and opera history in music history courses are often the summarized facts of the lives of composers, lists of their operatic works, and illustrations of recorded "highlights" – overtures and popular arias that are used to demonstrate the musical style of a particular composer or opera. Teachers may also emphasize the plot summary of a particular libretto, or choose a thematic approach to tie a selected opera to a certain cultural context, or to students' lives (Curtis 2000; Hartford 2016; Cuisick & Hersberger 2018).

In contrast, it could be asked: how can music history pedagogy *highlight* the aspects that make a piece of music recognizably opera – in other words, the special characteristics that make an opera an opera, what we call the "operatic of opera" – and how can a teacher increase students' understanding of opera as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the concept used by Richard Wagner in 1849 to refer to "a combined or total artwork" (Grey, 1992, pp. 232–233)? More specifically, how can music history pedagogy take into account opera's multi-artistic media, which include – in addition to music – a variety of other artistic devices and materials, such as text, drama, dance, setting, and lighting? Importantly, the understanding of opera's special characteristics, the "operatic of opera", thus requires the use of analytical approaches that specifically do not deal with these various media separately (e.g. plot and music individually), but rather aim at analyzing what effect they have when combined: namely, how opera becomes a *pluri-medial artform,* as described by Werner Wolf (2005) and Marie-Laure Ryan (2009).

In this theoretical study, we will *explore and illustrate opera's temporal narrativization through musical and other media as one possible analytical approach to looking at opera as a "combined" and "pluri-medial" artform.* Despite opera's temporality being tightly interwoven with its multi-artistic dramaturgy, it is the structural and harmonic issues that have been regularly underlined, even in textbooks on music history, and for the most part analytical models implicitly follow those methods traditionally used when analyzing symphonic instrumental music. We would argue that temporal narrativization provides one

alternative de-canonizing analytical approach to the artistic material in opera, so that studies in music history can be expanded beyond mere listening and traditional, notation-based music analysis. This approach is still rare, as even in publications that focus on time and music, such as Jonathan D. Kramer's (1988) seminal *The Time of Music: New Meanings, New Temporalities, New Listening Strategies,* opera's temporality is not discussed at all.

Theoretical standpoints

By narrativization we refer to the "reading strategy" that connects the texts to natural narratives, experientiality, and narrativity (Fludernik, 1996). Within the frame of the reader/listener/student's interpretation, opera's narration should not be linked only to a chronological and causal sequence of events, or to a scrutinized plot summary or to detached linear musical discourses (heard as a recording, and read from a score). Rather, it should be connected to multi-sensory, multi-layered, multi-dimensional, and multi-referential artistic discourses that offer new possibilities for interpretation. This "reading strategy" assumes that the unique power of opera as an art form is also based on the co-workings of various senses: hearing and feeling as well as seeing. Naturally, opera can also be seen as a sensorial art form in which language-based narration affects the experience. As Ryan (2009, p. 278) argues:

> [t]hrough narrativization, sensorial arts acquire a sharper mental dimension, and through collaboration with sensorial signs, language-based narrative allows a fuller experience of the storyworld. In multi-channel media, the appreciator can directly see, hear, and maybe even interact with objects, and the imagination, relieved from the cognitive burden of simulating sensory data, can more easily immerse itself in the story.

According to Ryan (2009, p. 271), the narrative power of opera (as well as of film and drama) is due to the presence of the language track. Hence, any analysis concentrating only on the musical construction, without recognizing language or the other media (theatrical dramaturgy, lighting, stage setting and other visual elements etc.) used in opera, narrows students' use of analytical skills, limits how they may or may not experience opera as a multi-artistic art form, and even constrains their ability to connect operatic works to wider cultural frames, including their own lives.

In consideration of these starting points, our aim is to illustrate that the temporal narrativization in opera is produced not only through the plot – the linear, chronological forward movement and associated events of the work – but can also be manipulated as a complex temporal multi-media construction. We therefore suggest that in the teaching of opera history or the analysis of opera, opera's architecture of temporal narrativization can be demonstrated through examples that show how opera as an artform differs from,

for instance, spoken theatre. Temporal narrativization also provides a perspective that can effectively break the more traditional way of teaching music history in which the analysis of style, harmony, and form is dominant. Through their collaboration with sensorial signs, the various artistic media produce, as Ryan (2009) explains, "a fuller experience of the storyworld" of opera (p. 278). In other words, in opera, music is not simply "accompanying" or "colouring" the plot. From this perspective, simply listening to an opera's music, for instance from a recording during a music history lesson, is not enough to provide a full perspective on the work, although music can arguably form its own narrative and also have its own logic (Abbate 1991). When the goal is to understand opera as a "combined artwork", it is also necessary to take into account the other media, which in turn requires audiovisual means, such as DVDs, online platforms etc. when analyzing opera in the classroom.

On the whole, we support the idea of plural pedagogical perspectives on opera, whilst at the same time suggesting no absolute hierarchies between these perspectives, and also accepting that mapping all possible perspectives in opera history teaching is not realistic and not necessary when aiming at meaning making. However, we also agree with the general educational theory that knowing the subject content for teaching requires more than knowing the facts and concepts related to the subject (such as knowledge of opera composers' lives or details of composition dates) (Davis, 2012; Natvig, 2012). Indeed, knowledge of this kind may no longer be the most relevant to teach in the current digitalized world, where facts are more easily accessible than ever before. In a wider educational framework, as Lee S. Shulman (1986) argued in his theory of teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, teachers should be expected to understand the "organizing principles and structures of the subject", the "reasons for these principles", and why a particular topic is particularly central to a discipline whereas another may be more peripheral (pp. 4–14). Such deep knowledge of disciplinary content enables the recognition that there are different ways of organizing ideas, which again allows the teacher to help students to understand the most important ideas without necessarily requiring them to organize ideas in the exact same way (Smith, 2009). Hence, this study can also be seen as dealing with "specialized content knowledge" (Ball, Thames & Phelps, 2008), through which the music history teacher can enrich the framing of subject content in a way that is particularly appropriate to living in a time where the idea that there is only one truth, or even a single research approach to knowledge, is no longer supported. Such an approach to opera requires that teachers of opera history, or the analysis of opera, apply perspectives from other disciplines such as literature, theatre, media studies, cultural studies, and philosophy, as indeed has been done in the field of new musicology (Locke 1991; McClary 1991; Richardson 1999; Scott 2000), and more recently in new opera studies (Levin 2007; Johnson, Fulcher and Ertman 2007; Till 2012; Novak 2015).

Since the teaching of opera and opera history contributes to the professional education of musicians – including opera singers and future opera composers – it is reasonable

to expect that at least *their* education should provide alternative perspectives into understanding "the operatic of opera" and the essential principles and craft of opera. In this study, we highlight the need for students in professional music studies to understand how opera differs from other art forms and Western musical practices, and what its special "operatic", "pluri-medial" characteristics are. Music history teaching should play a central role in this respect.

The starting points for pluri-medial temporal analysis

To explore "the operatic of opera" we will, for now, narrow the exploration to just one aspect, namely opera's ability to *manipulate time* through its various inherent media types and their interactions. For our analysis, we will apply two theoretical concepts introduced by Jelena Novak (2015, pp. 4–6) in order to make a general distinction between *a dramatic opera* and *a post-opera*. In our analysis, the first concept refers to operas of the classical-romantic repertoire, in which narration is mainly based on the so-called Aristotelian unities of time, place, and action (Cannon 2012, p. 34, 43); in other words, a plot which is chronological and causal. The second concept refers to operas in which "the relationship between music and drama is reinvented" (Novak, 2015, p. 5). This means that the traditional narration is challenged or negated in one way or another. By using these concepts, we will also make a distinction between the traditional view on temporal narrativity and more recent views on temporality. For the purposes of this discussion, dramatic opera basically refers to an opera composed before the Second World War, and post-opera to those operatic forms and practices created after the war. Furthermore, we will use the concept of dramatic opera as a starting point in order to further reflect the post-operatic forms.

We will start with an illustration of how an eminent German musicologist and a pioneer in the field of time and opera, Carl Dahlhaus (2003), analyses temporality in 19th century Italian opera in a famous chapter "The Dramaturgy of Italian Opera" (pp. 107–113), where he explores how time has been manipulated in Giuseppe Verdi's *Il trovatore* (1853). According to Philip Alperson (1980), there are, on a general level, two ways of speaking of time and music. On the one hand, music is "an art of time" (p. 405), meaning a progression of musical events in a certain timeline. On the other hand, there is a special "musical time" (pp. 405–406) which is ontologically distinct from the ordinary, everyday concept of time. Or, as Dahlhaus (2003) put it, there is a distinction between "real" and "expanded" time in opera (pp. 107–108).

In its most simple form, the distinction between real and expanded time can be seen in the basic unit of classical-romantic opera, namely the recitative-aria unit, as Dahlhaus also points out. According to Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker (2015), a recitative is a place for "narrative, informal dialogue, stage action: moments in which the plot moved forward", and the aria is a "static mode" which "stops time", and within which a character contemplates and reflects on their emotions to the audience (p. 25). This is a definition repeated in many

music history books, more or less in the same manner. Following this convention, the concept of the recitative-aria unit is commonly introduced to students, as has also been done in Abbate and Parker, but mostly as an example of the minimal structural unit of opera, not as a starting point for exploring temporality.

For Dahlhaus (2003, pp. 107–108), however, the recitative-aria distinction is a starting point for the temporal analysis of opera. By following Dahlhaus (2013, pp. 107–108), we will start with the recitative-aria structure but also apply concepts from Damien Colas (2014) as well as bring some concepts of our own into the discussion. We will introduce three main categories, "temporal sameness" (Dahlhaus 2003, p. 108), "temporal incongruence" (Dahlhaus 2003, p. 111), and "non-linear temporality" (our own category). In the first category, "temporal sameness", the three examples of "recitative", "*parlante* recitative", and "*noumenal* numbers" will be introduced. The second category, "temporal incongruence", comprises three examples: "expanded time in aria", "expanded time in ensemble", and "freezing time in a *quadro di stupore*".

In order to reach beyond Dahlhaus's (2003) analysis of opera's traditional music-centered temporality, we will expand our exploration towards the pluri-medial temporality of 20th and 21st century operas. A third category, "non-linear temporality", is our own development – and an extension of Dahlhaus's analysis – representing post-opera. This category includes examples that we have chosen to illustrate the temporal narrativization in 20th and 21st century opera. We will illustrate the category through four examples of temporal non-linear temporality: "interrupted time", "absolute present", "simultaneous time", and "aleatoric time". In so doing, we aim to show how post-opera best exemplifies the pluri-medial temporal narrativization of opera.

Three approaches to the temporal narrativization of opera in music history studies

1) Temporal sameness

The simplest form of narrativization of temporality in opera is so-called temporal sameness which is the first of our three main categories. To identify temporal sameness in an opera, it is necessary to compare singing and speaking, which in principle are very different means of artistic expression. In operatic temporal sameness, the starting point is that in some situations a sung utterance takes approximately the same time as a spoken one – in real time. To be precise, however, singing a recitative does not take *exactly* the same time as speaking the same words – it always takes a little longer. Hence, we have to accept a certain degree of approximation to be able to understand temporal sameness in opera (Dahlhaus, 2003, pp. 107–113; Colas, 2014, p. 193). Naturally, it is possible to illustrate this narrativization through an analysis of the score, or by listening to a recording of an example.

a) Solo recitative

Our first example of temporal sameness category is the solo recitative. As mentioned previously, the solo recitative is the first part of the classical-romantic opera's basic unit, the recitative-aria distinction. In opera's dramaturgy, the recitative carries the plot and advances the action. According to Dahlhaus (2003), in a solo recitative "musical-formal time usually is approximately commensurate with real time" (p. 108). Thus, the sung recitative and the spoken utterance are more or less equal. Solo recitatives are regularly used in the classical-romantic repertoire. W. A. Mozart's recitatives are well known examples, and Count Almaviva's recitatives in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* (1786) can be used to clarify the concept of the temporality of a recitative for students. For instance, Count Almaviva starts his third act aria with a solo recitative in which, after reflecting on the issue at hand, he concludes that something is going on behind his back.

b) Parlante *dialogue*

The second example of temporal sameness category is the *parlante* dialogue. As with the solo recitative, the *parlante* dialogue also carries the plot and advances the action, and the issues of temporality are also the same as with the solo recitative; accordingly, there is no great disparity between the duration of an utterance whether it be sung or spoken. In *parlante* dialogue, characters 'speak' together by singing with each other, using what Dahlhaus calls the *parlante* style. Dalhaus (2003) takes an example from Verdi's *Il trovatore* (p. 108). In the first part of the trio (act 1, scene 2) there is a *parlante* dialogue between the three characters – the Count of Luna, Manrico, and Leonora – but without repetition of either text or music. This part of the trio goes on like a spoken conversation, and takes approximately the same time as if it were uttered in speech. In Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* there are again many examples of this style. For instance, in the beginning of the second act – after the first aria of the Countess – Susanna, Figaro, and the Countess in their *parlante* dialogue hatch a plot to get back at the unfaithful Count.

c) Noumenal *numbers*

The third example of temporal sameness category deals with what Abbate (1991, p. 5) calls *noumenal* numbers. This category includes real-time song and dance numbers or performances on stage, inside the opera's storyworld; they are part of the plot. Analytically, they are aspects of theatrical dramaturgy. In these numbers, both the performers and the audience are characters in an opera (Dahlhaus, 2003, p. 108). For example, one character can sing a song while others are listening to her on-stage, or there may be an on-stage ball or a court event, such as a wedding, enacted. The temporal sameness here does not occur between the sung and spoken utterances. Instead, it is between the performance on stage and the real world. In other words, the duration of a performance on-stage and the duration of its performance in the real world are the same. This technique was originally inherited

from theatre, where it is called "the play within the play" (Woods, 2015). The most-often cited example is from William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, within which a play called *The Murder of Gonzago* is performed by a travelling theatre company, with a highly dramatic impact on what happens in *Hamlet* itself.

There are also many *noumenal* numbers in opera, and, from the perspective of teaching, these numbers – since they are "performances" within a performance and as such are easy to conceive – might be the easiest for a student to understand. In spoken drama, as well as in opera, a performance on stage can also be a play performed within an opera. One example is Benjamin Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1960), in which local workers perform a play called *Pyramus and Thisbe* to honour Theseus, the Duke of Athens. There are also several *noumenal* performances of music in opera. For instance, in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Cherubino sings two songs (in act 1 and act 2), and in the finale of the third act there are a series of performances: an entrance march for the wedding played by an onstage orchestra, a song for the Count sung by country girls, and a court dance (fandango) in which everyone in the celebration joins. There are also several other examples of *noumenal* music numbers in the repertoire. For example, in Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (1868), the young Walther performs a song in a singing contest (act 5, scene 5), and in Kaija Saariaho's contemporary *L'amour de loin* (2000), the Pilgrim sings a song by the troubadour to the Countess Clémence (act 2, scene 2) (Hautsalo, 2008).

2) Temporal incongruence

Temporal incongruence is the second of our three main categories of temporal narrativization. In addition to the "sameness moments" examined in the previous category, there are examples in which there is an incongruence between the duration of sung utterances and the duration of real-world time. In other words, the presented time (real-time narrative) and the represented time (performance time) are not the same. Following Dahlhaus (2003), researchers have used the term "expanded" to refer to these temporal situations (Colas 2014). According to Dahlhaus (2003, pp. 111–112), there are three examples in this category: an aria, an ensemble, and a "freezing moment", the so-called *quadro di stupore* (Engl. "transfixed with surprise"). This aspect of temporal narrativization is more challenging to illustrate pedagogically than the previous examples in the first category, since it is not necessarily so obvious. A more conscious analysis is needed, one that emphasizes that this type of narrativization is created not by the music of the opera alone, but rather by the musical structure, theatrical dramaturgy and libretto *together*.

a) Expanded temporality in arias

The first example in temporal incongruence category discusses expanded temporality in arias. In general, in 19th century Italian opera an aria precedes or follows a recitative, in which the vocal line is most often analogous with spoken utterance (example 1

of temporal sameness). However, an aria itself is an anomaly, *since an aria contains only a few words and basically no action*. In other words, the action on the stage stops for the most part when a character sings an aria. For issues of temporality, this means that the aria's structure expands outside the real-world time by repetitions of melodies and text, and thus is filled with emotional expression that influences timing. According to Dahlhaus (2003, p. 111), in a 19th century Italian *cabaletta*, which ends a scene, opera's musical time transcends the time of the spoken utterance. A well-known example from an aria is Figaro's cavatina aria "Largo al factotum" (act 1, scene 1) in Gioachino Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (1816), in which – instead of words and sentences – Figaro mainly repeats meaningless syllables. Figaro is in a hurry, but suddenly stops and starts to sing an aria; the action does not continue until the aria is over. Here, it is precisely the music (and its humorous and clever nature) that makes us able to bear the situation and not leave the auditorium. Other striking and more serious examples of expanding time are so-called death scenes, such as Rodrigo's passing in Verdi's *Don Carlos* (1867) (act 3, scene 2), in which the moment of death is prolonged to a half-hour scene. In these scenes, the character often goes on singing even though in reality the person would have died immediately. This is the case in the closing scene of Verdi's *La traviata* (1853), where the dying Violetta sings long, wonderful melodies. According to Abbate and Parker (2015, p. 139), "music can seduce [us] into making the wrong emotional alliance". In other words, it is music that makes us believe what the libretto text as such does not. In these situations, the musical expansion of time through the use of arias can function as a comforting element, making the death less sudden and more tolerable.

b) Expanded temporality in ensembles

The second example in temporal incongruence category deals with expanded temporality in ensembles. Whereas the *parlante* dialogues represent temporal sameness in operatic ensembles, in the use of expanded time techniques what is being said, and the music intertwined with it, are temporally far distant from each other. Hence, there is an incongruence between the duration of sung utterances and the duration of the actual event or action as described in the ensemble's music. This often happens in ensembles in which the characters do not so much speak to each other as express the emotional substance of one particular moment, in musically expansive and expanded formulas (Dahlhaus, 2003, p. 109; Colas, 2014, p. 193). In ensembles the characters do not simply sing one after another – more often they sing at the same time. The effect is that time seems to expand greatly in these ensembles. Again, Mozart's ensembles in *Le Nozze di Figaro* are good examples; the finale of the last act of *Figaro* lasts several minutes, even though the time it takes to say the given words would in reality take only a few seconds. The same type of situation occurs in Ludvig van Beethoven's *Fidelio* (1805) quartet in the first act of the opera, and in numerous other operas. In these cases, music enables us understand and differentiate what is said; in spoken

theatre, if characters were to speak at the same time it would be incomprehensible, chaotic, and irrational.

c) The freezing moment in quadro di stupore

The third example in temporal incongruence category is related to the freezing moment in *quadro di stupore.* In addition to the use of expanded time in operatic narration, there are scenes in which time and the moment seem to freeze. Dahlhaus (2003, p. 111) reminds us that in 19th century Italian opera there are occasions called *quadro di stupore*, or *tableau vivant* as they have been called in French practice (Scott, sit. Colas, 2014, p. 192). In these scenes the emotions and reactions of the characters are exaggerated. They freeze and "stay still" even though in the real world these kinds of reactions would last only a few seconds. Perhaps the best-known example of a *quadro di stupore* occurs in Gaetano Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835). There is a moment (act 3, scene 2) where the guests celebrating the marriage suddenly quiet down after hearing the shocking news that Lucia has murdered her bridegroom. As Colas (2014, p. 193) has stated, the time devoted to this astonishment is out of all proportion to the time the actual event would have lasted. Or, put another way, the time being represented is incongruent with the time it takes to represent it.

3) Non-linear temporality

The third of our main categories concerns non-linear temporality. In general, it is noteworthy that Dahlhaus's (2003) analysis was based on musical recordings, notation, and obviously live opera performances that he had participated in. This situation differs dramatically from that of today, where researchers and teachers can also make an analysis based on videos and DVDs, as well as on various materials available on the internet (albeit with some important copyright restrictions). Moreover, as already pointed out in this study, opera composers during the 20th and 21st centuries have expanded, challenged, and even rejected the conventional temporality of drama opera, and this requires new approaches if we are to understand the artistic architecture of the evolving art form. As is widely known, after the terrible events of the Second World War there was a general desire for a total reassessment of human, cultural, and aesthetic values. In music, one of the results of this so-called *Stunde Null*, "the time without a past" (Taruskin, 2010, p. 18), was serialism, which naturally also influenced the understanding of temporality in music and, also, the narrativization of temporality in opera. In other words, the linear, causal temporality typical of classical-romantic opera (e.g. recitative-aria-unit, *noumenal* numbers) was no longer seen as the most preferred approach. Consequently, several different temporalities emerged and were utilized in new contemporary operas after the war. For this study, we have chosen four examples out of the many possibilities to illustrate this development: interrupted time; the absolute present; simultaneous time; and, aleatoric time. These examples of temporal narrativization are complex, and it is challenging, if not impossible, to illustrate them quickly

and in experiential ways without using visual recordings to support the typical listening approach of students in higher music education.

a) Interrupted time

The first example in the category of non-linear temporality is interrupted time. Two of the ways that contemporary opera manipulates time and violates the temporal chronology of the libretto's storyline are the so-called *flashback* (analepsis) and *flashforward* (prolepsis) – dramaturgical and narrative means of interrupting time typically used in cinema. The framed story (the now-moment) may take some minutes or even hours, but the flashbacks bring the past back into the real-time frame. Such flashbacks can be, for instance, dreams, hallucinations, or memories. In contemporary opera there are several examples in which those narrativization techniques have been used. For instance, in Thea Musgrave's *The Decision* (1965), John Brown is trapped in a mining accident, and in a flashback he recalls his love, Katie, who married another man. In *The Last Temptations* (1975), an opera by Joonas Kokkonen, the male lead, the religious leader Paavo Ruotsalainen, lies on his death-bed and sees his past as anxious flashbacks. In this opera, the flashbacks create their own narrative in parallel with the main storyline, and reflect the unstable mental state of the character. In *Aleksis Kivi* (1996), an opera by Einojuhani Rautavaara, there are also several flashbacks, combining the dramatic action, music, and text, all of which transport the audience into the lead's nightmarish dreams. In teaching, one can approach this temporal narrativization, for instance, by starting with the now-moment and continuing to analyse the subsequent flashbacks. In *The Last Temptations*, the distinction between the present and flashbacks into the past is highlighted through speaking and singing, with the latter used only in flashbacks. A video-recording would aid in understanding the dramaturgy here, which would also make the complex structure of the music more understandable from a holistic perspective. Naturally, an understanding of the temporal architecture of this opera requires more than listening to the style of only one scene.

b) The absolute present

Our second example in non-linear temporality category concerns the absolute present – when represented time expands to the level where the temporal horizon seems to disappear. This approach – typical of minimalist composers, such as Philip Glass and John Adams – creates "an environment in which time passes" while at the same time there is also a "feeling of timelessness" (Colas, 2014, p. 192). In this timelessness there are no references to the past or the future. In Glass's operas, not only have the monologues been expanded into a space for the characters' reflection, but also the whole musical universe has been targeted towards the "zero degree" (Richardson, 199, p. 26). For instance, in Glass's *Satyagraha* (1980) a feeling of timelessness has been created by a rejection of conventional narrative technique, with its typical climaxes, crises, and resolutions, and replacing it with static repetition. Glass's opera

is a good example of how merely listening to the music alone could perhaps support an understanding of the composer's musical style, but not of how the pluri-medial materials are meant to work together to create a specific kind of holistic experience.

Another example from Glass is his opera *Einstein on the beach* (1976). In contrast to the real Einsteinian understanding of what would be experienced when travelling at near light-speed, our subjective sense of duration has apparently accelerated, while "objective" time has continued normally. In form, *Einstein on the beach's* lack of narrative development makes its progression (unlike for instance that of *King Lear*, the play) eminently reversible; there is no graspable end-state to be reached. According to Susan Broadhurst (2012), in *Einstein on the beach*, music and staging, sound and vision, are interrelated to the point of exhibiting common features, creating a complex temporal landscape. This temporal architecture could be described as "planetary"; we are in a system where different sound worlds briefly align and then seamlessly move out of phase again.

c) Simultaneous time

The third example of our non-linear temporality category is simultaneous time. Among the operas of "the absolute present", in which past and future are not involved at all, there is at least one opera in which several time periods are represented at the same time – the opera thus narrating several simultaneous times. In his opera *Die Soldaten* (1965), Bernd Alois Zimmermann applies his own philosophy of time, manifested in what he calls simultaneity (Pollock, 2014). By this he refers to opera as an entity that occasionally includes all three temporal dimensions – past, present, and future – at the same time. This has been carried out in practice through the use of simultaneous stages or platforms, on which there are scenes which at times overlap one another or run simultaneously (for example, the second scene of act 2, or all of act 4). From the music's perspective, citations and allusions from earlier operas transport the past into the present. In *Die Soldaten*, there are several stories running and music being played simultaneously on different stages. The stage setting itself narrates simultaneous yet different time periods on equal footing with the music.

It is not only different times that can be portrayed as simultaneous; there are also operas in which characters from different time periods can be represented at the same time, and in the same scene and on the same stage. We will introduce two examples here. In the final scene of Rautavaara's opera *Aleksis Kivi*, the main character meets himself as a young man; in other words, the past existence of the character has been brought into the opera's now-moment. Olli Kortekangas uses this temporal structure in *Daddy's Girl* (2007). In this opera, the tragic fates of different generations intertwine with each other, starting with the events of the Second World War and ending with a moment in the future – in other words, an epilogue which temporally exceeds the now-moment of the opera. Thus, the time scale stretches over the opera's real time and the frame story. On the level of the characters, in the first act of *Daddy's Girl* the female lead, adult Anna, encounters her 12-year-old self.

This encounter is represented not only through the dramaturgy of the opera, but also in the music. The two Annas, the soprano and a child singer, sing a duet together lasting a few bars, and after that the story moves on to the 1950s. It is noteworthy that portraying this kind of temporal mixing in opera, where it is accomplished through singing, seems to be easier than doing so in spoken theatre, where it would likely be more chaotic.

d) Aleatoric time

Our fourth example in non-linear temporality category concerns aleatoric time. According to Novak (2015), "a different aesthetic logic underlying the constellation of elements is what separates opera and post-opera" (p. 26). At its extreme, it is possible that in a post-opera there may be no causality or linearity, and the traditional elements of an opera – drama, story, and plot – are not the primary focus. An example is *The Badminton Opera* (2005) by Max Savikangas. In this opera "nothing connects anything", meaning that all of its constituent elements – music, text, and the action on stage – are scattered and disconnected. Since there is no story, there cannot be any temporal narration in the traditional sense. In Savikangas's opera, seemingly random elements are taken from vastly different discourses and contexts. The elements on stage are simultaneous or layered, and have their own random logic and durations. The performance includes multi-mediality and improvisation. For instance, a game of badminton is played naked on stage, and the time it takes will be defined by the actual duration of the real game they are playing, unrestricted by any dramatic prescriptions. Consequently, merely listening to the music, or only following the musical score, cannot do justice to the artistic temporal architecture of the work, which is the product of not only the composer alone but rather the composer together with the artistic team.

Limitations

In this study we have introduced temporal narrativization as one possible way to approach opera history in a manner that differs from the typical canon-based approaches in music history pedagogy. Instead, we have suggested that music history teachers could try to identify the special characteristics that make an opera an opera: in other words, the "operatic of opera". One possibility, as we have shown here, could be to explore the architecture of temporal narrativization, and to use multiple media in illustrating their combined effects. Other options and approaches are also possible, such as analyzing the "voice", "identity", "class", "technology and machines", or "transcendence". We have chosen temporal narrativization as it seems to effectively break with the canon of teaching about the great opera composers and their musical styles, whilst simultaneously offering new perspectives to explore that are in touch with recent developments in the field.

However, this brief analysis has obvious limitations. We have explored some aspects of the *subject content of opera* – the question of what is taught, or rather how the subject content is approached – in music history courses in professional musicians' education in higher music education, in particular**.** Following Shulman's (1986) work on teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, we have made a conceptual distinction between two types of subject-matter, namely between specific professional knowledge – the subject content of music history as studied and learned in the disciplinary setting of musicology and the performing arts – and pedagogical content knowledge in the context of teaching practices in various settings. Although both are equally important, we have limited our study to the subject content, while agreeing with Shulman (1986) who argues that "mere content knowledge is likely to be as useless pedagogically as content-free skill" (p. 8). Hence, the study has not dealt with such pedagogical aspects as student-centredness in actual teaching situations.

Secondly, the narrativizations that we have illustrated cannot be found in *all* operas. Rather, they are embodied in different styles of opera, with certain aspects being more characteristic and common than the others. In this sense, we do not try to explain the entire operatic repertoire, but to highlight potential, fruitful analytical strategies that can be used in music history pedagogy. Moreover, we have not fully examined how time manipulation has developed in contemporary operatic practices; however, the examples provided here can be used as a basis for developing such an evolutionary approach to teaching the history of opera.

Conclusion

In this study, we have argued that exploration of temporal narrativization can provide an alternative pedagogical approach in higher music education for understanding the architecture of multi-media artistic material in opera – the "operatic of opera". We have argued that teachers of music and opera history could explore the potential of narrativization in order to hear and see the less evident, in other words that which needs a second hearing. Paradoxically, this means that opera needs to be listened to and "read" in a non-linear way, by approaching it from different angles and also by paying attention to small details that may at first seem insignificant. We have suggested that by exploring the architecture of temporal narrativization and by using multiple media to illustrate this narrativization in music history pedagogy, it is possible for students to acquire a deeper understanding of the "operatic of opera" and experience opera as a *Gesamtkunstwerk* during their professional studies. In practice, this likely requires new analytical skills and an expansion of the use of technology and media from the teacher; however, as our examples show, easily accessible options do exist, and it is possible to start from the most obvious. We have expanded the views of Dahlhaus and Abbate by emphasizing here that this suggested analytical strategy

in pedagogy needs to be experienced and exemplified through videos, and also to be complemented by other means, in order to engage students' processes of knowledge construction with genuine artistic experiences: the experiences that can be called the storyworld of opera.

Author biographies

Liisamaija Hautsalo is a Finnish musicologist specializing in opera. She is an Academy of Finland Research Fellow at the Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki, Finland. Her five-year project, *The Politics of Equality in Finnish Opera* (2017–2022), explores Finnish opera in the context of equality, the primary value of the Finnish welfare society, understanding opera as a political and societal phenomenon. Hautsalo received her PhD from the University of Helsinki in 2008 for a dissertation exploring Kaija Saariaho's (b. 1952) first opera, *L'amour de loin*, and she is a docent at the same university. In addition to her expertise in contemporary opera analysis, opera theory, opera history and musical semantics, she also continues her research on Kaija Saariaho's vocal music. Hautsalo is a responsible teacher for writing and opera analysis at the Sibelius Academy's International Opera Program.

Heidi Westerlund is a professor at the Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki, Finland. She has published widely in international journals and books and she is the editor-in-chief of the *Finnish Journal of Music Education*. Her research interests include higher arts education, music teacher education, collaborative learning, cultural diversity and democracy in music education. She is a co-editor of *Collaborative Learning in Higher Music Education* (Ashgate), *Music, Education, and Religion: Intersections and Entanglements* (Indiana University Press), *Visions for Intercultural Music Teacher Education* (Springer), *The Politics of Diversity in Music Education* (Springer) and *Expanding Professionalism in Music and Higher Music Education – A Changing Game* (Routledge). Westerlund has led several research projects since 2015.

References

Abbate, C. (1991). *Unsung voices: Opera and musical narrative in the nineteenth century*. Princeton University Press. https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400843831

Abbate, C. & Parker, R. (2015 [2012]). *History of opera*. Norton. https://doi.org/10.1111/hisn.12036_67

Alperson, P. (1980). "Musical Time" and music as an "Art of Time". *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 38*(4), 407–417. https://doi.org/10.2307/430322

Balensuela, C. M. (2010). A select bibliography of music history pedagogy since 2000 with a list of papers read at the 2009 Teaching Music History Day. *Journal of Music History Pedagogy, 1*(1), 61–66. https://www.ams-net.org/ojs/index.php/jmhp/issue/view/8

Ball, D. L., Thames, M. H. & Phelps, G. (2008). Content knowledge for teaching: What makes it special? *Journal of Teacher Education, 59*(5), 389–407. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487108324554

Broadhurst, S. (2012). '*Einstein on the beach*: A study in temporality'. https://doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2012.728438

Cannon, R. (2012). *Cambridge introductions to music: Opera.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511980558

Colas, D. (2014). Time expanded. In H. M. Greenwald (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of opera*, (pp. 191–195). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195335538.001.0001

Cuisick, S. G. & Hershberger, M. A. (convenors) (2018). Sexual violence in opera: Scholarship, pedagogy, and production as resistance. *Journal of the American Musicological Society, 7*(1), 213–253. https://doi.org/10.1525/jams.2018.71.1.213

Curtis, L. (2000). The sexual politics of teaching Mozart's "Don Giovanni". *NWSA Journal, 12*(1), 199–142. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4316712

Dahlhaus, C. (1983 [1967]). *Foundations of music history*. Robinson, J. B. (transl.). Cambridge University Press.

Dahlhaus, C. (1989). *Nineteenth-century music.* Robinson, J. B. (transl.). University of California Press.

Dahlhaus, C. (2003). The dramaturgy of Italian opera. In L. Bianconi & G. Pestelli (Eds.), *Opera in theory and practice, image and myth. The history of Italian opera*, Part II: Systems. Whittall, M. (transl.) (pp. 107–113). University of Chicago Press.

Davis, J. A. (Ed.). (2012). *The music history classroom*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315555393

Fludernik, M. (1996). *Towards a "natural" narratology*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203432501

Goehr, L. (2007). *The imaginary museum of musical works. An Essay in the philosophy of music*. 2nd revised edition. Oxford University Press.

Grey, T. S. (1992). Gesamtkunstwerk. In B. Millington (Ed.), *The Wagner compendium: A guide to Wagner's life and music* (pp. 232–233). Thames & Hudson.

Hartford, K. L. (2016). Beyond the trigger warning: Teaching operas that depict sexual violence. *The Journal of Music History Pedagogy*, *7*(1), 19–34. http://ams-net.org/ojs/index.php/jmhp/article/view/197

Hautsalo, L. (2008). *Kaukainen rakkaus*: Saavuttamattomuuden semantiikka Kaija Saariahon oopperassa. [*L'amour de loin* – semantics of the unattainable in Kaija Saariaho's opera].

Doctoral Dissertation. University of Helsinki. Helsinki University Press. http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-10-4542-4

Johnson, V., Fulcher, J. & Ertman, T. (Eds.), (2007). *Opera and society in Italy and France from Monteverdi to Bourdieu*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511481734

Kramer, J. D. (1988). *The time of music: New meanings, new temporalities, new listening strategies*. Schirmer Books.

Levin, D. S. (2007). *Unsettling opera: Staging Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, and Zemlinsky*. University of Chicago Press.

Locke, R. P. (1991). Constructing the oriental 'other': Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila*. *Cambridge Opera Journal*, *3*(3), 261–302. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954586700003530

Maiello, J. V. (2013). Towards a praxial philosophy of music history pedagogy. *The Journal of Music History Pedagogy, 4*(1), 71–108. https://www.ams-net.org/ojs/index.php/jmhp/article/view/85

McClary, S. (1991). *Feminine endings: Music, gender and sexuality*. University of Minnesota Press.

Natvig, M. (2012). Classroom activities. In J. A. Davis (Ed.), *The music history classroom* (pp. 15–30). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315555393

Novak, J. (2015). *Post-opera: Reinventing the voice-body*. Ashgate. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315601717

Pollock, E. R. (2014). To do justice to opera's 'monstrosity': Bernd Alois Zimmermann's *Die Soldaten*. *The Opera Quarterly, 30*(1), 69–92. https://doi.org/10.1093/oq/kbu012

Richardson, J. (1999). *Singing archaeology: Philip Glass's Akhnaten.* Wesleyan University Press.

Ryan, M-L. (2009). Narration in various media. In P. Hühn, J. Pier, W. Schmid & J. Schönert (Eds.), *Handbook of narratology* (pp. 263–279). Walter de Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110217445

Scott, D. B. (Ed.). (2000). *Music, culture, and society: A reader.* Oxford University Press.

Shulman, L. S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher, 15*(2), 4–14. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X015002004

Smith, P. S. (2009). Exploring the relationship between teacher content knowledge and student learning. *Proceedings of the NARST 2009 Annual Meeting* (2009): 5. http://www.horizon-research.com/atlast/uploads/Papers%20and%20Presentations/P-1444-687%20PS%20Smith%20paper.pdf

Taruskin, R. (2010). *Music in the late twentieth century*. Oxford University Press.

Till, N. (Ed.). (2012). *The Cambridge companion to opera studies.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CCO9781139024976

Unkari-Virtanen, L. (2009). *Moniääninen musiikinhistoria. Heuristinen tutkimus musiikinhistorian opiskelusta ja opettamisesta* [Music History as a Polyphony: A Heuristic Study of Learning and Teaching Music History]. Doctoral dissertation. Sibelius Academy. Studia Musica 39. Sibelius Academy. http://hdl.handle.net/10138/235004

Wolf, W. (2005). "Intermediality"; "Music and narrative;" and "Pictorial narrativity". In D. Herman et al. (Eds.), *The Routledge encyclopedia of narrative theory* (pp. 252–56, 324–29, and 431–35). Routledge.

Woods, G. (2015, November 06). Hamlet: The play within the play. Retrieved March 04, 2021, from https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/hamlet-the-play-within-the-play