UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Conclusion

My interest in musicals was stirred during my childhood years, when I yearned to participate in visiting musical shows to my hometown, Port Elizabeth. I later developed a passion for Jungian psychology and symbolism. It occurred to me that certain musicals, frequently written in musical language of the familiar past, contained more than mere entertainment value and played a more important societal role than that of escapism.

While writing the script, lyrics and music of my own musical, *The Rainbow's Child,* and staging it at the National School of the Arts in 2001, I became increasingly aware of the relevance of the symbolic Hero theme to growing youngsters. Its prevalence in films and modern literature alerted me to the ongoing fascination of this topic, particularly to Western audiences and readers, although its roots in mythic tales are universal.

The connections between music and language were a point of departure for this study.
I began to look for research into the way "meaning" is conveyed in musical discourse. This led me to several writings which approached music via intensive, at times note-by-note analyses, including the semiotic approach. Looking at music this close up did not seem to me to reveal successfully how meaning might be conveyed in musical discourse, any more than examining electrons under an electron microscope might reveal the meaning of life.
I found the infinitely detailed minutiae of these analytical approaches in many cases rarified, exclusively academic and even obstructive to the hermeneutic insights for which I had been hoping.

Taking a step back, so to speak, I decided to analyse the texts of the musical libretti selected according to their Hero themes, and identify the main symbolic trends within these. There seemed to me a connection between the symbolic, rather than linguistic, "grammar" of fantasy tales, and the constructions of musical "grammar" of the familiar past, particularly that of the period in Western musical thought predominantly embracing the tonal system and its related features, i.e. accessible and easily identifiable melodic phrases, regular repetitive rhythms, and the tonal palette of the symphonic orchestra and popular "band" instruments.

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

I was convinced that the composers of certain musicals, in conveying the texts, might reflect the symbolic trends and entities within the texts via the use of specific compositional patternings, devices, formal/ harmonic/ melodic and/or timbral resources, even without being consciously aware that they were necessarily performing this process. Moreover, in so doing they might even augment the symbolic impact of the stories they convey, thanks to the (still) mysteriously communicative power of music. This conviction initiated my search for evidence of archetypal and other symbolic entities/trends expressed in musical discourse in the musicals discussed within this thesis.

Due to the nature of psychic structures, processes and relationships between symbolic elements revealed in the libretti, the examination of the scores has taken a macrocosmic overview of each musical. There is a flow and continuity in music which is not easily expressed in isolated bars and chords, or small rhythmic fragments. A sense of context and belonging to the whole both musically and theatrically, and a sense of symbolic identity and cohesion, are better conveyed in more comprehensive, complex musical sections of the dramatic-musical works, even if these are only several bars in length. Musical notation reveals at a glance a multitude of expressive potentials which would take text reams to describe. Homing in on specific smaller "particles" of musical organisation has occurred from time to time for the purpose of clarification or attention to symbolic detail within the drama unfolding, but it has been beyond the capacity of this thesis to elaborate upon each one of these potentials exhaustively, or to provide a detailed analysis of every song item, every detail of every symbol in each musical and how it is reflected in the musical discourse.

Symbols are by nature pictorial, with narrative if not visual properties. Examples of symbolic trends or entities expressed in musical discourse are descriptive and support the pictorial, which conveys the hero theme and "journey" processes. It is as if music has "no choice" but to mirror the contours of the symbolic grammar, albeit in the unique compositional style of each composer. The storytelling aspects of the musicals themselves lead to a descriptive rather than abstract style of composition, one which could be expected in programme music. Invested with detail as it is, the narrative style has the breadth to cover the territory of the hero tales expressed in the libretti.

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Just as the content of a symbol can never be expressed in purely rational terms and the unconscious does not offer up its contents to the conscious mind to order, so the irrational does not submit entirely to rational analysis. "Meaning" does not necessarily reveal itself readily, just because it is hunted for. Neither does a list of Jungian archetypal properties and processes provide an instant key to recognising the same as they are embedded in the libretti and characters of the stage musicals, nor how they are expressed in musical discourse.

However, it was first essential to determine the factors most valuable as tools in the analysis by the study of several books explaining Jungian archetypal psychology, the writings of Campbell, Lévi-Strauss and others concerning the mythic realm, and the workings of the psyche and symbols by Slüsser. Examination of these factors has yielded detailed insights into the archetypal forces at work within the human psyche, within the stories expressing the relevance of these forces, and in turn within the music conveying the stories and their intricate subtexts to their audiences.

Encountering and observing the archetypal forces at work in everyday existence, and participating in the compositional process of a hero theme musical, ultimately provided the key to the analysis of the hero theme elements as presented within the stories, the scores and their unique compositional grammars. The study of practical music involves an encounter between score and musician which goes far beyond the purely academic and rational. To approach analysing music featuring archetypal entities is to add another dimension to the encountering process. The encounter enlarges us as musicians and as human beings, who are in turn part of a larger human societal context. The insight into the relevance of the forces within the music communicating the hero themes is the result of this encounter, against the background of data generated by specialist writers. The selected libretti and scores have been evaluated as continuous, integrated symbolic entities with identifiable symbolic landmarks and contours. The compositional trends within each work which coincide with and support these symbolic factors have been observed. The way in which the symbolic grammar has been mirrored by each composer in musical discourse has made possible certain insights into the societal perspectives of the era in which the musicals were written.

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

The musicals themselves, utilising musical features derived from musics of the past, acquaint us with that past, in the historical present of the era in which they were written. They are musical anachronisms. Not even *JC Superstar* can escape this designation, for all the composer's rock, pop and minimalistic references, which also make it a product of its own era. Nevertheless, they are part of an ongoing quest for the meaning of existence as expressed by the ancient Greeks such as Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripedes in their mythic dramas, in which music played a functional role. Beyond the use of popular and familiar musical parameters utilised by the composers is a deeper sense of purpose.

I. Kässler, in an essay entitled "Apollo and Dionysus: Music Theory and the Western Tradition of Epistemology" (Strainchamps 1984:457), states that "the beginnings of music theory are to be found deep in Western mythology, where an antithesis is established between order and disorder". In order to explore the antithesis between order and disorder, integration and disintegration, meaning and nihilism, and find resolutions to contradictions inherent to dualisms, composers of the 1960s and '70s writing these musicals selected a musical grammar and ethos well-suited to examining ancient mythic dilemmas. Their compositional grammar reflects the influence of previous eras, but the appropriateness of this language to wrestling with the psychic issues so specific to the hero theme is clearly evident. Functional tonality within regular rhythmic phrase structures addresses the tensions and resolutions within the symbolic grammar of this mythic theme on an ongoing basis.

Alan Thompson states:

> in contemporary composition, the concept of myth has become less important as a concrete element, and has largely been replaced by a more abstract form of imagery. Although the theories and music of the late Romantic era exercised a huge influence on future generations, and still occupy positions of importance in modern cultures, few attempts were made to continue in the same spirit. It has yet to be seen whether or not art will again use myth in synthesis with itself to create a unitary aesthetic (1993:16).

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Thompson also says that "the latter half of the 20th century has seen the concept of myth become less important in art" (1993:15). One wonders whether Jung would accede to this statement. Perhaps closer to the truth would be to say "less important in art *music*". "It is largely due to one of the great masters of contemporary music, Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992) that myth in music has survived at all". (1993:15).

If musicals are to be excluded from the parameters of contemporary composition *en masse*, then these statements may be true. But they must be re-considered in the light of evidence if certain musicals in our own or a past era examine and reflect issues relevant to the human condition via mythic themes, and utilise musical grammar appropriate to illuminating their symbolic content, be this anachronistic or not. Mythic themes may have been less important to art music composers of the second half of the 20th century, but they were important enough to the general public of the time for composers to create at least six musicals with one specific mythic theme, within the space of twelve years. While these musicals are still being performed regularly one must conclude that their relevance to society is at least as great as that of art music compositions of the same era, many of which have passed into obscurity by comparison.

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
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