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### Title

Reconfiguring Myth and Narrative in Contemporary Opera: Osvaldo Golijov, Kaija Saariaho, John Adams, Tan Dun. By Yayoi Uno Everett

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The final essay, by Robin Rausch (portions of which were already published in 2006), does not provide much in-depth content but has a heart. The star of the essay is Marian MacDowell. Indeed, the book's abrupt ending with an essay centred on the MacDowell Colony may leave readers with the questionable conclusion that this is where the composer's main legacy lies.

This project was born during the honouring of the composer's 150th birthday at the MacDowell Festival and Symposium at Elizabethtown College in 2010. Volumes consisting of independent essays, often following a conference, can resist cohesion and an overriding argument. In this book, all contributors unite in their unquestioning commendation of MacDowell. However, the large part of this admiration is directed at the person and his life, not the music. Further, the frequent mention of 'mights', 'it is probables' and 'we do not know ifs' sometimes relies on hypothesizing, hinting at a certain anxiety. In all, the music is unable to have the final word in the efforts (most notably by the editor) to do justice to the composer's lifework. Nevertheless, MacDowell's is a complex story, because words, such as the disputes at Columbia University, did contribute to his personal tragedy. Perhaps part of Bomberger's frustration stems from the lamentable fact that the world will never be able to hear the composer's full artistic potential.

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*Reconfiguring Myth and Narrative in Contemporary Opera: Osvaldo Golijov, Kaija Saariaho, John Adams, Tan Dun.* By Yayoi Uno Everett. Pp. xviii + 244. Musical Meaning and Interpretation. (Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2015, £32. ISBN 978-0-253-01799-4.)

Yayoi Uno Everett's new book surely ranks as one of the most ambitious attempts yet to analyse opera in what she defines as a multi-modal dimension: one that not only places the structure of the music and libretto in counterpoint, but which accounts for a work's history, intent, alternative stagings, and reception, including the work as broadcast or filmed in high definition. A central tenet of this approach is the viewer's or interpreter's phenomenal experience, for '[m]ultimodal discourse acknowledges

one's embodied experience of attending to operatic production... as a highly mediated and situated cultural practice' (p. 40).

The intense scrutiny afforded to new additions to the operatic canon that attempt to deal with charged political, personal, and historical issues—as do the four works under review—renders Everett's achievement that much more remarkable. On the surface, one might link the historical tragedy of the four figures that dominate Osvaldo Golijov's *Ainadamar* (2003) with that of the four characters that trace a fictional wartime tragedy in Kaija Saariaho's *Adriana Mater* (2006). Yet the two works are very different not least in their approach to matters of representation and dramaturgy. The poeticized history of the John Adams's post-minimalism (or 'maximal minimalism', p. 135) of *Doctor Atomic* (2006), or the cultural hybridity and historical revisionism of Tan Dun's *The First Emperor* (2006–7) approach historical topics with the veneer of grand opera. But all four works explore human conflicts that arise from war, and all four—in Everett's view—occupy a space in which narratives of the personal and the historical are reconfigured as myths for the modern age.

Everett draws from an extensive array of music theoretical and critical methodologies, folded into an overriding semiological approach that unites various strands of semiotic discourse. She describes her analytic methods clearly and shows each theory's dynamic connection to the work under review. Although Everett draws on individual sources to fit the unique circumstances of each opera, her primary methodologies are outlined in the first chapter. As a music theorist, she begins with a work's score and libretto, followed by critical commentary, previews, and live attendance to study a director's interpretative aims and the experience of their *mise en scène*. Everett contrasts *multimodality* with *multimedia* approaches—the latter represent but one tool in her arsenal, notably informed by Nicholas Cook's *Analysing Musical Multimedia* (Oxford, 1998). Following Lars Elleström (*Media Borders, Multimodality, and Intermediality* (New York, 2010)), she sees research in neuroscience on the interaction of sensory modalities compatible with a semiotic approach; material, sensorial, and spatiotemporal concerns are part of a larger semiotic field, a view that complements earlier work on opera and narrative by Linda and Michael Hutcheon and Carolyn Abbate.

Mythic narratives become modern when we admit that they can express different and changing aesthetic ideals, as demonstrated by

Robert Ellwood and others (Ellwood, *Myth: Key Concepts in Religion* (New York, 2008)). Everett uses Roland Barthes's idea of myth as a 'double articulation' that oscillates between meaning and form, and Paul Ricoeur's views on the chronological dimension of temporality in narrative to set up the two strategies by which new aesthetic approaches complicate mythic narratives. In the first, historical subjects become textualized representations, while the second allows anachronistic references to older myths to infiltrate a primary historical and cultural context, to create a 'second order' semiological text.

The Greimassian square, Jakob Lizzka's notions of sign-referent transvaluation, and the work of Byron Almèn on musical narrative ground many of Everett's analyses, while the taxonomy of Robert Hatten proves useful in distinguishing pre-compositional agents from those experienced by listeners in performance. Further distinctions among seme, motive, and topic, developed in the work of Raymond Monelle, Eero Tarasti, and Márta Grabócz, operate on different levels of a work and performance, and may be fused into tropes. The ironic juxtaposition of often conflicting signs and tropes generates a 'tropological' narrative, which supports consideration of larger questions and allegorical meanings, shifting a local, particularized narrative into the timeless realm of myth (p. 13).

Everett also gives brief summaries of psychoanalytic approaches to opera, with a structuralist summary of the work of Jacques Lacan that draws from somewhat conflicting secondary sources. Everett refers to three objects—*objet* [sic] *petit a*,  $S(\mathbf{A})$  and  $\Phi$ —that connect the order of the Imaginary, Real, and Symbolic (p. 31); object *a* and  $S(\mathbf{A})$  are generally portrayed as two facets of the object, while  $\Phi$  indicates the phallic function, and is therefore not negativizable (see Bruce Fink, *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance* (Princeton, 1995), 90, 148, 173, and 189 n. 7). Yet her summary of Lacan's Four Discourses offers an obvious parallel to earlier narrative models (pp. 32–3). Further intertextual approaches are drawn into a sevenfold analytic orientation driven by the assumption that 'contemporary operas mythologize historical subjects' through textualized representation and transhistoricism, as illustrated by a coordinated multimodal narrative (p. 39). Perhaps the most laudable aspect of *Reconfiguring Myth* may be Everett's subtle adjustments to this model in subsequent chapters, driven by each work's unique sources, aesthetic goals, production history, and reception.

Not all multimodal topics apply to all four operas. Cross-cultural musical and thematic elements, for instance, characterize *Ainadamar* and *The First Emperor*. The former combines elements of Andalusian culture—flamenco singing *cante jondo* ('deep song'), Hijaz and Bayati scales—with rumba, metadiegetic music, and an electronic soundscape that includes *objets trouvés*. But Everett finds the most significant flamenco Andalusian reference to be the concept of *duende*, a kind of spirit guide, one that elevates *Ainadamar's* recursive plot to the level of myth. By contrast, the extensive cross-cultural elements that mark Tan Dun's *The First Emperor* are discussed in both general and specific contexts. A '1+1=1' concept of fusing Western and Eastern traits in *Emperor* is contrasted with Tan's earlier postmodern practice, wherein a panoply of different musical styles appeared as equal participants (as in *Marco Polo*, 1996). The merger of a Pucciniesque approach to grand opera with distinct elements of both Peking opera and the regional *qingqiang* style mark significant characters, arias, and moments of dramatic irony in the opera's narrative.

*Ainadamar* and *The First Emperor* are also the two operas that, after their respective premieres, underwent formal, dramatic, and musical revisions that substantially altered their narrative structure. The director Peter Sellars, for instance, oversaw a rewrite of *Ainadamar's* libretto and score, and added a fourth character—Nuria, the Catalan actress Margarita Xirgu's protégé—to shift the semiotic balance of the underlying structure. Tan's revisions to *The First Emperor*, by contrast, involved musical revisions which, in Everett's view, smoothed out the rough edges and rendered the opera's vocal parts more Pucciniesque, but curtailed the instrumental interludes that were a significant aspect of Tan's style.

Everett compares the Symbolist nature of *Adriana Mater*—which takes place in a non-specific war zone—to Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. But the remaining operas reflect historical figures and events whose depiction represents specific compromises with both recorded history and earlier portrayals. *Ainadamar's* García Lorca was probably not the political martyr celebrated in Golijov's narrative, but Xirgu did keep his memory alive in Uruguay, performing García Lorca's historical *Mariana Pineda* (1927) until her death in 1969. The story of Robert Oppenheimer's construction—and subsequent renunciation—of the atomic bomb was shaped by the librettist Sellars's incorporation of government documents, poetry, a

Tewa lullaby, and the Bhagavad Gita, texts which shift the focus from the personal to the political and the cosmic during the course of *Doctor Atomic*. Everett's outline of *The First Emperor's* history goes further back and further forward to centre its subject—China's first emperor Qin Shi Huang—as both a historical figure and the mythologized subject of recent films by Zhang Yimou (*Hero*, 2002) and *The Emperor's Shadow* (Qin Song, 1996). (Zhang directed the opera's first production, to a libretto written by Tan and Han Jin modelled on the narrative in *Shadow*.)

Topics discussed in great depth in all four operas include the effects of individual collaborators on the shape of the final work, the plot's semiotic structure, psychoanalytic subtexts, the role of musical elements (semes, leitmotifs, proto-topic, topic, harmonic progressions, and musical quotations), and the articulation of transvaluative moments. Such transvaluative moments often mark the transition of a historical or personal narrative to a mythic register; they also mark the moment in each chapter where Everett's keen observations snap into place, to offer the reader a synoptic, bird's-eye view of the opera's aesthetic goals and social resonance. Hence one of the most satisfying aspects of *Reconfiguring Myth* is Everett's sensitive attention to the way different productions articulate an opera as historical drama, allegory, and myth; such case studies set a new standard in our understanding of contemporary opera as not only a multi-dimensional, but also a constantly changing theatrical experience.

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*Music Data Analysis: Foundations and Applications.*

Ed. by Claus Weihs, Dieter Jannach, Igor Vatolkin, and Guenter Rudolph. Pp. 694. (CRC Press, New York, 2016; £46.99. ISBN 9-781-31-537099-6.)

In musicology, as in many other humanities disciplines, the turn to embrace digital and computational methods for inquiry has been too slow for some and not slow enough for others. One of the primary impediments appears to be an issue of translation between each field's respective set of jargon and modes of thinking. The literature attempting to facilitate such translation is a nascent body: Tim Crawford and Lorna Gibson's *Modern Methods for Music-*

*ology: Prospects, Proposals, and Realities* (Farnham, 2009) is perhaps the most prominent attempt to bring computer and data scientists into fuller conversation with musicologists. Inasmuch as that text proffers a broad overview of various kinds of projects, Claus Weihs, Dietmar Jannach, Igor Vatolkin, and Guenter Rudolph provide a comparatively narrow survey of computational methods for musicology focused on sound.

The authors state that the book 'provides the reader with the background knowledge required... in terms of acoustics, music theory, signal processing, statistics, and machine learning' (p. 1) The target audience is therefore ambitiously heterogeneous, including data and computer scientists, statisticians, musicologists (in the broadest terms), and engineers. The text is exhaustive and comprehensive, consisting of four main sections—Music and Audio, Methods, Applications, Implementation—and twenty-seven chapters. The organization of the sections and the chapters they contain is foundational and progressive. The first section of the book, Music and Audio, serves to create a common ground for musicians and data scientists by linking musical phenomena and terminology to the underlying physics, before introducing digital signal processing, feature identification and extraction, digital representation, and semantic linkage. This section alone could merit an introductory course in both music and computer science, as physics is interweaved to provide more advanced, in-depth content.

The second section, Methods, discusses means of both supervised (human-driven) and unsupervised (machine-automated) approaches to analysing audio signals. This is in addition to digitally driven tasks such as Evaluation (of models for classifying genre automatically), Feature Processing (refining the aspect of audio one wishes to examine), and (automated) Feature Selection. Irrespective of the jargon-laden descriptions of analytical modes in any discipline, the authors of the chapter on Evaluation (Vatolkin and Weihs) highlight a fundamental issue for all research, echoing an intriguing mix of Roland Barthes's 'photographic paradox' and Peircean semiotics. 'Most models are not an exact image of reality. Often, models only give rough ideas of real relationships. Therefore, models have to be evaluated whether their image if reality is acceptable... What are, however, the properties a model should have to be acceptable?' (p. 329) Finding such an acknowledgement 'reinforces what this text suggests and at points states, as well as what is necessarily central to any