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## Contemporary ties: wedding 20th-century musical theatre to opera using the same source material

Rose M. Dino  
*University of Iowa*

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CONTEMPORARY TIES: WEDDING 20<sup>TH</sup>-CENTURY MUSICAL THEATRE TO OPERA  
USING THE SAME SOURCE MATERIAL

by

Rose M. Dino

An essay submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts  
degree in Music in the  
Graduate College of  
The University of Iowa

May 2019

Essay Supervisors: Associate Professor Susan Sondrol Jones  
Professor John Muriello

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## PUBLIC ABSTRACT

An analysis of how opera and musical theatre composers and librettists depict a storyline and character provides great insight into the social, genre, and cultural-specific information necessary to make productions relevant to their audiences. Frequently, the same primary source is set by opera and musical theatre composers alike. This essay fills the gap regarding how opera and musical theatre interpret the same primary source and each show's relationship to its counterpart, while providing a brief overview of the cultural, musical, and dramatic elements as set by the librettists and composers.

Through the analysis of John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* and Kurt Weill's *The Threepenny Opera*, Gioachino Rossini's *La Cenerentola* and Rodgers and Hammerstein II's *Cinderella*, and Giacomo Puccini's *La bohème* and Jonathan Larson's *Rent*, this document explores how these operas and musicals interpret their sources. The core elements, such as plot, character, and ideals are present within the operas and analogous musical theatre shows, even though character relationships, actual events, and songs may change. Adapting for classical and musical theatre realms often leads to differences in the interpretation due to the expectations of the genre, in addition to, the cultural expectations of the composers' and librettists' contemporary audiences.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In the arts, it is common for genres, such as opera and musical theatre, to interpret the same primary source. There is, however, a noticeable lack of in-depth scholarly work exploring the various ways different genres approach the same source. Through the analysis of John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* and Kurt Weill's *The Threepenny Opera*, Gioachino Rossini's *La Cenerentola* and Rodgers and Hammerstein II's *Cinderella*, and Giacomo Puccini's *La bohème* and Jonathan Larson's *Rent*, this document will explore how specific operas and musicals interpret the same primary source.

John Gay used popular song and ballad tunes in *The Beggar's Opera* that pulled from Thomas D'Urfey's *Wit and Mirth or Pills to Purge Melancholy*, contemporary composers, and folksongs from England, Scotland, and Ireland. He also used his current government, political figures, and infamous people as inspiration. Based on *The Beggar's Opera*, Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht, along with Elisabeth Hauptmann who translated Gay's text into German and co-authored *The Threepenny Opera*, retold the story through the lens of the cultural and political climate of Germany in 1928.

*Cendrillon* by Charles Perrault was the inspiration for Gioachino Rossini's *La Cenerentola* and Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II's version of *Cinderella*. Published in *Histoires ou Contes du Temps passé: Les Contes de ma Mère L'Oye*, *Cendrillon* was Perrault's embellishment of an age-old tale.

Giacomo Puccini's retelling of Henri Murger's *Scènes de la vie de Bohème* primarily focuses on the relationship between Mimì and Rodolfo while recontextualizing the plot in 1830s Paris. *Rent* is Jonathan Larson's iteration of Puccini's *La bohème* as a contemporary retelling of the opera based on his own life experiences in New York City in the 1990s.

It is important to look at the way each genre or art form approaches its source anytime there are multiple interpretations. Examining the similarities and differences among genres gives artists (e.g., directors, performers, librettists, composers, students, etc.) crucial information about interpretation, setting, and performance elements. The following analysis will provide a template for others who may want to expand upon this research or explore other works with shared source material (e.g., ballets, symphonies, art song, plays, etc.).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The development of opera and musical theatre in the United States went through many changes as cultural shifts demanded better access and greater relevance. According to Matthew Friedman, “American musical theatre has enjoyed a lengthy, continuous and above all native evolution, beginning with the ballad operas of the Colonies before the American Revolution... this process occurred principally on Broadway, culminating in a clearly defined art form in the 1940s.”<sup>1</sup> Laura Ann Storm adds that, “Many works of the giants in the world of literature have provided ideas for some of the best-known and loved operas of the current day.”<sup>2</sup> A search of the list of works composed since 2000 shows that even if not interpreted into opera and musical theatre, the trend of using shared primary source material for various productions continues. Previous studies do not intertwine cultural, musical, and dramatic elements of a two-genre interpretation of a primary source. This essay fills the gap of how opera and musical theatre interpret a primary source and their relationship to each other while providing a brief overview of the cultural, musical, and dramatic elements as set by the librettists and composers.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Friedman, “Transatlantic: A Genealogy of Modern American Musical Theatre from *Jonny Spielt Auf* to *West Side Story*” (Master’s Thesis, Concordia University, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Laura Ann Storm, “*The Great Gatsby*: From Novel into Opera” (DMA Document, Florida State University, 2004).

## Literature Review

### Articles and Internet Resources

While several books deal with the development of opera and musical theatre separately, such as *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, *Historical Dictionary of the Broadway Musical*, and *Broadway: The American Musical*, there are virtually no published resources that discuss staged works and their relationship to each other and their primary sources. William Bolcom's article "Parallel Universes" is invaluable as a resource because it is written from the perspective of a composer who has written in both genres. His discussion about the struggles and developments of opera in the United States and musical theatre in the late 20th century is informative and sheds light on the challenges of writing for each genre. In an attempt to relate opera and musical theatre, Raymond Knapp and Sam Baltimore have reviewed four Sondheim musicals in "Sondheim's Almost-Operas" through an operatic lens. Through this examination, they highlight the operatic elements present in *A Little Night Music*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Passion*, and *Into the Woods*.<sup>3</sup> These discussions provide insight but do very little to compare operas and musicals that share a source, and do not provide a look at musical theatre through its own lens.

The Musical Theatre Appreciation Society is an online resource that provides perfunctory comparisons of shows like *Rent* and *La bohème*, but sites like this provide little more than basic character comparisons, plot similarities, and differences in time periods.<sup>4</sup> Tim Cordell also made a brief comparison using music videos developed for students in a music theory class at Edinboro University in PA. Although this is the beginning of a discussion revolving around the

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<sup>3</sup> Raymond Knapp and Sam Baltimore, "Sondheim's Almost-Operas," *The Sondheim Review* 21, no. 3 (Summer 2015): 10-11.

<sup>4</sup> Lauryn Clarke, "Rent VS La Bohème – What's the Difference?" posted June 11, 2017, <https://mtasonline.com/2017/06/11/rent-vs-la-boheme-whats-the-difference/>, accessed April 9, 2018.

topic under discussion, much remains to be explored regarding the relationships between the productions.

### **Dissertations and Theses**

The largest body of literature that investigates the relationship between staged works and their primary sources, or multiple interpretations of a primary source, exists in doctoral essays and master's theses. As musical theatre continues to be more accepted in the world of higher education and as proponents of both genres increase, resources beyond dissertations and theses will likely begin to appear. Each of the following sources represents a portion of what will be covered in this essay or has established a precedent for comparing the two genres and cultural influences.

The following academic works focus on the analysis of musical or dramatic aspects of opera or musical theatre without comparing multiple interpretations of one source. While Brian Hoffman analyzes scores of songs from 1950-2000 for his dissertation, "Elements of the Musical Theater Style: 1950-2000,"<sup>5</sup> his analyses are predominantly harmonic and focus on individual songs instead of complete works. Joseph Rotondi's analysis in his dissertation, "Literary and Musical Aspects of Roman Opera, 1600 – 1650," uses primary source and musical aspects of Roman Opera and examines the political and social atmosphere during the time of composition of the works.<sup>6</sup> He also analyzed the structural designs of the operas, aspects of solo voice and ensemble, and use of the orchestra.<sup>7</sup> In his thesis, "A Literary Approach to Musical Theater,"

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<sup>5</sup> Brian D. Hoffman, "Elements of the Musical Theater Style: 1950-2000" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Cincinnati, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Emilio Rotondi, "Literary and Musical Aspects of Roman Opera, 1600 – 1650" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1959).

<sup>7</sup> For another resource on approaching the adaptation of a primary work, see Galina Pastur's "Terrible Screeching: Adaptations of Pushkin's *Queen of Spades* in Theater, Opera and Film"

Douglas Reside provides a good resource for defining musical theatre, in addition to addressing the lack of tools to properly assess musical theatre. By comparing operetta and musical theatre, he comments on the divide between high culture and musical theatre, yet he steers clear of opera and does not relate shows that share a primary source.<sup>8</sup> Edward Latham sets forth a linear-dramatic approach to analyzing 20<sup>th</sup>-century opera in his dissertation, “Linear-Dramatic Analysis: An Analytical Approach to Twentieth-Century Opera,” which influenced the methodology used in this study.<sup>9</sup> His dissertation lays out some of the issues faced when only using the analytical practices of Stanislavsky (dramatic) or Schenker (linear) alone. His study demonstrates how a linear-dramatic approach can impact the performance of the roles selected for study, since many opera analyses tend to focus on the music or poetry and ignore the blocking and acting elements within the libretto.

The following dissertations and theses study cultural and social exploration as it relates to staged works at length, but these focus on one genre or are not show-specific. Leah Branstetter discusses the development of and cultural influences on opera in the United States, and highlights “popera,” in “Angels and Arctic Monkeys: A Study of Pop-Opera Crossover.”<sup>10</sup> Popera “is given a broad definition that encompasses both opera that exists outside the traditional

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(Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Southern California, 2001). Pastur’s dissertation discusses adaptations of Pushkin’s *Queen of Spades*.

<sup>8</sup> Douglas L. Reside, “A Literary Approach to Musical Theater” (Master’s Thesis, Truman State University, 2003).

<sup>9</sup> For more on a linear-dramatic approach, see Edward David Latham, “Linear-Dramatic Analysis: An Analytical Approach to Twentieth-Century Opera” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 2000).

<sup>10</sup> Leah Tallen Branstetter, “Angels and Arctic Monkeys: A Study of Pop-Opera Crossover” (Master’s Thesis, University of Cincinnati, 2009).

confines of the opera house as well as a hybrid musical genre that blends elements of operatic and pop styles.”<sup>11</sup>

Christopher Lynch documents “the intellectual, cultural, and commercial factors” that led to the rise of the “Broadway opera” and its influence on opera from the United States.<sup>12</sup> His dissertation, “Opera and Broadway: The Debate over the Essence of Opera in New York City, 1900 – 1960,” centers on the relationship of opera to musical theatre and the impact this relationship had on Broadway and U.S. opera. However, it does not focus on specific storylines that exist within the realm of each genre.

The methodologies used in the following documents to analyze the transformation of a literary work into a staged production provide a basis for the development of the methodology used in this essay. Yu-Chan Hu offers an analysis of three musicals and includes “the history of the source of the book, the influence of social and cultural backgrounds on the musical, and the influence of the musical on society and culture” in “Transformation of The Musical: The Hybridization of Tradition and Contemporary.”<sup>13</sup> Each transformation includes a table of comparisons in addition to prose analysis of the alterations. By exploring two libretti in her DMA project, “Prima le Parole: A Look at the Methodologies Involved in Creating Effective Opera Libretti,” Juliette Singler formulates a methodology to analyze the collaborative process of creating a libretto. She addresses questions regarding the relationship between music and drama in operatic works and how contemporary trends in libretti writing impacted librettists and

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., Abstract.

<sup>12</sup> Christopher Lynch, “Opera and Broadway: The Debate over the Essence of Opera in New York City, 1900 – 1960” (DMA Document, University of Buffalo, State University of New York, 2013).

<sup>13</sup> Yu-Chan Hu, “Transformation of The Musical: The Hybridization of Tradition and - Contemporary” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2014).

composers.<sup>14</sup> Laura Storm analyzes John Harbison’s opera, *The Great Gatsby*, an interpretation of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s novel by the same name in her DMA treatise, “*The Great Gatsby: From Novel into Opera*.” She highlights the fact that “throughout the history of opera, works of literature have provided inspiration for opera composers.”<sup>15</sup> She focuses on the genesis of the opera, evolution of the libretto, structure, major themes, characters, and tone of the opera and novel. Storm also adds that “The novel provides the composer/librettist with complex, larger-than-life characters for operatic treatment, a mythic story of love and death, and a distinctive musical era from which to draw inspiration...Fitzgerald’s novel *The Great Gatsby* and Harbison’s corresponding opera provide fertile ground for the exploration of the transition that occurs when a composer adapts a literary work for the operatic stage.”<sup>16</sup> Her treatise is representative of what this essay will explore regarding the relationship of a staged work to its primary source. In addition, this essay will include a two-genre comparison of the primary work.

Finally, the following three works most closely align with the intent of this essay, yet they still do not cover the scope of multiple two-genre analyses of a story. In his dissertation, “*Madame Chrysanthème: The Opera and Its Relationship to Madame Butterfly*,” Cho Chul Hyung set a precedent of comparing staged works that share primary sources and their influence on each other: André Messager’s *Madame Chrystanthème* (opera) and Giacomo Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly* (opera) with Pierre Loti’s novel, *Madame Chrystanthème* and John Luther Long’s short story turned to play by David Belasco, *Madame Butterfly*.<sup>17</sup> His analysis begins

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<sup>14</sup> Juliette Singler, “*Prima le Parole: A Look at the Methodologies Involved in Creating Effective Opera Libretti*” (DMA Project, Claremont Graduate School, 1997).

<sup>15</sup> Storm, “*The Great Gatsby: From Novel into Opera*”

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Cho Chul Hyung, “*Madame Chrysanthème: The Opera and Its Relationship to Madame Butterfly*,” (DMA Document, University of Washington, 2003).

with the origins and primary works then moves chronologically through the staged works. The scope of his paper focuses on the main Butterfly story, predominantly on Messenger's opera. While the analysis demonstrates the development of the Butterfly story and its metamorphosis through various interpretations, Hyung does not expand to other aspects of the works, such as song analysis and in-depth analysis of all characters beyond the title character. Lorin Miller establishes an analysis in her thesis, "From Monody to Modernity: An Examination of the Connection Between Early Baroque Opera and Contemporary Musical Theatre," between opera and musical theatre by comparing Monteverdi's opera *Orfeo* and Schönberg's musical *Les Misérables*.<sup>18</sup> She concludes that the two shows are intertwined based on four foundational elements: "the implementation of recitative and aria, the interdependent use of duet and chorus with the solo voice, the innovative incorporation of atypical tonalities within the melodic line, and the inventive application of instrumentation to enhance vocal expression in each work."<sup>19</sup>

The final of the aforementioned three works is an invaluable thesis by Margeaux Coenen titled, "That Doesn't Remind Us of 'Musetta's Waltz.'" Coenen compares *La bohème* to both the stage and film versions of *Rent* "by examining how transcultural differences and medium specificity have determined adaptations."<sup>20</sup> Coenen also concludes that finding a theory or method of analysis applicable to this subject is difficult, and she focuses on Adaptation Theory which is a relatively young field concerned with the "adaptations of literature to theatre and film."<sup>21</sup> Coenen takes issue with this theory since it predominantly concerns literary works

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<sup>18</sup> Lorin Miller, "From Monody to Modernity: An Examination of the Connection Between Early Baroque Opera and Contemporary Musical Theatre," (Master's Thesis, California State University Dominguez Hills, 2014).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Margeaux Coenen, "That Doesn't Remind Us of 'Musetta's Waltz'," (Master's Thesis, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 2010), 1.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

adapted for film and not literary works adapted for opera or musical theatre. Coenen devotes a considerable amount of time to composer biographies and non-musical issues, such as her thorough discussion of the controversy surrounding the rights to *Rent*. Coenen's thesis concerns one storyline and leaves out a more in-depth musical comparison. It also focuses primarily on the adaptation of the opera to stage musical to film. Except in the made-for-television musical, *Cinderella*, this essay does not deal with film adaptations, and more consideration is given to the original sources.

### **Methodology**

While trying to keep the scope of this essay manageable yet representative of both opera and musical theatre, the emphasis will be on three storylines and their primary sources: John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* and Kurt Weill's *The Threepenny Opera*, Gioachino Rossini's *La Cenerentola* and Rodgers and Hammerstein II's *Cinderella*, and Giacomo Puccini's *La bohème* and Jonathan Larson's *Rent*. *The Beggar's Opera* (ballad opera), *La Cenerentola* (dramma giocoso), and *La bohème* (verismo) all represent various types of operas just as *The Threepenny Opera* (crossover, opera/musical theatre), *Rent* (rock opera), and *Cinderella* (Golden Age of Broadway) represent different styles of musicals.<sup>22</sup> Each work will be analyzed according to the following guidelines as relevant to the purpose of this essay:

1. Treatment of Storyline/Score
  - a. Where in the storyline does the plot begin?
  - b. Setting/Environment
  - c. Time Period

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<sup>22</sup> K. Green, W. Freeman, M. Edwards, and D. Meyer, "Trends in Musical Theatre Voice: An Analysis of Audition Requirements for Singers," *Journal of Voice - Official Journal of the Voice Foundation* 28, no. 3 (2014): 324-327.

- d. Cultural Relevance/Commentary
  - e. Main Arias/Solo Songs
  - f. Main Ensemble/Chorus Songs
2. Treatment of Characters
- a. Physical appearance
  - b. Personality Traits
  - c. Relationships

In-depth analyses of these shows will shed light on the genre and cultural-specific interpretations of a primary source. Considering the treatment of principal characters, ensemble, musical setting, and period, appropriate performance practices will serve to better inform all involved in the preparation and performance of a staged artistic work. A character comparison table and list of songs from each production may be found in the appendices.

## CHAPTER 2: THE BEGGAR'S OPERA

### The Primary Source

From its first performance, John Gay's and Johann Christoph Pepusch's *The Beggar's Opera* remained a staple in the English drama canon. Scholar Yvonne Noble notes that "it has retained a relatively even reputation through nearly two-and-a-half centuries of shifting sensibilities."<sup>23</sup> Written during a time of political corruption and based on real-life characters of infamy, the opera is rife with political and social commentary. It weaves allusion, parody, and satire to create a story of the criminal underworld of London located in Newgate, a notorious prison in London renowned for its horrendous conditions.<sup>24</sup> Eventually the gallows were moved to this area from Tyburn, and over 1,000 public executions were carried out there between 1790 and 1902. In his preface to *The Beggar's Opera*, A.P. Herbert recounts finding a complete set of the *Proceedings of London Sessions from December, 1732, to October, 1733: bound up with the Accounts of the Ordinary of Newgate of the Behaviour, Confession, and Dying Words of the Malefactors who were executed at Tyburn. The Beggar's Opera* was first produced in 1728, and the malefactors chronicled in the set Herbert found provide "all the ingredients of the [opera]: the highwayman, the informers, the pickpockets, the hussies, the gin, the same immoral, callous, humorous, fascinating flavor."<sup>25</sup>

In addition to the recognizable characters burlesqued in his show, John Gay also presumed that the viewers are familiar with the popular songs and lyrics of the day, in addition to

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<sup>23</sup> Yvonne Noble, Preface to "1935-John Gay, *The Beggar's Opera: A Critical Edition*" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1966), i.

<sup>24</sup> *Historic UK: The History and Heritage Accommodation Guide*, <https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryMagazine/DestinationsUK/Newgate-Prison-Wall/>, accessed September 15, 2018.

<sup>25</sup> John Gay, Preface to *The Beggar's Opera* (New York: The Heritage Press, 1937), ix.

the Italian opera conventions that were pervading music at that time. Humorously, the Beggar segues into the opening ensemble song with these words:

I have introduc'd the Similes that are in all your celebrated Operas: The Swallow, the Moth, the Bee, the Ship, the Flower, &c. Besides, I have a Prison Scene which the Ladies always reckon charmingly pathetick. As to the Parts, I have observ'd such a nice Impartiality to our two Ladies, that it is impossible for either of them to take Offence. I hope I may be forgiven, that I have not made my Opera throughout unnatural, like those in vogue; for I have no Recitative. Excepting this, as I have consented to neither Prologue nor Epilogue, it must be allow'd an Opera in all its forms.<sup>26</sup>

Gay's opera includes some of the well-known excesses of Italian opera in that day, “including the egocentric passions of the imported Italian prima donnas who performed it.”<sup>27</sup> A well-documented feud between two such prima donnas, Francesca Cuzzoni and Faustina Bordoni, came to a head in 1727 as they fought each other on stage. They were later escorted off, bringing an end to the entire opera season at the theatre.<sup>28</sup> Lucy, played by Cuzzoni, is passionate and jealous just as Cuzzoni was in real-life. Meanwhile Polly, played by Bordoni, is modest and sincere. To play up the real-life rivalry between the divas, whenever their characters face each other in the opera, there is “some veiled burlesque involved.”<sup>29</sup>

Several staged works and publications may have laid the foundation for *The Beggar's Opera*. Purcell's semi-operas contained spoken sections interpolated with songs and instrumental music. However, in striking contrast with Purcell's heroic and romantic semi-operas that celebrated great figures, Gay's opera is a romanticized portrayal of the felons, fugitives, corrupt, and gangsters. The French *comédies en vaudeville* could have also influenced Gay.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., Introduction to Act I, 1.

<sup>27</sup> J.V. Guerinot and Rodney D. Jilg, *Contexts 1: The Beggar's Opera* (Hamden: The Shoestring Press, Inc, 1976), 96.

<sup>28</sup> Arifa Akbar, “Whine, Women and Song: The Bitter Rivalry of Handel's Divas,” *Independent*, posted April 28, 2008, <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/features/whine-women-and-song-the-bitter-rivalry-of-handels-divas-816644.html>, accessed September 15, 2018.

<sup>29</sup> J.V. Guerinot and Rodney D. Jilg, *Contexts 1: The Beggar's Opera*, 96.

These were performed in opposition to the established Comédie Française...As the form...developed, dialogue in prose became generously interspersed with lyrics set to well-known tunes-exactly the form of the ballad opera...Gay could have easily seen samples of this genre on one of his visits to Paris in 1717 and 1719, or in London, where there were numerous performances between 1718 and 1725.<sup>30</sup>

At the time, there was an abundance of literature and plays that celebrated the low-life of England. Guerinot and Jilg present actual excerpts of staged works, literary works, and songs of the day. Embellished criminal biographies were also at the height of their popularity as they were sold before the executions of infamous criminals.<sup>31</sup>

Thomas Durfey's *Pills to Purge Melancholy* was the primary source Gay used for the songs in *The Beggar's Opera*, but he also used songs by some of the best-known composers of the time.<sup>32</sup> Even though he changed the lyrics to fit the story, Gay relied on the fact that those in the audience would know the original words to the songs by heart. For example, "If Love the virgin's heart invade" cautions against falling for seduction, while the original song, "Why is you faithful Slave disdain'd" is about the complete opposite.<sup>33</sup>

The infamous criminal Jack Sheppard, who was notorious for his escape from Newgate Prison, served as inspiration for Gay's character Macheath. Another notorious criminal, Jonathan Wild, served as inspiration for the characters Peachum, Lockett, and Macheath. Wild controlled nearly all of London's underworld activity, and he was known to systematically and ruthlessly betray criminals to maintain power. Wild made a considerable sum of his money by offering evidence that resulted in the conviction a thief, many of whom were his men. Additionally, he

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 3-4.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 96. Opera composers Henry Purcell, Handel, Bononcini, and Sandoni were used, as well.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 107.

capitalized on returning the goods he or his gang stole to the rightful owners for a fee.<sup>34</sup>

Peachum's gang and Macheath's gang imitate the relationship between Wild and Sheppard. Sheppard was a womanizer and was helped by Elizabeth Lyon in one of his escapes but later betrayed by her to Wild. Macheath is aided by Lucy and he is eventually betrayed by Mrs. Trapes.

Sir Robert Walpole, de facto Prime Minister of Great Britain, and his government were satirized heavily in *The Beggar's Opera*. Using many of the literary devices familiar in his day, Gay "avoids fixed associations"<sup>35</sup> to weave Sir Walpole into his story. Walpole's transgressions were well publicized in weekly news journals, so those attending Gay's opera did not miss the many references to their Prime Minister interlaced throughout the show.<sup>36</sup> Even Walpole's mistress, Molly Skerret, is portrayed in Gay's opera through the mistresses of Peachum, Lockit, and Macheath. *The Mist's Weekly Journal*, one of the journals to escape Walpole's censure, even wrote about Walpole under the guise of writing about Wild. In a "Key to the Beggar's Opera," written by "Phil. Harmonicus" to the editor of *The Craftsman*, Harmonicus claimed that "the *Beggar's Opera* is the most venomous allegorical Libel against the Government that hath appeared for many Years past."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 44-45, 56.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 69

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 83-92.

## *The Beggar's Opera*

### **Synopsis**

#### **Act I**

The beggar, who stands in as the composer for John Gay, sets the stage for Mr. Peachum. Mr. and Mrs. Peachum discuss Mr. Peachum's desire to turn in one of the members of his gang to earn 40 pounds. The conversation turns to their daughter, Polly, and her possible marriage to Macheath. They are not pleased with this possibility as "Gamesters and highwaymen are generally good to their whores, but they are very devils to their wives."<sup>38</sup> Much to their chagrin, Filch reveals that Polly and Macheath are married. Since it cannot be undone, they decide to deal with it. They try to get Polly to turn Macheath in the authorities to get his riches. When Polly refuses, her parents decide to take matters into their own hands. Polly tries to find a way to save her lover. Macheath and Polly meet, and Polly reveals that her parents are against him. Polly convinces Macheath to leave, and they bid each other farewell.

#### **Act II**

Macheath's gang is in a tavern near Newgate singing a drinking song. Macheath appears and asks them to convince Peachum he has quit the gang. In the next few scenes, Macheath is partying with the women associated with Peachum's gang. Macheath admits to Jenny that although he has gotten money on the road, he has lost it at the Gaming-Table. At this time, Jenny and Suky signal to Peachum and the constables to capture Macheath. Macheath finds himself imprisoned under Lockit. Lucy Lockit, another of Macheath's lovers, visits him in prison and chastises him for putting her in a position to see him in jail and leave her with his infamy. He assures her that he will marry her at the first opportunity, but she reveals that she knows he is

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<sup>38</sup> Gay, 10.

already married to Polly. Macheath denies that he is married to Polly but only that he chats with her, kisses her, and says thousands of things to her that mean nothing. He assures Lucy that Polly is merely saying she is married to make Lucy jealous, and that Polly is conceited enough that any nice thing said to her convinces her it is forever.

Peachum and Lockit meet to discuss teaming up against Macheath. Following this, Lockit sees Lucy and berates her for whimpering over the man who abused her. Lockit assures that he will hang her husband, Macheath. He tells her to hang her cares with him and get all the money she can. Lucy visits Macheath and tells him, but Polly appears. A fight ensues between Lucy and Polly. Macheath tells Lucy this is just Polly trying to gain credit as his widow if he is hung. He pleads with Polly not to dispute this. Peachum shows up to take Polly home, but she begs him not to take Macheath from her. After Peachum and Polly leave, Lucy and Macheath are left to speak in private. Macheath reassures Lucy that he is naturally compassionate, declaring that he would rather die than be false to Lucy. He convinces Lucy to set him free so that he can owe his life to her as a way to love her even more.

### **Act III**

Lockit confronts Lucy about aiding Macheath in his escape. Lucy sings a song in the bar of an alehouse chronicling her education as a girl. Lucy is distraught as she believes that Macheath used her to return to Polly. She is convinced Polly will get his money and Peachum will hang him, cheating both herself and her father. Lockit thinks Peachum is trying to outwit him.

Meanwhile, Macheath is reunited with his gang and sets forth a plan to pickpocket at a play. Lockit and Peachum meet to discuss a plan to watch Polly and recapture Macheath. Mrs. Trapes interrupts with the news that Macheath is in Mrs. Coaxer's bed. Lucy confesses to Filch

that she is jealous, outraged, and ready to poison Polly's gin with ratsbane, a rat poison. At this point, Polly shows up to speak with her. Lucy thinks that Polly has spent her time with Macheath, but Polly admits that Macheath has not been around. They each offer timid apologies and condolences to the other. Lucy continues to press Polly to drink her gin, but Polly is on her guard and refuses to drink. At this moment, Polly notices that Macheath is once again in custody. A pitiful duet ensues as both Lucy and Polly decry their heartbreak. Peachum attempts to coerce Macheath to reveal the identity of his wife to prevent a lawsuit over his money in the event of his death. Meanwhile, Polly pleads with her father to let him off at his trial. Lucy begs her father to have more compassion if Polly's father does not relent. Neither father relents, and the women wait together to hear of Macheath's last moments.

Macheath is left to drink and reminisce in his final moments until the jailer interrupts him with a visit from his friends, Ben Budge and Matt of the Mint. Macheath reminds them that Peachum and Lockit are infamous scoundrels and requests that they are brought to justice at the gallows. After Polly and Lucy visit to bid their farewells, the jailer enters with four more wives, each with a child in tow. It is at this moment that the Player interrupts the Beggar and insists on a reprieve. The Beggar relents but leaves the audience with this final line, "Had the Play remain'd as I at first intended, it would have carried a most excellent Moral. 'Twould have shown that the lower Sort of People have their Vices in a degree as well as the Rich, and that they are punish'd for them."<sup>39</sup> The play resumes with Macheath relieved of his death sentence. However, he must choose a wife. He offers to present a partner to each of his "wives" and chooses Polly.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., Act III, Sc. XVI, 110.

## *The Threepenny Opera*

### **The Source**

A form of meta-art, *The Threepenny Opera* provided Bertolt Brecht, Elisabeth Hauptmann, and Kurt Weill the opportunity to “make ‘opera’ the subject matter for an evening in the theater.”<sup>40</sup> It billed as an adaptation of John Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera*. After the success of London’s revival of *The Beggar’s Opera* in 1920-1922, Brecht collaborated with Elisabeth Hauptmann to prepare a German translation of the work. The work was an anomaly in that they cast the show with singing actors from spoken theater. *The Threepenny Opera* “transformed saccharine, old-fashioned opera and operetta forms, incorporating a sharp political perspective and the sound of 1920s Berlin dance bands and cabaret. Weill’s acid harmonies and Brecht’s biting texts created a revolutionary new musical theater.”<sup>41</sup> Weill fled Germany with the rise of the Nazis, and although the show had already been produced around the world over 100 times, Weill’s and Brecht’s works were subsequently banned. After settling in the United States, Weill and his collaborators hoped for a major production, but satisfactory arrangements could not be made.<sup>42</sup> The show later reopened in Germany and eventually in the United States with an off-Broadway production in 1954 that recharged its reception and popularity.

Although Gay and Pepusch’s work is widely recognized as the source for *The Threepenny Opera*, Brecht also used ballads by François Villon and Rudyard Kipling.<sup>43</sup> The music of Gay and Pepusch’s world (opera, popular airs) heavily influenced the music of *The Beggar’s Opera* while the jazz idiom heavily influenced Weill and Brecht. Although there are far

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<sup>40</sup> Stephen Hinton, Preface to *Die Dreigroschenoper* (Vienna, Austria: European American Music Corporation, 2000), iv.

<sup>41</sup> “The Threepenny Opera,” Kurt Weill Foundation, 2018, <http://www.threepennyopera.org/>, accessed October 6, 2018.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Hinton, Preface, v.

fewer musical numbers in Brecht and Weill's work, the characters, songs (all but one), and scenes in *The Threepenny Opera* correlate with the scenes from its earlier counterpart.

Additionally, the tunes and text vary to reflect the milieu of the show.

## The Story Comparison

### Act I

Both shows open with an overture and introduction. The most notable song from *The Threepenny Opera*, "The Ballad of Mack the Knife," was a last-minute insert to introduce the story's leading character (refer to Appendix A for character comparisons and song lists). Harald Paulsen, the man portraying the original Macheath (Mac, Mackie, Mack the Knife), demanded a grand introduction, so Brecht and Weill composed "Die Moritat von Mackie Messer" ("The Murder Ballad of Mack the Knife").<sup>44</sup> Although "The Ballad of Mack the Knife" does not have a counterpart in *The Beggar's Opera*, Mr. Peachum's opening song that follows retains the music from Peachum's opening song in *The Beggar's Opera*. Both share the notion that all will betray or be betrayed by someone. However, the newer version places a strong emphasis on Christians in the opening line, "Wake up, you rotten Christians!"<sup>45</sup> Mrs. Peachum knows Mackie as a fine gentleman, but her husband reveals Mackie's identity to her in the beginning of *The Threepenny Opera*. However, in *The Beggar's Opera*, both Celia and Jonathan Peachum are well aware of who Macheath is and set out immediately to keep Polly from marrying him. Unbeknownst to them, she has already married Macheath, but in *The Threepenny Opera*, Polly and Mac have yet to be married. Mrs. Peachum has no clue who he is and thinks, "there is no finer gentleman."<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> David Cheal, "The Life of a Song: 'Mack the Knife,'" *Financial Times*, January 15, 2016, <https://www.ft.com/content/90df12d6-b87f-11e5-b151-8e15c9a029fb>, accessed October 6, 2018.

<sup>45</sup> Hinton, "Wach auf, du verrotteter Christ!" in *Die Dreigroschenoper*, 18.

<sup>46</sup> Hinton, "Es gibt keinen feineren Gentleman," in *Die Dreigroschenoper*, 21.

She changes her mind as soon as her husband reveals that he is Mack the Knife. Eventually, they set out, as in *The Beggar's Opera*, to hang Macheath.

*The Threepenny Opera* offers its audience the spectacle of Polly and Macheath's wedding. Although this scene does not exist in *The Beggar's Opera*, it incorporates ideas from the first scene with Polly and Macheath. *The Threepenny Opera* borrows the scene in which the couple simultaneously declare their love for each other and say their goodbyes as Polly urges Macheath to flee for his life. Mackie's gang attends the wedding which is held in a stable with newly "acquired" furniture. Tiger Brown also makes his entrance. Like Lockit in *The Beggar's Opera*, he is Chief of Police, but he is also a battle buddy of Mackie and attends the wedding in celebration. Polly sings "Pirate Jenny" as her offering for the wedding party. A girl Polly once saw at a four-penny bar is the basis for this song. "Pirate Jenny" might also be a reference to Lucy's alehouse education in *The Beggars Opera*. The "Love Song" that follows is analogous to "Were I Laid on Greenland's Coast" from *The Beggar's Opera* in sentiment: No matter where you are, I will stay with you and love you.

Polly's parents beg her to separate from Macheath in both shows, and Brecht cleverly references the end of Gay's libretto with Mrs. Peachum's line, "The guy has several women. When he is hanged, half a dozen women will report as widows each probably with a brat in her arm."<sup>47</sup> Brecht nearly quotes Mrs. Peachum and Polly verbatim during this scene. In both versions, Mrs. Peachum is so upset at the news of the marriage and declaration of love that she

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 73. "Der Kerl, der hat ja überhaupt mehrere Weiber. Wenn der mal gehängt wird, meldet sich wirklich ein halbes Dutzend Weibsbilder als Witwen und jede womöglich noch mit einem Balg auf dem Arm."

asks for cordial to which Polly orders her another glass, since she drinks double whenever she is out of order.<sup>48</sup>

## Act II

In *The Beggar's Opera*, Macheath's gang talks of a friend whose time had come and transitions to the camaraderie of the gang with Harry Paddington asking, "Who is there that would betray him for his [own] interest?"<sup>49</sup> While in stark contrast, *The Threepenny Opera* reveals a betrayal in the works by none other than the gang's own Captain. Both of these scenes reference Jonathan Wild.

At the location of their wedding ceremony, Polly warns her lover of her father and Brown's plot to hang him. Mac insists that Polly will have to take over the books and business, eventually having to turn in his men. At this point, the goodbyes begin to mirror the goodbye scene in *The Beggar's Opera* (Act I transition into Act II). Polly fears that Mac will not remain faithful, but he assures her that he will. One difference in Brecht's interpretation is the interloping scene: Mac relinquishes his reign to Polly for a few weeks, to which the men object. Polly asserts herself, eventually winning the men's support.

Although the dialogue between Mrs. Peachum and Jenny does not exist in Gay's opera, a conversation and subsequent agreement are implied. The exchange in Brecht's version references Macheath's self-descriptive speech in *The Beggar's Opera*. Celia assures Jenny in the "Song of Sexual Submissiveness"<sup>50</sup> that he must submit to his sexual desire and visit her. In Gay's tale,

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<sup>48</sup> Gay, 20. "Give her another glass, sir, my Mama drinks double whenever she is out of order." Hinton, 73. "Gib ihr nur ruhig zwei Glas. Meine Mutter verträgt das doppelte Quantum, wenn sie nicht ganz bei sich ist. Das bringt sie wieder auf die Beine."

<sup>49</sup> Gay, 37.

<sup>50</sup> Hinton, Preface, viii. The original Mrs. Peachum refused to sing this so it was cut completely in the original.

Macheath says of himself, “I love sex...I must have women. There is nothing that unbends the mind like them.”<sup>51</sup> Mr. Peachum is present during Macheath’s betrayal by Jenny Diver and Mrs. Coaxer in *The Beggar’s Opera*. Meanwhile, Mrs. Peachum is the one present during Mac’s betrayal by Jenny in *The Threepenny Opera*. Brecht and Weill insert a song to acquaint the audience with the torrid history between Mac and Jenny right before Mac’s capture. In this scene, audiences learn that Mac and Jenny had been “married” for over a year. In the song “Pimp’s Ballad,” each recount their experiences and eventually reveal that they conceived a child. It is implied that the child died, and they flushed the baby down the toilet.<sup>52</sup> Eventually, Brecht cut the final strophe detailing the pregnancy and disposal of the baby because of its controversiality.<sup>53</sup> It is not difficult to imagine that this could be one motivator for Jenny’s betrayal.

In each works’ scene in which Macheath appears in chains, he asks Police Constable Locket/ Police Constable Smith for lighter chains. In both versions, the response is that lighter chains can happen for a price: from one to ten Guineas in Locket’s prison<sup>54</sup> and fifty Guineas in Smith’s.<sup>55</sup> Lucy confronts Macheath in both stories using almost the same speech. In the former, however, Lucy begs her father for mercy. In the latter, the scene transitions immediately to the “Jealousy Duet” when Polly interrupts Lucy and Macheath. Following the song, the interaction between Polly and Lucy continues as it does in *The Beggar’s Opera* Act II, Scene XIII, except

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 41-42.

<sup>52</sup> Eric Bentley, ed., *The Threepenny Opera* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1960), 53.

<sup>53</sup> Hinton, Preface, ix.

<sup>54</sup> Gay, 51.

<sup>55</sup> Hinton, 104.

that Lucy announces she is pregnant with Mackie's child. In both versions, Macheath convinces Lucy to help him escape as a way of indebting himself to their love.

### **Act III**

After his escape, Macheath is betrayed yet again by one of the whores. While *The Beggar's Opera* opens Act III with Lockit blaming his daughter, Lucy, for Macheath's escape, he soon suspects that Peachum is trying to double-cross him. The scene shifts to an interaction between Macheath and his men. Mrs. Trapes, the madame of the brothel, visits Mr. Peachum and Lockit to trade business/goods/money in exchange for information that reveals Macheath is in bed with Mrs. Coaxer. In Brecht's version, it is Jenny and the other girls who approach the Peachums' home to get the money owed them for their betrayal of Mackie. When Mr. Peachum appears, Jenny tells him he is nothing compared to Mac. She reveals that she knew of his escape since he came to her for comfort. Jenny inadvertently reveals to Peachum where to find Mackie after insinuating he is with Suky Tawdry.

Meanwhile, Tiger Brown arrives to arrest Peachum, but Peachum reveals that he knows Brown is a close companion of Mackie. Peachum threatens to have hundreds of beggars afflicted with great disfigurements and disease flood to the Queen's coronation unless Brown arrests his intimate comrade, Mackie. Jenny once again forsakes Mac and gives them Suky's address. In the meantime, Brown laments that Mackie's plan for freedom did not work.

Polly's visit to Lucy takes a different turn in each telling. Gay sets the scene with Polly apologizing to Lucy in a much darker environment: Lucy trying to get Polly to drink cordial poisoned with ratsbane. Polly, suspecting something, refuses. Macheath's capture interrupts the women's exchange, and Lucy admits she is glad Polly did not partake in the drink as "she was

not happy enough to deserve to be poyson'd."<sup>56</sup> Although "Arie der Lucy" parallels Lucy's sinister plot to murder Polly, Brecht sets a more hospitable environment.<sup>57</sup> Polly tries to get information from Lucy on Mac's whereabouts under the guise of an apology, and subsequently, they both acknowledge that Mackie loves the other. Polly reveals that Mackie has two responsibilities and has run out on both, but she is grateful to have found a friend in Lucy. In a surprise twist, Lucy reveals that her pregnancy is a sham designed to help Mackie. It is at this moment Mackie's recapture interrupts the two women.

Before the hanging in *The Beggar's Opera*, Macheath sings of his demise, strengthening his spirits with liquor. Matt of the Mint and Ben Budge, along with Polly and Lucy, come to visit him, and the group sings their farewells. However, four more wives each with a child in tow interrupt the group. The final visitations in *The Threepenny Opera*, also at Newgate Prison, transpire a bit differently. Macheath tries to bribe Smith for his release and offers him 1,000 pounds. When Matthew visits him, Macheath is distraught to learn he can only acquire 400 pounds. Matthew blames Mackie for going to Suky's instead of running. In the interim, Smith and the constable have devised a trap involving soap. Polly is only allowed a five-minute visit in which she admits she has already transferred all their money per Mac's request. They are interrupted as Smith pulls her away. The penultimate visitor for Mackie is his old buddy, Brown. Brown enters to say goodbye and to settle a debt. Mackie thinks Brown is just trying to get the money owed him, and Brown is hurt by the way Mac is treating him while he is trying to say

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<sup>56</sup> Gay, 96.

<sup>57</sup> Hinton, Preface, ix. The song was initially cut because the original performer could not sing it well. It eventually proved to be superfluous.

goodbye. Brown finally orders Smith to let the final visitors in. Smith discloses to Mac that he has one minute left to help him escape if he has the money.

Macheath's soliloquy from Act III, Scene XIII, of *The Beggar's Opera*, is paralleled and also evokes Peachum's opening song in both shows. "Since laws were made for ev'ry degree, to curb vice in others, as well as me, I wonder we han't better company, upon Tyburn Tree! But gold from law can take out the sting; and if rich men like us were to swing, 'twou'd thin the land, such numbers to string, upon Tyburn Tree!"<sup>58</sup> The Peachums, Lucy, Reverend Kimball, Matthew, Jacob, and Jenny and the whores visit Mac in his final minutes. He exclaims to them, "We bourgeois artisans, who work with honest jimmies on the cash boxes of small shopkeepers, are being swallowed up by large concerns backed by banks. What is a picklock to a bank share? What is the burgling of a bank to the foundling of a bank? What is the murder of a man to the employment of a man?"<sup>59</sup> Mac continues to sing the following about his people,

We were not always virtuous, alas,  
That's why you'll see us hanging by the neck,  
For every greedy bird of prey to peck,  
As were we horses' offal on the grass...  
The outlaws, bandits, burglars, gunmen,  
All Christian souls that love a brawl,  
Abortionists and pimps and fun-men,  
I cry them mercy one and all.<sup>60</sup>

The player interjects and protests the Beggar's story with, "But, honest friend, I hope you don't intend that Macheath shall be really executed," the Beggar argues that Macheath must be hanged for strict poetical justice.<sup>61</sup> The Beggar relents and admits, simultaneously mocking the

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>59</sup> Bentley, 92.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 93-94.

<sup>61</sup> Gay, 110.

art form, “Opera must end happily.”<sup>62</sup> Peachum halts the hanging in *The Threepenny Opera* with the news that Macheath will not be hanged. Brown discloses that the Queen, at her coronation, commanded that Macheath be released and promoted to nobility with a pension of 10,000 pounds per year.

### **The Characters**

Although many of the characters remain the same, some with varied names, a few of the persons and their relationships are altered slightly. In the original production, Filch is already a close confidant of the Peachums. In contrast, Filch is beat by Peachum’s gang for begging in the wrong district without a license and presents himself to Peachum for a job in *The Threepenny Opera*. The original show portrays Polly as a prostitute working for her parents while Brecht portrays her as a bit pretentious and removed from her father’s business. Lockit, who is not an ally to Macheath and is much more stoic, serves as inspiration for both Tiger Brown and Smith. Whereas a long-standing relationship between Macheath and Jenny is alluded to in *The Beggar’s Opera*, the connection between the two is more evident in *The Threepenny Opera*. Brecht also names her Ginny Jenny. Perhaps this is a reference to Macheath’s line in *The Beggar’s Opera*, “If any of the Ladies chuse Ginn, I hope they will be so free to call for it,” to which Jenny replies, “You look as if you meant me.”<sup>63</sup> Finally, there is no epic of Macheath’s enterprises in *The Beggar’s Opera*. However, the demanded insertion of Mack the Knife vividly paints Mackie’s exploits. He is a man who kills men, steals money, set fire to a children’s hospital killing several children, raped a young bride, and had sex with two minors.

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 45.

## Conclusion

The lineage of shows beginning with Purcell, moving to Gay, and countless composers after, laid a solid foundation upon which Brecht and Weill conceived their opera. In a time of political and social strife, and using a story over 200 years old, Brecht and Weill accomplished a retelling with the consequences of their milieu. In this instance, the heroic treatment of such a treacherous villain heightens the awareness that even the best of men has vices and blurs the hardline of justice.

In a time rife with political and social discourse, shows that directly comment on current affairs have evolved even if the same basic framework or characters have not. Although the music and staging may vary, an actress playing the role of Jenny will benefit from knowing the evolution of her character from its inception. For example, an actress playing Jenny in *The Beggar's Opera* might make different choices interacting with Macheath knowing that another version has them in a torrid, long-term relationship resulting in the loss of a baby. A director's vision might vary regarding different staging and relationship choices based on how another version of the same story develops the plot and characters. Students and composers alike are able learn from and might create something new by studying a pre-existing work and reinventing it to fit within their current social and political climate.

## CHAPTER 3: CINDERELLA

### The Primary Source

Charles Perrault's *Cendrillon ou La Petite Pantoufle Verre* from his collection of fairytales, *Histoires ou Contes du Temps passé: Les Contes de ma Mère L'Oye*, has been the inspiration for many beloved rags to riches tales. Perrault added personal elements in his 1697 publication to the original story, thought to have originated in Greek (*Rhodopis*) or Chinese (*Ye Xian*) storytelling, that not only made the story his own but enraptured audiences around the world. His addition of the Fairy Godmother, Pumpkin, and Glass Slippers have inspired stories for generations.

### *Cendrillon ou la Petite Pantoufle Verre*

#### Synopsis, Characters, and Significant Objects

##### Cinderella

Perrault's version of *Cinderella* is one of great beauty, kindness, and moral fortitude. He emphasizes that her goodness and sweetness come from her biological mother. While the stepsisters vary from version to version, Cinderella remains the same. She is the daughter of a great man who was (or may still) have great wealth. According to Heidi Anne Heiner, "Cinderella's status as a gentleman's daughter makes her more acceptable as a future king's consort. It also places her above the status of a peasant. Cinderella is not usually a rags-to-riches tale, but a riches-to-rags-to-riches tale."<sup>64</sup> Cinderella's stepfamily gives her the name

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<sup>64</sup> Heidi Anne Heiner, "The Annotated Cinderella," *SurLaLune Fairy Tales*, <http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/cinderella/index.html>, Annotation 1, accessed October 13, 2018.

Culcendron,<sup>65</sup> but her younger sister (who is much kinder) calls her Cendrillon, or Cinderella, instead. Perrault makes no mention of her actual name.

### **Fairy Godmother, Pumpkin, Glass Slipper**

The godmother is introduced as *sa Marraine* (her godmother) first followed by “*sa Marraine, qui était Fée,*” in other words, “her godmother, who was a fairy.”<sup>66</sup> The fact that she is known as her godmother alludes to prior interactions between Cinderella and her godmother, but this may be the first time Cinderella (as well as the reader) is made aware of her magical powers. The use of the pumpkin is suitable not only because of its shape but because it “symbolizes feminine containment; the two worlds earthly and celestial; related to the moon, witches; a charm against evil spirits.”<sup>67</sup> The gold coach into which it transforms symbolizes great wealth. Great speculation has occurred regarding Perrault’s creation of the glass slipper.

The glass slipper has been the cause of much speculation and debate over the years, including a prevalent, albeit erroneous theory, that the glass was a mistake, a confusion between the French *verre* (glass) and *vair* (squirrel fur), since fur slippers are not as fantastical, but altogether realistic. In 1841, Honoré de Balzac popularized, perhaps even created the theory, and it has remained popular ever since despite many inherent issues within it, such as its dismissal of Perrault’s own adept literacy. The theory also negates Perrault’s interest in the fantastic and magical, discounting his brilliant creativity. Although the translation error theory has been dismissed by scholars since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it continues to appear in popular media all too often today.<sup>68</sup>

Albeit impractical for legitimate running and dancing, the glass slipper provides a stark depiction of Cinderella as light and graceful. No other prior story mentions a glass slipper.

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<sup>65</sup> Culcendron literally translates to “ashy (cendre) ass (cul)” but is often translated as Cinderwench.

<sup>66</sup> Perrault, “Cendrillon ou La Petite Pantoufle de Verre.”

<sup>67</sup> Steven Olderr, *Symbolism: A Comprehensive Dictionary*, 2nd Edition (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 1986), 163, as referenced in Heidi Anne Heiner, “The Annotated Cinderella,” *SurLaLune Fairy Tales*, <http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/cinderella/index.html>, Annotation 29, accessed October 13, 2018.

<sup>68</sup> Heiner, “The Annotated Cinderella,” Annotation 40.

## **Father and Stepmother**

Cinderella's father in Perrault's version is mentioned in the opening stanzas to set the family dynamic and his lack of engagement with Cinderella "for his wife governed him entirely."<sup>69</sup> Many other versions of the story imply or state that Cinderella's father is dead or away. Her father being dead or away may be an attempt to address why he does nothing to intervene in the abuse and mistreatment of his daughter and to preserve his paternal characteristics. The stepmother is the character who turns immediately vile and cruel after the wedding night out of her jealousy of Cinderella's character and beauty. Cinderella's positive attributes make the stepmother's biological daughters appear more repulsive and unpleasant. The stepmother orders the hierarchy in the house and seals Cinderella's fate as nothing more than a lowly servant. After her introduction in the first few stanzas, Perrault makes no more mention of her.

## **Stepsisters**

Although unnamed or given other names in alternate versions, Perrault only names the older sister. She is called Javotte only at the point when Cinderella asks to borrow her yellow dress.<sup>70</sup> Her response to Cinderella further asserts that the older sister is rude and uncivil. As previously mentioned, the younger sister who gives her the name Cinderella instead of the much harsher and vulgar Culcendron. In preparation for the ball, Javotte chooses to wear her red,

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<sup>69</sup> Charles Perrault, "Cendrillon ou La Petite Pantoufle de Verre," *Salle de Lecture*, <http://clpav.fr/lecture-cendrillon.htm>, accessed January 15, 2018. "La pauvre rîfle souffrait tout avec patience, et n'osait s'en plaindre à son père qui l'aurait grondée, parce que sa femme le gouvernait entièrement."

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. "Hélas! Mademoiselle Javotte, prêtez-moi votre habit jaune que vous mettez tous les jours,"

velvet dress while the younger sister chooses her every day petticoat with a gold flower gown and a diamond stomacher.<sup>71</sup>

After the ball, the sisters return and speak of the finest princess who showed them a thousand civilities and gave them oranges and lemons. When a gentleman from the Royal Court brings the lost slipper to their home, they try on the slipper to no avail. After Cinderella produces the other slipper she is also transformed into the beautiful princess by her godmother, and the sisters beg for forgiveness. Cinderella forgives them, brings them to the palace with her, and they marry two great Lords of the Court.

### *La Cenerentola*

#### **The Source**

Gioachino Rossini's and Jacopo Ferretti's 1817 comic opera retelling of *Cendrillon* completely flips many of Perrault's iconic symbols, yet it maintains the essence of the story. In this version, Rossini weaves elements of *dramma giocoso* by his use of character "types from serious opera (*parti serie*) appeared alongside the standard peasants, servants, elderly buffoons and others traditional to comic opera (*parti buffe*), often with intermediate characters (*in mezzo carattere*)."<sup>72</sup> The show was written in a little over three weeks and proved to be enormously

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<sup>71</sup> According to *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*, "The center front section of a waist or underwaist or a usually heavily embroidered or jeweled separate piece for the center front of a bodice."

<sup>72</sup> "Dramma giocoso," *Grove Music Online*, [www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com), accessed March 20, 2019.  
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/0-mo-9781561592630-e-0000008138>.

popular.<sup>73</sup> Although the recitatives and three of the arias in the opera were not by Rossini, he did not replace them.<sup>74</sup>

## Synopsis

### Act I

The Baron of Mountflagon, Don Magnifico, is one step away from social and financial ruin. To preclude this from happening, he hopes to marry at least one of his daughters to a rich man. He claims only his daughters, Clorinda and Tisbe, and not his stepdaughter, Angelina (Cenerentola). Cenerentola lives a life of servitude, but all she wants is her family's affection. Not too far from Don Magnifico lives Prince Ramiro. Prince Ramiro sends his tutor, Alidoro, out to scout the area for a suitable spouse. Alidoro shows up to Don Magnifico's house dressed as a beggar but finds no compassion from Clorinda or Tisbe. Instead, Cenerentola offers him coffee and breakfast. He determines Cenerentola is wise and charming and worthy to be the Prince's bride.<sup>75</sup>

The sudden arrival of the Prince's Knights interrupts the couple. The Knights announce the Prince's arrival, sending the sisters in a tizzy demanding assistance from Cenerentola. Cenerentola exclaims that everything is a mess, and that they want her to die.<sup>76</sup> As the sisters wake their father with news of the Prince's arrival, he informs them about a dream he was having: he believes his daughters will give birth to princes. After revealing their house is in ruin,

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<sup>73</sup> Richard Osborne, "Cenerentola, La," updated 2002, *Grove Music Online*, [www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com), accessed October 29, 2018.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. "Alidoro's aria 'Vasto teatro è il mondo', the chorus 'Ah, della bella incognita', and Clorinda's aria 'Sventurata! Me credea'; according to Ferretti, these and the recitatives are the work of the Roman composer Luca Agolini."

<sup>75</sup> Gioacchino Rossini, "Che qui saggia e vezzosa degna di me trovar sapro la sposa" in *La Cenerentola* (Milano: Ricordi, 2005), Act I, 60.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., "Si mi volete far crepar," Act I, 28.

Don Magnifico orders his daughters to dress in their finest robes, use their wits, and speak politely to help save them all. The daughters presume the Prince will marry one of them.

Prince Ramiro arrives at the house disguised as a valet. While he is searching the home, Cenerentola enters singing her favorite song, “Una volta c’era un re.” This song foretells what is to come in Cenerentola’s own life: a king who searches and finds three women wanting to marry him, but he chooses the one who is innocent and good over beauty. It is love at first sight; both want to speak but do not act upon it. The Prince and Cenerentola sing of about the other’s enchanting face and smile, and how it enters their heart and gives them hope. He mentions to her that he is looking for the Baron’s daughters. He inquires who she is, and Cenerentola admits she does not know and reveals her family dynamic: her mother was a widow but was also her sisters’ mother; her father is not her father but her stepfather. Her sisters interrupt the conversation, prompting Cenerentola to admit she never has a moment’s rest and must do everything. She and Prince Ramiro bid each other farewell as she leaves to attend to her sisters.

Prince Ramiro’s valet, Dandini, arrives in disguise as the Prince. Dandini sings of his experiences going from one beauty to another but has been unsuccessful in finding a beautiful face or exquisite morsel for himself. He persists in his tales of how he must marry or lose his inheritance. Dandini, as the Prince, whisks the girls away to a party. Cenerentola begs Don Magnifico to allow her to go dance for just one hour, but he refuses and calls her an ignorant servant, the lowest of the low.<sup>77</sup> Dandini intervenes while Prince Ramiro fights to hold back his anger at her treatment. Despondently, Cenerentola sighs, “Shall I always have to stay among the

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., “Servaccia ignorantissima...d'un estrazion bassissima,” Act I, 97.

cinders?”<sup>78</sup> She pleads with Dandini and Prince Ramiro to persuade Don Magnifico to allow her to attend the ball.

At this point, Alidoro enters with a book of record and asks Don Magnifico about the three sisters listed as living in his home. Don Magnifico states that the third sister died. When Cenerentola tries to interrupt, he threatens that if she speaks, he will slaughter her.<sup>79</sup> Cenerentola begs them not to leave her, but again, she is met with threats from Don Magnifico. Eventually, everyone leaves without Cenerentola. However, Alidoro makes his way back to Cenerentola and invites her to the palace.

At the palace, Don Magnifico, if he is still steady after thirty tastings, has been promoted to the position of Cellarman. True to his buffo role and arrogance, Don Magnifico completes the task and begins making proclamations regarding his wine expectations. He orders those around him to spread the proclamations throughout the land. In secret, Dandini and Prince Ramiro meet to speak about Clorinda and Tisbe. Dandini reveals they are both fickle and claims that Prince Ramiro’s teacher, Alidoro, is a goose.<sup>80</sup> Clorinda and Tisbe enter searching for the Prince, prompting Dandini to mention he can only marry one sister so his valet will marry the other. Prince Ramiro, still in disguise, affirms that he has a great heart, but the sisters refuse him. They call him “ordinary,”<sup>81</sup> and this tells him all he needs to know about them. Cenerentola arrives as an unknown lady with a veiled face, and a fit of jealousy takes the sisters.<sup>82</sup> Cenerentola sings of how she shuns gifts and claims that he who wishes to marry her should offer respect, love, and

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., “Ah! Sempre fra la cenere, sempre dovrò restar?” Act I, 99.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., “Se tu respiri, ti scanno qui,” Act I, 105.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., “Eh! Il maestro ha un gran testone. Oca eguale no si dà,” Act I, Finale, 157.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., “Un scudiero...con un'anima plebea...con un'aria dozzinale...mi fa male solamente a immaginar,” Act I, Finale, 164-165.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., “Gelosia già già mi lacera,” Act I, Finale, 172-173.

goodness.<sup>83</sup> Everyone is taken with Cenerentola as Don Magnifico enters. He recognizes a likeness between the mysterious woman and Cenerentola. His daughters reveal that they, too, thought the same initially but realized she could not be the same person who presently seemed too refined.

## Act II

Still at the palace, the sisters and Don Magnifico continue discussing the similarities between the mysterious woman and Cenerentola. He discloses to his daughters that there would be trouble if anyone found out how he squandered Cenerentola's inheritance. This is an issue because he received a large sum of money since Cenerentola was an only child and must return that money when she marries.<sup>84</sup> The sisters assure their father that the Prince will marry one of them. Don Magnifico goes on to fantasize about all the people who will approach him and provide him money to speak to his royal daughter on their behalf.

Prince Ramiro reveals to Alidoro that the mysterious woman reminds him of the woman he met earlier, Cenerentola. Dandini, still disguised as the prince, enters with Cenerentola. She admits to him that she loves someone else, his valet. Prince Ramiro interrupts them and asks if riches and rank do not tempt her, but Cenerentola assures him that it is virtue and goodness she values. Prince Ramiro asks if she will be his, but Cenerentola says he must get to know her and her position first. Cenerentola gives him a bracelet and leaves instructions on how to find her again: when he sees the matching bracelet on her right arm, if she does not displease him, she will be his. Prince Ramiro vows to find her.

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., "Sprezzo quei don," Act I, Finale.

<sup>84</sup> "Cenerentola, La," *OperaGlass*,

<http://opera.stanford.edu/Rossini/Cenerentola/note.html#b0903>, accessed October 27, 2018, Notes.

Don Magnifico approaches Dandini about his choice of a wife, and Dandini responds they will find out later and beckons him to approach and sit. Dandini reveals this is a bizarre case,<sup>85</sup> and Don Magnifico questions whether the Prince might want to marry him. Dandini begs Don Magnifico to keep what he is about to reveal a secret. Dandini, still disguised as the Prince, asks Don Magnifico how he should treat Don Magnifico's daughter should he marry one of them. Don Magnifico provides a long list: always 30 servants on call, over 100 horses, ice cream with dinner, et cetera.<sup>86</sup> Dandini slowly reveals his true identity by responding that he only eats leftovers, stays with servants, and always goes on foot. He finally exposes himself as Prince Ramiro's valet.<sup>87</sup> Don Magnifico threatens to tell the Prince, but Dandini assures him Prince Ramiro will not be outraged.

The scene shifts to Cenerentola, once again dressed in her everyday clothing. She is singing her favorite song about a king who chooses the innocent and good suitor over those who merely possess beauty. Her father and sisters enter and see that she is identical to the mysterious woman and demand to know if she has completed all her tasks. When Cenerentola asks why they are studying her, they admit it is because of a witch (the mysterious woman at the ball) who looks like her. Clorinda wishes she could beat the mysterious woman's shoulders. Tisbe interrupts to warn of an impending storm, and Don Magnifico wishes lightning would strike the valet.

After the storm, Dandini arrives and announces that their carriage was overturned and informs them of the Prince's arrival. When Prince Ramiro arrives, the family recognizes him as the valet. Don Magnifico still believes the Prince is there to marry one of his daughters, Clorinda

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<sup>85</sup> Rossini, *La Cenerentola*, Act II, 259.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, Act II, 262-263.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, Act II, 263-264.

or Tisbe, and orders Cenerentola to bring a chair for the Prince. The Prince sees the bracelet on her arm just as she notices him. Clorinda and Don Magnifico turn on Cenerentola, vilifying her audacity to sit with people above her station and try to push her back. However, Prince Ramiro intervenes. To let goodness triumph, Cenerentola pleads with the Prince to pardon her family out of his love for her.

Oblivious, Don Magnifico demands to know what Prince Ramiro wants but is ordered to remain silent. Prince Ramiro declares he wants to marry Cenerentola, and Don Magnifico, Clorinda, and Tisbe become incredulous. Don Magnifico was sure the prince would marry one of his daughters. The Prince, recalling the words from the Act I Finale, reminds Clorinda and Tisbe that he is just “ordinary.”

Before Cenerentola is willing to leave with the Prince, she only wants to kiss her father’s hand and embrace her sisters, but they refuse and tell her to go away. Their refusal incenses the Prince, and Cenerentola leaves with the Prince while her family remains behind to process the recent events. Tisbe laments that they will be a laughingstock while Clorinda sings of her anger. Alidoro interrupts them and discloses that he was the Beggar they sent away and knows all. He knows they kept Cenerentola as a servant among the ashes and rags,<sup>88</sup> but now she will ascend the throne. He also knows that Don Magnifico drank away Cenerentola’s inheritance, and now they have a choice to either end their days in poverty or go to the throne and beg for pardon. Clorinda cannot imagine lowering herself, but Tisbe seems to have no issue with the circumstances and welcomes her fate as she knows it will not kill her.

The chorus offers commentary on the state of Cenerentola’s family’s pride crumbling and goodness triumphing as Don Magnifico and his two daughters humbly arrive at the party. The

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., Act II, 325.

family sees Cenerentola, and they bow, calling her “Your Highness.” Cenerentola once again questions, “Will you never call me your daughter?”<sup>89</sup> As Prince Ramiro begins to intervene, Cenerentola announces that she will forgive as her act of revenge. She once more goes to her father and sisters, begs them not to cry or tremble, and assures them she will be their daughter, sister, and friend.<sup>90</sup> They finally embrace, and Cenerentola sings of no longer having to sit by the fire and how everything has changed.

## *Cinderella*

### **The Source**

Written specifically for television broadcast, *Cinderella*<sup>91</sup> was Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II’s first foray as a duo into the world of composing for television. NBC wanted an original family musical, and after considering the criteria, Rodgers and Hammerstein decided upon the tale of *Cinderella*. They sought out help from a friend, Richard Lewine, who was serving as president of CBS at the time. Lewine revealed that “CBS was looking to land a ‘television spectacular’ of its own; the network even had a talented newcomer signed to them for this purpose - Julie Andrews.”<sup>92</sup> Rodgers and Hammerstein made the switch to CBS as casting Julie Andrews for the title role felt “right from the start,” according to Rodgers.<sup>93</sup> It was written to fit within a 90-minute timeframe with six commercial breaks, so in effect, as six short acts. One hundred seven million viewers in America tuned into the live broadcast of *Cinderella*. The

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., “Né mai m’udrò chiamar la figlia vostra?” Act II, Finale, 338.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., “Figlia, sorella, amica Tutto trovate in me,” Act II, Finale, 341.

<sup>91</sup> Although I reference the earliest script version of the show I could find, there are differences between it and the original production. The actual plot and songs I reference are from the original televised production.

<sup>92</sup> Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, *Cinderella*, DVD, DVD insert commentary by Bert Fink, Vice President for Public Relations, The Rodgers & Hammerstein Organization, directed by Ralph Nelson (Los Angeles: Image Entertainment, 1957).

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

show has been remade for television two other times and adapted into a stage production.

Although Rodgers and Hammerstein never teamed up to write for television again,

“Hammerstein revealed to *Variety* that he and Rodgers were planning on expanding *Cinderella* into a full-fledged Broadway musical;”<sup>94</sup> though it never came to pass during their lifetime.

## Synopsis

In this version of *Cinderella*, the tale opens in the town square with the Herald announcing the Prince is giving a ball! The audience sees Cinderella, armed to near overflowing with packages, trailing after her stepmother and two stepsisters, Joy and Portia. The music to which they enter, “Stepsisters’ Lament,” foreshadows what is to come later in the production. After the family arrives home, Joy and Portia leave for their rooms, still in the middle of a spat. Meanwhile, Cinderella retreats to her corner of the house near the fireplace and sings her song, “In My Own Little Corner” in which she fantasizes about all she can be and do in the safety and comfort of her little space.

Rodgers and Hammerstein incorporate the King and Queen into their interpretation even though many other interpretations pay them little attention. These characters not only provide a bit of comic relief, but they also present a family working through normal family issues. The king and queen represent a husband and wife who are sometimes at odds with how to approach daily life but still love each other. They also embody parents dealing with the coming of age of their son and how to allow him to make his own decisions within the constraints of societal expectations. This family dynamic, evident in many of the concurrent television series, was important during the time of its composition and airing. The Prince, wanting to marry for love, is

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

sure the girl he marries will not be at the ball but continues with the plan out of love for his mother.

As in Rossini's opera, Cinderella's stepfamily is beckoning her for all the last-minute items they need before they leave for the ball. After the family leaves, Cinderella is left to daydream about what it would be like to attend the ball. Her godmother appears and interrupts Cinderella's thoughts. It is evident there is an established relationship between the two, but Cinderella is not aware of her godmother's magical nature. When probed, Cinderella responds that she remains at home because she could not fathom leaving her family since it would dishonor her deceased father's wishes.

Throughout this conversation, her godmother gives subtle hints that she is magical (i.e., entering the house without going through the door), but Cinderella does not seem to register the clues and tries to rationalize or ignore the magical occurrences. The discussion turns toward guardian angels and fairies. Cinderella shares her wish for someone to magically affect her situation and allow her to go to the ball. Her godmother warns her not to rely too much on them. Cinderella proceeds to share her wish that a pumpkin be transformed into a great golden carriage, four mice to horses, and two rats replaced with a coachman and footman. Cinderella wishes, "If only I had a guardian angel or my godmother were a fairy godmother."<sup>95</sup> During the song "Impossible," her Fairy Godmother reveals that "the world is full of zanies and fools" who build up impossible hopes which lead to impossible things happening every day.<sup>96</sup> The Fairy Godmother finally reveals her magical condition, and all the animals transformed as Cinderella

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<sup>95</sup> Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, *Cinderella* (New York: Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization, 1957), 29.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.* See song, "Impossible."

had wished. As the finishing touch, Cinderella's clothing transforms into a beautiful ball gown accompanied with slippers made of glass.

At the ball, the Prince seems none too excited to be dancing with his potential brides, one of whom is Cinderella's stepsister, Joy. The Fairy Godmother encourages Cinderella to enter the ball alone with a warning not to stay past midnight. Cinderella's entrance to the ball causes the Prince to halt his dance with Portia, mid-step, followed by the guests. As in Rossini's version, it is love at first sight, and even the King and Queen notice the difference in the Prince's face and step.

The Prince and Cinderella move away from the dance floor to speak privately, and although she knows his name, Cinderella refuses to reveal her true name to him. He asks, "Have you a strange feeling that something has just happened to you and you don't know what it is?"<sup>97</sup> This entire scene is reminiscent of the scene in which Cenerentola and Prince Ramiro meet in Rossini's *La Cenerentola*.<sup>98</sup>

Due to recent developments, the sisters sing of their jealousy and disappointment in being overlooked for someone so beautiful and delicate in the song "Stepsisters' Lament." As the ball continues, the Prince and Cinderella steal away to the Palace Gardens. Cinderella realizes how late it is and again refuses to reveal her name to the Prince. Enraptured by a kiss with the Prince and his confession of love, Cinderella loses track of time and rushes out just as the clock strikes midnight. She leaves behind a pumpkin and a glass slipper.

The next morning Cinderella is serving her family breakfast and enquires about the ball. When asked if anyone danced with the Prince, her two sisters maintain that they danced with the

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>98</sup> Rossini, "Tutto è deserto/Un soave non so che" in *La Cenerentola*, Act I, 59-67.

Prince for at least an hour. Cinderella presses and asks if they knew everyone in attendance, and they admit they knew all except for a princess who arrived late and left early. The sisters insist that the unknown princess only had one dance with the Prince. They were unable to confirm if he liked her or not since she was there for such a short time. They asked if Cinderella went to bed right after they left, but she replied she remained awake until a little after midnight dreaming of attending the ball. The sisters assert there is no way she could have known unless she was there, and Cinderella reveals that her “imagination” may be more vivid than they know. The family joins in her “supposition” but are wary of how she could know so much detail without being there.

Meanwhile, the Prince orders the Herald to try the slipper on every maiden in the kingdom, but no one has been found to fit the slipper. The Herald arrives at Cinderella’s home, and the sisters are unsuccessful in their attempts to fit into the slipper. The family assures him there is no one else in their home when the Fairy Godmother speaks up from outside to enquire about Cinderella. The Stepmother retorts she is only a chimney sweep and general servant, but per the Prince’s decree, the Herald insists he is to try the slipper on everyone. The stepmother chides the Fairy Godmother and says indignantly, “How dare you come poking your nose into my business!”<sup>99</sup> It is clear the Stepmother, just as Don Magnifico in Rossini’s *La Cenerentola*, wants no one to consider Cinderella and is sure there is no way she could be the one whom the Prince loves.

Cinderella is not home, however, and has made her way to the palace where the Herald and Prince eventually catch her. Cinderella reveals that she is the mysterious princess after the Herald fits the slipper on her. The scene transitions to Cinderella’s home. Now the tables have

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<sup>99</sup> Rodgers and Hammerstein II, *Cinderella*, 55.

turned with her stepfamily waiting on her hand and foot, bringing her last-minute items before the royal wedding. The musical ends at the wedding with the entire cast singing, “Do I Love You Because You’re Beautiful.”

### **The Story Comparisons**

Although Cinderella remains true to Perrault’s vision in each of these versions, the Cinderella in Rossini’s *La Cenerentola* is much more aware of the injustice committed against her (refer to Appendix B for character comparisons and song lists). While Cinderella fantasizes about and wishes for different experiences, Cenerentola begs not to be left alone and seeks for someone to intervene. Audiences see a more human-like personage in Rossini’s version. This humanness is what makes Cenerentola’s choice of mercy and grace all the more wondrous. Rossini’s version is a tale of love conquering abuse and rejection, while also revealing her daily struggle for love and a desire to escape.

### **Family**

Perrault’s version is that of a Gentleman who marries a woman that manipulates and controls him so much that he will not speak up against the abuses of his daughter. Meanwhile, Rodgers and Hammerstein tell a tale of a father who has passed away. Contrary to both versions, Rossini’s tale is of a widowed stepfather who squandered away his stepdaughter’s inheritance, threatens her, and refuses to love her. Although the sisters’ names vary in productions, their characters seem to remain the same. One sister, typically the older, is haughtier and a bit meaner to Cinderella. In Perrault’s version, it is Javotte (the only named stepsister) who is the meaner of the two while the younger sister is a bit more sympathetic. It is interesting to note that a 2013 remake with a new book by Douglas Carter Beane, using the music of Rodgers and Hammerstein, also based on the 1957 libretto, hearkens back to Perrault’s original version.

Charlotte (Javotte is sometimes translated as Charlotte even though Charlotte is a French name) and Gabrielle are the stepsisters. Gabrielle offers a dress to Ella (Cinderella) to wear to the ball. This seems to reference the point in Perrault's tale when Cinderella asks Javotte to borrow her dress. Rodgers and Hammerstein's original version does not differentiate much between the sisters, but it is clear in Rossini's version that the older of the two sisters, Clorinda, is the more aggressive counterpart. Tisbe is more willing to beg Cinderella's forgiveness than her older sister. Additionally, the relationship of the sisters to Cinderella is even more puzzling in Rossini's tale because they are Cinderella's half-sisters.

### **Fairy Godmother, Pumpkin, Glass Slipper**

While Rodgers and Hammerstein maintain the magical element iconic in Perrault's fairytale, there are subtle changes. Although Perrault's initiator of the transformation comes from the Fairy Godmother, Cinderella's wishes are what prompt the Fairy Godmother in Rodgers and Hammerstein's version. Another subtle change is from six mice in the original to four in Rodgers and Hammerstein. Rossini, however, chooses to forego actual magical elements and uses the "magic" of Alidoro's position to influence Cenerentola's transformation and attendance at the ball. Nevertheless, all are bound by time, whether due to a time limit on the magical elements or a need to make it home before the family returns.

One of the most epochal symbols in Cinderella is the glass slipper. The slipper is present in both Perrault's version and Rodgers and Hammerstein yet noticeably missing in Rossini's. According to A. Scott Parry in an interview about Opera Project Columbus' upcoming

production of *La Cenerentola*, “At the time, it was risqué to show a woman’s ankle. Bracelets were much more appropriate than actually showing ankles onstage.”<sup>100</sup>

### **Cinderella and Prince Meeting**

Although the Prince and Cinderella meet for the first time at the ball in Perrault’s and Rodgers and Hammerstein’s initial version, in Rossini and later versions of the Rodgers and Hammerstein the pair meet before the ball with the Prince dressed as a person of low status.

### **“Una volta c’era un re” / “In My Own Little Corner”**

Cenerentola’s favorite song, “Una volta c’era un re,” foretells her destiny and helps her make it through her days in the corner by the fireplace. It is a wistful song full of desire and hope for rescue from her current situation in life. “In My Own Little Corner,” sung by Cinderella, equally provides an escape from her reality. It, too, is a song of hope and foreshadows what is to come as she sings:

I am in the royal palace, of all places!  
I am chatting with the Prince and King and Queen,  
And the color on my two stepsisters’ faces  
Is a queer sort of sour-apple green!  
I am coy and flirtatious when alone with the Prince<sup>101</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The two versions of *Cinderella* discussed here are contrasting. One is more fairytale-like, involving a magical fairy godmother and glass slippers, while the other portrays a more realistic version of a “Cinderella story” with an all-knowing tutor who uses his influence and position to

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<sup>100</sup> Peter Tonguette, “Rossini’s Opera ‘Cinderella’ Uses Realism to Make Magic,” *The Columbus Dispatch*, posted June 21, 2018, <https://www.dispatch.com/entertainmentlife/20180621/rossinis-opera-cinderella-uses-realism-to-make-magic>, accessed November 3, 2018.

<sup>101</sup> Rodgers and Hammerstein II, *Cinderella*, 24.

get Cenerentola to the ball. Rossini seemed to use Perrault's fairytale as guiding inspiration, while Rodgers and Hammerstein used it as a solid framework. The graciousness, virtue, and mercy of Cenerentola are central to Rossini's story. Cinderella remains virtuous in Rodgers and Hammerstein, but ultimately, they had to write a 90-minute story for live family entertainment. This was a first venture into writing a musical for such a venue, and it was written in a way to allow for commercial breaks and to incorporate traditional family values.

In order to connect with audiences, it is important that a performer understand the intentional changes and choices Rossini and Rodgers and Hammerstein made to Perrault's *Cendrillon*. Each choice reflects the cultural and social influence of their time and may serve to inform modern interpretations. While the goodness and virtue of Cinderella provide the essence of these productions, her relationships with those around her and the events that lead to her eventual freedom vary. Perhaps one stepsister might show a bit more kindness, within the scope of her character and directions from a director, knowing that not all versions present both stepsisters as equal antagonists to Cinderella.

## CHAPTER 4: LA BOHÈME/RENT

### The Primary Source

#### *Scènes de la vie de Bohème*

Henri Murger published a series of vignettes called *Scènes de la vie de Bohème* in a magazine called *Le Corsaire* in 1845.<sup>102</sup> They were received with little success until Théodore Barrière approached Murger about turning the stories into a play. The two collaborated to bring the stories to the stage in a play called *Bohemia* or *La bohème*. After publisher Michel Levy proposed they turn the play into a novel, the pair accepted. The novel garnered great success and quite a profit for Murger and Barrière.<sup>103</sup> Murger wrote during a time of revolutionary crisis. His writings spoke to the younger generation of the time who “felt the full impact of the failed revolutionary expectations of 1848. They were the first generation who had to make some kind of peace with the refusal of bourgeois society to transform itself into something else. Murger met their need, spinning a thread of continuity between revolt and reconciliation, youth and age.”<sup>104</sup>

"Bohemian" was a derisive term originally associated with the Romani people group. Popularized by Murger, according to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, the term “bohemian” has since come to be defined as “a person (such as a writer or an artist) living an unconventional life usually in a colony with others.” On what “Bohemia” meant to Murger, Arthur Groos and Roger Parker state:

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<sup>102</sup> Dyana Neal, “The Bohemian Life According to Henri Murger,” Maryland’s Classical Music Station, 2012, <http://www.wbjc.com/the-bohemian-life/>, accessed November 9, 2018.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Arthur Groos and Roger Parker, *Giacomo Puccini: La Bohème* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 3.

For Murger and his contemporaries, Bohemia was merely a stop on the journey to a financially lucrative career, perhaps in the arts, perhaps not. Bohemia was more a state of mind than a place – one who wished to be called Bohemian should be devoted to arts and letters, disdainful of “bourgeois” conventions, poor, and young. The typical male inhabitant of Bohemia was well-educated and came from a middle- or upper-class family, so while the denizens of the Latin Quarter inhabited chilly rooms and did not always have enough to eat, most were never really too far away from a warm bed and a good meal, or at least a bit of financial help...The women of Bohemia tended to come from poorer backgrounds and had to earn their living as seamstresses, flower-sellers, or artists’ models (the latter being considered synonymous with prostitution.) In fact, these women often had to resort to selling their bodies, or at least to being “kept,” to avoid starvation.<sup>105</sup>

Murger’s bohemians are charismatic and carefree, pursuing life, love, and wine. They embrace their artistic lifestyle accompanied by poverty, but they are also attracted to the wealth of the bourgeois class. “[Bohemia’s] borders were youth and hope, gaiety and despair, love, poverty, courage, cold, and the hospital. To nineteenth-century explorers, Bohemia was a real country with real inhabitants but not marked on any map...It had to be entered through the mind, through some consciousness of belonging.”<sup>106</sup>

Murger’s father was the concierge of an apartment building where many artists lived. His father wanted him to take his place next to him as something more commonplace, but his mother had aspirations for him to be something nobler.<sup>107</sup> He grew up visiting the bourgeois tenants in his home while his parents toiled away in their janitorial and tailoring jobs.<sup>108</sup> As a child, his interactions with tenants like Manuel Garcia, Mme. Pauline Viardot, her husband, and her sister Maria Malibran, introduced him to other great artists of the time, such as Victor Hugo and Eugène Delacroix.<sup>109</sup> After learning of the riot in response to Hugo’s play, *Hernani*, Henri

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Groos and Parker, 1.

<sup>107</sup> Arthur Moss and Evalyn Marvel, *The Legend of the Latin Quarter: Henry Mürger and the Birth of Bohemia* (New York: The Beechurst Press, 1946), 20-22.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 24.

declared that he would grow up to be a great poet as well.<sup>110</sup> Perhaps the most influential person in his life was Monsieur de Jouy, the Academician, who used his resources and connections to provide Henri work opportunities.

As Murger got older, he spent much time socializing in the Latin Quarter where he befriended many artists. Murger based many of the characters in his stories on people he knew. Rodolphe and Mimi represent himself and his mistress, Lucile Louvet. An acquaintance of Murger's, Marie-Christine Roux, found herself interpolated into the stories as Musette.<sup>111</sup> His characters interact with each other and live in a manner that "is all for love, and love, with them, is known always to be a fragile, inconstant thing, even at the sharpest moment of enjoyment. If it lasts at all, it will last as a memory."<sup>112</sup>

In writing *Scènes de la vie de Bohème*, Murger shares the life of Bohemia in a way that is visceral and eternal.

The peculiar value of what he has to tell us of Bohemia is that it is told by a native of the country, who has lived there in his youth, and who has found life, with all its pains and pleasures, as much because of the pains as of the pleasures, admirable. Others have lived there, quite simply, and when they wrote have had other things to tell us. There have been writers who have visited Bohemia on their way to or from Shakespeare's seaport, inquisitive travellers with note-books; but Murger, writing of what he had lived, had precisely the talent to make it live over again, unmoralised, unchanged; the gay, hapless, irresponsible, eternally youthful thing that it had been.<sup>113</sup>

It is this exaggerated "realism" that has engaged audiences for well over a century.

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>111</sup> Gary Khan, ed., *Giacomo Puccini: La Bohème*, Overture Opera Guides Series (United Kingdom: Overture Publishing, 2017), 39.

<sup>112</sup> Arthur Symons, Introduction to *The Latin Quarter by Henry Murger*, ed. E.R. Waller, trans. Ellen Marriage and John Selwyn (London: Grant Richards, 1901), xii.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., x.

As mentioned earlier, Murger presented these stories in three different forms: short publications, a play, and a novel. Classical radio host, singer, and actress, Dyana Neal asserts that although Giacomo Puccini and his librettists, Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa, insisted otherwise, it is actually upon Murger's and Barrière's play that Puccini based his opera.<sup>114</sup> Nevertheless, it is more likely that Puccini and his librettists used both the novel and play. As a result, the play is the main focus in the forthcoming analyses with references to the novel after the final comparative analysis.

### ***Bohemia or La Bohème: A Play in Five Acts***

#### **Synopsis**

#### **Act I**

Murger's and Barrière's play has songs dispersed throughout the dialogue that make it more of a musical than a play. The play opens in a garden outside a house in a country neighborhood of Paris. Baptiste, a servant, notices a caravan just as Durandin enters and asks about the whereabouts of his nephew, Rodolphe. This scene provides the first glimpse of Rodolphe's character. Durandin goes on to bemoan the fact that Rodolphe is just like his father, a painter. He exclaims, "It's the same disordered spirit...The arts! The arts!"<sup>115</sup> Durandin has hopes that Rodolphe will marry Madame de Rouvre, but Rodolphe refuses. Even the 40,000 francs he would receive would not be worth it. Rodolphe thinks Mme. Rouvre is "the most flirtatious and imperious woman on earth, who orders you to love her so to speak."<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Neal, "The Bohemian Life According to Henri Murger."

<sup>115</sup> Théodore Barrière and Henry Murger, *Bohemia or La Bohème: A Play in Five Acts*, adapt. and trans. Frank J. Morlock (Rockville: Wildside Press, 2012), Kindle Edition, location 122.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, location 276-277.

Rodolphe, now alone, notices a group of artists and grisettes<sup>117</sup> and wishes to join them. Marcel calls to him from the group asking to borrow some silverware and place settings. They introduce themselves, and Rodolphe invites them over. The company includes Marcel, a seller of madrigals; Musette, a girl who loses the key to her heart too often; Schaunard, an orphan, painter, musician, and poet; Phemie, Schaunard's wife; and Colline, a philosopher and sinecure.<sup>118</sup> Audience members and readers begin to see Murger's definition of Bohemia as Marcel introduces Colline as, "the studious and dreamy child of Bohemia...Bohemia, bordered on the north by home, work, and gayety—on the south by necessity and courage—on the west and east by slander and the Hotel Dieu."<sup>119</sup>

Rodolphe discloses to his new companions that his "Uncle Million" wants to marry him off and requests to leave with the group. Durandin interrupts, and the company rushes off but not before Rodolphe begs them to wait in the nearby woods for him. Durandin delivers news that Mme. Rouvre has sprained her ankle and is waiting at the inn. Rodolphe takes the carriage under the guise of going to see her, but instead, he leaves to find Bohemia. Durandin realizes his nephew has tricked him.

## **Act II**

Act II opens in a double room in a sparsely furnished hotel. Musette is in the room to the left, and Rodolphe is in the room to the right. Musette is singing and speaks of the Vicomte leaving her, while Rodolphe dreams of his uncle leaving him a whole province in Peru. Both are interrupted by the cashier collecting rent. The cashier gives them until 4 p.m. to pay. Musette

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<sup>117</sup> According to *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*, a "grisette" is a young French working-class woman; a young woman combining part-time prostitution with some other occupation.

<sup>118</sup> According to *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*, an ecclesiastical benefice without cure of souls; an office or position that requires little or no work and that usually provides an income.

<sup>119</sup> Barrière and Murger, location 476.

continues her singing and eventually awakens Rodolphe. They engage in an argument with each other until they recognize the each other's voices. Rodolphe enters Musette's room, and she asks what has become of him. She admits she still loves Marcel. They speak of his former lover, Marie.<sup>120</sup> He shares that losing her enraged him and made him realize he needed a being to love. Rodolphe's need prompted him to adopt a lobster, but he ate it. He subsequently went to the orphanage and found a girl of eighteen he wanted to marry, but plans fell through.

Benoît interrupts looking for the money owed for rent, but Rodolphe does not have it yet. Benoît then approaches Musette, but he does not have the correct receipt, so he writes a new one. She asks him what he does when his renters, who are women, do not pay. He responds that he pursues them himself. Musette exclaims, "Well, run after me!"<sup>121</sup> as she runs out. Schaunard enters Rodolphe's room in search of money, and they come up with a plan to sell a ticket to a banquet to acquire money.

Baptiste arrives to fix up Musette's room for rent but refuses to do it after seeing how Musette left it. He then goes to Rodolphe's room to do the same but is distracted by finding Rodolphe's draft of *The Perfect Chimney Sweep* and begins to make corrections. Benoît arrives at Musette's room with Marcel, who proceeds to make a hole in the wall to spy on the girl who is supposed to stay next door to him so he can find inspiration. Mimi, who makes flowers, is taken to Rodolphe's room. Eventually, Benoît notices Baptiste has not made the room up and questions him about it.

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<sup>120</sup> One might wonder if this Marie references Murger's own love affair with Marie Vimal. He was so upset at her betrayal with his friend that he attempted suicide.

<sup>121</sup> Barrière and Murger, location 1448.

Now in their rooms, an ill Mimi can only think of what makes her happy—her love. Marcel finds her beautiful and claims to be in love with her but soon discovers a bonnet and realizes it resembles a bonnet of Musette's, his former lover. Rodolphe returns and both men recognize each other. Marcel, who recently received 2,000 francs, loans Rodolphe five francs. They talk of Musette, and Rodolphe reveals that Marcel is staying in Musette's room. Marcel discloses that there is a young girl now staying in Rodolphe's room.

Mimi overhears the exchange between the two men and realizes she hears the voice of her lover. It turns out Mimi was the orphan with whom Rodolphe fell in love, and the couple reunites. She confesses she always hoped he would return. Rodolphe says he will leave, but she attempts to persuade him to stay. He goes to stay with Marcel and requests that he send Mimi some light. Marcel obliges and enters with a candle. However, when Musette returns, Marcel rescinds his offer. After a failed attempt to get Musette to stay with Mimi, Rodolphe returns to Mimi.

### **Act III**

Musette tries to get Mimi to rest since it is evident Mimi is not well, but Mimi responds that Rodolphe is not rich, so she needs to work. As their conversation continues, Musette implies that she is having an affair with Baptiste. Mimi asks Musette if she still loves Marcel, and Musette responds that he is nice but will never get anywhere. If he does, then she will return. Mimi confesses she would die if Rodolphe leaves her. In response and in contrast to what Mimi just confessed, Musette sings

I love what shines,  
I love what resonates.  
Gold in joyous reflections,  
Whatever in life  
Gleams in poetry

To the ear or the eye.  
I love drunken folly  
Which ceaselessly  
Livens up Love and desire  
And the burning fevers  
Which make lips Red with pleasure  
I love what shines,  
I love what resonates.<sup>122</sup>

Mimi refuses another letter from Durandin via Baptiste as she has the previous letters from Durandin.

Musette and Marcel are planning to throw a party, but Musette receives word that her furniture will be repossessed. Marcel sends Baptiste to find the safe to pay, but Baptiste comes back empty-handed. They spent 2,000 francs in two months. Colline and Schaunard enter, and Schaunard admits that his wife, Phemie, has been having an affair, so he ended their relationship. After hearing about his friends' plight, he suggests ways to drastically cut costs for the party.

Baptiste pulls Rodolphe aside and shares with him the letters Durandin has been sending Mimi, letters full of promises if Mimi leaves Rodolphe and convinces him to go to Mme. Rouvre's ball. Mimi interrupts them and admits, yet again, that she has not been paid and only wants to kiss Rodolphe. They continue to talk about their disdain for money and how happy they would be if they did not need it. Their conversation turns to Musette and Marcel, and Rodolphe fears Musette will soon leave Marcel. Rodolphe asks Mimi if she loves him, and she replies, "More than yesterday and tomorrow more than today - to the end of the world."<sup>123</sup> Their moment is broken up by her chronic cough. Rodolphe wants a better life for her and claims that he loves

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., location 2192.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., location 2671.

her so much that he would rather see her with someone else who makes her happy. He declares his love for her but pleads she considers being with someone else. Mimi refuses.

Durandin enters and offers her 3,000 francs to leave Rodolphe. She argues she loves Rodolphe too much and beseeches Durandin to allow them to be together for the rest of her life, one month. She contends she will never touch his money as she earns her own. Durandin bemoans that she has killed Rodolphe's dream, and she finally relents. When Marcel, Rodolphe, and Musette return, Mimi plays her part, and Rodolphe finally relents and goes to Mme. Rouvre.

#### **Act IV**

Colline and Schaunard enter Mme. Rouvre's home. Schaunard is there to play piano for Mme. Rouvre while Rodolphe and Marcel have gone to dine at the Café Anglais. Now that Rodolphe is in good standing with his uncle, he receives all kinds of money from Durandin, which he shares with Marcel. Schaunard reveals Rodolphe has left Mimi, but Rodolphe charged him with obtaining news of her. Mimi is always ill. Musette is now the fiancé of a lord of high rank. Marcel and Rodolphe return followed by Mme. Rouvre and her friends. She imposes upon Marcel to draw for her friends while Rodolphe composes a poem. Marcel draws Mimi. Mme. Rouvre suspects Mimi is the drawing subject and intends to determine if Rodolphe still loves Mimi.

By chance, Mimi has come to Mme. Rouvre's home searching for Rodolphe. She waited two days and two nights and only wants him to know she has always remained faithful. Baptiste, on his way to retrieve Rodolphe, assures Mimi she only needs to say the word and Rodolphe would fall at her feet. Baptiste hatches a plan to reunite them, and Mimi is suspicious. Mme. Rouvre and Rodolphe return to talk while Mimi hides to listen. However, Mme. Rouvre knows

Mimi is there and orders Baptiste away before he attempts to warn Rodolphe of Mimi's presence. Mme. Rouvre asks Rodolphe about the drawing, and he admits it is Mimi. She presses Rodolphe for the truth about his love for Mimi, but he tries to distract her with physical affections. After an interruption, Rodolphe leaves, and Mme. Rouvre confronts Mimi. An argument ensues, and Rodolphe enters after discovering the truth about Mimi's presence. Mme. Rouvre reveals she knew Mimi was present for their conversation. Finally, Rodolphe renounces his recent actions, and he chooses love over money, resulting in Mme. Rouvre and his uncle severing ties with him.

## **Act V**

Down to their last bundle of kindling, Marcel, Rodolphe, Colline, and Schaunard gather in a room. Schaunard and Colline leave, and Marcel admits he has been waiting for Musette. Marcel and Rodolphe lament of their lost loves. Marcel talks about burning love letters from Musette for warmth. Musette interrupts the group by singing a song Mimi is known to sing. Rodolphe leaves Marcel and Musette. Marcel is upset by Musette's infidelity, but she recounts what kept her so long. Rodolphe returns and asks if Musette has seen Mimi and laments that Mimi might have a new lover and hats with feathers.<sup>124</sup> Unexpectedly, Mimi appears, leaning on the doorway. Rodolphe covers her in kisses. Recently returning from the hospital, she admits she is not well, but she tells Rodolphe she is just tired. Marcel leaves to find a doctor as he is afraid her illness is severe.

Mimi divulges she wanted to die after leaving Rodolphe at Mme. Rouvre's ball. She left because Durandin and Mme. Rouvre convinced her she was an obstacle to Rodolphe's future.

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid., location 4363.

Later, while attempting to jump from a bridge, a fever seized her, she fainted and ended up at the Hotel Dieu.<sup>125</sup> Rodolphe attempts to get her to rest, and she asks if he still loves her. He confesses that he does. Finally, the doctor arrives and tells Mimi, “Don’t worry, miss. It’s nothing, some rest—and everything will be fine,”<sup>126</sup> but discloses to Rodolphe that she has a week at most. Mimi states she already feels better since arriving and begs the doctor to completely cure her. Mimi notices Musette’s dress, commenting on how beautiful it is, and mentions how she would like a muff. Rodolphe declares she shall have one. Musette sends Marcel to get a muff for Mimi. Rodolphe leaves to request money from his uncle while Musette hands her bracelets to Marcel to sell for money.

Musette, watching over Mimi, speaks of the potential parallels of her life and Mimi’s. She comments on how cold Mimi is and covers her with a shawl. Marcel returns with the muff. He and Rodolphe were unsuccessful in their attempts to get money: Schaunard gives thirty sous and Colline three francs. Schaunard sold his suit, and Colline sold a series of books for the money. Durandin is convinced Mimi is playing a part, so he refused to give any money to his nephew. Ultimately, Mme. Rouvre enters, bringing money to the group. She is followed by Durandin, who says he will pay for Mimi to go to a nursing home, but she must leave. Mme. Rouvre objects and says Durandin will not give any money, and Mimi will not be leaving. She calls Durandin cruel in his apathy toward Mimi’s fainting. Durandin finally relents and gives his blessing, but it is too late as Mimi has passed.

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<sup>125</sup> The Hotel Dieu is a hospital in Paris for the poor.

<sup>126</sup> Barrière and Murger, location 4524.

## *La bohème/Rent*

### **The Story Comparisons**

Henri Murger's *Scènes de la vie de Bohème* is best-known as interpreted through Giacomo Puccini's great opera, *La bohème*, which premiered in 1896. Almost one hundred years later, Jonathan Larson's adaptation, *Rent*, premiered in a New York Theatre Workshop. The opening scene in both *La Bohème* and *Rent* reference the opening of Act V of Barrière's and Murger's play. Both shows open with Marcel (painter)/Marcello (painter) /Mark (filmmaker) and Rodolphe (poet/composer)/Rodolfo (poet)/Roger (songwriter) in their room with almost nothing to burn for warmth (refer to Appendix C for character comparisons and songs lists). In *La bohème*, Marcello is working on a painting as Rodolfo stares pensively over the city, meanwhile *Rent* opens with Mark's attempt to shoot a film and Roger's unsuccessful pursuit of writing one epic song. Larson's Roger cannot seem to get his guitar to tune. This scene refers to Schaunard's interaction with a vendor during the opening of *La bohème*'s Act II where he haggles over an out-of-tune trumpet. Although Murger has them down to their last bundle of kindling in Act V, Puccini has left them nothing to burn but Rodolfo's script for a five-act drama, and Larson has them burn Mark's posters and screenplays.

Next, Colline enters in *La bohème*, and all are interrupted by Schaunard accompanied by two boys bringing food, wine, cigars, and wood. Schaunard shares the outlandish tale of his new-found wealth. A man approaches him to drive a neighbor's parrot to an early grave by incessant musical performances. He eventually feeds the bird parsley to kill him. Schaunard's take is mirrored in a later scene in *Rent* after Collins enters with Angel Dumott Schunard bearing gifts of coffee, cigarettes, bananas, cereal, wood, and vodka. Angel earned his fortunes after a woman approached him to play his drums incessantly to drive her neighbor's dog to "bark itself to

death.”<sup>127</sup> Larson switches the prior scene with this next one in his version. In *La bohème*, Schaunard convinces Marcello, Rodolfo, and Colline to eat in the Latin Quarter, but they are interrupted by Benoît coming to claim past-due rent. They begin to drink together, and he regales them with tales of his conquests and eventually leaves. Benjamin Coffin III (Benny) interrupts Mark and Roger to collect the past year’s rent before Collins enters. They remind him he used to live there, and he leaves empty-handed.

All but Rodolfo leave to go to the Latin Quarter. Mimì enters to ask for a light for her candle, but a coughing fit seizes her, and she faints in his arms. She takes a sip of wine and timidly leaves only to return because she lost her key. At this point, new melodic material is introduced, and the pace of the show hastens.<sup>128</sup> A draft blows out Mimì’s candle as Rodolfo rushes to her, extinguishing his own candle in the process. Both grasp for the key, but Rodolfo finds it first and pockets it. They find their way to each other, and their hands briefly touch. Rodolfo sings of her tiny, cold hand and goes on to sing, “But luckily—it is a moonlit night, and here we have the moon close to us.”<sup>129</sup> He introduces himself, and Mimì responds, “They call me Mimì, but my name is Lucia.”<sup>130</sup> She goes on to tell him she embroiders silks and satins and makes lilies and roses. Rodolfo’s friends call up to him, and the couple leave holding hands. This plot is paralleled in *Rent* but with Larson’s modern afflictions. In *Rent*, the power is out, and all have left but Roger as he declined to go out due to lack of funds. His ex-girlfriend recently left him a note saying, “We’ve got AIDS,” before committing suicide.<sup>131</sup> While Roger is singing his anthem, “One Song Glory,” a knock on the door interrupts him. Mimi enters asking for a light

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<sup>127</sup> Jonathan Larson, *Rent* (New York: Music Theatre International, 1996), 55.

<sup>128</sup> Groos and Parker, 15.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>131</sup> Larson, 30.

for her candle. Roger recognizes her but cannot remember from where. He notices she is shivering, but Mimi blames the cold and being a little weak from not eating. Just as Mimi downplays her illness in *La bohème*, Mimi downplays her addiction and withdrawal in *Rent*.

Roger comments on Mimi's hair in the moonlight just as Rodolfo and Mimi sing of the moonlight. Mimi leaves with her lit candle, but quickly returns for something she lost. She lost her stash of drugs and reveals that she works as a dancer at the Cat Scratch Club. Roger tries to confront her about her addiction since he recognizes the signs from when he used to use drugs. Roger finds her stash but hides it. They go on to sing about the moon again, and when they touch hands, Roger sings about how cold Mimi's hands are.

In contrast to Puccini's *La bohème*, Larson's Mimi in *Rent* sings about how big Roger's hands are instead of him commenting on how small hers are. He introduces himself, and she announces, "They call me Mimi." Although Murger's interaction involving the candle is much subtler, his Rodolphe and Mimi were already in love before they meet in the apartments.

Larson introduces Maureen (Musetta), during the same act as Murger which is decidedly earlier than Puccini. Woven throughout the opening scenes are glimpses of Maureen and her girlfriend, Joanne (Alcindoro). From Mark's mom in the second song of *Rent*, the audience discovers that Maureen dumped him after realizing that she is a lesbian. Nevertheless, Maureen still relies on Mark for assistance with her sound equipment needs. Larson embodies the on-again, off-again love story between Marcel/Marcelo and Musette/Musetta in the relationship between Maureen and Joanne, though he alludes to the ties between the original pairing in that Mark and Maureen were together and continue to work together.

Mark shares with Benny that Maureen was not faithful to him. Benny uses Maureen's upcoming protest to bribe Mark and Roger by offering to forgive their debt and allow them to continue to live rent-free if they can stop her from holding her protest. Later, Mark and Joanne meet to set up sound for the protest. They both lament being Maureen's lover and all it entails in "The Tango" Maureen which seemingly references Marcello's line, "Her name is Musetta; surname: Temptation!"<sup>132</sup> While this scene does not mirror anything in Murger's original version or Puccini's retelling, it does point to Musette's/Musetta's/Maureen's fleeting and self-serving inclinations regarding love.

The scene in the Latin Quarter in *La bohème* is not seen in *Bohemia* but may be a reference to Mme. Rouvre's ball and the ball Musette and Marcel had hoped to host. The Latin Quarter, as interpreted through Larson's eyes, in *Rent* paints a vastly different picture where the vendors and patrons are beggars, addicts, and dealers.

Rodolfo buys Mimì a bonnet in *La bohème*. This bonnet could be a nod to Rodolphe's line in *Bohemia*, "Perhaps she has a new lover and hats with feathers."<sup>133</sup> The hat does not exist in *Rent*, and Roger does not buy Mimi anything, although he does "rescue" her from a dealer. However, Angel buys Collins a new coat since he lost his during a mugging. A coat plays an important role in each story: in both Murger's and Puccini's telling, a suit or coat is sold at the end to help cover the cost of caring for Mimi/Mimì; the coat in *Rent* represents yet another way Angel covers (protects, provides for, and loves) Collins.

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<sup>132</sup> Groos and Parker, "Il suo nome è Musetta; cognome: Tentazione!" in *Giacomo Puccini: La Bohème*, 20.

<sup>133</sup> Barrière and Murger, location 4363.

Still in the Latin Quarter, Musetta's sings "Quando m'en vo" ("Musetta's Waltz") in *La bohème* and reveals her character. This aria provides a brief glimpse into her experiences with lovers. Musette in *Bohemia* sings,

I love what shines, I love what resonates. Gold in joyous reflections, Whatever in life;  
Gleams in poetry; To the ear or the eye. I love drunken folly; Which ceaselessly; Livens  
up Love and desire; And the burning fevers; Which make lips Red with pleasure: I love  
what shines, I love what resonates.<sup>134</sup>

Similarly, "Quando m'en vo" is brought directly into *Rent* via Maureen's song, "Take Me or Leave Me," and Mimi's song, "Take Me Out Tonight," in which Mimi sings of using her looks to get favors. As an exotic dancer, she uses her looks and body to earn her living. Even Benny insinuates that she used her body to convince him to change his mind after locking them out of the apartment building, but she refutes this.

"Musetta's Waltz," one of the most iconic arias, is referenced several times in *Rent*. In a way that further corroborates the idea that Musetta serves as inspiration for Mimi, Roger's guitar theme is "Musetta's Waltz." In his quest to write his one song, he continually plays a version of "Musetta's Waltz." Mark even comments on this in *La Vie Bohème A*: "And Roger will attempt to write a bittersweet, evocative song... that doesn't remind us of Musetta's Waltz."<sup>135</sup> When Roger finally writes his epic song, "Your Eyes," his theme is reimagined as a rock version of "Musetta's Waltz."<sup>136</sup>

The Life Cafe in *Rent* represents the famed Café Momus in *Bohemia* and *La bohème*. Both are restaurants with which the respective composers were familiar, The Life Cafe in

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<sup>134</sup> Barrière and Murger, location 2192.

<sup>135</sup> Larson, 204. The script I am using says "provocative," but every other source I have found and the recording from the original Broadway cast use the word "evocative."

<sup>136</sup> Coenen, *That Doesn't Remind Us of Musetta's Waltz*, 60.

Alphabet City and Café Momus in Paris. However, one might also argue that the Café, which offers a moment of frivolity and freedom from care, exists within the dream of Collins to “Open up a restaurant in Santa Fe.”<sup>137</sup> It is clear that the Café Momus is a source of life and a place to gather for those in *La bohème*. The Life Cafe in *Rent* does this, as well, by bringing together Benny and his new wife, along with the large party of those who attended Maureen’s protest. The song, “La Vie Bohème” mimics the Café Momus scene in *La bohème* in its chaos and interactions. The song is also reminiscent of the bohemians’ song in the opening act of *Bohemia*:

To lunch, my friends.  
Chance gaily unites us  
On this flowered strand.  
Already our places are set.  
Royal Champagne...it’s not wine!  
Tasteless...pass us some Burgundy...  
Let’s drink our pure wine  
And long live youth!  
Long live youth!  
CHORUS:  
Our future must shine  
In the sun of our twenty years.  
Let’s love and sing together,  
Youth is too short.  
CHORUS  
Armed with patience  
Against evil destiny,  
Courage and hope,  
We mould our bread.  
Our careless attitude  
To the fanfares of our song  
Makes our misery happy,  
Youth is too short  
CHORUS...  
CHORUS  
Since the most beautiful things,  
Love affairs and beauty  
Like lilies and roses,  
Have only the season of Summer,  
When May in flowering arbors

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<sup>137</sup> Larson, 122-134.

Drapes the green flag of Spring,  
Let's love and sing some more.  
Youth is very short.  
CHORUS<sup>138</sup>

Puccini's scene in which Mimì listens in on the conversation between Rodolfo and Marcello references the scene at Mme. Rouvre's house where Mimi eavesdrops on Rodolphe and Mme. Rouvre's conversation. Rodolfo confesses he wants to leave Mimi, but Marcello calls him out on his jealousy. Rodolfo implies Mimi is a flirt, but even Puccini's "unusual harmonic simplicity and uncharacteristically low tessitura should alert us to its insincerity...the strain of maintaining this false insouciance is too great. Rodolfo breaks down and...admits his undiminished love for Mimì."<sup>139</sup> He is afraid she is dying. Mark and Roger have the same conversation in "Goodbye Love," a scene full of the rawness of grief and fear. In both versions Mimi overhears the conversation, and the lovers bid each other farewell after Mimì/Mimi realizes Rodolfo/Roger does not want to watch her die.

The final act of all three shows begins where all of the shows truly begin,<sup>140</sup> back in their apartments. However, in *Bohemia* and *La bohème*, Musette/Musetta appears to have moved on from Marcel/Marcello and is in a better financial situation. In *Rent*, Mimi has moved on to Benny, and Maureen is still begging for Joanne's forgiveness. "What You Own" from *Rent* is representative of the scenes in *Bohemia* and *La bohème* in which Marcel/Marcello and Rodolphe/Rodolfo lament the loss of their loves.

The ultimate scene in each show surrounds Mimi and her health, only one show offering a happy ending. Mimi appears after Musette in *Bohemia*, leaning on the doorway. As the scene

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<sup>138</sup> Barrière and Murger, location 742-793.

<sup>139</sup> Groos and Parker, 25.

<sup>140</sup> I count Act I from Barrière's and Murger's *Bohemia* to be a sort of prologue as much of the material in *La Bohème* and *Rent* aligns more with Acts II-V.

progresses, her company rushes off to fulfill her wish for a muff, to find a doctor and money, and to allow her and Rodolphe time together. In *La bohème*, Musetta brings the gravely ill Mimì to Rodolfo. She recounts how she found Mimì on the street and how Mimì begged to be brought to him. Musetta anxiously discusses the lack of food and medication for Mimì and directs Marcello to sell her earrings in exchange for a doctor and medicine. Eventually, Musetta leaves with Marcello to buy a muff for Mimì to warm her hands. Colline removes his coat and bids it farewell since he will sell it to help Mimì.

Rodolfo places the bonnet on Mimì's head after all have left. Everyone returns, Marcello and Musetta with cordial and a muff. As Mimì places her hands in the muff, she falls asleep, and she dies. The opera ends with Rodolfo's cries of, "Mimì!" In the finale of *Rent*, Roger has returned to New York searching for Mimi but is unable to find her. Maureen cries out for Mark, Roger, or anyone to help her bring Mimi inside. Maureen found her in the street, and she was freezing. Mimi begged to go to Roger. Mark and Collins set out to get her help. As in both Murger's and Puccini's versions, Mimi and Roger admit their love for each other in the final scene. In the two preceding shows, Rodolphe/Rodolfo does not offer a gift to Mimi other than love, but Roger offers his song. It is the song that had been eluding him from the beginning of the show, and he ends it with a final cry of, "Mimi!" *Rent* offers a semblance of a happy ending in that Mimi reawakens after a near-death experience in which she sees Angel who tells her to turn around and listen to Roger's song, "Your Eyes." *Rent* ends with the full company singing "Without You" mixed with repetitions of "no day but today."

The tribulations of the bohemians of *Bohemia* and *La bohème* transform into Jonathan Larson's contemporary woes in *Rent*. Woven throughout *Rent* is the utter despair and hope of those surviving AIDS, not only in the principal characters but through the ensemble members

who sing, “Life Support” and “Will I?” These scenes provide a tangible way for people to interact with the stigma of HIV and see humanness in those whom society dehumanized.

Just as Murger based many of his characters on himself and those he knew personally, Larson did the same. Larson directly referred to the way visitors to his own apartment had to call from a phone across the street and have keys tossed down to visit him. Both Murger and Larson based Rodolphe/Roger loosely on themselves. Mark and Maureen had a basis in Larson’s personal love life as an ex-girlfriend left him for a woman. Although the original concept for *Rent* differed greatly from the version with which most are familiar, the final version focused on AIDS, representing the amount of Larson’s friends who were HIV-positive. His political views, while still apparent, were tamed in the final version.

Both Murger’s novel and play are accepted to be the basis for Puccini’s opera. According to Groos and Parker, the following chapters in *Bohemia* inspired the following scenes in *La bohème*:

It becomes immediately clear that [Puccini, Illica, and Giacosa] follow Murger’s “Scènes” in the first and last acts. The list of borrowings for Act I begins with the detail of Marcel drowning an Egyptian on his “The Crossing of the Red Sea” (Ch. 7), and includes the small episodes in which Rodolphe burns his play act by act (by himself, Ch. 9), Schaunard relates the murder of a parrot (Ch. 17), and the Bohemians dupe their landlord (he is nameless in Ch. 19, but called Benoît in the play). By far the closest and most extensive borrowing, the meeting of Rodolfo and Mimì - especially the beginning moments - derives from the story of the artist Jacques and the seamstress Francine (Ch. 18)...Act IV also corresponds generally with Murger’s *Bohemia*. The sentimental reminiscences of Marcello and Rodolfo in the opening scene derive from a similar narrative retrospective in the “Epilogue to the Loves of Rodolphe and Mademoiselle Mimi” (Ch. 22). After the sudden entrance of Mimi, we have parallel sources, the chapters depicting the deaths of Francine and Mimi (Ch. 18 and 22) as well as Act V of the play, which itself conflates these two stories. The opera generally follows the action of the play: the sudden arrival and collapse of Mimì, her request for a muff, the pawning of Musette’s earrings and Schaunard’s coat, Musette’s concern for Mimì, and Mimì’s death. Although the novel provides a different ending... Acts II and III have almost no

basis in the “Scènes.” The only chapter that even faintly resembles Act II, “A Café in Bohemia” (Ch. 11), takes place *inside* the Café Momus.<sup>141</sup>

### **The Characters**

The characters in Larson’s *Rent* remain true, in a sense, to the characters in Puccini’s *La bohème*, yet because of the new context within which Larson set his cast some of the relationships have shifted a bit, as have occupations. In fact, some of his characters even draw inspiration from more than one of Puccini’s characters. Marcel is a painter in both Murger’s and Puccini’s works, but he becomes Mark, a filmmaker, in Larson’s. A filmmaker is like a painter in that he attempts to capture the world as he sees it in his medium. Rodolphe/Rodolfo/Roger starts off as a poet and composer in Murger’s original setting, evolves to a poet in Puccini’s, and returns to being a songwriter in Larson’s setting. Murger’s Musette is clearly the basis for Puccini’s Musetta, however, Larson chooses for Musetta to serve as inspiration for Maureen and Mimi. Mimi not only draws inspiration from Maureen, but the interactions she has with Roger directly correlate to those of her earlier counterparts with Rodolphe/Rodolfo. Colline remains a philosopher in Puccini’s version and is reimagined as a professor by Larson. Schaunard remains the same musical performer in all versions, although the love interests vary or are not existent depending on which version of the work. *Rent* makes Angel Dumott Schunard a central character who teaches those around him about living life to the fullest and ultimately inspires people even after his death.

### **Conclusion**

Each of the three shows celebrate and disdain Bohemia as its inhabitants fight to maintain the ideals of bohemia while trying to survive in a world full of convention. Bohemia is a place

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<sup>141</sup> Groos and Parker, 58-59.

that shuns convention and celebrates diversity, art, love, and living for today. For Murger, Bohemia is a step along the way to the bourgeois. Bohemians are described by Murger through the voice of Marcel as artists

with no other means of existence than art itself... Their everyday existence is a work of genius, a quotidian problem. But if a small fortune falls into their hands, they are to be seen cavalcading in the most serious fantasies, love the youngest and the most beautiful, drinking the best and oldest wines - never finding enough windows to throw their money out of.<sup>142</sup>

It is evident that Murger, Puccini, and Larson embody these ideals in their shows. These ideals are palpable in the relationships, trials, and tribulations their characters face. Murger's play and Puccini's *La bohème* conclude before the bohemians have entered a new echelon of financial status. Larson's *Rent*, however, offers a middle ground as Collins has found a way to access money and share his wealth by rewiring an ATM to give money to all those with the correct ATM code. Mark has gained notoriety for his film of the riots and signs with Buzzline before quitting to pursue his ideals. In a way, Roger has also transcended his bohemian life as he has composed his elusive song, even though he has gained neither fame nor money for it.

While the ideals remain the same, choices regarding character relationships, setting, character fulfillment, and music shift to highlight cultural idioms and expectations. Tuberculosis may not be as tangible for today's audience as other diseases, but the struggle for survival is. Roger may have evolved from Rodolphe through Rodolfo, but the essence of his core character has remained. *Rent's* Mimi may not be a timid woman like her two predecessors, but her love and life struggles are consistent. The artists in all shows fight to find fulfillment in their lives.

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<sup>142</sup> Barrière and Murger, location 498.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

A comprehensive analysis of how opera and musical theatre composers interpret the treatment of characters, music, and storyline provides great insight into social, genre, and cultural-specific information necessary for authentic performances. Popular music and tradition impact the compositions of each show, and it is enlightening to see how cultural influence works its way into each interpretation. This cultural impact is what pushes composers to reinterpret and create stories that appeal to their contemporary audiences. The ability to speak to what is relevant to the audience's experience makes these productions both real and spectacular. Whether it be through political satire, musical idioms, such as jazz or opera, or life experiences, the composers of the works studied in this show found a way to contemporize a primary source and bring it alive on stage in a way that impacted audiences for generations.

This essay has demonstrated that comparing shows with original sources can reveal which core elements remain, such as plot, characters, and ideals. Chapters 2 and 4 dealt with modern adaptations of an older opera based on a primary source, while Chapter 3 discussed two shows based on the same primary source. Chapter 3 is vastly different from Chapters 2 and 4 because the medium for which the musical was written changed, but it is equally vital and important.

The political and cultural contexts of the original and modern versions of *The Beggar's Opera/The Threepenny Opera* and *La bohème/Rent* are also apparent throughout this study as relationships and music change. Imported Italian Opera heavily influenced John Gay and Johann Pepusch, while new harmonies, textures, and jazz impacted Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht. These musical influences along with the concurrent political climate permeate the works. The movements toward realism and cultural norms affected the changes Rossini made to Perrault's

*Cendrillon*, while the medium and social climate of the United States heavily influenced Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella*. Writing for cinema offered the opportunity to impact a wider audience, but one must wonder if there may have been more character, relational, or plot development had the constraints of writing for six small acts not existed.

The cornerstone of the Cinderella story, no matter her actual name, is her character. In great contrast to this, *Bohemia/La bohème/Rent* in Chapter 4 reveal that even though a character remains in a show, the personalities and characteristics associated with them specifically may change. Murger's Mimi and Puccini's Mimì are very similar to each other but drastically differ from Larson's Mimi. Mimi's relationship to Rodolphe/Rodolfo/Roger remains as does her illness.

The core ideals, generally the crux of a show, are unmistakable in each show. Both *The Beggar's Opera* and *The Threepenny Opera* highlight government corruption and how social status impacts the framework within which people operate. The very essence of the story of Cinderella is that kindness, goodness, and humility will win over jealousy, selfishness, and meanness. The Bohemian ideals presented first by Murger carry through Puccini's *La bohème* and Larson's *Rent*.

As a composer, choices must be made to either reinvent or invent something new, but one must know what already exists to do this. Kurt Weill chose to keep many of the characters the same, with minor changes, and closely adhered to John Gay's storyline and text. He added to and edited what he knew would resonate more with his audiences. Jonathan Larson generally maintained the same characters, storyline, text, and kept his audience in mind. However, he also found ways to embody the characteristics of one of Puccini's characters into two in *Rent*. Rossini and Rodgers and Hammerstein made vastly different choices with their interpretations of

Perrault's *Cinderella*. Socio-cultural movements (i.e., realism) and artistic medium could have greatly impacted Rossini's more realistic characters while amplifying Rodgers and Hammerstein's more fantastical characters and events.

Although it may not be useful for someone performing the role of Cinderella in the Rodgers and Hammerstein version to be intimately familiar with Rossini's *Cenerentola*, it is insightful to know which characteristics from the original version each librettist and composer chose to retain. Librettists, composers, actors, and directors alike are able to make more judicial artistic choices based on how a story or character has developed through the lens of a different composer and genre.

### **Suggestions for Future Study**

There are numerous other works that lend themselves to this type of study. Had the scope of this essay been broader, more works and genres could have been explored, such as *Madama Butterfly* and *Miss Saigon* or *Aida*. One could also look at operas and musicals that started as novels, were then made into a film, and finally found their way to the stage such as, Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*. The possibilities to expand the research on a fairytale like Cinderella could incorporate Jules Massenet's *Cendrillon*, which follows more closely to Perrault's version than does Rossini's, Walt Disney's *Cinderella*, and Sergei Prokofiev's ballet, *Cinderella*. Musically, a comprehensive score study comparing *La bohème* and *Rent*, could provide great insight into the specific rhythms, harmonies, harmonic progressions, etc. each composer chose to represent their characters and tell their story.

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APPENDIX A

Tables for *The Beggar's Opera* and *The Threepenny Opera*

Table A1. Comparison of Characters from *The Beggar's Opera* and *The Threepenny Opera*

<i>Inspiration</i>	<i>The Beggar's Opera</i>	<i>The Threepenny Opera</i>
Jonathan Wild/Sir Robert Walpole	Mr. Peachum, head of criminals	Jonathan Jeremiah Peachum, head of a gang of beggars
	Mrs. Peachum, his wife	Mrs. Peachum, his wife
Faustina Bordoni	Polly Peachum, their daughter	Polly Peachum, their daughter
Jack (John) Sheppard/ Sir Robert Walpole	Macheath, head of a gang of robbers	Macheath, head of a gang of crooks
	Lockit, Police chief	Brown, Chief of London Police Smith, a police constable
Francesca Cuzzoni	Lucy Lockit, his daughter	Lucy, his daughter
	Wat Dreary, Macheath's gang	Walt Dreary, Macheath's gang
	Crook-finger'd Jack, Macheath's gang	Crook Finger Jack, Macheath's gang
	Matt of the Mint, Macheath's gang	Matt of the Mint, Macheath's gang
	Robin of Bagshot, Macheath's gang	Sawtooth Bob, Macheath's gang
	Nimming Ned, Macheath's gang	Ed, Macheath's gang
	Harry Paddington, Macheath's gang	Jimmy, Macheath's gang
	Matt of the Mint, Macheath's gang	
	Jemmy Twitcher, Macheath's gang	
	Ben Budge, Macheath's gang	
	Filch, Peachum's loyal servant	Filch, one of Peachum's beggars
	Jenny Diver, Peachum's gang, prostitute—conspires with Peachum to trap Macheath	Jenny Diver, a whore
	Diana Trapes, Peachum's gang	Whores (Dolly, Betty, Vixer, Molly, etc.)
	Mrs. Coaxer, Peachum's gang, prostitute – Macheath is in her bed when he is captured	
	Dolly Trull, Peachum's gang, prostitute	

Table A1—continued

	Mrs. Vixen, Peachum’s gang, prostitute	
	Betty Doxy, Peachum’s gang, prostitute	
	Mrs. Slammekin, Peachum’s gang, prostitute	
	Suky Tawdry, Peachum’s gang, prostitute—conspires with Peachum to trap Macheath	
	Molly Brazen, Peachum’s gang, prostitute	
	Beggar, narrator	Street Singer, narrator
	Player	
	Constables, Drawers, Turnkey, etc.	
		Reverend Kimball
		Beggars
		Policemen

Table A2. Songs from *The Beggar's Opera*

<i>The Beggar's Opera</i>	Singer(s)
Overture and Introduction	Instrumental
Through all the employments of life	Peachum
'Tis woman that seduces all mankind	Filch
If any wench Venus' girdle wear	Mrs. Peachum
If love the Virgin's heart invade	Mrs. Peachum
A Maid is like the golden ore	Mrs. Peachum
Virgins are like the fair flowers	Polly
Our Polly is a sad slut	Mrs. Peachum and Omnes
Can Love be controll'd by advice	Polly
O Polly, you might have toyed and kissed	Polly, Mrs. Peachum and Omnes
I, like a ship in storms, was tossed	Polly
A fox may steal your hens, Sir	Peachum and Mrs. Peachum
O ponder well! Be not severe	Polly
The turtle thus with plaintive crying/Melodrama. Now I am a wench indeed	Polly
Pretty Polly, say	Polly, Macheath and Omnes
My heart was so free	Macheath
Were I laid on Greenland's coast	Polly, Macheath and Omnes
Oh, what pain it is to part	Polly
The miser thus a shilling sees	Polly, Macheath
Fill every glass	Men of the Town
Let us take the road	Men of the Town
If the heart of a man is depressed with cares	Macheath
Youth's the season made for joys	Macheath and the Ladies of the Town
Before the Barn-door crowing	Jenny Diver and Ladies of the Town
The gamesters and lawyers are jugglers alike	Ladies of the Town
At the Tree I shall suffer with pleasure	Macheath
ACT II	
Man may escape from rope and gun	Macheath
Thus when the good house-wife sees a rat	Lucy
How cruel are the traitors	Lucy
The first time at the looking-glass	Macheath
When you censure the age	Lockit
Is then his fate decreed sir?	Lucy and Lockit
Thus when the swallow	Polly
How happy could I be with either/I'm bubbled, I'm bubbled	Lucy, Polly, Macheath
Cease your funning	Polly and Omnes
Why, how now, Madam Flirt?	Lucy and Polly

Table A2—continued

No power on earth can e'er divide	Lucy, Polly, Macheath, Peachum, Lockit and Omnes
ACT III	
When young at the bar	Lucy
Ungrateful Macheath...My Love is all Madness and Folly	Lucy
Thus gamesters united in Friendship are found	Lockit
The modes of the court so common are grown	Macheath and Omnes
What gudgeons are we men	Lockit and Peachum
In the days of my youth	Mrs. Trapes, Lockit and Peachum
I'm like a skiff on the ocean tossed	Lucy
A curse attends the woman's love	Lucy, Polly
Among the men, coquettes we find	Polly
Come sweet lass	Lucy
Hither, dear husband, turn your eyes	Lucy, Polly
Which way shall I turn me	Macheath
When my hero in court appears	Polly
When he holds up his hand	Lucy
Ourselves, like the great	Lockit and Peachum
The charge is prepared	Omnes
Scena. O cruel, cruel case!/But now again my spirits sink/Since laws were made for every	Macheath
Would I might be hanged	Lucy, Polly, Macheath
Thus I stand like the Turk	Omnes

Table A3. Songs from *The Threepenny Opera*

<i>The Threepenny Opera</i>	Singers(s)
Overture	Instrumental
Ballad of Mack the Knife	Street Singer
Peachum's Morning Hymn	Mr. Peachum
Instead-Of Song	Mr. and Mrs. Peachum
Wedding Song	The Gang
Pirate Jenny	Polly Peachum
Cannon Song	Macheath, Tiger Brown
Love Song	Macheath, Polly
Barbara Song	Polly
First Threepenny Finale	Peachum Family
Melodrama	Macheath
Polly's Song	Polly
Ballad of Sexual Dependency	Mrs. Peachum
Pimp's Ballad (Tango Ballad)	Macheath, Jenny
Ballad of the Pleasant Life	Macheath
Jealousy Duet	Lucy, Polly
Second Threepenny Finale	Macheath, Mrs. Peachum
Lucy's Aria <sup>143</sup>	Lucy
Song about the Futility of Human Endeavor	Mr. Peachum
Solomon Song	Jenny
Call from the Grave	Macheath
Epitaph	Macheath
Walk to the Gallows	Instrumental
Third Threepenny Opera Finale	Chorus, Macheath, Brown, Peachum Family

<sup>143</sup> "The Threepenny Opera." This song was cut on opening night but later performed on occasion.

APPENDIX B

**Tables for *La Cenerentola* and *Cinderella***

Table B1. Comparison of Characters from *La Cenerentola* and *Cinderella*

<i>Inspiration</i>	<i>La Cenerentola</i>	<i>Cinderella</i>
Charles Perrault <i>Cendrillon ou La Petite Pantoufle de Verre</i> - probably Egyptian or Chinese in origin		
Father	Don Magnifico, Baron of Mt. Fiascone	
Stepmother		Stepmother
Javotte, Older Sister	Clorinda	Portia (named after a lawyer so supposed to show wit - she has none)
Sister 2 (younger)	Tisbe (younger)	Joy (not necessarily the younger) (supposed to be named for her disposition but it is at odds with her demeanor)
Culcendron (Ashy Ass - translated to Cinderwench) - Cendrillon (called this by the nicer, younger sister)	Angelina/Cenerentola	Cinderella
Fairy Godmother		Godmother
6 mice – horses		
1 rat - coachman		Coachman
6 lizards - footmen		Footman
King		King
Queen		Queen
Prince	Don Ramiro, Prince of Salerno	Prince
Guests at the Ball	Courtiers of the Prince and Ladies	Guests at the Ball
Gentleman responsible for slipper		Steward
	Dandini, Don Ramiro's Friend	Herald
	Alidoro, Don Ramiro's Teacher	Chef
		Guards
		Minister
		Townsppeople and Children

Table B2. Songs from *La Cenerentola*

<i>La Cenerentola</i>	Singer(s)
ACT I	
Overture	Instrumental
No, no, no: non v'è	Clorinda, Tisbe
Una volta c'era un re	Cenerentola, Clorinda, Tisbe, Alidoro
O figlie amabili	Coro, Clorinda, Tisbe, Cenerentola, Alidoro
Cenerentola, presto	Tisbe, Clorinda, Cenerentola
Miei rampolli femminini	Magnifico
Sappiate che fra poco	Clorinda, Tisbe, Magnifico
Tutto è deserto	Ramiro, Cenerentola
Un soave non so che	Ramiro, Cenerentola, Clorinda, Tisbe
Non so che dir	Ramiro, Magnifico
Scegli la sposa	Coro
Come un'ape ne'giorni d'aprile	Dandini, Clorinda, Tisbe, Magnifico, Ramiro, Coro
Allegrissimamente, che bei quadri!	Dandini, Magnifico, Dandini, Ramiro, Alidoro
Signor, una parola	Cenerentola, Magnifico, Dandini, Ramiro, Alidoro
Sì, tutto cangerà	Alidoro, Cenerentola
Là del ciel nell'arcano profondo	Alidoro
Ma bravo, bravo, bravo!	Dandini, Magnifico, Ramiro, Clorinda, Tisbe
Conciosiacosaché ... Intendente? Direttore?	Coro, Magnifico
ACT I FINALE	
Zitto zitto, piano piano	Ramiro, Dandini
Principino, dove siete?	Clorinda, Tisbe, Dandini, Ramiro, Alidoro, Coro
Ah! Se velata ancor	Coro
Sprezzo quei don	Cenerentola, Ramiro, Dandini, Clorinda, Tisbe, Alidoro
Signora Altezza, in tavola	Magnifico, Clorinda, Tisbe, Cenerentola, Ramiro, Dandini
ACT II	
Mi par che quei birbanti	Magnifico, Tisbe, Clorinda
Sia qualunque della figlie	Magnifico
Ah! Questa bella incognita	Ramiro, Dandini, Cenerentola, Alidoro
Sì, ritrovarla io giuro	Ramiro, Coro

Table B2—continued

Ma dunque io sono un ex?	Dandini, Magnifico
Un segreto d'importanza	Dandini, Magnifico
Una volta c'era un re * similar to In My Own Little Corner	Cenerentola
Quanto sei caro!	Cenerentola, Clorinda, Magnifico, Tisbe
Temporale	Instrumental
Scusate, amici	Dandini, Magnifico, Ramiro, Clorinda, Cenerentola
Siete voi? ... Questo è un nodo avviluppato	Ramiro, Cenerentola, Tisbe, Clorinda, Dandini, Magnifico
Donna sciocca! Alma di fango	Clorinda, Magnifico, Ramiro, Dandini, Tisbe, Cenerentola
Dunque noi siam burlate?	Tisbe, Clorinda, Alidoro
ACT II FINALE	
Della fortuna instabile	Coro
Sposa ... Signore, perdona	Ramiro, Cenerentola, Magnifico
Nacqui all'affanno	Cenerentola and All
OMITTED	
ACT II	
Introduzione often omitted in performances <sup>144</sup>	Coro
Sventurata! mi credea often omitted in performances <sup>145</sup>	Clorinda

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<sup>144</sup> “Cenerentola, La,” *OperaGlass*.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

Table B3. Songs from *Cinderella*

<i>Cinderella</i>	Singers(s)
ACT I	
Overture/Curtain Music	Instrumental
The Prince Is Giving a Ball	Herald, Townspeople
Cinderella March (Stepsisters' Lament)	
In My Own Little Corner	Cinderella
Your Majesties	Chef, Steward, King, Queen
Boys and Girls Like You and Me	King, Queen
In My Own Little Corner Reprise/Fol-De-Rol	Cinderella, Godmother
Impossible	Cinderella, Godmother
The Transformation	Instrumental
It's Possible	Cinderella, Godmother
Entr' Acte/Curtain Music	Instrumental
Gavotte	Instrumental
Cinderella's Entrance	Instrumental
Ten Minutes Ago	Prince, Cinderella
Stepsister's Lament	Joy, Portia
Waltz	Instrumental
Do I Love You Because You're Beautiful?	Cinderella, Prince
Twelve O'Clock	Instrumental
ACT III	
Prelude/Curtain Music	Instrumental
When You're Driving Through the Moonlight	Cinderella, Stepmother, Stepsisters
A Lovely Night	Cinderella, Stepmother, Stepsisters
Do I Love You Because You're Beautiful Reprise	Prince
The Search	Orchestra
Palace	Orchestra
The Slipper Fits	Orchestra
Finale/Wedding	Chorus
Bows/Exit	Orchestra

APPENDIX C

**Tables for *Bohemia, La Bohème, and Rent***

Table C1. Comparison of Characters from *Bohemia, La vie de la Bohème, and Rent*

<i>La vie de la Bohème</i> (play)	<i>La Bohème</i>	<i>Rent</i>
Durandin, businessman		
Rodolphe, a compose/poet and Durandin's nephew - a composer? Described as one who sells madrigals, location 343	Rodolfo, a poet	Roger Davis, a songwriter
Marcel, a painter	Marcello, a painter	Mark Cohen, a filmmaker
Schaunard, a musician	Schaunard, a musician	Angel Dumott Schunard, street musician
Gustave Colline, a philosopher	Colline, a philosopher	Tom Collins, a professor
Benoît, hotel manager	Benoit, landlord	Benjamin (Benny) Coffin III, landlord
Baptiste, a servant		
Waiter/Cashier		
Gentleman		
Doctor		
Césarine de Rouvre, a young widow	*** also seems a bit like Musetta	
Mimi	Mimi	Mimi Márquez, exotic dancer *** also seems a bit like Musetta
Musette	Musetta	Maureen Johnson, performer
Phemie		
Lady		
Commissioner	Customhouse Sergeant	
Césarine's servants	Students, seamstresses,	
Guests	Bougoise, shopkeepers, street vendors, soldiers, waiters, children	
Ten men, four women		
	Parpignol, Toy vendor	
	Alcindoro, State Councillor	Joanne Jefferson, lawyer

Table C2. Songs from *Bohemia*

<i>Bohemia</i>	Singer(s)
ACT I	
True happiness; There's not happiness; Is for the heart. In marriage in my heart. No slavery No slavery; For us For between you and me; No slavery No slavery; Is so sweet. Is sweet. <sup>146</sup>	Durandin, Rodolphe
Our future must light up; In the sunshine of our youth. Let's love and sing some more. Youth comes only one. <sup>147</sup>	Chorus
(while picking flowers) Let's glean; Let's pick; The daisies. Among the green turf. To the sweet songs of warblers. Let's mingle, mingle, Our gay tunes. <sup>148</sup>	Musette, Phemie
To lunch, my friends. Chance gaily unites us; On this flowered strand. Already our places are set. Royal Champagne...it's not wine!...Tasteless...pass us some Burgundy....Let's drink our pure wine; And long live youth! Long live youth! Our future must shine; In the sun of our twenty years. Let's love and sing together, Youth is too short. Armed with patience; Against evil destiny, Courage and hope, We mould our bread. Our careless attitude; To the fanfares of our song; Makes our misery happy, Youth is too short. If the chosen mistress, Who by luck loves us; And makes ..... <sup>149</sup>	Chorus, Marcel, Rodolphe, Schaunard, Baptiste, Phemie, Musette
Pretty mouth and rosy lips; To sing out, always open. See Rose, Alert like a gay lark. To plait a crown; With both hands from ripe wheat. Rose, go harvest, and return; With both hands full of azure flowers. <sup>150</sup>	Musette

<sup>146</sup> Barrière and Murger, location 256.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., location 277.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., location 476.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., location 742-820.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., location 964.

Table C2—continued

<p>It's over. I'm forgetting; My brilliant life; And I repudiate; My noble love affairs. Yes, I say to you goodbye forever, Diamonds and admirers. Only to you, Marcel, My love, caresses and smiles. It's over. I'm forgetting; My brilliant life; And I repudiate; My noble love affairs. It's over. Finally, I'm forgetting She's forgetting; My brilliant life. Her brilliant life. And I repudiate And she's repudiating; My noble love affairs. Her noble love affairs.<sup>151</sup></p>	<p>Musette, Rodolphe</p>
<p>I love what shines, I love what resonates. Gold in joyous reflections, Whatever in life; Gleams in poetry; To the ear or the eye. I love drunken folly; Which ceaselessly; Livens up Love and desire; And the burning fevers; Which make lips Red with pleasure: I love what shines, I love what resonates.<sup>152</sup></p>	<p>Musette</p>
<p>As always, making common cause, Bold adventurers for pleasure. We run through all the City's quarters To meet fortune's steps.<sup>153</sup></p>	<p>Musette, Marcel</p>
<p>ACT V</p>	
<p>Memories of long ago; Recall to him my tenderness. Unfaithful lovers; Are always the most charming....<sup>154</sup></p>	

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., location 1133-1157.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., location 2192.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., location 2592.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., location 4339.

Table C3. Songs from *La bohème*

<i>La Bohème</i>	Singer(s)
ACT I	
Questo ‘Mar Rosso’ mi ammollisce <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Borrowed from Puccini’s composition <i>Capriccio sinfonico</i></li> <li>• Melody of Rodolfo’s <i>Nei cieli bigi</i> borrowed from Puccini’s <i>La lupa</i></li> </ul>	Marcello, Rodolfo, Colline
Pensier profondo!	Colline, Marcello, Rodolfo
Legna!...Sigari!...Bordò!	Rodolfo, Marcello, Colline, Schaunard
Si può?...Chi è là?	Benoit, Marcello, Schaunard, Colline, Rodolfo
Timido in gioventù	Benoit, Marcello, Rodolfo, Colline, Schaunard
Non sono in vena	Rodolfo, Mimì
Si sente meglio?	Rodolfo, Mimì
Che gelida manina! - Mimì’s cold hand	Rodolfo
Si. Mi chiamano Mimì -	Mimì, Rodolfo
Ehi! Rodolfo! Rodolfo!	Schaunard, Colline, Marcello, Rodolfo, Mimì
O soave fanciulla, o dolce viso	Rodolfo, Mimì
ACT II	
Aranci, datteri!	Chorus, Schaunard, Colline, Rodolfo, Mimì, Marcello
Chi guardi?	Rodolfo, Colline, Mimì, Schaunard, Marcello, Parpignol, Chorus
Viva Parpignol!	Chorus, Marcello, Schaunard, Colline, Rodolfo
Ch’io beva del tossico!...Oh! Musetta!	Marcello, Schaunard, Colline, Rodolfo, Alcindoro, Musetta, Mimì, Chorus
Quando me’n vo’ Quoted in <i>Rent</i>	Musetta, Marcello, Alcindoro, Mimì, Rodolfo, Schaunard, Colline
Chi l’ha richiesto?	Colline, Schaunard, Rodolfo, Marcello, Musetta, Mimì, Chorus
ACT III	
Ohè, là, le guardie...Aprite!	Chorus, Customhouse Officer, Musetta
Sa dirmi, scusi, qual è l’osteria	Mimì, Customhouse Sergeant, Customhouse Officers
Mimì?!... Speravo di trovarvi qui	Marcello, Mimì
Marcello, finalmente	Rodolfo, Marcello, Mimì

Table C3—continued

Mimì è una civetta	Rodolfo, Marcello, Mimì
Mimì è tanto malata!	Rodolfo, Marcello, Mimì
D'onde lieta usci	Mimì
Dunque è proprio finita?	Rodolfo, Mimì, Marcello, Musetta
ACT IV	
In un coupé?	Marcello, Rodolfo
O Mimì, tu più non torni	Rodolfo, Marcella
Che ora sia?	Rodolfo, Marcella, Schaunard, Colline
Gavotta...Minuetto...Pavanella...Fandango	Colline, Marcello, Rodolfo, Schaunard
C'è Mimì...c'è Mimì	Musetta, Rodolfo, Schaunard, Mimì, Marcello
Vecchia zimarra	Colline, Schaunard
Sono andati?	Mimì, Rodolfo
Che avvien?...Dorme?...Riposa	Schaunard, Mimì, Rodolfo, Musetta, Marcello
Che ha detto il medico?	Rodolfo, Marcello, Musetta, Schaunard, Colline

Table C4. Songs from *Rent*

<i>Rent</i>	Singers(s)
ACT I	
Tune Up #1	Mark, Roger
Voice Mail #1	Mark's Mother
Tune Up #2	Mark, Roger, Collins, Benny
Rent	Mark, Roger, Benny, Collins, Joanne, Company
You Okay Honey?	Christmas Caroler, Angel, Collins
Tune Up #3	Mark, Roger
One Song Glory	Song, Roger
Light My Candle	Mimi, Roger
Voice Mail #2	Mr. and, Jefferson
Today 4 U	Collins, Roger, Mark, Angel
You'll See	Benny, Mark, Roger, Collins, Angel
Tango: Maureen	Joanne, Mark
Life Support	Paul, Gordon, Steve, Ali, Pam, Sue, Angel, Mark
Out Tonight	Mimi, Mimi
Another Day	Mimi, Roger, Company
Will I?	Steve, Company
<i>On the Street</i>	Christmas Carolers, Squeegee Man, Mark, Collins, Angel, Homeless Woman
Santa Fe	Mark, Ensemble
I'll Cover You	Angel, Collins
We're Okay	Joanne
Christmas Bells	Company, Company
Over the Moon	the, Maureen

Table C4—continued

La Vie Bohème A	Mark, Waiter, Roger, Benny, Mimi, Collins, Angel, Maureen, Joanne, Mr. Grey, Company
I Should Tell You	Mimi, Roger
La Vie Bohème B	Maureen, Collins, Joanne, Mark, Angel, Company
ACT II	
Seasons of Love A	Company
Happy New Year A	Mark, Roger, Mimi, Collins, Angel, Maureen, Joanne
Voice Mail #3	Mark's Mother, Alexi Darling
Happy New Year B	Mark, Roger, Mimi, Collins, Angel, Maureen, Joanne, Benny, The Man
Take Me or Leave Me	Maureen, Joanne
Seasons of Love B	Company
Without You	Roger, Mimi
Voice Mail #4	Alexi Darling
Contact	Angel and Company
I'll Cover You (Reprise)	Collins, Company
Halloween	Mark
Goodbye Love	Mark, Roger, Mimi, Collins, Maureen, Joanne, Benny
What You Own	Mark, Roger
Voice Mail #5	Roger's Mother, Mimi's Mother, Mr. Jefferson, and, Mother
Finale A	Homeless People, Mark, Roger, Collins, Maureen, Joanne, Mimi
Your Eyes	Roger
Finale B	Company