

The Development of the Role of the Actor-Musician in  
Britain by British Directors Since the 1960's

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I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own.

Signed: .....

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## **The Development of the Role of the Actor-Musician in Britain by British Directors During the Period 1960 to 2000. Abstract**

This thesis will investigate the creation and development by two British directors, Glen Walford and Bob Carlton, of the use of the actor-musician in small-scale touring, popular theatre community and subsidised repertory with a strong community base performance practices from 1960 to 2000. It will argue that the actor-musician had been established in touring community theatre companies, where distinctive working methodologies had evolved. Using previously unpublished archive material and new interviews; this is the first dedicated academic study to identify the work of these directors as a distinctive and innovative practice, which has one key strand of musical theatre performance in Britain since the 1960s. It locates this new body of practice in a diverse tradition of socially engaged and politically informed theatre that evolved through times of financial stringency, it will argue nonetheless that the work of these two directors has primarily creative or artistic validity which was driven and underpinned by social and political concern.

The thesis will demonstrate that the two directors investigated represent the key line of continuity in the field of actor-musician practice. Each of these directors has worked and continued to work in very distinct styles and contexts and utilised the actor-musician in differing ways. The thesis will employ case studies in order to demonstrate ways in which the potential and range of the actor-musician was developed in: classic plays, including Shakespeare reworked and extant musicals; new work that has been specifically conceived and created for actor-musicians. In conclusion it will evaluate the continuing significance of this practice within British musical theatre.

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## The Literatures

Ros Merkin compiled and published a documentary book entitled, *Liverpool's Third Cathedral, The Liverpool Everyman Theatre, In the Words of Those Who Were, And Are, There*.<sup>1</sup> Even though this publication details each of the forty production seasons from the Everyman's inception in 1964 until 2004, the Everyman archive has been consulted independently for its unpublished material. However, this book is invaluable as it provides a reframe, which was not Merkin's, for the work of the two directors, Glen Walford and Bob Carlton, which both of whom worked at the Everyman, although Carlton was only employed as a freelance director. For each season, Merkin's scrupulous compilation provides detailed listings for each production, photographs, reviews, appreciative and non-appreciative letters, staff anecdotes and financial strictures, all of which are set in the context of ever-changing social forces.

Elizabeth Schafer's biography<sup>2</sup> is the most recent on Lilian Baylis and provides a detailed overview of the social conditions under which the Old Vic would eventually flourish. Earlier books have concentrated mainly on the work done by Baylis at the Old Vic and Sadlers Wells. The opening chapters are specifically concerned with the Cons family, Baylis's maternal line, and their musical connections. This early information sets the context for the sociocultural influences that impacted on The Old Vic combined with the work and influence that Emma Cons, Lilian's maternal aunt, brought to the borough of Lambeth and to The Old Vic. Most importantly, it clearly outlines the appalling social conditions that dominated many areas of London during the nineteenth century in order to establish the philanthropic and social work that was begun and in which Cons was very pro-active. This book provides the background material that demonstrates how the work that was started at The Old Vic in the mid nineteenth hundreds, would resonate through British theatre both socially and aesthetically. Previous books on Baylis and The Old Vic have been more

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<sup>1</sup> Merkin, Ros. 2004. *Liverpool's Third Cathedral, The Liverpool Everyman Theatre, In the Words of Those Who Were, And Are, There*. Liverpool: Liverpool and Merseyside Theatres Trust Ltd.

<sup>2</sup> Schafer, Elizabeth. 2007. *Lilian Baylis: A Biography*. 2007 1st ed. United Kingdom: University Of Hertfordshire Press.

focused on the actual productions, whereas this one helps to establish the social context and influence that resonated with Joan Littlewood. This thesis is concerned with the development of the actor-musician within the sociocultural theatre context and this book helps to establish the wellspring for this work.

Richard Wagner's book, *The Art Work of the Future and Other Works*<sup>3</sup>. *The Art Work* is dedicated to exploring the fusion between 'dance, tone and poetry'. Wagner looks back at the varying art forms of the Greeks and his own personal influences. Wagner sought to create works that combined dance, music and drama and his influence on opera and music were extensive and far-reaching. Wagner wanted to use music as an emotive language that would speak when words failed. His influence went beyond the creation of music and poetry; he was also responsible for innovations in theatrical practice, such as the dimming of lights in the auditorium.

It was his work and theories that influenced the generation of German Jews who escaped to America. It was they who largely created the American musical, with its fusion of dance, song and music. More importantly though, his influence can be seen in the big book musicals with their large orchestral arrangements and luxuriant sounding string sections. This essay is invaluable for understanding the influences that helped create and still influence the American musical, which in turn has impacted on the British musical form and helped to create the mega-musical. Whilst Wagner was arguably the most dominant influence, there are and have been others. For the purpose of this thesis it is essential to be able to differentiate between the musicals' influences, their history and styles.

Whilst Wagner has had substantial influence on the American musical there has been a parallel musical theatre tradition in Britain and one that has arguably two different routes. Elizabeth Hale Winkler in *The Function of Song in Contemporary British Drama*<sup>4</sup> provides an insight into the nature of song within a dramatic context. Elizabeth Hale Winkler is of the opinion that contemporary theatre is indebted not only to theatrical traditions but also musical traditions.

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<sup>3</sup> Richard Wagner, *The Art-Work of the Future*, in *Richard Wagner's Prose Works* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd, 1895).

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Hale Winkler, *The Function of Song in Contemporary British Drama* (London and Toronto: Delaware, 1990).

Her concern is that there has been little research on or acknowledgment of the impact that the British musical heritage has had upon the play. She points out that drama's appeal exists in the combination of visual, aural and mimetic resources within a performance and that a playwright's use of music and verse is capable of focusing the audience's attention to highlight the underlying meaning of a play.

Winkler theorises on dramatic song, arguing for it to be recognised as a separate genre. She discusses how the song works for the audience on a literary level as well as its psychological impact. Winkler devotes a chapter to the work of John Arden and Margaretta D'Arcy, who have been prolific in the inclusion and significance of song within their plays. The songs they use are either taken from traditional songs or modelled on the same. In a chapter on Edward Bond, Winkler points out that in contrast to Arden and D'Arcy, Bond draws upon varied sources of traditional and contemporary music, such as patriotic songs and pop lyrics. Winkler provides two main areas of significant interest, 'Dramatic Song: Theoretical and Historical Considerations' and 'The Dominance of the Popular Song: Music Hall to Rock'. This helps demonstrate the continuum of the folk form from early times and the inclusion of song by contemporary playwrights, such as John Osborne and Tom Stoppard.

John Blacking is a professor in social anthropology and an ethnomusicologist. In his book *How Musical is Man*<sup>5</sup> Blacking challenges the Western notion that only a small percentage of the population are musical and maintains that it is the complexity of Western classical music that puts it technically beyond the reach of many. This book is valuable for three reasons: firstly, because it examines the constituent elements of communication via language, music and integration with the physical body; secondly, because it challenges the Western notions of 'art music' and 'folk music', thirdly, it provides an insight into the reason why audiences regard amateur musicianship above professional acting.

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<sup>5</sup>John Blacking, *How Musical is Man?* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1974).

In contrast with books on musical theatre, there is a sparsity of written work on music hall. *Music Hall Performance and Style*<sup>6</sup> is a book comprised of seven chapters from seven different contributors. The opening chapter, entitled 'Music in the Halls', concentrates on the common musical language of music hall in the late Victorian period. It is particularly concerned with the roots of the music and how the music had been passed down through the ages whilst adapting new lyrics as and when required. This book provides material on popular songs and the radical break that the music hall made from the earlier type of popular song. It also provides important information on the performance material, its history, application and the performing styles. The fusion of song and character is discussed and how it was now insufficient just to sing a song. There is a valuable section discussing the inclusion of informal narrative and acting out songs by the performers. Four of the chapters are dedicated to music-hall performers but each one of these is a singer. There is no reference made to any form of actor-musician.

Whereas *Working the Halls*<sup>7</sup> is a combination of the Honri family and music hall history. Peter Honri wrote the book as a paean to his family in celebration of an unbroken line of music hall performers for over a century. The Honri family descended from two ancestral lines. On one side were entertainers and on the other designers, builders and managers of music halls. The book is a mixture of anecdote, music-hall sketches and music. It incorporates a wealth of pictorial evidence in the form of photographs, sketches and playbills. Therefore it gives a very rounded and accurate description of both the music-hall circuits and the life of the performer.

The Honri family were multi-skilled and musical people. The photographs demonstrate the various entertainment skills they utilised: clog dancing, comedy, ventriloquism and playing a variety of musical instruments. Although they played orchestral instruments such as the piano and trumpet, they concentrated on instruments that had their roots in 'folk' entertainment, such as the banjo and the concertina.

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<sup>6</sup> J.S. Bratton, *Music Hall Performance and Style* (Milton Keynes and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1986).

<sup>7</sup> Peter Honri, *Working the Halls* (London: Futura Publications, 1974).

The book does not concentrate solely on performance but gives them their historical context and origins. This book is a valuable resource as it gives a clear description of the progression from the travelling showmen and itinerant musicians of the eighteenth century through to the twentieth century. It demonstrates the popularity of the multi-skilled performers in Victorian and Edwardian times. The book concludes by stating the developmental and linked routes since the demise of music hall, such as cabaret and pop music.

*Musical From The Inside Out*<sup>8</sup> helps to evaluate the transition from large to small scale musical. Stephen Citron is an American lyricist and composer who writes about the creation of a musical from the originator's point of view. His intention with this book is to show how musicals are made from conception to production. This is a very detailed and informative book, which concentrates heavily on the American musical. Citron gives invaluable advice for both librettists and composers, explaining in great detail the range, structure and types of song. Citron gathered much of his research material from questionnaires that he distributed and consequently it is not always in sufficient depth or as accurate as might be required. But the advice given in this book does provide many insights. The strongest and most useful section is on song structure. It challenges preconceptions and provides pointers to uncover truths, especially when attempting to analyse show tunes. Citron identifies songs types and also discusses the importance of staging. The value of this book is that it is one of the few on musical theatre construction that attempts to look at the differences between the West End and Broadway, given that sometimes the composers and librettists work both in America and the United Kingdom. His insights and information are reinforced by quotes from the major musical songwriters from both countries. This has been helpful to the research as many of the musicals in this thesis are either of American origin or have transferred from the UK to America or vice versa.

Robert McKee's book, *Story, Substance, Structure, Style and Principles of Screenwriting*,<sup>9</sup> is very instructive and benefits from the courses that he regularly gives on screenwriting. As a master of the craft, he provides many

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<sup>8</sup>Stephen Citron, *The Musical from the Inside Out* (Chicago: R.D. Ivan, 1992).

<sup>9</sup>Robert McKee, *Story, Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting* (London: Methuen, 1999).

insights on the art of storytelling. His well-chosen examples range from detailed expositions of Shakespeare's plots, much used by television soap-opera writers, to up-to-date screenplay examples to demonstrate his points. In discussing narrative structure, he is very clear and insistent on the relationship with the audience and the material. As well as this he is very instructive on the most effective way to use the protagonist to maintain audience interest and build to a satisfactory closure. Unlike other books on scriptwriting, McKee puts a lot of emphasis on the writer learning to keep the audience in mind. Although this book is concerned primarily with screen or film writing, much of what is being said is relevant to all writers.

McKee's demonstrates that he has a forensic skill when approaching any script and his book is clear and effective in its instruction. It has been a very valuable resource when analysing strengths and weaknesses in the book musical, specifically when trying to deduce if and where structural problems lie. It also makes one challenge the popular myths and preconceptions that have been attached to various play texts.

In common with McKee's book is *Writing A Musical*<sup>10</sup> by Richard Andrews.

Andrews also run writing workshops and has worked extensively in the West End in all aspects of theatre production, from stage management to producer. There is an extremely valuable chapter dedicated to lyric writing and structure. He works through from the choice of title, metre and rhyme scheme. Unusually for this type of book, Andrews acknowledges that the songs are written to be sung. He therefore devotes a section looking at the difficulties of phonetics, both from a writer and singer's perspective. It is also unusual in that it begins with a very brief history of the musical theatre, and concludes with a chapter that looks towards the musical of tomorrow. It discusses the restrictions of West End theatres and venues as well as what he terms as the 'dinosaur' mega-musicals. This book is valuable for two reasons. The first being that it is written by a British author, and as the majority of musical theatre books originate from the United States. Whilst he does discuss the American musical and Broadway

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<sup>10</sup> R. Andrews, *Writing a Musical* (London: Robert Hale, 1997).

he concentrates on the West End, which functions differently and has a completely different musical history.

The last book on the musical theatre writing craft, *Making Musicals*<sup>11</sup>, is by Tom Jones. Jones is a successful American lyricist/librettist and best known for the musical *The Fantasticks*, renowned on Broadway for being the longest running musical show in the United States. This is a short book based on a series of lectures that he gave on the craft of musical writing. It is not meant to be analytic, rather a more informal approach to the subject in which he shares his thoughts and gives an insight into his creative process.

Jones writes with the insider's confidence about the American musical form, drawing heavily upon his own work, successful and unsuccessful, to illustrate how and why, in his opinion, musicals do or do not work on the stage. In the chapter entitled 'Break up of The Form' he lists eight substantial bullet points that explain what has to be done in order to create a Broadway musical. The value of this book is Jones's ability to identify weaknesses and strengths that the non-practitioner musical biographers overlook. There is an excellent chapter devoted to Rodgers and Hammerstein, their working practices and their influence upon the musical theatre form, and discussing, although not naming it as such, Wagner's influence. There has, as he acknowledges, been much written on their partnership but, as with the rest of the book, he has new observations about it. Furthermore, he uses the historical background to examine where the musical has moved to and questions its direction and development in the future. This book has provided much greater comprehension of the American Broadway musical partly because Jones is so insightful but mainly because he belongs to the musical theatre fraternity. He does not provide lengthy analysis, but goes directly to the heart of the difficulty. This is particularly invaluable in the analysis of musical books.

At present there is a small amount written on the actor-musician. Millie Taylor, in her book, *Musical Theatre, Realism and Entertainment*,<sup>12</sup> devotes part of a chapter on actor-musicianship providing a brief overview of *Return to the*

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<sup>11</sup> Tom Jones, *Making Musicals* (New Jersey: Limelight Editions, 1998).

<sup>12</sup> Taylor, Millie, *Musical Theatre, Realism and Entertainment* (Ashgate Interdisciplinary Studies in Opera) 2013 Kindle edition. Chapter 6.

*Forbidden Planet* and acknowledging that this production was inspirational for other regional directors. Also discussed is the actor-musician aesthetic and most importantly the audience reaction to the component parts or roles of the performer as there are many choices on which to focus. The over-arching focus of the chapter is 'coherent characterisation' for the performer when working with book musicals.

Ed. Willett, John and Manheim, Ralph, *Bertolt Brecht: Plays, Poetry and Prose, Journals 1934 – 1955*, Methuen, London, 1993.

This diary or journal is the second of two journals that the playwright, Bertolt Brecht maintained. Whilst not named by Brecht himself, this diary was given the unofficial title of 'Arbeitsjournal' or 'work journal'. The editors point out that Brecht was more guarded when he wrote this last journal. This is evident when a comparison is made with his earlier diaries, which appeared to be more spontaneous and full of ideas. Brecht actually wrote in this diary that he was being cautious in what he wrote because of unwelcome readers. He does not make clear who they might have been. The diary is full of gaps, sometimes for days and sometimes much longer periods. However, it is full of comments and observations on theatre and his creative practices.

Brecht was anti the Wagnerian approach to theatre and music. He wanted economy in his theatrical art and not the lavish theatre of Wagner. Brecht understood the power of music and was against it being used as an emotive tool. He was particularly opposed to Beethoven's work and what he regarded as its manipulative influence and sub text. The diary entries make it quite clear what he liked and wanted to gain from music both on a personal level as well as a professional one. There are no long lengthy discussions on music within the diary. There are often small entries but whilst he was economical in discussion, his précis makes the meaning/s very clear.

Brecht favoured music hall and the folk tradition. It is for this reason that this book is valuable specifically as it stands in opposition to the work and theories of Wagner and its influence on the theatre. This opposition helps to make clear the underlying structure and influence on the American musical book musical.

It does however also define the musical structure of those pieces that do not embrace the Wagnerian tradition.

Ed. Bratton, J.S., *Music Hall Performance and Style*, Open University Press Milton Keynes and Philadelphia 1986.

*Music Hall Performance and Style* is one of a series of books that is primarily concerned with British popular music. The overarching questions for the series are who made the music cultures of the British Isles and what makes music and songs popular. Whilst music is the main focus for the series, each book aims to foster interdisciplinary research.

This book is comprised of seven chapters from seven different contributors. The opening chapter, entitled, *Music in the Halls*, concentrates on the common musical language of music hall in the late Victorian period. It is particularly concerned with the roots of the music and how the music had been passed down through the ages whilst adapting new lyrics as and when required.

Four of the chapters discuss individual music hall performers, two from either gender. Each one of these performers had a strong stage identity and the authors of each of these chapters investigate class, sexism and ideology. A further chapter discusses the 'black face' minstrelsy in Victorian Britain.

This book provides material on popular songs and the radical break that the music hall made from the earlier type of popular song. It also provides important information on the performance material, its history, application and the performing styles. The fusion of song and character is discussed and how it was now insufficient just to sing a song. There is a valuable section discussing the inclusion of informal narrative and acting out songs by the performers.

MacColl, Ewan, and Peggy Seeger. 2009. *Journeyman: An Autobiography*. United Kingdom: Manchester University Press.

Ewan MacColl can be credited with being the first person to create a strong tradition of music combined with drama within the social aware and alternative theatre scene. MacColl was a very evocative writer and his book captures and

recreates the atmosphere of his early life in Salford and gives an unsentimental account of the hardship and poverty in the north of England. The descriptions of his father's union activities combined with his love of singing, provide the foundation and understanding of the influences, MacColl's drive and the work that would eventually he created with Joan Littlewood, his first wife.

The book contains chapters on agit-prop, Theatre of Action and Theatre Workshop. It does contain similar information to Littlewood's on their research and thirst for knowledge pertaining to theatre but although they were in agreement politically speaking it is evident that MacColl's knowledge and experience of this was greater.

More importantly though it gives a very clear description concerning his inclusion of his music for example in *Johnny Noble a Ballad Opera* in which the actors sang a capella.

Gorney, Howard, and Ewan MacColl, eds. *Agit-Prop to Theatre Workshop Political Playscripts 1930-50*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986.

This book supplements the autobiographical detail regarding the early work created by Littlewood and MacColl. It contains an introductory chapter that provides a commentary on the influences and development of their socialist touring companies. More importantly, it contains the scripts of their early agit-prop and touring productions. Included is *Johnny Noble* with some of the music written by MacColl for the production.

Littlewood, Joan, and Peter Rankin. *Joan's Book: Joan Littlewood's Peculiar History as She Tells It*. London: Bloomsbury USA, 2003.

Joan Littlewood's importance in the creation of the actor-musician is as a key antecedent to Glen Walford. Whilst her book does provide information on her life it is heavily self-edited. Her written style is such that it does at times obscure or make ambiguous some of the information supplied and concealing the real person.

Rankin, Peter. *Joan Littlewood: Dreams and Realities: The Official Biography*. United Kingdom: Oberon Books Ltd, 2014. Kindle.

It is fortunate therefore that Peter Rankin fills in much of the missing information, particularly on the insecurity and loneliness that surrounded her early life.

Mithen, Steven. 2011. *The Singing Neanderthals: The Origins of Music, Language, Mind and Body*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson eBook.

This is a very informative book that is centred on the archaeological research that has been done conducted on early humans in order to determine the importance of music and specifically song in homo sapiens. The analysis of skeletal remains in early man demonstrates that they possessed a larynx that was capable of making a variety of sounds.

He also includes research on babies and mothers and the sing-song style of communication mothers adopt when talking to them. This information is connected to the study and the importance of music with the belief that a comprehension of pitch and tempo change was crucial in establishing mutual co-operation in major tasks. The point being made is that all this underlies our ability to speak and furthermore stating that there is no such thing as a musical or unmusical person.

This consequence of this area of research for the thesis was in understanding the power of music for the individual and for a group. Further, providing a coherent explanation as to why music features in so many different aspects our lives. Music is an inescapable facet of life and it surrounds us in many forms. Music is constantly played on the radio; the majority of us have some form of portable playback device combined with a collection of our favourite pieces. Many authors, playwrights and composers have used music or an instrument as central to the story. The actor-musicians in a production display most of these elements and as a consequence of this the book was extremely elucidating.

The Gilded Stage A Social History of Opera Snowman, Daniel. 2010. *The Gilded Stage: A Social History of Opera*. United Kingdom: Atlantic Books Ltd Kindle edition

This book provides a history of opera from the 1600's through to the present day and the manner in which it spread from Italy eventually through to America.

He is clear that the book is not intended to be comprehensive but as he describes it, 'a sequence of scenes'. Snowman is particularly interested in the integration of the various art forms of which opera is comprised.

This book is unusual in that it is not concerned primarily with the performers, composers or the operatic works. The focus of this book is directly on the social and economic context in which opera was and is created. He provides informed detail on the financial challenges that opera presents to impresarios and the theatre owners.

One of the central themes in this book and its importance and relevance to the research is the focus in the social history of the opera. He provides a very informative narrative on how opera in common with other art forms continues to change. Particularly significant is the discussion on what is defined as 'serious' opera as opposed to 'popular' forms. He specifies *The Beggar's Opera* as falling into this category with its more accessible tunes and use of the vernacular. This provides important detail when discussing the impact of Weill and Brecht, social preferences with music upon the musical theatre form and their creation of *The Threepenny Opera*.

Mannes, Elena, and Aniruddh D Patel. 2011. *The Power of Music: Pioneering Discoveries in the New Science of Song*. United States: Walker and Company. Kindle edition.

A key element for this thesis is the power and influence of music both on the performer and the audience members. The power of music and mood has been known about for centuries but now with significant developments and an interest in neuroscience, the physical effects are starting to be documented.

The author, Elena Mannes comes from a well-known American musical family, whose grandparents founded the Mannes College of Music. And her great uncle, Walter Damrosch (January 30, 1862 – December 22, 1950) was a well-known conductor at the Metropolitan Opera. Mannes has not become a professional musician but was brought up with music and became increasingly interested in both the power of music on the brain and also the body. This book

is a combination of her musical knowledge combined with the new field of research on music and the brain: the cognitive neuroscience of music.

This book is particularly beneficial when investigating and describing the effect that the actor-musician's instrumental playing has upon the audience, and the primary importance of music on the individual. The book describes the brain imaging techniques and how much they have revealed in our reception of music. It makes it clear that there is not an area of the brain dedicated to music. Instead large areas of the brain are used for the reception of the different musical components such as rhythm and harmony. Of specific interest are the sections on the desire to move and dance on hearing music and how and why are songs for example embedded in the memory.

Heim, Caroline. *Audience as Performer: The Changing Role of Theatre Audiences in the Twenty-First Century*. United Kingdom: Routledge, 2015.

This is an interesting and informative book that acknowledges that the audience and performer relationship is mutable and experiences periods of change. The book is divided into two parts. Part one discusses, the audience performance and is concerned with nineteenth century stage etiquette and theatre nineteenth and twentieth century theatre etiquette. Heim discusses how in the 1800s rules of etiquette were imposed upon the audience, for example when to clap and not to call out or make a noise. The point is made that it has only been during the past decade that these strictures are now being ignored.

Part two looks at contemporary theatre with the audience as critic, community and consumer. A key element within this section on the audience is as co-creator with the performers. Heim interviewed many actors regarding audience reaction in which they stated that audience behaviour had changed and were no longer passive, reverting in part to that experienced in the nineteenth century. Also discussed was how they worked in order to gain a particular reaction from an audience. This is of particular significance in the sections discussing the actor-musician's performance and the desired relationship with the audience.

Freshwater, Helen, and Lois Weaver. *Theatre and Audience (Theatre &)*. United Kingdom: Palgrave MacMillan, United Kingdom, 2009.

In contrast to Heim's book Freshwater and Weaver are investigating some of the reasons behind the change in audience behaviour. The work done by experimental practitioners the 1960s with their interest in the audience and its part in the performance was of particular importance. A strong point is made that whilst an audience is comprised of individuals who have their own preferences and are also affected by their cultural influences, an audience is usually referred to as a solo entity. The expectation therefore that it should be communicated with in one way only and not acknowledging that an audience is the sum of its parts.

## Introduction

This thesis is the first detailed academic study into the origins, development, attributes and aesthetics of the actor-musician in the UK. The thesis will examine a range of musical theatre contexts out of which this practice emerged, demonstrating that the roots for the actor-musician date back to the 1960s where it was developed in Theatre in Education (TiE), community and outreach theatre by Glen Walford. The key lines of enquiry are the historical practices and sociocultural conditions influencing this development; the trends and influences that cinema and popular music had upon this particular field as well as on the audience reception. The thesis will interrogate one claim made about the emergence of the actor-musician by Lyn Gardner.

In the cash-strapped 80s and 90s [...] regional theatre directors realized that if they wanted to stage big musicals [...] actors should not only sing but also play the instruments [...]<sup>13</sup>

In fact, the use of actor-musician was originated and developed initially in community theatre in order to reach a wider and more diverse audience.

This thesis will also:

- 1) identify and discuss the distinctive aspects of actor-musician practices and how these have evolved with time and in diverse social performance contexts;
- 2) demonstrate the extent to which the actor-musician developed from popular and politically informed touring theatre companies with their uses of music, song and instrumental performance;
- 3) show the ways in which the actor-musician's emergence has related to social, cultural, political and theatrical circumstances;
- 4) illustrate the ways in which music can be a powerful force when used within a dramatic piece and that the fusion of actor and musician creates a markedly distinct aesthetic and creates new dramatic and musical performance possibilities.

The field of study is concentrated on the British musical theatre from the 1960s, the nascent period of the actor-musician, through to the end of the 1990s. The

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<sup>13</sup> Lyn Gardner, *The Guardian* 24 January 2008.

archive research has established this time period as containing the body of work for examination, from the inception of the actor-musician in the 1960s that culminates in a noted point of industry recognition in the 90s<sup>14</sup>. Furthermore, in order to provide a full picture of the rise and establishment of the actor-musician, the thesis focuses on the work of two key British regional theatre directors, Glen Walford and Bob Carlton. Both have been instrumental in the creation, development of both the actor-musician and the actor-musician musical.

Two archives have been crucial in providing the substantial documentary evidence for what is the first documented research into the actor-musician. The first is the unpublished archive for the Bubble Theatre<sup>15</sup> founded in 1972. It was at the Bubble Theatre under Glen Walford's artistic directorship (1972-1974 and 1976-1979) that the actor-musician first emerged. This company archive contains a range of extensive documentation: official formal documents that deal with policy; business concerns; contractual matters, and personal material, that show how and why the actor-musician developed. It also demonstrates how and in which ways the actor-musician was both used and continued to develop after Walford stepped down for the second time as artistic director of the Bubble and Bob Carlton took over the role (1979-1983). Walford and Carlton continued to develop and to use actor-musicians at the Liverpool Everyman but both in their own distinctive styles – Walford primarily with Shakespeare's plays, whilst Carlton created distinctive rock'n'roll musicals with Shakespearean plots. Of particular importance is a recording of the original community-touring Bubble Theatre production of *Return to the Forbidden Planet*,<sup>16</sup> (1983) which demonstrates an early usage of actor-musicians. From these documents there is a clear picture constructed of how and why the actor-musician developed with the progress of Walford's work evidenced by the archive material.

The second archive consulted is that belonging to the Liverpool Everyman and which was catalogued by Ros Merkin.<sup>17</sup> Merkin compiled and published a

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<sup>14</sup> In 1990 *Return to the Forbidden Planet* won the Olivier award for best new musical.

<sup>15</sup> In 1978 the company name was changed to the London Bubble.

<sup>16</sup> *Return to the Forbidden Planet* video, 4 September 1983.

<sup>17</sup> Dr Ros Merkin, Reader in Drama at Liverpool John Moore's University.

documentary book entitled *Liverpool's Third Cathedral: The Liverpool Everyman Theatre, In the Words of Those Who Were, And Are, There*<sup>18</sup>. Even though this publication details each of the forty production seasons from the Everyman's inception in 1964 until 2004, the Everyman archive has been consulted independently by myself for its unpublished material. However, this book is invaluable as it provides a reframe, which was not Merkin's, of the work of the two directors, Glen Walford and Bob Carlton, both of whom worked at the Everyman, although Carlton was only employed as a freelance director. This material will be referred to later in both the chapters on Walford and Carlton. For each season, Merkin's scrupulous compilation provides detailed listings for each production, photographs, reviews, appreciative and non-appreciative letters, staff anecdotes and financial strictures, all of which are set in the context of ever-changing social forces. This thesis supplements Merkin's work with wide-ranging further research.

More extensively documented official and personal material from the Everyman archive which is previously unpublished has been used here to chart Walford's tenure as artistic director. This material clarifies two important aspects of Walford's beliefs: that from the outset her focus was to attract and engage her audience with projects and plays with which the local working class identified; and that her tenure at the Liverpool Everyman widened the scope for the actor-musician, musicians, composers and directors with challenging and diverse projects. Importantly, as will be detailed in the following chapter on Walford, the archive material shows her dedication to popular theatre practice and specifically the use of Shakespeare's plays. The archive contains very detailed process notes and 'stream of consciousness' documents that relate specifically to the Shakespeare plays that she produced there and, importantly, her use of and the role of the actor-musician in those productions.

The Everyman archive also contains written correspondence between Bob Carlton and Nicholas Stanley<sup>19</sup> regarding the two actor-musician musicals that Carlton wrote and were produced at the Everyman. It provides essential

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<sup>18</sup> Merkin, Ros, *Liverpool's Third Cathedral: The Liverpool Everyman Theatre, In the Words of Those Who Were, And Are, There*. (Liverpool: Liverpool and Merseyside Theatres Trust Ltd., 2004.)

<sup>19</sup> Nicholas Stanley, Liverpool Everyman Theatre Manager

information about the development of both these productions and most specifically the way in which the demands for the Everyman programming impacted upon and shaped Carlton's production, *From a Jack to a King* (1984).

Whilst the two archives have provided substantial material, much of it unpublished, this has been supplemented and enriched by extensive personal interviews with both Walford and Carlton. Walford has also provided further information on her work via email that has included notable material from her early childhood as well. Further interviews and emailed correspondence that relate either to the actor-musician or to specific productions have been given by the following:

Directors:

Pete Rowe, Bob Carlton, John Doyle, Colin George, Glen Walford, Robert Hamlin, Han Duijvendak.

Actor-Musicians:

Nicky Furre, Karen Mann, Jane Milligan, Merlin Shepherd, Tina Jones, Matt Devitt.

Actors:

Gillian Cally, Robert Demeger, John Wild.

Designers:

Kate Burnett, Clare Lyth, Rodney Ford.

Choreographer:

Francesca Jaynes.

Musical Directors:

Paddy Cunneen, Sarah Travis, Robert Cousins.

This thesis is also underpinned by extensive reading in a range of related fields: musical theatre; performance; popular music studies; aesthetics; theatre practitioners and neuroscience.

The popular theatre practices of the 1960s has developed in the UK from the work of strong-minded, driven, powerful and creative individuals. These antecedents came from diverse backgrounds but their work has resonated across the UK. The actor-musician is a product of popular theatre.

One key antecedent of Walford's practice was Emma Cons<sup>20</sup> manager of The Old Vic (1879-1912), whose work grew out of a temperance movement aimed at working class people. The social reforms that Cons instigated would influence and resonate in the use of both drama and theatre in community and outreach work. The significance of this is that the inspiration for the actor-musician was developed and grew from both outreach and community theatre.

Cons had not started out to be a social reformer. She came from a musical family and although Cons did not become a musician – she was a talented working artist who specialized in stained glass – she was both appreciative and knowledgeable about the power of music.

Cons's studied at the same art school as Octavia Hill<sup>21</sup> and they became close friends. Hill was well connected and through this friendship Cons was introduced to many of the key social reformers of the time, such as John Ruskin (1819-1900) and Charles Kingsley (1819-1875).<sup>22</sup> As a consequence of moving in these circles, Cons eventually gave up her professional art work to become a rent collector for Hill.<sup>23</sup> Cons had learned from her friend Hill

[...] to recognise the value of entertainment for the poor. As soon as Miss Hill had taken over the administration of Ruskin's slum property in 1866 she started a playground for children and taught them singing-games, even hiring an organ-grinder to provide music for their dancing.<sup>24</sup>

In 1879 Cons established the Coffee Tavern Movement and took over the management of the Royal Victoria Hall, Lambeth,<sup>25</sup> which was selected for a number of reasons, the main one being that it was in the centre of one of the capital's poorest districts and surrounded by gin palaces and beer houses.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Emma Cons, (1838–1912).

<sup>21</sup> Octavia Hill (1838-1912).

<sup>22</sup> Schafer, Elizabeth, *Lilian Baylis: A Biography*, 1st edn (United Kingdom: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2007). p.53.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*.p51.

<sup>24</sup> Edward J. Dent, *A Theatre for Everybody: The Story of the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells*. p.2.

<sup>25</sup> Built in 1818, the theatre was originally named the Royal Coburg Theatre and renamed the Royal Victoria Theatre in 1833 in honour of Princess Victoria. In 1879 when Emma Cons took over the management, the word theatre was dropped from the title in favour of hall as it was believed that the word held bad connotations.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*. p.47.

Coffee rather than alcohol was served and entertainment confined to educational lectures and variety entertainments. Combined with Cons's local housing reforms, there was a substantial beneficial impact made on the local community. The reforms that Cons instigated would influence and resonate in the eventual use of both drama and theatre in community and outreach work<sup>27</sup> (1915) and which in turn inspired the work of Walford.

The next key antecedent in the development of popular theatre was Lilian Baylis (1874-1937), Cons's niece. It was under Baylis's cultural and influential development of this theatre, most notably with Shakespeare's plays, that would resonate across both the theatre industry and a wider audience.

In 1897 Baylis had started working with her aunt, who trained and passed on her knowledge of community and outreach work. In 1898 Baylis became the acting manager and on Cons's death (1912), Baylis inherited the Old Vic in order that she could continue her aunt's work. Baylis then successfully applied for a theatre licence. Initially she was more interested in producing opera,<sup>28</sup> not unsurprising as her mother, Elisabeth (Liebe) Baylis, née Cons, was an opera singer and Baylis was a skilled musician who had performed since she was a child. Opera, however, proved to be too expensive.

Cons and Baylis had between them appointed a number of artistic directors. William Poel joined the Old Vic in 1881. He had a hatred of the Victorian Shakespeare productions with their large sets, lengthy scene changes and alterations to the text and started the 'bare-boards' Shakespeare style.<sup>29</sup> Baylis's tight-fisted approach to running a theatre and to staging productions meant that the house style had to be 'bare-boards' Shakespeare [...] This frugal style was, however, supported on aesthetic and intellectual grounds by most of the men Baylis hired in to be the theatre's artistic directors.<sup>30</sup> When Poel left the

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<sup>27</sup> John Booth, *The Old Vic: A Century of Theatrical History*. Delany Press. (1 July 2008)

<sup>28</sup> Her first production was *The Bohemian Girl* (1900), by Michael William Balfe with a libretto by Alfred Bunn, and which was the first attempt at promoting opera in English. [www.theoldvic.com](http://www.theoldvic.com).

<sup>29</sup> Poel's tenure at the Old Vic ran from 1881–1894.

<sup>30</sup> Elizabeth Schafer, *Lilian Baylis: A Biography*, 1st edn. (United Kingdom: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2007). p.129.

Old Vic there were a number of short-term directors until Ben Greet<sup>31</sup> (1857-1936) took over in 1915. Greet had been directing a touring company performing open-air Shakespeare for decades [...] often setting up in outside venues which had even less to offer than the impoverished Vic stage, the lack of scenery and the shabby costumes at the theatre were not a problem for him.<sup>32</sup> Greet was very socially and community minded and before working in the theatre had been a teacher. During his four seasons at the Old Vic<sup>33</sup> he was committed to helping change children's perspective on Shakespeare. Greet, as well as directing twenty-four Shakespeare plays helped further develop the Old Vic's tradition for outreach [...]and] also introduced the school matinees.<sup>34</sup>

Joan Littlewood (1914-2002) is Glen Walford's third key antecedent in the field of twentieth century British theatre. It was Greet's achievement with this outreach work that would prove to be highly influential on the young Littlewood. It determined her to follow a career in theatre that in turn would have significant impact on the development of popular theatre in the UK in the twentieth century.

Joan Littlewood, illegitimate and brought up by her cockney grandparents in Stockwell, is a typical example of a member of the Lambeth community that the Old Vic was trying to reach. Peter Rankin explains:

At La Retraite, another school trip took her to a matinee at the Old Vic [...] This visit would be the start of a relationship that takes a bit of understanding.<sup>35</sup>

It was a production that had a substantial impact and which Littlewood describes in her book:

The play was *Hamlet*, with Gielgud, Wolfit, Martita Hunt and Robert Speaight. It had me on the edge of my seat all

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<sup>31</sup> Sir Philip Barling 'Ben' Greet, educated at the Royal Naval School, New Cross.

<sup>32</sup> Elizabeth Schafer, *Lilian Baylis: A Biography*, 1st edn. (United Kingdom: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2007) p.134.

<sup>33</sup> In 1925 Baylis adopted the name *The Old Vic*, by which the theatre was known locally, as its official title.

<sup>34</sup> Elizabeth Schafer, *Lilian Baylis: A Biography*, 1st edn. (United Kingdom: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2007) p.135.

<sup>35</sup> Rankin, Peter, *Joan Littlewood: Dreams and Realities: The Official Biography* (United Kingdom: Oberon Books Ltd).Loc. 421.

afternoon [...] From then on, I didn't miss a production down the Waterloo Road.<sup>36</sup>

As Elizabeth Schafer has demonstrated,

The matinees were eventually stopped in 1921, when it was discovered that schoolchildren were not supposed to pay for theatre visits during school hours [...but they] not only brought local children into the Vic, they also raised the profile of the theatre and increased the chances that the children's families would become interested in their local theatre and perhaps visit it some time.<sup>37</sup>

This was and is a key point in the community work that was being driven by Baylis. It was this work that in turn inspired Littlewood, the realisation that this theatre work was inclusive and that the plays being performed belonged to everyone and further that the Shakespearean plays were not elitist. It was this that was the propulsion that drove Littlewood to create and develop a popular theatre and made the Theatre Royal Stratford East clearly a key inspiration for the work of 1960s directors and companies.

In 1934 Littlewood met Jimmy Miller (Ewan MacColl),<sup>38</sup> whom she would eventually marry.<sup>39</sup> Littlewood's use of music in her productions sprang initially from her relationship with Ewan MacColl and their creation of the Theatre Union in 1934. MacColl was not an actor. He came from a political and union-minded family. His initial work had been for The Red Megaphones. The Red Megaphones, whose slogan was 'A Propertyless Theatre for a Propertyless Class', were an agit-prop theatre with their small street sketches performed for the factory workers in the Salford area where he had grown up. The purpose of these sketches was not to entertain, but to spread political and union messages to the workers. The Red Megaphones would use

[...] any platform they could – backs of lorries, say, or steps in front of a big building – and jump on them and perform

<sup>36</sup> Littlewood, Joan, and Peter Rankin. *Joan's Book: Joan Littlewood's Peculiar History as She Tells It*. London: Bloomsbury USA, 2003.p.52.

<sup>37</sup> Schafer, Elizabeth, *Lilian Baylis: A Biography*, 1st edn. (United Kingdom: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2007) p.135.

<sup>38</sup> Jimmy Miller adopted the name Ewan MacColl to avoid being caught when he went 'Absent Without Leave' (AWOL) from the army, 18 December 1940. Other than when quoting directly, Jimmy Miller will be referred to by his adopted name, Ewan MacColl.

<sup>39</sup> Littlewood and MacColl married in Salford, 2 November 1935.

short sketches full of information that urgently needed to be heard.<sup>40</sup>

This was in contrast to Littlewood who had won a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA) and brought professional acting skills and knowledge of classic plays to the group. This union was a powerful combination of a real understanding of the working class, the unions, actor training and music. MacColl musical knowledge was extensive and not limited to folk and popular music. For their production of, *Schweik*, MacColl chose, 'Smetana's *Richard III* and Prokofiev's *Lieutenant Kijé*.'<sup>41</sup> Also they were both hungry for knowledge, enjoyed performance and both in their own specific ways were railing against what they regarded as an unjust world and a biased class system.

Their goal was to create a theatre that reflected social issues and could translate those issues with poetic accessibility, using actors trained in movement, speech and song, enhanced by experimental techniques in stage design, lighting and sound.<sup>42</sup>

In 1936 Littlewood and MacColl were asked to create an anti-war play, *Miracle at Verdun*.<sup>43</sup>

The décor group designed and built a set [...] Musicians too were now working with the Group and an innovation was the use of live music. Ewan composed the songs and tunes, but he couldn't write music or play an instrument, he had to keep them in his head until he was able to convey them to the singers and musicians.<sup>44</sup>

Rankin is of the opinion that not only was Littlewood influenced by the productions at the Old Vic, she was further influenced by the social reform work that Cons instigated. One of the Old Vic's benefactors was Samuel Morley (1809-1886) who had been attracted by the 'penny lectures' that Cons had

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<sup>40</sup> Peter Rankin, *Joan Littlewood: Dreams and Realities: The Official Biography* (United Kingdom: Oberon Books Ltd) loc. 818.

<sup>41</sup> Peter Rankin, *Joan Littlewood: Dreams and Realities: The Official Biography* (United Kingdom: Oberon Books Ltd) loc.1012.

<sup>42</sup> Corbett, Susannah, *Harry H. Corbett, The Front Legs of the Cow*, The History Press Ireland (2011) Kindle version. p.73.

<sup>43</sup> Hans Chlumberg, *Miracle at Verdun*, the Lesser Free Trade Hall (1936).

<sup>44</sup> Howard Goorney, Malcolm Hay, and P. Roberts, *The Theatre Workshop Story* (United Kingdom: Methuen Publishing, 2008). p.17.

provided. This led to the creation of Morley College (1889), which initially held classes in the Old Vic dressing-rooms. Rankin makes this point:

Morley College,[...] was one of the first adult education colleges in the country. Although this happened before Joan's time, when she reached her Theatre Workshop years, classes were something she too organized. They were for people not necessarily in theatre [...]<sup>45</sup>

It is evident that Littlewood was influenced by the community and educational work that the Old Vic supported and that it gave her a predisposition to produce both the classics and good accessible theatre for the working class.

From the mid-50s to the early 60s, she and her company created theatre with an astonishing variety, with tremendous popular appeal, and ultimately with such great commercial success that it destroyed itself. Productions like Behan's *The Quare Fellow* and *The Hostage*, Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* [...] crashed and exploded onto the stages at Stratford, and left audiences reeling with delight and great joy, and young writers breathless with the possibilities of our theatre.<sup>46</sup>

Joan Littlewood directed a wide range of work comprised of classics, new plays and musicals which included William Shakespeare's *Richard II* (1954), *Arden of Faversham* (Unknown) (1955), *The Dutch Courtesan*, (John Marston) (1954), *Schweik* (Jaroslav Hašek) (1954) and *Fings Ain't Wot They Used T'Be*. (Frank Norman and Lionel Bart 1959).

The actors that Littlewood employed were a mixture of talented amateurs and some trained professionals. Littlewood disliked the 'cut-glass accents'<sup>47</sup> of the trained actors during the 50s, encouraging her actors to maintain their natural working-class accents.

Murray Melvin, who would join Theatre Workshop, describes being taken by his drama teacher to see a production.

<sup>45</sup> Rankin, Peter. 2014 *Joan Littlewood: Dreams and Realities: The Official Biography*. United Kingdom: Oberon Books Ltd. Loc 431.

<sup>46</sup> McGrath, John, and Nadine Holdsworth. 2002. *Naked Thoughts that Roam About: Reflections on Theatre 1958-2001*. Edited by Nadine Holdsworth. (1st edn. London: Theatre Communications Group). p.31.

<sup>47</sup> Joan Littlewood, *Joan's Book: Joan Littlewood's Peculiar History as She Tells It* (London: Bloomsbury USA, 2003) p.453.

The play we saw was *Richard II* [...] Now Stratford was run on a shoestring, so there were no long golden cloaks, no long fanfares [...] just raw Elizabethan language. And you were on the edge of your seat the whole evening.<sup>48</sup>

John McGrath writing in his book, *Naked Thoughts that Roam About*<sup>49</sup> recognised that although the Royal Court was being fêted as providing 'realism' and 'working-class' plays it did not have the authenticity of the work that was being produced in Stratford East and more importantly, neither was it providing any philanthropic or community work.

What was happening on the stage, in the pub down Angel Lane, in the street outside the door, all seemed to be a piece of the same universe. This group of people were telling a story – they were mediating contemporary reality, but in a way that the Royal Court or the West End or the repertory theatres had not dreamt of: they were telling it the way the working class saw it, and in a way that the working class could enjoy, and, what is more, *did* enjoy.

The work that was produced by Littlewood and MacColl influenced many theatre practitioners and their attendant companies.<sup>50</sup> It is of particular interest to note that Alan Dossor, who became the artistic director of the Liverpool Everyman in 1970, was a particular admirer of Joan Littlewood. Michael Coveney in *Plays and Players* said of Dossor:

[...] that any sort of theatre that we were going to make work in Liverpool would have to contain the sort of elements contained in Joan Littlewood's work: music, jokes, vulgarity and colour.<sup>51</sup>

This thesis, having looked at the key antecedents, will now examine those contemporary directors who were working in the field of popular and working-

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<sup>48</sup> Corbett, Susannah, *Harry H. Corbett, The Front Legs of the Cow*, The History Press Ireland (2011) Kindle version. p.135.

<sup>50</sup> McGrath, John, and Nadine Holdsworth, *Naked Thoughts That Roam about: Reflections on Theatre 1958-2001*, ed. by Nadine Holdsworth, 1st edn (London: Theatre Communications Group, 2002) p.31.

<sup>51</sup> *Freedom's Pioneer: John McGrath's Work in Theatre, Film and Television* (Exeter Performance Studies) (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2015), p 26-27.

class theatre. The theatre director Peter Cheeseman (1932-2010) is noted for creating the Victoria Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent (1962), which was the first purpose-built theatre-in-the-round. This style of theatre was a way of trying to democratising the auditorium as well as reducing staging costs. In the introductory notes to one of his productions, a musical documentary about the North Staffordshire Railway, Cheeseman describes the stage and auditorium:

The Victoria Theatre is constructed as a theatre in the round. Steeply raked blocks of seating five and six rows deep surround an acting area seven inches below the level of the front row. The steep rake gives the floor of the acting area great prominence.<sup>52</sup>

Cheeseman possessed an egalitarian view of theatre, favouring the mediaeval 'bull-ring' style as it dispenses with the fourth wall and is ideal for audience participation. A further benefit with this style of theatre is that the production costs can be reduced as the sight-lines dictate that flattage cannot be used and settings must be minimalistic. Cheeseman also believed that it gave greater intimacy and that the circle has been the preferred way for audience viewing for hundreds of years, citing the circus and boxing rings as examples.

Cheeseman specialised in documentary theatre with a frequent inclusion of live popular music within these productions. He frequently used themes that were either of local or of current interest, unlike Walford who was focused more upon the classics and more experimental in her staging and this includes a significant production in the round that will be discussed in the following chapter.

In 1966 Cheeseman and the playwright Peter Terson (1932 –) researched and created what they termed, 'a musical documentary' entitled *The Knotty* about the North Staffordshire Railway. It had a cast of ten and also used a 'guest artist, folk singer Jeff Parton'<sup>53</sup> *The Knotty* incorporated folk songs of the period. In common with many other community focused companies Cheeseman believed in the power and efficacy of music in drama.

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<sup>52</sup> Cheeseman, Peter. 1970. *The Knotty: A Musical Documentary*. London: Methuen Playscript. p xxii.

<sup>53</sup> [http://www.cregreen.talktalk.net/html/jeff\\_parton.html](http://www.cregreen.talktalk.net/html/jeff_parton.html). Jeff Parton singer, multi-instrumentalist, composer and caller. Founder member: Stoke Folk Club.

He wrote that,

I find folk songs accessible and attractive to more sections of the public than any other kind of music.<sup>54</sup>

The reasons he gives for this are that

They [...] do not reduce words to a subservient relationship with the music, so never become a gap in the action by a lapse into mere decoration.<sup>55</sup>

Whilst Cheeseman was an advocate of incorporating music into his plays, there was a strict separation between musicians and actors. The actors might sing but the voice was the only instrument that they would employ.

Cheeseman directed eleven musical documentaries that were founded on specific local community issues. Notable amongst these productions was *The Knotty*, which covers a period from 1810 to 1923 and is divided into parts one and two. It has numerous short scenes some of which are only a few lines long. In this musical,

The audience is presented with ballad singers, pre-recorded sound, caricatures, naturalistic scenes, direct audience address by the narrator, and actors in character dance a pole dance used to convey information regarding the period, and comic scenes and monologues.<sup>56</sup>

Cheeseman was clear that the use of music was a necessary element in a production. When auditioning he would look for actors who could sing. There are a number of songs in *The Knotty* and he used the songs in Brechtian fashion to stand outside and comment on the action.<sup>57</sup> He was keen on using well-known period folk songs and changing or adapting the lyrics as required, in common with other playwrights and lyricists over the centuries. This is also a technique that Carlton drew on and is discussed in detail in chapter three.

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<sup>54</sup> Peter Cheeseman, *The Knotty: A Musical Documentary*. (London: Methuen Playscript. 1970.) p.xvi.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Caroline Turner, 'Peter Cheeseman's work at the old and new Victoria theatres a consideration of community theatre.' Thesis (M.Phil) University of Birmingham, Department of Drama, 1996. p.119.

<sup>57</sup> Cheeseman, Peter. 1970. *The Knotty: A Musical Documentary*. London: Methuen Playscript. p.xvi.

Cheeseman, whilst not using actor-musicians, wanted his musicians to be visible and part of the production.

There were three productions, *The Jolly Potters*, (1964) *The Staffordshire Rebels* (1965) and *Good Golly Miss Molly* (1989) in which the musicians were 'positioned on the steps'.<sup>58</sup>

A low four-foot square rostrum is placed on the edge of the acting area opposite this centre entrance. The folk singer sits here and it is used as a kind of orchestra pit throughout the show for other artists who sing or play on it.<sup>59</sup>

The impetus for another of Cheeseman's productions, *Nice Girls*, (1993) was developed from some music recordings made by a group of women during the 1984–1985 miner's strike. This was a technique that Carlton would draw upon later with his own productions. The women concerned had started singing on the picket lines. When the strike ended the group kept together and 'performed at rallies and social events and supported miners' strikes nationwide'.<sup>60</sup> This production, as with the previous play cited, would have allowed for the inclusion of an actor-musician but a fusion of acting and musicianship for the performers was not a consideration.

He also favoured direct address to the audience. He describes it thus:

Direct address in the theatre can manifest itself in several forms: the actor talks to the audience as if they were characters in the play (contextualisation; also they used the aside...) the actor talks to the audience as himself and the actor talks to the audience as the character and the third is when the actor does not have any direct contact with the audience, yet must still acknowledge their presence.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Caroline Turner, 'Peter Cheeseman's work at the old and new Victoria theatres a consideration of community theatre.' Thesis (M.Phil) University of Birmingham, Department of Drama, 1996. p.53.

<sup>59</sup> Cheeseman, Peter, *The Knotty A Musical Documentary* p xxii

<sup>60</sup> Turner, Caroline. 1995. Peter Cheeseman's work at the old and new Victoria theatres a consideration of community theatre. Thesis (M.Phil)-University of Birmingham, Department of Drama, 1996.p 110

<sup>61</sup> Turner, Caroline. 1995. Peter Cheeseman's work at the old and new Victoria theatres a consideration of community theatre. Thesis (M.Phil)-University of Birmingham, Department of Drama, 1996. p.111.

Cheeseman had started his career in 1959 at the Derby Playhouse<sup>62</sup> where regional theatre was still being dominated by Edwardian box set comedies. He then moved to the Studio Theatre Company, which had been founded by Stephen Joseph. In 1955,

[...] Joseph launched his 'Theatre-in-the-Round' in Scarborough...having been influenced by experiments in the democratically minded USA where eighty-two arena theatres could be counted in 1950.<sup>63</sup>

In the published notes for one of his plays *The Knotty*<sup>64</sup> (12 July 1966) he writes that the first piece of documentary theatre he had seen was one of Littlewood's *Living Newspapers*<sup>65</sup> and how it '[...] left me with a firm belief that music was essential to provide an emotional momentum in a theatrical situation packed with heterogeneous factual material [...]'<sup>66</sup>

Cheeseman does not actually state that he found Littlewood and the Theatre Workshop company inspirational but he is certain about the efficacy and effect of two of her pieces. The second production that he refers to was *Oh! What A Lovely War* and he specifically mentions that it worked, and to work depends upon, 'talented, inventive variety artists.'<sup>67</sup> He cites Victor Spinetti's<sup>68</sup> (1929-2012) bayonet training sequence as a music hall comedic set-piece.

In 1962 when Cheeseman and Stephen Joseph (1921-1967) acquired an old cinema, which they turned into the Victoria Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Cheeseman was particularly interested in researching and producing 'local interest' plays. He also cited Littlewood as his greatest influence and that all of the elements that he used can be said to have developed in the music hall.

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<sup>62</sup> Derby Little Theatre Club was the forerunner of The Derby Playhouse and which opened October 1 1952 when the original building had burnt down.

<sup>63</sup> Wiles, David. 2003. *A Short History of Western Performance Space*. 1st edn. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press

<sup>64</sup> Cheeseman, Peter, *The Knotty, A Musical Documentary*, Methuen Playscript, 1970, London

<sup>65</sup> Goorney, Howard, and Ewan MacColl, eds., *Agit-Prop to Theatre Workshop Political Playscripts 1930-50* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986). The script for Joan Littlewood and Ewan MacColl's *Last Edition, A Living Newspaper, dealing with the events 1934-1940*, is included. The production was created from newspaper items which were then dramatized.

<sup>66</sup> Cheeseman, Peter, *The Knotty, A Musical Documentary*, Methuen Playscript, 1970, London

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Vittorio Giorgio Andrea Spinetti, actor (1929-2012).

Littlewood's work embraced many styles and importantly she was very fond of music hall, which she used in combination, to great effect, with some Brechtian techniques in *Oh What a Lovely War*.<sup>69</sup> She also directed *The Marie Lloyd Story*<sup>70</sup> using her knowledge of the music-hall performers that used to meet on Sundays at *The Horns*,<sup>71</sup> a pub close to where she grew up.

However, not all of Littlewood's ideas were necessarily inspired by the music hall. She had read widely and was very knowledgeable on a range of theatre and related performance practices, employing an eclectic mix of styles within her theatre productions. For example, her use of the pierrot costume for *O!, What A Lovely War* utilised the costumes that the ENSA performers had used to entertain the troops.<sup>72</sup> In 1939 the director Basil Dean (1888-1978) approached the actor and director Leslie Henson (1891-1957), who had been very active in providing entertainment for the forces during the First World War, and held regular meetings with him. During the First World War, Henson had put together, [...] a concert party of twelve in pierrot costume and make-up.<sup>73</sup> Her use of popular theatre forms is a practice also used by Walford, who employed opera and Shakespeare, whilst Carlton also used a combination of Shakespeare and B movies to reach a wider audience.

In comparison, Howard Goorney's *The Theatre Workshop Story*, provides a narrative and description of the Theatre Workshop from someone who had been involved from its inception. In 1938 Howard Goorney joined Theatre Union, the precursor to Theatre Workshop and continued with Littlewood though until the 1950s. Whilst both Joan Littlewood<sup>74</sup> and Ewan MacColl<sup>75</sup> had

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<sup>69</sup> *Oh! What a Lovely War* Theatre Royal Stratford East, 13 March 1963.

<sup>70</sup> *The Marie Lloyd Story* Theatre Royal Stratford East, 1967.

<sup>71</sup> The Horns was situated at 214 Kennington Park Road and was closed and demolished in the 1960s. This historic tavern (Surrey CCC was formed here in 1845) occupied a prominent position at the junction with Kennington Road. Rebuilt in grand fashion in 1887, complete with a massive assembly room and masonic temple, it was severely damaged by a VI flying bomb.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Andy Merriman, *Greasepaint and Cordite: How ENSA Entertained the Troops during World War II* (United Kingdom: Aurum Press Ltd, 2014) Kindle edition, loc. 175

<sup>74</sup> Joan Littlewood, *Joan's Book: Joan Littlewood's Peculiar History as She Tells It*, (London: Bloomsbury USA, 2003)

<sup>75</sup> MacColl, Ewan, and Peggy Seeger, *Journeyman: An Autobiography* (United Kingdom: Manchester University Press, 2009)

written autobiographies which included the developmental and subsequent production work, neither were in a position to give an overview of the whole or to understand the influence that their work had had upon both the company members and the theatre industry.

Goorney's narrative is clear and provides an insider's view and understanding of the Theatre Workshop's practices. It gives a more cohesive account of the working mechanisms as well as what the company was trying to achieve. Although both Joan Littlewood and Ewan MacColl wrote about their work, their books are autobiographical and not always directly concerned with the specifics of how the company functioned or the impact that the political and cultural influences had upon their work. Importantly in the opening line of the first chapter Goorney makes it clear that,

Drama, and singing and music has played a part in the cultural life of the socialist movement since the turn of the century.<sup>76</sup>

Goorney wrote the book both at MacColl's behest and that, '[...] it should be approached as a piece of oral history.'<sup>77</sup> In order to do this, he tape recorded the interviews he had with those people who had been involved with Theatre Workshop at different stages of its existence. The book therefore does not speak with one voice and gives a very clear explanation of the political stance that the company held, combined with the views held by the individual company members. This reinforces the underlying social commitment that was still flourishing in the dramatic work as well as the influences that it had and continues to have upon theatre practitioners.

This interest in the use of music in popular theatre production has been developed by subsequent practitioners, such as John McGrath (1935-2002) and Elizabeth MacLennan (1938–) and will be addressed in the following chapter with Glen Walford's tenure at the Liverpool Everyman.

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<sup>76</sup> Malcolm Hay, and P.Roberts, *Howard Goorney, The Theatre Workshop Story* (United Kingdom: Methuen Publishing, 2008). p.1.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.* p.xi

In 1971 John McGrath formed the agit prop touring company 7:84 and in his book *Naked Thoughts That Roam About* defends Littlewood's use of the pierrot show from the playwright, David Edgar. McGrath writes that:

David Edgar, in his laconic dismissal of an entire cultural tradition, says: 'It is interesting that they [some groups and companies] have achieved most when they have employed forms actually peripheral to the urban working class. Joan Littlewood's *Oh, What A Lovely War!* for example, used the Pierrot show (a basically Italian form, translated into British seaside entertainment).'<sup>78</sup>

McGrath goes on to state that:

First, the Pierrot show at the seaside in the 20s and 30s was a totally British working-class form, well-known and loved by mums and dads of the 1950s. Secondly, the style of presentation, the construction, the relationship between those actors and the audience, the way of singing the war songs, the degrees of sentiment and the mix-in of comedy in some of the cameos, all these and much more, owed everything to music hall, variety and ENSA show forms, not one of these 'peripheral to the urban working class.' And the urban working class came to see the show, and loved it.<sup>79</sup>

Rankin recounts Littlewood's first experience of a pierrot show on the only holiday that she had as a child.

[she...] wandered away along the beach. She found a pierrot show [...] The little songs the pierrots sang to introduce themselves and the black and white costumes that seemed to com from no particular period but went right back to *commedia dell'arte* enchanted her. Three performances a day were given. She watched every one.<sup>80</sup>

Carlton and Walford also appropriated popular theatre forms. Both of them used and reworked Shakespeare and Walford had also created a populist opera version of *Tosca*.

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<sup>78</sup> John McGrath and Nadine Holdsworth. *Naked Thoughts That Roam about: Reflections on Theatre 1958-2001*. Edited by Nadine Holdsworth. (1st edn. London: Theatre Communications Group, 2002.) p.31.

<sup>79</sup> McGrath, John, and Nadine Holdsworth. 2002. *Naked Thoughts That Roam about: Reflections on Theatre 1958-2001*. Edited by Nadine Holdsworth. 1st ed. London: Theatre Communications Group. p.31-32.

<sup>80</sup> Peter Rankin, *Joan Littlewood: Dreams and Realities: The Official Biography* (United Kingdom: Oberon Books Ltd). p.491.

MacColl was a gifted folk singer and composer who would later work with A. L. Lloyd,<sup>81</sup> also a folk singer and avid collector of folk songs. In his autobiography MacColl recounts the first meeting with Lloyd, whom he always referred to as Bert.

We met at Stratford East outside the Theatre Royal where I had been taking part in a Theatre Workshop production. It was a balmy summer evening and we stood there for an hour or more talking and singing snatches of songs at each other until we were moved on by a policeman.<sup>82</sup>

The early work that MacColl and Littlewood created was agit prop, pieces written by themselves such as *John Bullion* 'a Ballet with Words' and *Johnny Noble* – 'an episodic play with singing'.

[...] by the time the opening night arrived [...] *Johnny Noble* [was] in a very good shape [...] For us it was an historic occasions. For the Kendal audience it was[...]well, bewildering. *Johnny Noble* had been billed as A BALLAD-OPERA and the audience was apparently expecting something like *The Maid of the Mountains* or *The Merry Widow*. Instead they saw barefoot actors singing *a cappella* about things like fascism, war and unemployment.<sup>83</sup>

MacColl was a significant figure in the English folk song revival of the 1950s and 60s.<sup>84</sup> He gives an excellent explanation for popular music:

Right from the start [...] Bert [A.L.Lloyd] and I [...] had been stressing the fact that our traditional music was not only valuable in itself but could also serve as a model for contemporary popular music.

He goes on to make an interesting point about how popular music was being perceived as politically 'dangerous' and more importantly that some musical instruments were beginning to be regarded as containing some potent force so that it was regarded as necessary to belittle the musical knowledge and skill of the musicians.

<sup>81</sup> Albert Lancaster Lloyd, 29 February 1908 – 29 September 1982

<sup>82</sup> MacColl, Ewan, and Peggy Seeger, *Journeyman: An Autobiography* (United Kingdom: Manchester University Press, 2009)

<sup>83</sup> Ewan MacColl, *Journeyman: An Autobiography*. United Kingdom: Manchester University Press 2010.) p.239.

<sup>84</sup> Folk song revival 1945–1969.

When young men and women were seen accompanying their home-made songs and chants on guitars and banjos as they marched from Aldermaston to Trafalgar Square, the media was quick to label them as 'skiffers' and 'folkies'; by the late 1950s, even the word *guitar* had acquired a pejorative ring and was rarely mentioned in popular journalism without an accompanying derisory adjective or phrase (folksingers who only know three chords, etc.).<sup>85</sup>

These guitar-playing demonstrators with their new music, albeit with a political bias, had something in common with earlier minstrelsy inasmuch as they were imparting political information to the crowds. They chose to do this via song, which can help make a political statement more palatable. Further, if the tune is 'catchy' enough its message might just 'stick' in someone's mind. The instrument of choice was the guitar and for at least a couple of reasons. The first is that it allows the singer to accompany his or herself, which a wind instrument, for obvious reasons cannot. Secondly, the folk songs that being used have a simple construction and at a basic level the guitar can easily be played with a 'mastery' of a handful of chords. Also the acoustic guitar is very portable. It is important to note that they could not be defined as actor-musicians for the simple reason that they were not acting and there was no inclusion of any dramatic element.

When the Theatre Workshop was formed Littlewood was always keen to incorporate music. MacColl wrote much of the early music and when MacColl finally left the company she used other composers. The music that was used in Littlewood's productions were a mixture of extant, new works and old works with new lyrics. Eager to use popular music Littlewood employed Lionel Bart<sup>86</sup>. Bart, although remembered mainly for his musical theatre scores, specifically *Oliver!*, was a successful writer of pop songs, notably *Living Doll* for Cliff Richard and the Shadows,<sup>87</sup> which earned him, '[...] one of the four Novello Awards that [...he] picked up in 1959.'<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Ewan MacColl, *Journeyman: An Autobiography*. (United Kingdom: Manchester University Press 2010). p.330.

<sup>86</sup> Real name Lionel Begleiter, 1 August, 1930– 3 April, 1999.

<sup>87</sup> *Living Doll* was top of the charts from the beginning of August 1959 to Mid September.

<sup>88</sup> David and Caroline Stafford, *Fings Ain't Wot They Used T'Be: The Lionel Bart Story*, (Omnibus Press, London, 2011.) Kindle edition. loc.1384.

The years 1959 and 1960 were two *anni mirabiles* of Lionel's life [...] when a Hit Parade without at least three Bart composition was an aberration;<sup>89</sup>

Bart wrote the score for *Fings Ain't Wot They Used T'Be*, which was his first musical theatre piece.<sup>90</sup> The lyrics to *Fings Ain't Wot They Used T'Be* are written in,

'A very true cockney argot.'<sup>91</sup>: words and music not in bastardised American or fake hoity-toity but in his language, the language he'd spoken since he was a kid. It was a London musical, his London.<sup>92</sup>

These are the original lyrics. Subsequent versions of the song were sanitized.<sup>93</sup>

There's toffs with toffee noses and poofs in coffee houses  
and fings ain't wot they used t'be.  
There's short time low priced mysteries  
With our proper histories  
Fings ain't wot they used t'be  
it used ter be class  
Doin' the town, buyin' a bit of vice  
And that's when a brass, couldn't go down  
Under the union price, not likely!  
Once in golden days of yor  
Ponces killed a lazy whore,  
Fings ain't wot they used t'be.<sup>94</sup>

He was an untrained musician, could not write music, but did have an ear for a melodic tune, although one could argue that there is an element of plagiarism in some of his work.<sup>95</sup>

Everybody left the theatre 'talking Fings' and singing the song, not giving a toss about its similarity to 'Mountain Greenery'.<sup>96</sup>

For *Sparrers Can't Sing*<sup>97</sup>, first produced at Stratford East and then made into a film, the composer was James Stevens, a multi-talented musician who wrote operatic, orchestral and pop music. Whereas for *Oh! What A Lovely War*, songs were used that had been popular during the First World War (1914-1918). The songs used in this production were taken from a book entitled, *Tommy's*

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.. loc. 991.

<sup>90</sup> *Fings Ain't Wot They Used T'Be*. Theatre Royal Stratford East 1960.

<sup>91</sup> When the musical transferred to the West End, a glossary was put into the programme.

<sup>92</sup> *Fings Ain't Wot They Used to Be: The Lionel Bart Story*. Loc 1342

<sup>93</sup> Max Bygraves *Fings Ain't Wot They Used T'Be* 1960.

<sup>94</sup> *Fings Ain't Wot They Used T'Be* title song from 1963 production.

<sup>95</sup> *Mountain Greenery*, Rodgers and Hart and the title song from *Fings' Ain't Wot They Used T'Be*

<sup>96</sup> *Fings Aint Wot They Used T'Be: The Lionel Bart Story*. Kindle edition.

<sup>97</sup> Lewis, Stephen, *Sparrers Can't Sing*, Theatre Royal Stratford East 1960.

*Tunes*.<sup>98</sup> Throughout the centuries, popular melodies have been used again and again but with different lyrics. The advantage to this is the inherent familiarity for both the listener and the singer. The tommy's tunes were comprised of old and familiar tunes to which the soldiers created new lyrics when in the trenches. It is believed that many of the songs had been passed down and adapted by the servicemen through different wars and conflicts. An example of this is the melody with Robert Burns's *Auld Lang's Syne*,<sup>99</sup> which is thought to date from 1793, and used again in the soldiers' song, *The Reason Why*.<sup>100</sup> This reuse of a well-known melody is of particular value when a song is being used for a specific purpose, such as a political message.

*The Beggar's Opera* stood in stark contrast [...] to previous English-language opera, which had usually tended to present the elevated sentiments of ancient gods and monarchs and the like. Here, instead, was a clever arrangement of well-known ballad tunes set to new words, stitched together to create a popular entertainment that anyone could enjoy.<sup>101</sup>

Bob Carlton, when writing *Return to the Forbidden Planet*, worked in reverse with this concept, choosing well-known songs but which had suitable lyrics that would sit well within his plotline. This device was used also by Catherine Johnson when she wrote the book for the musical, *Mamma Mia!* (1999)<sup>102</sup> John Gay's *The Beggars Opera*<sup>103</sup>, written in the early eighteenth century, is an example of a production that is comprised of familiar music. It uses a mixture of hymns, folk tunes, some operatic arias and broadsheets.

What is of specific interest with the broadsheet is that they were printed without any music. It was up to the individuals to select a suitable tune that they knew and which fitted the verses.

We have seen that the folk-tune persists by oral tradition only; the same is true to a certain extent with the words of ballads, but in the case of the words the printing press

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<sup>98</sup> *Tommy's Tunes* (Erskine MacDonald Ltd 1917)

<sup>99</sup> Not the original.

<sup>100</sup> Note this is not the one used in *Oh! What a Lovely War*.

<sup>101</sup> Daniel Snowman, *The Gilded Stage: A Social History of Opera*. (United Kingdom: Atlantic Books Ltd. 2010). loc.1537.

<sup>102</sup> *Mamma Mia!* book by Catherine Johnson, Music by Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus (ABBA).

<sup>103</sup> *The Beggar's Opera* first performed at Lincoln's Inn Fields 1728.

began early to destroy this tradition, with the curious result that folk-music has preserved its vitality much longer than ballad poetry [...] When these broadsheets were sold at country fairs and elsewhere there was, of course, no music printed with them and the country singer would adapt to them his favourite tune with the result that the tune survived but that the words that went with it often disappeared before the ballad-monger's doggerel.<sup>104</sup>

The overarching influence on Glen Walford's early work that would provide the inspiration for the actor-musician can be traced to the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry from whence in 1965, the first Theatre in Education (TiE) company was created. The TiE movement was to have substantial influence upon the 1960s regional theatres.<sup>105</sup> The Sheffield Playhouse was one such theatre and where the director Colin George started Theatre Vanguard (1966), its outreach company into which he placed Glen Walford as its director. It was from this early work that Walford's inspiration for the actor-musician grew. The following chapter will identify the precise point at which the actor-musician was created and how the first actor-musician musical developed.

Carlton and Walford both have had the artistic directorship of the Bubble and a shared regard for the importance of community in common. However, there is a substantial difference in the way that they have both chosen to develop their careers in which they have been very successful; Carlton financially and unexpectedly so with the success of *Return to the Forbidden Planet*,<sup>106</sup> which was eventually produced in the West End in 1989 and ran for three years. This was followed by many tours and regional theatre productions. It is also a popular vehicle with schools and amateur theatre companies. But the greater success for both has been with the community work. By contrast the early part of Walford's career saw her as artistic director of two theatres. However, having resigned from the Everyman (1989) she has had a more peripatetic career,

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<sup>104</sup> Ralph Vaughan Williams, *National Music*, (Oxford University Press, London, New York and Toronto 1934.) p.61-62.

<sup>105</sup> From the late-1960sTiE became an established force nationwide and the Belgrade TiE company can be viewed as the roots from which other companies developed and grew. When actor-teachers departed the Belgrade, many would transport the practices established in Coventry to other bases across the UK. Paul Harman, an actor-teacher at the Belgrade in 1966, would go on to run the Liverpool Everyman Priority Community Theatre Project and set up the Merseyside Young People's Theatre Company. Similarly, Michael Jones, also at the company in 1966, would go on to set up Watford TiE company. From Belgrade Theatre TiE Education pack download.

<sup>106</sup> *Return to the Forbidden Planet*, The Cambridge Theatre, 1989–1992.

spending much of her life overseas specialising in work with foreign theatre companies, where she has also introduced the actor-musician. In contrast, Carlton, after the successful West End run with *Return to the Forbidden Planet*, he took over the failing Queen's Theatre in Hornchurch in 1997<sup>107</sup> which he has made into a viable concern.

The first actor-musician theatre company was the product of everything that Carlton had learnt about popular theatre. His knowledge and understanding of the cultural and political influences, community and social circumstances, all of this he fed into the development and creation of this emerging practice. Within his own theatre and practice he built upon Walford's work in recognizing the importance of music, specifically the use of popular or familiar music when incorporated into theatre productions. He also realized the efficacy of the actor-musician work and its potential in reaching out to the wider community to demystify and encourage the community into the theatre. His creation of a resident actor-musician company can be regarded as a validation of Walford's work. What he has not done with the Queen's was to attempt to make it into a commercial enterprise, for example a try-out theatre for the West End. The success of the Queen's is that it is rooted in the community for which it was originally built, and, as will be discussed in chapter three, the actor-musician has provided the cement.

The actor-musician practice continues to develop. There has been an expansion in terms of style of performance, musical structure and importantly musicianship. The actor-musician practice that provides an innovative type of performance and which having originated and developed in community theatre, has been embraced into regional and commercial musical theatre.

The popularity and increase and use of this form has necessitated the creation of actor-musician degree programmes. The actor-musician Jeremy Harrison joined the company at the Theatre Royal, York for the artistic director John Doyle's production of *Moll Flanders*, which won best musical at the 1995

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<sup>107</sup> Bob Carlton, artistic director of the Queens Theatre, Hornchurch, 1997–2014.

Theatrical Management Awards (TMA).<sup>108</sup> According to Harrison it was this production that began to develop his interest in the actor-musician. Harrison trained as an actor at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) and the Moscow Arts Theatre. He also holds a degree in music from the Open University. In 2000 Harrison took up a post at Rose Bruford College where he now teaches actor-musicianship. Harrison said that initially the actor-musician was formed as a music bolt-on to the acting degree, becoming a dedicated degree course in 2004. At the audition the students are asked for an acting piece and to play a musical piece. Harrison takes a mix of students, from those with grade eight music to others who play by ear. There has to be a wide range of musical instruments as the current industry demand requires more than just 'bedroom guitarists'. Many applicants already have acting skills, although some of the best musicians are unable to make the acting transition.<sup>109</sup> For the first two years the students take the following classes: 'movement, voice, music making, composition, MDing and arrangement, acting, musicality, singing and study'.<sup>110</sup> Harrison states that, 'The impulse to act and create music comes from the same place.' The course draws heavily on eastern European influences using the work and practices of companies such as *Song of the Goat*<sup>111</sup> and *Gardzienice*,<sup>112</sup> where musicality is used as a starting point for the actor's journey, with physicality and rhythmic notions that create the flow of narrative. Key importance for Harrison is what he terms the 'active imagination', where the performers use their imaginations to bring the two worlds of music and acting together.

There are two key authors on the topic of the actor-musician: Millie Taylor and Dominic Symonds, who have written individually and together both book chapters and papers on the actor-musician. What is often neglected or overlooked is the use and presence of the body by the actor-musician. This is an vital element of the actor-musician that Dominic Symonds addresses in his

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<sup>108</sup> 1995 *Moll Flanders*, book by Claire Luckham (from the novel by Daniel Defoe), lyrics by Paul Leigh (original lyrics by Claire Luckham and Chris Bond), music by George Stiles (based on tunes of the period) at the Theatre Royal, York.

<sup>109</sup> Jeremy Harrison interview Rose Bruford, 2005 .

<sup>110</sup> <http://www.bruford.ac.uk/courses/actor-musicianship-.aspx?pv=2>

<sup>111</sup> *Song of the Goat* (Teatr Piesn Kosla) founded in 1996 by Grzegorz Bral and Anna Zubrzycki

<sup>112</sup> *Gardzienice* founded in 1977 by Wlodzimierz Staniewski

article, 'The corporeality of musical expression: "the grain of the voice" and the actor-musician,'<sup>113</sup> which says that,

Here the exploitation of corporeality in vocal expression has been extended into instrumental performance to create an interesting and particularly expressive aesthetic form.<sup>114</sup>

Symonds uses a production, *Adam's Apple*<sup>115</sup>, a piece written and performed by the musical duo Sharp Wire, to argue that the actor-musician uses the musical instrument to stand in place or as an extension of the 'voice'.

[...] it is not just in the narrative content of *Adam's Apple*<sup>116</sup> that we recognize music as the expression of human corporeality; the identities of the performer-characters are announced, not only aurally and visually but also in the striking physical presence of the bodies onstage, through their various kinaesthetically and corporeally witnessed 'voices'. It is not enough to consider the music of *Adam's Apple* as simply accompanying the onstage performance, nor to consider its auality as simply a sound palette; the aesthetic of the piece sites the bodily production of music as its fundamental substance.<sup>117</sup>

It is this aesthetic that is key in the differentiation of performance and audience experience. The music does not accompany an actor or a singer, instead it is the melding of both of the art forms of acting and musicianship that are plied by one person, that creates this new aesthetic: a dyad comprised of instrument and actor. With this new aesthetic, the actor is constrained by the instrument, whereas the musician is freed from the pit.

The unique relationship of the actor-musician to the instrument is a key element in this thesis both from the performer's point of view and more importantly from the audience members. This is an area that will be discussed in the analyses of productions by both Carlton and Walford in the following chapters.

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<sup>113</sup> Symonds, Dominic. 2007. 'The Corporeality of Musical Expression: "The Grain of the Voice" and the Actor Musician'. *Studies in Musical Theatre*.

<sup>114</sup> Symonds, Dominic. 2007. 'The Corporeality of Musical Expression: "The Grain of the Voice" and the Actor Musician.' *Studies in Musical Theatre* p.168.

<sup>115</sup> Sharp Wire *Adams's Apple* 2005

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Symonds, Dominic. 2007. 'The Corporeality of Musical Expression: "The Grain of the Voice" and the Actor Musician.' *Studies in Musical Theatre* p.176

Simon Frith, in his book *Performing Rites: Evaluating Popular Music*,<sup>118</sup> whilst not specifically concerned with the use of 'voice' as described by Symonds, shows that his interest in the physical body is in identifying the combination of various musical performer roles as a characteristic of popular culture and the separation of these roles with more elite cultural productions. Some echoes of this can be found in Symonds's paper. Frith's initial approach has been to look at how music has been categorized as high and low culture in Europe and the United States during the nineteenth century. He specifically mentions Bayreuth and the importance of the quietness and stillness of the audience, also citing Wagner's dislike of having the instruments visible during a performance.

Frith contrasts this with,

A good rock concert, by contrast, is measured by the audience's physical response [...] And rock performers are expected to revel in their own physicality too, to strain and sweat and collapse with tiredness [...] Rock stage clothes [...] are designed to show the musician's body as instrumental [...],<sup>119</sup>

Frith goes on to add that,

Rock acts conceal not the physical but the technological sources of their sounds; rock audiences remain uneasy about musical instruments that appear to require no effort to be played.<sup>120</sup>

Theodor Gracyk, in his book, *In Rhythm and Noise*, discusses the increase in demand for recorded music in the 1950s which accelerated in the 1960s producing a substantial amount of song reuse but with a difference.

Mike Bloomfield provided a brilliant guitar riff to Bob Dylan's 'Like A Rolling Stone', which Richard Thompson lifts intact and employs at key moments in 'Wall of Death' (1982), with no credit to Bloomfield or Dylan. Of course, the music for 'Like A Rolling Stone' derives from Ritchie Valens' 'La Bamba' (1958), who in turn got it by rearranging a traditional Mexican song.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Frith, Simon. *Performing Rites: Evaluating Popular Music*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1998.)

<sup>119</sup> Frith, Simon. 1998. *Performing Rites: Evaluating Popular Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p 124-125

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Gracyk, Theodore. *Rhythm and Noise: Aesthetics of Rock*. (United Kingdom: I B Tauris & Co Ltd, 1996).p.92.

The 're-use' of recorded music will also be discussed in the chapter on Carlton and also how this too is reworked in a physical form by the actor-musicians.

Gracyk provides many examples of artistes such as Dylan and various rock bands appropriating material to create apparent new songs and also how incestuous this became amongst the rock industry.

Lennon and McCartney took advantage of the fact that melody and lyrics are subject to copyright, but rhythm patterns are not. Ringo Starr's drum pattern is one of the most arresting and original elements of the Beatles 'Come Together': (1969), and both Aerosmith<sup>122</sup> and Tina Turner<sup>123</sup> preserve it on their remakes. Yet Starr gets no writing credit.<sup>124</sup>

The developments in recording technology have allowed a different form of plagiarism to take place that is more concerned with finding a new sound. If the line between originality and theft in songwriting and arranging is hazy in rock, the haze thickens with digital sampling.<sup>125</sup>

The actor-musician has originated in a popular music environment. Music has been dominated by the aesthetic movement that began in the eighteenth century and in which the dominant art was fine art, as it was believed to be a product of genius. The criteria that was applied to art was also applied to music, although those critics concerned with aesthetics vacillated in their views and specifically where music was concerned. The twentieth century saw the development of rock music which was embraced under the popular arts banner and, central to this thesis, is also identifiable with the development of the actor-musician.<sup>126</sup>

The more energetic and kinaesthetically aesthetic response evoked by rock music exposes the fundamental passivity of the traditional aesthetic attitude of disinterested, distanced contemplation – a contemplative attitude which has its roots in ascetic idealism, in the quest for individual

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<sup>122</sup> Aerosmith an American rock band formed in 1971.

<sup>123</sup> Tina Turner (Anna Mae Bullock ) b. 26 November 1939.

<sup>124</sup> Gracyk, Theodore. *Rhythm and Noise: Aesthetics of Rock*. United Kingdom: I B Tauris & Co Ltd, 1996.p.94.

<sup>125</sup> Gracyk, Theodore. *Rhythm and Noise: Aesthetics of Rock*. United Kingdom: I B Tauris & Co Ltd, 1996.p.95.

<sup>126</sup> 'The Aesthetic of Popular Music', by Theodor Gracyk, *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ISSN 2161-0002, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>, 28 July 2015.

transcendence rather than communal interaction or social change. Popular arts like rock thus suggest a radically revised aesthetic with a joyous return of the somatic dimension, which idealist philosophy has long repressed to preserve its own hegemony (through the intellect) in all realms of human value.<sup>127</sup>

This begs the questions as to why stillness is expected of an audience listening to what is regarded as 'high brow' music? Is it regarded as undignified to respond to 'the beat'? Whilst opera and classical music can be more multi-layered in their musical construction than more popular musical forms, that is not to say that the rhythms and tempi are necessarily less rousing than those in many baroque pieces, for instance. However, this probably has more to do with the audience being a co-creator. Caroline Heim, in her book *Audience as Performer*, writes about the reciprocity in which one group, the performers, lead the other group, the audience, and vice versa.

Reciprocity and leading and following can be described in terms of expiration and inspirations: an exchange of breath. As discussed above, when the lights first illumine the stage in the electric air of the playhouse there is often a moment of inspiration as the audience breathe in the possibilities of the imaginary world. During the production, the actor's performance is the expiration that meets this expectation, and the reciprocity continues throughout the performance in a form of unlimited symbiosis.<sup>128</sup>

Heim's book is concerned primarily with the actor and the audience; however, the points that she makes concerning the co-creation of the work can equally be applied to a musical or an opera. Heim states that audiences are aware of the type of audience they are expected to be and the behaviour that that constitutes. Current audience behaviour with classical musical is expected to be restrained and for the audience member to be sitting back in their seat. Whereas,

Singing is an almost obligatory audience performance at all juke-box musicals [...] Singing, particularly communal singing during juke-box musicals, is an example of an implicit invitation; the audience who are familiar with the

<sup>127</sup> Richard Shusterman, *Performing Live : Aesthetic Alternatives for the Ends of Art*, 1st edn. (United States: Cornell University Press, 2000). p.44.

<sup>128</sup> Caroline, Heim, *Audience as Performer: The Changing Role of Theatre Audiences in the Twenty-First Century* (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2015) p.153.

songs 'join in' [...] Over the past decade, dancing and other kinetic performance often accompanies singing. In *Motown* and *Mamma Mia* audience members hold hands and sway side to side.<sup>129</sup>

Heim's research indicates the co-creation between performance and audience. The audience knows the appropriate way to react to the various forms of performance and equally the performers have specific expectation of their audience.

As will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters, audiences do respond to the musical skill of the actor-musician. Frith provides a specific example of this, describing a musician working through an instrument.

The particular way in which a guitarist gets a guitar note, for example (whether George Benson or Jimi Hendrix...) is at once a musical decision and a gestural one: it is the integration of sound and behavior in performance that gives the note its 'meaning'.<sup>130</sup>

Whilst this is a different take from Symonds's view it does make a similar point relating to the importance of the physical body and the transmission of the sound or the 'voice' via the instrument. This perhaps gives a further explanation regarding an audience's perceived dominance of the musical skill over the acting. These ideas will be drawn on and analysed in subsequent chapters.

In the 1960s, radio microphones and/or amplification would not have been a consideration for Walford with the touring Theatre Vanguard as it was not as yet an established element in the theatre production process. By the early 1970s when the actor-musician was in its infancy, amplification was gradually being introduced into the West End musical productions with microphones being used as reinforcement. For example, the production of *No, No, Nanette* Theatre Royal Drury Lane (1973) used seven float mics across the front of the stage in order to reinforce the principal's voices over the nineteen piece orchestra. This musical, written in the 1920s, does not include any electric instruments in its orchestral line-up, but does have a large brass section, as a consequence of

<sup>129</sup> Caroline, Heim, *Audience as Performer: The Changing Role of Theatre Audiences in the Twenty-First Century* (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2015) p.159.

<sup>130</sup> Frith, Simon. *Performing Rites: Evaluating Popular Music*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1998.) p. 94

which the violin section was miked. Importantly, a radio microphone was used to amplify the leading lady, Dame Anna Neagle, who was by then in her 70s and had insufficient vocal projection.

During the late 60s and into the early 70s rock musicals were beginning to be introduced into the West End that had electric instruments. The consequence of this was that it became necessary to mic the performers. For example *Godspell* Wyndhams theatre (1971), which had a small four-piece band, had float and rifle mics but also had one hand-held radio mic for the cast to use for their solo numbers to give them freedom of movement. The Bubble for the production of *Return to the Forbidden Planet* (1983) used cable mics for the band and singers which, as described in the Bob Carlton chapter, made blocking challenges for the director. The radio mics in the early 1970s were notoriously unreliable and, more importantly for a non-commercial company, were extremely expensive and would have been beyond the Bubble's financial reach. *Jesus Christ Superstar*<sup>131</sup> Palace theatre, London (1972) can be considered ground breaking in that the entire orchestra and rock band were amplified, as were the chorus and principles but on cable mics.

The introduction of sophisticated audio technology into musical theatre used in the UK in the 1970s, has provided another aesthetic layer. Jonathan Burston in his article 'Theatre Space as virtual place: audio technology, the reconfigured singing body, and the megamusical'<sup>132</sup> discusses the mega-musical and the use of the radio mic. What interested him specifically was the audio processing and the distortion of the aesthetics:

[...] as a consequence of the widespread, multi-directional, and frequently careless deployment of loudspeakers, we see bodies singing, and yet sound often (if not almost always) appears *not* to emanate directly from them.<sup>133</sup>

This reference is important in describing the impact that amplification and the radio mic has upon an audience's view of both the body and the voice in

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<sup>132</sup> *Popular Music*, Volume 17 Issue 02 May 1998, pp. 205-218.

<sup>133</sup> *Popular Music*, Volume 17 Issue 02 May 1998. p.213.

performance and one that has grown to inform the practice of the actor-musician.

For example, the amplification allows for the performer to turn their back on the audience with no perceptible change in the quality or volume of the voice. Further, the use of the lavalier radio mic<sup>134</sup> can allow for a singer to become the leading and vocally dominant instrument over both an amplified choir and orchestra that includes electric instruments that are singing and playing at fortissimo level.<sup>135</sup> This is a physical impossibility without the use of radio mics. An example of this was with the penultimate number in *Chess*<sup>136</sup> (Prince Edward Theatre 1986) *Endgame. Act II.*<sup>137</sup> Amplification, the use of the radio mic has had a three-fold significance for the actor-musician. That wearing of a body mic and also a comparable radio pick-up on their instrument gives them freedom of movement; they do not have to stay rooted to one spot when singing either into a stand mic or playing an electric bass or guitar, neither are they impeded by trailing cables. It also means that they do not have to always position themselves facing downstage when singing and if required, can vocally dominate.

It has already been discussed that audiences expect to see the musicians' physical effort whilst playing their instruments. The solo guitarist may give a physical performance in order to create an aural performance but there may possibly exist more of a performance challenge in visually convincing an audience that the singer's vocal output maybe greater than that produced by a chorus of 20.

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<sup>134</sup> There are two types of radio mic; a hand-held or lavalier mic. The lavalier is a very small mic and with the transmitter is either attached to the body or placed in the costume. The hand-held radio mic, looks similar to any other hand mic but incorporates the transmitter in the casing and has no trailing leads.

<sup>135</sup> This is referring specifically to musical theatre and not to opera where it is expected and physically possible for the leading singer to be heard over a large orchestra. Neither is this a comment on the training or vocal range of musical theatre performers, many of whom are opera trained. It refers specifically to the impact and changes that the use of radio mics, the score and musical arrangements with powerful electronic instruments has upon the overall musical performance aesthetics.

<sup>136</sup> Lyrics, Rice, Tim, Music: Ulvaeus, Björn, Andersson, Benny, *Chess*

<sup>137</sup> It is of interest to note that whilst this was aurally extremely effective for the audience, it upset many members of the *Chess* choir who acknowledged its absurdity.

In comparison to this it is maybe the apparent effort that the actor-musician brings to the performance that is crucial and forms part of the aesthetic. The actor-musician presents as an actor in a scene which then concludes. It demands that that character leaves the stage which the character does but the performer does not. The performer is now a musician, part of the band or 'orchestra' and plays the music for a dance number. The dance concludes but the actor-musicians do not leave the stage but sit at the side whilst an acting scene unfolds, for which they are not required. This is the aesthetic of an actor-musician musical where the performer is at all times part of the whole and the actor, musician, singer and in some instances dancer, have been put into a melting pot to create one distinct performer. The actor-musician has many voices, many methods of 'telling' the story: speech for the 'narrative', song when words are no longer sufficient and an instrument to provide a backing, or a different mood or colour to a scene. All this must be and should appear to be seamless; although there is a range of possibilities to be utilized which will form part of the performance analysis in the following two chapters, there exists no division of the actor on the stage and the musician relegated to the pit the musical exists on the stage and the actor-musician is the musical.

Millie Taylor, writing on the actor-musician, discusses the effect that an actor-musician performance has upon the audience,

That aesthetic in performance challenges audiences to simultaneously perceive multiple realities as performers are seen as musicians, actor, character and vocalist[...]. How the audience members individually perceive the blend of simultaneously presented realities is open. Some may choose to focus on the character and plot, others on the skill of musician and actor, others on the theatricality of the performance, but there will always be a blend of all of these.<sup>138</sup>

There are two key issues to be examined in the link between a performer and the audience. The first is the attraction to music that is familiar and which connects us with specific periods in our life and, more importantly, connects us with our own large peer group. The other issue is in regard to the actor-

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<sup>138</sup> Taylor, Millie, *Musical Theatre, Realism and Entertainment* (United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012) Kindle Edition. Loc 3278.

musician's technical ability; is it the multi-skilling of the actor-musician that is lauded by the audience and if so, does one skill take precedence over the other and if so for what reason? The indications are that it is the musicianship that is regarded as the primary skill.

The importance and purpose of musicality in humans continues to fascinate researchers. Elena Mannes in her book, *The Power of Music*, states that,

[...] today many scientists are convinced that there is a biology of music, a hardwired capacity for musical appreciation and expression.<sup>139</sup>

There has been considerable research into the place and power of music. Much of the research has centred on the mother and baby relationship. 'Motherese' is the term used for the specific way in which mothers communicate with their babies and which, as Mannes says, is '[...] a great example of the link between music and language.'<sup>140</sup> Motherese is a sing-song style of speech and it exists in all cultures. 'Baby-talk', 'motherese' and 'infant-directed speech' (IDS) are all terms used for the very distinctive manner in which we talk to infants who have not yet acquired full language competence [...] The general character of IDS will be well known to all: a higher overall pitch, a wider range of pitch, longer hyper-articulated vowels and pauses, shorter phrases and greater repetition than are found in speech directed to older children and adults. In his book on Neanderthal man, Steven Mithen explains why babies are communicated with in this manner:

We talk like this because human infants demonstrate an interest in, and sensitivity to, the rhythms, tempos and melodies of speech long before they are able to understand the meanings of words.<sup>141</sup>

He also discusses to what extent this early man could communicate. From various skeletal remains they have been able to evaluate the construction of the larynx. Although not developed as fully as modern mankind, the research indicated that s/he would have been able to create a range of pitched sounds

<sup>139</sup> Mannes, Elena, and Aniruddh D Patel, *The Power of Music: Pioneering Discoveries in the New Science of Song* (United States: Walker and Company, 2011). p.2.8

<sup>140</sup> Mannes, Elena, and Aniruddh D Patel. 2011. *The Power of Music: Pioneering Discoveries in the New Science of Song*. United States: Walker and Company. P. 94.

<sup>141</sup> Mithen, Steven. 2011. *The Singing Neanderthals: The Origins of Music, Language, Mind and Body*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson ebook.p. 69

but not speech. Whilst the Neanderthals would have been able to communicate with sounds there is also a strong possibility that they would have created some early form of song. However, what this does indicate is the implied inheritance of the ability to create and to be able to differentiate between sound frequencies.

He also makes the point that particularly in the west we refer to people as being musical or unmusical and which are both misnomers. To either not play an instrument or not possessing sufficient technical skill with the same is not being unmusical. Equally, some people are unable to pitch accurately when singing. However, they recognise the music and can hear if it is played or sung incorrectly. Mithen's opinion is that: '[...] it appears that the neural networks for language are built upon or replicate those for music.'<sup>142</sup>

The composer Vaughan Williams held a not dissimilar opinion regarding singing, stating that, 'Song, I believe, is nothing less than speech charged with emotion.'<sup>143</sup>

He goes on to explain that,

The German words *sagen* and *singen* were in early times interchangeable and to this day a country singer will speak of 'telling' you a song, not of singing it.<sup>144</sup>

He then provides an example.

I was once listening to an open-air preacher. He started his sermon in a speaking voice, but as he grew more excited the sounds gradually became defined, first one definite note, then two, and finally a little group of five notes. The notes being a, b, a, g, a with an occasional drop down to e. It seemed that I had witnessed the change from speech to song in actual process.<sup>145</sup>

The fusion of art forms into the variant forms of performance has taken place over the centuries and with many different cultures. It might be argued that it is with the majority of these that the inclusion of music and or song has been the

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<sup>142</sup> Mithen, Steven. 2011. *The Singing Neanderthals: The Origins of Music, Language, Mind and Body*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson ebook.p69

<sup>143</sup> Vaughan Williams, Ralph. *National Music*. London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1934.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Vaughan Williams, Ralph. *National Music*. London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1934. P.31- 32.

consistent and linking factor. There is much discussion and research about the purpose and use of music. What is without argument is that all humans possess an inherent appreciation of music. All cultures use song and dance and there has been substantial research made on its importance and usage. Richard Wolfram in an article on European song-dance form, cites art-work that depicts early dance forms known as the 'song and chain' dance and which existed in many different cultures.

Another song-and-chain dance may be seen on the ring from Roga in Meckleburg from the fifth century of the Bronze age [...] From Cyprus come terracotta statues of about 2000 BC, on which chain and dance are represented;<sup>146</sup>

He also includes an early description of this dance form,

Homer very beautifully describes such dances as are represented on old Greek vase pictures: one man plays and sings, the others dance round him in a circle, or boys and girls move to and fro in ranks. 'The divine singer,' Homer says, 'sang to the sound of the lute and two dancers began the song and spun round in the centre.' Here we find the general round-dance with special leaders of both singing and dancing.<sup>147</sup>

The tempi and scale formation might vary but there are similar applications made. Within this musical ability is an understanding of rhythm – we naturally tap our feet in time with a song. We are not following a score or any other instruction, this ability is within us.

Anthropologists Steven Mithen<sup>148</sup> and Leslie C. Aiello<sup>149</sup> are of the opinion that this recognition of pitch and rhythm are the skills that we require in order to communicate with each other both on a one-to-one basis and, more importantly, to maintain the group or groups. We need an understanding of pitch in order to pronounce and recognise words and rhythm to construct sentences in a comprehensible order.

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<sup>146</sup> Wolfram, Richard, *European Song-Dance Forms*, Journal of the International Folk Music Council, Vol.8 (1956), p.33 [www.jstor.org/stable/834743](http://www.jstor.org/stable/834743)

<sup>147</sup> Wolfram, Richard, *European Song-Dance Forms*, Journal of the International Folk Music Council, Vol.8 (1956), p.33

<sup>148</sup> Steven Mithen, Professor of Archeology at University of Reading.

<sup>149</sup> Leslie Crum Aiello (b. May 26, 1946) is a Paleoanthropologist and Professor Emeritus of University College, London.

What is the significance of this ability? The belief that the ability to make these sounds was to promote co-operation and the necessity for working together. This ability was more sophisticated in early homo sapiens with whom song and music began to develop. The evidence for this was with the discovery of a small musical instrument: a small three-holed pipe. This was discovered in Geissenklösterle, Germany. 'Geissenklösterle is a cave in Southern Germany and one of the earliest known sites of modern humans in Europe.'<sup>150</sup>

Although there is little use made of communal singing for work in today's culture, songs such as sea shanties demonstrate this point about the importance of using singing for communal work. The sea shanty dates back to a time when it was necessary for crews to get the timing right on sailing ships, either when rowing or running up the main sail, for example. Benjamin Britten uses a communal work song in Act I of *Billy Budd* –'Pull, my Bantams!'<sup>151</sup>

There are two sets of aesthetics that embrace the actor-musician: the use of popular forms of music and the combining of the art forms, acting and music. In an actor-musician performance the majority of the music is either derived from popular or musical theatre traditions. It is the power of the actor-musician that stimulates and elicits from the audience a group recognition via the transmission of the culturally-valuable songs being played. This is achieved because the performer as musician is conspicuous and not hidden from view in a pit. In essence it provides a similar effect to that of Homer's description of the performer and the dancers moving around him it is inclusive.

Theodore Gracyk, in his article on the aesthetics of popular music, states that:

[...] whatever is true about fine art is true about music. From the middle of the eighteenth century until the middle of the nineteenth, philosophers regarded music as a pillar of the emerging system of the fine arts. As a result, music could not be regarded as art if it lacked genius and

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<sup>150</sup> Mithen, Steven, *The Singing Neandethals: The Origin of Music, Language, Mind and Body*. Phoenix loc 5449. Kindle version.

<sup>151</sup> *Billy Budd*, Op. 50, Benjamin Britten libretto E. M. Forster and Eric Crozier, (1951)

autonomy. By the beginning of the twentieth century, most intellectuals endorsed the elitist consensus that popular music lacks these features.

Theodor W. Adorno in his *Essays on Music* discusses popular music, specifically the song structure but most importantly the influence that the radio has had in creating a popular music culture by excessive play repetition.

This process may be roughly defined as 'plugging'. The term 'plugging' originally had the narrow meaning of ceaseless repetition of one particular hit in order to make it 'successful'.<sup>152</sup>

Adorno goes on to make the point that this total immersion with popular music is a form of brainwashing in which only this type of music will suffice or satisfy the listener.

It leads the listener to become enraptured with the inescapable. And thus it leads to the institutionalization and standardization of listening habits themselves [...] Repetition gives a psychological importance which it could otherwise never have. Thus plugging is the inevitable complement of standardization.<sup>153</sup>

There are two further points that are particularly significant. The repetition of something and in this instance a song.

Mass listening habits today gravitate about recognition. Popular music and its plugging are focused on this habituation. The basic principle behind it is that one need only repeat something until it is recognized in order to make it accepted.<sup>154</sup>

The significance of this is in the playback of a particular piece of music. This is relevant in the success of *Return to the Forbidden Planet*.

The element of 'psychological transfer' [...] is the tendency to transfer the gratification of ownership to the object itself and to attribute to it [...] the enjoyment of ownership which one has attained.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Adorno, Theodor W., *Essays in Music* University of California Press; First Edition (24 July 2002) p.447

<sup>153</sup> Ibid. p 447

<sup>154</sup> Ibid. p.452

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, p.456

But if working songs are virtually redundant, instances of communal singing remain. For example football crowds, religious ceremonies and choirs. The act of singing entails deep breathing and therefore taking in more oxygen which generates a sense of well being combined with a sense of belonging and a united common interest.

But for virtually all of us, music has great power, whether or not we seek it out or think of ourselves as particularly 'musical'. This propensity to music this 'musicophilia' shows itself in infancy, is manifest and central in every culture, and probably goes back to the very beginnings of our species.<sup>156</sup>

The other form of what is described as collective engagement is the audience experience. For example, audiences are expected to join in at a pantomime when there is the traditional song sheet.

[...] we use the term *collective engagement* as a way of describing the audience's sense that there are communal meanings; that they value the relationship to performers, the shared enjoyment with other audience members, and the sense of social inclusion that can accompany the experience of attending the live performing arts.<sup>157</sup>

Lyn Gardner provides an excellent description of the sense of collective engagement in a review of a large community project in Wales,

[...] the National Theatre of Wales [...] produced a contemporary and community-based version of *The Passion* over an Easter weekend in Port Talbot, South Wales. Combining professional actors and musicians with local participants involved as cast and crew, and using contemporary stories and various spaces and locales for the setting, the production was developed with the participation of over 1,000 volunteers, and the final production attracted 22,000 people in the town to watch the performance. The production 'was like watching a town discovering its voice through a shared act of creation'.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Sacks, Oliver. *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain*. (London: Pan MacMillan, 2011). Loc. 192.

<sup>157</sup> Radbourne, Jennifer, Hilary Glow, and Katya Johanson. 2013. *The Audience Experience. A Critical Analysis of Audiences in the Performing Arts*. United Kingdom: Intellect Books. Loc 356.

<sup>158</sup> Gardner, Lyn *The Passion Review*, *The Guardian*, 24 April 2011.

The audience who comes to watch a play or a musical has a very different type of experience. If the musical is a new musical and the music completely unfamiliar to the audience then the audience link is that of a shared experience of people who enjoy musicals. On the other hand if the musical is a revival, there is a strong possibility that many of the audience are familiar with the music and it is also possible that they have seen this musical produced before. The audience experience then for those who are familiar with one or both of these elements is very different. With a musical such as *The Jersey Boys* (Prince Edward Theatre 2008), the attraction for this musical, which is telling the story of a 60s group the Four Seasons, will be for those people who were teenagers in that decade. The reception of any musical that features either iconic groups or a selection of hit songs from a specific period will have an audience that shares a common bond, a common frame of reference. Much of the enjoyment will come from a sense of a shared experience. If the experience is watching an actor-musician, the musician half of the performer is usually the one that is lauded by the audience as it is a skill that they do not possess and, again citing Symonds, '[...] the aesthetic of the piece sites the bodily production of music as its fundamental substance.'<sup>159</sup>

In *How Music Works* David Byrne discusses the community aspect of experiencing the arts and specifically music. This is relevant to the influences that created the actor-musician via the early touring companies.

The arts don't exist in isolation. And of all the arts, music, being ephemeral, is the closest to being an experience more than it is a thing – it is yoked to where you heard it, how much you paid for it, and who else was there.<sup>160</sup>

Byrne makes the point regarding why there was a tradition of popular music and musicianship and the form that this took.

Of course people have always been able to go hear professional musicians performing in big cities. Even in small towns, paid entertainers played at dances and weddings [...] But a hundred years ago most people didn't

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<sup>159</sup> Symonds, Dominic. 2007. 'The Corporeality of Musical Expression: "The Grain of the Voice" and the Actor Musician.' *Studies in Musical Theatre* p.176.

<sup>160</sup> Byrne, David. 2013. *How Music Works*. United States: McSweeney's Publishing. Kindle. Loc. 4456.

live in big cities, and for them music was made locally, often by friends and family.<sup>161</sup>

He then goes on to make the case for praising the solo musician. Ewan MacColl is an example of someone from a poor family playing folk music but also creating new works.

In the modern age, though, people have come to feel that art and music are the product of individual effort rather than something that emerges from a community. The meme of the solitary genius is powerful, and has affected the way we think about how our culture came into being. We often think that we can, and even must rely on blessed individuals to lead us to some new place, to grace us with their insight and creations – and naturally that person is never us.<sup>162</sup>

On the other hand research has been done on those audience members who are either musicians themselves or have at some point in their lives learned to play an instrument to a specific level. Research indicates that in these circumstances the audience experience is very different.

The effects of musical training on listening are not necessarily positive, sometimes making listeners feel excessively critical and unable to engage emotionally with a concert performance.<sup>163</sup>

What is of interest is the effects upon the brain that listening can do. Jennifer Radbourne, writing on audience response, states that there has been significant research by neuroscientists on musicians and non-musicians which has detected a difference in the brain structure of musicians.

[...] pianists' brains show a different response when they listen to music that they have played on the piano, as

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<sup>161</sup> Byrne, David. 2013. *How Music Works*. United States: McSweeney's Publishing. Kindle. Loc. 4473.

<sup>162</sup> Byrne, David. 2013. *How Music Works*. United States: McSweeney's Publishing. Kindle. Loc. 4485.

<sup>163</sup> Radbourne, Jennifer, Hilary Glow, and Katya Johanson. 2013. *The Audience Experience. A Critical Analysis of Audiences in the Performing Arts*. United Kingdom: Intellect Books. Loc. 1801.

compared with a flute, for which they do not have a physical muscle memory.<sup>164</sup>

The importance of Shakespeare's work in the development of the actor-musician by both Walford and Carlton has been referred to earlier in this chapter and will be examined in detail in the subsequent chapters. In Shakespeare's plays it is evident from the inclusion of lyrics that music was incorporated as well as a customary jig played at the end of a performance. The playwright also includes references to both music and musical instruments.

The use of music in both the theatre and in his plays during Shakespeare's lifetime varied. It was theatre practice for a trumpet to be sounded three times to indicate that the play was about to begin. This is echoed today in current front-of-house (FOH) practice when bells are rung to encourage the audience to take their seats.<sup>165</sup> It was also a practice utilized by the travelling players to herald their arrival. This is detailed by Thomas Dekker in *The Guls Hornbook*,

Present / not your selfe on the stage (especially at a new play) until the quaking prologue hath (by rubbing) got color into his cheeks, and is ready to give the trumpets their Cue, that hees upon point to enter:<sup>166</sup>

Shakespeare refers to this practice three times in his plays, in *Hamlet*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and also in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

THESEUS: Let him approach.  
*Flourish of trumpets*  
*Enter QUINCE for the Prologue*<sup>167</sup>

According to David Lindley, the play texts are good indicators as to the positioning of the musicians and that in Shakespeare's later plays is it indicated that they are playing in the gallery above the stage. '- as for example, in *The Tempest*, where Ferdinand hears the music "now above me" (1.2.408),'<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid..Loc 1792

<sup>165</sup> These warnings are given at 3,2 and 1 minutes prior to curtain/lights up and are frequently accompanied by a tannoy announcement from the stage management.

<sup>166</sup> The Guls Hornbook P 50

<sup>167</sup> Act V A Midsummer Night's Dream William Shakespeare.

<sup>168</sup> David Lindley, *Shakespeare and Music* The Arden Critical Companions, (Bloomsbury: London, New Delhi, New York, Sydney) Kindle edition p.91.

The scholarly consensus now is that the use of the central space in the gallery over the stage as a music-room (when required) was probably imported into the open-air theatres some time after about 1608, in imitation of the practice at the indoor theatres, where the evidence for musicians 'above' is earlier and clearer.<sup>169</sup>

There were other musical uses for which the trumpet and also drums were employed and these were for battle scenes or to announce the entrance of royalty. Shakespeare's audiences would have been familiar with the use of instruments to either call to arms or to announce a dignitary. David Lindley in his book *Shakespeare and Music* says that '[...] the closing scenes of *Macbeth* are [...] punctuated and orchestrated by instrumental noise [...] to generate a sense of conflict which cannot be represented fully on stage [...]' He goes on to say that, The sense of aestheticisation of battle is one possible consequence of these musically accompanied dramatic realizations.<sup>170</sup>

There is a distinct difference in Shakespeare's use of music from current theatre practice. His insertion of all of the music that is referred to in the texts is intended to be heard and acknowledged by the characters. Whilst contemporary versions of his plays do include the required music cues, it is now also the fashion to include soundscapes to create a specific mood or atmosphere, in common with current film techniques, although it might be argued that the orchestrated battle sounds are an early attempt at a soundscape. But the modern soundscape music is not for the benefit of the characters and they do not acknowledge it, instead it is intended for an audience response.

Lindley clarified in his book that the music used in Shakespeare's plays '[...] were often assembled from a variety of pre-existing music, only sometimes with new additions.'<sup>171</sup> The use of music and extant music was important to the sixteenth-century audience as it provided a key to the status and attitude of the characters. The choice of the music would be selected to correspond with the social status of the particular character. For instance, if a ballad was used that

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid. p. 92

<sup>170</sup> Ibid. p.113

<sup>171</sup> David Lindley, *Shakespeare and Music*, The Arden Critical Companions, (Bloomsbury: London, New Delhi, New York, Sydney) Kindle edition, p.111

would indicate that the character was from a lower class. Lindley also defines the differences in the employment of music in the plays between the sexes and that it was recognized that if a man sung then he was either 'drunk or in love'<sup>172</sup>. Women on the other hand if belonging to either the middle or upper classes would have been expected to sing<sup>173</sup> and they would have had musical tuition.

The current fashion with contemporary work is for new music to be composed for a production. But what is less acknowledged is Shakespeare's understanding of musical structure and how he incorporated this into his plays. It is important to recognize that musical education had been a significant element in England, primarily to support the church.

The rebirth of popular musical education in England took place almost exactly three centuries after the final dissolution of the monasteries. During those three hundred years nothing had emerged to take the place of the disbanded medieval song schools where music had originally been nurtured. But just as it had been a principal feature of the song school to train children to competence in the music of the liturgy, so in the growing schools of the National Society For Promoting Religious Education three centuries later children again began to receive musical instruction primarily to equip them to perform the music of the church service.<sup>174</sup>

Shakespeare, therefore, would have had tuition in music at his grammar school as this would have formed part of the curriculum. His knowledge is demonstrated not only with fragments of song included but his references to structure.

Many of Shakespeare's musical allusions take the form of puns or technical jargon beyond the immediate comprehension of a modern audience. *The Taming of the Shrew*, for instance, presents part of a music lesson with

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid p.126

<sup>174</sup> Bernarr Rainbow, *The Land without Music: Music Education in England 1800-1860 and Its Continental Antecedents* (Boethius Classic Texts in Music Education) (United Kingdom: Boethius Press (UK), (1965).p.156.

sufficient accuracy to reveal the detail of a method of learning to read music current from the eleventh century, which was to survive in isolated instances until the middle of the nineteenth century. The fact that in the play this music lesson is contrived as a ruse to cover clandestine conversation increases the difficulty of following its course.<sup>175</sup>

Horensio: Madam, before you touch the instrument,  
To learn the order of my fingering,  
I must begin with rudiments of art;

Bianca: Why, I am past my Gamut<sup>176</sup> long ago!

Hortensio: Yet read ...

Bianca: [reads] Gamut...A re...B mi...C fa ut...  
D sol re...E la mi...<sup>177</sup>

The Gamut was a sight reading method which originally started as ut, re, mi as apposed to do, re, mi. It was based on the *Hymn to John the Baptist* ,

Ut-queant laxis,  
Re-sonare fibris  
Mi-ra gestorum  
Fa-muli tuorum  
So-lve pollute  
La-bii reatum  
Sa-ncte Iohannes<sup>178 179</sup>

The frequent references to music in the plays of Shakespeare reflect something of his audience's familiarity with musical terminology. And while it is easy to draw too enthusiastic a picture of the general level of musical culture in England at the close of the sixteenth century, it is apparent that, for the cultivated among his audience at least, an acquaintance with music in both its 'practical' and

<sup>175</sup> Bernarr Rainbow, *The Land without Music: Music Education in England 1800-1860 and Its Continental Antecedents* (Boethius Classic Texts in Music Education) (United Kingdom: Boethius Press (UK), (1965).p.14

<sup>176</sup> It was named 'Gamut' as the staff began with a low G on what is now the modern bass clef and was given the Greek symbol γ (gamma), thus gamma-ut eventually contracted to Gamut.

<sup>177</sup> Shakespeare William, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Act III, Sc i, l.72

<sup>178</sup> Guido of Arezzo (c. 991-1033)

<sup>179</sup> This teaching method<sup>179</sup> is echoed in the musical *The Sound of Music* (1965) and the song *Do-Re-Mi*<sup>179</sup> when Maria teaches the Von Trapp children the notes of the major musical scale.

‘speculative’ forms unquestionably provided not only a source of pleasurable relaxation but also a token of a liberal education.<sup>180</sup>

This is evident in Shakespeare’s use of musical puns. An example of this can be found in *King Lear* Act 1 Sc II with Edmund’s soliloquy. Edmund is illegitimate and is plotting to overthrow his brother Edgar, who is their father’s legitimate heir. The divisions Edmund is speaking of in his soliloquy, refer to those of family and country. But being aware at the end of his speech that his brother has just entered makes the implication that he is referring to musical divisions.

Edmund: Tut, I should have been that I am,  
had the maidenliest star in the firmament  
twinkled on my bastardizing. Edgar –

Enter EDGAR

Edmund: And pat he comes like the catastrophe of the  
old comedy: my cue is villanous melancholy,  
with a sigh like Tom O’ Bedlam. O, these  
eclipses do portend these divisions! fa, sol, la,  
mi.<sup>181</sup>

The modern musical both in Britain and America was influenced by the work that came out of Germany and specifically by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill.

The young composers of Berlin – among them Kurt Weill...They not only gained entry to popular culture but at times took control of it: Weill’s *Threepenny Opera* charmed Germany as *Show Boat* charmed America. Weill and company seemed on the verge of solving the ultimate mystery – how to break the divide between classical music and modern society.<sup>182</sup>

The composer Hanns Eisler, a close friend and collaborator with Brecht said that:

What Germany needed was music that told deeper truths about human society. Open the windows when you compose, he instructed his colleagues. ‘Remember that

<sup>180</sup> Bernarr Rainbow, *The Land without Music: Music Education in England 1800-1860 and Its Continental Antecedents* (Boethius Classic Texts in Music Education) (United Kingdom: Boethius Press (UK), 1965). p.13

<sup>181</sup> Shakespeare, William, *King Lear* Act 1 Sc.II.

<sup>182</sup> Ross, Alex. 2008. *The Rest Is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century*. 1st ed. Kindle. New York: Picador USA. Loc.3435.

the noise of the street is not mere noise, but is made by man [...]<sup>183</sup>

Brecht, in common with Littlewood, was influenced by and also enjoyed the music-hall environment.

Inspired by popular cultural events like music hall, where the patrons (often predominantly male) could smoke and drink while watching, Brecht began to promote the image of a smoker's theatre of relaxed and therefore discerning 'cool' spectators who would not be 'carried away' by the on-stage world. He alluded sports events – expansive bright lighting and a lack of mystery and suggestion – as another example of how to set the scene for shrewd spectatorship.<sup>184</sup>

Brecht was not only a music-hall spectator but also a performer,

Throughout the 1920s Brecht made appearances as a cabaret performer, pretending to be a clarinetist in a sketch called *Orchestra Rehearsal* by the Bavarian folk comedian Karl Valentin and impressing audiences with demonic renditions of songs like 'Legend of the Dead Soldier' at a Berlin cabaret called The Wild Stage.<sup>185</sup>

Weill, on the other hand, had a classical music training. However, he integrated many different styles of music into his work. Weill's integration of popular music forms, such as jazz, and the use of performers from music hall and musical comedy was in part an attempt to use popular forms to create a socially useful art and challenge elitist forms like opera.<sup>186</sup>

This chapter has introduced the two key directors that have been responsible for the creation and development of the actor-musician. It sets the work of both of these directors firmly in community theatre, both touring and regional, identifying the influences on them, both social and as a theatre practitioner. It has raised also the relevance of Shakespeare in their work as text and as inspiration for musicals. Another element that has been stressed is the use of music or musical instrument as a topic in literature, film, musicals and opera.

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<sup>183</sup> Ross, Alex. 2008. *The Rest Is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century*. 1st ed. New York: Picador.USA. Loc.3586.

<sup>184</sup> Meg Mumford. Bertolt Brecht (Routledge Modern and Contemporary Dramatists 2008). Kindle. p.16.

<sup>185</sup> Meg Mumford. *Bertolt Brecht* (Routledge Modern and Contemporary Dramatists 2008). Kindle. p.12.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid. p.24.

What is of key importance in this thesis is our relationship to music and song. The anthropological work has been identified alongside the specialists in various music genres, specifically popular and opera. What has also been mooted is the corporeality of the performer; how this is perceived by the audience, and the impact that it has upon the reception of the work. This thesis will assert that the specific multi-skilling of the actor-musician is a complete break with earlier practices and that the actor-musician musical is now an established musical genre. The following two chapters provide case studies on the two directors responsible for the creation and development of the actor-musician, Glen Walford and Bob Carlton.

## Glen Walford – Creator and Developer of the Actor-Musician

This chapter is an analysis of previously unpublished material about the work and career of the British theatre director Glen Walford and demonstrates her central importance in the creation and development of the actor-musician and the actor-musician genre in the United Kingdom. The significance of which is demonstrated partly by Walford's use of the practice in other countries such as Hong Kong and Japan. Working consistently since the mid 1960s, Walford had been the artistic director for three different theatre companies.<sup>187</sup> She now maintains a freelance career that is both international and domestic and is highly regarded for her Shakespeare productions in which she incorporates actor-musicians.<sup>188</sup>

This chapter will establish the influences upon Walford's early life, specifically a love of the Shakespearean storylines that gave her an early interest in drama. It will then investigate how this love of Shakespeare led her to the other influences – educational, social and cultural – that helped shape her theatre practice and the route that led to the creation of the actor-musician genre. A critical analysis of her working practices will also be provided, culminating in two detailed case studies of actor-musician productions. The basis for this investigation has been provided by extensive research into two unpublished archives, *The Bubble Theatre*<sup>189</sup> and *The Liverpool Everyman*<sup>190</sup>. Further material, such as set designs and previously unpublished scripts, have been

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<sup>187</sup> The Bubble Theatre (1971-1974 and 1976-1979), Chung Ying Theatre Company, Hong Kong (1979-1982) and the Liverpool Everyman (1983-1989).

<sup>188</sup> 'Scores of theatre-lovers braved heavy rains on Saturday night to attend the gala opening of Glen Walford's adaptations of Shakespeare's famous play *Macbeth* at the Frank Collymore Hall. Produced by the Gale Theatre of London and Barbados, the play is directed by Walford, a respected British director.' <http://www.glenwalford.com/pages/reviews.html>

'[...]The Bard's short farce was performed with verve and gusto by a talented cast, under the brilliant directorship of Glen Walford. When festival chairman Ray Sykes brought Walford back to Ludlow, he charged her with creating a hit. She's done exactly that and Ludlow Festival has a theatrical crackerjack on its hands [...]' The Shropshire Star  
<http://www.glenwalford.com/pages/reviews.html>

3 The Bubble Theatre, 5 Elephant Lane, London SE16 4JD

4 The Liverpool Everyman Archive, Thomas Aquinas Building John Moore University, Liverpool.

provided from individuals' personal archives. Detailed material on Walford's working practices and productions has been researched from personal interviews with performers, professional collaborators and musical directors. Glen Walford herself has given both personal and written interviews for this research.

It was the influence of Shakespeare's plays both as text and cultural value that provided the impetus for Walford's theatre career. In one of the 'stream of consciousness' documents (1986) written by her for the creative team at the Liverpool Everyman, she explains that as a young child *The Taming of the Shrew* was:

[the...] first Shakespeare I ever read but only in Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare form in *Golden Wonder Book*, amid many other folk and heroic tales, poems, Grimm et cetera. Completely hooked on it as seven-year-old and returned to it with fascination again and again.<sup>191</sup>

Glen Walford, real name Glennis Margot Walford, was born in 1939, in Martley, a small rural Worcestershire village, which she regarded as 'a cultural waste ground.'<sup>192</sup> She was an only child and cites this as being the reason that she lived imaginatively in her head.<sup>193</sup> Having discovered Shakespeare and also *Grimm's Tales*, she enjoyed dressing up, creating plays and also possessed an early entrepreneurial instinct: 'Fairy stories, mythical, magical adventure stories [...] I (would) direct, act, account [...]'<sup>194</sup> These plays would be performed in the woods with fallen trees used as seating. She would be the author, a performer, and would sell tickets for the performances.<sup>195</sup> Whilst at school she started to experiment with larger projects:

Being a country kid with nature landscapes all around me; influenced by my grandfather telling epic tales in his own brilliant story-telling style I would transfer my fertile imagination to outdoor epics and was always good at

<sup>191</sup> Walford, Glen, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Stream of Consciousness Mark One 4 August 1986 EVT/PF/000727.

<sup>192</sup> Everyman, The Liverpool. 2006. Everyman Archive Oral History Interview Glen Walford-EVT/OH/000004.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

scooping people up and carrying them along with me. I remember as an eight-year-old somehow having my imagination (plus undoubted early erotic tendencies) (sic) by a painting of *The Rape of the Women*. I divided the entire primary school playground – boys on the hill and girls in playground below, then blew a whistle and boys had to go and grab girl of their choice. The teacher snatched her whistle back and blew it again before it got any further but this is the sort of epic I devised and performed before I knew anything about theatre at all.<sup>196</sup>

Having been inspired initially by the Lamb's Tales<sup>197</sup>, she developed an interest in drama that led to her reading English at Bristol University where she studied under the distinguished English literary critic Lionel Charles Knights, who was then the incumbent of the Winterstoke Chair of English.<sup>198</sup> Most importantly for Walford, Knights was a renowned authority on Shakespeare:

L. C. Knights was one of the most distinguished Shakespeare scholars of the twentieth century and an exemplary literary teacher and critic. His name remains most closely associated with his earliest published essay, *How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?* (1933), which challenged the Bradleyan approach to character in Shakespeare. It was and remains – despite Knights's demurrals – a radical challenge to thinking about the nature of Shakespearean drama.<sup>199</sup>

The legacy that Knights's tutelage has given to Walford is independent thinking and confidence when directing and working with Shakespeare's plays. Her approach is not reverential, which is demonstrated in her stream of consciousness notes to *The Winter's Tale* company: 'I don't like that poxy "Time the Chorus" stuff[...]'<sup>200</sup>, neither is she afraid to edit the texts, as is demonstrated in a letter to all members of the cast: 'This production of *The*

<sup>196</sup> Glen Walford email. (London 2009).

<sup>197</sup> Often referred to as The Lamb's Tales, Charles and Mary Lamb, *Tales from Shakespeare*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell (1878).

<sup>198</sup> Endowed from the benefaction of the late Right Hon. Lord Winterstoke of Blagdon, Pro-Chancellor William Henry Wills, 1st Baron Winterstoke, Bt (1 September 1830 – 29 January 1911) who was the first chairman of Imperial Tobacco.

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/cms/go/statutes/general/chairsendowed.html>.

<sup>199</sup> Citation: Chris Joyce, L. C. Knights. *The Literary Encyclopedia*. 8 October 2008. [<http://www.litencyc.com/php/speople.php?rec=true&UID=12312>, accessed 17 March 2009.]

<sup>200</sup> *The Winter's Tale* stream of consciousness notes. EVT/PF/000816.

*Tempest*[...]has been cut (about one third of it has gone) and has been and will continue to be “re-welded”.<sup>201</sup>

In this respect, Walford’s attitude and approach to Shakespearean texts coincidentally bears similarity to Peter Brook’s. In Margaret Croyden’s book, *Conversations with Peter Brook*, Brook says that: ‘With Shakespeare, you can genuinely turn the play inside out. You can put the first scene last. You can cut out lines [...] you can write lines in.’<sup>202</sup>

In her adapting and editing she tacitly acknowledges the strong scholastic influences on her understanding of the text combined with the prevailing attitudes to productions of Shakespeare. For example, in her notes on the Everyman production of *The Taming of the Shrew*<sup>203</sup> she wrote: ‘The Christopher Sly subplot is cut for which I shall receive some academic stick.’<sup>204</sup>

She goes on to justify her decision by stating that,

I realise ‘*Shrew*’ is a problem play and I can’t back off the issue by guts and theatre alone [...] I just at the moment hope that the fundamental love I have for Shakespeare and the play will be so manifest in the production that there will be the usual optimism and joy which the audience seem to get from Everyman Shakespeare.<sup>205</sup>

It should be pointed out that Walford is not unique in excising the Sly subplot. For example, Conall Morrison, director of *The Taming of the Shrew* (2008) for the Royal Shakespeare Company, in which he maintained the subplot, said that: ‘Jonathan Miller’s done various versions on TV and on stage, where he always cuts the Sly framework.’<sup>206</sup> <sup>207</sup> However, Walford is not someone to accept prevailing beliefs and traditions especially with Shakespeare. This is

<sup>201</sup> Actor’s contractual letter. EVT/PF/000457.

<sup>202</sup> Margaret Croyden, *Conversations With Peter Brook 1970-2000*. (New York & London: Faber and Faber 2003.) p.10.

<sup>203</sup> *The Taming of the Shrew* stream of consciousness notes. EVT/PF/000727 5.8.86.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Conall Morrison, director of *The Taming of the Shrew*, Courtyard Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, on 30 April 2008.

<sup>207</sup> *The Taming of the Shrew*, Chichester Festival Theatre, 1972, director Jonathan Miller.

borne out by the fact that six of her Shakespeare productions have been her own adaptations.

As will be demonstrated, Walford's practice was in direct opposition to the emerging mainstream theatre practices of the time. She had some of the same intellectual influences as her theatre contemporaries, but the choices she made were radically different.

A key influence in Walford's university education was Knights's friendship with Dr Frank Raymond Leavis. Knights had read English at Cambridge where he had met Leavis and whom he regarded as his mentor.

Born in Cambridge in 1895, Frank Raymond Leavis became a leading critic who approached English literature with an academic rigour not seen before, though he has since been regarded as unduly judgmental. Attending Cambridge University, he lectured at Emmanuel College and was elected into a fellowship in 1936. With his wife Queenie, he founded *Scrutiny* in 1932, an acclaimed journal of criticism, which sought to inculcate in readers a mature and morally serious response to culture and specifically literature, and thus avert the deadening effects of industrial society and a vulgar mass media.<sup>208</sup>

Leavis was a powerful academic influence whose career spanned four decades. In conjunction with his wife, he was responsible for placing the study of English and the English novel at the centre of the arts.

A consequence of this was his influence on those Cambridge undergraduates who became interested in the theatre. Sir Peter Hall, the first director of the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), acknowledges in his autobiography the impact of Leavis on dramatic text, and also dedicates his book *Shakespeare's Advice to the Players* to F.R. Leavis.<sup>209</sup>

One big factor out of the Cambridge account and that's F R Leavis,[...]his distinctive way of analysing a text and discovering by their analysis whether the man was sentimental, indulgent, factious, irresponsible, was a

<sup>208</sup> [http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/lit/theory\\_history/leavis,%20f.htm](http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/lit/theory_history/leavis,%20f.htm) 20 January, 2009.

<sup>209</sup> Peter Hall, *Shakespeare's Advice to the Players*, (London: Oberon Books, 2003).

wonderful acid test for a director [...] although he hated the theatre, he also believed very much that the health of a society was dependent on the health of its culture.<sup>210</sup>

Sir Trevor Nunn, when director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, cited Leavis as one of the strongest influences on his literary sensitivity.<sup>211</sup>

The post – second World War years had been a period of substantial change for the universities, with the expansion in higher education and specifically the study of English and the arts. But contained within this was the elitism that emanated primarily from Leavis, who took the moral high ground. Claudia Johnson, Professor of English Literature at Princeton University, is in agreement with the literary theorist and critic Terry Eagleton, who writes in his book *The Function of Critics* is that: '[...]Leavis certainly paved the way for all critics who assume the centrality of English literary studies to the humanities. Scholars today typically regard Leavis as one of humanism's nastiest bogeymen: imperialistic, elitist, homophobic, and sexist – charges that are mostly deserved.'<sup>212</sup>

Undergraduates drawn towards reading English during the 50s and 60s, would have been heavily influenced by the work of Leavis and Knights. Pendennis, writing an article in *The Observer* entitled: 'The Hidden Network of the Leavisites', said of Leavis that:

His disciples are, almost without exception, those who have sat at his feet, pupils and research students. Attracted to Cambridge, often to Downing by his prowess, they have over thirty years spread all over the world. Above all, Leavis has taught teachers. Many have taken up strategic positions in the provincial universities.<sup>213</sup>

Their work and influence on literary criticism went hand in hand with their definition of 'acceptable' culture and, most importantly, Leavis defined the

<sup>210</sup> [http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/johntusainterview/hall\\_transcript.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/johntusainterview/hall_transcript.shtml).

<sup>211</sup> 'Theater; From Lectern To Stage', New York Views Of Shakespeare 4 November, 1984 *New York Times*.

<sup>212</sup> Claudia L. Johnson, 2001. *F. R. Leavis: The Great Tradition of the English Novel and the Jewish Part*; (University of California Press.) p. 202.

<sup>213</sup> Pendennis. The Hidden Network of the Leavisites, in *The Observer*, 11 March 1962.

recipients of populist culture as being 'Men and women, especially women, [who] seek in the vicarious realm of fiction the wider range of human experiences which a complex and narrowed life denies them [...] For emotional satisfaction, civilisation-hampered people turn to fiction.'<sup>214</sup>

If Walford had embraced Leavis's view on populist literary culture, she would not have accepted his flagrant sexism. It is unlikely that sexism alone would have turned Walford towards a different theatre path. But it is highly probable that it provided sufficient reason for her to evaluate the extent to which his bigotry and discrimination were influencing a generation of graduates, some of whom were theatre practitioners. What is certain is that Walford eschewed the prevailing elitism and turned her theatrical focus towards a different audience. This was the impetus, but what other influences and experiences were to lead her to the creation of the actor-musician genre?

Hall (b.1930), Nunn (b.1940) and Walford (b.1939) had each come from working-class families – Hall from Bury St Edmonds, Nunn from Ipswich and Walford from Worcester, and all three were only children. Another factor they had in common was that they were the first members of their respective families to go to university, where they each read English. However, both Nunn and Hall were up at Cambridge, although not at the same time, whilst Walford was at Bristol. Their immersion in the educational and social influences whilst at Cambridge was substantial and, it might be argued, had directed both Hall and Nunn towards an elitist theatre. Walford, however, chose to follow another path, which had similar values and aspirations to those held by the theatre director and playwright John McGrath<sup>215</sup> (1935 – 2002). His book *A Good Night Out*, written in 1981, was a collection of six lectures that he had given between January and March 1979 at Cambridge University and is concerned with 1970s theatre. This was the period in which Walford was developing and working with the Bubble Theatre and although Walford is not directly named he is also speaking for her beliefs and practice. In the preface McGrath says that: 'I tried to explain [...] some of the thinking, the experience and the aspirations that lay

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<sup>214</sup> F.R. Leavis & Denys Thompson, *Culture and Environment, The Training of Critical Awareness*. (London: Chatto and Windus, 1937), p.99.

<sup>215</sup> The first production that McGrath directed was Aristophanes's *The Birds* in 1959, an open air production whilst at St John's College, Oxford.

behind my work in the theatre during the last decade.<sup>216</sup> More specifically he refers to the first lecture in which he: '[...] discussed something of the nature of the dominant bourgeois form of theatre as found at the Royal Court from 1956–1972/3, currently at the Aldwych, [and the] National[...]when the word “prestige” is in the air [...]'<sup>217</sup> Continuing he says that in 1979: '[...] there is, even now, even in England, an identifiably “working-class” culture which is simply *different* from that bourgeois culture emanating from Sir Peter Hall’s emporium.'<sup>218</sup>

McGrath<sup>219</sup> states that he does not: '[...] accept the following assumptions:

that the audience for theatre is an idealized white, middle-class etc. person and that all theatre should be dominated by the tastes and values of such a person.<sup>220</sup>

Most importantly within this same section it picks up on, albeit tacitly, the influence of Leavis and literature:

that the so-called ‘traditional values’ of English literature are now anything other than an indirect cultural expression of the dominance over the whole of Britain of the ruling class of the south-east of England.<sup>221</sup>

He continues his argument in support of a different type of theatre:<sup>222</sup>

To be more specific, I *do* believe that there is a working-class audience for theatre in Britain which makes demands, and which has values [...] and that these values and demands contain within them the seeds of a new basis for making theatre that could in many ways be more appropriate to the last quarter of the twentieth century than the stuff that presently goes on at the National Theatre, or at the Aldwych.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> John McGrath, *A Good Night Out. Popular Theatre: Audience, Class, and Form*, (2nd edn. London: Nick Hern Books, 1996), p.xiii.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid* p. 61.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>219</sup> It should be noted that McGrath was also from a working-class background and went on to read English at Oxford.

<sup>220</sup> McGrath, John. 1996. *A Good Night Out. Popular Theatre: Audience, Class, and Form*. (2<sup>nd</sup> edn. London: Nick Hern Books, 1996),p.3-4.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>222</sup> McGrath, John. 1996. *A Good Night Out. Popular Theatre: Audience, Class, and Form*. (2<sup>nd</sup> edn. London: Nick Hern Books, 1996),p.3-4.

<sup>223</sup> The Aldwych was the London home of the RSC from 1960 –1982.

Hall and Nunn have been artistic directors of the RSC and the National and both have been knighted.<sup>224</sup> Of the two, Hall's career has largely veered away from any form of populist/popular theatre, concentrating on classical theatre and opera, whilst Nunn has enjoyed much success with musical theatre<sup>225</sup> and also with his and John Caird's co-production of *Nicholas Nickleby*<sup>226</sup> (1980). When interviewed, after having received an achievement award, Nunn stated that:

I've never had any feeling of disconnection between the classical theater, or the contemporary theater, or musical theater, or the thing that we call opera. I've never wanted to categorize them, or to feel that they should be done by different people, different specialists. I've never believed in that.<sup>227</sup>

Walford did not take the same directorial route. In 1962 she did apply for one of the ABC director scholarships. She was the only woman amongst the candidates and did not receive a placement.<sup>228</sup> Amongst the same cohort was Trevor Nunn, who was successful and won a scholarship to the Belgrade, Coventry.<sup>229</sup> So, to what extent did the university degree and cultural influences that Walford received and experienced define her theatre practice and how would this lead to the creation of the actor-musician genre?

In the 1960s, Bristol University was pivotal for the British theatre on two counts. It was the first British university to offer drama and, according to Walford, was attracting the 'crème de la crème'<sup>230</sup> of students both British and international, who eschewed Oxbridge in favour of this new degree. Whilst many directors and actors came via the Oxbridge route, neither university offered a drama degree; but those up at Cambridge gained experience from Footlights, the University Amateur Dramatic Club, whilst those at Oxford came via the Oxford University Drama Society (OUDS).

<sup>224</sup> With the exception of Sir Laurence Olivier, the artistic directors of the National Theatre have all been Cambridge graduates: Sir Peter Hall, Sir Trevor Nunn, Sir Richard Eyre and Nicholas Hytner.

<sup>225</sup> His most famous production is the world's longest running musical, *Les Misérables*. This was developed whilst Nunn was at the RSC. However, he has also directed musicals in the commercial sector, for example *Cats* and, most recently, *Gone with the Wind*.

<sup>226</sup> RSC production of *Nicholas Nickleby* dramatized by David Edgar, 1980.

<sup>227</sup> [www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/nunnint-6](http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/nunnint-6) 28 June 1996 Sun Valley Idaho.

<sup>228</sup> Glen Walford dvd.

<sup>229</sup> Trevor Nunn worked at the Belgrade from 1962 to 1965 when Peter Hall made him an associate director at the RSC.

<sup>230</sup> The Liverpool Everyman. 2006. 'Everyman Archive Oral History.' Interview Glen Walford. EVT/OH/000004.

Glynne Wickham, Professor of Drama at Bristol University from 1960 to 1982, enjoyed the rare distinction of having pioneered a new academic discipline in British universities. In March 1945, Oxford University had explored the possibility of setting up a Department of Drama, but in 1947 Bristol, under the imaginative leadership of its Vice-Chancellor Sir Philip Morris, seized the initiative and introduced drama to the curriculum.<sup>231</sup>

Although Walford had elected to read English, her intention was to become an actor. During this period she went to the theatre a great deal.<sup>232</sup> The drama department provided her with the opportunity to act in as many plays as possible. She also made friends with many of the up and coming theatre practitioners during this period, such as the directors Michael Kustow, Alan Dossor and Peter James. These people would become vital contacts in her career. Thus there were two influences working in opposition with each other: Leavis's dislike of theatre and Wickham's passionate belief in it.

It was central to Wickham's vision of drama in universities that there should be the closest links possible with the professional theatre and he forged close ties with the company at the Bristol Old Vic (BOV) and with the BOV Theatre School.<sup>233</sup>

However, it was neither literature nor theatre that proved to have the most influence on Walford. Instead, she cites film as having an even greater impact,<sup>234</sup> specifically the 60s art films influenced by the Japanese film director Akira Kurosawa.<sup>235</sup>

[...] funny that I have become huge friends with the husband of his [Kurosawa] grand-daughter who is a big performance-art star in Japan and plays lead in 'Titanic - the musical'. (Tokyo 2009)<sup>236/237</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> Martin White, Obituary: Professor Glynne Wickham In *The Independent*, London, 2004.

<sup>232</sup> Glen Walford, email 17 December 2008.

<sup>233</sup> Martin White, Obituary: Professor Glynne Wickham In *The Independent*, London, 2004.

<sup>234</sup> Glen Walford email December 2008.

<sup>235</sup> Akira Kurosawa {1910 –1998}, best known in the West for his film *Rashômon* (1950), winner of the top prize at the Venice Film Festival.

<sup>236</sup> Glen Walford email London 2009.

<sup>237</sup> Fuji Television Network, Tokyo *Titanic the Musical*, (2009).

Kurosawa (1910–1998) was born into a samurai family, the top echelon in the Japanese feudal class system.<sup>238</sup> When Kurosawa was a child, his father took his children to the cinema where western films were starting to be shown.<sup>239</sup> A combination of his samurai heritage, a talent for drawing and an interest in western films, specifically those of John Ford, and a wide range of artistic influences, for example, Dostoevsky, Gorky, Shakespeare and Noh theatre, produced highly influential and evocative films. Kurosawa made three films which are based on Shakespeare's plays: *Throne of Blood* (1957), based on *Macbeth*; *The Bad Sleep Well* (1960), which parallels *Hamlet*, and *Ran* (1985), a reworking of *King Lear*. *Throne of Blood* is considered by the critics to be one of Kurosawa's best films. Shot in monochrome, the film is set in Japan with samurai warriors. Kurosawa did not attempt to translate Shakespeare's verse but wrote new dialogue. He stays truthful to the original plotline, although it is a leaner version and some characters, such as Macduff, have been omitted. The clarity of his storylines with subplots excised resonate in Walford's Shakespeare productions where she cuts scenes and dialogue that she considers either outmoded or where the humour has not made the journey over the centuries.<sup>240</sup> Most important is Kurosawa's cinematic style, for which he is acclaimed. He was an innovative director and devised the use of multiple cameras when shooting scenes, and employing telephoto lenses, which has the effect of 'flattening the frame'. For Kurosawa, there were two main advantages in the use of multiple cameras. Firstly, he would set the cameras at a distance from the actors in order that they would be less self-conscious about them. Secondly, the multiple cameras meant that he could film from many different angles.

[...] in addition to the telephoto lenses...[the] multicamera approach, which he uses to overcome the actor's acute consciousness of a single camera's position and which he claims first to have used in *Seven Samurai*, extends the fragmentation of his images.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> The feudal system has been abolished. However, family names can still indicate from which class someone originated. A samurai name still bestows a certain amount of high status.

<sup>239</sup> Cinema was introduced to Japan in 1896. By 1917 there were 64 cinemas in Japan and in 1920, intertitles and a narrator were used. It was not until 1935 that the talkies were first shown.

<sup>240</sup> Glen Walford email London 2009.

<sup>241</sup> Stephen Prince, *The Warrior's Camera*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1991). p.173.

This was of particular use to him when editing the film. Kurosawa was his own editor and his films were renowned for the fast editing.

Walford acknowledges the impact of Kurosawa's visual skills but it is his use of music that has had a substantial impact on her Shakespeare productions and specifically upon her use of the actor-musician. Her use of music and sound will be discussed in detail later in this chapter in the case study on *The Winter's Tale* (1989).

The influence of film on Walford also came via Bristol University:

[...] to Wickham drama did not mean just theatre. The arrival of George Brandt in 1951 (the last member of what Wickham called 'the four musketeers') introduced film studies to the curriculum. Wickham [was] keen to include broadcast media, and talked his way onto a BBC training course.<sup>242</sup>

This demonstrates that this period for Walford and for the theatre was one of substantial influences. It introduced her to professional theatre and up-and-coming practitioners. It built upon her early love of Shakespeare, providing her with the critical tools with which to approach his plays. She also became acquainted with art-house films, which is of specific importance in the development of Walford's theatre. She created popular theatre and yet she borrows ideas taken from a type of cinema which is aimed at an intellectual niche audience.

A major and more direct influence on Walford's theatre work came from someone whom she terms her 'guru', the founder of the Crucible Theatre Sheffield, the director Colin George.<sup>243</sup> Born in 1929, George read English at Oxford and therefore did not come under the direct influence of Leavis. Also, upon completing his degree, he was advised to put something back into the community, an idea that he embraced: '[...] I was up at Oxford and I think it's quite interesting, it was[...]49, 50, 51, just post-war, I did National Service. We

<sup>242</sup> Martin White, Obituary: Professor Glynn Wickham. (*The Independent*, London 2004).

<sup>243</sup> Everyman, The Liverpool. Everyman Archive Oral History Interview Glen Walford 2006. EVT/OH/000004.

were told, 'Look, you've had a wonderful education, go out and serve the community' [...]<sup>244</sup> George was aware that using one's skills and education for the benefit of others was a value that was too quickly superseded by self-interest and material gain.

Very [...] different from nowadays, you know: 'get on and make your way in life irrespective of anyone else' [...] I wanted to go into theatre, I got to Oxford and decided with a friend that I would form a touring company, inspired by tales of Benson going round in the 20s and 30s, everyone said nowadays you could do that, Wolfitt had done it.<sup>245</sup>

George was also a devotee of Shakespeare, selecting some of his plays to produce for his first theatre company. His early theatre career involved a substantial amount of touring and rehearsing in difficult conditions:

[...] the actors in three weeks did that tour and rehearsed a new play. It did give us three weeks' rehearsal – well three weeks' mornings – but of course when it was matinée at Netherton or Nuneaton, off we went.<sup>246</sup>

Writing in an email,<sup>247</sup> George discusses how, in 1965, he became artistic director of the Sheffield Playhouse. He made the decision to create a touring company that also participated in the main company's work. This was a model that had been introduced the previous year in Coventry and the Palace Theatre, Watford had just followed suit. This style of company became known as Theatre in Education (TIE). George went to Watford to see one of their performances for schools and from this he decided to create a TIE company in Sheffield. Funding for this company came from the Arts Council and it was decided to name it Theatre Vanguard. Its purpose was, as its name implies, to take out new and developing ideas into the community in order to draw the community into the main house. Theatre Vanguard took productions into schools but also involved students in workshops. The productions were simply but imaginatively designed, and for the workshop the students used any items of costume or props found in the stage area. Sheffield City Council also subsidised the company, which was intended to foster an interest in drama. The company visited as many state schools as possible, where the students took part in

<sup>244</sup> Theatre Archives Project, Colin George, British Library, 21/11/2005 p.1.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid. p.5.

<sup>247</sup> Colin George, Theatre Vanguard artistic director email, 19 July 2008.

improvised scenes that gave them the opportunity to experience performing with professional actors. Initially George was the director of Theatre Vanguard as well as artistic director of the Playhouse. When he assembled the new company of actors one of the number was Glen Walford. 'I had a company of five. I did the first shows myself, then Gwen [sic] Walford, who's a wonderful director – she goes round the world now directing – she came and I had an excellent company.'<sup>248</sup>

George's early career had taught him a substantial amount about different audiences and venues. He also maintained his belief that the community needed to be served. What specifically impressed Walford about George was that he did not believe in segregation. Therefore, not only would all the company appear on the main stage, they would also take productions to working men's clubs.<sup>249</sup> The theatre and values she was experiencing here were in stark contrast to the elitism being promoted via the university.

Together George and Walford set about engaging a new and small group of actors who were good all-rounders but also had different skills, such as juggling, and, more importantly, were musical and could sing. The company included Pip Donaghy and Alun Armstrong,<sup>250</sup> who is a proficient singer and also folk guitarist. Walford recognised two things. The first was the added value that live music gave to certain productions. She realised that the combination of music and text could help comprehension; that music can make that emotional connection to an individual or an audience when words are no longer sufficient. Secondly, she recognised that actors who were also musically proficient possessed a combination of communication skills that could cover a wider spectrum than an actor or musician. It was at this point that she believes the idea of the actor-musician started to germinate.

George says of Walford that her approach is highly inventive and that this was born out by the productions and workshops she developed. He points out that

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<sup>248</sup> Theatre Archives Project, Colin George, (British Library, 21/11/2005). p.4.

<sup>249</sup> Everyman, The Liverpool. 2006. 'Everyman Archive Oral History' Interview Glen Walford. EVT/OH/000004.

<sup>250</sup> Alun Armstrong is known mainly for his television work and theatre plays. However he has taken major roles in a number of West End musicals, for example, *Sweeney Todd* – June 1993 Cottesloe Theatre.

this was the time when the Beatles<sup>251</sup> were at the height of their popularity. Walford having realised the powerful combination of musician and actor, was now keen to use music and text, and she started to incorporate music into the workshops. George was particularly impressed by one workshop in particular, which demonstrates how effective the inclusion of music in drama can become. It was a science-based workshop and on the first day Beatles music was used, with children taking on the role of atoms – water dancing with hydrogen until an atomic explosion was created. Day two involved a near blacked-out classroom and an actor in military uniform briefed the children on dropping an atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Day three had the children improvising the chaos in Hiroshima after the bomb had dropped with citizens crawling to Asano Park, all done to the music of Pink Floyd.<sup>252</sup> Then, after a short break, the acting company performed a cut-down version of Beckett's *End Game*. The children did not realise that they were watching a play by an established writer and responded to the humour and Beckett's grim vision.<sup>253</sup>

In an interview with Walford, she stated that she had always liked the long established tradition of 'the players coming to town'.<sup>254</sup> In 1608 Thomas Dekker, writing in his book *The Belman of London*, describes a band of travelling players:

Their apparel is old and phantasticke, tho it be never so full of rents: the men weare scarfes of Callico, or any other bare stuffs having their bodies like Morris dancers with bells and other toyes to intice the country people to flouce about them, and to wounder at their fooleries [...]<sup>255</sup>

Theatre Vanguard had its own van and it was important to Walford that it was brightly coloured (yellow) and had stickers and images over it. She says that one of their devices was to arrive at the school and each actor would dress up as a child's toy. Armstrong would don a bee costume and invade the playground. The children were encouraged and led to create a story using the

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<sup>251</sup> The Beatles, British rock band 1960–1970.

<sup>252</sup> Pink Floyd, British rock band known for their psychedelic music 1965 to 2005.

<sup>253</sup> Colin George, Theatre Vanguard artistic director, email 19 July 2008.

<sup>254</sup> Glen Walford, interview London 24 February 2006.

<sup>255</sup> Thomas Dekker, *The Guls Hornbook and The Belman of London in Two Parts*. (London: J.M. Dent and Sons 1936). pp.237/8.

live toys and pieces of furniture with which to build an environment, such as a ship. Whilst Walford acknowledged the tradition of the players coming to town, there was, however, one important difference and that was Walford's decision to include music within Theatre Vanguard's professional work.

Walford is not a singer or an instrumentalist, and neither skill is essential for a theatre director. In common with many people, she enjoys and appreciates music. The musical director Paddy Cunneen refers to Walford as 'having a musical soul'. Walford says that storytelling is at the heart of her work and, in her opinion, the inclusion of music for both young people and adult audiences is an extremely valuable tool for making the storytelling more accessible. This is a view also held by the theatre director John McGrath and in his book *A Good Night Out* he says that:

Working-class audiences like music in shows, live and lively, popular, tuneful and well-played. They like beat sometimes, more than the sound of banks of violins, and they like melody above all. There's a long submerged folk tradition which is still there.<sup>256</sup>

This view placed Walford's theatre practice apparently at the centre of working-class or populist theatre: 'Middle-class theatregoers see the presence of music generally as a threat to the seriousness again, unless of course it is opera, when it's different.'<sup>257</sup> This is precisely what Walford challenged with her 1986 production of *Tosca*, which is described in detail later in this chapter.

In Walford's view, it is the notion of the accessibility that is key to successful theatre and her acknowledgement of this that made her recognise the value of the fusion of music and acting in the actor-musician. The dramatic literature that was being promoted then via the universities did not provide a theatre for the masses.

Theatre, however, is still discussed as if it were a book [...] there does exist a huge body of *dramatic literature*, which is rarely performed and whose 'language' is indeed that of

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<sup>256</sup> McGrath, John. 1996. *A Good Night Out. Popular Theatre: Audience, Class, and Form*. (2<sup>nd</sup> edn. London: Nick Hern Books, 1996),p.55.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

words on the page<sup>258</sup> [...] dramatic literature is what is sometimes left behind when theatre has been and gone.<sup>259</sup>

The comprehension and evaluation of the literature was for the intelligentsia, who would have no need of music to aid comprehension.

In opposition to an accepted 'middle-class' theatre, was Joan Littlewood's company, which had had its roots in agit-prop – Theatre Workshop. 'Littlewood had no time for polite, genteel theatre that provided pleasant diversions for a predominantly middle-class audience [...] she described the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Royal Court and the National Theatre as "the walking dead" [...] She wanted to create the antithesis of this type of theatre.'<sup>260</sup>

Walford acknowledges the influence that Theatre Workshop had upon her:

Although I frequented theatre a great deal, I was only influenced by the minimalism of scenery which Peter Brook developed so well and the anarchy of Joan Littlewood, although I didn't ever see anything she directed or if I did I don't remember it, which is pretty shocking.<sup>261</sup>

Walford did however recognise the impact that Littlewood's work had upon the theatre and how that had challenged the accepted beliefs and practices of the time. Although Walford and Littlewood's practices vary there are underlying similarities. And importantly it is a focus on making theatre accessible to a local community which is and was key to both. Nadine Holdsworth, in her book on Joan Littlewood, explains that: 'In practice, she rejected the tendency of some directors to work out the style of a show, character motivations and blocking prior to rehearsals, before fixing and polishing the results with the actors.'<sup>262</sup> More importantly, 'She wanted actors who were equal partners with her in the creative process, who could explore possibilities in rehearsal and be able to adapt to change, respond to interruptions from the audience and cope if

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid p. 5.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid. p.6.

<sup>260</sup> Nadine Holdsworth, *Joan Littlewood*. (London and New York: Routledge. 2006), p.46.

<sup>261</sup> Glen Walford, email, London 2008.

<sup>262</sup> Nadine Holdsworth, *Joan Littlewood*, (London and New York: Routledge. 2006). p.48.

someone messed up during performance.<sup>263</sup> Walford's rehearsal process is explained in more detail later in this chapter but her approach is for the actors to have complete ownership of a text in order that they remain adaptable in performance.

Littlewood and Walford both understand the importance and efficacy of the inclusion of music within a production. For instance, there are points of heightened emotion where words are insufficient but music can reach out and connect with an audience. Littlewood would have learnt much about the power and influence of music from her husband, Ewan MacColl. Together they set up the Theatre Union (1936) and then Theatre Workshop, touring for eight years before establishing a base at the Theatre Royal, Stratford East. '[...] she [...] added music (often opportunistically and occasionally sentimentally) – a jazz band in *A Taste of Honey*, Republican ballads and music-hall songs in *The Hostage*, and a score by Lionel Bart to Frank Norman's play turning it into a fully fledged musical.'<sup>264/265</sup> Richard Eyre and Nicholas Wright in *Changing Stages* state that Littlewood's '[...] achievements, however, have resonated throughout British theatre. She broke up the fabric, revolutionised the way that plays were presented, the way that they were written, and the way directors and actors and writers collaborated'.<sup>266</sup>

McGrath provides a possible explanation for this tacit influence upon Walford:

As the 1944 Education Act continued to cause growing numbers of working-class youths to blunder on into higher education, some into universities [...] so more of them came out of this process, excited by theatre, wanting to be theatre directors. And of these, a very small number felt, instinctively, that Joan was doing something they wanted to try to do. And so, almost any number being greater than *one*, a spreading or diaspora of Joan's disciples took place through the theatres.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> *Fings Aint What They Used to Be* Theatre Royal, Stratford East 1959, Garrick Theatre, London 1960.

<sup>265</sup> Richard Eyre and Nicholas Wright, *Changing Stages*: (Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. 2000). p.264.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.p.269.

<sup>267</sup> McGrath, John. 1996. *A Good Night Out. Popular Theatre: Audience, Class, and Form*. (2<sup>nd</sup> edn. London: Nick Hern Books, 1996), p.44.

Furthermore, there were other influential people, such as the director Alan Dossor who had read drama at Bristol University and possessed:

[...] an immense admiration for Joan Littlewood, had studied her work and her audiences, [...] he had assembled a company of excellent young actors, who worked in the inventive, confident, audience-grabbing way of Theatre Workshop, and the story was told with a certain amount of pace and variety. There was not much music, however [...]<sup>268</sup>

When Walford left Sheffield in 1970 she went to work for the artistic director, William Gaskill, at the Royal Court Theatre, London. During her time there she worked as: 'Assistant director, *Slag*.<sup>269</sup> Also involved in projects, workshops, planning meetings etc.'<sup>270</sup>

However if she was veering towards a theatre style that held values similar to that of Littlewood, then she was at that point situated in the opposing camp. Eyre and Wright state that:

It was certainly true that at the Royal Court there was always a comic contrast between the meticulous observations of working-class life on stage and the patrician audience with their chauffeur-driven cars parked two-abreast outside the foyer when the theatre had a hit.<sup>271</sup>

In the 1950s the Royal Court Theatre, London, was highly influential, becoming a flagship for new writing.

On 8 May 1956, John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* opened at the Royal Court on Sloane Square. It was the third production of the new English Stage Company, under Artistic Director George Devine, and is now considered the play that marks the beginning of modern British drama. George Devine aimed to discover hard-hitting, uncompromising writers, and create a company that would challenge and stimulate British theatre.<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> Ibid. p.50.

<sup>269</sup> David Hare, *Slag*, Royal Court Theatre, 1971.

<sup>270</sup> Glen Walford curriculum vitae 1979 – the Bubble archive.

<sup>271</sup> Richard Eyre, and Nicholas Wright, *Changing Stages*: (Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.2000). p.

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<sup>272</sup> Royal Court Theatre website – accessed 4 April 2009.

That it was influential is not in question, rather the notion that it would ‘challenge and stimulate British theatre’. An assumption was made that there was only one theatre, or more correctly one theatre of any literary value. John McGrath, writing in *A Good Night Out*, says that: ‘My belief[...]has been that there are *indeed* different kinds of audiences, with different theatrical values and expectations, and that we have to be very careful before consigning one audience and its values to the critical dustbin.’<sup>273</sup> McGrath was not alone in this view. Joan Littlewood with Ewan MacColl had founded an agitprop group, Theatre in Action, in 1934. Subsequent companies were touring companies, although Theatre Workshop eventually found a permanent home at Theatre Royal Stratford.

The Royal Court and Theatre Workshop both delivered new writing. Theatre Workshop was dedicated to providing art for the working-classes. The production of *Look Back in Anger* had given the mistaken view that the Royal Court was also dedicated to reaching out to the working-class. In the *Playwrights’ Theatre*, Terry Browne quotes Tony Richardson, who said that the management aims were to: ‘[...] show a repertoire of modern plays and the possibilities of modern theatre, and which would also present plays which hadn’t been produced [...] with the belief [...] that this would produce a kind of renaissance of writing inside England.’<sup>274</sup> These aims were not original and in essence paralleled the work that Littlewood was already doing with Theatre Workshop. However, the Royal Court found that there were difficulties with the new writing that was being put forward.

One of the problems with the plays which were being submitted was that they continued to deal with a society which had passed away, in a language which was dead – the language of the upper-class Kensington. Indeed one of the attractions of *Look Back in Anger*, apart from its obvious thematic relevance to contemporary life, was its break from the so-called standard English of the Edwardian drawing-room.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> McGrath, John. 1996. *A Good Night Out. Popular Theatre: Audience, Class, and Form*. (2<sup>nd</sup> edn. London: Nick Hern Books, 1996), p.3.

<sup>274</sup>Terry W Browne, *Playwrights’ Theatre. The English Stage Company at The Royal Court Theatre*. (Bath: Pitman Publishing 1975). p.10.

But the Royal Court is situated in affluent Sloane Square whilst the Theatre Royal, Stratford East environs were East End slums and an ever-changing immigrant population. Robert Leach writing in *Theatre Workshop* states that: 'Theatre Workshop's problems were compounded by the rise of the Royal Court Theatre as a darling of the fashionable left.'<sup>276</sup>

Leach goes on to define the essential differences between the two theatres as regards new writing:

The Royal Court [...] was essentially a development from its earlier incarnation as the home of Fabian drama practised by George Bernard Shaw, John Galsworthy and Harley Granville Barker [...] Theatre Workshop's position, [...] was very different [...] derived from the European *avant-garde* idea of total theatre [...] what was significant to these theatres was the experience of the audience, not the excellence of the playwriting. They, like Theatre Workshop, urgently wanted communication with their spectators.<sup>277</sup>

Both theatre companies were lauded for their various successes. But Theatre Workshop struggled for survival, receiving minimal help from the Arts Council, unlike the English Stage Company. John Ezard and Michael Billington writing Littlewood's obituary said that:

'She [Littlewood] helped to change the face of British theatre. Although scandalously underfunded, she broadened the classic repertory, discovered new writers, galvanised the effete British musical and created a genuine company full of idiosyncratic performers [...]'<sup>278</sup>

It is of interest to note that Walford omits her tenure at the English Stage Company from her comprehensive online biography. It is a significant omission given the status of the Royal Court. Although Littlewood's theatre had its roots in agit-prop which Walford's did not, these two women had experience of

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<sup>275</sup> Terry W Browne, *Playwrights' Theatre. The English Stage Company at The Royal Court Theatre*. (Bath: Pitman Publishing 1975). P.71.

<sup>276</sup> Robert Leach, 2006. *Theatre Workshop, John Littlewood and the Making of the Modern British Theatre Exeter*. (University of Exeter 2006), pp140-141.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

<sup>278</sup> John Ezard and Michael Billington, *The Guardian*, Monday 23 September 2002.

touring in vans, taking theatre to a similar audience and both realising, in their different ways, the power and use of music.

If Theatre Vanguard was the seedbed for the actor-musician genre, the Bubble Theatre was to provide the nursery. In 1972 the Greater London Arts Association (GLAA) carried out research which showed that there was 'a definite demand for a professional touring company which would work specifically within the communities of the 32 Greater London Boroughs [...]'<sup>279</sup>

The theatre director Peter James, who was a friend of Walford's from Bristol, put her forward as a candidate for the role of artistic director. Walford was successful with her application and in May 1972 the Bubble Theatre was established. The aim of the new company was to '[...] introduce a more informal concept of theatre to a wider cross section of the community'.<sup>280</sup>

When the Company was first set up it consisted of, '[...] six actors and actresses, with a technical and administrative staff.'<sup>281</sup> The 1972 opening season included three different productions, one of which was specifically for children, school workshops and a variety of 'appearances' in community and local centres which included pubs and old people's homes. The work that Walford had done in Sheffield, combined with her own personal beliefs on the efficacy of theatre, enabled her to place this new touring theatre at the heart of the community with her multi-pronged approach.

She named the company the Bubble Theatre. Unlike Theatre Vanguard, the Bubble was to have a large purpose-built performance tent that could be erected upon a playing field or village green, a visual statement that said to any community that, 'the theatre has come to town'.<sup>282</sup> '[...] the inspiration she returned to most often when she spoke was the original, sixteenth century Italian commedia dell'arte, those travelling troupes of radical players'.<sup>283</sup> The tent which was used for touring in the summer months was key to this

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<sup>279</sup> Bubble Theatre Information sheet November 1972 – Bubble Archive.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

<sup>282</sup> Walford, Glen. 2006. Glen Walford Interview. London.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid.

approach. Andrew Kitchen, the publicity officer for the Bubble describes the importance of the tent in a Press Release.

The Tensi-Dome is erected in parks and open spaces and is rapidly transformed into a fully equipped theatre with all the necessary technical equipment and social amenities for the audience. As the Bubble Theatre is primarily designed for people who do not normally go to the theatre the atmosphere is always friendly and informal at performance.<sup>284</sup>

Importantly, the performance area in the Bubble tent was in the round. There is no evidence in the archives regarding the initial decision about the performance space, other than it was to be a tent; however when this first tent was replaced the press release states that:

Although the Bubble's new structure is twice as big as the old one, performances will still be given in the round, and the atmosphere, with the audience of under two hundred people, will continue to be warm and friendly.<sup>285</sup>

This implies that Walford held a similar belief to Peter Cheeseman, in the efficacy of a circular performing space especially when working for and attracting a local audience.

In common with Stratford East where Joan Littlewood encouraged the post show drinks in the bar between cast and audience, the Bubble also encouraged a 'relaxed and informal' atmosphere [...] the actors often drink tea with the audience before the performance begins.<sup>286</sup>

It was at the Bubble Theatre that the role of the actor-musician was officially recognised and named by Walford, imbedding it within the company policy. The Arts Council had given Walford two director's bursaries. 'One of these was to tour the United States in order to make a special study of mobile theatre.'<sup>287</sup> Combining this knowledge with her experiences at Sheffield she 'created policy

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<sup>284</sup> Press Release February 9, 1977.

<sup>285</sup> Press release - no date given.

<sup>286</sup> Press release - no date given.

<sup>287</sup> Glen Walford curriculum vitae The Bubble archive 1979 .

of original actor/musician theatre (developed from Theatre Vanguard) to appeal to a complete cross-section audience.'<sup>288</sup>

The actor-musician genre was not established from the inception of the Bubble. Although the actor/musician policy was embedded in the development of the Bubble, it was a slow development. The Bubble was set up, in Walford's words, 'as a high-status company'<sup>289</sup>, and on a much larger scale than Theatre Vanguard. It was fundamental that every performer who was engaged had to be musical, although it was not yet a requirement that every performer should be an instrumentalist. Walford had learnt from her time at Theatre Vanguard how important the use of music was when reaching out to a large and varied audience. One such example was *The Pub Show*:

'A show that can be performed in pubs, within the Bubble or in old people's homes, clubs etc. It is essentially a short variety show; entertaining, funny and involving audience participation in songs and laughter.'<sup>290</sup>

Walford was still maintaining her love and inclusion of Shakespeare's work within this new company. She was inventive with her approaches, understanding that in order to whet the appetite, it is important to present the *hors d'oeuvres* rather than the main meal. In 1973 she directed *The Jack the Ripper Show*, which was:

[...] aimed at adult audiences. The story concerns a family during the late 1880s, who travel London's parks performing short Shakespearean extracts in their tent. Business is bad; they decide to 'move with the times' and base a popular and sensational melodramatic show around the recent villain, Jack the Ripper. A show full of fun, music and excitement.<sup>291</sup>

This was a clever approach using the well tried 'Jack the Ripper' theme as an entrée to disguise her intention of introducing Shakespeare and into which she was also using music to make the production it more enjoyable.

<sup>288</sup> [www.glenwalford.com/pages/biog.html](http://www.glenwalford.com/pages/biog.html).

<sup>289</sup> Glen Walford Interview, London February 24 2006.

<sup>290</sup> London Bubble Online archive *The Pub Show* (1973).

<sup>291</sup> London Bubble Online archive *The Jack the Ripper Show* (1973).

Since her time at the Traverse, Walford had written a number of productions and compiled others. In Sheffield she wrote and directed a Christmas musical, entitled *Crackers*. It was therefore significant to the development of the actor-musician genre, that when Walford left the Bubble for a two-year period she worked as a freelance director. During her sabbatical from the Bubble, the majority of the productions she directed were new musicals. She also collaborated on devising and adapting *Beggar's Opera* and *Threepenny Opera* to create a new musical, *Beggars Can't Be Choosers* (1974) that she directed at the Albany Empire. She then followed this with a space-age reworking of *Hamlet*, entitled *Peyton Space*, which also had a new musical score.<sup>292</sup> Whilst these early productions did not include actor-musicians, they are indicative of Walford's understanding that music is an important ingredient when attempting to introduce playwrights, productions and other elements to a specific audience that might be regarded as a cultural form for which they wrongly feel has nothing to say to them. It is Walford's immersion into the writing and development of these new musicals that bears out Cunneen's reference to 'a musical soul'.

It was during her second tenure with the Bubble Theatre that she: 'expanded [...] repertoire and house-style to embrace the classics.'<sup>293</sup> Her decision to rejoin the company '[...] was conditional on the Board of Management's commitment to a policy of expansion.' Walford wanted, '[...] to produce more shows and to promote closer links with the Boroughs.'<sup>294</sup> She was particularly keen to start offering and directing the classics. 'Plays under consideration for the Adult Classic are Gay's, *Beggar's Opera*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Bartholomew Fair*.'<sup>295</sup> However, the first Shakespeare play that Walford directed for the company was, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1978). She followed this the next year with *Twelfth Night* (1979).<sup>296</sup>

In a 1979 curriculum vitae she includes:

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<sup>292</sup> Glen Walford curriculum vitae 1979 the Bubble archive.

<sup>293</sup> [www.glenwalford.com/pages/biog.html](http://www.glenwalford.com/pages/biog.html).

<sup>294</sup> Bubble Expansion document 1977.

<sup>295</sup> Bubble Expansion document 1977.

<sup>296</sup> Glen Walford curriculum vitae 1979 the Bubble archive.

76-79 Bubble Theatre Company, London. Returned as Artistic Director. Involved in major expansion of the company and in plans for enlarged theatre structure [...] *Midsummer Night's Dream*, (largely Shakespeare with original cutting, reshaping by myself and brand new musical score). *'Twelfth Night'*, (some Shakespeare most with embellishment).<sup>297</sup>

In her reference to the embellishments of *Twelfth Night*, she is referring to her practice of reworking, cutting and reshaping. Both productions included music and it was here that Walford's unique approach to Shakespeare began to evolve. Writing in an email she states that:

'My influences were mostly filmic. I was a huge 'art films' buff in the 60s mainly influenced by Kurosawa [...] [...] 'cross-cut' in theatre, assume the audience will make big imaginative leaps and spend much time creating visual imagery.'<sup>298</sup>

The opening scene from *The Twelfth Night* Bubble script<sup>299</sup> gives an indication of the pace that Walford wanted. Orsino's opening speech is reduced to half its length with his following short speech also cut in half. The character of Curio is excised from the scene which then cuts to Valentine's entrance with his speech also reduced slightly in length. Walford also cuts words such as 'cloistress' that might be considered too outdated for a modern audience and also references to 'hart' hunting, which might have had some relevance for country dwellers but not in the urban environments in which The Bubble performed. Although Walford is 'quick' with the blue pen she does maintain the flow and form of Shakespeare's language.

'Audiences all over London have emerged from Glen Walford's amazing seaside production of *Twelfth Night* finding that Shakespeare can be fast, furious and fun. Subtle and reverent it may not be, but the production is vastly enjoyable and highly entertaining.'<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> Glen Walford email 17 December 2008.

<sup>299</sup> *Twelfth Night* Act 1 Sc. 1 Bubble archive.

<sup>300</sup> Bubble Bounces Into Walthamstow – Andrew Ward Publicity Officer – Bubble Archive (1979).

In an email, Glen Walford states that, the precise point at which the actor-musician was created, was with *The Bubble Band Show* (1978).<sup>301</sup>

*The Bubble Band Show* Devised by Ian Milne,  
Designed by Steve McCabe  
Cast: John Ashton, Ben Bazell, Angela Brinkworth, Cliff Burnett Lewis Cowen, Kevin Currie, Chris Hauke, David Kitchen, Eva Lohman, Oliver Murray, Lesley Nicol, Stuart Organ, Ned Vukovic, Joanne Walker, Stephen Warbeck<sup>302</sup>

When Walford set up the Bubble Theatre, not everyone was expected to play an instrument although they did have to be proficient singers<sup>303</sup>. This demonstrates the continuity with Theatre Vanguard, where Walford had recognised the value of actors who sang and possibly played a musical instrument. In 1978 Ian Milne joined the Bubble Theatre as musical director. Milne, an ex-member of the *Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band*<sup>304</sup>, was an excellent pianist who played 1950s and 1960s rock music. It should be noted that the company included Stephen Warbeck (1953 -), who started his career as an actor but is now a very successful composer.<sup>305</sup>

Milne began devising productions, loosely threading a storyline through the rock music, with other company members taking on acting roles, which resulted in the creation of:

*'The Bubble Band Show'*<sup>306</sup>, which was a late-night cabaret, featuring an eclectic mix of r'n'r, Motown, folk [...] Ian formed faux Ronettes groups within the show and there was quite a rolling repertoire of stuff. It was enormously popular.<sup>307</sup>

Walford realised that the success of *The Bubble Band Show* was a pivotal moment for the Bubble Theatre with the creation of the actor-musician. Most importantly, she realised the potential held by the combination of music woven

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<sup>301</sup> Glen Walford email June 2 2009.

<sup>302</sup> The Bubble Theatre archive.

<sup>303</sup> Glen Walford interview London 2006.

<sup>304</sup> *The Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band* created between 1962 to 1965 was the first of the art college bands. The title is taken from George Studdy's postcard picture of Bonzo Dog and the DaDa movement.

<sup>305</sup> Warbeck, Stephen, created the score for *Shakespeare in Love* (1998) and *Billy Elliot* (2000)

<sup>306</sup> *The Bubble Band Show* (1978).

<sup>307</sup> Glen Walford email June 2 2009.

together with a storyline and told by actor-musicians. It was at this point that the actor-musician genre was identified and named. From this time on, anyone admitted to the company had to be both an actor and an instrumentalist. 'The fourteen (sic) strong company has a wide range of professional experience and are all competent singers, dancers and musicians.'<sup>308</sup> Walford acknowledges Milne's contribution and says of him that: 'He was an extraordinary character. He advanced our actor/musician style to incredibly advanced heights.'<sup>309</sup>

Milne's skills made Walford realise the potential that this had for the The Bubble and more importantly for theatre in general. Actor-musicians could be highly skilled in both artistic disciplines and this would mean that there would not be a restriction on the types of musicals that could be produced. Her artistic vision was highly influential and other directors, musicians and performers started to work in this genre.

In 1979 Walford left the Bubble and subsequent professional engagements enabled her to develop her practice of the actor-musician. Bob Carlton took over as artistic director. He built on the success of *The Bubble Band Show*, and created *The Hubble Bubble Band Show* (1982). This was then developed the following year to become *Return to the Forbidden Planet* (1983)<sup>310</sup>, based on *The Tempest*, and is a piece written specifically for actor-musicians and won the 1990 Olivier Award for Best Musical. The history and importance of this particular production in the development of the actor-musician, will be covered in the subsequent chapter on Bob Carlton, Artistic Director of the Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch.

Walford left the Bubble Theatre and in 1979 was employed by the British Council to establish the Chung Ying Company in Hong Kong. The significance of this appointment was that the British Council, impressed with Walford's work at the Bubble, wanted to create a company with a similar ethos. Importantly, this was to include the introduction of the actor-musician genre into the

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<sup>308</sup> Bubble Bursting Into Summer, Letter from John Richardson, Bubble Theatre Chair 1979 Bubble Archive.

<sup>309</sup> Glen Walford Interview, London 2006.

<sup>310</sup> Bob Carlton, *Return to the Forbidden Planet*, 1983.

company's work. The intention for the company was for a gradual assimilation of the Cantonese personnel.

In 1979 she founded the Chung Ying Theatre Company in Hong Kong and opened the Queen Elizabeth Stadium with a musical version of her adaptation of *Animal Farm* in English and Cantonese. Later she helped steer the company to independent status with its own Board of Governors. She directed many English and Cantonese-speaking productions, integrating both British and Chinese cultures. Productions played major venues in Hong Kong and toured throughout South East Asia.<sup>311</sup>

Walford worked in Hong Kong until 1982 and this established her international reputation. She is known as a director who, whilst not being a linguist, (although after three years in Hong Kong she had learned some Cantonese<sup>312</sup>) is confident and capable of working with actors in another language:

Walford explains that the connections an actor makes between the character's feelings, words and actions are what hold together a performance. '[As an actor] you can understand things in your heart[...]good acting is good acting - in whatever language. And bad acting is bad acting. It's that simple.'<sup>313</sup>

As Walford's reputation grew, the demand for her work overseas grew. One major project she was offered was to direct at the Greek Epidaurus Festival:

In a further tribute to her growing international reputation [...] Glen Walford is to direct *Prometheus*<sup>314</sup>, with an international company at the 17,000 seats fifth century BC amphitheatre at Epidaurus in Greece. The production will be in Greek, and is being mounted by a cosmopolitan production team, consisting of French, Russian and English members.<sup>315</sup>

However, it is in Japan that her major international work has taken place. Her reputation for directing innovative and popular Shakespeare productions was growing:

<sup>311</sup> Glen Walford biography <http://www.glenwalford.com/>

<sup>312</sup> Glen Walford dvd.

<sup>313</sup> Amy Vaillancourt Matsuoka, *Daily Yomiuri* [www.glenwalford.com/pages/titanic.html](http://www.glenwalford.com/pages/titanic.html).

<sup>314</sup> Aeschylus, *Prometheus*, Epidaurus 1988.

<sup>315</sup> *It's All Greek to Her* – Press Release – EVT/PF/000799.

[In] 1986 she was invited to Japan to create a popular performing 'house-style' and direct Rhyming Theatre Company's annual Shakespeare productions. (With Japanese actors, directed in Japanese.) She adapted Japanese translations, incorporated facets of Japanese and English culture, introduced actor-musicians and made full use of flexible space. *Much Ado About Nothing* (1986) *Comedy of Errors* (also toured Japan, 1987), *Measure For Measure* (1988), *Merchant Of Venice* (Best production award, 1990), *As You Like It* (1992), *Macbeth* (1994).<sup>316</sup>

Walford would not now approach a Shakespeare production without the inclusion of the actor-musician and therefore this type of performer was introduced in Japan.

Walford is fearless with her direction and is known for a unique style that she employs in British theatre which shall be examined subsequently. However, it was not possible to utilise this in Japan, owing to a combination of Japanese cultural issues and theatre practice.<sup>317</sup> Japanese theatre practice is reliant upon the director giving exact directions. A cultural factor is that the Japanese are brought up to be part of a group. The language does not utilise the word 'I' but rather, 'with the approval of the group'.<sup>318</sup> This poses difficulties for a western director when trying to elicit spontaneity in an actor. Walford says of the Japanese that:

They are on the whole a nation of copyists and when I moved into the big commercial companies over there it was expected that I would just dictate and actors obey. So big changes there, which they are still reeling with.<sup>319</sup>

She explained that the Japanese way of rehearsing is: 'based on their education methods, which are obedience-based rather than creative'. But she deemed it necessary to bring to the theatre her own mix of British culture and theatre practice.

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<sup>316</sup> Glen Walford, [www.glenwalford.com/pages/International.html](http://www.glenwalford.com/pages/International.html).

<sup>317</sup> Glen Walford email London 2008.

<sup>318</sup> [www.thejapanfaq.com/FAQ-Primer.html](http://www.thejapanfaq.com/FAQ-Primer.html), Uchi Soto.

<sup>319</sup> Glen Walford email London 2008.

Amy Vaillancourt Matsuoka, writing in the *Daily Yomiuri* about *Titanic The Musical* (2009), being produced for the Fuji Television Network, says that:

As a director in Japan, she is entirely against the authoritarian approach that is still so prevalent here. 'You must lead people, not bully them: inspire and get them to take responsibility.[sic] A responsible actor is one who can think and decide for himself, making him ultimately a great asset to a production. Flanked by interpreters, and with a bilingual production book in hand, Walford is in control. She admits that when it comes to overall artistic decisions, 'I'll be strong if I need to be.' Fearlessly she navigates rehearsals, stopping actors to question motivation when their emotions are not being conveyed. She redirects, rewrites and pushes onward with the goal of touching the audience. She rejoices when her success comes in the form of audience members struggling to restrain their sobs.<sup>320</sup>

This review concentrates upon control. In this patriarchal country, Japanese women speak using a high childlike register<sup>321</sup>. To Matsuoka, Walford's western approach, combined with the lower timbre of her properly modulated voice, would give an impression of strength.

*Onnagata* have produced a highly stylised version of femininity which seeks to represent a female type, and they have many methods to reduce their physical size on stage, as well as the refined movements and an extremely distinctive falsetto voice which are a very male view of women.<sup>322</sup>

For the last twenty years, Walford has worked on many projects and for a variety of companies in Japan.

I think I can take sole credit for turning Japanese theatre process on its head. They used to work wholly by rote and repetition, never creatively developing from the text and just going over, going over text in rehearsal and moving woodenly about. Actors never took initiative but just robot-like obeyed the director's instructions, which were barked out military fashion. That is simplistic and does not apply to the work of a small body of extraordinarily imaginative

<sup>320</sup> [www.glenwalford.com/pages/titanic.html](http://www.glenwalford.com/pages/titanic.html).

<sup>321</sup> [www.thejapanfaq.com/FAQ-Primer.html](http://www.thejapanfaq.com/FAQ-Primer.html).

<sup>322</sup> [www.artelino.com/articles/kabuki\\_theater.asp](http://www.artelino.com/articles/kabuki_theater.asp).

directors such as Ninagawa [...]<sup>323</sup>

Although Walford credits Ninagawa as being more imaginative in his approach to direction, she is very aware of the high regard in which he is held in Japan and of his authoritarian approach to actors. Writing in an email she stated that, “he would brook no dissent from actors”.<sup>324</sup> The actor Robert Demeger,<sup>325</sup> who played Polonius in Ninagawa’s, *Hamlet* at the Barbican confirmed this statement.<sup>326</sup>

The first day of rehearsal, no words of welcome. We read through the play and were then dismissed. The second day the set had been erected in the rehearsal room. We had to rehearse in full costume with all the props and sound effects. We were told our exits and entrances and when to move. When I approached Ninagawa San and asked him respectfully via the interpreter about character notes, he replied: “You are the actor – that is your business.” We were forbidden to rehearse without him.

Whilst Walford was able to break down much of the Japanese resistance to a more creative approach to acting and directing, she was aware that there were understandable limitations.

Many Japanese actors still suffer from a fear of vulnerability and exposure which is seen as weakness. They have a subconscious need to let the audience know that they are 'acting'. Loss of face is a huge cultural issue which is a bar to true acting. But they have natural grace, dedication and an inbuilt gift of physical stillness, which is a quality many UK actors can learn from.<sup>327</sup>

Walford continues to work on a regular basis in Japan, directing a mixture of Shakespeare and musicals.

Walford loves to tackle larger-than-life projects with grand stories. Her penchant for epic tales reaches from Shakespeare to *Shirley Valentine*, from the *Rocky Horror Show* to *Sleeping Beauty*. She is drawn to ‘great big stories

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<sup>323</sup> Glen Walford email, London 2009.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid.

<sup>325</sup> 1951–2014.

<sup>326</sup> Robert Demeger, interview, London June 8 2009.

<sup>327</sup> Glen Walford email, London 2009.

which are exhilarating [tales of] life on a big scale.' And the theatre genre best suited to this, she says, is the musical. 'When words are not enough, you have to launch into song [...]'<sup>328</sup>

Another aspect of Walford's directorial style is her rehearsal methodology, which is thought to be unique in Britain. Although there is not a template in British theatre for direction, the approach that Walford takes in rehearsal with the actor and the text is remarkably different from other directors.

Some actors have a preference for learning lines in advance of starting rehearsals Sir Noël Coward worked in this manner.

(He) said, 'I warn you, Michael [MacCowan], I am of the school that believes in being absolutely word perfect at a first rehearsal [...] But I can't start to rehearse a play properly unless I know the words [...] I cannot afford, and I am adamant about this, to take time off at rehearsals to learn words. I think those should be learned before you start.'<sup>329</sup>

But during the first half of the twentieth century, this idea was challenged and eventually fell out of favour:

Saint-Denis was among the first practitioners consciously to adhere to a principle of rehearsal that subsequently became firmly established in British theater – that the actor should not learn the words before rehearsals begin. An important function of rehearsals, according to this method of working, is the exploration of the relationship between speech and gesture/movement (blocking).<sup>330</sup>

When the repertory system was at its height, it was not possible for an actor to learn his/her lines in advance. Productions were put on for only two or three weeks and with performances in the evenings and rehearsals during the day, it was difficult therefore to memorise lines effectively.

<sup>328</sup> [www.glenwalford.com/pages/titanic.html](http://www.glenwalford.com/pages/titanic.html).

<sup>329</sup> Hal Burton, *Great Acting*. (New York: Bonanza Books 1967), pp.173/174.

<sup>330</sup> Robert Gordon, *The Purpose of Playing Modern Acting Theories in Perspective*. (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press 2006). p.158.

It is now widely accepted practice that actors will not have learned their lines in advance of rehearsal and will carry the book with them as they rehearse. Actors vary in the speed at which they memorise the lines. However, a director will usually state at what point in rehearsal everyone should be 'off the book'. If lines are forgotten after this, prompts will be given by the deputy stage manager (dsm), who is always in rehearsal with the director. However, in Walford's rehearsals, no books are used at all.<sup>331</sup> 'I act like an autocue and with no book it gives the actors an extra hand and cuts short a lot of the rubbish you get in rehearsals. I act like an inner voice and they learn the lines very quickly.' Instead, Walford feeds sections of the text to the actor.

The cast had assembled well before the daily 10.30 call, and almost immediately Ralph Brown as Macbeth was reciting one of the best-known speeches from the play: 'If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well it was done quickly [...]'

But Brown did not speak the lines like that. 'If done [...] when done [...] well [...] done quickly,' he said. He was not reading the lines either, as might be expected at this early moment in rehearsals. The lines were being fed to him.<sup>332</sup>

The Wirral comic Pauline Daniels was directed for the first time by Walford in a production of *Women on the Verge of HRT*<sup>333</sup> (2001) at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry.

Ms. Daniels tells me she was amazed at the system and absolutely loved it. And audiences loved her performance. 'Willy<sup>334</sup> is a fan and had always said she was a great Shirley Valentine and that I should work with her,' says Glen. 'I have never laughed so much with a production. 'She admits it's a tough system of working for a director. 'It kills me and I may be getting too old for it.' In fact, she had to revert to usual rehearsal methods for *Educating Rita* because of the amount of words and a lack of rehearsal time. Even so, it worked well enough for Angela Clarke to pick up a recent Scouseology Award.<sup>335</sup>

<sup>331</sup> [www.glenwalford.com/pages/titanic.html](http://www.glenwalford.com/pages/titanic.html).

<sup>332</sup> Philip Key, *Blood, sweat and tears*. *Daily Post* 26 February 1986 EVT/PF/000674/2.

<sup>333</sup> Jones, Marie, *Women on the Verge of HRT*, 1995.

<sup>334</sup> Willy Russell, author of *Shirley Valentine*.

<sup>335</sup> Philip Key, *Coming Back to Rita is all the sweeter*. *Daily Post*, Liverpool (November 8, 2002).

Walford favours this rehearsal technique especially when working on a Shakespeare play, saying that:

She wanted initially [...] to get the sense of the play, for the actors to understand the story. So books are not carried, and the lines are stripped to essentials. 'It also means the actors are not carried away by the verse as can so easily happen, [...]'<sup>336</sup>

This style of rehearsal can be unnerving for actors if they have not worked like this before. 'From the sidelines, it looked most uncomfortable, although many actors were to say later they found it a great help. "That book in your hand always does get in the way," said Andrea Gibb, playing one of the witches.'<sup>337</sup> For the actor-musician, this style of working is extremely beneficial as they have to deal with the portage and playing of musical instruments.

Nicky Furre, when asked about the rehearsal method that Walford utilises when working with actor-musicians, wrote in an email that:

Why would you assume working with text was a different technique for a director than working with music? It is the same thing – the communication comes through whatever the story is and whatever the emotion of the moment is behind that scene - text or lyrics, the outcome and process is the same. With music you perhaps work more closely with the musical director but the method is the same for the actor whether you are speaking or singing. Tell the story, communicate what is happening in that moment [...]'<sup>338</sup>

The assumption that a different approach might be required is erroneous. Single words can be selected from the libretto in the same way that they are extracted from a text. Also, it is not uncommon for directors to ask an actor to speak the lyrics of a song in rehearsal in order that the tale is told effectively. When questioned as to when she had first adopted this style of rehearsal, Walford said: 'I was always irritated by the restriction of scripts during rehearsal and concentrated on developing techniques of getting rid of these.'<sup>339</sup> As well as this, she found that this method was highly beneficial for the individual actors because it gave the cast a solid understanding of the play and narrative,

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<sup>336</sup> Philip Key, *Blood, sweat and tears*. *Daily Post* 26 February 1986 EVT/PF/000674/2.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>338</sup> Nicky Furre email 4 October 2009.

<sup>339</sup> Glen Walford, email June 2 2009.

making it: 'impossible for them to dry.'<sup>340</sup> Memorising for an actor is reliant upon the visual, auditory and kinetic elements involved in acting. For example, a particular line is remembered in conjunction with a specific move or in conjunction with an expression made by another character.<sup>341</sup>

There are no scripts that exist in the archives which demonstrate the words that Walford uses when rehearsing with the exception an early handwritten *Tosca* libretto that does contain instances of words placed in boxes indicative of her 'prompts'.

Tosca: The moon is full, the heavy scent of flowers fills the  
air and charms the heart. Don't you feel happy,

Tranquil,  
serene.

Content<sup>342</sup>

However, the voice teacher Kristin Linklater utilises a system which has similarities with Walford's system and provides an explanation for the success of this working method. Writing in her book *Freeing Shakespeare's Voice* she describes an exercise in a chapter, *Words into Phrases*:

Now take the word MOTHER.

Let the word turn into a picture, breathe it in, let it speak.

Now put MOTHER in front of EARTH – MOTHER EARTH.

...Now take the words EARTH MOTHER...

Now take EARTH CIRCUMFERENCE.

[...] breathe the picture in; release the picture out through the words.

If your breath and voice are sensitive to the changing picture, the word EARTH will sound subtly different each time you say it because the feeling or mood that accompanies each picture is different.<sup>343</sup>

This is a simplified version of a longer exercise which in itself follows on from an earlier set of exercises. Linklater's main focus is on the voice and she describes her work thus: 'The basis of all my work is the belief that voice and

<sup>340</sup> Glen Walford, in conversation at Academy of Live and Recorded Arts( ALRA), December 2008.

<sup>341</sup> <http://www.angelfire.com/art2/breuer/LL.html>.

<sup>342</sup> EVT/S/000088 p7.

<sup>343</sup> Kristin Linklater, *Freeing Shakespeare's Voice*, (Theatre Communications Group, New York 1992), p.45.

language belong to the whole body rather than the head alone and that the function of the voice is to reveal the self.’<sup>344</sup> But her exercises, whilst approaching the actor’s craft and skill from a different perspective, do appear to have the same result as Walford’s approach. This can be deduced from Linklater’s outline of the purpose behind the exercise: ‘The aim of the exercise is to break the linear reading habit and trust that the expression of juxtaposed vertically-experienced image/feelings will accumulate into meaning.’<sup>345</sup>

The actor and director John Wild, when working for her at the Everyman, was very impressed with Walford’s rehearsal method and has adopted this method, but has developed it and made it his own, although he did say when interviewed that after rehearsals he would study the text as well, not just to help learn his lines but also to have more understanding of the plot as written.<sup>346</sup> He was in agreement that Linklater’s methodology was similar to Walford’s.<sup>347</sup> The actor Gilian Cally was also impressed with this style of working:

[...] it is a wonderful way of getting a broad scope of what the actual story and sequence of the play is. I remember having a run through of the whole play using just key words at an early stage of rehearsals and being amazed at the company’s understanding of the length and breadth of the play. To this day (I haven’t worked with Glen since then) I use a modified version of key words on any play I am rehearsing. I circle in pencil the key words in my script and this forms the basis for my understanding of my character’s journey and this aids my study of the lines (a more arduous task, the older you get)<sup>348</sup>

Although this is her preferred rehearsal method, Walford is prepared to be flexible if the situation demands.

I have never used any other method than ‘thinking on your feet’ except when I have undertaken to direct ‘conventional’ productions with ‘conventional’ actors when the hassle of getting them to do away with habits of a lifetime would be too much. This has never happened when I am given full

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<sup>344</sup> Ibid.p.4.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid.p.4.

<sup>346</sup> John Wild, *The Winter’s Tale*, Cast Member. London phone interview June 9 2009.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid.

<sup>348</sup> Gilian Cally, Gilian (Ford) Cally email, *The Winter’s Tale*, March 19 2010.

sway over instigating and casting a production.<sup>349</sup>

However, the key phase in the development of Walford's practice was the six year that she spent as Artistic Director of the Liverpool Everyman Theatre where she consolidated and embedded the actor-musician genre. Walford developed a house style for the Everyman which is described [in the Artistic Activities Sub-Committee document] under the section on 'Music':

Music plays an important part in many theatrical productions, especially where young people are involved. The Everyman's own 'House Style' regarding shows involved the complete integration of music, acting and movement. It not only enhances the spoken word, but is a profound means of self-expression and communication.<sup>350</sup>

This integration of music, acting and movement relates back to her insistence that books are not carried during rehearsal, thereby making a performance the sum of the three parts.

This was translated into a new artistic policy for the Everyman which demonstrates how music, and specifically the actor-musician, is embedded into the work that was created there. The document, entitled *Artistic Aims*,<sup>351</sup> was presented as a numeric list:

The Everyman should be seen as not only blazing the trail in the Arts, but also showing a way forward through the contribution of the performing arts towards assisting the regeneration of a depressed urban area and to promoting the wealth of regional vitality beyond the purely local scene, and [...]

4. To provide the opportunities and conditions to attract experienced and multi-talented actors, musicians, directors and designers...

7. To weld the whole into an exciting and cohesive "house style".<sup>352</sup>

This was to recommend and monitor policies for the artistic activities. The intention for the house style was:

<sup>349</sup> Glen Walford, email 2 June 2009.

<sup>350</sup> Everyman Artistic Activities Sub Committee EVT/A/M/000021.

<sup>351</sup> Artistic Aims – EVT/A/M/000018.

<sup>352</sup> Everyman Artistic and Social Policy EVT/A/M/000018.

- 2) To use freely the conventions of opera, ballet, mime and music
- 3) To concentrate on the 'occasion'<sup>353</sup>

It is the next point that is implicit in demonstrating that the actor-musician is now a recognized type of performer:

- 4) [...] to attract multi-talented actor-musicians<sup>354</sup>

Walford's acknowledgement and understanding regarding the power of music in a theatre production was learnt during her period with Theatre Vanguard. But on a deeper level and although not named as such, she is demonstrating a tacit understanding of music as the inborn communication tool that humans possess.

In her six years the Everyman mounted thirty-three productions, only eleven of which contained no music.

#### Musicals

The Liverpool Blitz Show 1983 -1984  
 Return to the Forbidden Planet 1983 -1984  
 Threepenny Opera 1984-1985  
 From a Jack to a King 1984-1985  
 Me, Myself, I 1984-1985  
 Tosca 1985-1986  
 Wack and the Beanstalk 1985-1986  
 Something Wicked This Way Comes 1985-1986  
 Cabaret 1988-1989

#### Pantomimes

Aladdin 1987-1988  
 Cinderella 1988-1989

#### Plays Without Music

Shane 1983-1984  
 Scarpia 1983-1984  
 When the Wind Blows 1983-1984  
 Siamese Twins 1984-1985  
 Two Can Play 1984-1985  
 Bouncers 1984-1985  
 Arturo Ui 1986-1987  
 She Stoops To Conquer 1986-1987  
 Shirley Valentine 1986-1987

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<sup>353</sup> Artistic Activities EVT/A/M/000021.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid.

Entertaining Mr Sloane 1987-1988  
 Three Sisters 1987-1988

#### Plays With Music

Dragons Tales 1983 -1984  
 You'll Never Walk Alone 1983 -1984  
 Romeo and Juliet 1984-1985  
 Me, Myself, I 1984-1985  
 Comedians 1986-1987  
 Paradise Lost 1987-1988  
 Hamlet 1987-1988  
 The Winter's Tale 1988-1989

This is not to say that the majority were musicals. Although musicals did feature, the remainder was a mix of new writing, classic works. Most importantly, the annual Shakespeare play would incorporate actor-musicians.

If Walford lacks musical ability, she says of herself that ‘ [...] was always good at scooping people up and carrying them along with me.’<sup>355</sup> Walford recognized those people that she could inspire and who would dare to experiment or to push boundaries within her productions. The musical director, Paddy Cunneen, who became so influential with the rise of the actor-musician, was one such person. He had worked on a fringe show in the 1980s that Walford had seen.

1982 – Italy win world cup! Cunneen languishing in Poverty in London working with obscure fringe co.  
 1983 – Thatcher re-elected – Cunneen works at Everyman on *Midsummer Night's Dream*.<sup>356</sup>

She liked what he did and invited him to work with her on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Everyman.<sup>357</sup> Their association lasted throughout her tenure in Liverpool. They have also worked together at the Ludlow Shakespeare Festival. Cunneen is a trained musician<sup>358</sup> and whilst he wrote and scored music for Walford's productions he would also take on acting roles. Having been introduced by Walford to the concept of the actor-musician, he embraced it and sought to develop it.<sup>359</sup> ‘It was for the thrill and the theatricality of people being

<sup>355</sup> Glen Walford email 2008.

<sup>356</sup> Paddy Cunneen, curriculum vitae EVT/PF/000622.

<sup>357</sup> Paddy Cunneen phone interview 2008.

<sup>358</sup> EVT/PF/000622 Cunneen studied Music at Cardiff University 1974

<sup>359</sup> Paddy Cunneen has composed extensively for both the National and the Royal Shakespeare Company. He is an associate director of *Cheek by Jowl* since 1980; a published playwright and lectures on playwriting at the University of Glasgow.

multi-skilled on stage. Audiences are always impressed by the skill level of people on stage.<sup>360</sup>

This is an important factor in the popularity of the actor-musician. Actors, musicians and dancers are applauded for the skills that the audience does not possess. The more complex the skill or skill combination, the greater is the audience's admiration and enjoyment. The appeal of the multi-talented performer has a long history. John Southworth, writing on mediaeval minstrels, said that:

Though each performer would have had his or her special skills, the instrumentalists among them would as readily have lent a hand or leg with an acrobatic turn, or filled a part in a sketch, as acrobats and actors doubled in wind or brass.<sup>361</sup>

Walford, having identified the actor-musician practice, used it, developed it and promoted it wherever she was working. Many people, when working with her and actor-musicians for the first time, were inspired by this new practice and which has gradually evolved into a genre. Han Duijvendak met Walford in 1980 at the Haymarket Theatre in Leicester. Duijvendak, having completed his theatre training in Holland, had settled in England. He initially worked as a stage manager but then became assistant to Michael Meacham in Leicester. 'I was interested in directing and then did a show in the studio there at the same time as Glen Walford. She liked what I did and asked me to come to the Secombe Theatre.<sup>362</sup> She opened it with an actor-musician panto.'<sup>363</sup> The use of actor-musicians resonated with Duijvendak. He explained: 'I was struck with how literal British theatre is. My fascination was with the actor-musician, a more encompassing experience for the audience, and Glen Walford had the same philosophy and so we got on. When she went to Everyman she asked

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<sup>360</sup> Paddy Cunneen phone interview 2008.

<sup>361</sup> John Southworth, *The English Mediaeval Minstrel*. Woodbridge, (Suffolk; Wolfeboro New Hampshire: The Boydell Press 1989), p.14.

<sup>362</sup> 1981-1982 Secombe Centre Sutton Founding Director Policy-creator fund-raiser. Co-adapted, produced and directed Dick Whittington, [www.glenwalford.com/pages/biog.html](http://www.glenwalford.com/pages/biog.html).

<sup>363</sup> Han Duijvendak, phone interview 2008.

me to join her.<sup>364</sup> Duijvendak is an example of someone that has been inspired by the actor-musician practice and when he eventually left the Everyman he:

[...] set up a production company for actor-musicianship. Put in an Arts Council bid for a three-year development plan to specialise in actor-musician work [...] We did a production in Amsterdam and Greece, European Programme now Culture 2000. We did an actor-musician production with a Greek, Dutch and English cast and a Greek composer which premiered in Amsterdam.<sup>365</sup>

This demonstrates the spread of the actor-musician practice within a relatively short time frame. It should also be noted that the practice was not just being promoted in the United Kingdom but was also being pioneered overseas by Walford.

The Everyman in 1985 was now known for its diverse programming, which included Walford's classic plays alongside newly commissioned work and musicals. 'She had already done it with Shakespeare, her productions were always packed and talked about by a grass-roots theatre audience [...]'<sup>366</sup>

Walford utilised both her teaching experience and director's knowledge to provide Shakespeare 'Play Days' for schools. One of the plays she used was *Romeo and Juliet*. The approach that she took was to identify a theme, *Romeo and Juliet* – what's the story and what's it got to do with us?<sup>367</sup> Having found the theme she then used five questions that the pupils could engage with and which would also demonstrate that the subjects, on which Shakespeare was writing, were not confined to the sixteenth century. For example,

c) What do you think about going against your parents' wishes? Can you understand Juliet's parent's reactions? What would you do?<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>364</sup> Ibid.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid.

<sup>366</sup> Nicky Furre email 15 May 2009.

<sup>367</sup> R&J EVT/PF/000620.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid.

The play days had up to five ‘performances’ and with time restrictions of ‘ a total running time of 1 hour 50 minutes’ with a break after fifty minutes. Five actors were used who would invite groups of children ‘[...] to join the cast on stage for specific exercises:

- i) director uses actors and kids as puppets
- j) play scenes from one character’s point of view
- k) verbalise thoughts of characters
- h) make music/ learn songs’

Tickets were sold for 50p at these ‘performances’.

Walford’s approach when deciding on the construction of these days harkens back to her childhood performances as previously described.

Season Twenty-One (1984-1985) was Walford’s second season at the Everyman. Seven productions were mounted during the year. The four using actor-musicians are asterisked.

<i>The Threepenny Opera</i> by Bertolt Brecht*	11 October	17 November
<i>From a Jack to a King</i> by Bob Carlton*	22 November	5 January
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> by William Shakespeare*	24 January	23 February
<i>Siamese Twins</i> by Dave Simpson	28 February	30 March
<i>Me, Myself &amp; I</i> by Alan Ayckbourn*	4 April	4 May
<i>Bouncers</i> by John Godber	10 May	8 June
<i>Two Can Play</i> by Trevor D. Rhone	13 June	6 July <sup>369</sup>

Walford’s incumbency at The Everyman ran from 1983 to 1989 in which time the actor-musician was consolidated, developed and firmly accepted as a genre in the United Kingdom. Walford, on her website, describes her tenure thus: ‘Created new artistic policy in which long-running productions – large-scale musical epics, innovative Shakespeare and actor-musician premieres – attracted large audiences and supported smaller-scale innovative in-house productions [...]’<sup>370</sup>

The two case studies that follow are productions that Walford directed whilst at the Everyman: Puccini’s *Tosca* (1985) and Shakespeare’s, *The Winter’s Tale*

<sup>369</sup> Ros Merkin, *Liverpool’s Third Cathedral, The Liverpool Everyman Theatre, In The Words of Those Who Were, And Are, There*. (Liverpool: Liverpool and Merseyside Theatres Trust Limited in association with Liverpool John Moores University 2004), p.183-191.

<sup>370</sup> <http://www.glenwalford.com/pages/biog.html>.

(1989). Her production of *Tosca* took the actor-musician genre to another level, whilst *The Winter's Tale* is a fusion of the influences as already described, producing a sophisticated production and is indicative of her use of the actor-musician within Shakespeare's plays.

In 1985, Walford wanted to try something very different and broke new ground for actor-musicians with a staging of Puccini's *Tosca*. It was the first opera to be performed at the Everyman. Walford was not interested in a safe and well-liked theatre – what she was interested in, according to Nicky Furre, was boundary breaking. 'Glens (sic) very strong point, see a boundary, any boundary and bust it.'<sup>371</sup> The boundary Walford wanted to break in this instance was the élitism that surrounded opera. 'It has always annoyed me no end that opera is seen as an elitist form and that if you haven't got loads of money to spend, then you can't go. And I'm very intimidated by opera snobs.'<sup>372</sup>

The élitism surrounding opera is rooted not in a supposed inaccessibility of musical form but in financial restrictions. Opera is an expensive art-form to mount and consequently so are the tickets. It is the cost that made it and continues to make it elitist, regardless of country or nationality.

A well-paid blacksmith in Paris working in the coach-building industry during the 1830s and 1840s might have received an annual salary of around 1500 francs [...] and a shoemaker as little as 800 francs at a time when basic outlay on food and drink for an average family of four could be as high as 500 francs. And then there was the rent to pay. For most such people, tickets to the Opéra, which were priced between 2.50 and 7.50 francs [...] would have seemed an unnecessarily extravagant expense.<sup>373</sup>

This is a situation that is perpetuated in the United Kingdom today.

[...] few among today's working classes, on a family income of £30,00 or even £40,000 [...] with around £15,000 going

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<sup>371</sup> Nicky Furre, email 15 May 2009.

<sup>372</sup> Artistic Aims – EVT/A/M/000018.

<sup>373</sup> Snowman, Daniel, *The Gilded Stage: A Social History of Opera* (United Kingdom: Atlantic Books Ltd., 2010), loc. 3159.

on basic living expenses, would make a habit of spending £225, or even £75, on an opera ticket.<sup>374</sup>

Unfortunately, opera is very expensive business and over the centuries there have been few impresarios that have made money from it but more importantly, succeeded in maintaining an opera house. There has always been, 'the problem of how to balance artistic and financial considerations, maximize audiences and, somehow, pay [the] artists.'<sup>375</sup>

Walford's decision to mount an opera was a brave one but at the same time there was a recognition from her regarding the inherent difficulties in producing an opera. Her realisation that the use of actor-musicians could break through a social and cultural divide and without the restrictive financial conditions was inspired.

According to Furre, the idea to put on an opera was first mooted in the pub. The notion to mount an opera was embraced by the Everyman staff. They had great belief in Walford's ideas which had always been proved to be right. The challenge that *Tosca* posed was: 'How can we make this upper-class, posh, untouchable thing that is opera accessible to a Liverpool audience? How can we present the music and the passion and not put the ordinary theatregoer off?'

<sup>376</sup>

The decision was the ground-breaking idea to turn *Tosca* into an actor-musician opera. This was the first time that actor-musicians were used to play a classical score. Previous actor-musician productions both at the Bubble and the Everyman utilized bands or small musical line-ups and whilst the music varied in style, it had not been classical. More importantly, there had been no attempt at mounting productions which required orchestral scores, such as the classic musicals. The Everyman *Tosca* paved the way for the actor-musician to be used for the playing of more elaborate musicals, as well as opera.

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<sup>374</sup> Snowman, Daniel, *The Gilded Stage: A Social History of Opera* (United Kingdom: Atlantic Books Ltd., 2010) Ibid. loc. 3165.

<sup>375</sup> Snowman, Daniel, *The Gilded Stage: A Social History of Opera* (United Kingdom: Atlantic Books Ltd., 2010), loc. 792.

<sup>376</sup> Nicky Furre, email 15 May 2009.

For *Tosca*, highly skilled actor-musicians were required who could play orchestral instruments. The piece would also necessitate a larger line-up than usual, even with a score reduction. Including Cunneen, the cast of actor-musicians totalled fourteen. *Tosca* was a collaboration between Walford and Cunneen with some contribution from Han Duijvendak. Walford had always wanted to direct an opera and chose *Tosca* as a tribute to her father who had recently died.<sup>377</sup> It was Cunneen's decision to do it in the round which at the time was also an original concept. Walford's approach to staging this opera was ahead of its time: it even prepared the way for the large-scale productions staged at the Royal Albert Hall.

[...] the first 'in the round' classical music we had was The Centenary Production of *La Boheme* 1-10 February 1996, produced by Raymond Gubbay. This type of event has become a regular feature at the Hall - since 1996 we have had *Carmen*, *Madam Butterfly*, *Tosca* and *Aida*.<sup>378</sup>

A further innovation was to place all the actor-musicians on the top level of the auditorium in a circle.

Walford took the decision not to use the original Italian libretto, neither did she employ the English translation by William Beatty-Kingston (1837-1900), which was used by The Royal Opera House in 1954<sup>379</sup>, nor the Edmund Tracey (1927-2007) translation written for the 1976 English National Opera production with a revival in 1980. Instead she: '[...] worked on a very over-written and old play version; juggled with all the existing librettos, then threaded in extracts from 'The Song of Songs' and new writing of my own. Quite a task.'<sup>380</sup>

Walford remained faithful to the original story but, using the King James version of the Old Testament, she wove in extracts from Leviticus, Exodus, the Psalms and notably, The Song of Songs.<sup>381</sup> She was very selective in her choice of

<sup>377</sup> Whilst serving in the Navy, Walford's father's ship were given tickets to see *Tosca* at La Scala. He frequently spoke about the production to Walford. *Tosca* by Puccini, May 10 1954. Director, Antonino Votto, Giuseppe Di Stefano, Cavarodossi and Renata Tebaldi, Floria Tosca.

<sup>378</sup> Jacky Cowdrey, email - Royal Albert Hall Archivist. London. January 20, 2010.

<sup>379</sup> David Ogden, Archive Assistant, Royal Opera House Covent Garden email 3 September 2009.

<sup>380</sup> Glen Walford email London 2009.

<sup>381</sup> *Tosca*, adapted by Glen Walford and Paddy Cunneen with contributions by Han Duijvendak. Final text as produced at Everyman Theatre, Liverpool, October/November 1985.

biblical quotes. In the telephone interview with Cunneen, he stated that Walford was very bright and had studied theology.<sup>382</sup> Walford regards The Song of Songs as a beautiful piece of writing and had used it previously in her own adaptation of The Song of Solomon that she directed at the Traverse theatre, Edinburgh in 1965.<sup>383</sup> The scene in *Tosca* where she employs this text is erotically charged as is The Song of Songs. Within the *Tosca* English translation there are many references to the Catholic Mass and which is mirrored in The Song of Songs.<sup>384</sup>

Compare the English translation from the Ricordi edition (1990)

Cavaradossi: I know it! And she had such religious fervour,  
in her daily prayers, that unseen I have painted her  
lovely features.<sup>385</sup>

to Walford's. The inclusion of The Song of Songs provides a more lyrical, sensual description:

Cavaradossi: Yes indeed! She was so absorbed  
In prayer that I, unseen,  
Could paint her lovely features.  
Kiss me with the kisses of thy mouth  
For thy love is better than wine.<sup>386/387</sup>

Additions to the new libretto were added by Duijvendak:

Once there was a first draft we did dip into the Italian libretto as noted in the score Paddy Cunneen used, to refine and sharpen our text. And in places we summerised and paraphrased to save time and cut straight to the drama of a scene. I don't really speak Italian, but having done a fair amount of Latin during my Dutch secondary education, I can get by enough to make myself understood in Italy and to work out the meaning of Italian lyrics and libretti on the page – with the help of a dictionary if necessary.<sup>388</sup>

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<sup>382</sup> Paddy Cunneen,. Glen Walford and the Actor-Musician Musical Director telephone Interview. (Glasgow 2008)

<sup>383</sup> Glen Walford web site.

<sup>384</sup> The meaning of this poem, which continues to be read at the Jewish Passover and also forms part of the Old Testament has been lost.

<sup>385</sup> Giacomo Puccini, 1990. *Tosca*, Opera Vocal Scores Series. Milan: BMG Ricordi Music Publishing S.p.A. line 224 – 239.

<sup>386</sup> Puccini. *Tosca*. Liverpool: Everyman Theatre 1985.

<sup>387</sup> *Song of Solomon* Chapter 1 Verse 2.

<sup>388</sup> Han Duijvendak, email 10 August 2009.

The old play version to which Walford referred is the original five-act play, *La Tosca*, written by Victorien Sardou, on which Puccini based his opera.

The following section is the scene in which Tosca kills Scarpia:

Acte V Scène V

Scarpia. Alors [...] ce qui m'est dû! [...] *Il l'enlace d'un bras, et baise ardemment son épaule nue.*

Floria. Le voilà! [...] *Elle lui plonge le couteau dans le cœur.*

Scarpia. —Ah! maudite! *Il tombe sur le canapé.*

Floria, *avec une joie et un rire férocés.*  
—Enfin ![...] C'est fait! [...] Enfin! [...] Enfin! [...] Ah! c'est fait! [...]

Scarpia. A moi! [...] Je suis mort! [...]

Floria. J'y compte bien! Ah! bourreau! Tu m'auras torturée pendant toute une nuit, et je n'aurais pas mon tour? [...] *(Elle se penche sur lui, les yeux dans les yeux.)* Regarde-moi bien, bandit! [...] me repaître de ton agonie, et meurs de la main d'une femme, lâche! Meurs, bête féroce, meurs désespéré, enragé! Meurs! [...] Meurs! [...] Meurs! [...]

Scarpia, *sur le meuble et reprend le couteau. Ils se regardent ainsi dossier du canapé, et d'une voix étouffée.*  
Au Secours! [...] A moi! [...]<sup>389</sup>

This can be compared with the original Italian libretto:

Scarpia: Tosca, finalmente mia!... Maledetta!!

Tosca: Questo è il bacio di Tosca! Scarpia: Aiuto! Muoio! Soccorso! Muoio! Soccorso! Aiuto! Muoio! Aiuto!

Tosca: Ti soffoca il sangue? Ah! E ucciso da una donna!...M'hai assai torturata?! [...]

Scarpia: Soccorso! Muoio!

Tosca: Odi tu ancora? Parla! [...]Guardami! [...] Son Tosca! [...]O Scarpia!

<sup>389</sup> Project Gutenberg eBook of *La Tosca*, by Victorien Sardou 1909.

Scarpia: Soccorso! Aiuto!

Tosca: Ti soffoca il sangue?

Scarpia: Muoio!

Tosca: Muori dannato! Muori!  
Muori!! Muori!!!

Scarpia: Ah!...

Tosca: È morto! [...] Or gli perdono!!  
E avanti a lui tremava tutta Roma!<sup>390/391</sup>

The Everyman version below left shares some similarities with the Edmund Tracey version below right with the exception of the Exodus section.<sup>392</sup> Walford has endeavoured to make the passages not only sensual but sexual. Note Scarpia's first line which taken out of context is sexually suggestive.

<p>Scarpia: He shall lift his rod and part the waters; And the children shall pass on dry land In the midst of the sea...<sup>393</sup> Tosca, at last you are mine.</p> <p>(TOSCA STABS HIM) Cursed viper</p> <p>Tosca: This is the kiss of Tosca</p> <p>Scarpia: Ah, help me! I am dying!</p> <p>Oh help me, I am dying!</p> <p>Tosca: Is your blood foaming and choking you?</p> <p>And killed by a blow from a woman! Did you torture me enough? Can you still hear me?</p>	<p>Tosca, now at last you're mine!</p> <p>(TOSCA STABS HIM) Cursed viper! That was the kiss of Tosca Ah, help me! I'm dying! Ah, help me! I'm dying! Oh! Help me! Murder! Please help me!</p> <p>Your blood foams and chokes you!</p> <p>Ah! The blow struck by a woman! I repaid all your torture!</p>
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<sup>390</sup> Giacomo Puccini, 1982. *Tosca* Opera Guide London and New York: John Calder (Publishers) Ltd and Riverrun Press Inc. pp.69-70

<sup>391</sup> Act 11 bars 985 -1039.

<sup>392</sup> King James Bible, Exodus 14 vs 21-22.

<sup>393</sup> King James Bible, Exodus 14 vs 21-22. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

Look at me! I am Tosca!  
O Scarpia! (SHE KISSES HIM)<sup>394</sup>

Scarpia: Please help me! Murder!

Tosca: Can you still here me? Tell me!  
Look at me! I am Tosca!  
Oh Scarpia!<sup>395</sup>

However, the most important addition is the stage direction for Tosca to kiss Scarpia as he dies. This directorial decision combined with Walford's inclusion of extracts from The Song of Songs, which is the most sexual and sensual writing contained in the Bible, created a highly charged production. Nicky Furre wrote that:

The whole relationship with Scarpia was about sexual tension, a love triangle between the main characters. I think the kiss was the way Tosca could get close enough to kill him but also to release him and herself [...] it also had great dramatic effect of course!<sup>396</sup>

Whilst Walford has remained faithful to the story, it would appear from the libretto that the opera has been cut and reduced to two acts only. It has not been possible to obtain a copy of the score. But the libretto indicates that lengthy orchestral sections were deleted. This is understandable, as with a large reduction in the size of the orchestra the lyrical quality would have been lost, especially when minus the string section. It is also unlikely that the actor-musicians would have been able to sustain a sufficiently high standard of playing for what are quite substantial sections of the unsung sections of the score.

Walford and Cunneen were prepared for casting to be slow and problematic. Cunneen, commenting on this, said:

It was difficult in the early days finding actors for these roles. They would come along with a box (*containing a clarinet*) they had borrowed off their uncle for the audition. At the audition they would claim they could not put it

<sup>394</sup> Giacomo Puccini, *Tosca*. Liverpool: Everyman Theatre 1985.

<sup>395</sup> Giacomo Puccini, *Tosca Opera Guide* London and New York: (John Calder (Publishers). Ltd and Riverrun Press Inc. 1982), p.69.

<sup>396</sup> Nicky Furre, email October 4, 2009.

together but I would always make them play.<sup>397</sup>

It was frustrating for Walford to have performers who possessed many of the prerequisite skills that she wanted but had insufficient music skills. This is demonstrated in a letter to Brendan Hughes, whom she had employed for three consecutive productions:

Because of my own preoccupation with “total theatre”, I am thrilled to have someone in the Company with such an incredibly advanced sense of style and movement. I wish we could have kept you for “Shane<sup>398</sup>”, but the available parts demand instrumental skills, and the kazoo’s just not good enough – pity!<sup>399</sup>

They were very fortunate in finding actors for the main roles who were also trained opera singers.<sup>400</sup> Both Walford and Cunneen saw many opera singers who were working in opera companies at that time and found no one suitable. Walford persuaded Cunneen to audition Nicky Furre for the *Tosca* role. Furre had worked with Walford previously on a number of productions and although a classically trained singer, she had decided to follow a career in musical theatre.

I honestly don’t think Paddy was too keen – you should understand that at that time I had a great voice as far as musical theatre was concerned, I was trained properly but it wasn’t in the true opera class as a voice [...] yes I was classically trained but had turned away from it! The tenor had the same sort of background to me, I think.<sup>401</sup>

It was Walford who was resistant to engaging opera singers, although Cunneen, understandably, was very concerned about the singing technique. ‘In the end Paddy agreed and, I think, just kept his fingers crossed. What Glen was looking for was someone to tell the story and that had to be more important than the technicalities of singing technique.’<sup>402</sup> Just as importantly, ‘They also [...] got people who were multi-instrumentalists. It was incredible.’<sup>403</sup>

For Cunneen, *Tosca* involved substantial work, and the most difficult part of the

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<sup>397</sup> Paddy Cunneen, telephone interview, Glasgow 2008.

<sup>398</sup> *Shane* adapted by Bob Eaton from a novel by Jack Schaeffer March 1984

<sup>399</sup> EVT/PF/000600.

<sup>400</sup> Rodney Cottam, *Scarpia*; Nicky Furre, *Tosca*; Philip Rham, *Cavaradossi*.

<sup>401</sup> Nicky Furre, email interview, May 15 2009.

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>403</sup> Paddy Cunneen, telephone interview, Glasgow 2008.

project were the arrangements. Reducing any score for actor-musicians is an exacting task but reducing an orchestral score is the most challenging.

For *Tosca*, the composer, Giacomo Puccini, specified the following orchestral line-up:

The Orchestra Pit:

3 Flutes/2 Piccolos, 2 Oboes, English Horn, 2 Clarinets, Bass Clarinet, 2 Bassoons, Contrabassoon, 4 Horns, 3 Trumpets, 3 Trombones, Bass Trombone, Timpani, Tenor drum, Triangle, Cymbals, Tam-tam, Bass Drum, Carillon, Celesta, Glockenspiel, Harp, Strings

On Stage:

Flute, Viola, Harp, 4 Horns, 3 Trombones, Bells, Organ, 2 Tenor Drums, Rifles, Cannon<sup>404</sup>

According to David Ogden, Archive Assistant at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, this translates into the following number of musicians used in a major international opera house:

In the Orchestra Pit

12 Woodwind players

11 Brass Players

5 Players for Timpani/Percussion/Harp/Keyboard

47 String Players\*

Stage Band

6 Players

\*The number of string players is the only thing that might change from year to year and would depend on how many players could comfortably fit in the pit in the layout that a particular conductor requested. However the number of strings would always be somewhere in the region of 45–50 and the rest of the forces would not change as they are what Puccini specified!<sup>405</sup>

The required number of musicians is therefore between 79–84. Cunneen reduced the arrangements so that they could be played by just 14 actor-musicians. The following cast list designates both the acting roles and instruments played.

<sup>404</sup> Giacomo Puccini, *Tosca*, Opera Vocal Scores Series. Milan: BMG Ricordi Music Publishing S.p.A. 1990. p. VI.

<sup>405</sup> David Ogden, Archive Assistant, Royal Opera House Covent Garden email 3 September 2009.

Keyboards)

John Atholl: Church/Statesman (Trombone,  
 Oliver Beamish: Church/Statesman (Horn/Trumpet)  
 Rodney Cottam: Scarpia (Timpani)  
 Paddy Cunneen: Church/Statesman (Computer,  
 Keyboards, Clarinet)  
 Matthew Devitt: Sacristan (Trombone)  
 Richard Evans: Church/Statesman (Cello)  
 Nicholas Fawcett: Church/Statesman (Bassoon)  
 Nicky Furre: Tosca (Cymbals)  
 Andrew Mackintosh: Angelotti, (Clarinet)  
 Nick Mercer: Church/Statesman, (Violin, Baritone Horn)  
 Philip Rham: Cavaradossi, (Cello)  
 Philip Scott: Church/Statesman (Viola)  
 Jorg Walesch: Spoletta (Violin)  
 Michael Wilcox: Church/Statesman (Violin)<sup>406</sup>

Sometimes other factors can have an impact on the arrangements. According to Merlin Shepherd, one of the actor-musicians, this was something that happened with the production of *Cabaret*<sup>407</sup> (1987)

It's a very expensive project to get the score for *Cabaret* - I don't think that the Everyman had that kind of dosh. I seem to remember that Paddy arranged it from the short score, ie, the two piano part. I might be wrong, it may have been from a book, like piano accompaniments [...] I don't really remember, although there may have been parts for the stage band that we didn't use.<sup>408</sup>

For instance, large string sections have to be rewritten for solo instruments. The musical line-up might not include a specific instrument so the arranger will have to choose a different instrument. The demands of the acting role can also intrude upon the musical needs making it impossible for the performer to play an instrument at a given point. For instance, wind instruments can be problematic because the performer cannot speak or sing whilst playing. On the other hand the double bass might impede movement either of the performer or of the instrument. This might mean that another musician has to play instead and therefore a possibility that the arrangements be reworked. This was a major problem with *Tosca*. The arranging proved problematic and during

<sup>406</sup> Ros Merkin, 2004. Liverpool's Third Cathedral, The Liverpool Everyman Theatre, In *The Words of Those Who Were, And Are, There*. Liverpool: Liverpool and Merseyside Theatres Trust Limited in association with Liverpool John Moores University. p.193.

<sup>407</sup> *Cabaret*, Liverpool Everyman 8/10/1987 Kander and Ebb based on Van Druten

<sup>408</sup> Merlin Shepherd, email 2009.

rehearsal Cunneen was having to re-score the parts on a daily basis. ‘Every night I was reassigning it wherever possible. I was photocopying it overnight as it was quicker than rewriting.’<sup>409</sup>

Walford’s initial design brief was for ‘Scarpia to be in a wheelchair on a stark white hospital-type set.’<sup>410</sup> But the designer Claire Lyth said that, ‘I struggled with this and couldn’t make sense of it in relation to the music.’ However, Walford had stated that,<sup>411</sup> ‘she wanted Tosca as a bird (i.e. free spirit versus Scarpia’s controlling power).’ It was this notion that led Lyth to the eventual design concept of an earthquake. She explained what this represented, ‘[...] danger in an uncertain world, which seemed to echo the power of the music and the revolutionary political background of the opera.’<sup>412</sup>

The staging was on four sides and the floor was painted in swirling colours representing ice.<sup>413</sup> From one corner to another, on the diagonal, was a large and jagged fissure, indicative of an earthquake. On either side of the fissure were small groups of stalactites.<sup>414</sup> ‘The stalactites were also a visual and political symbol and one was used as the weapon with which Tosca killed Scarpia.’ This staging was to provide a challenge for Tosca, played by Nicky Furre.

[...] it had a terrifying set - wooden slats set on an angle to a sort of peak in the middle, with a gap you had to jump over in 2-inch heels, just a little bit too wide, that was treacherous at most and leg-breaking at least. The shoes were nice though. Like a goat on a hillside, I had to sing arias while hoping I wouldn’t fall to my doom. No doubt pre-prepared by Glen because of the story and to keep me on my toes!<sup>415</sup>

Every member of the cast was an actor-musician, irrespective of the size of the part. This was for two reasons: one, it was expedient given the nature of the

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<sup>409</sup> Paddy Cunneen, telephone interview, Glasgow 2008.

<sup>410</sup> Lyth, Claire. 2009. *Tosca* - Designer - Email.

<sup>411</sup> Ibid.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid.

<sup>413</sup> Lyth, Claire website, photo of model box and of photograph *Tosca*, Liverpool Everyman stage.

<sup>414</sup> Claire Lyth, 2009. *Tosca* - Designer email.

<sup>415</sup> Furre, Nicky, *Tosca* (2) cast Member email, 2009.

score and the reduction in the arrangements, but also because Walford demands much of her ensemble.

The cast had no time to sit at the side! You do not sit in a Glen production. Each actor-musician had to play different instruments at different times in the auditorium, act various characters on the stage and then rush around to get to their next instrument in time. It was exhausting. Paddy had to make the score sound full with only, what 12 instrumentalists? (can't remember how many actually), and not miss out any of the twiddly bits! He also had to try and conduct this chaos! he he he, monster of his own making!<sup>416</sup>

The actor-musician role demands much from the performer. Not only must he or she work hard at delivering each component of the role: acting, playing and possibly singing but the physical effort required for each is demanding. For instance, a performer acts a scene on one part of the stage. S/he then quickly exits and re-enters on the opposite side with a large musical instrument, heavy and unwieldy, which must be played whilst s/he is walking across the stage. This instrument will then be exchanged for another after which s/he will both sing verse and play the instrument for the choruses. This all requires skill, stamina and focus. An actor will leave the stage between scenes but the actor-musician is permanently engaged in the entire production.

The actor-musician must be prepared to be a multi-instrumentalist. Professional musicians will have studied more than one instrument and many semi-professional musicians will play more than one instrument but to differing levels. The actor-musician is generally expected to play more than one instrument for a production but might also have to learn a new one.

In this production I played percussion and tubular bells in addition to the singing. Others played violin, cello etc. That is just how things worked out – I also at that time played bass, guitar and a bit of sax and clarinet. As a musician actor<sup>417</sup> you tended to learn an instrument for the tunes you had to play in that production and just made it look good! However in *Tosca* that wasn't quite enough and all of the

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<sup>416</sup> Ibid.

<sup>417</sup> It is of interest to note that when referring to *Tosca*, Furre speaks of musician-actors.

musician actors were bloody good at the instruments they were asked to play [...]<sup>418</sup>

A difficulty for the actor-musician when playing heavily scored music, is being able to hear your cue or to see the conductor, if there is one. For *Tosca*, the cast adopted a specific coping strategy because they were:

[...] often scattered over the whole of the auditorium, not able to hear other instruments as a whole and trusting in luck a lot of the time! We always tried to keep a sight line open to the other musicians so at least you could visually see the beat if you couldn't hear it!<sup>419</sup>

The other difficulty is the instruments and their placement. An instrument can be used as a prop to represent something else. Depending on the nature of specific scenes, it might be necessary for the actor-musician to put the instrument down. Alternatively, the instrument might not be portable. The logistics regarding the positioning or placement of the instrument for the performer are complex, as they are for the arranger.

If you had an instrument that could be carted about you did that, if it was too big to carry you had to dash to get to it before your que [sic] to play! However, play that music these actors did. It wasn't taped, it wasn't faked, they played every hard earned note, and did it well. It may not have been high opera but is sure was low opera!<sup>420</sup>

Cunneen is very proud of what was achieved with the opera:

*Tosca* not a huge popular success box office - about 30/40%. All the players from the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic came. I saw the tuba player 4 or 5 times. Scally girls 13 or 14 utterly charmed by it. Always there in the front row...those girls came every night [...] That was what the place was like and that is what an actor-musician can do, can stimulate, makes them think on a level way above the mundane.<sup>421</sup>

Cunneen also gives a very vivid account of how the actor-musicians performed in *Tosca* and the impact upon the audience:

<sup>418</sup> Nicky Furre, *Tosca* (2) - Cast Member – email 2009.

<sup>419</sup> Ibid.

<sup>420</sup> Nicky Furre, *Tosca* (2) cast Member email 2009.

<sup>421</sup> Paddy Cunneen, Glen Walford and the Actor-Musician Musical Director telephone Interview. Glasgow. 2008.

[...] throughout the show the actor-musicians feverishly scurried around the theatre, singing a chorus in Latin here, putting down a violin there, saying a few lines somewhere else, running back to pick up a tenor horn and so on. For Scarpia's entrance we arranged to get most of the cast at the back of the auditorium, behind the bulk of the audience, and out of their line of sight. As the villainous Scarpia enters Puccini writes three crashing chords and these I arranged on as much brass as we could muster in the ensemble. Every night without fail the guys would burst their lungs blaring out the three chords on trumpets, trombone and horns. Every night without fail I could see, from my stage position, the unsuspecting audience literally jump out of their seats with terror. It was a great way to bring on the protagonist, and it was always my favourite moment.<sup>422</sup>

This account demonstrates two things. The first is the complete integration of each actor-musician within the performance. From the overture until the end of the second act, they are engaged in a way that does not often happen with a play. They are connected by the music and whether at any point they are acting, playing an instrument or waiting for their next cue they are counting bars. The second point is the impact that can be made with the freedom to move the actor-musicians either on the stage or in the house. What is not detailed in Cunneen's account is that Lyth's set with its fissure allowed for Scarpia to make his entrance through the centre.<sup>423</sup> Walford, in her direction, allowed for much linkage with all the different performers and the artistic team.

Furre, whilst recognising what had been achieved, maintained a performer's critical perspective.

It was raw, it was not played particularly well, not sung fantastically or a musical milestone but it told the story, simply, quickly (we could get to the bar well before last orders), ordinary people liked it and came to see it. We had put on the essence of the opera Tosca – the music as well as the story – and got away with it. I hope to think it changed the way some people thought, I hope it encouraged others to investigate other opera experiences.

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<sup>422</sup> Merkin, Ros. 2004. Liverpool's Third Cathedral, The Liverpool Everyman Theatre, In *The Words of Those Who Were, And Are, There*. Liverpool: Liverpool and Merseyside Theatres Trust Limited in association with Liverpool John Moores University. pp. 193 -194.

<sup>423</sup> Everyman, The Liverpool. 2006. Everyman Archive Oral History Interview Glen Walford-EVT/OH/000004.

What it did do was prove that Glen can tell a story, any story, with any means that come to hand. It was a great experience.<sup>424</sup>

Whilst it was not a box-office success, it was critically well received:

This is a play with music – and the large cast play their own instruments, sing their own arias, and at the end of the day play their own play acting [ ...] The notes need to be taken as seriously as the words delivered as they are by actors who can sing, rather than singers who can't act. A very clever mixture.<sup>425</sup>

In this review, Joe Riley identifies the multi-skilled nature of the performers and production and tacitly identifies them as actor-musicians as opposed to musician-actors.

The award has to go to *Tosca* which was a brave and brilliant Everyman adaption of the play and the more famous opera, containing elements of each plus additions. It could so easily have fallen disastrously between two stools, and the fact that it succeeded so marvellously in retaining the feel of grand opera without any of the latter's longueurs is a tribute to its director Glen Walford and also to its musical director Paddy Cunneen. The two of them produced an evening of sublime playing.<sup>426</sup>

As is shown here, there was at this time a shortage of suitable performers. It will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters that it was the success of these early productions, seeking to reach out to a different type of audience, that provided the impetus for the actor-musician genre to imbed itself firmly as a distinct style of theatre. This attracted more performers to embrace the actor-musician route and resulted in training programmes being set up.

The second case study is Walford's final production at the Everyman, a production of *The Winter's Tale* (1989). Actor-musician productions can and do vary in the amount of music that is included. The use of the actor-musician in

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<sup>424</sup> Nicky Furre, *Tosca* (2) cast Member email 2009.

<sup>425</sup> Joe Riley, A stark, colourful version of *Tosca*, *Liverpool Echo*, Friday, October 4, 1985.

<sup>426</sup> *Tosca* review, Merseymart.

this and other of Walford's Shakespeare productions is not as all-inclusive as with *Tosca*. However, it does demonstrate the creativity, inventiveness and the overwhelming desire from Walford to make texts and specifically Shakespeare, accessible and enjoyable to everyone. Walford's Shakespeare productions incorporate the actor-musician for the scenes where music is indicated in the texts. But the actor-musicians also play the underscoring, added where it might add atmosphere, heighten a dramatic moment or to help establish in which country a play is set. Importantly it is a crucial element of each production that the actor-musician's aesthetic is linked to the scenography.

In a telephone interview, Cunneen described Walford as 'a maverick, fantastically energetic'. Walford and Cunneen would encourage the actor-musicians to experiment by playing music which, 'whetted the appetite and clearly located the play where it was.'<sup>427</sup> A key point is Walford's approach in rehearsal to music and text. She views them both equally. Cunneen said that: 'The music was discovered in rehearsal in the same way that the play was discovered - simultaneously. The music has become organic and not something put in before the tech [...] learning to perform the music helped them to perform the play.'<sup>428</sup> This point is of particular interest. The accessibility for the audience when there is a fusion of music and text has already been discussed. Cunneen is stating here that for the actor-musician in discovering the music they discover the play or text.

Walford understands how these two art forms when fused together create something more powerful. Cunneen said that in his view the most important aspect was:

That if you have actor-musicians in a play it brings you a great way of by-passing rational needs about the play. She wanted to create visceral emotional drive rather than highly contextualised thought. Music served this style and we had a great deal of licence with the music.<sup>429</sup>

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<sup>427</sup> Cunneen, Paddy. 2008. telephone interview, Glasgow.

<sup>428</sup> Ibid.

<sup>429</sup> Ibid.

*The Winter's Tale* was not considered to be a commercial choice for a final production. But what can be judged by her selection is the enduring influence and importance to Walford of Shakespeare and the actor-musician genre.

'This is a cool, controlled and magnificent production. It triumphs because director Glen Walford has confronted a pig of a play – all those irrational decisions and ludicrous events – on its own terms.'<sup>430</sup>

But it was a play that she wanted to direct and regarded it as a reward for her time at this theatre.<sup>431</sup> Walford's stream of consciousness notes do not provide a specific reason for her selection of this Shakespeare play. However, it is made clear that she is interested in the difficulties that 'peace' can create.

Sicilia and Bohemia are lands of long-time peace. We do not concern ourselves with who they are or not enemies with – it is not mentioned. Here are the problems of peace. The problems of unrelieved serenity and pleasure. Leontes erupts and the glass is shattered.<sup>432</sup>

Walford states in the notes that, '*Winters Tale* poses questions: we ask the audience to meditate.'<sup>433</sup> This play provided her with a question with which her interest in Japan would allow her to answer challenging the 'pig of a play' with its problematic opening scene that textually does not provide an explanation for Leontes' jealousy. Walford's notes provide her explanation:

We contemplate and we meditate but for Leontes the demons are choking; the rest don't understand and no one can exorcize. For him its not enough to self-destruct – he has to Bomber Harris the entire cosmos (some suicides lock themselves in garage or room with carbon monoxide or razor; others thoroughly gas wife, kids and pet dog – the mini Leontes syndrome).<sup>434</sup>

She then provides her reasoning for using the Japanese influenced set,

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<sup>430</sup> Erlend Clouston, *Winter's Tale*, Liverpool Everyman (1989) *The Guardian*

<sup>431</sup> The Liverpool Everyman, 2006. Everyman Archive Oral History Interview Glen Walford-EVT/OH/000004.

<sup>432</sup> EVT/PF/000816.

<sup>433</sup> EVT/PF/000816.

<sup>434</sup> EVT/PF/000816.

Leontes palace world seems not to have a lot to bother it nor does Polixenes palace world [...] just to underline the advanced art a society as self-orientated as Japan was for so many years makes of its civilizing rituals but the intense violence that may be released by the demons within. Leontes destroys form.<sup>435</sup>

'For her swansong at the Everyman Glen Walford has produced *A Winter's Tale* of such splendour that it stands aloof like a monument.'<sup>436</sup>

The actor John Wild played the role of Polixenes. In an interview<sup>437</sup> he said how influenced Walford was by Japan and had decided to set the production as a 'Kabuki' piece. Kabuki means song and dance and was originally regarded by the Japanese as a form of theatre for the working people; a similar audience to the British one Walford sought to entertain. It should be clarified that this was not a fully formed Kabuki production but a westernized production that borrowed elements from this Japanese theatrical form.

Walford approached her Shakespeare productions at the Everyman by creating a 'stream of consciousness' paper with suggestions and inspirational notes. The papers were always made available to the cast and the creative team.

The attached notes constitutes a stream of consciousness [...] They are rather embarrassingly self-indulgent mainly because some of the tales may spark off publicity links and are not to be taken ultra-seriously or worry anyone overmuch about my mental condition [...] As with all my Shakespeares you can bet blood the basic concept will remain but things will change and develop within the parameters.<sup>438</sup>

Claire Lyth, the designer for both *Tosca* and *The Winter's Tale* found this to be extremely helpful. Writing in an email she said that:<sup>439</sup>

'Glen did a wonderful "stream of consciousness" brief with her ideas, as she often does for Shakespeare. It is a great way to work from a designer's point of view. She doesn't describe the set or any practical wishes, just the feel she

<sup>435</sup> EVT/PF/000816.

<sup>436</sup> *A Winter's Tale* review, *The Stage* 1989.

<sup>437</sup> John Wild, *The Winter's Tale* cast member, London 2009.

<sup>438</sup> Walford, Glen 5.8.86 EVT/PF/000727.

<sup>439</sup> Claire Lyth, email June 23, 2009.

wants.'

From these original papers, the themes and images that Walford wanted are detailed. She wanted to create tableaux and make the court a place of stillness.<sup>440</sup> 'Winters (sic) Tale poses questions; we ask the audience to meditate.' She uses the Japanese word, 'wa' which means 'harmony'. The story is a tale of winter, implying cold, snow and ice. At the start of the play the court is in harmony yet fragile. But the harmony is soon disrupted as if into shards of glass.

A quack-zen inspiration [...] There may be a ritual drinking game on the lines of a Japanese tea ceremony [...] the audience's attention would be focused strongly (sic) onto the 'objects' – goblet – glass but pure of form and the wine inside - sparkling and pink [...] The problems of unrelieved serenity and pleasure. Leontes erupts and the glass is shattered (image?)<sup>441</sup>

This was realised with the set being comprised of a:

Centre rostrum approx. 4 metres square. At each corner strings of black cord strung with smashed "crystals" – bits of chunky Perspex. These drew like curtains to form an "ice cage" surrounding Leontes in his isolation. The rostrum and surrounding levels were covered in white artificial grass. The feel was very cold and formal, befitting Leontes court, with a western interpretation of a Japanese setting.<sup>442</sup>,

According to Lyth, Walford was working in Tokyo during the pre-production period. The costumes designs had to be faxed to the Rhyming Theatre Company for Walford's approval,<sup>443</sup> [...] so I faxed them through in group format for cheapness. They were all a western interpretation of Japanese ideas like the Set.' Walford also used the notion of different tribes, with Polixenes as a Bohemian and Leontes, as a Sicilian.<sup>444</sup>

Wild states that in the early stages of rehearsal Walford had the cast improvising being icicles. This had a dual purpose: to engender the sense of cold for the play but more importantly, to inculcate stillness and containment. Stillness is an aspect of the Japanese actor that Walford particularly admires,

<sup>440</sup> *The Winter's Tale* EVT/PF/000816

<sup>441</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>442</sup> Claire Lyth, *A Winter's Tale* designer email June 23, 2009.

<sup>443</sup> Claire Lyth, email June 23, 2009.

<sup>444</sup> John Wild, *The Winter's Tale* cast member. London, 2009.

[...] they have natural grace, dedication and an inbuilt gift of physical stillness, which is a quality many UK actors can learn from.<sup>445</sup> Wild said that they were given bowls to hold and that he had to learn to<sup>446</sup> ‘deliver my speeches dead still. Keeping still but finding the level of energy’. Above the rostrum was an upper stage, a walkway on three sides with treads on either side that went down to a ground level.<sup>447</sup> Above this upper stage was a large moon. During Act II, John Boorman, the actor playing Leontes, had to sit still under the moon for half an hour, symbolically overlooking the proceedings.

In *The Winter's Tale*, there are three distinct uses of music. The first type is a song for a character to sing; the second, dance music and the third, underscoring. In *Shakespeare's Use of Music, The Final Comedies*, John H. Long discusses how, at the point at which the play was written, the Jacobean masque was at the height of its popularity. ‘When Shakespeare wrote *The Winter's Tale*, he was therefore in the midst of an audience which delighted in the fantasy, the artificiality, the allegorical-pastoral-classical themes, the music, dance, spectacle, and declamation, all found in the Stuart masques.’<sup>448</sup>

Long goes on to quote Allardyce Nicoll who, in *Stuart Masques and the Renaissance Stage*, said: ‘Into this strange world of allegorical figures [...] come, bravely clad or in rags [...] a motley crowd [...] from Western lands and from the Orient [...] Ballad-singers, Fiddlers, Mock-musicians [...]’<sup>449</sup> The production that Walford created, as will be shown, could be said to have included this mixture of the West and the Orient combined with the actor-musicians.

The first piece of music included in Shakespeare's text does not occur until the entrance of Autolycus in Act IV Sc III. Autolycus, a likeable rascal, enters singing a song of flowers and nature. Two dances follow this, *The Shepherds and Shepherdesses* and *The Twelve Satyrs*, then more songs from Autolycus. Finally, there is the use of ‘underscoring’ when Hermione steps down from the

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<sup>445</sup> Glen Walford email London, 2008.

<sup>446</sup> John Wild, *The Winter's Tale* cast member. London, 2009.

<sup>447</sup> Claire Lyth, email June 23, 2009.

<sup>448</sup> John H Long, *Shakespeare's Use of Music: The Final Comedies*. (New York: Da Capo Press 1977). p.68.

<sup>449</sup> Allardyce Nicoll, *A Stuart Masques and the Renaissance Stage*. (New York Blom 1963), pp.192 -201..

podium towards the end of the play. Francesca Jaynes, who choreographed the dances and who has subsequently worked on a number of actor-musician productions for other directors, said in an interview that whilst the actor-musicians played the music they did not take part in the actual dances.<sup>450</sup>

Walford does, however, look for as many opportunities as possible to incorporate the actor-musician. For example, in the stream of consciousness notes, Walford details the instruments and sounds that she wants included: 'Violin; flute-oboe; harp; tinkling percussion; cello. Whispers; soprano; birds; harmony.'<sup>451</sup>

In this production, music was present from the beginning of the play. Walford and Cunneen knew that Wild, cast as Polixenes, played both guitar and bass. However, he informed them that he had had to learn the violin when he played the role of Laurie Lee for a BBC production. Walford had already specified, within the stream of consciousness notes, the violin as one of the instruments she wanted used. Having decided to incorporate music from Act I Wild was directed that: 'part of the character entrance was as a busker playing the violin and the busker was disguised as Polixenes.'<sup>452</sup>

With *The Winter's Tale*, the concept of cold and glass was to imbed the role of the actor-musician firmly into the overall concept and design. The inspirational notes had allowed the creative team to develop further ideas. Paddy Cunneen, the musical director for *The Winter's Tale*, describes how Walford's glass image is followed through into the music 'to provide a feeling of cold',<sup>453</sup> was very keen to have glass instruments made for this production [...] made entirely of glass, the flutes, panpipes, triangles and tubular bells [...]<sup>454</sup> In a telephone interview, Cunneen explained how the instruments had been realized.

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<sup>450</sup> Francesca Jaynes, Phone interview. Richmond, 9 March 2010.

<sup>451</sup> Glen Walford, *The Winter's Tale* - Stream of Consciousness Notes EVT/PF/000816 Liverpool, 1989.

<sup>452</sup> John Wild, *The Winter's Tale* cast member, London 2009.

<sup>453</sup> *The Daily Post* 3/2/1989.

<sup>454</sup> *Ibid.*

Pilkington glass<sup>455</sup> wanted to make something for us. This old chap made the flutes out of glass and I told them where to put the holes. The flutes would steam up with the musicians' breath. Found glass from every possible source. I had some demi-johns with bottoms cut off and they sounded like bells. It makes the music visible and shows the audience how it is being done.<sup>456</sup>

The use of glass instruments, reminiscent of ice, helped define the setting of a Japanese winter. Importantly these glass instruments demonstrate the corporeality of the musicians; the hot breath that turned to steam in the flutes demonstrates clearly the physical connection, the relationship between the musician and the instrument, it is one being. Stringed instruments are visibly plucked and wind instruments blown but in this instance, every visible breath is linked to every heard note.

On a different level, the use of the flute was important as it is an instrument favoured in the Kabuki theatre and also used by Kurosawa to great effect in *Throne of Blood*. (1957)

The instruments arrived at the tech for the last week of rehearsals where they were tested out. Cunneen knew exactly what he wanted to do with these instruments. His concept was to come up with strange noises just to create mystery in the play.<sup>457</sup> Wild said that he, along with other members of the company, 'Did a bit of glass hitting'.<sup>458</sup> The influence of Kurosawa's films visually and on the actor-musician aurally can be detected here. Kurosawa liked to strip music down to a single line to create impact, comment and atmosphere. This is precisely what was being achieved with the striking of the glass instruments. What Wild flippantly refers to 'glass hitting' was more than random strikes on objects. These objects were musical instruments and required the timing and ability of an actor-musician to play them.

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<sup>455</sup> Pilkington in the UK. The Group has its headquarters in St Helens, Merseyside, located between Liverpool and Manchester in the North West of England. Manufacturer of float, rolled and wired glass to glass processing and merchandising, automotive original equipment (OE) and automotive glass replacement (AGR) manufacture.

<sup>456</sup> Paddy Cunneen, telephone interview, Glasgow, 2008.

<sup>457</sup> John Wild, *The Winter's Tale* cast member, London 2009.

<sup>458</sup> Ibid.

For the actor-musician, the use of the bowls provided a key moment - for the production Walford had included some stylized ceremonies with glass bowls. The bowls became very important throughout the play and at times in conjunction with the moon.<sup>459</sup> 'The centre moon had fibre optics threaded through it – which lit up as the oracle was talked about.'

The message from the oracle became a large crystal bowl, which was dropped as Leontes says, 'There is no truth at all in the oracle', or something similar. It was dropped onto a cymbal (the Musical Director's idea) and created a wonderfully shattering image and sound. (The bowl was designed to break partially and contained some loose crystals).<sup>460</sup>

Gilian Cally, who played Hermione in this production, writing in an email said that:

[...] music (used) [...] to set the mood and as punctuation [...] particularly remember Leontes left alone on stage when he had got rid of Hermione and his baby Perdita, with music and lighting heightening his awful isolation and mania. Most certainly music was used to heighten emotion.<sup>461</sup>

Cally did not play an instrument in this production as Walford was in this production particularly [...] interested in tableaux. A fascinating picture which tells a story which comes to life; frozen art; these tableaux echo forward to Hermione's statue coming to life.'<sup>462</sup> In this instance music if played by Hermione, would have created an aural interruption. Further an image of the 'statue' clutching a silent instrument would have created a challenge to the corporeality of the actor-musicians. Cally said: 'Some of the cast who could play instruments, played them [...] I sing and remember doing some improvisation with Paddy and he recorded some of the voice work and incorporated it into the show.'<sup>463</sup>

It should also be noted here that alongside the use of the actor-musician, the music and arrangements that were being used during Walford's tenure at the

<sup>459</sup> Claire Lyth, email June 23 2009.

<sup>460</sup> Claire Lyth, email June 23 2009.

<sup>461</sup> Gilian (Ford) Cally email, *The Winter's Tale*. 19 March 2010.

<sup>462</sup> EVT/PF/000816

<sup>463</sup> Ibid.

Everyman were highly experimental and original for their time. Merlin Shepherd in an email described the originality of Cunneen's music and also the demands made on an actor-musician in Walford's penultimate Everyman Shakespeare production of *Hamlet* (1988):

He [Cunneen] used a sampler, from a computer. I had never seen the like, it was computerised music in its early days. Paddy and I played along with sequenced tracks [...] Paddy and I (and the aforementioned computer) accompanied Mickey Stark, now playing Horatio and other characters (quite brilliantly, I must add), singing the gravediggers song. Paddy played tuba [...] and I played two saxes at the same time, an alto out of the left side of my mouth and a tenor out of the right. Not only that but we work(sic) masks, and the rhythm was in a very asymmetrical time signature, with changing meters every couple of bars, and different timings and fingering on each instrument.<sup>464</sup>

Cally wrote that another key moment in the production and where music was used to heighten emotions was the point at which Hermione 'returns' to life. Wild also spoke of this scene saying that: Wild said that the glass instruments were used to the full [...] when Hermione was brought back to life and I played a bit of soundscaping.'<sup>465</sup>

This soundscaping incorporated the violin, flute, panpipes, triangles and tubular bells. 'The music is also a mark of the supernatural; its magical powers revive Hermione [...]'<sup>466</sup> It is moments such as these that the use and power of the actor-musician is realized: 'The actors speak and twixt the lines make music on violins, flutes, oboes and recorders [...] All this, of course, is down to subtext: the knowing what goes into the doing and saying.'<sup>467</sup>

The reviews in the national papers were full of praise for her production and her artistic choices. 'This is one of the most vital and original Shakespeares I've

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<sup>464</sup> Merlin. Shepherd, email Glen Walford and the Actor-Musician. 19 June 2009.

<sup>465</sup> John Wild, *The Winter's Tale* cast member, London 2009.

<sup>466</sup> John H Long, *Shakespeare's Use of Music: The Final Comedies*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1977. p. 90.

<sup>467</sup> Echo, 27/1/89 in Ros Merkin, *Liverpool's Third Cathedral, The Liverpool Everyman Theatre, In The Words of Those Who Were, And Are, There*. Liverpool: (Liverpool and Merseyside Theatres Trust Limited in association with Liverpool John Moores University 2004).

seen for some time.<sup>468</sup> Michael Billington writing in *The Guardian* described it as: 'The last of Glen Walford's sensational Shakespeares.'<sup>469</sup> More importantly, the reviews also validated her desire and aim to demystify the classics, making them accessible to everyone.<sup>470</sup> 'Rehearsing *Winter's Tale* she became animated about the company's burlesquing the bucolics: "Don't patronize the peasants," she said. "I am one. Give them their dignity."'

Walford knits together all the elements of her productions, actor-musicians included. From her stream of consciousness notes it is evident that she has a very clear idea of overall mood, shape and the aesthetic that she wishes to create. *The Winter's Tale* with the glass instruments provided an original and exquisite aesthetic in which the actor-musician with the hot breath was melded into one – a genii-like form imprisoned in the glass.

Walford also used Actor-Musician devices to create the humour in some of her productions. Merlin Shepherd was employed as an actor-musician and in an email stated that he had been,

[...] involved in theatre shows with Pauper's Carnival, Moving Being, Cardiff Laboratory Theatre, so by the time I reached the *Everyman* I was ready to try many things and not really afraid of theatrical risks.<sup>471</sup>

According to Shepherd, Walford knew that he could ride a unicycle and during the rehearsal period for *Cabaret*,

Glen [...] was looking really hard to find an appropriate place to put it in the show. I was dressed as the Devil at that point, in a one-piece lycra suit replete with elasticated horns and a long red tail, having just done acrobatics and played soprano sax in "Money, Money", [...] who left Fraulein Kost's room [...] there were actually three of us and I was the last, always rushing and sweaty as I had just disappeared understage into one of the stage traps and then ran up to the balcony to play the ending of the song and then had to dress with the sailor's accoutrements and collect my unicycle. I played the soprano sax as I rode off, my own idea, and then later in the run I tucked my long red tail behind me and over my saddle so it stuck out at the

<sup>468</sup> *The Winter's Tale* Review. The Sunday Times, 1989.

<sup>469</sup> Michael Billington, *A Winter's Tale* Review. The Guardian, 1989.

<sup>470</sup> Ros Merkin, *Liverpool's Third Cathedral, The Liverpool Everyman Theatre, In The Words of Those Who Were, And Are, There*. Liverpool: (Liverpool and Merseyside Theatres Trust Limited in association with Liverpool John Moores University 2004). Robin Thorber, Guardian 4 February 1989.

<sup>471</sup> Merlin. Shepherd, email, 19 June 2009.

most suggestive angle possible, and rode off playing. The idea dramatically behind this was that it would deeply shock Fraulein Schneider and Herr Schultz. I remember it was good fun [...].<sup>472</sup>

A further example, in Walford's production of *Hamlet* (1988) Shepherd who was playing the role of Bernardo recounts that,

Paddy and I (and the aforementioned computer) accompanied Mickey Stark, now playing Horatio and other characters (quite brilliantly, I must add) singing the gravediggers song. Paddy played tuba (which he learned for *Cabaret*) and I played two saxes at the same time, an alto out of the left side of my mouth and a tenor out of the right. Not only that but we work masks, and the rhythm was in a very asymmetrical time signature, with changing meters every couple of bars, and different timings and fingering on each instrument. It was great fun and bloody marvellous. I loved playing Paddy's music with him.<sup>473</sup>

Walford's development of the actor-musician and the actor-musician genre has been traced from the mid 1960s through to 1989. Walford's employment of the genre did not cease at that point and she continues to work with actor-musicians at home and abroad. She still employs them for her Shakespeare productions, for instance, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Ludlow (2006). But the journey that the actor-musician role took from the Theatre Vanguard (1966) through to *The Winter's Tale* (1989) demonstrates a sophisticated development from an actor with some musical instrument skills, to actor-musicians with a high standard of musicianship for *Tosca*, to *The Winter's Tale* utilizing newly crafted instruments. The bravery and creativity with these productions resonated through the theatre industry, inspiring performers, directors and musical directors. Each of these categories have in turn sought for greater skills and variety in the application of the genre.

From an examination of the Bubble and the Everyman archives, interviews with Walford and those people who have worked with her, this chapter has identified the influences on Walford, pinpointing the route she took in creating the actor-

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<sup>472</sup> Ibid.

<sup>473</sup> Merlin Shepherd, email, 19 June 2009.

musician and subsequently the actor-musician genre. It has analysed her directorial and rehearsal practices, establishing her maverick, experimental and creative qualities that inspire performers and collaborators alike.

The chapter details that Walford, having been inspired initially by Shakespeare's stories from a child, has maintained her love of his plays intellectually and dramatically. Throughout her career, irrespective of the theatrical influences, storytelling remains at the heart of her practice. This is particularly evident in her Shakespeare productions and her supposedly irreverent approach to the text. 'She cuts it to shreds. She is more interested in the story...and then finding a world for it. The biggest thing is not necessarily the language. Language, world, relationships – best theatre is a combination of all of them.'<sup>474</sup>

Having developed the actor-musician role, her Shakespeare productions included and continue to include actor-musicians. Shakespeare and the actor-musician define her continuity of practice. The English language and its study has been a key influence. The influences came via the academics, both Knights and Leavis, from which she gained knowledge and confidence, specifically with Shakespeare's language, structure and meaning. However, within this education was the promotion of élitism in the arts. This is something to which Walford is opposed. As well as English, Walford studied Latin, for which she is very grateful.

[I am...] continually on spiritual quests trying to answer things through dreams and subconscious rather than through academic education (although without A-level Latin my brain would be completely disorganised. It is something I cherish having had the experience of to this day).<sup>475</sup>

Walford's reference to spiritual quests combines with her love of Shakespeare. She says of herself that she: '[...] was always interested in magic – especially "natural magic" and am a pantheist by nature [...]'<sup>476</sup> Walford's productions of the Shakespeare plays, written by another 'country kid' with references to

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<sup>474</sup> John Wild, *The Winter's Tale* cast member, London 2009.

<sup>475</sup> Glen Walford email. London, 2009.

<sup>476</sup> Ibid.

nature and natural magic, constantly reinforce her love of the rural and other world.

The inclusion of music into her work sprang from her time with Theatre Vanguard. If she can neither sing nor play an instrument, the 'musical soul' to which Cunneen refers, understands and acknowledges the value that music can bring to an audience's appreciation and understanding. Oliver Sacks in, *Musicophilia* says that:

We humans are a musical species no less than a linguistic one...All of us (with very few exceptions) can perceive music [...] We integrate all of these and 'construct' music in our minds using many different parts of the brain. And to this largely unconscious structural appreciation of music is added an often intense and profound emotional reaction to music.<sup>477</sup>

Walford is keen on theatre education and the following extract from an Everyman flier demonstrates her integration of text and music and, importantly, gives an apt overview of her directorial work.

This course will [...] examine the approach of Glen Walford, the Everyman Artistic Director, to Shakespeare's work, with special reference to her past productions, her creative cutting and her method of working with actors [...] She was forging a reputation for producing Shakespeare in an exciting and highly accessible manner [...] Vital elements of the shows include a strong musical score, composed and directed by Paddy Cunneen, a very bold up - front acting style which is non-naturalistic, and movement which when combined with the set and the lights create a highly visual and atmospheric piece.<sup>478</sup>

Walford is clear about her lack of musicianship but those who have worked with her are clear that she is the creative impetus. Cunneen said that, 'If it did not come directly from Glen it was always the inspiration by Glen's belief in dare.'<sup>479</sup> Furre was also clear on this point.

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<sup>477</sup> Oliver Sacks, *Musicophilia*. (London: Picador 2008).pp. xi -xii

<sup>478</sup> *Shakespeare Alive and Kicking* EVT/PF/000783.

<sup>479</sup> Paddy Cunneen, telephone interview, Glasgow, 2008.

[...] Glen knows her limitations – one of them being a bit of a blind spot where music is concerned - but the idea of teaming up with Paddy was irresistible [sic]. She could trust him completely with the musicality and they were on the same wavelength. Wild was also clear that the work done between Walford and Cunneen was always collaborative.<sup>480 481</sup>

But in the same way that Alexander Fleming with his specific knowledge recognized that the mould in the Petri dish had a significance, so it was that Walford's knowledge saw the greater potential between music and acting, specifically when performed by an individual, an actor-musician.

Her discovery and use of the actor-musician genre influenced many other directors in the United Kingdom. Although a criticism that is often directed at the actor-musician genre is that the main reason for utilising it is purely financial, for Walford whilst not ignoring a potential saving on a large pit orchestra, the creative concept was the governing one. Cunneen said that:

Basically, she always worked from the conceptual point of view rather than financial. If there was a financial one then she would pull the wool over my eyes by making me conscious of the creative concept. I don't believe that it was financial but always for the theatrical impact.<sup>482</sup>

Walford's influence is substantial. She developed the actor-musician genre to make the classics accessible to an audience that thought they were for another class. Most importantly though she wants to entertain and not drive an audience away. 'When Shakespeare rides the crest of a great wave of feeling, he rises to transcendental heights by means of poetry, symbolism, and music – three successive steps of an escape from the limitations of language [...]'<sup>483</sup>

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<sup>480</sup> Furre, Nicky, *Tosca* (1) Cast Member. Nerja, 2009.

<sup>481</sup> John Wild, *The Winter's Tale* cast member, London 2009.

<sup>482</sup> Paddy Cunneen, telephone interview, Glasgow, 2008.

<sup>483</sup> John H Long, *Shakespeare's Use of Music: The Final Comedies*. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1977.)

The increasing popularity of the actor-musician genre both in regional and West End theatre created a demand for more actor-musicians. The *Tosca* production threw down a gage for actor-musicians with greater musicianship and acting skills.

## **Bob Carlton, the Bubble, the Queen's Theatre and Cut to the Chase**

This chapter examines the work of Bob Carlton, artistic director and playwright who consolidated both the position of the actor-musician and created the first bespoke actor-musician musicals. He has also created the first permanent actor-musician company in a regional theatre, which is named Cut to the Chase. The chapter will analyse how and why Carlton developed the work begun at the Bubble by Glen Walford, which led to the success of his first actor-musician shows both as playwright and director. It will discuss the financial, social, political, cultural difficulties facing regional theatres in the nineties. It will show how these provided an opportunity for Carlton to establish a permanent company comprised of actor-musicians, whilst at the same time both reversing and then stabilising the fortunes of a failing regional theatre. His working practices will be examined in order to identify the influences that helped shape him and his approach to theatre. A critical analysis is made of four musical case studies: two written for the actor-musician, one extant musical and the fourth written specifically for the local Hornchurch audience. *Return to the Forbidden Planet*, was a groundbreaking actor-musician musical and as a consequence of this receives a detailed account of the context and the genesis of the show. The basis for this investigation has been provided by extensive research into two unpublished archives, the Bubble Theatre, the Liverpool Everyman. The online archive for the Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch, Essex has also been consulted. Further material, such as set designs and archived recordings have been provided from individuals' personal archives. Detailed material on the development of Carlton's productions has been researched from personal interviews with performers, professional collaborators and musical directors. Bob Carlton also provided a personal interview for this research.

Carlton was born on 23 June 1950 in Coventry, which was a city in the process of being rebuilt, having been devastated by the Luftwaffe during World War II. He did not come from a theatrical background: his father, Reginald Charles, was a postmaster and his mother, Nancy Olwyn, née Darlison, was a shop assistant. There is little information available on Carlton's early life. However, Carlton attended an independent school, King Henry VIII, which is part of the Coventry School Foundation. The school, housed in an impressive red brick

building and with large pieces of art work in the grounds, currently has a strong performing arts department. It is not known if drama was being taught when Carlton attended, but amongst the alumni listed on the school's website<sup>484</sup> are Paul Daniel, who was until 2005 the musical director of the English National Opera; Eric Malpass, the novelist; Rachel Millward, the film-maker and the poet Philip Larkin. Therefore, an assumption might be made that within this school was fostered a strong interest in the arts. Certainly, by the time Carlton left school he had developed an interest in the theatre, becoming, in 1968, a student assistant stage manager (ASM) at the newly built Yvonne Arnaud theatre<sup>485</sup> in Guildford, Surrey. The Guildford Repertory Theatre burnt down in 1963 and was replaced by the Yvonne Arnaud which opened in 1965.

In the 60s and 70s, the Yvonne Arnaud and its policies were in stark contrast to those later adopted by Carlton when he took over the artistic directorship of the then impoverished and failing Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch. Guildford is a wealthy area and Surrey's county town. In 1936 a repertory company was established and the Guildford Repertory Theatre built in 1946. The first artistic director of the Yvonne Arnaud was Laurier Lister. 'From the start, this theatre had a strong West End bias. Many famous actors have appeared there including Michael Redgrave, Ingrid Bergman, Dame Sybil Thorndike, Dirk Bogarde, Helena Bonham Carter, Colin Firth, Felicity Kendal, Paul Eddington, Derek Jacobi and Zoe Wanamaker.'<sup>486</sup> But as will be demonstrated later in this chapter Carlton has, with a few exceptions, eschewed the West End, choosing instead to work in regional theatres.

Carlton's career path to artistic director was not via a stage management route. Leaving his Guildford assistant stage manager position, in 1971 he enrolled at Hull University on the new degree programme. When Hull first started to offer drama in 1963, it was only the universities of Manchester and Bristol, where Walford had studied, that had drama departments. The Hull drama department had small beginnings, with only one member of staff, Donald Roy, although initially, according to the recent publication *Huddled Together*, it [...] received

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<sup>484</sup> <http://www.kinghenrys.co.uk/former-students/past-students/> accessed 16 September 2013.

<sup>485</sup> The theatre was named after the French actress, Yvonne Arnaud who lived in Effingham Common, a village in Guildford parish.

<sup>486</sup> <http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/recreation-heritage-and-culture/archives-and-history/archives-and-history-research-guides/archives-of-20th-century-repertory-theatre>.

positive impetus for the introduction of a dedicated department of drama from several senior academics, professors of English and French, later abetted (less predictably, unless you knew he would soon become president of the Magic Circle), by the newly appointed professor of biochemistry, Dr. Edwin (Eddie) Alfred Dawes.<sup>487</sup> Initially drama was offered only as an ‘ancillary’ subject but in 1969 was offered as a joint degree. *Huddled Together* is a book comprised of a 138 personal accounts of the drama department, written by graduates from the first fifty years. Unfortunately Carlton did not send a submission, although he is mentioned by Reg Farrier as a cast member in one of the films he made, ‘Vag, a 30s romp directed by Steve Hare. (Cast) Bob Carlton, Bobbie Wilcox, Nick Wilmott, Pete Oliver, a red car, plus others.’<sup>488</sup> The performance space at Hull was created from the old gymnasium and named the Theatre Lab. Theatre Lab was a black box which was unusual as performance spaces such as these were rare in the 1970s. By 1971, when Carlton had enrolled, Donald Roy had been joined by two other members of staff, David Edwards and the idiosyncratic Harry Thompson, who had been Bernard Miles’s house manager at the Mermaid. Richard Saunders, in his contribution, recounts what the class of 69 learnt from Harry: ‘We learned that *Three Sisters* is a play about “not going to Moscow”. We learned that Melodrama is “a thing upon thing thing” and that outdoor productions are “whimsicult in the wet”.’<sup>489</sup>

The cohorts benefited from the numerous workshops given by high-profile actor guests, such as Sir Donald Wolfit, Micheál MacLiammóir, Harry H Corbett and the film star Veronica Lake. According to Gil Osborne, who was a student in 1970, there was a substantial amount of varied and practical work that the students learned: ‘And I stage managed and operated sound and worked in the paintshop and did FOH and observed directors and got involved in any and all productions [...] in the little black-box Theatre Lab.’<sup>490</sup>

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<sup>487</sup> Michael J. Walton, ed. *Huddled Together: 50 Years of Hull University Drama Department* (Hull: Barbican Press, 2013). p.7.

<sup>488</sup> Michael J. Walton, ed. *Huddled Together: 50 Years of Hull University Drama Department* (Hull: Barbican Press, 2013).p49.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid. p.24.

<sup>490</sup> Ibid. p.43.

Another graduate, Joan Mills, also at Hull with Carlton, writes about the influences that the course had upon her as a director.

[...] did Hull influence what I was to become? Certainly: the whole possibility of directing opened up for me. The range of other skills I had a chance to explore, in design, making, sound and light. I became a director who loves the whole technical process of theatre and relishes the problem-solving.<sup>491</sup>

Whilst the specific influences that resonated with Carlton are unknown, the reminiscences and detail provided by his fellow students do provide the academic context and the experimental theatrical environment to which he was exposed. The book also makes reference to two other graduates being encouraged by the staff to apply for the Arts Council Trainee Director's Bursary. Whether or not he was encouraged Carlton was successful in his application and became an Arts Council Trainee Director at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry. Carlton cites *The Foursome*<sup>492</sup> (1974) by E A Whitehead as the first play he directed. This was staged in the Belgrade Studio.

The Belgrade, as has already been mentioned in the previous chapter, was the theatre in which Theatre in Education (TIE) was born.

It was in 1964 with the arrival of Gordon Vallins, the newly appointed Assistant to the Director, that events began to unfold. Vallins was a Geography teacher by training and had spent the previous few years working for an organisation called the British Drama League. His experience of both drama and education would not only shape his work at the Belgrade, but determine the founding principles of TiE.<sup>493</sup>

The work that Vallins did would result in the inclusion of a TiE company at the Belgrade. Carlton as a trainee director at the Belgrade would have been very aware of the work and the focus of this company. Importantly, this was Carlton's home city and he would have had knowledge of some if not all of the major issues with which the city had had to deal. Oliver Turner, in his article on

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<sup>491</sup> Michael J. Walton, ed. *Huddled Together: 50 Years of Hull University Drama Department* (Hull: Barbican Press, 2013) p.11.

<sup>492</sup> <http://www.filmreference.com/film/46/Bob-Carlton.html>

<sup>493</sup> [www.belgrade.co.uk/files/downloads/192/TIE+education+pack.pdf](http://www.belgrade.co.uk/files/downloads/192/TIE+education+pack.pdf)

the TiE company, writes that:

The company was always mindful of the fact that its work did not take place in a vacuum, but in a specific city in a specific part of the country. The company would often use local history to provide participants with a deeper connection to the work: *The Siege of Kenilworth*, *The Weavers* and *The Carmakers* being prime examples. *The Carmakers* ran from March to April 1971, and explored the dramatic changes in Coventry's industrial landscape during the twentieth century [...]<sup>494</sup>

In the analysis of Carlton's directorial practice his acknowledgement of the contribution made by performers, combined with his respect for the company will be demonstrated. This important piece of work made by the TiE company would have resonated with Carlton. It is indicative of the influences that he as a Coventry man, would have experienced with the miners, their history and the trade unions.

[...An] example of the company's engagement with politics would be *The Price of Coal* (1975), which responded to the coal miners' strikes of the early 1970s. Miners in Bedworth, which lies five miles to the north of Coventry, were part of this dispute and the issue was hugely divisive; indeed, according to David Pammenter,<sup>495</sup> the sons and daughters of these miners were being spat at in the streets of Coventry. The company felt it was important to tackle this issue head on by highlighting the long and complex history of the mining industry. The company developed a participatory performance that reconstructed 400 years of mining history, giving young people access to an experience and depth of knowledge they would be unlikely to be able to gain from reading newspapers or watching television.<sup>496</sup>

The impact of the 1970s miners' strike in this industrial city with a history of workforce issues would have had an effect on any individual who had grown up in Coventry. In a phone interview with the actor-musician Karen Mann, she said that, 'Carlton was always very union minded.'<sup>497</sup> This will be demonstrated later by the action that Carlton took when he made the decision that it was no longer

<sup>494</sup> [www.belgrade.co.uk/files/downloads/192/TIE+education+pack.pdf](http://www.belgrade.co.uk/files/downloads/192/TIE+education+pack.pdf).

<sup>495</sup> David Pammenter was Head of TIE at the Belgrade Theatre from 1972 to 1977.

<sup>496</sup> [www.belgrade.co.uk/files/downloads/192/TIE+education+pack.pdf](http://www.belgrade.co.uk/files/downloads/192/TIE+education+pack.pdf).

<sup>497</sup> Karen Mann, telephone interview, 5 July 2013.

necessary to employ a pit band for extant musicals and which is demonstrated later in this chapter. This was not a financial decision, although it had financial implications and was a further step in the development of the actor-musician role.

Carlton and Walford had both found inspiration in Shakespeare's work and it was Shakespeare who would again provide the inspiration for the next development of the actor-musician. Walford integrated music into her Shakespeare productions using actor-musicians, whereas Carlton did the reverse, integrating Shakespeare lines into his musicals. Broadway and West End musicals based on Shakespeare's plays had already proved popular with writers, for example Cole Porter's *Kiss Me Kate* (1951), based on *The Taming of the Shrew*, and Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story* (1957), based on *Romeo and Juliet*. But during the 1970s tastes were changing and the musical theatre was moving rapidly into rock'n'roll style scores. *Hair*, an off-Broadway import and which was described as the American tribal rock musical, had opened in London in 1968<sup>498</sup> and *Jesus Christ Superstar*, a rock opera, opened in the West End in 1972.<sup>499</sup>

[...] one of Carlton's earliest theatre experiences was seeing hippy musical *Hair*, a show that broke the mould in much the same way *Forbidden Planet* did. 'I thought it was wonderful,' Carlton says today. 'Just the fact that the actors held microphones was different, so you didn't know if it was a play or a gig, and that was really inspirational for *Forbidden Planet*.'<sup>500</sup>

*Jesus Christ Superstar* was unusual for two reasons. Firstly, because it had a large pit orchestra with a substantial rock band on stage, and secondly because the fashion was now for rock musicals to have small bands.<sup>501</sup> *Superstar* was presented as a semi-staged concert. Radio mics were not used for this production, instead hand-held cable mics were positioned around the set for the

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<sup>498</sup> Gerome Ragni and James Rado; music by Galt MacDermot, *Hair*, Shaftesbury Theatre, London - 27 September, 1968.

<sup>499</sup> Lyrics by Tim Rice and Music by Andrew Lloyd-Webber, Palace Theatre, London, 9 August, 1972.

<sup>500</sup> [www.heraldscotland.com/Neil Cooper, theatre critic / Wednesday 4 February 2015 / Arts & Ents](http://www.heraldscotland.com/Neil-Cooper-theatre-critic/Wednesday-4-February-2015/Arts-Ents)

<sup>501</sup> *Your Own Thing* had an eight-piece band and *Catch My Soul* was played by Gass, a four-piece rock band.

chorus to use with three riser mics<sup>502</sup> down stage for the principals to use. The use of the riser mic meant that the principals had limited movement and would perform as if a solo singer at a concert. It was the first British musical that was completely amplified, requiring a large mixing desk and two operators to achieve this. The sound quality was very good but led to greater expectations with successive musical theatre productions.

The first and least successful of the rock Shakespeare musicals was *Your Own Thing* (1969),<sup>503</sup> based on *Twelfth Night*. This was followed by *Catch My Soul* (1970),<sup>504</sup> based on *Othello* and lastly *Two Gents of Verona* (1973).<sup>505</sup> This production did employ radio mics. However, this was not a very successful exercise as the available transmitters were unreliable and the sound quality not good enough.

These three productions were all aimed at the commercial sector. Whilst the rock musical was in the ascendant, it was the large-scale musicals, with *Blood Brothers* (1983) being a notable exception, which in the 1980s would monopolise London's West End. But Carlton's two subsequent productions: one based on *Macbeth* and the other on *The Tempest*, were created and honed in the community and touring theatre.

[...] it was not an accident that in the 80s it was the musical – the most potentially profitable of all theatrical forms and the ultimate celebrant of individualism – that came to dominate theatre: the musical was Thatcherism in action.<sup>506</sup>

The musical *Cats* opened at the New London Theatre on 11 May 1981. It had a cast of 22 and a large orchestra.<sup>507</sup> According to Michael Billington, this was the musical that:

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<sup>502</sup> Riser mics are equipped with a small motor allowing them to rise up out of the stage floor as required when needed by a vocalist.

<sup>503</sup> Lyrics and music by Danny Apoliar and Hal Hester, book adaptation, Donald Driver. *Your Own Thing*. Comedy Theatre, London, 1968.

<sup>504</sup> Lyrics by Jack Good, Music by Ray Pohlman and Emil Dean Zoghby based on Shakespeare's *Othello*. *Catch My Soul*. Prince of Wales Theatre, London. 1970.

<sup>505</sup> Lyrics by John Guare, music by Galt MacDermot with a book by John Guare and Mel Shapiro, based on Shakespeare's play with the same name. Phoenix Theatre, London. 1973.

<sup>506</sup> Billington, Michael. 2007. *State of the Nation*, British Theatre Since 1945. London: Faber and Faber. p 284.

<sup>507</sup> Instrumentation: Tenor/soprano/flute, trumpet/piccolo/trumpet, trumpet/flugel, flute/baritone/soprano/clarinet, cello, percussion, trombone/euphonium, horns, oboe/cor anglais, keyboards (4), electric/ acoustic guitar, bass guitar/ string bass, four pit voices.

[...] led to the industrialisation of the musical by pioneering the use of individual mikes for each singer instead of group microphones on or above the stage: the result was the banishment of the unaided human voice from virtually all musical shows [...].<sup>508</sup>

The radio mic adapts the human voice to match the power of these instruments as it cannot compete unaided. The use of microphones either 'on or above the stage' [rifle mics] were employed to swell the volume on the chorus numbers. For instance, they were used on *Evita* (1978) for the *Descamisados*,<sup>509</sup> during the opening of Act II with *Don't Cry for Me Argentina*, but the principals all wore radio mics.

*Return to the Forbidden Planet* did not use radio mics in the original Bubble production and this would have been for a number of reasons. The production was produced on a low budget and radio mics were and are very expensive items to buy or hire. It is also unlikely that the Bubble was licenced for their usage. During this period radio mics were mainly used in the West End where production values were higher and so were the budgets. When Carlton directed the production at the Cambridge Theatre (1989),<sup>510</sup> radio mics were used. The absence of microphone leads allowed the actor-musicians more freedom of movement. A similar technology is also available for both acoustic and electric instruments. The benefit to guitarists and bass guitar players is that they have freedom of movement. This is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Whilst Billington is correct in the assumption that radio mics were responsible for the industrialisation of the musical. 'Individual mikes' or more correctly 'radio mics' had been in use for some years but only in a limited capacity. The use of radio mics was addressed as early as 1949 in the Wireless Act. Those people or companies who hired or owned radio mics were only licensed for four frequencies, general use.<sup>511</sup> *Evita!* 21 June 1978, used five radio mics, followed by *Sweeney Todd*, 2 July 1980, which used an illegal twelve. The licence holders wanted the law changed but then the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), were slow to react. Meanwhile the theatre production companies

<sup>508</sup> Billington, Michael. *State of the Nation British Theatre Since 1945*, (London: Faber and Faber. 2007). p. 288.

<sup>509</sup> The shirtless ones.

<sup>510</sup> Sound designer: Bobby Aiken for Bobby Aitken Associates.

<sup>511</sup> General use meant that they could use those four radio mics anywhere in Britain.

continued to flout the law. Possibly because the musical theatre industry was growing both as an export and as a tourist attraction, it was a highly valuable commodity and the DTI turned a blind eye.<sup>512</sup> However, the situation came to a head with the production of *Starlight Express* which used 21 radio mics. On the press night the BBC brought an outside broadcast van and were using their radio mics. Unfortunately, their radio mics used identical frequencies to the show mics. The BBC had a greater legal allocation of frequencies than West End theatres. This caused radio interference during the first night and a potential legal action by the Radio Authority.

During this period, the government were looking for additional radio spectrum as there was 'an explosion in use'.<sup>513</sup> A committee was created to look at requirements ancillary to broadcasting. This committee was chaired by McCoughlan, a civil servant, who had already been told what the outcome was to be, and that it was a 'no' to interested parties such as theatres. The report produced in 1984, is referred to as 'The Broadcaster's Version'. However, it was the creation of Channel 4 that was instrumental in the change to the spectrum review. Channel 4 had limited studio space and the intention was for it to buy in the majority of programmes from independent companies. In order for the independents to function, they required more frequencies. This resulted in a second report which was made in 1986: 'A study of the requirements for a radio frequency plan, for radio services ancillary to the making of programmes, filming, presentations and any other entertainment and speaking purpose.'<sup>514</sup> When this report was made there was much pressure brought to bear by interested parties. Andrew Lloyd-Webber was instrumental in exerting a lot of government pressure.<sup>515</sup> The changes were eventually agreed but initially nothing happened as the DTI did not realise the urgency and thought that they could take as long as two years before the new licences were assigned. This was soon corrected.

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<sup>512</sup> Brian Copsey, secretary of the Association of Service Providers, personal interview, 14 September 1992.

<sup>513</sup> Brian Copsey, secretary of the Association of Service Providers, personal interview, 14 September 1992.

<sup>514</sup> John Wykes, senior engineer for Audio Engineering, interview, 10 June 1992.

<sup>515</sup> Ibid.

The influence of the radio mic on the musical was and is substantial. Carlton would have been aware of these developments and would have been considering the extent to which these would widen the directorial decisions and movement choices for the actor-musician musical. Previously, if artistes used mics on stage they were restricted by the cable which limited how far they could travel on the stage. The radio mic enabled freedom of movement. Also, the positioning of the microphone in the hair provided very close miking. Before the legal limit on radio mics was changed, there was much frustration with the usage because it was not possible to get everyone miked up and static mics were used. This meant that there was a sound quality difference in the mix.

*Return to the Forbidden Planet's* transfer into the West End was well timed. Not only were there individual mics for the performers, pick ups were now being used on electric and bass guitars. This was a substantial change to the aesthetic for the actor-musician. As the guitarists were no longer restricted by trailing leads, this allowed greater freedom with blocking and dispensed with the intricate cable choreography that was sometimes required to avoid performers becoming tangled. In the early days when *Return to the Forbidden Planet* was first produced there was a degree of restriction in movement when playing the electric guitars and bass. Carlton said that they made a feature of this by choreographing a dance routine so that they the cables appeared to be tangled. At the end of the number the performers would unravel themselves and their instruments to the delight of the audience.<sup>516</sup>

More importantly though, guitarists and trailing cables were an aesthetic that belonged to and was identified with rock bands. Although the music used for this production originated with these bands, this particular musical was telling a different story.

The use of electronic pick-ups on instruments now allowed for portage with the electric instruments. Generally with the actor-musician there is certain amount of instrument sharing. This might occur because an instrument is required but that actor-musician does not appear in that scene or s/he is singing and therefore unable to play a wind instrument at the same time. In these

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<sup>516</sup> Bob Carlton interview, Queen's Theatre Hornchurch, 5 May 2006.

circumstances, another actor-musician will play the instrument. The significance of this is that instruments in common with props, have to be placed in an appropriate position for that other performer. Therefore, there is a substantial amount of blocking of instrument positioning and choreography. The freedom that the pick-up gave specifically for electric guitars meant that anyone playing these instruments was not restricted to one area of the stage. But it does require another level of learning for the actor-musician. Patti LuPone describes the process and the challenges when playing Mrs Lovett in the actor-musician production of Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*.

We couldn't have music stands – we were moving around the stage with our instruments most of the time [...] every note [had] to be memorized. As I learned the music, my prop track and blocking cues became easier [...] I would get up from playing the tuba to pick up a bucket of blood, move to stage left, and on a note from Judge Turpin's trumpet, pour blood from one bucket to another. Every piece of music became part of my character: I walked onstage. I hit the orchestra bells. I hit the triangle. I picked up my knitting. I poured blood. All integrated. All of us relied on one another for physical safety as well. Props, instruments, and blood were flying on that stage.<sup>517</sup>

The success that this small actor-musician West End version of *Return to the Forbidden Planet* would eventually receive is remarkable for its timing, which falls at the end of the 1980s, and does not fit into the mould of the then current West End productions. Michael Billington states in his book,<sup>518</sup> that *Cats* (1981) signalled the beginning of the rise of the 'mega-musical'. In 1985 *Les Misérables* opened at the Barbican for an eight-week run. It was around this period that Peter Hall, who was then the artistic director of the National Theatre, was being criticised for the commercial productions that he was undertaking. It is possibly for this reason that Nunn, artistic director of the other major subsidised theatre company,

[...] insisted that [...] *Les Mis* was presented under a joint RSC-Mackintosh banner and [...] a percentage of all profits went in perpetuity to the company [...]<sup>519</sup>

<sup>517</sup> Patti Lupone, *Patti Lupone A Memoir*, Random House 2010. p 272.

<sup>518</sup> Billington, Michael. *State of the Nation British Theatre Since 1945*, (London: Faber and Faber. 2007).

<sup>519</sup> *Ibid.*p.290.

The success of *Les Misérables* was to impact on the theatre in a variety of ways. The first directly affected the RSC:

[...] while the arrangement was of pragmatic benefit to the RSC, It set a dangerous precedent. It gave a commercial producer a large say in the artistic programming and policy of a subsidised national company.<sup>520</sup>

The second levelled a cultural blow.

Increasingly, our national companies were judged less by their obligations to the world repertoire than by the fundamental criterion of commercial theatre: is it a hit or a flop? Something in the culture radically changed in 1985; and changed for the worse.<sup>521</sup>

The third hit at the aesthetic.

And the ultimate paradox is that a show that did so much to replace the traditional book musical with a form of showbiz spectacle was directed by the text-trained Trevor Nunn.<sup>522</sup>

Although there were other musicals that enjoyed substantial runs, for example the revival of *Me and My Girl*,<sup>523/524</sup> it was the mega-musicals that dominated the West End in the 1980s: *Cats*<sup>525</sup> (1981), *Phantom of the Opera*<sup>526</sup> (1986), *Les Misérables*<sup>527</sup> (1985) and *Miss Saigon*<sup>528</sup> (1989). In 1981 *Cats* won Best Musical at the Olivier Awards, as did *Phantom of the Opera* in 1986. *Les Misérables* opened at the Barbican on 8 October 1985, transferring to the Palace on 4 December 1985, but did not win the Olivier having been panned by the critics. Ironically, it is now the longest running musical. Given the popularity of *Les Misérables*, it was anticipated that the next musical created by Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg, *Miss Saigon* (1989), would win the Olivier Award. According to the musical director, Kate Edgar:

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<sup>520</sup> Ibid.p.291.

<sup>521</sup> Ibid.

<sup>522</sup> Ibid. p.289.

<sup>523</sup> *Me and My Girl* music by Noel Gay book and lyrics by Douglas Furber and Arthur Rose.

<sup>524</sup> Adelphi Theatre, February 12 1985 – January 16 1993.

<sup>525</sup> New London Theatre 11 May 1981 – 11 May 2002.

<sup>526</sup> Her Majesty's Theatre 9 October 1986.

<sup>527</sup> Barbican Theatre 8 October 1985.

<sup>528</sup> Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, 20 September 1989.

There was a palpable gasp from Petula Clark when she opened the envelope announcing the winner as *Return to the Forbidden Planet*.<sup>529</sup>

The unexpectedness of this result is echoed by Charles Spencer, who, when writing a review of the 2001 West End revival of *Return to the Forbidden Planet*, says that:

There are few sights more terrifying than Cameron Mackintosh in a filthy temper, and I wouldn't have liked to run into him at the Olivier Awards in 1990. His huge, vastly expensive production of Boublil and Schonberg's *Miss Saigon* was widely regarded as a shoo-in for the best musical award [...] Rarely have apple carts been more dramatically upset.<sup>530</sup>

*Return to the Forbidden Planet* is a small-scale musical that had been developed in the regional sector and was never intended for the West End, having its beginnings in the innovative London touring company, the Bubble Theatre:

The Bubble really is presenting 'popular theatre': it's cheap, classless, informal. We don't have a popular theatre in this country not on any scale. So any venture that pulls people in who wouldn't otherwise set foot inside a theatre can only be good'.<sup>531</sup>

Importantly, *Return to the Forbidden Planet* is an actor-musician musical and, crucially, the first full-length musical written specifically for an actor-musician cast. The West End success of this piece poses the question: why did such a small-scale musical triumph over *Miss Saigon* with its big production values and created by the same writers who wrote the very financially successful *Les Misérables*? Billington, writing on *Miss Saigon*, was of the opinion that it was superior to *Les Misérables*. [...] although it came from the Boublil-Schonberg

<sup>529</sup> Kate Edgar, phone interview, 10 February 2011.

<sup>530</sup> Spencer, Charles. 2001. 'Welcome return to forbidden pleasure'. In *The Daily Telegraph*. London: *Daily Telegraph*. accessed 5 June 2013

<sup>531</sup> <http://www.artsindustry.co.uk/features/bursting-with-life>. p.210.

team [...] it was a decisive cut above its predecessor.<sup>532</sup> He goes on to explain why:

[...] it had a mythic plot deriving from Puccini's *Madam Butterfly*. Not only that: it actually improved on the Puccini prototype [...] it is less in a spirit of Pinkertonian imperialism than one of post-war guilt. The point it made was that the Americans never remotely understood the people they were supposedly protecting in Vietnam.<sup>533</sup>

Whether or not Billington's appraisal is correct is not for discussion here. Certainly *Miss Saigon* was a commercial and financial success, running for ten years at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, whilst *Return to the Forbidden Planet* ran for only three years at the Cambridge Theatre. The debate is what were the criteria by which *Miss Saigon* was discounted as best new musical in favour of the smaller production? What were the factors that influenced this decision?

Scott Miller, in an extract from a forthcoming book, writing on *Return to the Forbidden Planet*, says that:

The musical works because the surprisingly artful fake Shakespearean dialogue (the *Fakespeare*) that Bob Carlton created and the rock lyrics he chose are both forms of poetry that can be very crude (even obscene) and populist but they can also be very poetic and emotional and subtle, and both forms were consciously designed to appeal to the masses.<sup>534</sup>

He also makes an interesting point, comparing the musical convention of breaking into song with Shakespeare's language.

Likewise the inherent artificiality of Shakespeare's language nicely matches the inherent artificiality of the act of breaking into song in a musical; both forms are exaggerated and idealized kinds of storytelling.

The reviewer for *What's On* provides this appraisal:

<sup>532</sup> Billington, Michael. 2007. *State of the Nation: British Theatre Since 1945*. London: Faber and Faber.p.294.

<sup>533</sup> Ibid.

<sup>534</sup> Scott Miller forthcoming book untitled.

A masterpiece [...] Take one plot (Shakespeare's *The Tempest*), one B movie (*Forbidden Planet*) and for added flavor (sic) plunder the entire Shakespearean cannon for dialogue (the more pungent the plagiarism, the more piquant the final effect) [...] Your favorite blasts from the past [...] ring out of the story with such unadulterated audacity that the cue lines themselves beg for mercy.<sup>535</sup>

*The Telegraph's* Charles Spencer continues to explain why, in his opinion, it won the award:

Yet I'm not sure that those brave Olivier judges didn't get it right. *Miss Saigon* may have conquered the world but it is a show one admires rather than loves. *Forbidden Planet*, in contrast, is wittily inventive and endearingly self-deprecating. Twelve years ago, when doomy, po-faced blockbusters dominated the stage, it was a refreshing reminder that musicals used to be all about fun, and didn't necessarily leave audiences wanting to slash their wrists.<sup>536</sup>

This does however beg the question as to whether or not there is an underlying implication either musicals should not attempt to address serious themes or that a musical theatre audience does not have the educational level to appreciate an intellectual approach. More importantly, does this expose the British resistance to the linkage between acting and music as was outlined in the first chapter?

Lyn Gardner though, when discussing a subsequent revival, does prick the reverential Bard bubble:

The script is made up of a mixture of quotations and cod Shakespeare. I like the comment when Prospero has taken the Captain Oates option after admitting to playing mind games: Beware the ids of March [...] Last time this was playing in the West End, about ten years ago, I took a couple of American Shakespeare scholars to see it. They were not too grand to love every minute, and you shouldn't be either.<sup>537</sup>

<sup>535</sup> <http://www.samuelfrench.com/p/1686/return-to-the-forbidden-planet> reviews.

<sup>536</sup> Spencer, Charles, Welcome return to forbidden pleasure, *The Daily Telegraph* 17 December 2001.

<sup>537</sup> Gardner, Lyn. Review: Theatre: The B-movie and the Bard: *Return to the Forbidden Planet*: Savoy, London. *The Guardian*. London: Guardian News and Media Limited. 2001.

Although this is an important point regarding the actor-musician, what does have more relevance to the success of *Return to the Forbidden Planet*, is Miller's comment on popular culture.

Shakespeare was writing for mainstream audiences as much as Brian Wilson<sup>538</sup> or the great musical comedy writers were, and linking these forms was Carlton's way of giving us an unexpected glimpse into what Shakespeare's work was to his time. Shakespeare never meant his plays to be only for the educated and cultured; they were for everybody, exactly like rock'n'roll and musical comedy.<sup>539</sup>

Miller then continues, expanding on the popular culture link between Shakespeare, rock'n'roll music and subtext:

And that 'under-meaning' in Shakespeare is similarly found in early rock'n'roll, an art form almost entirely about sex, but unable in the 1950s and early 1960s to say so outright. *The Shoop Shoop Song*<sup>540541</sup> is about the difference between idealized romantic love and physical, carnal love; that it talks around that subject rather than addressing it head-on is an artifact of a more repressed time. But that also marries it beautifully to *The Tempest*, a story that works almost entirely on a subtextual, psychological level.<sup>542</sup>

The Olivier Award had now established the actor-musician as performer and as the creation of a new form of musical. What had been the inspiration for *Return to the Forbidden Planet*? The actor-musician role had been germinating prior to Carlton taking over as artistic director of the Bubble. What were the circumstances and developmental process that Carlton used which would result in the actor-musician becoming a 'fully fledged' performer?

In 1979 Carlton joined the Bubble company whilst Glen Walford was artistic director, taking over from her when she left in 1980. Carlton, in common with or perhaps learned from Walford, realised the importance of using music in plays, and especially for the children's shows as it made the work more accessible to

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<sup>538</sup> Brian Wilson, lead vocalist and chief songwriter for the Beach Boys.

<sup>539</sup> Scott Miller. *Inside Return to the Forbidden Planet*. 2008.

<sup>540</sup> Rudy Clark, *It's in His Kiss (The Shoop Shoop Song)* recorded in 1964 by Betty Everett.

<sup>541</sup> This was not included in the original British versions.

<sup>542</sup> Scott Miller. *Inside Return to the Forbidden Planet*. 2008.

them. Karen Mann, who had just joined the company, performed in both the adult and children shows. Another element that also made the work accessible was the use of the Bubble tent. According to Mann it felt very much like the circus coming to town, a view also held by Walford and discussed in the previous chapter. Mann made the point that when they toured with a Shakespeare production, it was not necessary to be historically correct and to be playing a lute; a rock guitar fitted in perfectly.<sup>543</sup> The Bubble tent was popular theatre, it was 'the good night out'.<sup>544</sup>

In 1980 Carlton directed a play with musical, *They Shoot Horses, Don't They*, which would lead him into making a decision that would have significant union implications. The production had a band that was comprised of five professional musicians, and the musical director was Paul Abrahams, who was the musical director and composer for the Bubble from 1979 to 1981. Abrahams on his web page says that: 'I composed the music for *They Shoot, Horses Don't They* with a fresh faced Gary Oldman<sup>545</sup> playing the lead. I still have a tape of him singing one of my songs.'<sup>546</sup> The play, adapted from a novel of the same name, is set in America during the 1930s depression and takes place in a dance hall where a dance marathon is being held. Although this is not a musical, there is a lot of live music used which is comprised of hits from the period and includes such numbers as: '*The Best Things in Life Are Free*' by Buddy G. De Sylva, Lew Brown and '*Brother, Can You Spare A Dime?*' by Jay Gorney and E. Y. Harburg.<sup>547</sup> The professional musicians were required for much of the rehearsal period and, according to Mann, 'they became bored with playing the same music over and over and started putting in depts.'<sup>548</sup> This is a practice that is permitted by the Musicians' Union and it is standard practice, particularly in the West End.<sup>549</sup> Carlton, however, was completely incensed by these changes.

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<sup>543</sup> Karen Mann, telephone interview, 5 July 2013.

<sup>544</sup> Ibid.

<sup>545</sup> Gary Oldman, film actor known for his role as Sid Vicious in *Sid and Nancy*, directed by Alex Ross.

<sup>546</sup> <http://www.paulabrahams.com/aboutme.htm> 2 August 2013

<sup>547</sup> This song, made popular by Bing Crosby, is regarded as the anthem of the depression.

<sup>548</sup> Although this word is a contraction of deputy, dep is the term always used in the theatre along with the present participle – depping.

<sup>549</sup> Exceptions may be made to the depping rule if the musical director is of the opinion that a particular player is vital and that a dep would be too disruptive and the player will have an alteration made to the contract. For *Chess* (1986) Prince Edward Theatre this variation was made to the drummer. They are permitted to have a dep in to cover a holiday period but only

According to Mann<sup>550</sup> he said that, 'Actors cannot put in deps so why should musicians?'<sup>551</sup> This was a crucial point in the actor-musician history because he then made the decision that from then on, he would only employ actors who could also play instruments. However, Mann said that Carlton did not want to be responsible for putting professional musicians out of a job. Therefore, in 1981 he paid for every actor-musician member to become members of the Musicians' Union. This is not an action that any subsequent actor-musician directors took.<sup>552</sup> The same year he produced *Happy End*,<sup>553</sup> which he did with Kate Edgar, who took the role of the General and who played an accordion. There was a professional core band but they were supported by actor-musicians.<sup>554</sup>

Carlton also decided that he would continue with the tradition that Walford had started. For his first year he continued to work with the actor-musician. A recurring item in the Bubble programming that Walford had introduced were the band shows: *The Pub Show* (1974); *The Cabaret Pub Show* (1977) and *The Bubble Band Show* (1978), which was devised by Ian Milne and which Carlton would build on. In his interview he said that: 'After the season was up and running the actors and the band would get together some songs which was called *The Bubble Band Show* (1978). Then the audience, having seen the main show, would come in for the late night *Bubble Band Show*, grab a few beers and the cast would play and sing the songs.'<sup>555</sup> According to the actress Tina Jones, 'The music was eclectic. We did loads of Van Morrison numbers and the Shangri-Las. Some rock'n'roll. Ian Milne was brilliant and we did lots of three-part harmonies.'<sup>556</sup> Carlton said that Walford had then started to dramatise these songs and that he remembered seeing a wonderful version of the song *Old Shep*.<sup>557</sup>

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after some rehearsal. On one occasion when this musician was delayed, the performance was cancelled.

<sup>550</sup> Karen Mann, telephone interview, 5 July 2013.

<sup>551</sup> Ibid.

<sup>552</sup> Actor-musicians are now recognised by *Equity*.

<sup>553</sup> Music by Kurt Weill, lyrics by Bertolt Brecht and book by Elisabeth Hauptmann.

<sup>554</sup> Karen Mann, telephone interview, 5 July 2013.

<sup>555</sup> Bob Carlton, Queen's Theatre Hornchurch, interview 5 May 2006.

<sup>556</sup> Tina Jones, phone call, 16 September 2013.

<sup>557</sup> *Old Shep* (1933) written and performed by Red Foley. It was about his childhood dog, Hoover, an Alsatian who was poisoned by a neighbour. Elvis Presley also recorded a version.

The actor Chris Errington came on dressed as a cowboy and another actor came on dressed as a dog, who was Old Shep. And the dog refused to die and it was hysterically funny. So they had these two minute psycho dramas that they devised and they were great evenings.<sup>558</sup>

Carlton was inspired by these short musical sketches and continued with these in his first year at the Bubble.

In his second year as artistic director, Carlton started to build on the work that Walford had begun with *The Bubble Band Show* and which would lead to the creation of the first musical written specifically for actor-musicians. He decided that it would be a good idea to try to link the short sketches together with a story and decided that he wanted to write a half-hour musical. It was during this period that Kate Edgar mentioned to Carlton a play that her brother, the playwright David Edgar, had written, entitled *Dick Deterred* (1974).<sup>559</sup> Edgar had written *Dick Deterred* as a parody of *Richard III* and which was aimed at the American president, Richard Nixon.

*Dick Deterred* was first produced in February 1974, in a slightly shortened version [...] at the Bush Theatre, and later moved to the Terrace Theatre, in London.<sup>560</sup>

David Edgar had written the play, which centres on the Watergate scandal, in iambic pentameter:

Prince: Fear not, dear gentle Edmund, all of this  
Is but imagining; as when you thought  
That secret sabotage had ta'en a hand  
To drop you from the Democratic race.<sup>561</sup>

Kate Edgar had also added music to the play and for which David Edgar had written the lyrics. Edgar suggested that Carlton also write something in iambic pentameter. He thought that this was a good idea and both of them went to the pub to discuss it. This inspired Carlton, who had always loved Shakespeare, his

<sup>558</sup> Bob Carlton, Queen's Theatre Hornchurch, interview 5 May 2006.

<sup>559</sup> Edgar, David. *Dick Deterred*. (London and New York: Monthly Review Press. 1974.) p.9.

<sup>560</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>561</sup> *Ibid.* Act 1 Scene V. p.58.

favourite being *Macbeth*, which he thought had a good story. He decided to base his production on this play, which he would write in verse and use 1960s rock songs. According to Edgar, when they walked into the pub there was ‘a cheesy singer’ and the number he was performing was *From a Jack to a King*.<sup>562</sup> It was at this point that they both realised that the idea would work. Edgar and Carlton spent many hours going through pop and rock anthologies to find suitable songs. They started with *From a Jack to a King* followed by *Leader of the Pack*.<sup>563</sup> Realising that this held potential as well as continuity with a previous Bubble musical entertainment, Carlton named the new production *The Hubble Bubble Band Show* (1982) and it was performed as a fifty-minute late night cabaret. Edgar says that: ‘It was very sexy and very dark.’<sup>564</sup> This title would eventually be changed when the production went to the Everyman, possibly because the reference to ‘bubble’ would not have the same resonance for Liverpool as it did in London.

The *Hubble Bubble Band Show* however, rends the Bard asunder to prove he wrote this archetypal rock’n’roll saga which so satisfactorily displays the remarkable musical talents of the company. We are introduced to such lesser known Shakespearean showbiz characters as Eric Glamis, Thane Cawdor, Duke Box, and Tempestua Orifice to name but a few. ‘If music be the food of love [...] rock on!’ Rock’n’roll classics abound, from Presley to the Beatles.<sup>565</sup>

The original Bubble Theatre script<sup>566</sup> is comprised of ‘units’ that give a précis of the ‘scene’, the characters involved and the song, which concludes each ‘unit’:

#### Unit Five

Queenie says she only goes for superstars.

Eric says Duke Box says he has superstar potential.

Queenie ask him to prove it.

Number Five – ‘*So you want to be a rock’n’roll star*’ (The Byrds)<sup>567 568</sup>

<sup>562</sup> Music and lyrics by Ned Miller, *Jack to a King* (1957)

<sup>563</sup> Music and lyrics by George ‘Shadow’ Morton, Jeff Barry, Ellie Greenwich, *Leader of the Pack*, recorded by the Shangri-Las 1964.

<sup>564</sup> Kate Edgar, phone interview, 10 February 2011.

<sup>565</sup> Bubble Press Release: New Night-Time Magical Ritual in Dozens of London Parks.

<sup>566</sup> The original *Hubble Bubble* script.

<sup>567</sup> Original *Hubble Bubble Band Show* script page unnumbered.

<sup>568</sup> Music and lyrics by Jim McGuinn, Chris Hillman, The Byrds. *So You Wanna Be A Rock’n’Roll Star*, first appeared on their album, *Younger Than Yesterday*, Columbia Records released February 1967.

This script also indicates the simplicity of the original production. The *Macbeth* storyline was pared down considerably and uses linking dialogue. The linking sections then segue into the next musical number. This is a construction in which Carlton is skilled and is suggestive of pantomime style.

Duke Box: And though our hearts are sad 'cos Terrys [sic] gone  
gone  
We'll do the show in best tradition  
I've got a new talent for you to see  
My very latest star discovery.

(Eric comes forward with Queenie and sings number 8 'From a Jack to a King.')

Eric: From a jack to a king,  
From loneliness to a wedding ring  
I played an ace and I won a Queen,  
You made me queen of your heart.<sup>569</sup>

The script is a parody of Shakespeare's style and work and is full of references to contemporary icons and events:

Duke Box: So to this task I must bend my thoughts  
And like the worthy Epstein<sup>570</sup> find a man  
To ply his drum sticks<sup>571</sup> on a Premier kit.<sup>572</sup>

The production was successful and well received but Carlton as artistic director and the Bubble continued to face financial difficulties.

[...] Carlton faced the perennial frustration of having to disband the company 'just as it starts working at optimum pitch'. At the end of the 1981 season the company hoped to keep itself together over the winter by putting itself on the open market, but there was no money for it. At least the 1982 season rated as one of the Bubble's most successful. *The Hubble Bubble Band Show*, 'a tale of sex and drugs and rock'n'roll', according to the posters, was a loose

<sup>569</sup> Henry Ned Miller, *From a Jack to a King*, Fabor Records 1962 re-release.

<sup>570</sup> Brian Epstein, *The Beatles* manager.

<sup>571</sup> A reference to the sacking of the original drummer, Pete Best and replacing him with Richard Starkey (Ringo Starr).

<sup>572</sup> Premier Percussion Limited – UK drum makers.

adaptation of *Macbeth* and was a smash hit. The tent was besieged 'by mighty audiences beating the grass to its door', according to Rowlands. The *Times Educational Supplement* said that 'The Bubble Theatre must be one of the best reasons for staying in London during the summer.'<sup>573</sup>

The next major step in the creation of the actor-musician genre was prompted by a financial decision made by the Bubble board. *The Hubble Bubble Band Show* had been very well received and, according to Carlton, the Bubble board said why didn't they do a full-length play like that?<sup>574</sup> In a recent interview Carlton was asked how he had come up with the idea for *Return to the Forbidden Planet*. He replied that:

I have [...] always loved B-movies. Sci-fi was a huge part of my generation, as was listening to the music of the 1950s and '60s. With *Planet*, I just put together three of the things I really liked – sci-fi B-movies, rock'n'roll and Shakespeare – and it worked.<sup>575</sup>

Carlton in common with Walford gained inspiration from film. However, Walford's came from international art-house, whereas Carlton's was from Western popular cinema. He discusses the film that gave him the idea for the musical:

I remembered seeing the 1956 science-fiction film *Forbidden Planet*<sup>576</sup> as a youngster and that it had nicked the story of *The Tempest*, so I started to write a space fiction show also based on *The Tempest* called *Return to the Forbidden Planet*. Then I realised Shakespeare said it better than me, so I nicked lots of stuff from *The Complete Works*! It was a big hit.<sup>577</sup>

The film *Forbidden Planet* (1956), directed by Fred McLeod Wilcox, started life as a screen story entitled *Fatal Planet*, written by Irving Block and Allen Adler in

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<sup>573</sup> Sandy Craig, former Bubble chair, <http://www.artsindustry.co.uk/features/bursting-with-life/> 2010.

<sup>574</sup> Bob Carlton Interview Queen's Theatre Hornchurch 5 May 2006.

<sup>575</sup> <http://www.queen's-theatre.co.uk/news/37/bob-carlton-chats-about-writing-return-to-the-forbidden-planet> 25.08.2012.

<sup>576</sup> Fred McLeod Wilcox, *Forbidden Planet*. USA: MGM.1956.

<sup>577</sup> <http://www.queen's-theatre.co.uk/news/37/bob-carlton-chats-about-writing-return-to-the-forbidden-planet> 25.08.2012.

1952.<sup>578</sup> When Cyril Hume wrote the screenplay the title was changed to *Forbidden Planet*, as Metro Goldwyn Mayer thought this to be more commercial. *Forbidden Planet* is regarded as an influential sci-fi classic. It was nominated for an Oscar for its special effects and its score of electronic music, composed by Louis and Bebe Barron, and was the first of its kind. The film concerns a twenty-third century space ship, the United Planets Cruiser C57-D which travels to the planet Altair IV, in search of a previous ship that had disappeared three centuries earlier. There are three inhabitants on the planet Altair IV: Dr Morbius (Prospero), Altaira (Miranda), his daughter and Robbie the Robot (Ariel). The United Planets Cruiser C57-D crew was comprised of six featured cast and a large company of extras.

The film does have a monster or 'Caliban' and this is of interest because it uses Freudian theory<sup>579</sup> and the monster is the Monster of the Id.

Morbius: Id. An obsolete term once used to explain the elementary basis of the subconscious mind.

Commander: Monsters from the subconscious. The thing out there, it's you!

Altair: Kill it Robbie!

Commander: It's no use. He knows it is your other self.<sup>580</sup>

The screenwriters are actually incorrect in their terminology and also confuse Freudian and Jungian theories. The monsters are not from the subconscious but the unconscious mind. For Jung the unconscious contained *all* aspects of human nature, 'light and dark beautiful and ugly, good and evil, profound and silly.'<sup>581</sup>

Whilst Carlton follows much of the film's original storyline, he changes the names back to Shakespeare's characters and introduces a new one, Gloria, Doctor Prospero's wife. He explains that:

The inspiration for this came many years ago, when the

<sup>578</sup> [Http://www.answers.com/topic/allen-adler-actor-science-fiction-horror](http://www.answers.com/topic/allen-adler-actor-science-fiction-horror).

<sup>579</sup> Psyche composed of tensions between opposing attitudes of the id, ego and super ego.

<sup>580</sup> Fred McLeod Wilcox, *Forbidden Planet*. USA: MGM.1956.

<sup>581</sup> Ruth Berry, *Jung A Beginner's Guide*. (Abingdon: Hodder and Stoughton 2000.) p.30.

Bubble Theatre were playing their childrens shows to the crèche at the Greenham Common Womens Peace Camp, which was protesting against nuclear weapons. It made me think about the fact that nuclear energy was originally invented by men for a good cause, but which has been used for bad reasons<sup>582</sup> – and it was women who were trying to stop this.<sup>583</sup>

Carlton does keep the Monster of the Id but he has a different take:

In *Planet*, the X Factor would be nuclear fission and the Monster of the Id would be the atomic bomb – it shows how Prospero, like everyone, can be perverted by their evil side. As brilliant as his scientific abilities were, they opened up a terrible can of worms in the end. Gloria sees this and has to find a solution.<sup>584</sup>

When talking about the actual production and specifically the Monster of the Id Carlton is very clear about the production values. When asked whether or not any changes had been made to the recent production he said that there were:

A few but not many. The original Monster of the Id was just a few bin bags stuck together! To be honest, we've actually had to make a stand against changing it too much – purely because the whole point of *Return to the Forbidden Planet* is that it is essentially a 50s B-movie!<sup>585</sup>

When referring to the Cambridge Theatre version he said that:

Even in the West End production, we had a huge shuttlecraft cut-out with a sparkler stuck up the back. We could have afforded to have hi-tech ray guns made but we chose to use hairdryers instead – we've really had to fight to keep the wonderful tackiness!<sup>586</sup>

Carlton did not create a completely new storyline, but used much of the film's plotline. Edgar and Carlton, again using an anthology of existing pop songs,

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<sup>582</sup> This is not entirely accurate. Nuclear physics developed from work originated in Germany in 1895 by Roetgen working on the cathode ray. This was developed further by Marie and Pierre Curie who discovered an energy that they named radio-activity. This eventually led to the splitting of the atom. In 1939 Einstein sent a letter to Roosevelt warning him about the dangers of nuclear weapons.

<sup>583</sup> <http://www.Queen's-theatre.co.uk/news/37/bob-carlton-chats-about-writing-return-to-the-forbidden-planet> 25.08.2012.

<sup>584</sup> <http://www.Queen's-theatre.co.uk/news/37/bob-carlton-chats-about-writing-return-to-the-forbidden-planet> 25.08.2012.

<sup>585</sup> Ibid.

<sup>586</sup> Ibid.

cherry picked rock'n'roll songs which they felt fitted the relevant characters and storyline, although it was Carlton who was responsible for writing the script. Again he wrote it in verse, using iambic pentameter and for which he unashamedly, 'Plundered the complete works of Shakespeare.'<sup>587</sup> Shakespeare used the crude form of iambic pentameter rarely and not in *The Tempest*. However this possibly suited Carlton's purpose in attracting his audience with a style not too dissimilar from pantomime. Edgar is very clear that the success of *Return to the Forbidden Planet* can be attributed to two things. The first is that, 'It was Bob's genius, and you have to give him the credit for this, that he went away and wrote it.' Her second point was, 'that it came out of nothing, it was the combination of all the ideas, the brainstorming and a fantastic company.'<sup>588</sup>

Carlton, when asked where his idea for the production had come from, said that the idea came because he was working for the Bubble company and that:

It was not developed in isolation, although I wrote the piece in isolation in my bedroom. I wrote the story and then [...] worked with the actors. Went away and wrote act I, we rehearsed act I and changed things in rehearsal, and then I wrote act II. It was put together like that.<sup>589</sup>

Matt Devitt, who originated the part of Cookie, had trained in the performing arts at Middlesex Polytechnic. But he had also played in a rock band where he had perfected his guitar playing. After graduating, he worked for a while at the Ministry of Defence. It was whilst working there that he saw an advertisement in *The Stage* (1980)<sup>590</sup> for an actor-musician which he believes to be the first such advertisement. He applied for an interview but his application was 'ignored'. Angered by this he wrote a strong letter to Bob Carlton and was granted an interview. Carlton had himself been incensed by Devitt's letter and for days prior to the interview had been practising rolling up the letter which he planned to do to Devitt's face. However, he was so impressed by Devitt's acting and musicianship that he did not carry this through.<sup>591</sup>

<sup>587</sup> Bob Carlton interview, Queen's Theatre Hornchurch, May 5 2006.

<sup>588</sup> Kate Edgar phone interview, 10 February 2011.

<sup>589</sup> Bob Carlton interview, Queen's Theatre Hornchurch, 5 May 2006.

<sup>590</sup> The Bubble Theatre Company, *The Stage*, 3 January 1980. p.12.

<sup>591</sup> Matt Devitt interview, Queen's Theatre Hornchurch, 21 September 2012. Carlton told him after the interview about the letter rolling and he does tell this story against himself.

Devitt's musicianship combined with his acting skills produced a flamboyant guitar solo that echoed those of some of the rock guitarists of the 1960s.<sup>592</sup> In an interview with Devitt though, he was quite clear that, whilst acknowledging that he is 'an actor-musician', he considers that his primary skill is as an actor and that though he possesses a good level of musical skill on the guitar he is not a professional musician. 'My guitar playing is not good enough.'<sup>593</sup> There is an irony here that his ability on the guitar was the skill that gave him his first theatre job and is the skill that he appreciates the least. He explains that his guitar solo in *Return to the Forbidden Planet*, was a 'performance'. It was something that was devised and rehearsed specifically for the production, implying that he could not produce a guitar solo on demand. Further, there is a frustration for him in the perceived dominance of his musicianship over his acting. He cites a recent production of the *Merchant of Venice*<sup>594</sup> in which he played Shylock. At the end of one long speech, it was rounded off by him playing four bars of music on the guitar. He was subsequently praised for his performance only to discover, that despite the size of Shylock's role, he was being fêted only for his musical skills and that his acting skills went unmentioned.<sup>595</sup> Bob Carlton on the Queen's Theatre web page reinforces this view that many people are unable to detect the skill and craft of the actor but are clear on the skills of the musician.

You can stand up as an actor and recite the greatest speech from *Hamlet*, and still some audiences may say: 'Anyone can do that.' But when you add that to being able to play the electric guitar, everyone loves it! It really wins people over.<sup>596</sup>

This is a frustration felt by many actors, reinforced after the 1990 Employment Act and when the unions are no longer closed shops. The use of untrained actors and celebrities in productions undermines the skill and craft of the actor. Also, because the skill is intangible, unlike ballet or musicianship, it is difficult for

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<sup>592</sup> This guitar solo was so popular that it is included in the score. Subsequent actor-musicians who play the part of Cookie also include this solo.

<sup>593</sup> Matt Devitt interview, Queen's Theatre Hornchurch, 21 September 2012

<sup>594</sup> *The Merchant of Venice*, Queen's Theatre Hornchurch, directed by Glen Walford 2012.

<sup>595</sup> Matt Devitt interview, Queen's Theatre Hornchurch, 21 September 2012

<sup>596</sup> <http://www.Queen's-theatre.co.uk/news/37/bob-carlton-chats-about-writing-return-to-the-forbidden-planet>.

an audience to evaluate the level of mastery. On the other hand, music, as already discussed in the opening chapter, has had a very different history which might account for it being so highly regarded.

From about 1600 onwards, musical specialisation increasingly removed musicians and ever wider travel. As a result, the professional-amateur division became harder and harder to cross, so that much musical production – music making among non-professional people – was cut off from professional musicianship. Amateurs eventually became, with few exceptions, people who bought already-written scores from a 'music-shop' and took them home to play or sing from. Amateur composition dwindled, and more and more people became listeners only, with no knowledge of music-making, except for singing in the bath.<sup>597</sup>

Nicky Furre, as already mentioned in the Glen Walford chapter, was opera trained. In *Return to the Forbidden Planet*, she was cast as Gloria, Prospero's wife. Edgar says of Furre that she has an extraordinary voice with a very high range and is able to sing both opera and rock.<sup>598</sup> One of the numbers used in the show is the Beach Boys's *Good Vibrations*, which was written by Brian Wilson. Wilson is renowned for the experimental work that he did in the studio. *Good Vibrations* had taken him months to record and used a variety of instruments not normally associated with pop music. One such instrument was the electro-theremin, invented by the trombone player Paul Tanner.<sup>599</sup> The electro-theremin is a form of oscillator that can produce electronic notes and the pitch and or key can be changed by the musician. Furre was able to replicate these electronic sounds vocally. According to Edgar, Wilson came to see *Forbidden Planet* and was amazed to hear *Good Vibrations* being used. He said that the Beach Boys had never attempted this live because they thought that it could only be reproduced in the studio. From then on it was included in their concerts.<sup>600</sup>

Nigel Nevinson was the original actor who played Ariel in the Bubble production

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<sup>597</sup> Dick Bradley, *Understanding Rock 'n' Roll, Popular Music in Britain 1955 - 1964*. (Buckingham UK and Bristol USA: Open University Press 1992). p.83.

<sup>598</sup> Kate Edgar phone interview, 10 February 2011

<sup>599</sup> Paul O.W. Tanner 15 October 1917 – 5 February 2013, trombone player with The Glenn Miller orchestra

<sup>106</sup> Kate Edgar phone interview, 10 February 2011.

but when he left, Kraig Thornber took over the role. Thornber was a multi-skilled performer. As well as being an actor-musician, he was also a trained dancer and roller skater. It was decided that Ariel would wear roller skates. Edgar said that Thornber, being a dancer, was very flexible and able to contort himself into various positions whilst skating.<sup>601</sup> It added another dimension to both the role and the musical and subsequently all performers playing this role are required to do so on roller skates. In typical repertory style, the company rehearsed this production during the day and performed another show during the evening. It was the fusion of all these skills and ideas that made *Forbidden Planet* a success. In the published text of *Forbidden Planet*, Carlton acknowledges the input from the company:

Although my name appears on the cover of this book, my debt to the Bubble Theatre Company is inestimable. Over the years the work method of the company and their commitment to producing a truly popular theatre have led to a contribution from actors and staff that I have never experienced before. This contribution ranged from storyboarding, to suggesting suitable quotes, to pillage, to changing arrangements for people who couldn't quite master a particular bass riff in the limited amount of rehearsal time available, but above all to their generosity, when, for one reason or another, we were just having a bad day. I cannot now remember who contributed what, but it was a great way to work.<sup>602</sup>

As cited earlier by Edgar the creator of this musical was Carlton, although he does credit the company with quite a substantial input. However, whilst the dedication is laudable it does not state whether or not they were in receipt of any financial remuneration.

Carlton is aware that a major aspect of actor-musician musicals is the importance of a particular sense of the ensemble. This is just one of the reasons why he eventually created a repertory company.

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<sup>601</sup> Ibid.

<sup>602</sup> Bob Carlton, *Return to the Forbidden Planet*. (London and New York: Methuen London Ltd. 1985). p.6.

'There are many rewards gained from running an ensemble such as Cut to the Chase [...]' explains Bob. 'One big advantage is that rehearsals and preparations for productions run much more smoothly because, having worked together before, company members are comfortable with each other and know one another's way of working.'<sup>603</sup>

Unlike other musical theatre companies, the fact that the performers are also the instrumentalists means that they stay connected with the piece in a way that neither an acting or musical company does. They are ever-conscious of the rhythm and of the beat, which they must not drop. This is the actor-musicians perspective of the performance and it is comparable to the *collective engagement*<sup>604</sup> that an audience experiences. The actor-musician and the audience have a greater connection with the performance through the communal meanings that both 'sides' acknowledge.

*Forbidden Planet* was written as an ensemble piece and not a star vehicle. Kate Edgar said that they did audition 'fading rock stars' for subsequent productions and recasts, but did not cast them as they would have upset the overall balance. In 1991, when *Forbidden Planet* was taken to America and opened off-Broadway at the Variety Arts Theatre, New York,<sup>605</sup> they put a leading name into the production. But it did not work because this was someone known to the audience and it upset the balance of the show.<sup>606</sup>

In 1983 the Bubble toured *Return to the Forbidden Planet* with a brand new tent and auxiliary tents to accommodate dressing rooms and a bar. The audience for the company had grown and this tent gave an increased audience capacity from 225 to 350 which was indicative of the growing popularity of the company and importantly of the actor-musician. As already described in the previous chapter, the Bubble company originally toured Greater London in a specially designed tent. There was much wear and tear on the Bubble tents which had been specially designed for the company and were expensive items. Since the

<sup>603</sup> <http://www.queens-theatre.co.uk/archive/cuttothechase/10yearinterview.htm> accessed 20 October 2013.

<sup>604</sup> Radbourne, Jennifer, Hilary Glow, and Katya Johanson. *The Audience Experience. A Critical Analysis of Audiences in the Performing Arts*. United Kingdom: Intellect Books, 2013.

<sup>605</sup> *Return to the Forbidden Planet* opened at the Variety Arts Theatre on 29 September 1991 and closed 26 April 1992.

<sup>606</sup> Kate Edgar phone interview, 10 February 2011.

Bubble's inauguration, three tents had been commissioned. During this season a decision was taken to film *Return to the Forbidden Planet*. At the same time and possibly because it was perceived to be thriving, there was an announcement by the Greater London Arts Authority (GLAA) that they would be axing the Bubble's grant:

In 1983 the company produced Shakespeare's forgotten rock'n'roll masterpiece, turning *The Tempest* into *Return to the Forbidden Planet*, another popular success, but it was a step too far for the GLAA, which announced that it would be withdrawing its grant for the forthcoming year, despite the company's increasing extra-curricular activities at OAP clubs, community centres, summer playschemes, adventure playgrounds and local festivals.<sup>607</sup>

This recording was made at the Montrose Recreation Ground, Edgware on Sunday 4 September 1983. This video is introduced by John Hole, who was then the chairman of the Bubble Theatre. In his introduction, Hole speaks about the Bubble's artistic policy which was,

[...] to provide an accessible, popular medium of theatre for every age and every taste which can suitably play many different venues in the outer London boroughs of the whole of London. Which means we have to find work which at one and the same time will entertain and stimulate audiences in such differing kind of places as, let us say, Cheam, where it's on the whole an upper-middle-class audience; Blackheath, which is rather the same and also we play Millwall Park, Isle of Dogs, where quite clearly one is talking primary [sic] about a working class audience. That is very different to most repertory theatres, who are very clear about who they serve because they serve their particular neighbourhood. And for that reason one has to develop a particular style and content for the work which in fact does work with all those different sorts of audiences. And indeed the amazing thing is that one can find such a style and it does work. You can see audiences standing on their feet in Millwall Park and in Edgware as you will tonight, cheering – because they are having such a good time.<sup>608</sup>

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<sup>607</sup> <http://www.artsindustry.co.uk/features/bursting-with-life/> 2010.

<sup>608</sup> The BubbleTheatre, *The Return to the Forbidden Planet*, 1983.

The video is not limited to the performance of *Forbidden Planet*, its intention is to let the viewer have some idea of the entire Bubble experience. The musical director, Kate Edgar, who also played the Flight Captain and the actress playing Miranda, Annie Miles, both in costume, welcome the 'viewer' outside the Bubble tent which was: 'based on the simple principle of the pneumatic tyre. It consists of three dome-shaped tubes which when inflated, form the main rib of a rigid, free-standing structure [...]'<sup>609</sup> They progress to the ticket office and then on to the bar tent with the 'viewer'. There were two further tents which '[...] form the foyer/bar and dressing/green room [...]'<sup>610</sup> Bubble would erect the tents on council- run green spaces.

Intercut with these sequences are interviews with Bob Carlton and some of the actors. After the interviews, Act 1 begins. Both in the interval section and at the end of Act 2, the audience are also interviewed. There is a mixture of young and old, regular attendees and others for whom this has been a new experience. The film does generate the excitement and energy of the circus coming to town. The performance tent is large and welcoming with tables and chairs rather than a bank of seats and the audience can bring in their drinks.

The style is informal and friendly. The bar tent alongside the main structure, the cabaret-style seating and the audience's close proximity to the action all contribute to the special atmosphere of a Bubble show. It is a style which appeals to and attracts both regular theatre-goers and the many people who would never normally think of live theatre as a thing 'for them'.<sup>611</sup>

More importantly the audience were able to get up if they wished and dance to the music. It was reaching the audience on all levels: music they knew and to which they enjoyed dancing; the retelling of an old story; enjoyment of the actor/musicianship, and the wit and humour of Shakespeare. It appeared to be populist theatre but the Shakespearean link ensured that it was not talking down to its audience. Unfortunately, the London Bubble no longer tours with a

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<sup>609</sup> Anthony Craze. 'Bubbling over with new ideas.' *The Stage and Television Today*. (21 September 1978 London)

<sup>610</sup> Ibid.

<sup>611</sup> The Bubble Theatre EVT-PF-000391-002

tent as it became too costly to keep replacing them.

Kate Burnett was the designer for the original *Return to the Forbidden Planet*. Bob Carlton had been impressed by Burnett's design for *The Tempest* at the Nuffield Theatre and offered her a job. Burnett provides a detailed description of the Bubble tent and its various restrictions but also gives some indication regarding the inspiration behind *Return to the Forbidden Planet*.

The arrangement for the tent was to have a raised walkway down the middle of the tent. The restrictions under the Greater London Council (GLC) were pretty severe as there were audience members sitting at tables and chairs that were joined together. Therefore there were restrictions on the types of material that could be used. Doing a band show was the easiest because everything was metal. People were allowed to drink. There was a Bubble policy that if there was trouble you would switch the music up! The musical director was Kate Edgar, who is an extraordinary good musician with a very good knowledge of modern music. She has an ability to teach actors to play very quickly and so there was a culture of bringing people on very fast. With the productions there was almost always a band so that when the actors were not acting, they were playing the instruments.<sup>612</sup>

The set comprised of the flight deck that was positioned at one side of the tent. The flight deck had the control deck that concealed the keyboard and synthesiser. The musical director was Kate Edgar who took the role of the Flight Captain. Edgar's main instrument was the keyboard and it was positioned so that Edgar was facing the audience and the playing of the keys plus her control of effects made on the synthesiser created the feeling of someone flying the ship. Other elements helped to create this image: above the consul was a screen, which was supposed to be the cockpit window and where images of outer space were projected. The budget for the production was small, as were the technical resources. Designer Kate Burnett was playing with the 'Dan Dare' concept and had to simulate the craft flying through space.

We did not have the technology. We had an OHP<sup>613</sup> and I had to time it and draw miles and miles of space. Then I

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<sup>612</sup> Kate Burnett phone interview, 4 February 2011.

<sup>613</sup> Over Head Projector.

had another roll, which went the other way. There was someone winding it. It was very rudimentary.<sup>614</sup>

Directly opposite the flight deck was a fire exit. This was used also as a stage exit and entrance. Connecting the flight deck and main stage area was a walkway that went through the middle of the tent and joined the fire exit. This area was used to great effect for the monster:

The monster had lots of black gauze attached to it and it hurtled down the gangplank and back again, so you never really saw what it was.<sup>615</sup>

*Return to the Forbidden Planet* was never intended for the commercial West End market. In 1983 Bob Carlton was engaged to direct a musical called *Shane* at the Liverpool Everyman. Rodney Ford, who was engaged as the designer, said in an interview that, 'this was cancelled because the Everyman was unable to get the performance rights for the music. Carlton then put forward his musical *Return to the Forbidden Planet* as a substitute.

But how do we define it? Imagine *Star Trek* at Stratford for *The Tempest*. What's more, imagine it in the form of comic strip characters. Add to that a most professionally executed live musical backing from the pop charts of the past 25 years and you will begin to appreciate the several levels on which this show operates.<sup>616</sup>

In the Everyman archives are the *Forbidden Planet* box office takings for the period 27 October to 26 November.

Gross Box Office	-	13,743.75
Less V.A.T. @ 15%	-	1,792.66
NET	-	11,951.09 <sup>617</sup>

It must be assumed that these takings were regarded as satisfactory because in 1984 Carlton was engaged again to direct *The Hubble Bubble Band Show*, which would become *From a Jack to a King*. It was initially a much shorter piece

<sup>614</sup> Kate Burnett phone interview, 4 February 2011.

<sup>615</sup> Ibid.

<sup>616</sup> Joe Riley, *Liverpool Echo*, 28 October 1983.

<sup>617</sup> *Return to the Forbidden Planet* Statement of Income, Liverpool Everyman.

but with the success of *Forbidden Planet* Carlton wanted to turn this into a full-length musical. The main difference between these two productions was that *From a Jack to a King* took a more direct route from Shakespeare's play *Macbeth* and therefore Carlton had to find an alternative approach.

In a letter contract from Nicholas Stanley,<sup>618</sup> the Everyman's administrator, dated 14 August 1984, he confirms a 'conversation' with Bob Carlton in which it was decided to re-title the production from *The Hubble Bubble Band Show* to *From a Jack to a King*. The terms and conditions in this letter also state that the production, which was only half an hour in length, be lengthened.

1. The show is to be extended to a running time of approximately 105 minutes, excluding interval.<sup>619</sup>

There is a further clause that concerns the extension to the script.

5. The draft script shall be completed and in our hands by 17 September 1984. The final draft shall be in our hands by 1 October<sup>620</sup>.

After the Everyman, *Return to the Forbidden Planet* was produced again at the Tricycle Theatre in 1985. Whilst it was playing there, the producer André Ptaszynski<sup>621</sup> saw it and said that it should go into the West End. Application was made to the rights holders for the music but permission was not granted for some of the songs and the whole thing died.<sup>622</sup>

According to Kate Edgar, the eventual success of *Return to the Forbidden Planet* was entirely due to luck. In 1988, the administrator of the Bubble was leaving and wanted a farewell party. More crucially, she wanted *A Band Show*. Many of the 'hardcore *Planet*' people were at the party and played a few numbers. It revived interest in *Return to the Forbidden Planet* and it was

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<sup>618</sup> Letter contract to Bob Carlton from Nicholas Stanley EVT-PF-000609-001.

<sup>619</sup> Ibid.

<sup>620</sup> Ibid.

<sup>621</sup> Prior to 2000, André Ptaszynski ran his own theatre and TV production company. Amongst other shows, he was sole or co-producer on five which won Best Musical Olivier Awards and/or Evening Standard Awards in the 1990s: *Return to the Forbidden Planet*, *Show Boat*, *Tommy*, *Chicago*, and *Spend Spend Spend*.<sup>[2]</sup> He also promoted many comedians, ranging from Rowan Atkinson, Dave Allen, Rik Mayall and Victoria Wood in the 1980s to Eddie Izzard, The League of Gentlemen and Armstrong and Miller in the 1990s and later.

<sup>622</sup> Kate Edgar phone interview, 10 February 2011.

produced again at the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry. André Ptaszynski saw it again and this time was successful in getting the rights. It was this production that went into the West End.<sup>623</sup>

Initially the production was not a success. It had only run for six weeks and had small houses, although the audiences that did come enjoyed it but the word of mouth was insufficient. André Ptaszynski was on the verge of putting up the notice but decided to give the production one extra week as it was coming up to half term and this was a family show. The previous week, the Gloria Hunniford Show on BBC Radio 2, sent the astronomer Heather Couper and the actor Brian Glover to see the production for the Arts Review section. The Hunniford programme aired on what Edgar remembered was a 'very rainy Sunday the week before half term.' Both Cooper and Glover gave the production rave reviews.

Bob Carlton reiterates what happened:

After six weeks, we nearly came off because it only had a cult following. Then everything changed when *Planet* had a rave review on the *Gloria Hunniford Show*. I rang the box office afterwards to find out if sales had improved but couldn't get through. I was annoyed because I thought the phones were down. But it turned out they weren't, the box office staff were answering them non-stop and there were queues to see the show! It went on to win an Olivier Award for Best Musical and ran for three years in the West End.<sup>624</sup>

Kate Edgar's opinion of *Return to the Forbidden Planet* is that it is a genuine and effective actor-musician musical. In her view, many actor-musician musicals are structured so that when the performers are playing, they are sitting or standing either on the edges of the acting area or in some instances off stage. This also refers to the instruments, such as a drum kit or piano that are large instruments and not easily concealed or integrated within the design. There are of course musicals where the instruments are on stage but this is because the musical is about a pop group. The brilliance with this musical is that it only has one set, which is the control room for the spaceship. Further,

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<sup>623</sup> *Return to the Forbidden Planet* opened at the Cambridge Theatre on 18 September 1989.

<sup>624</sup> Bob Carlton Interview, Queen's Theatre Hornchurch, 5 May 2006.

the instruments, specifically the keyboard and drum kit, are part of the spaceship. The keyboard is the controls for the ship whilst the drum kit could be described as the ship's engine. The top of act one is reminiscent of the television programme *Star Trek*, with the pre-flight checks being made.

Bosun Arras: We have completed all the pre-flight checks.

Navigation Officer: 5,4,3,2,1. Ignition. We have lift off.

*The drummer begins the drum solo opening of Wipeout by the Surfaris and as the guitars and synthesizer join him, the lights come up, giving the effect of the ship in action, and on the video screens we see the ship lift off from earth...the band continues to play Wipeout, but increasingly on each drum break we get the impression that the ship is becoming more unstable [...]*<sup>625</sup>

The drum part for Wipeout has an insistent rhythm not dissimilar from the sound of a fast train moving. The cast playing guitars and brass instruments gently sway from side to side apparently in motion with the ship. During the drum breaks there are some heavily accentuated chords played on the guitars at the start of each bar, at which point the crew jump upwards together, as if the ship has hit turbulence.

This is a clever and effective opening that immediately establishes the spaceship, the actor-musicians and that music and instruments will be used not merely for its own sake but where necessary to replicate, for instance, things that are happening to or on the ship.

The musical instruments also have a dual purpose. For instance, if a guitar is pointed directly at someone, then it is replicating a laser gun. The hand held microphones also have other uses.

*Cookie takes Prospero's microphone and with synthesizer effects uses it as a Geiger counter to check the Doctor. This done Prospero leaves the air-lock and enters the ship.*<sup>626</sup>

<sup>625</sup> Bob Carlton, *Return to the Forbidden Planet*. (London and New York: Methuen London Ltd. 1985.) Act 1 p7.

<sup>626</sup> Bob Carlton, *Return to the Forbidden Planet*. (London and New York: Methuen London Ltd. 1985.) Act 1 p10.

In 1992 Carlton had two West End productions running at the same time, when *From a Jack to a King* was put on at the Boulevard Theatre, London,<sup>627</sup> and transferring to the Ambassadors Theatre on 20 July 1992. It is this longer version that was produced at the Queen's Theatre in 1998 and 2007. Matt Devitt co-directed the 1998 version with Bob Carlton and Devitt was responsible for the redirection in 2007.

The 1960s and 70s saw the beginnings of a move away from the book musical,<sup>628</sup> such as *Oklahoma!* This change occurred in both the American and British musicals with productions such as *Hair* (1968), *Godspell* (1972) and *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1972) which is defined as a rock opera. Not only was there a move away from the book musical but also the scores became more rock'n'roll influenced. The days of the 'well-crafted' show tune were numbered. The popularity of the Beatles and the rise of the rock bands led audiences to expect a different type of score. Initially rock music was disliked by a section of the public:

It was thought there was a resemblance between rock'n'roll and jungle music. In part a racist dislike of black musicians but more importantly it was also a misconceived reaction to a real challenge in the nature of the music itself, a large step forward in the century-old development of *codal fusion* between the European and Afro-American codes. The importance of both prominent rhythmic 'monotony' (the beat) and rhythmic variety (improvised singing and playing 'against the beat') in the music was recognised as an element foreign to the tonal-European tradition.<sup>629</sup>

In 1998 Bob Carlton was appointed artistic director of the ailing Queen's Theatre in Hornchurch, Essex. After leaving the Bubble he had written a number of Christmas shows for the Liverpool Everyman and had pursued a successful freelance directing career in both television and theatre. His work in the regional theatres, and specifically his tenure with the Bubble, would have given him a very clear idea of the entertainment tastes and needs of the wider local community. Also, the popularity of *Return to the Forbidden Planet*, not

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<sup>627</sup> The Boulevard Theatre was situated upstairs in Raymond's Revue Bar, Soho.

<sup>628</sup> A book musical integrates music, dance and lyrics into a fully formed drama. Book musicals are frequently, although not exclusively based on a pre-existing novel.

<sup>629</sup> Dick Bradley, *Understanding Rock 'n' Roll, Popular Music in Britain 1955–1964*. (Buckingham UK and Bristol USA: Open University Press, 1992.)

only at the Bubble but at the Everyman, the Tricycle and the Belgrade and subsequently at the Cambridge, was an accurate indicator of the efficacy of a blend of humour, cultural referencing, music and the skill of the actor-musician. It was this knowledge that prepared him for the challenge of engaging with and wooing back the local audience to a theatre that had prospered for many decades. However, little by little, subsidies were cut and effective programming ceased. Money and, more importantly, inspiration was needed in order to turn the theatre's fortune around.

The original Queen's Theatre (1953 to 1975) was housed in an old cinema in Station Road, Hornchurch. It was a repertory theatre with a resident company that included actors such as Timothy West, Glenda Jackson and Peggy Ashcroft. The Queen's became successful and well supported by the local community, so much so that it outgrew Station Road and a decision was made to build a larger purpose-built theatre on a site in Billet Lane. This was completed and opened by Peter Hall in 1975. The theatre thrived until the 90s which was:

[...] a decade of decline for the Queen's. In order to produce work, the management was forced to pursue co-production partnerships with any small-scale, commercial producer able to fit in with the schedule. Artistic direction was difficult if not impossible [...] By 1998, the theatre was playing to 25% audiences, frequently in deficit, ignored by central arts funding (now London Arts) and on the brink of closure. It was clear that radical changes had to be implemented in order to save the theatre and the borough rose to this challenge by committing £100K to the annual grant and by clearing the accumulated deficit.<sup>630</sup>

One of the first things that Carlton actioned was the creation of a resident performance company. In an interview with the playwright and educationalist, Rod Dungate, Carlton had described some of his future plans for Hornchurch.

He wants to try to get a company together in which 'people can play a variety of roles, the kind of company which has gone out of fashion.' He notes the growing trend to cast actors in parts where they are themselves, where you say 'I want the person I cast to be the person in the play'. His

<sup>630</sup> <http://www.Queen's-theatre.co.uk/legacy/aboutus/billetlane.htm>

wish is for the actors to come towards the character during the rehearsal process.<sup>631</sup>

This was a brave decision by Carlton to form a repertory company at a time when the art subsidies for regional theatres were being heavily cut. It was an even braver decision when the company he formed was one comprised of actor-musicians and brave on the part of the actor-musicians committing themselves that would not permit them to take more lucrative jobs, such as television and film, at short notice. This was the first dedicated actor-musician company.

The Queen's is home to Cut to the Chase<sup>632</sup> [...] professional resident company of actor-musicians. Cut to the Chase [...] is based on the traditional repertory system. During the run of each show the company spend the day rehearsing for the next show, whilst performing the current production in the evening. Every year the company bring you eight Main House shows, everything from musicals and comedy to dramas and thrillers, not to mention the annual family pantomime. Company members also appear in the Queen's touring Theatre in Education shows, taking drama direct into the classroom.<sup>633</sup>

Carlton realised that for the Queen's Theatre to survive, he had to make sure that the work that was produced infiltrated the community, resonating with them on many different levels. That he eventually succeeded was not just down to good returns at the box office. It was also the building design and its potential which Carlton identified, that was a crucial factor in its success. The Queen's Theatre was opened by Sir Peter Hall on 2 April 1975 in a new building designed by the borough architect R W Hallam and project architect Norman Brooks.<sup>634</sup> The 70s saw a different approach taken with theatre architecture. The buildings were to be more than performance venues and the intention was to establish them as a hub in the local community. This was achieved initially in two ways. The first was in the performance spaces, with the auditoria seating

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<sup>631</sup> Rod Dungate, *A Director Who Writes*, Rod Dungate Talks to Bob Carlton. *Plays and Players Applause*: 1997. p33.

<sup>632</sup> *The Winnipeg Free Press*, March 1944 ran an article about screen writing that included this: Miss [Helen] Deutsch has another motto, which had to do with the writing of cinematic drama. It also is on the wall where she can't miss seeing it, and it says: 'When in doubt, Cut to the Chase.'

<sup>633</sup> *The Romford Recorder*, 2008

<sup>634</sup> <http://www.offwestend.com/index.php/theatres/history/24>.

steeply raked and not divided into different levels for the different social classes, as were popular with the Victorian and Edwardian theatres. The Hornchurch design was not dissimilar in style from the 1972 New Birmingham Rep designed by the architect Graham Winteringham. In an interview with Terry Grimley, Winteringham said that:

The original brief was pretty startling – 1,000 seats in one rake. The design of theatres in those days was very much argued about – should it be proscenium stage, a thrust stage, or in the round? It went on and on. This is why Denys Lasdun, when he came to design the National Theatre, designed three different auditoriums, rather than try to do all three in one. We eventually came down in size from 1,000 because we realised it was getting too huge a space. But the idea of a single rake did appeal to me – it smacked of the Greek arena.<sup>635</sup>

A not dissimilar style had also been used with the Thorndike Theatre auditorium, in Leatherhead, Surrey. The theatre opened in 1969 and the architect Roderick Ham's [...] vision for the building was that it would be a complete cultural centre, not just a theatre. An art gallery, coffee bar, restaurant, bar and youth theatre were all components of this.<sup>636</sup>

The Queen's Theatre has a large foyer area with a substantial bar that is sunken and has a staircase at either end for easy access. On the right side of the foyer is a seated café area and on the left side a small stage and, beyond this, access to the auditorium. The theatre is situated just off the High Street and its nearest neighbour is a large Sainsbury's. The foyer area is inviting, not just for the theatre audiences but also as a daytime drop-in centre for the local residents to meet friends. In an interview with Bob Carlton,<sup>637</sup> he had stressed the importance of imbedding the theatre at the heart of the community. He had had a small stage erected in the foyer to be used as a venue for local aspiring musicians with a weekly Friday 'open mic' session and which was very popular. He also said that the 'open door' policy had given the Hornchurch audience a feeling that the actor-musician company were 'friends'. It was quite common for

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<sup>635</sup>[http://www.thefreelibrary.com/30 years of Birmingham rep: Staging the grand design; Sixties architect of Birmingham Rep Graham Winteringham tells Terry Grimley he still feels a great affinity with the buildings.](http://www.thefreelibrary.com/30+years+of+Birmingham+rep:+Staging+the+grand+design;+Sixties+architect+of+Birmingham+Rep+Graham+Winteringham+tells+Terry+Grimley+he+still+feels+a+great+affinity+with+the+buildings.)

<sup>636</sup>Thorndike Archive <http://www.the-theatre.org/history>.

<sup>637</sup>Bob Carlton interview, Queen's Theatre Hornchurch, May 5 2006.

performers waiting at the Sainsbury's checkout with their lunchtime sandwiches to be given feedback on their roles or asked what they were playing in the next production.<sup>638</sup>

Carlton's attitude to the audience and local community would have been fostered by his time at the Bubble whilst it was touring with the tent. He made two important decisions, the first being that the theatre should operate as a repertory and secondly that a permanent actor-musician company should be employed. During the interview at Hornchurch, Carlton said that he had had a very good freelance career but that he took 'a large cut in salary' when he went to Hornchurch. In spite of this he took on the role of artistic director at the Queen's because he wanted, referring to the actor-musicians, 'to try and develop the whole thing in this country.'<sup>639</sup>

This was a bold decision on two counts: firstly repertory had become unfashionable, mainly because employing full-time companies with the successive grants cuts was no longer viable for the regional theatres. Secondly and more importantly, the ensemble was comprised of actor-musicians. Carlton's first season included *From a Jack to a King*, which is a musical specifically written for the actor-musician. The box-office takings immediately shot from a weekly 25 per cent to 75 per cent, a percentage that it has maintained for the past fifteen years.<sup>640</sup>

The set for the 2007 production of *From a Jack to a King*,<sup>641</sup> designed by Mark Walters, is reminiscent of the Soho streets in the 1960s. It includes small shop fronts and first-floor windows with red lighting indicative of the sex trade that was prevalent then. The set works on more than one level with a set of treads up to the first floor. The lighting for the entire production, by Richard Godin, is deliberately gloomy and dark with intermittent usage of lightning flashes and strobe effects. This is a deliberate reference to the musical's roots in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, with its brooding bleakness of the Scottish landscape

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<sup>638</sup> Ibid.

<sup>639</sup> Bob Carlton interview, Queen's Theatre Hornchurch, May 5 2006.

<sup>640</sup> [www.offwestend.co/index.php/theatres/history/24](http://www.offwestend.co/index.php/theatres/history/24)

<sup>641</sup> Queens Theatre Archives dvd recording of 2007 production of *From a Jack to a King*

and its mystical content. The musical centres on the music industry and has a cast of nine plus the musical director, Carol Sloman. The musical follows the *Macbeth* plotline with three witches (backing singers) informing Eric Glamis that he shall become a famous musician. Terry King (King Duncan), the front man for a rock'n'roll band is murdered by Eric (Macbeth) when he tampers with King's motorbike. Queenie (Lady Macbeth) encourages Eric, who is signed up by Duke Box (the band's agent). The actor-musician aesthetic for this production is not as experimental as that employed in *Return to the Forbidden Planet* as its subject is centred on the rock band industry and therefore it is unsurprising for the lead characters to be playing instruments. However, the witches do figure throughout the musical and play electric bass and guitar.

*From a Jack to a King* is given a 1940s cinematic feel by Carlton and the *Macbeth* plot lends itself with a highly charged sexual relationship between the Eric and Queenie. The set and lighting design emphasise this but Carlton has been astute in turning Shakespeare's Macduff into Joe Macduff, private investigator. For Joe Macduff's first appearance he is spot-lit revealing him in trilby and trenchcoat,<sup>642</sup> the acknowledged 'uniform' for all private detectives. His opening speech begins with a parody of the famous line from the film *Casablanca*:<sup>643</sup> Of all the bars in town [...] <sup>644</sup> In the film, the line was spoken by Humphrey Bogart and although Bogart's character Rick Blaine is not a private detective, Bogart was associated with playing detective roles and wearing the attendant trilby and trenchcoat.

The instruments used in *From a Jack to a King* are a keyboard, bass guitar, electric guitars, a trumpet, two saxophones and drum kit. Drum kits are not portable items but there are some scenes where Eric demonstrates his 'virtuosity' on the kit, therefore it is put into a prominent position on stage instead of in the wings. The keyboard, on the other hand, does not feature as an actor-musician instrument as the musical director does not take part in the onstage performance and is not featured on the stage. The three witches,

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<sup>642</sup> The trench coat was developed for British soldiers during World War I.

<sup>642</sup> *Casablanca*. Warner Bros 1942 director Michael Curtiz, Screenplay by Julius J. Epstein and Philip G. Epstein and Howard Koch.

<sup>643</sup> Rick Blaine : 'Of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the world, she walks into mine.'  
*Casablanca*.

played by two women and a man, are more frequently and prominently featured throughout the piece. The music used is 50s 60s hits and *I'll Put A Spell On You*<sup>645</sup> is used throughout by the witches whenever they have scenes where they are manipulating the fortunes of Glamis via witchcraft. The witches sometimes act as backing singers and there are stands provided for the hand held radio mics. At other points they play instruments, sometimes accompanying themselves, and sometimes other cast members.

*From a Jack to a King* and its development from *The Hubble Bubble Band Show* is not as well constructed as *Return to the Forbidden Planet*. There are a number of reasons for this. Its original title is indicative of the playfulness of the piece and first and foremost it was developed as a 'Band Show' with the inclusion of the basic Macbeth storyline and added wit and humour. The darkness of 'The Scottish Play' resonates with The Shangri-Las 1960s hit, *Leader of the Pack*, in which the hero dies in a motorbike accident. It is unsurprising that this song is included in the play list as it was and continues to be a popular song, especially with its rather dramatic ending,

As he drove away on that rainy night I begged him to go  
slow  
But whether he heard, I'll never know  
Look out! Look out! Look out! Look out!<sup>646</sup>

However, in 1984, when Carlton agreed to extend the piece for the Liverpool Everyman, it was developed from being a band show into a full-length production. The contract states that it will be 'extended to a running time of 105 minutes'.<sup>647</sup> In fact the current running time is 115 minutes. It was at this point that the 'witches' sections were inserted into the piece. They do not feature in the original script. Another character that does not feature in the original is Macduff. At the end of Unit 11, there is a character of a policeman who eventually defeats and kills Glamis. This scene still remains but the policeman is now Macduff. It cannot be argued that the insertion of the witches and Macduff are merely padding as the storyline is now truer to the original *Macbeth*.

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<sup>645</sup> 'Screamin' Jay Hawkins, *I'll Put A Spell On You* 1956.

<sup>646</sup> Ellie Greenwich, George Morton, Jeff Barry, *Leader of the Pack* 1964.

<sup>647</sup> Letter contract to Bob Carlton from Nicholas Stanley EVT-PF-000609-001.

Eric: Is this a spanner I see before me  
 The handle toward my hand? Come let me clutch  
 thee  
 Thou marshallest me the way I was going  
 And such an instrument I was to use

(A bell rings and there is a shout of 'Time gentlemen  
 please')

Eric: I go and it is done. The bell invites me  
 Hear it not Terry, for it is a knell  
 That summons thee to heaven or to hell

Laura sings Number 7 Terry/Leader of the Pack<sup>648</sup>

He sort of smiled and kissed me goodbye  
 The tears were beginning to show  
 As he drove away on that rainy night  
 I begged him to go slow.<sup>649</sup>

He rode into the night, accelerated his motorbike  
 I cried to him in fright, don't do it, don't do it, don't do  
 it.<sup>650</sup>

But these insertions make the musical darker and although the death of Terry King is less gruesome than the original, it is my contention that the potency of Shakespeare's play cannot be masked. The underlying evil in the original play in combination with the supernatural forces do not lend themselves easily to a transformation into a comedy or even a black comedy.

Carlton's development of the actor-musician can be clearly seen in this musical. The musicians are not relegated to a defined 'band' area when playing their instruments. This musical is centred around a rock band and specifically the characters of Terry King and Eric Glamis. Both have scenes where they are playing instruments and which are used specifically as part of the action. King plays guitar and Eric, drums and guitar. However other characters, specifically the witches, play various instruments – saxophones, trumpet, guitar and electric bass either to accompany themselves, or as backing for other singers. There are also sections where the instruments are being used as props. Laura, King's girlfriend, sings *My Guy* whilst embracing a guitar as if it were her boyfriend:

<sup>648</sup> *The Hubble Bubble Band Show* script, p.16.

<sup>649</sup> George 'Shadow' Morton with Jeff Barry and Ellie Greenwich. *Leader of the Pack* 1964.

<sup>650</sup> Marilyn Annette Ripley (Twinkle) *Terry* 1964.

'Nothing you could say can tear me away from my guy  
 Nothing you could do 'cause I'm stuck like glue to my guy  
 I'm stickin' to my guy like a stamp to a letter  
 Like the birds of a feather we stick together  
 I'm tellin' you from the start I can't be torn apart from my  
 guy'.<sup>651</sup>

A guitar is used again during the funeral section after King has been killed. The *Dead March* is played on the keyboards whilst the guitar he played is now carried around the stage as if it was his coffin. It is then propped up on a stand down stage as if placed in the church ready for the funeral service. The witches are carrying wreaths which are leaf covered tambourines. These are played whilst Witch 3 accompanies on a shaker she is carrying that is intended to replicate his cremation urn. The last section where instruments are used as props is in the final scene. A duel takes place between Eric and Macduff. Eric employs his guitar as a weapon whilst Macduff has a trumpet. They circle each other with Eric playing riffs and chords that are countered by Macduff with a few bars from various television police series themes that included *The Sweeney*<sup>652</sup> and *Dixon of Dock Green*.<sup>653</sup>

The success that Carlton has had with the Queen's Theatre can be demonstrated by the close relationship that he has generated with the community. In the Queen's Theatre archive Carlton says that he created a repertory company because he wanted to [...] give the Queen's a specific identity within the community [...].<sup>654</sup> In an interview he said that audience members telephone the theatre to see if their favourite company member is performing. In the Queen's Theatre online archive Carlton stated that when he first took over as artistic director in 1998 he put on a lot of populist work to encourage the community to visit the theatre which had lost its Arts Council grant in 1984. Having built up a regular audience he then changed the programming and started to include Shakespeare's plays. Currently the Queen's archive ceases in 2011, but demonstrates that Carlton directed a

<sup>651</sup> Written and produced by William 'Smokey' Robinson, *My Guy* 1964.

<sup>652</sup> *The Sweeney* 1975–1978 created by Ian Kennedy Martin ITV.

<sup>653</sup> *Dixon of Dock Green* 1955–1976 created by Ted Willis BBC.

<sup>654</sup> Bob Carlton <http://www.queenstheatre.co.uk/archive/cuttothechase/10yearinterview.htm> accessed 12 August 2013.

Shakespeare play every year, starting with *Midsummer Night's Dream* (2003); *Romeo and Juliet* (2004); *Comedy of Errors* (2005); *Macbeth* (2006); *The Tempest* (2007); *Twelfth Night* (2008). He then missed two years continuing with *The Taming of the Shrew* (2011). In an online interview on the Queen's website he says that:

I don't set Shakespeare in period because he didn't. Shakespeare set everything in contemporary costume whether he was writing about ancient Rome or medieval Scotland.<sup>655</sup>

This implies that his productions are costumed in contemporary UK clothing which is not the case. For example, for his production of *The Taming of the Shrew* (2011)

[it has...] a Wild West setting [...] We lose the Induction with Christopher Sly and come straight to the dusty main street of the little town of Padua, Texas some time in the late 19th century. On one side is Baptista Minola's hotel and saloon; on the other, an undertaker's establishment run by elderly Gremio conveniently adjacent to the sheriff (Hortensio)'s office.<sup>656</sup>

In common with Walford, a variety of music is played by the actor-musicians, the music having been chosen by Carlton's musical director.

Throughout the play there is music, very well selected by Carol Sloman from a mix of blue grass, traditional and film-score sources and extremely well played and sung by various cast members. It links location changes as well as providing a counterpoint to the not-always clearly enunciated dialogue.<sup>657</sup>

Carlton in the online interview says of Shakespeare that:

Shakespeare is England's greatest playwright and a huge part of our heritage, so it is important to preserve the beauty and simplicity of his words.<sup>658</sup>

<sup>655</sup> <http://queens-theatre.co.uk/archive/archive/2007/questionsansweredbybobcarlton.htm> accessed 15 November 2015

<sup>656</sup> <http://queens-theatre.co.uk/archive/archive/thetamingoftheshrew2011.htm> accessed 15 November 2015

<sup>657</sup> <http://queens-theatre.co.uk/archive/archive/thetamingoftheshrew2011.htm> accessed 15 November 2015.

<sup>658</sup> <http://queens-theatre.co.uk/archive/archive/thetamingoftheshrew2011.htm> accessed 15 November 2015

At the same time and in common with Walford he is not overly reverential and like her also cut the Christopher Sly scene.<sup>659</sup>

Carlton said that, 'The Queen's is also one of the few theatres in the UK to produce all its own Main House shows – this allows us to choose exactly what we want and what our audience wants rather than having to select from a stock of commercial productions.'<sup>660</sup> The theatre has its own TiE company and also a Community Play for nineteen year olds plus that meets once a week and which is a bi-annual event. In 2008 and 2009 the Queen's Theatre won the Heart of the Community award. Andrew Curtin, Havering Council's Cabinet Member for Culture and Communities and Queen's Theatre Trustee, said:

'The Queen's Theatre transforms the lives of people throughout Havering and I think that this award demonstrates just how loved and admired the Queen's is. I am very glad that Havering Council works closely with the Theatre Trust to ensure excellent theatre for people in Havering.'<sup>661</sup>

*Good Intent*<sup>662</sup> is a further case study in the development of the actor-musician performance genre. *Good Intent* was written for the Queen's Theatre. It tells the story of an American pilot who has joined the RAF during World War II. It contains stories of the families he came into contact with, other RAF comrades and his eventual death when his Spitfire suffered engine failure whilst he was making a test flight. Instead of bailing out he steers the plane away from the local school thus saving the children's lives. We learn at the end of the play that he is buried in St Andrew's churchyard, Hornchurch. *Good Intent* is not a musical but a play with music and demonstrates how Carlton uses the actor-musician in different ways.

*The Good Intent*<sup>663</sup> is a play is comprised of two main storylines that interconnect and features a new score. The first centres on the American

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<sup>659</sup> Shakespeare, William, *The Taming of the Shrew*

<sup>660</sup> Bob Carlton <http://www.queens-theatre.co.uk/archive/cuttothechase/10yearinterview.htm> accessed 12 August 2013.

<sup>661</sup> <http://www.queens-theatre.co.uk/archive/cuttothechase/10yearinterview.htm>

<sup>662</sup> *Good Intent*, book by Dave Ross and Gerry Sweeney. Lyrics and music by Nick Dawson, Dave Ross and Ray Shea. Queen's Theatre Hornchurch 2003.

<sup>663</sup> *The Good Intent*, book by [Dave Ross](#) and Gerry Sweeney lyrics and music by Nick Dawson, Dave Ross and Ray Shea.

spitfire pilot, who we learn was born in England, and his relationship with his RAF comrades. The other story concentrates on a married couple who are having difficulties because the husband has gone AWOL<sup>664</sup> from the Navy and is hiding from the authorities. The two storylines interlink when the American befriends the wife and tries to help the husband. Alongside the wartime story, it attempts to capture the mood of the period with contemporary music. The staging is minimalistic. But in order to create a 1940s atmosphere, projection is used showing Lancaster bombers and Spitfires in flight. The Queen's Theatre has a revolve and this is used for quick scene changes. The sets are simple, with either small pieces of furniture to denote a family kitchen, or a bar to indicate the mess. Stage right there is a piano and drum kit. The members of the cast provide the music. In some scenes, for example in the mess, the piano is part of the furniture and the company members play the piano as part of the action. In other scenes, members of the company play instruments providing an accompaniment for the songs becoming the theatre 'pit' players. At other times the actors would play an instrument as part of the action. For instance one character plays the spoons. In another someone will play a saxophone.

A clever feature of this production is the use of two ARP<sup>665</sup> wardens who function as a 'music hall' duo. ARP wardens were responsible for patrolling the areas in which they lived. It was vital that they knew the streets in their locale and also had to have a good knowledge of the residents. This was essential as it was the ARP wardens who were first on the scene whenever buildings were bombed or fires started by incendiary bombs. They have short scenes that intercut the narrative, comedy sketches and patter routines. Their final appearance in the production is a song and dance routine in the style of Flanagan and Allen.<sup>666</sup> One of the performers plays the ukelele whilst the other accompanies him on the spoons. The song is entitled *The Blackout Rag* and includes specific phrases used at the time and refers to the constant danger that the British population faced from the German bombings. The use of the

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<sup>664</sup> AWOL absent without leave.

<sup>665</sup> ARP Air Raid Precaution wardens who would patrol the streets during WWII ensuring that houses and businesses were complying with the blackout.

<sup>666</sup> Flanagan and Allen were a music hall double act popular in WW II. Their act was a combination of songs and comedy routines. Bud Flanagan (1896–1968) and Chesney Allen (1893–1982).

music-hall style echoes the working-class culture and the palliative nature of the music-hall.

ARPs:            Walls have ears they say, so  
                       We don't talk about it  
                       Don't forget your gas mask  
                       Wouldn't be without it  
                       Livin' by the minute  
                       We forget we're in it  
                       Dancing to the blackout rag.<sup>667</sup>

The productions at The Queen's Theatre are not limited to those that Carlton has written or other new works such as *Good Intent*. He is also aware that his audience want to see productions of well-known plays and musicals. In 2010 Carlton directed *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*.<sup>668</sup> This musical comedy, is based on Plautus's play *Menaechmi*<sup>669</sup> with music written by Stephen Sondheim and is far removed in musical style from Carlton's own work. The play involves twins and mistaken identity. Sondheim's musical was the inspiration for the BBC's television programme *Up Pompeii*,<sup>670</sup> starring Frankie Howard as 'the cunning slave', and would have a resonance with the older audience. It would however present difficulties for regional theatres as the musical line-up is quite substantial.

Reed I - Flute, Alto Sax, Clarinet  
 Reed II - Alto Sax, Clarinet  
 Reed III - Tenor Sax, Clarinet  
 Reed IV - Baritone Sax, Clarinet, Bass Clarinet  
 Reed V - Flute, Clarinet 3 Trumpet 3 Trombone 2  
 Percussion  
 Harp  
 Strings<sup>671</sup>

However, the skills of the Cut to the Chase company enables the production to reduce the orchestra size to two trumpets, two violins, two guitars, a banjo, a piano, a double bass, a saxophone and two side drums. It should be noted that if pit musicians were employed for this reduced lineup then a minimum of eleven players would be required. This is because professional musicians

<sup>667</sup> *Good Intent* Act II Sc 10 *The Blackout Rag*.

<sup>668</sup> Book by Burt Shevelove and Larry Gelbart, music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim.

<sup>669</sup> Plautus, Titus Maccius, *Menaechmi* c254-184BC.

<sup>670</sup> Talbot Rothwell, *Up Pompeii* 1969 -1970.

<sup>671</sup> [http://www.guidetomusicaltheatre.com/shows\\_f/forum.htm](http://www.guidetomusicaltheatre.com/shows_f/forum.htm).

would not or could not double this combination of instruments. Actor-musicians, on the other hand, whilst being trained with one particular instrument, have sufficient skill on a wide variety of instruments. If necessary, they will learn to play a short musical section on an instrument they are unfamiliar with in order to fill a gap if a player is involved in a spoken or sung section and unable to play at that point.

The set, which was designed by Mark Walters, replicated the Roman theatre *scaenae frons* with its three onstage entrances and upper levels. There are no additions or alterations made in order to accommodate the actor-musicians. Carlton does not employ the instruments as props in this production. The courtesans play the saxophone, flute, trumpets and violins. They play these in their own scenes and these are frequently used in a comedic fashion reminiscent of the stripper's number, 'You've Gotta Have a Gimmick' from the musical *Gypsy*.<sup>672</sup> When they are offstage they are responsible for the numerous 'Roman' fanfares that feature throughout the production. The title, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*,<sup>673 674</sup> is a reference to the opening line for stories that vaudeville and music-hall comedians used. The opening musical number, *Comedy Tonight*,<sup>675 676</sup> gives licence to the director to insert comedy business as and when appropriate. Carlton uses the actor-musician to provide both visual and musical jokes. There are two 'proteans' who play Roman soldiers and carry large side drums which they play with beaters. In one scene they follow Pseudolus, beating the drum in time with his footsteps, and they use the same device in another scene following one of the courtesans. In another scene one character tap dances on top of a sea chest whilst playing a banjo. He is accompanied by two singers and two other actor-musicians, one playing a violin and the other a double bass. Once the musical number has concluded, the banjo player gets off the chest, the lid is opened and the instruments are placed inside. The final instrument to be put away is the double bass. This large instrument is too big for the chest but it has been placed over a stage trap and there is a hole in the bottom of the chest. The

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<sup>672</sup> *Gypsy*, lyrics by Steven Sondheim and music by Jule Styne, Book Arthur Laurents, 1959.

<sup>673</sup> Based on Plautus's comedy, *Menaechmi*.

<sup>674</sup> Titus Maccius Plautus (c. 254 – 184 BC) Roman playwright.

<sup>675</sup> Something familiar, something peculiar, something for everyone: a comedy tonight!

<sup>676</sup> *Love is in the Air* was the original opening song but Jerome Robbins thought it not strong enough and Stephen Sondheim wrote and substituted *Comedy Tonight*.

double bass slowly disappears from sight, the chest is closed and the musicians carry it off.

Cut to the Chase actors are nothing if not versatile, and everyone pitched in musically, from Philia on flute to Panacea on sax. One of the best sight gags was the double bass in the trunk, prelude to one of the most imaginative numbers, the reluctant slave trio accompanying 'Impossible' – tap dancing thrown in.<sup>677</sup>

In 2010 Stephen Sondheim celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, an event that was well publicised by the British theatre industry. Carlton took advantage of this fact when he decided to mount *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*.<sup>678</sup> Coincidentally, a new set of theatre awards were devised which are known as The Offies.<sup>679</sup>

The OffWestEnd.com website, which has been championing London's independent theatres for years, launched the Offies in 2011 to celebrate excellence and innovation in productions outside the West End.<sup>680</sup>

The Queen's Theatre had a successful nomination:

Carlton's production of *A Funny Thing* was nominated and won the award for the Public Vote for Best Entertainment. Both *Camp Horror*<sup>681</sup> and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* received acclaim from press and audiences they also boasted stunning sets and large casts. The judges were also impressed with the theatre's resident group of actors/musicians Cut to the Chase who besides acting, singing and dancing also performed the music live on stage.<sup>682</sup>

This award acknowledged the hard work involved in maintaining and running a regional theatre and, most importantly, how it is valued by the community.

<sup>677</sup> Gray, Michael. 2010.

'file:///Users/francescagreatorex/Desktop/The%20Public%20Reviews%20»%20A%20Funny%20Thing%20Happened%20On%20The%20Way%20To%20The%20Forum%20–%20Queen's%20Theatre,%20Hornchurch.webarchive..

<sup>678</sup> *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. Queen's Theatre Hornchurch 24 September – 16 October.

<sup>679</sup> <http://www.offwestend.com/>

<sup>680</sup> [http://www.offwestend.com/index.php/pages/the\\_offies](http://www.offwestend.com/index.php/pages/the_offies).

<sup>681</sup> *Camp Horror*, music and book by the Heather Brothers.

<sup>682</sup> *Romford Recorder*, Queen's In The Running For Two Gongs, Reporter Lee–Ann Richards Friday, November 12, 2010

Queen's Artistic Director Bob Carlton beamed:

'We are absolutely delighted that two of our productions have been nominated. In this difficult time for the arts industry, it is so heartening that our hard work has been recognised. Thank you to our extremely loyal audiences for all their support.'<sup>683</sup>

In the summer 2013 edition of *Equity* magazine, the president, Malcolm Sinclair, devotes his column to the Queen's Theatre<sup>684</sup>:

It is somewhat sobering to have been part of a campaign, The Manifesto for Theatre, arguing for a certain type of theatre, including permanent companies, with strong regional and local roots, much like the rep theatres that flourished when some of us started;[...]only to discover that such a theatre does exist and is flourishing, owing to sound management, dedicated artistic vision, a wise and supportive local authority and a resulting loyal audience.

Carlton said that when he inherited the Queen's Theatre it had a quarter of a million pound deficit and that it had lost its Arts Council grant. Under his direction it did eventually get the grant back but it is the poorest funded regional theatre. Carlton attributes much of their financial success to the actor-musician company and how they are regarded by the community. The theatre has an 83 per cent capacity audience that has resulted in a slight financial surplus. Although it is successful, the margin is slight:

We were delighted to learn that we are one of the Arts Council's National Portfolio Organisations and have retained our grant until 2015. However, we will be suffering an 11 per cent cut in real terms. As a registered charity that has to raise 72 per cent of its income through the box office and additional fundraising – which is much higher than the national average – we are grateful for ongoing support from our loyal audiences, our partners in local businesses and the London Borough of Havering, all of whom have supported us through thick and thin for nearly 60 years.<sup>685</sup>

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<sup>683</sup> Ibid.

<sup>684</sup> *Equity*, summer 2013 p30 [www.equity.org.uk](http://www.equity.org.uk).

<sup>685</sup> Bob Carlton Interview, Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch 5 May 2006.

Sinclair, writing in the *Equity* magazine, provides information on the Queen's Theatre season significant to its success:

There are seven main house productions a year, plus a panto; there is a permanent company of actor-musicians who are contracted for the entire season to do the shows.

In common with the majority of regional theatres the Queen's Theatre has its own workshop, but unusually, still employs this for building its own sets, 'in Bob's view, essential for the success of the whole enterprise.'<sup>686</sup> It is more cost-effective to build in-house as you are not paying a third party and can also recycle materials and repaint old sets thus saving money.

Although Carlton has an actor-musician company the programming is not restricted to musicals. However, all the productions contain music. Some plays, such as *Good Intent*, have music and musicians contained within the story. With other productions this is not the case and the musicians will be kept out of sight. Carlton is also clear that what is vital is that there is respect for the period of any piece. In 2006, Matt Devitt directed a production of *Room at the Top*<sup>687</sup> based on the film of the same name. The production includes a jazz score and the actor-musicians play this. But they are positioned offstage when playing. They are only brought on at the end for the curtain call.

An important aspect for Carlton actor-musician productions is style in a performance and to vary the way in which the actor-musicians are used and directed. He cited *Fings Ain't What They Used T' Be*<sup>688</sup> which he had directed. This play, with music by Lionel Bart and which was originally developed at Stratford East and directed by Joan Littlewood, is set in a club. Carlton had the instruments scattered around the stage for the actors to pick up as and when required which reflects Littlewood's original production and directorial style. In comparison Carlton directed a production of Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie* (2001). Carlton's literary agent also handled Williams's work and told Carlton that a score existed for *The Glass Menagerie* and that the agency held the copy. The music was an underscoring for the play. There was a dedicated

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<sup>686</sup> Sinclair, Malcolm *equity*, Summer 2013 p30 [www.equity.org.uk](http://www.equity.org.uk).

<sup>687</sup> *Room at the Top* by John Braine adapted by Andrew Taylor (2006)

<sup>688</sup> *Fings Ain't Wot They Used T'Be*, by Frank Norman (1999).

pianist used, with the Gentleman Caller playing the trumpet and Laura the double bass. For this production, the musicians were shown in shadow or projection was used at appropriate dramatic moments.<sup>689</sup>

Carlton has considered and acknowledges the efficacy of the actor-musician and is critical of productions in which he finds their usage wanting. For instance, in 1993 Sam Mendes directed *Cabaret*<sup>690</sup> at the Donmar.<sup>691</sup> *Cabaret* includes the 'KitKat' band who feature within the scenes and are ideal roles for actor-musicians. Carlton noted that every time the band played that they were put into a darkened lighting state. 'Feature them!' he said.<sup>692</sup> Alternatively, with the stage version of *Tommy*<sup>693</sup> that used a pit band, Carlton said that: *Pinball Wizard* which closed act I, 'did not get an ovation. It was played by professional musicians who are much better than our actor-musicians. But if they had been on stage, they would have got the ovation.'<sup>694</sup>

Millie Taylor in her book, *Musical Theatre, Realism and Entertainment*,<sup>695</sup> is of the opinion that, 'Actor-musicianship might well be one of the most disruptive forms of performance, perhaps removing the possibility of interpreting the performance as "realistic."' She cites *Return to the Forbidden Planet* as, 'one of the first actor-musician shows to reach London's West End [...]' and not *the* first.<sup>696</sup> She is also of the opinion that it was Carlton's productions that inspired other directors. In her section on actor-musicianship she does not see further than the fact that Carlton's work employed 50s and 60s pop songs and gives no credit to either the book or the acting performances. Whilst her book is concerned with 'realism', she does ignore the actor-musician's skill in delivering a performance that is a combination of mock Shakespeare combined with a copy of 1950s film acting. *Return to the Forbidden Planet* was not written as a

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<sup>689</sup> Bob Carlton Interview Queen's Theatre Hornchurch 5 May 2006.

<sup>690</sup> *Cabaret* is a musical based on a book written by Christopher Isherwood, music by John Kander and lyrics by Fred Ebb.

<sup>691</sup> Donmar Warehouse, Earlham Street, London.

<sup>692</sup> Bob Carlton Interview Queen's Theatre Hornchurch 5 May 2006.

<sup>693</sup> *Tommy* Music and lyrics by Pete Townshend. Book by Pete Townshend and Des McAuff. Additional music and lyrics by John Entwistle and Keith Moon Shaftesbury Theatre London, 1997.

<sup>694</sup> Bob Carlton interview, Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch 5 May 2006.

<sup>695</sup> Millie Taylor, *Musical Theatre, Realism and Entertainment* (Ashgate ebook 2012) location 3235.

<sup>696</sup> Millie Taylor, *Musical Theatre, Realism and Entertainment*, (Ashgate ebook 2012) location 3235

realistic piece but it does require of the performers that they believe in and deliver the correct acting style and in this it must be realistic. Taylor is a professional musician and in common with an audience member looks no farther than the instrumental abilities of the performer. The Queen's Theatre rehearsal room is well equipped with a variety of instruments, and when Carlton was asked about further training for the actor-musician company responded that there was insufficient time during the season for this to take place. He said that: 'We are on a treadmill here. We start rehearsing in August through until the end of June. We rehearse by day and play at night and so no real training can take place.' He made the point that: 'Learning for a show and training are different things.'<sup>697</sup>

Hornchurch does have a learning culture for its actor-musicians and it is expected that actors will learn to play different instruments. Also, the amount of music learning and playing that the performers do does improve their playing skills and abilities. However, without tuition bad habits can be learned.

Carlton's insight into the community needs and his awareness and foresight as to how effective an actor-musician company can be has served what was a failing theatre well.

The Queen's Theatre is a vibrant producing theatre in the London Borough of Havering, serving East London, Essex and beyond. As a registered charity and the cultural hub of the region, over 200,000 people enjoy theatre's work every year, from the best in live entertainment to an inspiring education and outreach programme.<sup>698</sup>

In 2014 Bob Carlton stepped down as artistic director of the Queen's Theatre. His last production there was a revival of *Return to the Forbidden Planet* which was then taken on tour. In an interview for *The Herald* Glasgow he made this point.

One of my big arguments when people start talking about how arts funding should be cut, and of course schools and hospitals should be funded, is that this one show has earned more money for the exchequer than every grant

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<sup>697</sup> Bob Carlton interview, Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch 5 May 2006.

<sup>698</sup> Queen's Theatre Hornchurch online archive.

combined that the Bubble ever had.<sup>699</sup>

Carlton's decision in creating an actor-musician company at the Queen's Theatre both transformed the fortunes of a failing venue and established the actor-musician and the theatre at the heart of the Hornchurch community, for which there has been little recognition amongst the national press and the theatre community at large.

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<sup>699</sup> [www.heraldscotland.com/Neil Cooper, Theatre critic / Wednesday 4 February 2015 / Arts & Ents.](http://www.heraldscotland.com/Neil%20Cooper,%20Theatre%20critic%20/%20Wednesday%204%20February%202015%20/%20Arts%20&%20Ents)

## Past and Future

This study set out to explore the origins of the actor-musician and has identified the UK socio-cultural conditions and theatre circumstances in which the actor-musician has evolved. The study sought also to examine the attributes and aesthetics of the actor-musician practice. The general theoretical literature on this subject is minimal and inconclusive on some of these vital questions. This study sought to answer four questions:

- 1) identify and discuss the distinctive aspects of actor-musician practices and how these have evolved with time and in diverse social performance contexts;
- 2) demonstrate the extent to which the actor-musician developed from popular and politically informed touring theatre companies with their uses of music, song and instrumental performance;
- 3) show the ways in which the actor-musician's emergence has related to social, cultural, political and theatrical circumstances;
- 4) illustrate the ways in which music can be a powerful force when used within a dramatic piece and that the fusion of actor and musician creates a markedly distinct aesthetic and creates new dramatic and musical performance possibilities.

The impetus for this research was the realization that a number of regional theatres were now producing actor-musician musicals, mainly extant, but with some new work. Initial enquiries implied that the employment of actor-musicians was a financial strategy that had been developed by the regional theatres in order to satisfy a demand for the large-scale musicals. Early research indicated there to be a minimal amount of published academic work on the actor-musician but that this was production specific, remaining silent on the creation and development of the actor-musician. It was this gap in the field of study that led to this first detailed academic research into the origins, development, attributes and aesthetics of the actor-musician in the UK.

The published *Return to the Forbidden Planet* script is of significant importance to this thesis as included is Bob Carlton's thank you to the Bubble theatre company for their help in the development of the production and thus firmly establishing that the roots of this acknowledged actor-musician musical were in the socio-cultural, community and small scale touring sector. This production provided a marker from which the chronological order of the actor-musician development could be ascertained. Walford's early theatre career coincided with the growth of Theatre in Education and regional theatres beginning to create outreach companies. This was combined with the advent of rock'n'roll music and provided a fertile environment into which the actor-musician could develop. Both the Bubble and the Everyman archives in combination with interviews with key people, provided the evidence which tracked the impetus for the actor-musician back to the 1960s Sheffield Theatre Vanguard and the eventual emergence which occurred with The Bubble Band Show. The Bubble archive evidences the actor-musician's inception.

The opening chapter also investigated the influences that had engendered a sociocultural theatre movement. The Old Vic, the history of which is well documented was identified as having provided, in varying circumstances, Glen Walford's three key antecedents Emma Cons, Lilian Baylis and Joan Littlewood. It demonstrated the efficacy of the philanthropic work, combined with theatre productions and music in a then impoverished Lambeth borough, and was highly influential on the young Joan Littlewood.<sup>700</sup> Littlewood took two things from the Old Vic, firstly an enduring love for Shakespeare and classic plays, and secondly an appreciation of the benefits of outreach work. The combination of Littlewood's theatre knowledge and directorial skills combined with MacColl's musical contribution and extensive touring was a significant influence on many emerging practitioners in the 40s and 50s. MacColl recognized, from his early agit-prop work that a tuneful song was an effective way to broadcast his political messages to factory workers in their lunch breaks. He recognized that a story or message is more easily imparted and remembered when transmitted in song. This is a device that was used by other theatre practitioners, such as John McGrath and Peter Cheeseman who, in order to facilitate this further, would

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<sup>700</sup> Rankin, Peter. 2014. *Joan Littlewood: Dreams and Realities: The Official Biography*. United Kingdom: Oberon Books Ltd. Kindle version.

sometimes employ the age-old device of using a well-known tune, but with new lyrics, in order to make the work 'familiar' and to aid retention. The thesis notes that this is a device that has been frequently used in theatre and was employed also by Shakespeare.

This thesis acknowledges the power of music and song and has questioned the importance of music. The combined research of neuroscientists, anthropologists and musicians has provided substantial evidence, which indicates that music is both the basis of language, but is also homo sapiens' collective and connecting language. It is this that allows us, en masse, to clap in time to music un-cued and un-conducted. Some melodies are particularly favoured and are 'recycled' using different lyrics. A song also has the potential to 'hold' a collective memory, that, when played, is identified as representing a particular event or time.

Music can take over when words are insufficient and the actor-musician has the flexibility to use and present music or language to the audience as appropriate. But aesthetically it has something further to offer; the fusion of instrument and body. The glass flutes used in *The Winter's Tale*, bore witness to this fusion as hot breath was exhaled via the instrument indicating that it is the physical presence of the musician that exists within the flute. Alternatively, a stringed instrument such as a violin is 'embraced' by the actor-musician becoming part of the individual. This allows and can take on many 'personalities' with many differing voices. A further advantage of the instruments being visible is that it allows for the performer to incorporate emotion or if required showmanship - virtuoso flair into the playing of the instrument. A musician in a pit is concentrating on playing the notes, turning the pages of the music but remains relatively still. Whereas on stage, the actor-musician is not so restricted and can simulate effort, for instance into 'searching' out those notes high on the fret board. This can add to the excitement for an audience.

The case studies have demonstrated that the actor-musician and its use is not restricted to one specific musical style. The fusion of the two art forms, music and drama allow for the audience to witness the entire creative event, as there are no musicians concealed in a pit. This was of particular importance with *Tosca* as it demystified and made opera accessible to an audience that would

not have considered experiencing this type of work. For the performer this also provided flexibility as, in this instance, it was staged in the round. This was something, which at that time had not previously been attempted by opera companies and also harkened back to early British theatre.

This research also indicates that there is a substantial use of music and song in popular theatre and questioned its importance both in theatrical performance and to mankind in general. The anthropological research makes a detailed claim that our appreciation of music, and not in the cultural sense, is the underlying structure of language. Furthermore, the belief is that early man used sounds in order to communicate with the group for collaboration and survival. This research reinforces the importance of music and song; sung, played and heard. Equally, the research conducted by the neuroscientists has taken this further and they are convinced that all humans have an inbuilt musical facility and which exists as a basis for language. It further demonstrates that research conducted into the verbal communication between mother and baby has a distinctive and identifiable rhythm and musicality. It provides a plausible theory for an overall demand for music in our lives, communal singing and musical theatre.

The thesis discusses the role of the audience in musical theatre. Caroline Heim defines the audience as a 'co-creator' that understands their role in the performance. The nineteenth century rules of audience etiquette have, to a large extent, been abandoned by our contemporary musical theatre audience, who no longer stay silent, but whistle and cheer. Also popular musical theatre is less inhibited than opera audiences who neither sing nor physically engage with the music. Whereas in the popular musical theatre audience, it is expected that the audience will join in<sup>701</sup> singing, clapping and tapping feet to the rhythm. However, the factor that determines this is both the popularity and prior knowledge of the music. Carlton recognized the power that familiar music had and in creating *From a Jack to a King* and *Return to the Forbidden Planet*, he

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<sup>701</sup> *Mamma Mia!* A west end musical in which the audience have ceased to be co-creators, frequently dominate the singing and after the calls and in common with rock bands perform encores for more communal singing.

chose the music carefully. Both shows use well-known, yet appropriate songs that move the story along.

The audience response to the actor-musicians in the 1983 Bubble *Return to the Forbidden Planet* filmed recording and also witnessed in a revival at the Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch in 2013, demonstrates that our understanding of pitch, rhythm and tempo is linked to an ability to communicate and co-operate en masse when the audience, for example, starts to clap in time with the music. It is a spontaneous action to which no aural or visual cue is given to begin it and neither is there a conductor beating the time.

Carlton was impressed with the work that the Bubble had done under Walford's guidance, speaking of it as 'evangelical theatre', which created audiences from a group of people who had never been to the theatre before. This same evangelism could also be applied to other theatre practitioners such as Pete Rowe, whose work it also influenced.

This thesis has concentrated on the social conditions and theatrical influences in which the actor-musician was both developed and then established. Today the actor-musician is recognized as a type of performer and as a musical theatre performance style. Rowe, who subsequently became the Bubble's artistic director from 1986 to 1989, had seen some actor-musicians productions at the Bubble. He saw how powerful it could be and started integrating actor-musicians into his own work. On leaving the Bubble he first joined Clwyd Theatr Cymru and subsequently the New Wolsey, Ipswich. With both of these theatres he has carried on the actor-musician work. Rowe is still in post in Ipswich and from where in 2011 he directed a twenty-two actor-musician version of *Guys and Dolls*.<sup>702</sup> This was a co-production between, Clwyd Theatr the New Wolsey Theatre and Salisbury Playhouse.

From the opening moment of this exhilarating co-production [...] you know you're in confident, charismatic hands. A group of New York hoodlums take to the stage brandishing cases, one calls out: 'Let's Do it!' They open the cases with

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<sup>702</sup>*Guys and Dolls* book by Abe Burrows and Jo Swerling; music & lyrics by Frank Loesser. First British production London Coliseum, 28th May 1953.

swagger, but pull out musical instruments instead of guns. It's the first of many ingenious touches under Peter Rowe's direction, with cast members doubling up as the house band. This gives the show an extraordinary buzz, and intensifies the mood of key scenes with the musicians woven right through them. Cleverly, it also makes you notice the music more, beyond the glorious best-known numbers, such as *Luck Be a Lady*, *Take Back Your Mink*, and the show-stealer, *Sit Down You're Rocking the Boat*.<sup>703</sup>

The combination of Walford's work and Carlton's success engendered substantial interest and by the late 80s and early 90s, other regional theatre directors were starting to use actor-musicians. One such director was John Doyle who worked at the Watermill in Newbury Berkshire on many actor-musician musicals. Doyle's real pioneering work of the actor-musician began at the Watermill Theatre, Newbury with a production of *Cabaret* (1998), where he was associate director for ten years.

Doyle makes it clear that his use of the actor-musician was not as a combination performer. In those early days, performers sat with their music stands, got up and acted and sat down again. The music and the scenes were not integrated.<sup>704</sup>

According to the website, the theatre 'produces quality work that attracts high calibre artists and creative teams earning it a reputation as one of the very best producing regional theatres in the country'.<sup>705</sup> But he came to prominence with his actor-musician production of Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*, which first transferred from the Watermill to the West End. Subsequently the production was taken to Broadway where both he and his musical arranger, Sarah Travis, won Tony's.<sup>706</sup>

When his actor-musician production of *Sweeney Todd* proved successful and brought him acclaim both in Britain and America, he then consolidated his reputation in America with another Sondheim musical, *Company*.

<sup>703</sup> *Guys and Dolls* review, *The Guardian* Elisabeth Mahoney, 16th March 2011

<sup>704</sup> Pender, Rick Sondheim Review *Finding the Story: An Interview with director John Doyle* (Vol.12 No.4 Summer 2006).

<sup>705</sup> Joyce, Geoff. 2006. The Watermill's Jill Fraser, *Sightline* 29 No 1(Spring 2006) p.39.

<sup>706</sup> Doyle won a Tony for best musical revival and Sarah Travis also won a Tony for Best Orchestrations (11 June 2006). She is the first woman to have won an award in this category.

The increase in directors wishing to use actor-musicians has created a demand for more performers. Jeremy Harrison who had worked at the Watermill also, developed the first actor-musician degree course at Rose Bruford college which was validated by the University of Manchester. This course has proved to be very popular. In 2014 a second actor-musician programme was offered by Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts, whose degrees are validated by the University of East Anglia. Mountview has also formed a relationship with the Watermill theatre in Newbury. This theatre still maintains its interest in the actor-musician. The Mountview rationale for this course is that:

There is an ever-increasing demand from the theatre industry for performers who combine first-rate acting ability with a high-level of musicianship. Mountview's Actor Musician degree develops these dual skills to the highest level, enabling graduates to work professionally as actors on stage, as musicians or as performers who can combine musicianship and acting.<sup>707</sup>

The third is at Guildford School of Acting (GSA) which is now part of the University of Surrey. The aims for this degree are that:

Throughout the programme the emphasis is on your development as a performer and as an actor, the ethos of the course is to create an ensemble that are capable of taking any piece and working together to find new ways of exploring, interpreting and performing a piece of theatre. Your skills when you leave the course of training will enable you to work as both an actor and an actor/musician across a range of texts and performance contexts.

Both the GSA and Mountview courses are offered by drama schools whose reputations lie mainly with their musical theatre provision and more importantly that their graduate focus is upon the West End. There is a distinct difference between these two degrees and that offered by Rose Bruford. Bruford's degree is centred on ensemble and European companies that devise work that incorporates music and drama. Whereas with the two drama schools it can be argued that the inclusion of musicianship is possibly to make their musical theatre performers more employable. GSA is ensemble focused although there

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<sup>707</sup> Mountview.org.uk.

is no indication of an interest in world theatre and neither does Mountview give an indication of an interest in ensemble. It is important to note that both the drama schools include dance, indicating that they are particularly interested in their students developing as 'triple threat' performers. It is this that is the indicator that there is a musical theatre performer bias as opposed to the development of a more specialized actor-musician.

The demand for actor-musicians is not restricted to musical theatre and there are actor-musician companies that are now diversifying with the type of music that they play. Alternatively there are a number of actor-musician companies, such as the Rude Mechanicals, that specialise in a particular acting genre, combining actor-musicians and commedia dell'arte. Whereas Dumbwise a touring company, uses classic and modern texts, and Blackeyed Theatre, which incorporates actor-musicians, recently toured a new adaptation of Bram Stoker's, *Dracula* (2013).<sup>708</sup> Sharpwire's work has already been discussed and Gogmagogs are unusual as they come from a classical music background and looking for a different audience.

[...] founded in 1995 by the theatre director Lucy Bailey and violinist Nell Catchpole through their common desire to release the physical expression of the classical musician. The company's work has since received huge acclaim for its combination of virtuoso string playing, dynamic physical movement and inventive, groundbreaking theatre.

Lucy Bailey writing on the Gogmagogs website says that:

I am a theatre director and a classically trained musician who has tried at every opportunity to use music in my work. I have always believed that it is possible to communicate new, and often difficult music, to a wider audience; by revealing it's [sic] innate power through a theatrical language. There is so much movement hidden in music and this connection is a sensual one, which communicates on an immediate and subconscious level. My work therefore is to find those physical gestures that will unlock the meaning and the form.<sup>709</sup>

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<sup>708</sup> Blackeyed Theatre: *Dracula* by Bram Stoker, adapted by John Ginman (2013.0

<sup>709</sup> <http://www.littlevikings.co.uk/gogmagogs/home/home.php>

Walford has continued to work in Britain directing Shakespeare. Her productions have included *The Comedy of Errors* (2007) at the Ludlow Festival, *Twelfth Night* at the Cliffdown Theatre (2011) and *The Merchant of Venice* (2012) at the Queen's Theatre Hornchurch. Each of these productions has also included actor-musician work. It was the Hornchurch production in which Matt Devitt played Shylock and resented being lauded just for his guitar solo.<sup>710</sup>

The popularity or demand for musicals has seen an increase in the number of productions utilising the actor-musician. Whilst original pieces have been written, there has also been a concentration on reworking existing musicals, such as *Cabaret* or *Irma La Douce*. As musicals of this type fall into the category of 'full-scale' musicals, as already detailed earlier in this chapter, it has had a substantial impact on the role of the actor-musician. This has been in two ways. Musical such as the two just cited have scores that utilise orchestral instruments, unlike *Return to the Forbidden Planet*, which uses a majority of electronic instruments. Therefore a broader range of musical talent is required. Secondly, there has been a shift from the performer who is primarily an actor who also plays an instrument, to a performer who integrates both skills into one performance. This development has occurred as directors, such as John Doyle, have realised that with some musicals it is possible to create an integrated work of text and music. This shift in emphasis on performance skill and style should be reflected in a descriptive title change from 'actor/musician' to 'actor-musician', thus defining those roles that require acting and some musicianship, such as *Godspell*, as opposed to those where the entire book and score is woven together for performance.

This thesis concentrated on the creation and early development of the actor-musician. Since *Return to the Forbidden Planet*, there have been a number of musicals in the West End that have utilised the actor-musician - for example, *The Jersey Boys* (2008) and *Once* (2013). The company, Kneehigh has also had a brief foray into the West End with *Brief Encounter* (2008). Kneehigh, which is based in Cornwall, has, alongside its use of the actor-musician,

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<sup>710</sup> Matt Devitt, interview, Hornchurch, 20 September 2012.

adopted Walford's original Bubble touring idea and have had a tent created that is named the Asylum which they take out to the wider community.

'The cast of five play[ing] guitars and flutes with skill, as well as providing vocals for eerie siren-calls and haunting church-like chants'<sup>711</sup>

What is of interest though is that, with the exception of John Doyle's production of *Carmen* at the Watermill, Newbury in 2000, there have been no other actor-musician operas since Walford's *Tosca* (1985) and neither have any been written. Mountview Academy in its audition criteria for the actor-musician actively degree states that,

Please note that songs must:  
Not be from the classical repertoire (this includes opera)<sup>712</sup>

Kate Edgar believes that the actor-musician is capable of more but thus far the new work has not been created. Her dream is for the National Theatre to give fifteen actor-musicians twelve weeks to workshop a production that is not an extant musical or a *Tosca* but something that celebrates and exploits the whole art of the actor-musician. But, so far, this has not been done.<sup>713</sup>

Travis raised an interesting point regarding Broadway orchestras. She had noted that the Broadway houses, following on from Wagner, were now covering over their pits, which meant that not only were the musicians unseen, more importantly no sound was coming from the pit. The instruments were amplified but without the acoustic sound from the pit the sound was like a compact disc (CD). Travis, when talking about the American 2006 Tony awards presentations said that: 'At the Tonys, *Sweeney* was the only thing that was done live.'<sup>714</sup>

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<sup>711</sup> <http://www.getreading.co.uk/what-on/theatre/review-dracula-by-blackeyed-theatre> accessed 21 October 2013.

<sup>712</sup> <http://www.mountview.org.uk/applying/studying-at-mountview/actor-musician.html#sthash.WxvighC4.dpuf>

<sup>713</sup> Kate Edgar phone interview 10 February 2011.

<sup>714</sup> Sarah Travis, interview, in (Bagnor, Newbury: 2006).

Musical directors such as Rob Cousins and performers such as Karen Mann acknowledge that since the first introduction of the actor-musician that the level of musicianship has increased. This is due to a number of reasons. Trained actors who also had a high level of musicianship were now putting themselves up for actor-musician roles. Those performers who had already been working as actor-musicians were improving their musicianship. Significantly, it was the creation of an actor-musician degree that would validate the practice both academically and as an established form of performance.

There are also freelance directors such as Craig Revel Horwood, who has directed actor-musician versions of *Hot Mikado*, *Sunset Boulevard* and *Chess*. Horwood initially took over from Doyle at the Watermill and he continues to direct actor-musician shows. Horwood is a dancer and does incorporate dance into his actor-musician productions. He has recently directed an actor-musician version of *Fiddler on the Roof* (2013) in conjunction with the Mayflower Theatre.

The show consisted of twelve actor/singers who were also the musicians – we call them ‘actor/musos’ in the industry.<sup>715</sup>

Amongst the drama schools and in the British musical theatre industry there is concern about the ‘triple threat’ performer. In Britain the triple threat is perceived as being the singer, dancer and actor. Many musicals require that the performers are multi-skilled. The term ‘triple threat’ is not exclusively a theatrical term. But it does imply that it is no longer sufficient to be a highly talented performer in one area alone and that, if this is the case, unemployment is the threat. The actor-musician seems to present a different combination triple threat: singer, actor and musician. Patti Lupone, who played Mrs Lovett in Doyle’s Broadway transfer of *Sweeney Todd* concurs with this:

‘You could see that with every cast member – the instrument became a part of them. Many members of the company played more than one instrument [...] These

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<sup>715</sup> Revel Horwood, Craig, *Tales from the Dance Floor*, (Michael O’Mara Books Limited, London, 2014) Kindle version. Loc. 586

actors were triple threats in a whole other way – actor, singer, musician.<sup>716</sup>

The defining element of an actor-musician company and of which Rob Cousins, the musical director, Karen Mann and Carlton amongst others all refer to is the company unity and how they grow into an ensemble so quickly. The Queen's Theatre and the New Wolsey Theatre do not use star names in their productions. If one of the performers is playing a leading role, they will also be filling in – for example, playing small percussion instruments such as a triangle. Rowe was also against the use of star names as he said it damages the ensemble. He cited Doyle's casting of Janie Dee and David Soul in *Mack & Mabel* saying that it made the rest of the cast look like chorus. Interestingly, Sarah Travis<sup>717</sup> also referred to the majority of the cast in the same production as chorus, although her opinion was it was the structure of the musical itself that had been the cause of this.

Rowe did recognise the pressure that commercial managements exact upon productions. But he felt that if you put in star names where they are playing in an ensemble style, 'it is a shame that it [the ensemble] is watered down'.<sup>718</sup> There was a similar instance with *Sweeney Todd*. The production had closed in the West End but was still playing on Broadway. A British tour was sent out with what had been the Ambassadors production but instead was advertised as 'fresh from Broadway', with Jason Donovan<sup>719</sup> and Harriet Thorpe in the leading roles.

The pre-eminent skill with the actor-musician is acting. Rowe and Carlton are clear that when auditioning for actor-musicians that they are chosen for their acting skills first. Carlton only auditions once a year for his repertory company, which, he says, is 'a conventional audition'.<sup>720</sup> Auditionees are asked to: 'prepare a modern piece, a classical piece, probably Shakespeare, and to sing a song.' He is of the opinion that regardless of whether the performer's

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<sup>716</sup> Lupone, Patti, *Patti Lupone a Memoir*, (Crown Publishing Group, New York, 2010) Kindle version, p.275.

<sup>717</sup> Sarah Travis interview, Watermill Theatre, Newbury, 2006.

<sup>718</sup> Pete Rowe interview, Hornchurch, May 5 2006.

<sup>719</sup> *Sweeney Todd* UK tour 2006.

<sup>720</sup> Bob Carlton, interview, Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch May 5 2006.

professional training has been in music or acting, the majority of people who play an instrument can invariably sing.<sup>721</sup> They are then taken to the Queens' Theatre rehearsal room which is filled with musical instruments. They are asked to try out the instruments and 'to see whether or not they have natural aptitude'.<sup>722</sup> Rowe said that 'the biggest difficulty is the acting' and that [at the auditions] 'it is always a trade-off between director, musical director and choreographer'.<sup>723</sup> However, he did qualify this by saying that it is becoming less of a compromise as the pool of talent is getting bigger all the time. Although, Rowe also referred to '*Buddy-type*' shows which are put on by commercial managements, where they are really only interested in someone who is a good musician and 'the acting very weak'. The actor-musician is more than a trained actor who can play an instrument. An actor-musician is a performer who is skilled in acting, musicianship and song. They are able to work within these three skills and move seamlessly between each one. The crucial element of the craft is their ability to memorise the text, the blocking and the score, making the performance a coherent whole.

The actor-musician is now a recognized and established form of performer but this thesis establishes that its roots and development lie not in the commercial sector but in the community and outreach.

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<sup>721</sup> Ibid.

<sup>722</sup> Ibid.

<sup>723</sup> Pete Rowe, Interview. Hornchurch May 5 2006.

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