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Louis Grabu and his opera Albion and Albanus

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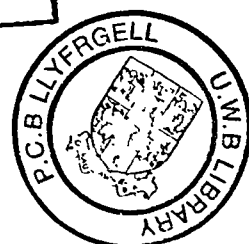
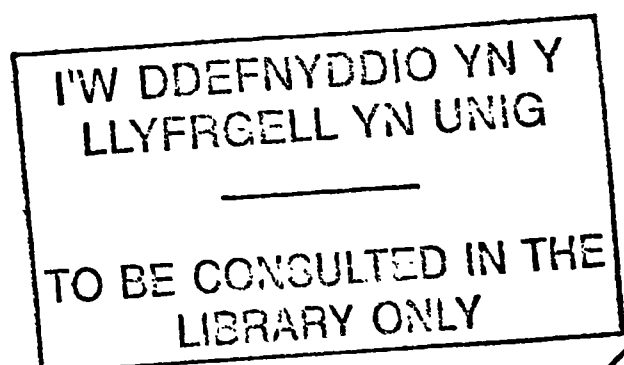
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LOUIS GRABU AND HIS OPERA
ALBION AND ALBANIUS

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of
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Two Volumes: Volume I



Summary

Albion and Albanius and its composer, Louis Grabu, have been unjustly dismissed by musical scholars. This thesis seeks to redress that injustice. A documentary biography of Grabu is provided, and a discussion of the inception of *Albion and Albanius*, detailing the role of each of its creators. The opera is subjected to a thorough examination, including a discussion of: 1) the relationship between the 1685 libretto and the 1687 score; 2) its large-scale structure and tonal plan; 3) and its vocal and instrumental writing. These studies reveal that Grabu, in composing the music, Dryden, in writing the libretto, and Betterton, in designing staging, drew upon specific models from Lully's *Phaëton* (1683). Furthermore, it is shown that Grabu drew upon a thorough knowledge of Lully's other operas: not only the general compositional features and structures, but also specific movements. There is, in addition, evidence suggesting that Grabu borrowed musical ideas and techniques from Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*.

Information regarding the opera's performance is gathered from the score and developed through comparison with contemporary practices. In particular, the similarities between Grabu's score and those of Lully printed by Ballard suggest that Grabu wrote for an ensemble modelled on that of the Paris Opéra. The dance and staging elements of the opera are examined in the light of information about, and illustrations from, English and especially French productions (particularly the drawings of Berain).

Grabu's influence on Purcell, and *Dioclesian* in particular, is demonstrated. The reception history of *Albion and Albanius* is explored, and the assertion that Grabu was an incompetent composer and the opera an artistic failure is shown to be unfounded. A modern edition of *Albion and Albanius* with critical commentary is provided.

LOUIS GRABU AND HIS OPERA *ALBION AND ALBANIUS*

VOLUME I

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| Acknowledgements | iv |
| Author's Declaration | v |
| Chapter 1 Introduction | 1 |
| Chapter 2 Louis Grabu: A Biography | 9 |
| Chapter 3 The Genesis of <i>Albion and Albanus</i> | 29 |
| Chapter 4 Dryden's Libretto and the Score of <i>Albion and Albanus</i> | 44 |
| Chapter 5 Large-scale Structure in <i>Albion and Albanus</i> | 63 |
| Chapter 6 The style and Structure of Constituent Movements | |
| 6.1 Recitative | 77 |
| 6.2 Songs, Choruses and Ensembles | 98 |
| 6.3 Instrumental Music | 120 |
| Chapter 7 Grabu's Borrowings from Lully | 140 |
| Chapter 8 Performing <i>Albion and Albanus</i> | 158 |
| Chapter 9 Stage Design and Dance in <i>Albion and Albanus</i> | 192 |
| Chapter 10 The Legacy of <i>Albion and Albanus</i> | 221 |
| Chapter 11 Reception History | 248 |
| Chapter 12 Conclusion | 267 |
| Appendices | |
| A. Manuscript and Printed Sources of Grabu's Music | 272 |
| B. Documents on the Early Reception History of <i>Albion and Albanus</i> | 277 |
| i. <i>The Raree Show</i> | |
| ii. Extracts from the dedicatory essay to <i>Miscellanea: or Various Discourses Written Originally by the Sieur de Saint Evremont And made English by Ferrand Spence</i> | |
| iii. An excerpt from <i>English Dramatick Poets</i> by Gerald Langbaine | |
| C. Extracts of lyrics from the musical sections of <i>Brutus of Alba, or Augusta's Triumphs</i> | 285 |
| Bibliography | 291 |

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Music and theatre in the English Restoration united in a hybrid plant that bore several different and, to modern eyes, strange fruits. Such has been the victory of all-sung opera over any other type of musical theatre, that, even for the English, a return to the exciting and changeable musical theatre landscape of London during the last forty years of the seventeenth century is a voyage to a foreign and recalcitrant land. It is therefore interesting to observe that one of the few works from the period that conforms closely to the modern notion of opera, Dryden's and Grabu's *Albion and Albanus*, should today be one of that era's most neglected entertainments. Not only that, but for those intent on exploring the context of the period in an attempt to shed light on the life and works of Henry Purcell, the overlooking of *Albion and Albanus* as a repository of information on the contemporary theatre and its music has left a sizeable gap.

The reopening of the public theatres at the restoration of Charles II initiated an important process of change in the relationship between music and drama in England. Whereas prior to the interregnum, narrative drama had flourished separately from the non-narrative concoction of scenic design, music, dance and poetry of the Caroline court masque, the Restoration theatre encouraged a merging of these previously divergent strands. Patents for two theatrical companies were granted by Charles in the summer of 1660. Thomas Killigrew, patentee of the King's Company, and in particular, William Davenant, patentee of the Duke's Company, took the opportunity offered by the closure of the theatres and the subsequent break in dramatic tradition to introduce both changeable scenery and a much greater amount of dance and music into dramatic representations. These innovations seem to have been thoroughly welcomed by the audiences of the day, judging from the diary entries of such men as Pepys

and Evelyn, and from the increasing prominence given to music, scenic design and dance in the productions of the first fifteen years of the Restoration.

Through-composed opera, on the other hand, failed to find a home on the Restoration stage. During the Commonwealth sung drama had, on occasion, been staged as an apparently acceptable substitute for spoken drama. At least one of these productions, *The Siege of Rhodes*, seems to have been sung throughout. From the title, which states that the story was sung in 'Recitative Musick', it is clear that *The Siege of Rhodes* was composed after the Italian declamatory style, though the music unfortunately does not survive.¹ With the reopening of the theatres, however, even this production was stripped of most of its music and presented as a straight play. After enduring some twenty years' hiatus in spoken drama, London audiences, and the nascent theatre companies, seemed more than satisfied with a diet free of opera.

This is not to say that the same audiences were happy to forgo the pleasures of music in the playhouse; as has been noted above, music was allowed to take an increasingly prominent role in theatrical productions. Almost every play of the period would have been graced by music before the play began, and act tunes which were played between each of the acts. Other songs and instrumental music might be included in the body of the play.² The extent to which spectacle and music were integrated within the drama, and the amounts of each that were included, varied greatly. In the 1670s, several important works explored the integration of music and drama, and expanded the amount of music included in a given play. Elkannah Settle's *The Empress of Morocco*, with music by Matthew Locke,

¹ See E. Dent, *Foundations of English Opera* (Cambridge, 1928), pp. 43-61.

² A thorough discussion of the use of music within Restoration plays can be found in C. Price, *Music in the Restoration Theatre (With a Catalogue of Instrumental Music in the Plays 1665-1713)* (Ann Arbor, 1979).

suggests one of the directions which the relationship between music and drama was taking. The play, which was staged in 1673, contains a masque in the fourth act in which the action of the main drama is carried forward in a musical episode. This masque is in fact a masque within the play and thus, while several of the actors who normally speak in the play sing in this passage, they do so as characters in the masque and not as themselves.³

While *The Empress of Morocco* is notable for the way in which a musical passage is used to advance the dramatic action, *The Tempest*, produced in the following year, shows another branch of the path along which the rather awkward pairing of music and drama was advancing. The work, which had already been revived in an adaptation by Dryden and Davenant in 1667, was now altered once again, but instead of providing the music with a dramatic function, there is simply a much greater quantity of it. Little thought is given to the dramatic role of the music, and those characters who sing are entirely separate from those who speak. Such a situation is not entirely surprising. While Settle's was a modern play, written with all the innovations of the Restoration period in mind, *The Tempest* was originally written for an entirely different production aesthetic, one in which music played a decidedly less prominent role. Coupled with the music, and equally foreign to the original design of the play, was the spectacle, including dancing, extravagant scenes, and machines. One would expect the modern scenic and musical elements to sit somewhat uneasily with the older drama.

The Tempest was, nevertheless, a great popular and financial success. The Duke's Company, which had mounted it, apparently attributed this to the music and spectacle, and so proceeded with another lavish entertainment that mixed these elements with spoken drama. This successor, which had, in fact, been planned before *The Tempest* (see note 6

³ See C. Price, *Henry Purcell and the London Stage* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 9-11.

below), proved to be a combination of the two strands of music and theatre exemplified in *The Empress of Morocco* and *The Tempest*. In *Psyche*, Thomas Shadwell and his collaborating musicians (primarily Locke), provided a modern work which had by right all the innovations of the restored theatre, and furthermore put these elements at the service of the drama. Thus the music is allowed to participate in the action of the drama, and one of the principal characters, Venus, both sings and speaks. Like *The Tempest* before it, *Psyche* proved to be a popular success, though in financial terms it seems to have been less profitable.⁴ Such were the expenditures on the spectacular aspects of the work, which were more extensive than *The Tempest* in both musical and scenic terms, that even an enthusiastic public reception could not bring in enough money to make the venture as profitable as a hastily organised hotch-potch. This consideration was to influence the way in which London's theatre companies pursued operatic entertainments throughout the Restoration period.

Native English musico-dramatic experiments were not the only influences circulating in London in the 1670s. In fact, *Psyche* itself was modelled upon the tragédie-ballet of the same name by Molière, Quinault and Corneille, with music by Lully, which was produced in Paris in 1671. During the summer of that year, Thomas Betterton had travelled to France as part of the Duke's Company's preparations for building the new Dorset Garden theatre. As was to happen later with Lully's *Phaëton*, Betterton was inspired by the Paris *Pysché*, and his desire to produce a similarly spectacular entertainment resulted in the efforts of Shadwell and Locke.

⁴ John Downes in *Roscius Anglicanus* comments that 'The long expected opera of *Psyche*, came forth in all her Ornaments; new Scenes, new Machines, new Cloaths, new *French* Dances: This opera was Splendidly set out, especially the Scenes; the Charge of which amounted to above 800 *l*. It had a Continuance of Performance about 8 days together it prov'd very Beneficial to the Company; yet the *Tempest* got them more money' (pp. 35-36). For an extended discussion of *Psyche* and its origins, see E. Dent, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-124.

Only two years after Betterton's trip to France, Robert Cambert, a pioneer of the French operatic form, arrived in England.⁵ In 1671, he and his librettist Perrin had mounted in Paris the first production of the new Académie de la musique, *Pomone*, with great success. Unfortunately for Cambert, only a year later Perrin's mismanagement allowed Lully to gain control of the Académie. Cambert subsequently left France for England, bringing with him the seeds of the new French-style opera, and by 30 March 1674, his *Ariane, ou le mariage de Bacchus* was performed at Drury Lane, the home of Killigrew's King's Company. The opera, which began with a panegyric prologue to Charles and his brother James, was all-sung and replete with spectacular staging designs. For whatever reason, Cambert's efforts did not spawn further French operas, though Peter Holman has argued that *Ariane* prompted the Duke's Company to respond with *Psyche*.⁶

After the excitement of the innovations of *Psyche* and the exposure to the newly minted French-style opera, the development of the relationship between music and drama in the public theatres temporarily stagnated. *Psyche*, though popular, had shown the limits of the economic feasibility of music, spectacle and drama, and the theatres seemed satisfied with the knowledge that a less ambitious work such as *The Tempest* was just as popular, and much more lucrative. The French opera was likely to have been equally expensive, but it seems to have aimed at gaining patronage from the Royal purse. *Ariane* had expressly addressed itself to the marriage of the Duke of York and to the praise of Charles II, and its primary

⁵ For a discussion of Cambert's theatrical works, see J. R. Anthony, *French Baroque Music from Beaujoyeulx to Rameau* (London, 1974), pp. 60-66.

⁶ *Four and Twenty Fiddlers* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 343-349. B. Wood and A. Pinnock have argued that Duke's company were not yet prepared to mount *Psyche* in response to *Ariane* and so countered with the hastily mounted, but extremely successful, production of *The Tempest*. See the liner notes to the recording of *Psyche*, The New London Consort, directed by Phillip Pickett (L'Oiseau-Lyre, 1995), pp. 10-13.

producers, Cambert and Grabu, attempted to make it the first work of a Royal Academy of Music patronised by the King. But Royal money was not forthcoming and the venture failed. Thus neither the theatre companies nor the Crown had the financial will to press forward the union of drama and spectacle for another ten years.

Despite the fact that a few new works combining music and drama did appear in the late 1670s, notably Charles Davenant's *Circe* (1677), none represented an advance over *Psyche* in exploring the relationship between the two arts. In the early 1680s, however, native through-sung opera, in the form of Blow's court entertainment *Venus and Adonis*, once again appeared. The work is on a small scale; though it contains a prologue and three acts, it is something less than an hour in duration, and the original performance seems to have gone completely unnoticed by contemporary observers. Nevertheless, it may have represented a preliminary attempt by English composers to form a Royal Academy of Music in the same fashion as that attempted by Grabu and Cambert a few years earlier. In a petition of April 1683, Blow and the Master of the King's Music, Nicholas Staggins, asked the King for a licence 'for Creating of an Academy or Opera of Musick'.⁷ Recent scholarship has also suggested that Purcell's composition of *Dido and Aeneas* followed closely upon the creation of *Venus and Adonis*.⁸ It too may have been planned to strengthen the case for a projected Academy, though the plan failed.

Blow's opera and the attempt to form a Royal Academy may have represented an effort to pre-empt the stirrings in London's one remaining theatre company of plans to bring a French opera to the English stage. In November 1682, the Duke's Company absorbed the long-ailing King's

⁷ The document is reproduced in B. Wood and A. Pinnock, "Unscarr'd by turning times"? the dating of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, *Early Music* 20 (1992), p. 387.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 387-388.

Company, and the resulting conglomerate was renamed the United Company. One year later, encouraged by Charles II, the company's leader, Betterton, again travelled to France, now with the hope of importing a French opera. When this proved impossible, he turned to a composer of the French style who was well known to him, Louis Grabu, and asked him to write a through-sung opera to an English libretto by John Dryden.

It is clear from this brief account of musical theatre productions in England that the resulting opera, *Albion and Albanus*, stands at a critical juncture in English theatrical development. It represents the first advance in the public theatre of the relationship between music and drama since *Psyche*. Its combination of a composer of the French school and an English librettist reflects a continuation of the cross-fertilisation of English and French practices evident in the theatre of the 1670s. Furthermore, it shows a theatre company once again testing the financial viability of an overtly spectacular entertainment.

A significant misunderstanding of *Albion and Albanus*'s problematic stage run, and several largely unsupported attacks on the work itself, have caused scholars to neglect the opera and assume that its failure to inspire subsequent through-composed opera is reason enough to consider it a dead end. This study will suggest that such a conclusion is unfounded, and that the opera offers information vital to the understanding of English musical theatre of the period. This information includes evidence of the opera's role in the direct transference of elements of the Paris Opéra to the English stage, as well as many crucial insights into both theatrical and musical performance practice. A full appreciation of Purcell's reaction to *Albion and Albanus*, in the form of his subsequent compositions, is likewise impossible without a thorough examination of the opera's music and structure. Finally, such a study reveals that the work itself is of high quality (why else would Purcell have imitated elements of it?), and worthy

of performance today, in a time when renewed interest in Restoration music has led to recordings of music from *The Tempest* and *Pysche*. In the case of the latter work, but for our knowledge of Downes' comments about its popular success (quoted in note 4 above), we might conclude from the ridicule meted out to it in Duffet's *Psyche Debauch'd*, and the lack of a truly similar work until the production of *King Arthur* some seventeen years later, that *Pysche* was an expensive failure. Instead, it is commonly acknowledged to hold an important place in the musical and theatrical development of the English stage, and has been rightly served by a good modern edition. This thesis intends to show that *Albion and Albanus* played an equally important role in the development of English musical theatre, and it is hoped that the critical edition of the opera which accompanies it will engender further investigation of an unjustly neglected work.

Chapter 2

Louis Grabu: A Biography

As with most musicians of the Restoration, there is little information upon which one can build a thorough biography of Louis Grabu. What information there is must be pieced together from Court records, letters, newspaper advertisements, literary references, and musical sources; inevitably, there will be many gaps. In Grabu's case, the first gap stretches from the unknown date of his birth to his marriage in Catherine of Braganza's Catholic Chapel, the record of which is the first indication of his existence.¹

19. Aprill 2 [16]65. In her Maties Chappell Royall att Saint James London were Joyned in Lawfull wedlock Ludovicus Grabeu of Shalon in Catalunnia and Catherine Deluss of Paris.²

Judging from the information provided in this document, Grabu probably met his bride in Paris, but how he came to be there in the first place is unknown.³ He most certainly was educated in France, for the English consistently referred to him as a Frenchman both during and after the time he was active in England.

When and why Grabu travelled to England is also unclear. Whatever the reason, he found great success there, for just under a year after his marriage, he was awarded one of the most eminent jobs in the court

¹ The entry on Grabu in *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, etc.*, claims that Grabu was in France in 1659. He may well have been, but the editors wrongly base this assumption on the erroneous premise that Grabu collaborated with the librettist Pierre Perrin on the opera *Ariadne* (sic), or *The Marriage of Bacchus* in 1659. As we shall see, this was originally composed by Robert Cambert. Philip H. Highfill, K. A. Burnim, and E. A. Langhans (eds.), *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers and other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800*, vi: Garrick to Gyngeell (Carbondale & Edwardsville, 1978), pp. 290-291

² J. C. M. Weale (ed.), *Registers of the Catholic Chapels Royal and The Portuguese Embassy Chapel 1662-1829*, i. *Marriages* (Publications of the Catholic Record Society, 38; London, 1941), p. 4.

³ Two Catalan villages have been suggested as 'Shalon'. *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, etc.* suggests San Celoni near Barcelona (vi, p. 290-291), while Peter Holman suggests Salou, located on the coast south of Tarragona. *Four and Twenty Fiddlers*, (Oxford, 1993), pp. 293-294.

music of Charles II, the post of Master of the King's Musick. A warrant from the Lord Chamberlain's office, dated 24 November 1666, indicates that Louis Grabu was installed

as master of the English chamber musick in ordinary to his Majesty, in the place of Nicholas Lanier, deceased, to inspect and govern the same, with the accustomed allowances and powers as Mr. Lanier formerly did, with all rights and priviledges as he formerly enjoyed.⁴

Some biographical sketches of Grabu have claimed, on the strength of an entry in the Lord Chamberlain's account book, that he received the post on 31 March 1665,⁵ but Peter Holman has convincingly shown that this entry is erroneous and that Grabu's appointment must have occurred one year later.⁶ From a patent dated 17 April 1667, we learn that 'Lewis Grabu, Master of the Musick in place of Nicolas Lanier; [shall be paid] £200 a year from the Exchequer, for life, from Lady Day [25 March] 1666'.⁷

Grabu's appointment may well have come as a shock to many English musicians, and in particular John Banister. The latter was a member of Charles II's Twenty-four Violins, a group which, along with the Chapel Royal, was to become one of the most important and influential musical organisations during the Restoration period.⁸ Prior to Grabu's appointment, Banister had been developing a smaller group of twelve players drawn from the main band, and he may well have expected that, upon Nicholas Lanier's death, he would become the Master of the King's Musick. Some questionable financial dealings with the members of the Twenty-four Violins, however, may have cost him the post, along with Charles II's strong affinity for French-style music with which he must have associated Grabu. Thus, on the one hand, Grabu's status as a Frenchman played strongly in his favour, while on the other hand, his nationality

⁴ A. Ashbee, *Records of English Court Music, i: 1660-1685* (Snodland, 1986), p. 74.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

⁶ P. Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers*, p. 294.

⁷ A. Ashbee, *Records of English Court Music, v: 1625-1714* (Aldershot, 1991), p. 55.

⁸ P. Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers*, especially Chapter 12.

heightened the jealousy several ambitious English musicians felt towards him. This state of affairs complicated Grabu's situation throughout all the years he lived and worked in England.

Part of Grabu's job involved rehearsing the Twenty-four Violins, and a record from 24 December 1666 suggests that he took measures to establish his authority in place of Banister:

Order that Mr. Bannister and the 24 violins appointed do practice with him [Grabu] and all his Majesty's private musick do, from time to time, obey the directions of Louis Grabu, master of the private musick, both for their time of meeting to practise, and also for the time of playing in consort.⁹

About two months later, Pepys recorded a rumour of Banister's displeasure with the situation: 'They talk also how the King's Viallin, Banister, is mad that the King hath a Frenchman come to be chief of some part of the King's Musique'.¹⁰ The final blow came when Grabu was given control of Banister's twelve-member Select band as a result of the latter's questionable handling of the group's pay:

Whereas John Bannister was appointed to make choice of 12 of the 24 violins, to be a select band to wait upon his Majesty, and was paid £600 for himself and the 12 violins in augmentation of their wages, his Majesty authorizes the payment of £600 to Lewis Grabu, master of his Majesty's musick, appointed in the place of John Bannister, for himself and the 12 violins.¹¹

Subsequently, Grabu seems to have distributed the wages to the satisfaction of the band, and in so doing probably managed to gain their backing, as the wording of a remonstrance against Banister seems to indicate; 'Wee the Band of Violins now under the direction of Monsr Grabu'.¹² His musical leadership of the Twenty-four Violins was also successful, if one may judge from two approving comments made by Samuel Pepys on 15 November

⁹ A. Ashbee, *Records of English Court Music*, i, p. 74.

¹⁰ Wednesday, 20 February 1666/7. *Diary of Samuel Pepys*, viii, ed. R. Latham and W. Matthews (London, 1974), p. 73.

¹¹ A. Ashbee, *Records of English Court Music*, i, p. 75.

¹² 29 March, 1667. A. Ashbee, *Records of English Court Music*, viii: 1485-1714 (Aldershot, 1995), pp. 180-181.

1667 and 15 April 1668 (see Chapter 11). Nevertheless, Banister was not his only enemy in the court music. Pelham Humfrey, who himself travelled to France to study the French style, was contemptuous of Grabu, telling Pepys ‘he understands nothing’ (see Chapter 11).

Grabu’s meteoric rise in the court musical establishment touches upon the important question of why he first came to England. It seems unlikely that he crossed the Channel unannounced, and on simple merit (and on his adopted French status) gained a powerful job in the court music. There must be some possibility that he was either sent by the French court, or was requested from them by the English court. Reference to the case of one of Grabu’s compatriots, the composer Robert Cambert, may throw light onto the former’s arrival in England.

Cambert, who composed the first French opera (*Pomone*, 1671), is commonly thought to have fled France in 1673 after losing the *privilège* of the Académies d’Opéra to Lully in 1672. Recently it has been suggested that Cambert’s removal to London was not a self-imposed exile, but rather that he was sent by the French court, and perhaps Louis XIV himself, to serve as a musician to Charles’s French mistress, Louise de Keroualle.¹³ The French court perceived her as an instrument to gain influence with Charles,¹⁴ and establishing her with a proper household, including musicians well-versed in French music of which Charles was so fond, may have been an important concern. Thus, it may not be a coincidence that Cambert made preparations to leave France soon after Keroualle’s elevation to the Duchess of Portsmouth on 25 July 1673. Whether Grabu came to England in a similar situation, that is as a favour to Charles and as an ambassador of French culture, is not clear, but it is certainly a possibility.

¹³ J. Buttrey, ‘New light on Robert Cambert in London, and his *Ballet en Musique*’, *Early Music* 23 (1995), pp. 199-221.

¹⁴ For an examination of Keroualle’s political role, see N. K. Maguire, ‘The Duchess of Portsmouth: English consort and French politician, 1670-85’, *The Stuart Court and Europe*, ed. M. Smuts (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 247-273.

Louis XIV was always concerned (usually successfully) with keeping Charles under the influence of France, and catering to the English King's strong predilection for French culture must have been one of the methods he employed.

Though Grabu had gained a prominent position, and a salary of £200 per year (plus livery) as Master of the King's Musick, prosperity seems to have eluded him. Charles was notorious for his tardiness in paying musicians, a fault which was to cause Grabu great hardship over the years. Despite being awarded the job at the end of March 1666, he did not receive his first payment until 1 September 1669 (see Table 1 below).

In addition to his work administering and rehearsing the Twenty-four Violins and the Select band, Grabu composed and copied music, and taught. A warrant from the Lord Chamberlain's office dated 17 April 1668 shows he was owed '£165. 9s. 6d. ... for fair writing several dances, airs and other music, and for drawing the said music into several parts, for pens, ink and paper, for chamber rent and for the prickers' diet, and for fire and candles and for other necessities, from 4 November 1666 to 25 March 1668'.¹⁵ By 11 March 1671 he was owed an additional £117. 4s. 6d. 'for fair writing and pricking several sorts of music ... in the months of April, July, October, December, 1668, and February 1668-9, and for other services done by him',¹⁶ money that was probably never paid to him. Exactly what music he composed in the 1660s and early 70s is not known, for none of Grabu's existing music can confidently be dated to this period. On 1 October 1667 Pepys heard a 'Song of Peace' by Grabu performed in the Boarded Gallery at Whitehall,¹⁷ but the music no longer exists. The only indication of Grabu's work as a teacher comes from a record of 21 February

¹⁵ A. Ashbee, *Records of English Court Music*, i, p. 83.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

¹⁷ *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, viii, p. 458.

1668/69: ‘Lewis Grabu, Master of his Maties Musick, & to have the teaching of two boyes’,¹⁸ though there must have been more than this document indicates, especially after he was relieved of the post of Master of the King’s Musick. Grabu’s job also required him to attend the King when he travelled from London. In May of 1670, he was one of a group of musicians that accompanied Charles to Dover where the King signed the Secret Treaty.

Warrant to pay £20 to Mr. Lewis Grabu, master of his Majesty’s musick, for his riding charges and expenses in attending upon his Majesty to Dover for 20 days, from 16 May to 4 June 1670, at the rate of 20s. a day.¹⁹

There is no evidence to suggest whether or not Grabu was involved with the London theatres during the 60s and early 70s. In December of 1670 he must have been known well enough by theatre audiences for Thomas Shadwell to drop a casual reference to him in *The Humourists*:

Brisk: Fa, la, la, la, that’s an excellent Corant; really I must confess *Grabu* is a very pretty hopeful Man, but *Berkenshaw* is a rare fellow, give him his due, fa, la, la, for he can teach some to compose, that are deaf, dumb and blind.²⁰

Whether he was known from his position in the court music, or by his efforts in the theatre, is not clear, and though Brisk speaks favourably of him, it is well to remember that in Shadwell’s play the latter is ‘a[n] ayery, fantastick, singing, dancing Coxcomb, that sets up for a well-bred Man and a man of honour, but mistakes in everything’.²¹

The first definitive notice of Grabu’s work in the theatre comes from 1674. The title page of the libretto for *Ariane, or the Marriage of Bacchus* reads:

An Opera, or, a Vocal Representation. First Compos’d by Monsieur P. P. Now put into Musick by Monsieur Grabut, Master of His Majesties Musick. And Acted by the Royall Academy of Musick, At the Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden.

¹⁸ A. Ashbee, *Records of English Court Music*, i, p. 88.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 113.

²⁰ *The Works of Thomas Shadwell*, ed. Montague Summers, i (London, 1927), p. 221

²¹ Ibid., p. 191.

The opera, however, performed on 30 March 1674, had almost certainly been composed by Robert Cambert some fifteen years earlier.²² In 1659 the librettist Pierre Perrin had written *Ariane, ou le mariage de Bacchus* to celebrate the nuptials of Louis XIV and Marie Thérèse of Spain. Cambert composed the music, but the opera was overshadowed by Cavalli's *Ercole Amante* and was not publicly performed. Perrin and Cambert seem to have revised the work in the early 1670s, perhaps for performance at the new Académies d'Opéra, but once again it was put on hold. Cambert probably brought the unperformed score with him to England in 1673. Unfortunately, the music does not survive, and why Grabu's name was placed on the title page instead of Cambert's is unclear.

Several biographical sketches of Grabu suggest that he had been a student of Cambert in France. This assumption must be based upon their association in the production of *Ariane*, for no extant source indicates such a relationship, nor suggests that they even knew one another before Cambert arrived in England. In fact, as Christina Bashford points out, there is no concrete evidence of Cambert's participation with the production, since his name does not appear on the libretto.²³ Some sort of relationship, however, can be inferred. The opera was performed in French and all of the 1659 libretto is present in the 1674 version (with some additions); common sense strongly suggests that Cambert's earlier music was used. Grabu may well have composed the new prologue attached to the work in honour of Charles II and celebrating the marriage of his brother James to Mary of Modena. Perhaps Cambert felt that Grabu's name would carry more weight with the opera's English audiences and so left his own contribution anonymous. Their likely association is also strengthened by the attempt to establish a

²² See P. Danchin, 'The Foundation of the Royal Academy of Music in 1674 and Pierre Perrin's *Ariane*', *Theatre Survey* 25 (1984), pp. 53-67 and C. Bashford, 'Perrin and Cambert's *Ariane, ou le mariage de Bacchus* Re-examined', *Music and Letters* 72 (1991), pp. 1-26.

²³ C. Bashford, op. cit., p. 3.

Royal Academy of Music in England along the lines of that which Cambert had previously initiated in France. Again, Cambert's role is implicit, Grabu's explicit. The name of the latter appears on the libretto, along with the 'Royall Academy of Musick', while Cambert's participation in the formation of the Académies d'Opéra in France suggests that he provided Grabu with the idea.

Grabu was directly involved in the practical side of the production, as several documents show. Three days before *Ariane* was performed at Drury Lane, a warrant from the Lord Chamberlain to Christopher Wren instructed him to 'deliver to Monsieur Grabu, or to such as he shall appoint, such of the scenes remaining in the theatre of Whitehall as shall be useful for the French opera at the theatre in Bridges Street, and the said Monsieur Grabu to return them again safely, after 14 dayes time, to the theatre at Whitehall'.²⁴ On 2 May of the same year, Grabu was involved in a dispute between several French dancers, 'M^r Pecurre M^r Le Temps M^r Shenan and M^r D'muraile ffrench Dancers in the late Opera',²⁵ and Thomas Killigrew. We learn that 'Mons^r Grabu was often at their [the dancers] practising, & knew their Clothes were makeinge & shewed no dislike'.²⁶ His involvement with the details of this opera may suggest he took similar pains with *Albion and Albanius* when it came to the stage. Thus, Grabu seems to have been heavily involved in *Ariane* even if Cambert composed most (or all) of the music, probably in the hope that it would be the first of many productions by the nascent Academy. In the event, however, the venture came to nothing.

Grabu's attempts to set up a Royal Academy may have been occasioned by the loss of his court job. In November of 1673 the Test Act

²⁴ 27 March 1674. A warrant to 'Mr. Killigrew' on 27 April requests the return of the scenes. A. Ashbee, *Records of English Court Music*, i, pp. 135, 137.

²⁵ A Nicoll, *A History of English Drama*, i, fourth edition (Cambridge, 1967), p. 355.

²⁶ A. Ashbee, *Records of English Court Music*, v, 67.

(passed the previous Spring) came into effect, banning Roman Catholics from serving the King:

No person who is a Roman Catholicke or reputed to be of ye Roman Catholique Religion doe presume after the Eighteenth day of this instant November to come into his Maties presence or to His Palace or to the place where his court shalbe.²⁷

Along with many other Catholic court musicians, Grabu was forced out of his job.²⁸ His ties with the court were not completely severed, however, for in January 1676/7 the Lord Chamberlain ordered that twelve 'violinists attend to practise Mons. Grabu's musick'.²⁹

Nicholas Staggins was appointed in Grabu's place, but exactly when he took over the job is unclear.³⁰ Though Staggins was paid from Midsummer 1673, Grabu was still presenting himself as Master of the King's Musick in the libretto to *Ariane* (published in 1674). An examination of payments and warrants to pay Grabu suggests that he was a paid employee of the Crown until either Michaelmas or Christmas of 1673 even though he was still using the title in 1674. The Test Act came into effect during the third quarter of Grabu's eighth year of service, and this seems to be the correct quarter in which to end his pay period. On 29 December 1673 a record shows that '£500 by certificate of 22 October last past is due to Lewis Grabu for 2 and 1/2 years' salary ending at Michaelmas last'.³¹ Either the sum owed Grabu, or the assumption that Michaelmas 1673 was the date to which his service should be reckoned, is wrong. By 29 December he had received £1050 salary in service to the Crown, a sum that covered five years and one quarter. If we date the start of his employment from Lady Day 1666, this would cover a period until St. John's Day 1671.

²⁷ A. Ashbee, *Records of English Court Music*, i, p. 131.

²⁸ P. Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers*, pp. 298-299.

²⁹ A. Ashbee, *Records of English Court Music*, i, p. 168.

³⁰ P. Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers*, p. 298.

³¹ A. Ashbee, *Records of English Court Music*, v, p. 65.

The £500 he was owed indicates he had worked two and a half years more, that is, through Christmas 1673, not Michaelmas.

As Table 1 below shows, Grabu was paid sporadically during his tenure, and when payments did come, they were usually several years late.

Table 1 Payments to Grabu

| Period Paid by quarter | Amount Paid | Date Paid | Reference |
|---------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 1-2 1667 | £100 | 1 Sept. 1669 | p. 182 |
| 3-4 1667 | £100 | 11 Oct. 1669 | p. 184 |
| 1-4 1668 | £200 | 27 July 1670 | p. 186 |
| 1-4 1666 | £200 | 17 Oct. 1671 | p. 192 |
| 1-4 1669 | £200 | 24 January 1671/72 | p. 193 |
| 1-2 1670 | £100 | 30 Sept. 1673 | p. 196 |
| 3 1670 | £50 | 17 Nov. 1673 | p. 197 |
| 4 1670, 1 1671 | £100 | 11 Dec. 1673 | p. 197 |
| 2-4 1671 1 1672 | £200 | 3 Jan. 1673/74 | p. 197 |

The fiscal year is judged from Lady Day (25 March).

1st qt. Lady Day to St. John's Day (25 June), 2nd qt. St. John's Day to Michaelmas (29 Sept.), 3rd qt. Michaelmas to Christmas (Dec. 25), 4th qt. Christmas to Lady Day.

References are to A. Ashbee, *Records of English Court Music*, v.

In December 1669 he petitioned for his arrears (£500 at that point),³² but was denied any money for a further seven months. On 23 May 1673 he signed over all the money owed him from copying music, and for his attendance upon the King at Dover (money which had been owed him for three years at the least), to 'Walter Lapp, citizen and mercer of London',³³ a total of £274. 9s., while in February 1673/74, a John Badger petitioned Grabu for £30.³⁴ Two months later Grabu assigned 'to Walter Lapp all sums due [him] as Master of the Musick'³⁵ which amounted to at least £574. In 1677 he petitioned the King again:

Your petitioner ... hath lately fallen under very grievous misfortune, the greatest of which hath been your Majesties willingness to receive another person into his place dureing pleasure. Your majesty was neverthelesse a few days since graciously pleased to declare that your petitioner should receive the Growing benefitt thereof untill the arrears due ... should be paid [which would keep] him from arrests and provide some subsistence for his distressed family. [He] ...

³² A. Ashbee, *Records of English Court Music*, viii, p. 198.

³³ A. Ashbee, *Records of English Court Music*, i, p. 125

³⁴ Ibid., p. 133

³⁵ 4 April, A. Ashbee, *Records of English Court Music*, v, p. 66.

most humbly prays your majesty according to your Royal compassion to a poore servant, guilty of noe crime but misfortune.³⁶

Grabu was not exaggerating – the Lord Chamberlain followed up the petition and found him ‘very poor and miserable’, and owed £627. 9s. 6d.³⁷ Nevertheless, no money was paid to him; only in 1686 did he begin to receive payment of his arrears, and then only a portion of the total owed him.

After the loss of Grabu’s court post and his failure to establish the Royal Academy of Music, there is a gap of about three years for which his only recorded activity is the aforementioned rehearsal with twelve of the court violins. Not until 1678 is there clear evidence of his work composing incidental music for the theatre. That year he provided songs for Thomas Shadwell’s adaptation of *Timon of Athens*, Nathaniel Lee’s *Mithridates*, and Thomas Durfey’s *Squire Oldsapp*, his first extant, dateable compositions.³⁸ Only one song survives from each of these plays, though for *Timon* he must have composed much more music; it contains a sizeable divertissement of which the existing song, ‘Hark how the songsters of the Grove’, represents only the first part. John Downes’s comment on the production, that ‘’twas very well Acted, and the Musick in’t well Perform’d; it wonderfully pleas’d the Court and City’,³⁹ would seem to indicate that Grabu’s music was fairly successful. In addition, Grabu’s act tunes may have accompanied the première of Dryden and Lee’s *Oedipus* in the same year.⁴⁰

³⁶ A. Ashbee, *Records of English Court Music*, i, pp. 170-171

³⁷ 5 May 1677. A. Ashbee, *Records of English Court Music*, i, p. 172. The arrears were broken down as follows: ‘Out of Your Majesty’s Exchequer, the sum of £450; out of the office of the Treasury Chamber, £145. 4s. 6d.; and out of the Great Wardrobe, £32. 5s.’

³⁸ ‘Hark how ye songsters of the air’ was published in *Choice Ayres and Songs*, book II (London, 1679); ‘One night when all the village slept’ and ‘Close in a hollow silent cave’ appeared in book III (London, 1681). Grabu set another song for *Squire Oldsapp*, though only the lyrics survive in *A New Collection of Songs and Poems by Thomas D’Urfey* (London, 1683).

³⁹ *Roscius Anglicanus* (London, 1708), p. 37.

⁴⁰ Several reasons make the 1678 première (rather than the famous 1692 revival) the most likely production for which Grabu wrote his incidental music. First, it seems improbable that the United Company would have asked Grabu to write incidental music for a 1692 revival that Purcell was already providing with vocal music. Purcell’s name was the big

Grabu certainly wrote music for more than these four plays, and many of the untitled instrumental airs attributed to him in several manuscripts must have been for the theatre. The seven airs for *Oedipus*, found in Leeds Public Library (Q 784.21 L969), are preceded by seven other tunes attributed to Grabu and in the same style. Both sets begin with a French overture in two sections, where the second section is in a triple metre and employs an imitative texture. This untitled suite is almost certainly incidental theatre music. Another set of five airs from the British Library (Add. MS 31429) begins with a French overture very similar to those in the Leeds manuscript and may well have been written for the theatre. The part-books, dated 1682, were owned by Thomas Fuller, and since Grabu's airs are the first entries, it seems reasonable to assume they were written prior to his departure for France in 1679.

On 31 March 1679, Grabu, his wife and three small children were issued with a passport to go to France.⁴¹ Why Grabu left England is another question with no certain answer. Though he seems to have found some success in the theatre, it was, apparently, not lucrative enough to warrant staying in England. He must have, by this time, finally given up hope that his substantial arrears would be paid. This realisation combined with the

draw by the 1690s and he surely would have been asked to provide all of the music were it necessary. Grabu's music was probably reused on this occasion, making it unnecessary for Purcell to provide incidental music. Grabu was active as a theatre composer in the late 70s, but by the early 90s he had all but disappeared from the London musical scene. However, the only extant source of Grabu's *Oedipus* music, *GB-LEp* Q 784.21 L969, contains music for plays written and performed during the mid-90s. It is presumably upon this evidence that *A Biographical Dictionary of English Court Musicians*, compiled by A. Ashbee, D. Lasocki, asst. by P. Holman and F. Kisby (Aldershot, 1998) dates his music to the 1692 revival (p. 505).

Grabu may also have written the vocal music for the 1678 première. If so, perhaps the music had been lost by the time of the 1692 revival, necessitating the replacement music by Purcell. If Grabu did write vocal music to *Oedipus*, he may have had dealings over it with Dryden, who later claimed specifically to have written the third act, in which most of the vocal music appears. See note in *When Beauty Fires the Blood*, James A. Winn (Ann Arbor, 1992), pp. 249-250.

⁴¹ *Calendar of State Papers Domestic, Charles II, January 1st 1679 to August 31st 1680*, ed. Daniell (London, 1915), p. 338.

rampant Catholic hatred fuelled by the Popish Plot, was probably enough to persuade him to return to France.⁴²

Almost nothing of the facts surrounding Grabu's time in France are known. He may have hoped to find work at the court of Louis XIV, and he would have had some contacts through dancers he had worked with in the production of *Ariane*. Pécour, Lestang and Romain Dumirail all seem to have returned to France before Grabu, and all three worked in the charmed circle of Lully's various court musical productions. Grabu is also very likely to have known Jean Favier, who had, with Cambert, mounted a *Ballet et Musique pour le Divertissement du Roi de la Grande Bretagne* in January or February 1674,⁴³ probably using the three dancers mentioned above. Though only speculation, it also seems highly likely, given John Buttrey's research involving Cambert and the French ambassadors to London, that Louis himself had some knowledge of Grabu.⁴⁴

A set of three part-books copied mainly by Nicolas Dieupart, a member of Louis XIV's *Grand Ecurie*, contains music by Grabu, at least part of which seems to have been composed during his return to France.⁴⁵ Now housed at Yale University, each of the books of Filmer MS 33 bears the inscription 'Livre de Triôts appartenants, á Dieupart Fluste et Cromône ordin.^{re} de la Chambre du Roy. 1680,'⁴⁶ and the great majority of the music found within is by Lully. The books seem to have been used at court, since

⁴² Peter Holman points out that 'many Catholics were fleeing the country' at this time. *Four and Twenty Fiddlers*, p. 298.

⁴³ Buttrey, 'New Light on Robert Cambert', pp. 209-219. Favier was well-connected in the French court and court musical establishments. From 1680-90 he taught dancing to the Dauphine, and he danced frequently in works by Lully. For biographical details see R. Harris-Warrick and C. Marsh, *Musical Theatre at the Court of Louis XIV* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 21-27.

⁴⁴ See note 13 above.

⁴⁵ Dieupart's date of birth is unknown; he first appears in French court records in 1671 when he purchased a place as a player of the *flûte* and *trompette marine* in the *Grand Ecurie*. He died on 17 November 1700. The discussion of these part-books and Grabu's place in them is based upon Robert Ford's article 'Nicolas Dieupart's book of trios', *Recherches sur la Musique Française Classique* 20 (1981), pp. 45-75.

⁴⁶ R. Ford, op. cit., p. 46.

several of the Lully pieces are headed with titles like 'le petit coucher du Roy.' Two of the pieces by Grabu bear the date 1681, which, along with other evidence in the manuscript, has led Robert Ford to fix the time of Dieupart's copying of the books to 1680-81.⁴⁷

Grabu's contribution to the manuscript includes a *ritournelle* from an *intermède* that he subsequently published in England under the title *Pastoralle* (see below).⁴⁸ Such *intermèdes* were often performed between acts of a play, and numerous references to such performances in the *Mercure Galant* attest to the popularity of the form. Ford suggests that several of the other works in the manuscript may also be excerpted from *intermèdes* that Grabu composed while he was in France. Nevertheless, despite Grabu's seeming connections to both dancers and musicians in the court circle, there is no evidence that the court itself ever employed him. Thanks to his association with Cambert, and his status as former master of music to the English King, Grabu is unlikely to have been warmly welcomed by Lully. He most probably would have been forced to look for work outside the circles in which Lully had direct control. The evidence of Grabu's participation in the competition for a place in Louis's Royal Chapel may offer support for this conclusion.

The *Mercure Galant* of April 1683 lists Grabu as a competitor for a place in the '*Musique de la Chapelle de Sa Majesté* [Louis XIV]'. That spring, the French King sponsored a competition to fill the four positions of *sous-maître* in his Royal Chapel. On successive days, 35 composers presented a motet of their own composition at the King's daily Mass. Fifteen of these were chosen for the competition's final stage, which

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 49.

⁴⁸ The *ritournelle* is that found on page 5 of the *Pastoralle*. In the Filmer manuscript it bears the rubric 'Vivons'. Ford suggests that this is a garbled reference to the chorus following the recitative which is preceded by the *ritournelle*, and which begins 'Vive l'amour' (op. cit., p. 53).

eventually produced Delalande, Colasse, Coupilliet and Minoret as the winners. Grabu, however, did not make it into the final round.⁴⁹

Grabu's fortunes changed in the late summer, when Thomas Betterton arrived on a mission to import French opera into England. Once in France, Betterton contacted Lord Preston, the English Envoy Extraordinary to the French court.

I have received the honour of your lordship's [letter] by Mr. Betterton with his Majestys commands to me to assist him in treating with some persons capable of representing an opera in England, which I have obeyed as far as it was possible to do it.⁵⁰

Importing a complete French production, however, proved to be impossible, so Betterton sought out Grabu, whom he evidently knew. Grabu must have convinced the theatre manager that he was capable of writing a French-style opera, and Betterton in return offered the composer assurances of support from the United Company, and probably also from the court.⁵¹ Thus, four years after leaving England, Grabu found himself crossing the Channel again with great hopes.

Though writing an opera was the primary reason for which Betterton engaged Grabu's services, upon his return the composer found immediate work composing incidental music for straight plays. In all likelihood, he was back in England before the end of 1683, for by 11 February he had written eight act tunes and two songs for John Wilmot's *Valentinian*. A month and a half later, more of his incidental music accompanied the opening of Thomas Southerne's *The Disappointment*. A performance in the Spring may well have accompanied the publication of his *Pastoralle*, which,

⁴⁹ The passage from the *Mercure Galant*, along with a detailed examination of the competition, can be found in M. Benoit, *Versailles et les musiciens du Roi: étude institutionnelle et sociale, 1661-1733* (Paris, 1971), pp. 102-108. Benoit finds Grabu's absence from the final fifteen surprising.

⁵⁰ Letter of 25 August 1683 to the Earl of Sunderland. *GB-Lbl Add. MS 63759*. See also Chapter 3, n. 12.

⁵¹ Lord Preston wrote to the Duke of York one month later, asking him to speak favourably of Grabu to the King. See Chapter 3.

as we have seen, was probably composed during his time in France. Dedicated to the Duchess of Portsmouth, the music was printed in a fine edition, along with that for *Valentinian*, and was on sale by the early summer.⁵² Two other songs, ‘All loyal hearts take off your brimmmers’, to a text by Dufey, and ‘When Lucinda’s blooming beauty’, were published in song collections of 1684 and 1685 respectively,⁵³ and may also date from this period.

The timetable and events surrounding *Albion and Albanus* are detailed in the next chapter. Its preparation and production must have taken up a great deal of Grabu’s time from mid-1684 onwards, for after the intense activity of the first half of that year, there is no other music that can be confidently dated until well after the close of the opera. In addition, even before the run of the opera had finished, a printed edition of the music by subscription was advertised in the London Gazette. This project must have involved some of Grabu’s attention until the finished product was announced in the London Gazette on 9 July 1687. What payment Grabu received for the opera, and for his other compositions written after he returned to England, is unknown. By the end of 1686, however, he must have felt some financial security, since on 15 December he obtained the first payment of his long overdue arrears.⁵⁴ By 5 April 1687, he had received £450 in back pay, and his gratitude is evident in the opera’s effusive dedication to James II.

Though the evidence is purely circumstantial, there is good reason to

⁵² *London Gazette*, 23 June 1684. Peter Holman, in his article ‘*Valentinian*, Rochester and Louis Grabu’, *The Well Enchanting Skill: Music, Poetry, and Drama in the Culture of the Renaissance: Essays in Honour of F. W. Sternfeld* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 127-141, convincingly argues that the untitled instrumental music following the *Pastoralle* belongs to *Valentinian*, and that the absence of the play’s title from the title page of the edition is due to the fact that Rochester had been an enemy of the Duchess of Portsmouth.

⁵³ ‘All loyal hearts take off your brimmmers’ was published in *Choice New Songs ... by Tho. D’Urfey* (London, 1684); ‘When Lucinda’s blooming beauty’ was published in both *The Theatre of Music* (London, 1685) and *A Collection of Twenty Four Songs* (London, 1685).

⁵⁴ A. Ashbee, *Records of English Court Music*, ii, p. 211.

believe that Grabu had a hand in the performance of Lully's *Cadmus and Hermione*, which was performed in London on 11 February 1686 (probably at Dorset Garden).⁵⁵ The performance may represent a belated realisation of Betterton's 1683 trip to France, and Grabu's connections may have been vital in securing singers for 'twas acted by none but the French.'⁵⁶ This would not have been the first time that Grabu took the lead in promoting another composer's work, as we have seen in the case of Cambert's *Ariane*. As with Grabu's opera, the King and Queen attended a performance of *Cadmus* and one can imagine that the production of operas in consecutive years once again ignited Grabu's hopes for a Royal Academy of Music in England, though as before, no such organisation materialised.

The next production to which Grabu can confidently be linked is Waller's adaptation of Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Maid's Tragedy*, performed on 28 January 1687.⁵⁷ The outer parts of five incidental airs for the play are found in MS 1144 at the Royal College of Music, along with tunes for *The Double Marriage*, here ascribed to Purcell. The latter, however, are attributed to Grabu in Filmer MS 9. Zimmerman, without knowledge of the concordant Filmer manuscript, questioned the ascription of *The Double Marriage* tunes to Purcell, and Curtis Price's identification of the Filmer concordance makes Grabu the most likely candidate.⁵⁸ *The Double Marriage* was played at court on 6 February 1688;⁵⁹ this is the last production with which Grabu can be positively associated. Filmer MS 9 contains another suite of airs attributed to Grabu, which in all likelihood were written for the theatre. Besides their appearance in the same manuscript with *The Double Marriage* music, one of the tunes is written for

⁵⁵ See W. J. Lawrence's discussion of the evidence surrounding a London performance of *Cadmus* in *The Times Literary Supplement*, 28 March 1936.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *The London Stage 1660-1800*, i: 1660-1700, ed. Van Lennep (Carbondale, 1965), p. 355.

⁵⁸ F. Zimmerman, *Henry Purcell 1659-1695: An Analytical Catalogue of his Music* (London, 1963), pp. 268-269. C. Price, *Music in the Restoration Theatre* (Ann Arbor, 1979), p. 165.

⁵⁹ *The London Stage*, p. 362.

the trumpet, a very unlikely instrument to be used in concerted music before the mid-to-late 1680s. Thus, it seems probable that the two suites were composed around the same time.

US-NH Filmer MS 9 [Trumpet Tune]



Another printed edition of Grabu's music appeared in 1688, though his name is not given in the title. Many of the pieces in *A Collection of Several Simphonies and Aires in Three parts; Composed for Violins, Flutes and Hoe-boys* can be ascribed to Grabu through concordances in different manuscript sources, and the stylistic consistency throughout the whole of the edition suggests that all of the music is by Grabu.⁶⁰ At least two of the pieces were composed no later than 1679, since the first treble parts appear in the recorder book *Vade Mecum* published by Playford in that year.⁶¹

⁶⁰ For a discussion of these concordances see Robert Ford, op. cit., pp. 52-58. Concordant manuscripts where pieces are ascribed to Grabu include Filmer MS 33, *EIRE-Dtc* MS 413 and *GB-Ob* MS Mus. Sch. C. 44 (the latter is not listed in Ford's discussion). Fourteen unascrbed concordances are found in *US-Wc* M2.1.L9 Case.

⁶¹ *Vade Mecum for the Lovers of musick, shewing the excellency of the recorder ...* (London, 1679).

Other pieces may belong to Grabu's time in France, since some are also found in Filmer MS 33. Of special note is the title of the edition which includes 'hoe-boys'. Given the manuscript designation 'pour les hautbois' in *Pastoralle*, the likelihood that oboes were used in *Albion and Albanus*, and Grabu's seeming connection with the French wind player Nicolas Dieupart, there is reason to think that Grabu may have played an important role in the re-introduction of the oboe into England (see Chapter 8).⁶²

Grabu's music may have continued to be played sporadically in revivals of plays for which he had composed, such as the probable productions of *Valentinian* by the United Company in 1688-89, and 1691-92.⁶³ Since Purcell provided only vocal music for the 1692 revival of *Oedipus*,⁶⁴ Grabu's act tunes were probably reused, while the latter's incidental music may also have accompanied a revival of *The Maid's Tragedy* as late as July 1698.⁶⁵ It is likely that Grabu's music was also occasionally heard at the musical gatherings organised by the small-coal man, Thomas Britton. Four entries in the catalogue of Britton's books prepared for auction after his death in 1714 contain Grabu's name, among them, a score of *Albion and Albanus* and 'a set of Grabu in 5 parts'.⁶⁶

Nevertheless, after 1688, there is only one certain musical reference to Grabu, in the form of an advertisement in the London Gazette of 15 November 1694.

A Consort of Musick, Composed by Mr. Grabue, will be performed on Saturday next at Mr. Smiths in Charles-street, Covent-Garden, between the hours of Seven and Eight.

⁶² This suggestion is advanced by Robert Ford, op. cit., pp. 57-58.

⁶³ *The London Stage*, pp. 369, 375-376; P. Holman, "'Valentinian', *Rochester and Louis Grabu*", p. 129.

⁶⁴ *The London Stage*, 413. See also n. 40.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 498.

⁶⁶ The catalogue (now lost) is printed in J. Hawkins, *A General History of Science and Practice of Music, A new edition with the author's posthumous notes* (London, 1875), ii, ed. Othmar Wessely (Graz, 1969), p. 792.

This must have been a sort of going-away concert for Grabu, since less than a month later he obtained for himself and his family a passport ‘for Holland or Flanders’.⁶⁷

It is fairly easy to surmise why references to Grabu dry up after 1688. When the Catholic James II lost his throne to the Protestant William of Orange, any hope Grabu may have had of court support vanished. Not only was Grabu himself Catholic, but just a year earlier, he had dedicated the printed edition of the opera, an unashamed panegyric to the Stuart Monarchy, to James II. In addition, his music would have come to seem increasingly outmoded in the public theatres, and he would have had little hope of competing with the rise of Purcell’s theatrical star. The mystery is not, then, why Grabu disappeared from the musical scene at the end of the 1680s, but rather, why he stayed in England so long after 1688.

⁶⁷ *Calendar of State Papers Domestic, William and Mary, January 1694-June 1695*, ed. W. J. Hardy (London, 1906), p. 349. The passport was issued for 4 December. *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, etc.* seems to have mistaken this notice, since it claims that ‘Grabu returned to Paris on 3 December 1685’, a journey for which I can find no evidence.

Chapter 3

The Genesis of *Albion and Albanus*

Despite the existence of several documents concerning the creation of *Albion and Albanus*, there is still some question as to how the work came into being. In particular, Dryden's explanation of his own role in the development of the project lacks some important details. The existing evidence suggests that Charles II, Betterton, Grabu and Dryden all had a hand in shaping its final form, and with careful attention to the sources and their circumstances, it is possible to frame a plausible inference about the course of events which resulted in the opera *Albion and Albanus*.

The First Evidence

The two earliest documents regarding the opera provide the best starting point for examining its genesis. On 14 August 1683, the Newdigate newsletter reported that 'the Manager of y^e Kings Theatre intend wth in short time to pforme an Opera in like manner of y^t of ffrance. Mr Betterton wth other Act^{rs} are gone over to fetch y^e designe'.¹ Just over a month later, the Duke of York received a letter from Lord Preston, the English Envoy Extraordinary to the French court.

I should not have presumed to give your Highness the trouble of this if something of charity had not induced me to it. I do it at the instance of a poor servant of his Majesty's, who some time since was obliged by a misfortune to leave England. It is Mr Grabu, sir, whom perhaps your Highness may remember. Mr Betterton coming hither some Weeks since by his Majestyes command to endeavour to carry over the opera, & finding that impracticable, did treat with Monsr Grabue to go over with him to endeavour to represent something at least like an Opera in England for his Majestyes diversion. He hath also assured him of a pension from the House, & finds him very willing and

¹ J. H. Wilson, 'Theatre Notes from the Newdigate Newsletters', *Theatre Notebook* 15 (1961), p. 82.

ready to go over. He only desireth his Majestyes protection when he is there, and what encouragement his Majesty shall be pleased to give him if he finds that he deserves it.²

These two documents provide the latest possible starting point of the project, 14 August, and three of the four primary players, Charles II, Betterton and Grabu. We now turn to the question of why Grabu was entrusted with the musical side of the project.

Grabu and Betterton

Grabu's career as a composer for the English stage would undoubtedly have involved him with Thomas Betterton. Though the only documented evidence of a relationship between them involves the production of *Albion and Albanius*, it seems likely that they had dealings with each other both before and after the opera.

When Grabu lost his post as Master of the King's Music in 1674, he seems to have turned to the stage in search of a livelihood. In 1678 he wrote music for at least two plays in which Betterton acted, Shadwell's adaptation of *Timon of Athens* and D'Urfey's *Squire Oldsapp*. His incidental music for Dryden and Lee's *Oedipus*, in which Betterton played the title role, may also date from 1678. In his position as both actor and manager for the Duke's Company, Betterton would probably have been familiar with Grabu's music and with the business dealings that involved contracting with him and paying him for it. Perhaps Betterton was observing Grabu as early as March of 1674, when the latter was involved in the production of the French opera *Ariane* at Drury Lane. Betterton must have studied this production with interest, and it is possible that his company's staging of *The Tempest* later in

² 22 September 1683: London, British Library, Add. MS 63759, p. 91. *The London Stage 1660-1800*, i: 1660-1700, ed. Van Lennep (Carbondale, 1965) places this entry on Wednesday, 12 September (p. 323). England was at this point still using the old Julian calendar which ran ten days behind the Gregorian calendar in use on the Continent.

the year was an attempt to counter *Ariane*.³

Lord Preston's letter indicates that Betterton initially planned to bring a complete production of a French opera back to London; finding that impossible, he engaged Grabu. The inference drawn from this has tended to focus on Grabu as a second-rate substitute for a real French opera. It seems clear, however, that Betterton did not feel this way. In employing Grabu he took a huge risk on an extremely expensive project. Furthermore, he promised Grabu a pension from the House (the United Company), which presumably involved writing music for several plays in addition to the opera; certainly Grabu wrote incidental music for Rochester's *Valentinian* which opened in February 1684, and Southerne's *The Disappointment*, a month or two later. This is hardly the sort of action a manager as experienced as Betterton would have taken without a great deal of confidence in his resources, and particularly in Grabu. One presumes that this confidence stemmed from Betterton's previous experience of working with him.

After the close of *Albion and Albanus*, Grabu continued to write music for the United Company, including at least one play in both 1687 and 1688. Several other untitled theatre suites attributed to him may also date from this period. Although impossible to confirm, it seems Betterton continued to feed projects to Grabu, an indication that he had neither lost confidence in the composer, nor blamed him for the loss of money that *Albion and Albanus* caused the United Company.

Betterton's Role in *Albion and Albanus*

Betterton brought Grabu into the project; but why was the opera planned in the first place? An inclination on Betterton's part for elaborate theatre productions is surely one explanation. Having inherited a genuine love for the

³ There is no unambiguous date for the première of *The Tempest*; *The London Stage* first lists it on 30 April (i, p. 215).

spectacular aspects of theatre from his predecessor, William Davenant,⁴ Betterton had by 1683 already gained extensive experience with works involving music and machines. He had involved himself heavily in the productions of *The Tempest* and *Psyche*, among others, and was to continue his commitment to spectacular entertainments even after the costly failure of *Albion and Albanus*. He also travelled to the continent several times to familiarise himself with the developments there in theatre, theatrical design, and playhouses.⁵

Happily, Betterton's desire to stage a spectacular entertainment seems to have chimed with King Charles's desire for a French-style opera. While the Newdigate newsletter states that Betterton's trip to France was planned by the United Company, Lord Preston's letter suggests that he went 'by his Majestyes command'.

By 1683, Charles had gained the firmest grip on the reins of power that he was to achieve in his reign. Over the past four to five years he had weathered the Popish Plot and the Exclusion Crisis. His arch-enemy, Anthony Cooper, 1st Earl of Shaftesbury, had been exiled to Holland, where he died in January. Even more recently Charles had survived the Rye House Plot when a chance fire forced him to return early from Newmarket, an event Tory propagandists interpreted as divine intervention. As James Winn suggests, freed from his enemies, 'the King had been living a court life increasingly resembling that of his autocratic cousin Louis [XIV, King of France]'.⁶ An important aspect of Louis's grand life-style was the elaborate performance of Lully's operas, and Charles, with his Francophile tastes, wanted to adorn his court with opera in a similar fashion.

⁴ J. Milhous, *Thomas Betterton and the Management of Lincoln's Inn Fields, 1695-1708* (Carbondale & Edwardsville, 1979), pp. 20-25.

⁵ See the article on Thomas Betterton, *A Biographical dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers and other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800*, ed. Philip H. Highfill and others (Carbondale & Edwardsville, 1973-), ii, pp. 73-96.

⁶ J. A. Winn, *John Dryden and His World* (New Haven and London, 1987), pp. 405-406.

Charles's was not a hands-on role, but one that determined the nature of the project. His desire for opera gave Betterton the scope to work on a very expensive endeavour, and perhaps provided the possibility of financial support from the court. Most importantly, however, Charles's tastes are evident in the emphasis in both sources on 'an Opera in like manner of y^t of ffrance'. This meant *all-sung* opera, not the combination of music and spoken drama that English theatre, under Betterton's influence, had developed. Though the portion of the King's exile spent in France had predated the development of French opera by over 15 years, he was no stranger to the operatic music of Lully, and had been entertained with scenes from *Alceste*, *Cadmus and Hermione*, *Thésée*, and *Atys* by French musicians visiting the court in 1676.⁷

Betterton's role, in contrast, most definitely involved him in the details of the production. Though Dryden was eventually to write the libretto, Betterton, in part acting on the King's behalf, seems to have taken some role in the shaping of it. It is important to note that no plans for an English libretto would have been made before the trip to Paris. The original intention was 'to carry over the opera' as a more or less complete production directly from France. In the event, upon his return, Betterton had only a composer engaged and needed to find a librettist quickly.

One of the detailed stage directions from *Albion and Albanus*, for which Betterton was probably responsible,⁸ suggests his influence in creating the opera's libretto. A scene from Act III of *Albion and Albanus* involving Proteus seems to be drawn directly from Lully's opera *Phaëton*.

⁷ J. Buttrey, 'New light on Robert Cambert in London, and his *Ballet et Musique*', *Early Music* 25 (1995), p. 205.

⁸ 'The descriptions of the Scenes, and other decorations of the Stage, I had from Mr. Betterton, who has spar'd neither for industry, nor cost, to make this Entertainment perfect, nor for Invention of the Ornaments to beautify it.' Preface to *Albion and Albanus* in *The Works of John Dryden*, xv: *Plays: Albion and Albanus, Don Sebastian, Amphytrion*, ed. E. Miner, G. B. Guffey and F. Zimmerman (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1976), p. 11.

Phaëton – 1683 Quinault, Lully

Act I, scene viii

Protée disparaît, & se transforme successivement en Lion, en Arbre, en Monstre marin, en Fontaine, & en Flame. Mais sous ces formes différentes, il est suivi & environné par les suivants de Triton ... Protée après plusieurs transformations reprend enfin sa forme naturelle.]

[Proteus disappears, & transforms himself successively into a Lion, a Tree, a Sea Monster, a Fountain and a Flame. But despite these different guises, he is followed and surrounded by the Followers of Triton ... Proteus, after several transformations, finally resumes his customary shape.]⁹

Albion and Albanus – 1685 Dryden, Grabu

Act III, scene i

*In the middle of the Cave is Proteus asleep on a Rock adorn'd with shells, &c. like the Cave. Albion and Acacia seize on him, and while a Symphony is playing, he sinks as they are bringing him forward, and changes himself into a Lyon, a Crocodile, a Dragon, and then to his own shape again: He comes toward the front of the Stage, and Sings.*¹⁰

In *Phaëton*, Proteus's prophecy is carefully placed to achieve the greatest dramatic effect. At the end of the Act I, in a powerful accompanied recitative, he predicts Phaëton's fall at the hands of his father, providing a riveting conclusion to the Act. Proteus's appearance in *Albion and Albanus*, on the other hand, seems extraneous. He prophesies that Albion will be restored again and that he is the 'Care of Heav'n', something that has been made clear only 20 lines before:

Albion. See the Gods my cause defending,
When all humane help was past!¹¹

The resemblance between the two transformation scenes is too close to be coincidence, especially when Betterton's 1683 trip to Paris is taken into consideration. Since it was expressly concerned with opera, he would have heard much about Lully's most recent and very popular effort. Betterton left for France in the summer, certainly before the report of his departure in the

⁹ Quinault, *Phaëton* (Paris, 1683). The score of the opera, printed in the same year by Christophe Ballard, substitutes 'Tigre' for 'Lion', and 'Dragon' for 'Monstre'.

¹⁰ *The Works of John Dryden*, xv, pp. 47-48.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Act III, i, lines 26-27.

Newdigate newsletter of 14 August,¹² but was unlikely to have arrived while *Phaëton* was on the stage. The opera, which had been performed in public since 27 April, was still running on 30 July, when, as the *Mercure Galant* reports, the sudden death of the French Queen halted performances.

They were ready to begin *Phaëton* and were already playing the overture; they did not continue and Mr. de Lully, having refunded the money he had taken in, sent the saddened audience away.¹³

After thirty days of mourning, performances of *Phaëton* resumed, continuing until 12 or 13 January 1684.¹⁴ Thus, had Betterton not arrived by 30 July, as seems likely, he may well have had the opportunity to see the opera when it reopened at the end of August.¹⁵

Surely Grabu, living in Paris at the time, would have attended performances; probably he also purchased the full score of the opera which was published in the same year. Dryden left no doubts about the composer's status as an expert on French opera in the preface to *Albion and Albanius*: 'his being acquainted with all the performances of *French Opera's*, ... have raised him to a degree above any Man, who shall pretend to be his Rival on our Stage'.¹⁶ Furthermore, Grabu undoubtedly used some of Lully's music for Proteus in the analogous scene for *Albion and Albanius* (see Chapter 7).

¹² Lord Preston reported Betterton's arrival in France in a letter to the Earl of Sunderland dated 25 August. Preston's letter was written on 15 August by the calendar in use in England. Given the fact that he was carrying a letter from the Earl of Sunderland to Lord Preston, Betterton probably would have contacted the latter as one of his first duties once in France. If Preston responded promptly to Sunderland's letter, the date suggests that Betterton probably left England only a few days before the notice printed in the Newdigate newsletter.

¹³ Translated in Jérôme de la Gorce's liner notes to *Phaëton*, recorded by Les Musiciens du Louvre, Marc Minkowski, director (Paris, Erato), 1994, p.16.

¹⁴ S. Pitou, *The Paris Opera: An Encyclopedia of Operas, Ballets, Composers and Performers*, vol. I, *Genesis and Glory, 1671-1715* (Westport, Connecticut and London, 1983), p. 289.

¹⁵ Thomas Otway's *The Atheist*, in which Betterton played the role of Beaugard, is the only play calendared in *The London Stage* for July (p. 320). No date is offered, and this is the last play calendared for the season. R. Hume and J. Milhous have instead suggested that *The Atheist* played in April or May 1683 in 'Dating Play Premières from Publication Data', *Harvard Library Bulletin* 22 (1974), p. 393. If they are correct, it is possible that Betterton could have left for France in time to see a performance of *Phaëton* before the Queen's death. However, see n. 12 above.

¹⁶ *The Works of John Dryden*, xv, p. 8.

It seems likely then that both Betterton and Grabu had first-hand knowledge of the latest music and stagings of the Paris Opéra.

One imagines an enthusiastic Betterton returning to England with a libretto of *Phaëton*, and with its magnificent staging fresh in his mind. Needing a libretto for Grabu to set, he approaches Dryden, who is already busy with a combination of a play (*King Arthur*) and a prologue (*Albion & Albanius*) planned for a future production with the United Company. Betterton, Grabu, and possibly Charles II, who want an *all-sung* opera immediately, persuade him to expand the prologue into a full-length opera, encouraging him to find a place for the spectacular transformation of Proteus. The insertion of such a scene at Betterton's and Grabu's request would certainly account for its dramatic superfluity.¹⁷

Such an explanation of the genesis of *Albion and Albanius* would also agree with the *ad hoc* character of the opera, but it differs on several points from the one Dryden presents in his preface:

It was originally intended only for a Prologue to a Play,
Of the Nature of the Tempest ... But some intervening
accidents having hitherto deferr'd the performance of
the main design, I propos'd to the Actors, to turn the
intended Prologue into an Entertainment by itself, as
you now see it, by adding two acts more to what I had
already Written.¹⁸

It is hard to imagine Dryden choosing of his own accord to expand an *all-sung* prologue by two acts, especially when one considers the multifarious complaints he makes about writing for music: "'Tis true, I have not been

¹⁷ Lionel Sawkins has offered a similar explanation for the inclusion of the Frost Scene in *King Arthur*: 'perhaps it was Purcell who suggested the idea [the Frost Scene] when the text [*King Arthur*] was being revised.' See 'Trembleurs and Cold People: How Should They Shiver?', *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell*, ed. M. Burden (Oxford, 1996), p. 251. Sawkins's suggestion is speculation, and the circumstantial evidence, both temporal and musical, for the role Betterton and Grabu may have played in influencing Dryden to include a scene for Proteus is much stronger than that for Purcell suggesting the inclusion of the Frost Scene in *King Arthur*. We may just as well speculate that the experience of including the Proteus scene in *Albion and Albanius* led Betterton [and Purcell or Dryden?] to look for other scenes from the Paris Opéra, resulting in the borrowing from *Isis* in *King Arthur*.

¹⁸ *The Works of John Dryden*, xv, pp. 10-11.

often put to this drudgery; but where I have, the Words will sufficiently show, that I was then a Slave to the composition, which I will never be again'.¹⁹ Surely it was Betterton, with his enthusiasm for spectacular stage events, Grabu, with his knowledge of French opera, and Charles, with his desire to ape Louis XIV, who drove the creation of *Albion and Albanus*, and not Dryden, who was suspicious of unnecessary spectacle and had little desire to subjugate his talent to music and machines.²⁰

Other hypotheses for the opera's origins have been offered, which suggest that Dryden was 'involved in [the] plans from the start' (that is from Betterton's return from France),²¹ or that Dryden responded to the request for a libretto with the *King Arthur*-plus-prologue combination he describes in the preface.²² These two theories, however, do not acknowledge the very important distinction between English-style opera and continental opera. The former was 'Tragedy mix'd with *Opera*; or a *Drama* Written in blank Verse, adorn'd with Scenes, Machines, Songs and Dances';²³ the latter was *foreign opera*, as performed by the French or Italians, and by definition, *all-sung*.²⁴ Dryden is quite clear about this distinction in the preface to *Albion and Albanus*, and when, following Charles's direction to secure French opera, Betterton returned from France with Grabu, the Poet Laureate would have

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 10.

²⁰ Dryden did write a libretto for an opera in 1677, though it went unperformed. *The State of Innocence and the Fall of Man, an Opera* was an adaptation of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Though he calls it an opera in the title, it is important to note that Dryden is referring to an English-style opera where the main characters speak, as in *King Arthur*. See James A. Winn, *When Beauty Fires the Blood* (Ann Arbor, 1992), pp. 210-231.

²¹ J. A. Winn, *John Dryden and His World* (New Haven and London, 1987), pp. 393-4, and *When Beauty Fires the Blood*, p. 254. In the latter work, Winn further suggests that Dryden originally provided, and Grabu set, only the first act of *Albion and Albanus*, which was at this point still only the prologue to *King Arthur*. After performing this in front of the King, its success led them to expand it into a complete opera (p. 263).

²² E. Saslow, 'Dryden in 1684', *Modern Philology* 72 (1974-75), pp. 248-255.

²³ *The Works of John Dryden*, xv, p. 10.

²⁴ It is interesting to note that France went through a similar period when native musical theatre traditions, which combined music, spoken text and dance, differed from the all-sung Italian model. As the English court and theatre imported Grabu, so Cardinal Mazarin had earlier imported Cavalli to produce all-sung Italian opera in France. Cavalli's efforts were not warmly welcomed and it was only 15 years later that Cambert and subsequently Lully (himself Italian) managed to establish all-sung opera in France.

been swimming against the tide to write *King Arthur* in response. If, however, he had already started *King Arthur* before Betterton's return, under the assumption that it would be produced by the United Company, he may well have been persuaded to convert the prologue to it into a complete opera in lieu of the French production which Betterton failed to bring back.

Preparations and Delays

Betterton was probably back in England in October, and presumably would have secured Dryden's participation in the project as quickly thereafter as possible.²⁵ Grabu may have returned to England by the end of the year; by 11 February 1684 he had written extensive incidental music and songs for Rochester's *Valentinian*, performed on that day at Whitehall.²⁶ He also must have arranged for the printing of the *Pastoralle*, dedicated to his patron the Duchess of Portsmouth, for it was advertised in the *London Gazette* on 17 July 1684.²⁷ By late March or April he had written eleven tunes for the production of Southerne's *The Disappointment*, which probably opened during the week of 31 March to 5 April. Edward Saslow's reconstruction of Dryden's creative timetable in 1684 suggests that the poet must have finished *Albion and Albanius* and most of *King Arthur* by the beginning of April 1684.²⁸ This supposition fits perfectly with Grabu's timetable; with his work on *The Disappointment* finished, he could have begun writing the opera immediately upon Dryden's completion of the libretto.

At least part of *Albion and Albanius* was presented before the King on 29 May, for the Newdigate Newsletter reported that '[on Restoration Day]

²⁵ *The London Stage*, citing Langhans, suggests that the new season began on 8 October (i, p. 324).

²⁶ P. Holman, 'Valentinian, Rochester and Louis Grabu', *The Well-enchanting Skill*, ed. J. Caldwell and others (Oxford, 1990), pp. 127-141.

²⁷ As we have seen in Chapter 2, the *Pastoralle* appears to have been written during Grabu's time in France.

²⁸ E. Saslow, op. cit., pp. 250-252.

before his Mat^y^e at Windsor preached the Archb^p of Canterbury & [in] the Evening his Mat^y^e is Entertained with M^r Drydens new play the subject of which is the last new Plott'.²⁹ Exactly what sort of performance the opera received is unclear, though it must only have been a sample of what was to come; on occasion, Dryden read his plays to interested courtiers and in this case may have read some of the opera before the King.³⁰ It is also possible that some parts may already have been set to music and that these sections made up a portion of the performance. Whatever the case, 'the last new Plott' refers to the Rye House Plot which is depicted in the final act of the opera, which seems to indicate that the libretto was complete by this point.

By August, Dryden clearly expected work on the production to be progressing. In a letter to his publisher Tonson he wrote: 'I desire to know whether the Dukes house are makeing cloaths & putting things in a readiness for the singing opera, to be playd immediately after Michaelmasse'.³¹ *Albion and Albanus* may have originally been scheduled to open in October, perhaps as the first production of the new season. If that had been the initial plan, as Dryden seems to have expected, the production was far behind schedule. Another letter, this one from Edward Bedingfield to the Countess of Rutland, dated 1 January 1685, shows the production was still in the rehearsal stage in late December: 'Wee are in expectation of an opera composed by Mr. Dryden, and set by Grabuche, and so well performed at the repetition that has been made before his Majesty at the Duchess of Portsmouth's, pleaseth mightily, but the rates proposed will not take soe well, for they have set the boxes at a guyny a place, and the Pitt at halfe. They advance 4,000*l.* on the

²⁹ J. H. Wilson, 'More Theatre Notes from the Newdigate Newsletters', *Theatre Notebook* 16 (1962), p. 59.

³⁰ J. A. Winn, *John Dryden and His World*, p. 394. Saslow, in 'Dryden in 1684', suggests that this performance may have been the première; this cannot be possible for the opera was still in rehearsal in January 1685.

³¹ *The Letters of John Dryden*, ed. Charles Ward (New York, 1942), pp. 22-4.

opera, and therefore must tax high to reimburse themselves'.³² That the opera was now well behind schedule should be no surprise; *Psyche* ran behind schedule in the seventies and *The Fairy Queen* suffered long delay in the early nineties.

The rumoured cost of the opera, £4000, must, if true, have been a colossal expenditure for the United Company. Judith Milhous has estimated that such a sum was equal to about one half of the Company's annual expenses.³³ Likewise, the admission prices Bedingfield mentions are four times the standard charge. The only other production from the period of comparable extravagance, *The Fairy Queen*, was reported to have cost £3000. Though Downes reports that 'the Court and Town were wonderfully satisfy'd with it', in financial terms, they 'got little by it'.³⁴ At a cost of £1000 more, the company could hardly have expected to make money from *Albion and Albanius*, even if it had run without interruption. They may well have hoped for support from Charles, who seems to have taken a leading part in starting the whole project, but there is no evidence that either Charles or his brother after him offered the company anything besides the admission charges of James and his entourage.

When at the beginning of February the opera was very near to opening, disaster struck. Charles II died suddenly on February 6, plunging the nation into grief, engendering instability over the succession, and closing the theatres. Dryden's postscript to the opera relates that: 'it was all compos'd and was just ready to have been perform'd when he [Charles II] ... was taken from us.'³⁵ Once the shock of the King's death had passed, the

³² *Historical Manuscripts Commission, Twelfth Report, Appendix, Rutland MSS.*, Part V, vol. ii (London, 1889), p. 85.

³³ J. Milhous, 'The Multi-media Spectacular on the Restoration Stage', *British Theatre and the other Arts 1600-1800*, ed. S. S. Kenny (Washington, London and Toronto, 1984), pp. 54-56.

³⁴ *Roscious Anglicanus* (London, 1708), pp. 42-43.

³⁵ *The Works of John Dryden*, xv, p. 12.

directors of the United Company must have felt desperation at the situation of the opera, whose subject was intrinsically tied to Charles. Fortunately for them, James ascended to the throne without strong dissent, and Dryden stepped in, altering the opera to compensate for events.

It might have been expected, that his Death must have chang'd the whole Fabrick of the opera; or at least a great part of it. But the design of it Originally, was so happy, that it needed no alteration, properly so call'd: for the addition of twenty or thirty lines, in the Apotheosis of Albion, has made it entirely of a Piece. This was the only way which cou'd have been invented, to save it from a botch'd ending; and it fell luckily into my imagination.'³⁶

Grabu duly composed new music for the extra lines, and the scene designers set to work on a new machine to carry Albion into heaven. No doubt, however, the delays and additions cost the company more money, and had there been an expectation of financial support from Charles, there would now have been some question as to whether James would show the same favour.

The playhouses reopened at the end of April, but *Albion and Albanus* was kept back until June. This further delay may well have been intended to place the première during the meeting of the new Parliament, which ran from 19 May to 2 July.³⁷ The opera, staged at Dorset Garden, probably opened on 3 June, and the Lord Chamberlain's list records a £30 charge for 'The King and Queene & a Box for y^e Maydes of Hono^r at the Opera' on this day.³⁸ Narcissus Luttrell endorsed his copy of the word-book with a manuscript note '1^s 3 June'; his copy of the prologue and epilogue is marked with the note '1^d 6 June' which, if he bought it at the playhouse, would indicate a performance on this day.³⁹ On the evidence of John Downes's entry in *Roscius Anglicanus*, *Albion and Albanus* is commonly thought to have closed with a

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 12-13.

³⁷ J. A. Winn, *John Dryden and His World*, p. 416.

³⁸ A. Nicoll, *A History of English Drama*, 4th edition (Cambridge, 1967), i, p. 350. This charge was only double the normal price, not quadruple as Bedingfield had originally reported.

³⁹ *The Works of John Dryden*, xv, p. 501. Macdonald, citing Malone, lists only Luttrell's 6 June manuscript dating, and so assumed this was the day of the première.

performance on 13 June, the day on which news of Monmouth's landing in the West reached London.⁴⁰ It seems more likely that the sensitive news would have stopped performances immediately, making 12 June the day of the final performance. Downes's remarks are not particularly clear: 'This being perform'd on a very Unlucky Day, being the Day the Duke of Monmouth, Landed in the West: The Nation being in a great Consternation, it was perform'd but Six Times'. All that can be said with certainty is that the opera was performed on 3 June and that it ran for six performances. *The London Stage* suggests 10 June as one of these, citing Luttrell's account that on this day 'one capt. Goreing was killed at the playhouse by Mr Deering'.⁴¹ The men (evidently drunk) were in fact arguing over Elizabeth Barry; both were hoping to escort the actress to her dressing room following a performance.⁴² Barry, however, was not a singer and it is very unlikely she would have performed in the opera. Thus, the incident, which resulted in a sword-thrust through Goring's throat, occurred after a performance of some other work than *Albion and Albanus*.

Albion and Albanus was never revived.⁴³ The opera's cost probably prevented any possibility of performances in the next season or two, and besides, it was primarily concerned with the glorification of Charles II. After the Glorious Revolution of 1688 the opera was completely dead; no one would have chanced offering an opera in praise of the Stuart monarchs during the reign of a King who had overthrown them.

The close of *Albion and Albanus* also heralded the end of all-sung

⁴⁰ *The London Stage*, p.337.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 337. A performance date of 10 June is repeated in *The Works of John Dryden*, xv, p. 342.

⁴² R. Jordan, 'Observations on the Backstage Area in the Restoration Theatre', *Theatre Notebook* 38 (1984), pp. 66-68.

⁴³ In *The Works of John Dryden*, xv, p. 334, Franklin Zimmerman has mistaken a notice in *The Postman* of 24 June 1697 as an indication of a performance of *Albion and Albanus*. In fact, it is an advertisement for unsold copies of the 1687 edition of the opera. Curtis Price has repeated this mistake in his entry on *Albion and Albanus* in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London, 1992).

opera productions by the United Company. It has commonly been argued that opera had been found too risky, and that the public was happy to be fed a diet of dramatic opera. All-sung opera *was* undoubtedly risky, but not because of any audience fickleness. Financial exigencies, not a lack of public support, may well have stopped any additional operas. If every opera was to run near the £4000 mark, productions could never be a financial success.⁴⁴ *The Fairy Queen*, a popular dramatic opera – but one nearly as expensive as the all-sung type – proved that. Unfortunately, putting on opera with fewer scenes and machines was not an option. Just as foreign opera by its nature was all-sung, so it was extravagant. Yet the Company surely would have been happy to continue with opera had it gained royal *financial* support as the Académie Royale de Musique in Paris did.⁴⁵ In fact, they must have hoped that *Albion and Albanus* would persuade Charles to subsidise further productions in the manner of Louis XIV. This hope died with him, and instead they fell back on dramatic opera, which had many of the trappings of its all-sung cousin, but was less expensive.

⁴⁴ John Buttery makes a similar point but also concludes from Downes's comments (that the company only recovered half of their expenses) that audiences were 'not good'. *The Evolution of English Opera 1656-95*, unpublished PhD dissertation (Cambridge University, 1967), p. 202. There is, in fact, no evidence to suggest whether audiences were good or bad; the cost of the production alone is reason enough to explain why the company lost money, particularly when compounded with the short run of the production.

⁴⁵ For instance, from the death of Molière in April 1673, Lully was given the use of the theatre of the Palais Royal free of charge. Likewise, scenery and costumes purchased by the Crown for performances at Versailles could be re-used in Paris, while alterations and repairs to the theatre could also be paid for with government money. S. Pitou, *The Paris Opera*, i, p. 13.

Chapter 4

Dryden's Libretto and the Score of *Albion and Albanus*

In *Albion and Albanus* Dryden presented a very unusual operatic libretto. The story is an allegory on the life of Charles II and depicts his exile and several of the more difficult periods of his reign in surprisingly explicit detail. Such overtly political subject matter seems an unlikely choice for an opera, and more than one writer has commented upon its inappropriateness for a dramatic setting.¹ Lully's operas had set a precedent for politicising operatic entertainments, but even here, the panegyric allegories in praise of Louis XIV were confined to the prologue. The nature of the genesis of *Albion and Albanus* provides the apparent reason for the sustained allegory. As we have seen in Chapter 3, Dryden seems already to have begun work on a sung prologue (*Albion and Albanus*) to a play with music (*King Arthur*), which he was persuaded to expand into a complete drama in itself. The problems created by both the choice of subject matter, and the expansion of this material into three acts will be discussed in due course, but a brief synopsis of the story and an explanation of the allegory are first in order.²

The first act opens with a scene of despair as Augusta (representing the city of London) and Thamesia (representing the river Thames) are presented lying on couches in 'dejected postures'. Hermes descends in a chariot and enquires of the couple the cause of their despair.³ Augusta tells

¹ See for instance the passage by Charles Burney quoted in Chapter 11.

² A complete commentary on the libretto, fully explicating the details of the allegory, is available in *The Works of John Dryden*, xv: *Plays: Albion and Albanus, Don Sebastian, Amphitryon*, ed. E. Miner, G. B. Guffey and F. Zimmerman (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London), 1976. P. Hammond, in 'Dryden's *Albion and Albanus*: The apotheosis of Charles II', *The Court Masque*, ed. D. Lindley (Manchester, 1984), pp. 169-183, explores the iconography of the libretto and the way Dryden uses it to argue towards political ends.

³ The names 'Hermes' and 'Mercury' are used interchangeably in the stage directions of the libretto, though in the text 'Hermes' is used exclusively. Stave rubrics in the score use 'Hermes' exclusively, but one dance in the first act (no. 8) is entitled the Ayre for Mercury's Followers.

him of the loss of her 'plighted lord' Albion (Charles II, whose absence at the start of the opera represents his exile during the Interregnum). Hermes points out her betrayal of Albion, but offers her the opportunity to repent of her wrongdoings. This she eagerly accepts and she, Thamesia and their followers affirm their repentance in the chorus 'We'll wash away the stain'. After a dance of Mercury's followers, Democracy and Zelota (who represent the democratic and religious factions of the Commonwealth) enter and prepare to rape Augusta. They are accompanied by Archon, who though he at first appears to be in league with the antagonists, at the last minute intervenes to save Augusta.⁴ Thamesia and Augusta prepare to attack Democracy and Zelota, but Hermes stops them and instructs Archon to put the would-be rapists to sleep with his caduceus.⁵ Hermes, echoed by the chorus, proclaims Albion's return, and Archon goes to receive him. After a dance for mariners, Juno enters on a chariot drawn by peacocks and warns Augusta to be true to Albion. Iris then appears on another machine and sings a song describing the rapturous reception attending Albion's return. Juno, Iris and Hermes ascend and a scene of four triumphal arches is revealed. Albion and Albanus enter the stage and are received with dancing and a joyful chorus that closes the act.

The first scene of Act II takes place in Hell, where Pluto is ruminating on his joy in causing disunion in the world above. Democracy and Zelota approach him and he recognises them as his progeny. They report the loss of their power in 'Albion's Isle' now that Albion has returned, and Pluto realises that the latter's peaceful rule has slowed the stream of souls to Hell. Democracy suggests that the restoration of a Commonwealth might renew the flow, and the three hatch a plot 'in

⁴ In 1660 General George Monck, whom Archon represents, marched an army into England from Scotland. Initially, the march was believed to be in support of the Protectorate, but Monck pledged his support to the Royal cause, helping to enable Charles's return.

⁵ This act represents the bloodless restoration of Charles II.

seeming care of Albion's life' which will end his reign and implicate his brother Albanus (Charles's brother James) and wife Acacia (Catherine of Braganza).⁶ Pluto calls forth Alecto who offers them 'the basest, blackest of the Stygian band' (Titus Oates, a primary catalyst of the Popish Plot), to carry out the scheme. Their machinations are sealed with dancing and a chorus in which they proclaim "'Tis a Jubilee here when the world is in trouble'.

Scene two returns to the Thames, where Augusta is racked with unfounded jealousy for Albion's love. Democracy and Zelota approach her disguised as a 'patriot' and 'religion' respectively. With spurious arguments they prey upon her weakness and persuade her to forsake Albion once again.

Albion and Albanus enter, and Albion contemplates his people's return to disobedience. Hermes descends and counsels Albion to let Albanus go into exile until things turn for the better. After an anguished dialogue with his brother, in which Albanus argues the same case, Albion is convinced of the wisdom of this course of action.⁷ Apollo descends on a chariot and comforts the brothers, forecasting an eventual end to their difficulties.⁸ He exits, and Thamesia enters with Tritons and Sea Nymphs to provide an entertainment for Albanus as he goes into exile.

Act III opens with Albion at Dover, deserted by all but his wife Acacia. He once again contemplates the fate of his peaceful rule, morosely concluding that "'Tis fatal to be good.' Tritons and Nereids rise up from the sea to 'charm his discontent' with an entertainment of singing and dancing, though the Nereids' final line, 'Vessels are found'ring, and vows are in

⁶ The plot represents the Popish Plot. In 1678 rumour of a Catholic conspiracy to assassinate Charles II surfaced. It was suggested that his Catholic brother, James, would then take the throne and impose Catholicism on England. The rumours were almost completely false, but the populace had a paranoid fear of Catholicism and the alleged plot took hold.

⁷ James was forced into exile during the Exclusion Crisis which was partly engendered by the political instability resulting from the Popish Plot.

vain', acknowledges that all is not well. This allusion serves as a cue to the entrance of Democracy and Zelota, now accompanied by Tyranny and Asebia. They revel in the success of their plot and call for a masque to celebrate. The Boys in White (followers of Charles's bastard son, the protestant Duke of Monmouth whom the Earl of Shaftesbury was backing as a replacement for James in the line of succession during the Exclusion Crisis) perform a 'Fantastick Dance', which is followed by a dance for the 'Sectaries' (representing protestant non-conformists). The four antagonists continue to plot, and try to decide who should rule when Albion is unseated. Their dilemma is acted out in the following dance where the White Boys join with the Sectaries. Unable to agree, they begin fighting, and the Sectaries eventually chase the White Boys from the stage leaving Albion in safety.

Albion and Acacia enter and seek out Proteus to obtain a prophecy. They surprise him while he is sleeping, and though he changes into various shapes in an attempt to escape, they restrain him until he offers a prophecy. Proteus predicts that Albion's rule will be restored once again.

Democracy and Zelota return and once more try to subdue Albion, employing a one-eyed archer to shoot him. Their plot is foiled by a miraculous fire (representing the Newmarket fire which caused Charles to return early to London, thus thwarting the Rye House Plot) that springs up between them and Albion, and the antagonists sink below the stage. Albion and Acacia give thanks for the 'avenging fire'. Venus enters on a machine bringing Albanus, and their respective followers, the Loves and Graces and the Heroes, dance in their honour. Apollo now enters on a machine and announces that Albion shall be taken up to Heaven while Albanus will rule on earth.⁹ Acacia and a chorus of followers celebrate Albion's apotheosis.

⁸ In both the libretto and score the name 'Apollo' is used in Act II and 'Phoebus' in Act III.

⁹ This section of the opera was added to accommodate Charles's death.

The second and final scene moves to Windsor where a vision of the Honours of the Garter appears above the stage. Fame rises out of the middle of the stage on a globe and he, followed by the chorus, brings the opera to a close with a song in praise of Albion.

Even in this brief description of the story, several dramatic problems are evident. First, the dramatic arc of the opera is faulty. Act I is a closed unit; the dramatic tension engendered by Democracy and Zelota's attempt to rape Augusta is solved by the end of the act, and Albion is returned to power. This is surely a relic of Dryden's original design for *Albion and Albanius*, as a self-contained prologue. If we compare this to the first act of Quinault and Lully's *Phaëton*, which builds gradually towards the prophecy of Phaëton's fall, Grabu's dilemma in providing dramatic music is clearly delineated. The progression from the second to the third act is more satisfactory, leaving the question of Albanius's return from exile unresolved.

Several problems of characterisation also present themselves. Dryden seems to have found some difficulty in giving a rounded character to Democracy and Zelota, not a surprising situation given the fact that they are meant to personify the abstract concepts of democracy and religious zeal. Albion also presents problems; Dryden depicts him as a completely passive character. He spends the majority of the opera either wondering why his peaceful rule has gone wrong, or being saved by gods or other miraculous devices. The fate of Augusta, the most fully drawn character in the opera, is also unsatisfactory. After her telling song and recitative in the second act, she disappears from the opera without explanation.

Though the extensive allegory of the opera seems dramatically unwieldy, it may well have aided the acceptance of the through-sung drama by the English audience. Richard Luckett argues that, while audiences would have had trouble in accepting 'real' characters conversing in song,

allegorical characters and gods might rightly converse in this way.¹⁰ Ferrand Spence's comments in the preface to his translation of St. Evremond's writings on opera make this clear:

But, to leave it in suspences whether all the Aristotelian and Horation Precepts are nicely requisite in the composition of a Comedy, and not to return back and enquire here, whether the same dispute may be warped also to tragedy, we can make no manner of question, but that Opera's or pieces of Machine are not subject to their Jurisdiction, but are wholly out of the pale of those two Men's Territories, since they are of a later date, and owe their original to Florence in Lorenzo de Medici's time or to the Venetians ...

Comedy ought to have everything likely and probable, i.e. only natural and ordinary Events; Opera's which are a species, that stand in opposition to the former, must accept only of extraordinary and super-natural Adventures ...

From this wide distinction betwixt the nature of Comedy and Opera, it may be determin'd, that either my Authour [St Everemond] did not understand the right notion of Operas, when he terms them, ev'n beyond a litteral sense, Comedies in Musique, or else he means that abused Constitution of them, which he himself derides, when they are compell'd in Musick to negotiate the inferiour and common affairs of civil Life. In this Observation he certainly shakes hands with truth, and I am sure, you, sir, will take his side: For I, partly, believe, that should a Man drillingly sing and warble out an errand to his Laquais, the Fellow might, perhaps, go, but I fancy, he would make more hast to Court than to the place appointed him in his message, that he might be the first to make Friends for his Master's Estate.¹¹

As for the drama itself, James Winn suggests that though some of the dramatic confrontations in the opera are 'stiff and schematic' when compared to Dryden's best plays, a comparison with similar texts, like the prologues to *Ariane* and *Calisto*, shows Dryden's libretto to be far superior.¹² In particular he praises Augusta's scene in Act II, which demonstrates Dryden's ability to fuse 'the poetical and musical conventions normally used to depict a jealous woman with the recently remembered history of the Popish Plot. No previous English opera gives politics that

¹⁰ 'Exotick but Rational Entertainments: The English Dramatick Operas', *English Drama: Forms and Development*, ed. M Axton and R. Williams (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 123-141.

¹¹ F. Spence, *Miscellanea: or Various Discourses Written Originally by the Sieur de Saint Evremont And made English by Ferrand Spence* (London, 1686). The dedicatory essay is not paginated.

¹² Winn, *When Beauty Fires the Blood* (Ann Arbor, 1992), p. 258.

kind of emotional life'.¹³ Grabu clearly responded to Dryden's accomplishment in this scene, for it elicited from him one of the opera's strongest musical passages.

The opera also presents an important achievement in the integration of dance and scenic design within the drama. While it is clear that these two elements are used primarily for spectacle, they take an active dramatic role in the third act. The set of three dances, beginning with that for the White Boys and ending with the dance for the Fighting White Boys and Sectaries, presents through choreography alone the failure of one of Democracy and Zelota's plots against Albion (see Chapter 9). Later in the act, when Albion finds himself threatened by a one-eyed archer, a fire erupts between him and his enemy, saving Albion and trapping the aggressors. This version of *deus ex machina* is no doubt a weak dramatic device, eliciting from both Dryden and Grabu a perfunctory response. It nevertheless shows the scenic design of the opera operating on more than a simply decorative level. Given the fact that in later dramatic operas, critics lament the fact that the drama and music rarely cooperate (let alone the dance and scenic design), it is strange that no attention has been focused on Dryden and Betterton's ability to integrate dance, scenery and music in *Albion and Albanus*.

Whatever the merits and faults of the libretto, it is primarily Grabu's setting of it that is at issue here. Before examining the music in detail, it is worth considering how Grabu dealt with the libretto as it was presented to him, and whether he felt the need to make both larger structural alterations to it, and minor changes in individual words or phrases.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 266-267. In Chapter 5 of this book, Winn discusses the literary merits of the opera in full, and is even-handed in assessing the successes and failures of the libretto.

A Comparison of the Libretto and the Score

A comparison between the printed libretto and the musical score of *Albion and Albanus* reveals several discrepancies between them. These discrepancies range from insubstantial differences in single words, to complete verses of missing text. There are also discrepancies between stage directions in the libretto and their corresponding musical movements and order in the score, discrepancies which often elucidate Grabu's concern for creating symmetrical multi-movement structures. For the most part, however, there is little difference between the libretto and the score, suggesting that Grabu set the text of the opera more or less as it was given to him. Dryden's statement in the opera's preface, that 'I was a slave to the composition' and that 'I will be counsell'd, and will always follow my Friends advice, where I find it reasonable; but will never part with the Power of the Militia',¹⁴ leads one to suppose that he was at least offered suggestions (presumably from Grabu and Betterton) in the writing of the opera. Elsewhere I have argued that the scene at Proteus's grotto was thrust upon Dryden by Grabu and Betterton, who knew of the similar scene in Lully's *Phaëton*; resemblances in the music support this suggestion. However, any alterations or concessions Dryden may have made seem to have been incorporated at a stage before the musical composition had begun. Thus, compared to the relationship between the music and the word-book of *The Fairy Queen*, for instance,¹⁵ the differences between the two forms of *Albion and Albanus* are minor.

Discrepancies between individual words may stem from several causes: 1) errors in the manuscript of the text from which Grabu composed, 2) errors introduced into the text during the process of musical composition,

¹³ *The Works of John Dryden*, xv, p. 10.

¹⁵ B. Wood and A. Pinnock, 'The Fairy Queen; a fresh look at the issues', *Early Music* 21 (1993), pp. 44-62.

and 3) word changes purposely introduced by Grabu. Since there is no extant manuscript of the libretto, it is difficult to differentiate between the first two categories. The editors of the California Dryden Edition state that the text of the printed score was copied from a different source (presumably the theatre score) from that used to compile the 1685 printing of the libretto.¹⁶ There are, of course, many differences in spelling and punctuation between the libretto and score, but two instances where slightly different readings have affected the musical composition in minor ways suggest that Grabu worked from a manuscript of the text other than that used in producing the printed libretto.

In the first instance, the omission of the letter 'e' from 'thee' in the line 'what brought Thee, Wretch, to this despair' (I, i, 46),¹⁷ is reflected in Grabu's setting of the text. In the score, the line, sung by Hermes, is set as below (no. 6, bar 123):



The omission of 'e', and the consequent lack of commas flanking 'wretch' may have led Grabu to set 'the' instead of 'thee'. If he had been working from a manuscript that contained the latter reading, the words 'brought thee' would probably have been set to even quavers. In Act III, i of the libretto Albion is given the following couplet:

Let our tuneful accents upwards move,
Till they reach the vaulted Arch of those above.
(lines 179-180)

¹⁶ *The Works of John Dryden*, xv, p. 501.

¹⁷ The line numbers are those given in *The Works of John Dryden*, xv.

Grabu, clearly working from a erroneous manuscript, set the following (no. 64, bars 71-73):

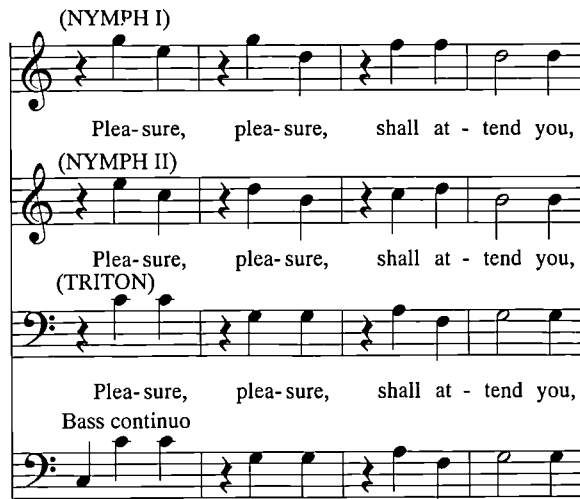


Neither of these examples is a significant error, but the discrepancy in the second in particular does obscure the meaning of the text.

Other inconsistencies between words in the libretto and the score have not affected the musical composition. In these cases, it is nearly impossible to determine whence the error derives, but the text of the 1685 word-book usually provides a better reading.¹⁸ A nine-line errata list was published with the 1685 word-book. For the most part, it represents corrections of printing errors, since these same errors are not found in the score. In one instance, however, the changes represent Dryden's revision of the text. In the Act III duet 'From the low palace of Old Father Ocean' (no. 53), two nereids sing 'Sea-sporting ['sea-spouting' in the word-book] Dolphins are tam'd for our Motion.' The errata slip replaces 'Sea-sporting' with 'Sea-raceing' and 'tam'd' with 'train'd'. The score preserves the original reading, which would presumably have been the one used in performance, unless Dryden gave the singers a verbal instruction to sing the revised words. The changes would have made no difference to the music; they simply represent a last-minute revision on Dryden's part.

The score provides one instance where Grabu altered Dryden's lyrics to produce a line better suited to his musical needs. In the Chacon, Dryden begins the second verse 'Sports and pleasures shall attend you', while Grabu sets 'Pleasure, pleasure shall attend you':

¹⁸ See the Commentary to the score for examples.



The textual change introduced by Grabu is much easier to sing, and it is required because of a musical decision; a setting that would not have called for a change in the text is easy to imagine. Instead, Grabu gave the musical idea, a crotchet rest followed by two crotchets, precedence over the text, and altered the latter to suit himself.

As would be expected in the case of a composer working in a language other than his mother tongue, Grabu almost always deferred to Dryden. Unlike Purcell, he either felt little need to alter the words of the text, or lacked a secure knowledge of English that would allow him to make alterations.

Omission of complete verses

An entire verse of Dryden's libretto is missing from the score both in the first act and in the third. In each circumstance, the omission occurs in a strophic song and seems to result from the printer's inability to either place two lines of text under a single vocal line, or to find space elsewhere on the page to display a second verse.

Iris's song in Act I (no. 18) relates the news of Albion's safe sea crossing and the rapturous reception given him by his people at his arrival. Stage directions in the libretto indicate that a 'retornella' should be played

after the first six lines, thus dividing the text into two six-line verses. In the score, only the first verse is set to music (bars 80-103), followed by a 'ritornel' (bars 104-119); there is no indication of a repeat or of another verse. The first six lines contain only the description of Albion's sea-journey, while the second six deal with the ecstatic reception afforded him. Juno's subsequent text, 'Why stay we here when mortals laugh and love', makes less sense without the vivid description of the people's reaction to Albion's return. There is no compelling reason to conclude that the second verse was cut from the musical setting. It must have been sung to the same music of the first verse after the ritornel was played. Limitations in the flexibility of presentation probably meant that the printer was unable to signal the presence of the second verse in the score.

The same is true of the duet for the nereids in Act III, 'From the low palace of old Father Ocean'. Dryden provides them with two four-line verses, only one of which appears in the score. This verse is set to a binary song with an explicitly marked repeat of the first section (and a probable repeat of the second section), but no indication of a second verse or a repeat of the whole structure. The song is part of a short entertainment commanded by Neptune to charm Albion's discontent, and it is followed directly by the entrance of Democracy and Zelota. The second verse foreshadows Albion's continued troubles:

Ev'ry Nymph of the flood, her Tresses rending;
 Throws off her Armlet of Pearl in the Main;
 Neptune in anguish his Charge unattending,
 Vessels are foundring, and Vows are in vain.
 (III, i, 39-42)

The second verse contrasts with the first, which contains no hint of disruption, and thus makes a neat transition into the entry of Democracy and Zelota, which is otherwise unmarked by even a continuo prelude. Once again, it seems more likely that the printer was unable to include the second

verse under the text of the first than that Grabu cut a dramatically relevant passage of text.

Changes due to Large-scale Musical Structuring

On several occasions, dances in the score appear in slightly different places from those indicated in the libretto, or appear with no direction from the libretto. These discrepancies occur most often in the masques of the first two acts, and result from Grabu's apparent concern to create large-scale multi-movement structures. In the divertissement that ends Act I, Grabu added both a dance (No. 23, Second Ayre) and a chorus (No. 24, 'Hail, Royal Albion, hail'). The addition of the chorus brings the act into agreement with Acts II and III, both of which end with a chorus. Grabu also altered the presentation of the final lines of text, 'Behold the differing climes agree,/ Rejoicing in thy Restauration'(I, i, lines 254-255), given to Thamesia in the libretto. Grabu turns the passage into a duet for Thamesia and Augusta and twice repeats the lines, providing a melismatic setting that recalls the divertissement's opening passage, 'The Royal Squadron Marches'. The text is altered by shortening 'differing' to 'diff'ring', unbalancing the nine-syllable poetic line, but creating greater ease in the setting of it. Why the Second Ayre was added is unclear. The preceding Ayre for the Four Parts of the World is sufficient to parallel Grabu's practice elsewhere of including a dance between two vocal movements using the same text. Perhaps the addition was a response to the needs of the choreographer, for there is no additional scenic element which would have required music either to cover stage noise or to provide time for machinery or scenes to be moved.¹⁹

¹⁹ The Second Ayre is the only movement in this long divertissement to use a triple metre (besides short sections of recitative), and Grabu may have included it for the sake of rhythmic variety.

In the Act II Masque in Hell, Grabu both rearranges the placement of dance movements, and repeats several lines of text to meet musical-structural needs. The libretto indicates that both dances for the devils are to come between the solo version of 'Let us laugh' and its choral restatement. Instead, the dances are separated, one positioned as in the libretto, and the other placed after the chorus. Likewise, the chorus, which in the libretto repeats only two lines of Pluto's song, repeats all of the lyrics of Pluto's song in the score. As discussed in Chapter 5, this arrangement is part of the carefully planned structure of both the Masque in Hell, and its parallel, the Masque of the Sea. The stage direction concerning the dances for the devils is also inconsistent with the score. While the libretto describes 'a single Entry of a Devil follow'd by an Entry of 12 Devils' (II, i, 123), the score gives the titles of both dances in the plural 'Ayre for the Devils' and 'Second Ayre for Devils'.

Grabu's musical structure also required adjustment or perhaps the addition of a movement in the Masque of the Sea. The libretto presents Thamesia's song 'Old Father Ocean' (no. 42) and 'See the God of Seas' (no. 44) as two uninterrupted verses (II, ii, lines 142-157) prefaced by a stage direction indicating the rising of Neptune and his followers from the sea. In the score, there is a short continuo prelude before the song 'Old Father Ocean', and the two verses are separated by the Ayre for the Gods of the Rivers (no. 43), which does not appear explicitly in the libretto. It is unclear from the score as to whether Neptune rises during the continuo prelude and the song 'Old Father Ocean', or whether his rising awaits the Ayre for the Gods of the Rivers. Whatever the case, Grabu placed the Ayre before the verse 'See, the god of seas attends thee' as a parallel to the full-string prelude which prefaces Pluto's song 'Let us laugh' in the first scene of the act. The Ayre for the Gods of the Rivers and its repetition as the entr'acte²⁰

²⁰ The entr'acte rubric refers to the movement as the Ayre for the Gods of the Floods.

provide the frame for the arch-structure of the Masque of the Sea. Once again we see Grabu adding and altering the placement of movements for musical-structural reasons.

Despite the confusion here between the libretto and the score, the former clarifies a misattribution of 'Old Father Ocean' to Neptune instead of Thamesius in the score. The misprint may be the result of the printer misreading the musical manuscript. As we have noted, the libretto signals Neptune's rising from the sea just prior to Thamesius's 'Old Father Ocean'. A similar direction in the music manuscript was probably mistaken by the printer as an indication that Neptune was to sing the solo.

In Act III, Grabu added a choral movement to give structural consistency to the movements following Venus's entry. Venus, accompanied by Albanus, rises out of the sea in a giant scallop-shell. She sings two five-line verses (III, i, lines 190-199), the first of which touches upon peace and pleasure, and the second upon the heroic character of Albanus. Each verse is punctuated with a corresponding dance by the appropriate attendants: Graces and Loves (attendants of Venus) for the first, and Heroes (attendants of Albanus) for the second. After the Heroes' dance, a chorus reprises Venus's second verse, though there is no indication in the libretto of a reprise of the first verse following the dance of the Graces and Loves. In the score, Grabu added a choral reprise of Venus's first verse, creating parallel three-movement structures (solo-dance-chorus) around each of Venus's short solos.

In one other instance, Grabu deviates slightly from the indications in the libretto. When Albion enters at the opening of the third act, only Acacia accompanies him; a train of attendants escorts neither. A dialogue ensues between the two, sealed with a 'chorus of both' to lyrics that repeat Albion's last statement, 'To rule by love'. It seems clear that Dryden was trying to stress Albion's isolation by presenting him on-stage without attendants.

Grabu, however, set the ‘chorus of both’ to a four-part choral texture accompanied by five-part strings. In most situations, choruses seem to be composed of on-stage attendants to the various characters. If an on-stage chorus appeared here, it would be in conflict with one of the primary aims of the scene, the visual presentation of Albion’s abandonment. Perhaps the chorus was sung from off-stage. Whatever the case, it is difficult to find a convincing explanation as to why Grabu expanded Dryden’s direction for a duet into a full chorus.

The Final Chorus

The Grand Chorus which ends the opera, and the stage directions which follow it, reveal a final situation where the score and libretto diverge. Here, the score provides a correction to the libretto of an error which has been replicated in every subsequent edition since 1685. The sense of the first six lines as printed in the libretto breaks down in the midst of lines four and five:

Fame. Renown, assume thy Trumpet!
From Pole to Pole resounding
Great *Albion’s* Name;
Great *Albion’s* Name shall be
The Theme of Fame, shall be great *Albion’s* Name,
Great *Albion’s* Name, Great *Albion’s* Name.
Record the Garter’s Glory:
A Badge for *Hero’s*, and for Kings to bear:
For Kings to bear!
And swell th’Immortal Story,
With Songs of Gods, and fit for Gods to hear;
And swell th’Immortal Story,
With Songs of Gods, and fit for Gods to hear;
For Gods to hear.
(III, ii, lines 1-14)

When compared to the text allocated to Fame in the score, it is clear that the printer neglected to add the words ‘the theme of fame’ to line four, an error easily understood given the repetition of the phrase at the beginning of the next line, and the very frequent repetition of words and phrases in the passage. The text, exactly as it appears in the score, reads as follows:

Fame: Renown, assume thy Trumpet
 from Pole to Pole, resounding
 great *Albion's* Name;
 Great *Albion's* Name shall be the Theme of Fame.
 (these lines repeated by the chorus)
Fame: The Theme of Fame shall be great *Albion's* Name,
 great *Albion's* Name, great *Albion's* Name;
 (these lines repeated by the chorus, then elaborated)
Fame: Record the Garter's glory,
 Record the Garter's glory,
 And swell th'immortal story
 With songs of Gods, and fit for Gods to hear;
 And swell th'immortal story
 With songs of Gods, and fit for Gods to hear.

The nonsensical reading of the chorus provided in the printed libretto suggests that at this point, the printer was not working from a copy of the text alone, but from one that included the music. Such a situation could have come about owing to the delayed opening run of the opera. Copies of the libretto may have been ready for what seems to have been the expected première of the work in February 1685. The King's death delayed the production and necessitated the addition of several new lines to accommodate the change in circumstances. This in turn would have required the printer to reprint the final gatherings of the libretto. In the process, the original version of the final chorus may have been misplaced, perhaps forcing the printer to set the final chorus from a copy of the text already set to music. This would explain the unnecessary repetitions of 'Great Albion's name'. Interestingly, when George Colman borrowed the text of this chorus to end his masque *The Fairy Prince* (set by Thomas Arne and performed at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden in 1771 [see Chapter 10]), he seems to have recognised the error in the printing of Dryden's libretto, correcting it in the edition of his own works where it is printed as follows:

Renown, assume thy Trumpet
 From Pole to Pole, resounding
 Great GEORGE's Name!
 Great GEORGE's Name
 Shall be the Theme of Fame.
 Record the GARTER's Glory:
 A Badge for *Hero's*, and for Kings to bear:
 For Kings to bear:
 And swell th'Immortal Story,
 With Songs of Gods, and fit for Gods to hear;
 For Gods to hear.²¹

The hypothesis that the libretto's printer was forced to work from a musical copy of the text comes into question when the second half of the lyric is examined, since Grabu's chorus omits the line 'A Badge for *Hero's*, and for Kings to bear:/For Kings to bear!' (III, ii, 8-9). Were the printer copying from a musical score, this line should be absent from the libretto as well. The line itself reinforces the appearance above the stage of 'a Vision of the Honors of the Garter', and so is in one way superfluous. Yet as likely as not, Grabu worked from a manuscript of the text in which the lines were lacking and did not leave them out for any deliberate reason.

The last five lines of the printed libretto also seem to contain an unnecessary repetition (lines 12-13). These again may be seen to originate from the repetition found in the musical score. Colman's edition of the chorus removes this repetition and provides what seems to be the best available reading. However, given the evidence above, it is not possible to completely reconcile the reading in the musical score with that found in the libretto to *Albion and Albanus*, or to satisfactorily explain the mangled state of the chorus in the libretto.

The opera's final stage direction calls for 'Trumpets and Ho-Boys' to accompany this chorus. The score, however, contains no explicit evidence for either instrument, though there is a strong circumstantial case for the inclusion of oboes (see Chapter 8). The discrepancy between score

²¹ See *The Fairy Prince* in G. Colman, *Dramatic Works*, iv (London, 1777).

and libretto here is possibly one of ignorance on Grabu's part. He may either not have received a manuscript of the libretto with this instruction in it, or he may have simply disregarded it as a minor detail of the poet's and scene designer's stage directions.

Comparison between the score and libretto reveals only minor differences between the two, and clarifies slight inconsistencies over line allocations, omissions, or nonsensical phrases that occur separately within each version. Such a comparison also elucidates Grabu's concern for analogous and symmetrical multi-movement structures, since it shows he added musical numbers when such large-scale designs were not already present in the libretto. In general, however, he adhered very closely to the libretto as it was supplied to him by Dryden, not a surprising situation given Grabu's lack of complete security with English (as evinced by some of his vocal settings) and the dramatist's experience and high stature.

Chapter 5

Large-scale Structure in *Albion and Albanus*

Structural use of tonality in *Albion and Albanus*

The use of tonality plays an important structural role in *Albion and Albanus*. It articulates entrances of characters or groups of characters, it signals changes in the dramatic situation, and it establishes polarity between the protagonists and antagonists through the contrast of major and minor keys. While several commentators have pointed out a certain symmetry in the opera's tonal structure,¹ tonality is not the primary means by which large-scale symmetry and balance are manifest in the work. When these elements are a concern, they are achieved through arch structures, created by nesting a movement between recurrent pairs of movements in the same key.

In *Albion and Albanus*, almost every entry of a new character, or group of characters, is accompanied by a change in tonality (Table 1). This practice is similar to that of Lully in his *tragédies en musique*, where each scene of an opera is usually set in one key, and where shifts between scenes are often accompanied by a change of key.² In his librettos, Quinault followed the French theatrical convention of changing scenes at the entrance or exit of characters.³ Dryden, however, made few explicit scene divisions in *Albion and Albanus*. Act I is a single scene, while Act II is divided into two scenes, the first in hell and the second in the city of London. The third

¹ Wesley Vos first noted this symmetry in *English Dramatic Recitative before ca. 1685*, unpublished PhD dissertation (University of Washington, 1967), p. 171, though he failed to note the section in B flat major in the third act. Margaret Laurie expanded upon Vos's observations, noting that 'there is a certain symmetry about the overall key-structure, with Act I moving from D minor to A minor, Act II from F major to C major and Act III encompassing both by moving from D minor to C major' in *The Blackwell History of Music in Britain: The Seventeenth Century*, ed. I. Spink (Oxford, 1992), p. 320.

² See L. Rosow, 'Jean Baptiste Lully', *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London, 1992), iii, pp. 87-88, and J. Newman, *Jean-Baptiste de Lully and his Tragédies Lyriques* (Ann Arbor, 1979), p. 93.

³ For a discussion of the literary structure of the *tragédie en musique* and its antecedents, see chapters 1 and 3 of J. Newman, op. cit.

act is in two scenes, of which the second contains only the final chorus in praise of Albion. If Dryden's libretto were to be divided into scenes according to French practice, these divisions would occur, in most cases, at the same points where Grabu places key changes.

Table 1 Tonal Structure in *Albion and Albanus*

| | | | | | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|----------|-------------|
| A | d | G | C | a | C | a | a |
| c | Dialogue: | Entry of | Archon | Archon puts | Song for | Entry of | Entry of |
| t | Hermes, | Democracy | saves | Democracy | Thamesis | Juno & | Albion & |
| | Augusta, | Zelota & | Augusta | & Zelota to | & dance | Isis | Albanus |
| 1 | Thamesis | Archon | | sleep | for | | |
| | | | | Mariners | | | |
| A | F | f | F | F | c | C | |
| c | Scene in | Augusta's | Entry of | Mono- | Entry of | Masque | |
| t | Hell | aria | Democracy | logue: | Hermes, | of the | |
| | | | & Zelota, | Albion | dialogue: | Sea | |
| 2 | | | etc. | | Albion & | | |
| | | | | | Albanus | | |
| A | d | D | d | g | B \flat | g | C |
| c | Dialogue: | Entry of | Dialogue: | Scene at | Entry of | Entry of | Celebratory |
| t | Albion & | Democracy | Albion & | Proteus's | Democracy | Venus | chorus in |
| | Acacia | & Zelota, | Acacia | grotto | & Zelota, | | praise of |
| 3 | | etc. | | | etc. | | Albion |

Grabu contrasts Albion and his supporters with the forces of Democracy, Zelota and their friends through the use of major and minor tonalities. When the foes arrayed against Albion take the stage, the musical setting is invariably in a major key. When the stage is left to Albion, his supporters, and the gods that are defending him, minor keys predominate.⁴ The key of C major is reserved for celebratory scenes: the rescue of Augusta, Thamesis's song and the dance for the mariners that follows it, the masque for Albanus, and the final chorus of the opera. The passage in which Archon puts Democracy and Zelota to sleep with Hermes's wand is the single instance when a minor key is used while the antagonists are on the

⁴ This opposition of major and minor keys refers to complete scenes or movements. Within a given scene, there is no consistent pattern whereby passages for the protagonists are set in the minor and passages for the antagonists are set in the major. For instance, when in no. 64 the antagonists disappear, leaving the stage to Albion and Acacia, there is no shift to a minor key. The movement to the minor awaits the change of scene at Venus's entry 26 bars later.

stage. In this situation, however, the protagonists are clearly in control; thus the minor tonality associated with them takes precedence.⁵

This leads us to another purpose of a shift in key, to emphasise an alteration in the dramatic situation. At the changes of key for Archon's song (from G to C) and for Hermes's accompanied arioso (from C to a) no characters enter or exit. Rather, it is the dramatic situation which changes. In the first case, Archon's decision to rescue Augusta swings the balance of power to the protagonists, and they rejoice at their salvation. At the beginning of Hermes's aria, the human celebrations are superseded by a god, and by the weighty business of formally subduing Democracy and Zelota.

There are several instances where a change in key might be expected, but does not occur. Surprisingly, the entry of Albion and Albanus during the Marche in Act I, despite being their first appearance in the opera, is not articulated with a change of key. According to the pattern outlined above, only a minor key or C major is an option. The latter would seem to be the best choice, since it provides a change from the previous scene in A minor, and it corresponds with the C major endings of the other two acts. Grabu's decision to remain in A minor seems to squander a critical dramatic opportunity.

In Act II, Albion enters after Democracy and Zelota have attempted to entice Augusta into another betrayal. His entrance establishes two of the criteria which signal a change in key: a protagonist and the entrance of a new character. However, Albion sings his monologue in F major, the key of the preceding scene for Democracy and Zelota. Why Grabu failed to set the monologue in a different key is unclear. The association of the protagonists

⁵ A similar situation occurs in the third act of Lully's *Persée*. When Mercury defeats the Gorgons they sing for the first time in D minor, Mercury's key, rather than their own, D major. See Caroline Wood, *Music and Drama in the Tragédie en Musique, 1673-1715* (New York and London, 1996), p. 348.

with minor tonalities throughout the opera seems too consistent to be an unconscious device. Apparently, the minor key (C minor in this case) was delayed in order to accompany Hermes's entrance immediately following the monologue. Usually Grabu avoids moving directly from one minor key to another, and perhaps this prompted him to save the key change for Hermes's entrance. He does, however, place two consecutive passages in differing minor keys within the third act: the dialogue between Albion and Acacia, and the scene for Proteus. The choice of F minor for Albion's Act II monologue (the same key of Augusta's aria), would have provided greater tonal variety, and conformed to the perceptible pattern of tonal movement within the opera. As with the entry of Albion and Albanus in Act I, Grabu missed an opportunity to exploit a change of tonality for dramatic effect.

Another entry, that of Apollo in Act III, goes unmarked by a key change, though the reason is in this instance clear. The entry marks the beginning of the section added to the opera to accommodate the death of Charles II. Grabu must not have wanted to alter the established tonal structure of the opera when he inserted the new material, and so did not put this additional scene in a contrasting key.

Franklin Zimmerman has rightly remarked upon the rather stagnant tonal structure of the opera.⁶ The fact that there is a coherent plan for the use of different tonalities does not necessarily make it a pleasing one. In particular, the several long passages set in a single key cause Grabu's failure to contrast tonalities at Albion's first entry in Act I and in Act II to be even more acute. Furthermore, the choice of keys is very conservative, and is weighted heavily towards the flat side of the tonal spectrum. Only two passages in the entire opera are set in sharp keys, the initial entries of Democracy and Zelota in the first and third acts.

⁶ See his discussion of the musical aspects of the opera in *The Works of John Dryden, xv: Plays: Albion and Albanus, Don Sebastian, Amphytrion*, ed. E. Miner, G. B. Guffey and F. Zimmerman (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1976), pp. 343-355.

Architectural Structure in *Albion and Albanus*

The success of other aspects of large-scale musical organisation in *Albion and Albanus* contrasts with the often monotonous tonal planning. Each act follows a similar pattern: 1) three-part ritornel, 2) passages of recitative, song, and dance which advance the plot, and 3) a masque or divertissement which ends the act, and which is dramatically static. In addition, the first act is preceded by an overture, while the second act contains two divertissements; each closes one of the two scenes into which Dryden explicitly divided the act. Though Dryden created the pattern by which a divertissement ends each act, it is Grabu who succeeds in turning these divertissements into convincing structures which prove to be some of the opera's greatest strengths.

The primary tools by which Grabu unites each of these divertissements are the repetition of musical material – often complete movements, repeating rhythmic patterns, and the seamless linking of one movement to the next. The two Act II divertissements are especially concerned with symmetry, while the first act is given continuity by similar rhythmic and melodic patterns. The final act closes with a grand *da capo* solo and chorus movement as opposed to a multi-movement structure.

The Act I Divertissement

The first act divertissement celebrates the return from exile of Albion and Albanus. The brothers appear on the stage, but they are spectators to the pageantry which is displayed in their honour. The eight movements of the divertissement are unified through repeating head-motives involving one or both of the outer voices, similar rhythmic patterns, and to a lesser extent, motives from within the bodies of the individual movements (Table 2). In addition, all the movements are designed to link directly into one another. All but one begins with an anacrusis, and in each case, the anacrusis

completes the final bar of the previous movement. In the case of the Second Ayre, its final cadence resolves on the opening bar of the final chorus.

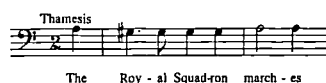
Unlike the two divertissements of the second act, Act I does not rely on the repetition of large musical sections. The only exact repetition occurs when the Ayre for the Four Parts of the World is repeated for the entr'acte, or act tune. Once again Grabu follows French practice, in which the entr'actes are not new material, but movements taken from earlier in the opera.⁷ The choice of movement is not arbitrary, but governed by structural and dramatic concerns. The restatement of the Ayre for the Four Parts of the World frames a smaller unit within the divertissement, dividing the large, formal structures of the Second Ayre (a rondo) and the final chorus from the earlier flexible structures containing duets, choral interjections and ritornels.

This first-act divertissement is the only section in the opera where Grabu attempts to unite a large number of movements through thematic relationships. In several other instances, he uses a head-motive to connect an instrumental ritornel or prelude with a subsequent section of recitative or aria, but the repetition is always immediate, and not shared amongst several movements. The chorus sections of this divertissement are also unique since this is the only occasion in the opera where the chorus enters without a solo voice first presenting most of its material. While Augusta and Thamesia do introduce some material later taken by the chorus (no. 21.b: Augusta bars 8-10, Thamesia bars 11-16), the motives are significantly reworked, or only the rhythmic pattern and not the melodic outline remains.

⁷ L. Rosow, 'Making Connections: thoughts on Lully's entr'actes', *Early Music* 21 (1993), pp. 231-238.

Table 2
Recurrent Rhythmic and Melodic Patterns in the Act I Divertissement

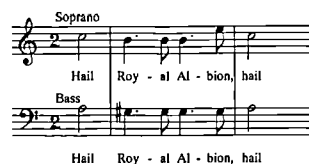
No. 19



No. 20 March



No. 21.a Chorus



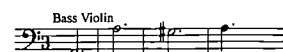
No. 21.b Ritornel



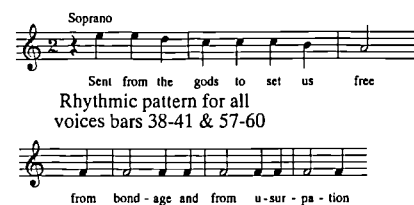
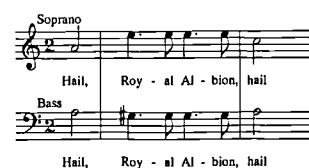
No. 22 Ayre for the Four
 Parts of the World



No. 23 Second Ayre



No. 24 Chorus



Repeat No. 22 for the entr'acte

Despite the thematic integration (or perhaps because of its extreme regularity), this divertissement is the least successful of the four. There is a great deal of textural variety, but it does not relieve the monotony of the relentless A minor tonality, nor the prosaic rhythmic patterns that dominate and link most of the movements.

The Masque in Hell

The first of the Act II divertissements is a masque set in Hell. After plotting the downfall of Albion, Pluto and his henchman celebrate with song and dance. The masque is united by repeated rhythmic patterns, and by one of Grabu's most successful structural devices, the repetition of a solo movement reworked for full chorus.

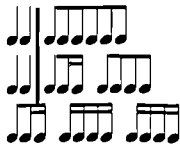




The masque begins with a duet for Alecto and Pluto, 'Take him, make him', that is a variant of a bass doubling continuo song. The soloists sing in alternation for the majority of the movement, but in the final eight bars, when they do sing simultaneously, Grabu slavishly retains a trio texture by writing the two violins in unison. This introductory duet is differentiated from the following symmetrical series of movements since it does not share in their unifying rhythmic patterns. The two primary patterns: 1) a two-crotchet anacrusis, and 2) running semi-quavers (Table 3) are established in the prelude (bars 1-25 of no. 31) that follows the duet, and the subsequent movements derive the majority of their rhythmic material from these patterns.

The Ayre for the Devils is the centre of the symmetric arch structure. The song and chorus that frame it, 'Let us laugh', are nearly identical. Pluto's vocal line becomes the bass line of the chorus, and the two-part violin texture above it is replaced by three choral voices doubled by strings, plus an additional string part. All of the five-part string interludes are transferred intact from the solo to the chorus. The Second Ayre for Devils

balances the prelude to Pluto's song, and though they do not share similar melodic material, they are linked by a two-crotchet anacrusis.

As in the Act I divertissement, a seamless flow of movements is indicated in the score. The prelude moves directly into Pluto's song, whose final bar lacks a quaver beat, supplied by the anacrusis to the Ayre for the Devils. The metre of the second ending of this dance returns to 3, and the bass note is tied across to the beginning of the chorus. Furthermore, all of the movements can be linked by proportional tempo relationships (see Chapter 8, Table 4).

Table 3 Structure of the Act II Masque in Hell

| Mvt. | Length | | Forces | Time-sig. | Rhythmic pattern |
|--------|--------|---------|---|-----------|--|
| No. 30 | 40 | Duet | Pluto, Alecto Violin I, II, continuo | 8 3 | Introductory mvt. |
| No. 31 | 25 | Prelude | 5-pt strings | 3 |  |
| | 69 | Song | Pluto, Violin I, II , continuo, 5-pt strings | 3 & 2 |  |
| No.32 | 66 | Dance | 5-pt strings | ♩ |  |
| No.33 | 69 | Chorus | Chorus, 5-pt strings | 3 & 2 |  |
| No.34 | 30 | Dance | 5-pt strings | 3 |  |

The Masque in Hell is a very successful musical unit. Its variety of instrumental and vocal textures, combined with a lively and well-structured alternation of metre, hold the listener's attention. Underpinning these features is a pattern of rhythmic unity and a satisfying symmetrical organisation.

The Masque of the Sea

The Masque of the Sea, which closes Act II, is an entertainment for Albanus as he prepares to journey into exile. Within the dramatic structure of the act, it parallels the Masque in Hell. In the first scene of Act II, the antagonists construct a plot to destroy Albion and seal it with a devilish masque. In the second scene, Albion and Albanus decide upon the unavoidable exile of the latter, and a masque is performed to ease Albanus's journey. Grabu responded to this dramatic correspondence by structuring the Masque of the Sea in direct parallel with the Masque in Hell. Each section of the earlier masque has a paired movement in the Masque of the Sea. Correspondence in the choice of voices and instrumental textures is observed in the pairings. Thus, where Pluto and Alecto sing a bass-doubling-continuo duet as the introduction to the Masque in Hell, Thamesia sings a bass-doubling-continuo song (with recorders instead of violins) to introduce the Masque of the Sea. The Prelude to Pluto's 'Let us laugh' is paired with the Ayre for the Gods of the Rivers, and both 'Let us laugh' and 'See the God of seas attends thee' are set for the same instrumental forces and are subsequently reworked for the chorus.

Once again, a dance movement is at the centre of the arch structure, but the Chacon far outweighs the Ayre for the Devils in both length and substance. In this way Grabu firmly swings the musical balance of the two masques to the side of the protagonists. The organisation of the Chacon is discussed in Chapter 6.3, but it is important to note the way in which Grabu integrates the movement within the structure of the masque as a whole. After the middle section of the Chacon, which moves to the tonic minor, the tonic major returns; it is not, however, reaffirmed by a choral entry. The choral affirmation of C major comes only with the recapitulation of 'See the god of seas attends thee'. This delay in the reintroduction of the vocal forces makes the Chacon feel incomplete. It is not an end in itself, but

instead plays a part in building the musical momentum of the masque to its climax in the final chorus.

To an even greater extent than at the close of Act I, the entr'acte, a repetition of the Ayre for the Gods of the Rivers, is an integral part of the masque.⁸ It parallels the Second Ayre for Devils of the Masque in Hell, and seals the symmetrical shape of the masque. It is tempting to conclude that, just as the Chacon surpasses the Ayre for the Devils in size and grandeur, so the symmetry of the Masque of the Sea is more perfect than that of the Masque in Hell, through the repetition of the Ayre for the Gods of the Rivers.

Table 4 Large-scale Structure in The Masque of the Sea

| Mvt. | Length | | Forces | Time-sig. | |
|--------|--------|--------|---|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| No. 42 | 40 | Solo | Thamesis, Recorders I, II and continuo | 3 | Introductory mvt. |
| No. 43 | 34 | Dance | 5-pt strings | ♩ | |
| No. 44 | 52 | Song | Thamesis, Violin I, II, continuo, 5-pt strings | 2 | |
| No.45 | 365 | Chacon | 5-pt strings | 3 | |
| No.46 | 52 | Chorus | Chorus, 5-pt strings | 2 | |
| No.47 | 34 | Dance | 5-pt strings | ♩ | (Entr'acte) repetition of no. 43 |

Like the earlier masques, continuity between movements is observed. Movements 42-45 are linked either by ties in the bass line from the final bar of one to the first bar of the next, or by a change in the final bar of one to the metre of the following movement.

This is the most successful of the masques. It is the longest, displays the greatest textural variety, and is the only one to move into another key (albeit the tonic minor) for an extended period. Unlike the other

⁸ The entr'acte rubric reads Ayre for the Gods of the Floods.

divertissements, there is no rhythmic pattern that unites the movements, but there is a careful alternation between duple and triple metres (as in the previous masque), thus avoiding the monotony which flaws the end of Act I. The symmetry which underpins the structure is the most complete to be found in any of the three masques, and the masque's function as a ballast to the scene in Hell realises an even larger-scale symmetry which encompasses the whole act.

Act III The Final Chorus

The final act ends with a single chorus movement, not a series of movements. At 228 bars, this chorus is the largest single structure in the opera after the Chacon. Like the masques of earlier acts, it contains a variety of textures, and is also the accompaniment to a dance. It shows organisational techniques which we have already seen, notably a rhythmic pattern that permeates its different sections, the use of large sections of repeated material, the reworking of solo material into chorus material, and a concern for symmetry.

The movement is in *da capo* form with a prelude. Like that to Pluto's song, 'Let us laugh', this prelude (bars 1-27) provides the majority of the rhythmic patterns found later in the movement (Table 5.a). These patterns originate from a natural response to the rhythm of the text; the solos for Fame must have been the first bars to be composed, and the resulting rhythmic patterns then used in composing the prelude. The four-bar, running-quaver melisma on 'From pole to pole resounding', though not a response to the rhythmic quality of the words, also becomes an important rhythmic pattern in the piece. Whenever a long series of quavers is used, it almost invariably stretches over four bars. In Table 5.b, the careful alternation between soloist and chorus can be seen. Grabu detaches Fame's initial solo material from the *da capo* form, despite the fact that the choir

repeats it exactly in bars 43-57. This avoids the juxtaposition of two solo sections when the movement repeats to bar 43.

Table 5.a

Rhythmic and Melodic Patterns in 'Renown, assume thy trumpet'

Violin bars 1-4



Fame bars 27-30



Violin bars 5-10



Fame bars 76-81



Bass Violin bars 22-26



Fame bars 30-35



Table 5.b

Formal Organisation of the Final Chorus

Bar no. Length Material Forces

| | | | |
|------------------|----|----|-------------------------------------|
| 1-27 | 27 | A | Instrumental Prelude |
| 28-42 | 15 | B | Solo for Fame |
| 43-72 | 30 | B | Chorus + 5-pt instrumental section |
| 73-81 | 9 | C | Solo for Fame |
| 82-124 | 42 | C' | Chorus + instrumental trio sections |
| 125-46 | 22 | D | Solo for Fame |
| Repeat of 43-124 | | | |
| 43-72 | 30 | B | Chorus + 5-pt instrumental section |
| 73-81 | 9 | C | Solo for Fame |
| 82-124 | 42 | C' | Chorus + instrumental trio sections |

Letter designations for compositional material refer to the vocal material only (except A).

Grabu's concern for coherent large-scale structures throughout the opera is clear and this concern no doubt reflects similar types of structures found in Lully's operas. Several of Grabu's practices, including the ending of acts with choral movements and the massive Act II Chacon, in fact typify techniques Lully used in his three late operas beginning with *Amadis* (which had yet to be performed when Grabu left France in the winter of 1683-4).⁹ Amongst his other organisational techniques are: 1) rhythmic patterns which are repeated in a series of movements, 2) reworking solo material into choral material, 3) repetition of large pieces of musical material (especially whole movements), 4) the symmetrical structuring of the repeated material, and 5) carefully-planned alternation of vocal and instrumental textures. The structures vary in their degree of success. The rhythmic and motivic integration of Act I is monotonous, while both of the Act II masques are varied in rhythm, texture and motivic material. These factors, combined with a symmetrical arch-structure, make the Masque of the Sea particularly satisfying. Finally, Grabu found success in the most structurally complex movement of the opera, the final grand chorus. Here, with great accomplishment, the organisational techniques of the larger masques are condensed into a single movement.

⁹ Writing on Lully's use of the chorus, Patricia Howard notes that 'there is a tendency in the last three operas to use the chorus as a major element of form and to end the majority of acts with a choral finale'. See P. Howard, *The Operas of Jean-Baptiste Lully*, unpublished PhD dissertation (University of Surrey, 1977), p. 215. Caroline Wood further notes that 'most of the larger scale structures in Lully's operas are brought about by repetition'. She mentions 'the reprises of dances or the use of the same music for ... [a] dance and duet or *air* and chorus' along with the use of large chaconne forms, op. cit., p. 348.

Chapter 6

The Style and Structure of Constituent Movements

6.1 Recitative

Any examination of *Albion and Albanius* is bound to show, as most earlier musicologists commenting on the opera have pointed out, that the opera is heavily indebted to the works of Lully. The forms and types of the individual movements Grabu used can all be traced to the Florentine composer's operas. The distinctive recitative, the predominantly homophonic textures, and the forces for which the opera was planned all derive from Lully's operatic models. In itself, this fact does not provide a valid ground on which to criticise Grabu's composition, though many writers have used it as such. Donald Grout, speaking of *Albion and Albanius*, brands Grabu 'a better courtier than composer', and his music a 'feeble imitation of Lully'.¹ An examination of the score simply does not uphold this conclusion. Although he wrote in a style largely developed by Lully, Grabu composed in it fluently, and many passages in the opera compare favourably with Lully's efforts. Furthermore, Romain Rolland's comment that

Grabu n'avait sans doute aucune originalité ... et il est curieux que ce maître de la musique du roi d'Angleterre, après vingt ans de séjour en Angleterre, soit resté si irréductiblement français qu'on peut se demander, après avoir lu son opera, s'il avait jamais entendu un page de musique anglais²

is not entirely accurate, for on detailed compositional levels, Grabu's practices differ from Lully's, sometimes showing what seem to be English influences. In this chapter, I shall examine the music of *Albion and Albanius*, noting both where it follows and where it differs from the

¹ D. Grout, *A Short History of Opera*, second edition (New York, 1965), pp. 137-138.

² R. Rolland, 'L'Opera au XVIIe siècle Angleterre', *Encyclopédie de la Musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire*, ed. A. Lavignac (Paris, 1925), p. 1884. The date appended to this article is 1912.

examples set by Lully, and attempt to trace any other influences that may have affected Grabu's composition. At the same time we shall see that Grabu was a skilled composer and that in many passages he was able to produce music of great craftsmanship, beauty and drama.

The style of the vocal writing in *Albion and Albanus* is in great part derived from that found in Lully's operas, and in particular Lully's recitative. The obvious characteristic relating the two is the frequent change of metre, 'the most instantly recognisable feature of French recitative'.³ The purpose of these frequent changes and the relation of one time signature to another have been the matter of repeated discussion in the circles of French Baroque scholarship. Grabu's use of alternating metres is very close to that of Lully, and while principles which apply to the interpretation of these metres in Lully's music can be applied to *Albion and Albanus*, aspects of the use of metre in the latter may also shed light on Lully's practice.

The recitative of *Albion and Albanus* is unlike any written by Grabu's English counterparts. In an attempt to apply to the English language a style developed for the French, he introduced metre changes where English-speaking composers had never found them necessary. French recitative style as codified by Lully was, in part, a response to the technical features of French dramatic poetry.⁴ Lully built upon the seventeenth-century *air de cour*, where the lack of regular accent in the

³ C. Wood, *Music and Drama in the Tragédie en Musique, 1673-1715* (New York and London, 1996), p. 17.

⁴ This discussion of Lully's recitative techniques is based on Lois Rosow's entry on Lully in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, iv, ed. Stanley Sadie (London, 1992), pp. 84-85, and on P. Howard, *The Operas of Jean-Baptiste Lully*, unpublished PhD dissertation (University of Surrey, 1974), pp. 165-169.

poetry necessitated an analogous alternation of metre. Through the use of these changing metres, Lully ensured that the final rhyming syllables of lines and the final syllables of caesuras in long lines all fell on the first beat of the bar. This gave a corresponding metric accent to the only fixed poetic accents in the poetry. The fluctuating secondary accents within lines were emphasised by a variety of devices, including pitch, agogic, metric or harmonic accents, and the lack of regularly stressed syllables allowed for a variety of rhythmic interpretations.

English poetry, in contrast, almost always follows a regular pattern of accent. Nevertheless, in *Albion and Albanius*, Grabu persisted with the French practice of placing the final stressed syllable of every line and caesura on the first beat of the bar. Often these metric accents are joined with an agogic accent, especially in a triple metre. When Grabu notates recitative in 3, the metrical accent often takes precedence over the declamation (see no. 36, 'Let not thy generous passion' for an example of the song-like use of 3 within a long passage of recitative).⁵ The resulting arioso style causes some syllables to receive undue stress in what should be an evenly stressed pattern. In French poetry, the irregularity of the poetic accent makes this less obtrusive, but in English, where the poetic stresses are regular, such a practice can be disruptive. In contrast to that of Grabu, all the declamatory arioso in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* is in common time. Purcell accents important words with a short melisma, an affective interval or by harmonic means, and there is no attempt to point out end rhymes by consistently placing them on the first beat of the bar. Unsurprisingly, the importation of French recitative technique did not catch on in England, and English declamation continued to be much more heavily influenced by the Italian style, though it certainly retained its own character.

⁵ See L. Rosow's discussion of Lully's recitative, *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, iv, p. 85.

Grabu's recitative shares another feature of primary importance with that of Lully's: the fluid nature of recitative and song within any given passage. Unlike Italian opera, or *Dido and Aeneas* for that matter, *Albion and Albanus* has no strict division of vocal music into recitative and aria. Passages that are clearly recitative flow seamlessly into more song-like sections and back again. A passage in Act III for Albion (ex. 1) provides a perfect example. In bars 46-48, Albion responds to Acacia, questioning his own ability to deal with his zealous religious opponents; the vocal line is clearly set as recitative. In the next bar, a metre change ushers in a song-like section in which Albion's thoughts turn to contemplation of the results of his idealistic rule. There is no obvious section break or even a rest in the vocal line, and the cadence on chord V is open-ended. The shift from recitative to song is imperceptible.

Ex. 1 Act III, i, 'Behold, ye pow'rs' (no. 49), bars 46-55

ALBION

Ah! what can'st thou a - vail, A - gainst re - li - gion, arm'd with zeal, And fac'd with pub - lic

good? Oh mon - archs! see Your fate in me, To rule by love,

6 7 #6

Despite the ease with which Grabu slips from recitative into song, one important feature of Lully's operas is conspicuous by its absence from *Albion and Albanus*, the short rondeau air or binary air with repeats. Often found interspersed with passages of recitative, these structures are a hallmark of Lully's style. Dialogue airs in particular can be used in a series to present a conversation between characters, and thus sometimes 'substitute

for recitative'.⁶ Though Grabu does use binary airs in *Albion and Albanus*, he does so less frequently than Lully, and he usually conceals their formal structure by withholding repeats. Even when binary airs are used, they never act in place of recitative. There may be several reasons for this (see below), but the absence of these airs gives Grabu's recitative a decidedly different structure from that of Lully's.

Several other structural devices and idiosyncrasies of Lully's recitative style can be found in *Albion and Albanus*. In Lully's operas, a ritornel or prelude sometimes introduces both arias and sections of recitative. Often, the opening motive of the ritornel returns as the opening vocal line to the section which follows; this same design is found in *Albion and Albanus*. The head-motive may be more or less exactly reproduced in the vocal section. For instance, the rhythmic pattern of the first ritornel (no. 5) is replicated in the first five bars of Hermes's subsequent entry (no. 6), though the pitches are not. The two-bar first violin motive of the ritornel preceding Juno's entry (no. 17) is repeated in Hermes's entry in no. 18, while the prelude to Act II (no. 26) is linked in both rhythmic and melodic profile to Pluto's ensuing recitative (no. 27).⁷

Grabu also adopts Lully's idiosyncratic use of an escape note at cadences. When a vocal (or instrumental) line approaches a cadence from the second scale degree, it is much more likely to resolve on the tonic after first moving up to the mediant (ex. 2.a, bar 49-50). Less often the melody will move to the dominant before resolving on the mediant. This allows for the use of an ornament on the resolution, something that is often explicitly notated in Lully's scores (see the final two bars of ex. 9.a below). Though there are no ornaments marked in the score of *Albion and Albanus*, it is

⁶ J. R. Anthony, *French Baroque Music from Beaujoyeulx to Rameau* (London, 1974), p. 83.

⁷ See J. R. Anthony, op. cit., p. 75 for a discussion of Lully's use of musical recall. Anthony focuses on some of the more systematic uses of this recall, but less systematic examples, like those found in *Albion and Albanus*, are common.

fairly safe to assume that Grabu expected these cadences to be ornamented in a similar fashion. Most English composers instead anticipate the tonic at a cadence, often making the most of the resulting semitone dissonance with the leading note.⁸

Grabu's predominantly syllabic style of text setting is also consistent with French practice. Lully rarely uses melisma within passages of recitative, and when he does, it usually occurs within the short airs that pervade the recitative. As Patricia Howard points out, melisma was thought of as an intrinsically Italian device, and Lully, in setting himself against the Italian style, generally avoided it.⁹ Grabu, however, uses melisma more freely. Since *Albion and Albanus* contains very few of the short airs prevalent in Lully's operas, the melismas are worked directly into the recitative. As with Lully, who did write florid passages within airs and choruses, words such as 'thunder', 'triumph' and 'chains' are set with roulades.¹⁰ However, Grabu's more frequent use of florid writing means less obvious words sometimes receive a melismatic treatment, for instance 'disperst' (no. 6, bars 95-97) and 'involve' (ex. 2.a). This greater predilection for melismatic writing, and its inclusion in recitative passages, may be the result of Grabu's exposure to the English style of vocal writing. In particular, it resembles some of the melismatic eruptions in passages of recitative within Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* (compare ex. 2.a, b & c).

Like both his French and English counterparts, Grabu relied on obvious word-painting to set words like 'heav'n' and 'hell' (ex. 3). Such transparent devices were expected of composers of the period. In the case

⁸ In his instrumental music, Grabu makes frequent use of an anticipatory tonic, but in these instances, he almost always avoids dissonance by employing it in both the line approaching the tonic from the second scale degree *and* in the line approaching the tonic from the leading tone. See Chapter 6.3.

⁹ P. Howard, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

¹⁰ Patricia Howard points out that in Lully's operas, 'florid passages were *de rigueur* for words like "tonnerre", "triomphe", and "chaînes", *op. cit.*, p. 93.

Ex. 2.a *Albion and Albanus*, Act II, ii, 'Were Commonwealth restor'd again' (no. 29), bars 45-50

ZELOTA

Y'have all for-got To forge a plot, In seem-ing care of Al-bion's life; In-spire the crowd With cla-mour loud, T'in-volve his bro-ther and his wife.

Ex. 2.b *Albion and Albanus*, Act II, ii, 'Were Commonwealth restor'd again' (no. 29), bars 66-70

name. One who through ev'-ry form of ill has run, One who in Na-both's days was Be-lial's son;

Ex. 2.c *Dido and Aeneas*, Act I, no. 6, bars 1-9¹¹

DIDO

Whence could so much vir-tue spring? What storms, What bat-tles did he sing? An-chi-ses' va-lour mix'd with Ve-nus' charms, How soft, how soft in peace, and yet how fierce how fierce in arms!

¹¹ Drawn from the Purcell Society edition of *Dido and Aeneas*, ed. M. Laurie and T. Dart, reprinted in the Norton Critical Scores series, ed. Curtis Price (New York and London, 1988).

of Thamesis's first entrance, Grabu offers a flowing passage of tenths between the voice and continuo, immediately capturing the allegorical relationship between the character and the river Thames. These flowing tenths return when Zelota orders Thamesis to carry away Augusta's treasure, but his hostile response is set to a jagged ascending line in complete opposition to the descending tenths – a convincing musical representation of his defiance (ex. 4.a & b). This more extended use of word painting is short-lived; none of Thamesis's further passages employ this flowing motion, nor does Grabu attempt to portray any other personages in the opera with a recurring characteristic motive.

Ex. 3 Act II, i, 'Infernal offspring of the night' (no. 27), bars 47-52

PLUTO DEMOCRACY

2

Speak what you are, And whence you fell. I am thy first be - got - ten

care, Con - ceiv'd in Heav'n, but born in hell;

3

Ex. 4.a Act I 'Thou glorious fabric, stand!' (no. 6), bars 46-50

THAMESIS

2

And I the no - ble flood, whose tri - bu - ta - ry tide

6 4 6 b 4

Ex. 4.b Act I, 'Nymph of the city' (no. 10), bars 13-21

ZELOTA

glide. That on thy bux-om back the float - ing - gold may glide.

THAMESIS

Not all the

gold the south-ern sun pro - du-ces, Or trea-sures of the fam'd Le - vant Suf-fice for pi - ous

us - es, To feed the sa - cred hun - ger of a saint.

Grabu also made use of intervallic word-painting, with the falling diminished fifth the most common interval; it is used for a variety of expressive words and phrases, from pitiful exclamations (Augusta's cry 'Oh Hermes' – no. 6, bars 86-87) to Hermes's description of the descent of Juno ('what wonders' – no. 18, bars 2-3).¹² Falling diminished fourths are used similarly, and, on rare occasions, a rising minor sixth makes an appearance (on the word 'resist' – no. 9a, bars 6-7, and for the exclamation 'But gone my plighted Lord, Ah! gone is he' – no. 6, bar 39).¹³ Intervals larger than a minor 6th are absent except in the case of octave leaps between phrases, or in songs when the bass voice doubles the continuo line.

¹² In Lully 'falling diminished 5ths abound; they are the most usual expressive device for harsh epithets like 'ingrat' ..., and pain: 'vous souffrez'. P. Howard, op. cit., p. 91.

¹³ Caroline Wood has suggested that Lully associated intervals with particular sentiments, i.e. descending diminished fifths and suffering, descending diminished fourths with suffering of the affairs of the heart variety, op. cit., p. 22-3. No such specific relationship between affective intervals and emotional connotation can be deduced in *Albion and Albanus*.

The dramatic use of harmony plays only a minor role in the recitative. For example, Pluto's opening recitative in hell (II, i, no. 27) which begins 'Infernal offspring of the night' is set to a jaunty vocal line outlining a tonic F major chord. In the subsequent phrases 'to drag the chain / And fill with groans', both chain and groans are set appropriately enough with roulades, but the underlying harmonies offer little in the way of harmonic colour. Such passages thrust the burden of their dramatic effect squarely on the shoulders of the performers. Occasionally the direct juxtaposition of a major and minor chord produces a potent effect (ex. 5), but these moments are less frequent than one would hope.

Ex. 5 Act II, i, 'Let not thy generous passion' (no. 36), bars 65-67

ZELOTA

Be-reaves him of his roy - al pow'r, For Heav'n—to mourn, and Hell to smile.

6 6 7 6 6

In example 6, the purposeful series of dominant chords contrasts with the more usual meandering progression between related keys and so captures Augusta's immediate willingness to make amends for her betrayal of Albion. Example 7 shows Grabu following a sequence fuelled by flattened sevenths and ending in F major, with a surprising D major chord. The chord, which Grabu holds for one and a half bars (clearly disrupting the previous pattern of harmonic motion), accompanies Pluto's summoning of the Fury Alecto, and seems to hint at the opening of the latter's monologue, the one passage in the opera in which Grabu ventures beyond his purposely modest harmonic world (see below).

Ex. 6 Act I, 'Thou glorious fabric, stand!' (no. 6), bars 143-146

HERMES

Sup - pose me sent Thy Al - bion to re - store, Can'st thou re -

AUGUSTA

pent? My false-hood I de - plore.

Ex. 7 Act II, i, 'Were Commonwealth restor'd again' (no. 29), bars 25-30

25 PLUTO

Thou Zeal, like true re - li - gion burn, To gain the gid - dy crowd's es - teem: A - lec-to!

thou to fair Au - gu - sta go! go, And all thy snakes in - to her bo - som throw.

All of the preceding devices are employed on a local level for specific dramatic effects. There is, in contrast, little attempt to structure passages of recitative in which musical development corresponds with dramatic development, or which build towards long-term dramatic and musical goals. Neither the contrast and recall of tonalities, nor the use of recurrent motives or harmonic progressions plays more than a passing role in the recitative.¹⁴ While changes of tonality do articulate the entrance of

¹⁴ The repetition of large sections of music or entire movements is used as a unifying device within the divertissements and masques. These units, however, are static in dramatic terms; the recall of musical material plays a formal role only. Head-motives (as discussed above), which link a prelude or ritornel with a subsequent recitative or song, function at a local level, the repetition of musical material occurring once only.

characters or a change in the dramatic situation, the shifts are crude and are used only between large sections of music.¹⁵ The key changes themselves are achieved not through modulation, but through continuo links usually less than a full bar in length. The resulting sections are rarely shorter than 100 bars, and in any one of them, it is unusual for more than twenty or so bars to pass without a return to the tonic. Movements to other tonal levels within the passages delineated by a key change are thus very short (few could be characterised as modulations), are not generally governed by dramatic requirements, and are restricted to closely related keys (the relative major is the most frequent destination in a minor key, and the dominant the most frequent in a major key). As a result, characters or their emotions are not associated with a particular tonal level, nor is there any attempt to develop characterisation through distinctive and recurring harmonic progressions.¹⁶

This style of organisation is again derived from Lully. Rosow's description of 'Larger-scale organisation' within Lully's operas applies to *Albion and Albanus* without adjustment:

Lully's music is in a virtually constant state of gentle modulation. However, because of the brevity of musical units ... the music always returns to the home key after very few phrases. ... Despite some use of contrasting closely related keys, a single key generally dominates a scene. A dramatic turning-point, which might occur within an individual scene but which usually occurs at the entrance or exit of characters to mark the beginning of the next scene, will be accompanied by definitive modulation to a new home key, often announced by a brief descent in the bass line or perhaps by a slightly longer 'prélude' for continuo alone.¹⁷

The main difference between Grabu's and Lully's organisation outside their divertissements is Lully's use of musical recall in the form of rondeau-like refrains and recurring cadential phrases. This, combined with the fact that

¹⁵ See Chapter 5.

¹⁶ A rhythmic, harmonic and melodic head motive does unite the first act divertissement, but the choice of the motivic material does not have any dramatic significance.

¹⁷ L. Rosow, *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, iv, pp. 87-88.

Grabu made little use of short airs with some sort of formal construction, gives the 'scenes' in *Albion and Albanius* a less formal structure.

Grabu's setting of Dryden's text has been roundly criticised. His 'perpetual changes [of metre] are ... destructive to the natural flow of the words, and this is made worse by "perpetual ill accent"'; he is accused of being 'barbarously insensitive to the prosody of the English language', and 'generally insensitive to the nuances of Dryden's verse.'¹⁸ There are several instances where Grabu has completely mis-set English words; twice in a passage for Hermes (no. 12, bars 11-12 and 19-20) he puts the second syllable of 'other' on a strong beat, and does the same with 'accents' in a passage for Albion in Act III (no. 64, bars 69-70). Other such instances could be cited. The opposing view, voiced by Ian Spink, is that Grabu's mistakes are 'quite venial'.¹⁹ Certainly it is hard to believe that the opera's English singers did not rectify the more obvious errors in performance. As we shall see below in the case of Alecto's monologue, and later in Augusta's aria, Grabu could be effective in setting English texts.

Perhaps Albion's Act II monologue (no. 37) provides the best microcosm within which to view Grabu's successes and failures in text-setting throughout the opera. The first five bars (7-11) present Dryden's text in a recitative style with no mis-accents or unneeded disturbances to the delivery of the poetic line. As Albion's musings increase his distress, Grabu disrupts the rhythmic pattern through the use of an agogic accent on 'and dye rebellion'. When Albion contemplates the possibility of renewed violence the tessitura rises, and each of the three poetic lines in bars 15-18 moves to a higher pitch (c¹, d¹, e^{b1}). This culminates in the impassioned outburst 'How long, ye gods, how long,' which Grabu sets using the highest

¹⁸ E. Dent, *Foundations of English Opera* (Cambridge, 1928), p. 166; E. W. White, *The Rise of English Opera* (London, 1951), pp. 38-40; C. Price, *History of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London, 1989), pp. 40-41.

¹⁹ *English Song, Dowland to Purcell* (London, 1974), p. 179.

note of the passage (e_b¹) and a chromatic leap in the vocal line (a diminished fourth), and which he offsets with a rest to capture Albion's agitation. A tonicisation of the dominant follows, achieved by a descending bass line (c¹-g) and a complementary chromatic ascent in the voice (g to c¹, bars 20-23), leaving this first section appropriately open-ended. Here, the fluidity of Grabu's recitative pays an impressive dividend as Albion reflects upon his peaceful rule in a passage of great subtlety and tenderness ('I thought their love through mildness might be gain'd').²⁰ This unforced shift from growing anger to pensive contemplation gives a sense of humanity to Albion's characterisation. The gentle vocal line, and the soft way in which Grabu engineers the return to F major, combining a modulation in the bass ending on a first inversion chord with the entry of the vocal line on the dominant, lends mildness to the passage.

Albion's thoughts then return to the turmoil of his people's discontent, which Dryden underlines with a shift from iambs to anapests. Grabu attempts to capture the change; he offers a pitch accent on 'but tumults, seditions' and the vocal line becomes choppy, but his insistence on stressing the final strong rhyming syllable of each line ('se-di-tions', 'pe-ti-tions', 'grant-ing', 'want-ing', 're-bel-ling') sounds stilted. Though he places an appropriate agogic accent on the first syllable of 'merciful nature', it is spoiled by a ham-fisted setting of 'effects'. Likewise, two bars later he misplaces the stress on 'forgiving', and ends the monologue with a mis-accent on the final syllable of 'creator'. Thus an excellent contemplative song-like passage is immediately undercut by a mishandled recitative.

Grabu does commit all of the sins in text-setting of which his many critics accuse him. These same critics, however, perpetrate the worse sin of failing to be even-handed in their judgements. To read them, one must

²⁰ The shift into a song-like passage is nearly identical to the Act III section for Albion discussed earlier (no. 49, bars 46-67).

conclude that all of the text-setting in *Albion and Albanus* is of the poorest quality, when in fact, Grabu's failures are matched by his successes.

One of Grabu's best passages of recitative is the Act II monologue for Alecto, 'Take of a thousand souls' (no. 29 bars 50-75). Grabu set Dryden's extremely descriptive portrait of Titus Oates, 'the basest, blackest of the Stygian band', with the most harmonically colourful four bars of recitative in the opera. The passage opens with a pedal note overlaid in bar 3 with an unprepared minor seventh, which rises by semitones to f in bar 4. The level of dissonance is unprecedented in the opera (with the exception of Proteus's sleep music) and in the rest of Grabu's extant works, suggesting that it may be modelled on a passage by another composer.

Had Grabu hoped to find a passage of similar harmonic expressiveness in Lully's operas to serve as his model, he would have been disappointed. Nevertheless, there may be some reason to suppose that he tried. Lully's *Bellerophon* of 1679 contains a series of scenes (Act II, v-vii) in which the spurned lover, Stenobée, approaches the magician Amidosar to conjure a monster to wreak vengeance on her enemies. In several passages of recitative, Amidosar describes summoning the monster from the 'nuit infernal'. The situation resembles Alecto's offering of the 'blackest of the Stygian band', which may have led Grabu to look here for inspiration. Despite the colourful language of the scene, Lully makes no attempt to characterise the 'monstre furieux' with any harmonic expressiveness. Instead he uses a standard device of a I-IV⁶₄-I progression over a tonic pedal (ex. 8).

Bellerophon was the first of Lully's operas to be printed by Christophe Ballard; an edition was published in the same year as the opera's première. Grabu returned to France in 1679, may have had the opportunity to see the opera, and certainly would have been able to acquire a score had he wanted one. If he did study the scenes involving Amidosar, instead of

finding a model for Alecto's monologue, he may have been struck by Stenobée's exhortation to the magician to do her bidding quickly (ex. 9.a). It closely resembles, both textually and musically, Hermes's Act I song 'Haste away' (ex. 9b).

Ex. 8 *Bellerophon* (1679), Act II, v

AMIDOSAR

Je puis de la nuit in-fer-na-le, Fai-re sor-tir un mon-stre fu-ri-eux

6
b4
6 6

Ex. 9.a *Bellerophon*, Act II, v

STENOBÉE

Has-tez vous, has-tez vous de ser-vir mon cou-roux.

6 b 6

Has-tez vous, has-tez vous de ser-vir mon cou-roux. Has-tez vous, has-tez

6 4 # 5

vous de ser-vir mon cou-roux. Has-tez vous, has-tez vous, has-tez vous, has-tez vous.

6 6 5 6 6 4 3 5

Ex. 9.b *Albion and Albanus* (no. 15), bars 1-20

HERMES

Haste a - way, loy - al chief, haste a - way, haste a - way, No de - lay, but o -

-bey, To re - ceive thy lov'd Lord; Haste a - way, haste a - way,

haste a - way, haste a - way, haste a - way, haste a - way, haste a - way.

Other models from Lully's operas also would have failed to provide the sort of harmonic word painting Grabu eventually wrote for Alecto. Precedents could, however, be found in the works of another French composer, Marc-Antoine Charpentier, and in the works of English composers. Charpentier's *Orphée descendant aux enfers* of 1683 opens with an instrumental passage very similar to the opening of Alecto's monologue (ex. 10).²¹ The pedal note, the unprepared seventh and a setting in hell all correspond to Alecto's monologue. It is questionable, however, whether Grabu would have had any knowledge of Charpentier's cantata.

²¹ There is no certain date of composition for *Orphée*. C. Cessac dates the work to 1683-84 in *Marc-Antoine Charpentier* (Paris, 1988), trans. E. T. Glasgow (Portland, 1995), p. 436. H. W. Hitchcock dates the work to 1683 in *Marc-Antoine Charpentier* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 3 and 77, and speculates that it may have been commissioned by the Grand Dauphin.

Ex. 10 *Orphée descendant aux enfers*, Charpentier (c. 1683)

Violin d'Orphee &
Violin

Flute a bec &
Flute allemande

Bass viol

#7 4 8 3

Grabu almost certainly would have known the work of Matthew Locke and the dramatic opera *Psyche*. Probably first performed in 1675, it contains a dialogue of despairing lovers. When one of the lovers invokes the misery of hell, Locke inserts precisely the same gesture: a sustained unprepared seventh over a tonic pedal (ex. 11).

Ex. 11 *Psyche*, Act II, The Song of the Despairing Lovers, Locke (1675),

In hell — there's no such mi-ser - y as now op-pres - es me

b #7 #

Though in all likelihood Grabu attended performances of *Psyche*, it would not have been necessary for him to remember hearing it in 1675, since the printed edition of the music was still on sale in the 1680s.²²

A scene from *Dido and Aeneas*, however, presents the most interesting parallel with the passage in *Albion and Albanius*. In Act II of *Dido*, the Sorceress's first entrance begins with a six-bar pedal on F. The shape of the vocal line is almost identical to that of Alecto's in all but two points: in the second bar, Purcell uses an A flat instead of an A natural, and in bar 3 (corresponding with bar 4 in *Dido*) Grabu breaks the leap of a

²² An advertisement for 'The Vocal and Instrumental Musick in *Psyche*, with the Instrumental musick in *The Tempest*' to be sold by John Carr appears in *The Theatre of Musick, 3rd book* (London, 1686).

minor sixth by adding an A flat. Both composers turn to F major after the first phrase cadences (ex. 12.a & b).²³

Is there any causal relationship between these two passages, or is the resemblance simply coincidence? It seems safe to assume that Purcell did not model his passage after Grabu. While the unprepared seventh is a rarity in Grabu's work, Purcell used them more frequently.²⁴ Furthermore, he would have had little need to turn to a foreigner for a model in setting English. Is there a possibility then that Grabu knew Purcell's opera? Bruce Wood and Andrew Pinnock's proposed redating of *Dido and Aeneas* would place its composition before *Albion and Albanus*, or perhaps at the same time; they suggest that there may have been 'one or two performances [of *Dido*] ... during the autumn of 1684'.²⁵ In Chapter 3, I have suggested that Grabu began work on *Albion and Albanus* around April of 1684. When Grabu returned to England in either late 1683 or early 1684, he apparently had close ties with the court, and had an opera been performed there, even a small one, he surely would have seen it or known about it. Elsewhere it will be seen that Grabu borrowed not only general forms and styles from Lully, but specific passages of music (Chapter 7); there is no reason to think he would not have done the same with a passage of Purcell that he found useful. Certainly the opening of Alecto's monologue is an uncharacteristic passage in Grabu's work. That Purcell was the inspiration for it is speculation, but circumstantial evidence is strong enough to warrant that such speculation be taken seriously.

²³ If the sorceress was originally sung by a bass, as has been suggested several times, the resemblance is, obviously, even closer. See I. Chelij and C. Price, 'Dido's bass sorceress', *Musical Times* 127 (1986), pp. 615-618, and B. Wood and A. Pinnock, "'Unscarr'd by turning times'?: the dating of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*", *Early Music* 20 (1992), p. 383. Sandra Tuppen has independently noted the similarity between these passages in *Equal with the best abroad: French influence on English theatre music 1660-1685*, unpublished PhD Dissertation (University of Wales, Bangor, 1997), i, pp. 136-37.

²⁴ For instance, see Dido's first line in Act III, scene ii of *Dido and Aeneas*, 'Your counsel is urg'd in vain', and S. E. Plank, 'And Now About the Cauldron Sing': music and the supernatural on the Restoration Stage', *Early Music* 18 (August 1990), p. 399.

²⁵ B. Wood and A. Pinnock, op. cit., p. 388.

Albion and Albanus II, i

Ex. 12.b

Dido and Aeneas Act II, i

96

In conclusion, it is clear that Gräbu's recitative is modelled closely upon Lully's. The frequent metre changes, the syllabic setting, the flexible transition between recitative and song and a lack of harmonic colour are hallmarks of Lully's style. Nevertheless, there are several indications of English influence, notably a greater use of melisma within recitative passages and the chromaticism of Alecto's monologue. That no more English influence can be seen in Gräbu's writing, despite more than fifteen years spent in England, should not necessarily come as a surprise. Gräbu was consciously writing a French-style opera, since as we have seen in Chapter 3, he was hired to compose a substitute for the ready-made French opera which Betterton had been unable to import. Though there are instances where Gräbu failed in his attempt to set the English language, there are many others where he showed great skill, indicating that many earlier musicologists, who have thrown a blanket of negative criticism over the text-setting, have carelessly based the criticisms on only a few passages.

6.2 Songs, Choruses and Ensembles

The songs in *Albion and Albanus* can be divided into four types: 1) bass-doubling-continuo songs, 2) continuo songs, 3) song-and-chorus structures and 4) songs accompanied by four-part violas and continuo. All of these have precedents in the operas of Lully, though in some instances Grabu adapted them to meet the particular needs of *Albion and Albanus*. Before examining each type of song in detail, it is helpful to consider briefly some aspects of Grabu's vocal writing that are common to all of the types mentioned above.

A striking feature of Grabu's song writing in *Albion and Albanus* is the predominance of through-composed songs, combined with an aversion to repeats in binary songs. These two features strengthen the fluidity of movement between recitative and song discussed earlier; the absence of repeats, which underline the formal structure of songs, conforms to the lack of formal structure in the recitative. When Grabu does choose to repeat the material of a song, the repetition is usually in the form of a chorus and the material is often repeated in its entirety, creating a song-and-chorus unit.

Only two songs in the opera (one of which is a duet) are in a clear binary form with explicit repeats of each section, and there are no rondeau forms. This situation contrasts with the construction of vocal airs in Lully's operas, where both rondeau forms and binary forms with repeats are common. One reason for the difference may lie in the libretto. Dryden's poetry makes little use of line repetition, so there are few poetic structures that suggest an analogous rondeau treatment. In contrast, poetic forms that suggest concurrent musical structures are prevalent in the librettos of Quinault, a situation that may reflect both the many years the poet and composer collaborated with one another, and the active role Lully took in the shaping of the librettos. Neither of these factors applies in the collaboration between Grabu and Dryden, and this may provide some

explanation for the absence of complementary formal structures in the poetry and vocal music.

As with the recitative, the songs are harmonically conservative – perhaps even more so. Surprising or dissonant chords used as colouristic devices are uncommon and Grabu at all times sticks to closely related keys. There is rarely any movement to another key that could be characterised as a modulation; rather, the music passes fleetingly through a number of keys before returning to the tonic. After the tonic, the dominant is used most frequently as an important cadence point, though there are songs in which it is never used as a tonal goal. Nor do all the songs contain an internal cadence which acts as an important goal. In through-composed songs especially, all cadences within a song may hold an equal importance. On occasion, a cadence achieves a greater prominence when it is used as the point at which a new metre is introduced (as in Pluto's Act II song 'I wonder'd how of late' – no. 28), but this is an exception to Grabu's usual method.

The vocal lines are similarly conservative. There is little use of affective intervals except in the songs accompanied by violas in four parts and continuo. As we shall see below, these are in an elevated style different to that of the other songs in the opera, and their more colourful intervals and speech-influenced rhythms are a result of their kinship with Grabu's recitative style.

The rest of the songs are for the most part melodically unmemorable. They tend to mix conjunct and disjunct motion fairly evenly, but Grabu's handling of larger intervals is often slightly awkward (for instance Isis's song 'Albion by the nymph attended' – no. 18, bars 80-103). The best of Grabu's vocal melodies are those found in the bass-doubling-continuo songs (especially Thamesia's Act II songs). This is somewhat surprising given the fact that these lines serve the dual purpose of being a melody and a bass

line. Thamesis's 'Old Father Ocean' (no. 42) is particularly successful; it is set to an infectious rhythmic pattern, and combines a strong and direct harmonic structure (focusing on I and V) with a proficient setting of the text.

The rhythmic patterns of songs (and duets) are often related to dance rhythms. One duet is explicitly labelled as a minuet, while other songs contain rhythmic patterns borrowed from the dance (for example, the gavotte rhythms in Thamesis's 'See, the god of seas attends thee' – no. 44), and still other songs or song-like passages employ the rhythm of the dances that immediately follow them.¹ Grabu also makes use of changes of metre (from duple to triple or vice versa) in several of the bass-doubling-continuo songs. The changes in metre are not simply arbitrary; they often respond to both a change in mood or idea in the text, or a change in poetic metre.

Franklin Zimmerman has demonstrated Grabu's use of prolonged hemiola patterns in several vocal passages within the opera, a feature that has been misinterpreted by earlier critics.² The Act I solo and chorus 'Godlike Albion is returning' (no. 13 bars 94-111 and no. 14) provides the best example. The seeming mis-accentuation of the first nine bars of the chorus (and the parallel but shorter solo passage of Hermes, which introduces it) is easily solved by interpreting the rhythm as a hemiola. A similar interpretation of the solo and ensemble "'Tis time to mount above' (no. 19) goes some way to addressing the accentuation of this passage, though unlike the previously mentioned chorus, the hemiola is required for all but the first two bars, begging the question of why Grabu chose to set the passage in 3 instead of 2.

¹ The second half of Thamesis's 'Medway and Isis' (no. 15, bars 21-44) shares its rhythmic patterns with the Ayre for the Mariners that follows it. Though not a dance, the March (no. 18) shares its rhythmic patterns with the duet for Augusta and Thamesis, 'The Royal Squadron Marches' (no. 19, bars 22-66), which precedes it.

² *The Works of John Dryden, xv: Plays: Albion and Albanius, Don Sebastian, Amphytrion*, ed. E. Miner, G. B. Guffey and F. Zimmerman (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1976), p. 350.

Ex. 1 Act I, 'Godlike Albion is returning' (no. 19), bars 1-8

Vn I

Va II
Va III

S
A

T
B

B-Vn
BC

God - like Al - bion is re - turn - ing, Loy - al hearts to cheer, God -

3

-like Al - bion is re - turn - ing, Al - bion is re - turn - ing, Loy - al hearts to cheer;

-like Al - bion is re - turn - ing, Al - bion is re - turn - ing, Loy - al hearts to cheer;

The songs are set syllabically with infrequent melismas on words such as 'thunder' or 'laugh'. Whereas Grabu's use (if not the style) of melisma differs from Lully's in passages of recitative, in songs it is virtually the same. The melismas are invariably without pattern and aimless (see especially the treatment of 'thunder' in 'The clouds divide' – no. 18, bars 1-25), a trait which reflects Lully's attempt to distance himself from the patterned use of melisma found in the Italian style. In his songs, Grabu adopted Lully's practice completely.

Bass-doubling-continuo songs

The bass-doubling-continuo song is, after the five-part instrumental scoring and the frequent metre changes of the recitative, the most obviously Lullian feature of Grabu's score. In such songs, two treble instruments accompany a vocal bass line, which is doubled by the continuo. Grabu adhered rigidly to this trio texture, as can be seen in the Act II song 'Take him, make him' (no. 30). The song is actually a duet for Pluto and Alecto, though most of the time the characters (both basses) sing in alternation. At the one point at which the two voices join together singing different musical lines, the two violins play in unison, thus preserving a three-part texture.

All of the examples of this vocal form in *Albion and Albanus* are through-composed. On two occasions, however, the material of a bass-doubling-continuo song is reformed, after a dance, into a full chorus. The two songs that undergo this change occur in the second act, and as discussed in Chapter 5, their pairing is of structural and dramatic significance. Pluto's 'Let us laugh' (no. 31), and Thamesia's 'See the god of seas' (no. 44), achieve prominence over similar songs not only through being transformed into choruses, but also through the addition of the full orchestra in interludes where the voice is not present. This feature represents a slight departure from Lully's practice, where bass-doubling-continuo airs are not provided with interludes for the full orchestra. The special treatment of these two songs clearly illustrates Grabu's intention that they be considered in relation to each other. Archon's bass-doubling-continuo song 'From the Caledonian shore' (no. 11) is also reformed into a chorus, but in this instance the solo and chorus form a single entity. The material of the second half of Archon's solo is repeated by the chorus.

Several writers on Lully's operas have commented on his use of the bass-doubling-continuo air to portray a specific type of character. Le Cerf de la Viéville, writing in the first decade of the eighteenth century, pointed

out that ‘our basses normally sing [the parts of] kings, secondary and scorned lovers, solemn and rather elderly heroes, etc.’.³ Patricia Howard, after examining the whole of Lully’s operatic output, specifically associated the bass-doubling-continuo air with characters that were unsuccessful lovers, and Caroline Wood has repeated this assertion.⁴ The latter goes on to suggest that ‘the association of the doubled continuo *air* with particular types of characters, by implication comic if not overtly so, dictates a light-hearted musical style’.⁵ In *Albion and Albanus*, Thamesius, Pluto and Archon sing all of the bass-doubling-continuo songs, and while none are unsuccessful lovers, they are all secondary characters, and their songs are musically light-hearted in tone. Certainly, none of them sings the accompanied song/recitative passages that are reserved for the serious characters and the gods.

Caroline Wood also repeats Howard’s observation on an air for the bass Roland in Lully’s opera of the same name:

Roland is Lully’s most important bass role: he is, of course, the unsuccessful lover of Angélique and perhaps the audience did, as Howard suggests, read a special meaning into his soliloquy ‘Ah, j’attendrai longtemps,’ [IV, 2] when he is given a vocal line free of the instrumental bass when believing Angélique to be in love with him.⁶

Grabu observed a similar differentiation in *Albion and Albanus*. Albion is a bass role, and though his Act III monologue ‘Behold, ye pow’rs’ (no. 49) is written for the same forces as a bass-doubling-continuo song, the vocal line is not doubled by the bass continuo, and a four-part texture is created. Furthermore, the passage is more recitative-like than the songs for Pluto and Thamesius. Both the different texture and the arioso character of the passage

³ Quoted in C. Wood, *Music and Drama in the Tragédie en Musique* (New York, London, 1996), p. 58. The original French can be found in volume II of *Histoire de la musique et des ses effets* (Amsterdam, 1725), p. 121.

⁴ P. Howard, *The Operas of Jean-Baptiste Lully*, unpublished PhD dissertation (University of Surrey, 1974), p. 190, and C. Wood, op. cit., pp. 57-58.

⁵ C. Wood, op. cit., p. 59.

⁶ C. Wood, op. cit., p. 58. Howard’s discussion occurs on p. 190 of *The Operas of Jean-Baptiste Lully*.

are, in terms of the hierarchies of the opera, more elevated in style, and they distinguish Albion as a serious character. Thus, Albion's monologue both supports Howard and Wood's suggestion that the texture of the previously mentioned soliloquy for Roland (where the voice and bass continuo are distinct from one another) had a special significance, and shows Grabu exploiting this significance independently of Lully.⁷

Over half of the bass-doubling-continuo songs contain metre changes. These changes are occasioned by an alteration in mood or metre (or both) in the text. Archon's song 'From the Caledonian Shores' (no. 11) boasts the most successful of these; Grabu shifts from 3 to 2 as Archon describes the crowd's cries of 'Peace and freedom and a King', a gesture that takes on even greater strength when the material is repeated by the chorus. Grabu takes best advantage of a metre change again in Pluto's song 'I wonder'd how of late' where a move into triple-time (at a point where Dryden shortens the line length) captures Pluto's self-indulgent complaint. Uncharacteristically, Grabu repeats a line of Dryden's text, also adding another 'too' to the pair Dryden has provided, thus further emphasising Pluto's immoderate self-pity.

Continuo songs

Only two of the continuo songs (i.e. songs for voice and continuo only) are set pieces that could easily stand alone outside the context of the opera. One of them, the Act III song 'From the low palace of old Father Ocean' (no. 53), is a vocal minuet for two voices, with explicit repeats marked for each section. It is possible that the song was strophic; a second verse exists in the word-book though it does not appear in the score (see Chapter 4).

⁷ Lully's *Roland* received its première on 18 January 1685. *Albion and Albanus* had already been performed in rehearsals at this point, and it seems highly unlikely that Grabu could have known about Roland's soliloquy.

A similar situation occurs with Iris's 'Albion by the nymph attended'. The song appears in the score as a single verse followed by a ritornel, but the word-book contains an additional verse and indicates that the ritornel is to be played between each strophe. These two songs are the only ones in which Dryden wrote two verses of the same length and with the same metrical pattern. The fact that Grabu set both of them as independent units suggests that the lack of other such musically independent songs is a result of Dryden's libretto rather than an aversion on Grabu's part to writing them.

Acacia's 'O thou who mount'st th'ethereal throne' (no. 72), might also seem to form a discrete song which could stand alone from the surrounding music. The vocal line of the first half of the song, however, presents an ascending series of minims that make for an unsatisfactory melody. When the melody is later reworked as a chorus, the peculiar construction of the line is made clear; Grabu uses the melody imitatively in the four choral voices to suggest a chorus in *stile antico*. The dependence of the first half of the song on the subsequent choral adaptation undermines the song's integrity as an individual unit, emphasising its function as part of a larger song-and-chorus unit.

The rest of the continuo songs in the opera are through-composed, and with the exception of Hermes's Act I 'Haste away' (no. 15), are not clearly songs at all. The latter, a short 20-bar structure, gains a sense of wholeness from the repetition of the words 'haste away' and from its placement between two discrete structures, a chorus and Thamesia's bass-doubling-continuo song 'Medway and Isis'. Other passages are song-like, but are not closed forms. Hermes's 'Rise, rise, Augusta, rise' (no. 6, bars 100-117) displays a regular rhythmic pulse, a running bass line, and a text repetition of the first line. However, it ends in a different key from that in which it begins (moving from B flat major to D minor), and it is not clearly distinguished from the passages of recitative which surround it. Something

similar could be said of the Act II passage for Democracy and Zelota ‘Were Commonwealth restor’d again’ (no. 29, bars 1-20). Here one finds a regular rhythmic pulse and a recognisable melodic outline. Democracy takes the first nine bars, which cadence on the dominant. Zelota then sings the next eleven bars, which end on the tonic. Nevertheless, the result feels more like melodic recitative than a discrete song, and, when Pluto takes over at the end of the passage, Grabu moves directly into *secco* recitative. The imperceptible changes from song-like passages to recitative-like passages and the near absence of any formal structures in these song-like passages, created through either musical or textual repetition, prevents their transformation into fully-fledged song. Here Grabu departs from Lully’s model, for despite the fact that the latter frequently shifts seamlessly between song and recitative, Lully’s operas contain many more songs with a formal musical and textual structure.

Song-and-Chorus Structures

Almost every one of the choruses in *Albion and Albanius* is preceded by a vocal solo which introduces the material of the chorus. The bass-doubling-continuo songs for Pluto and Thamesia mentioned above provide nearly all of the material for the subsequent choruses, as does Acacia’s ‘O thou who mount’st th’ethereal throne’. However, while Pluto and Thamesia’s songs are separated from the choruses that are based upon them, the final cadence of Acacia’s song overlaps with the beginning of the chorus based upon it. As we have seen, the melody of the song is unsatisfactory; its reworking as chorus is necessary to make proper sense of it. These factors bind the solo and chorus together in a single unit, unlike the choruses based upon Pluto’s and Thamesia’s solos.

Archon’s previously mentioned ‘From the Caledonian shore’ is similar in construction to Acacia’s song. Though the solo passage could

stand alone, its final cadence is elided with a choral entry based on the material of the second half of the song, and the sense of a single solo-choral unit overrides the independence of the solo. Song-like solo passages without a closed formal structure are often used in a similar fashion to introduce choruses. The choruses 'We'll wash away the stain' (no. 7), 'Resist, and do not fear' (no. 9b), 'Godlike Albion is returning' (no. 14), and 'To rule by love' (no. 50) are each preceded by a song-like passage emerging out of recitative that introduces their musical material.

Passages for solo voice, four-part violas and continuo

In *Albion and Albanus*, numbers for solo voice, four-part violas and continuo straddle a line between song and recitative. While song-like features, such as melismatic writing and the use of regular metric accents in some passages, are present, the text takes precedence over the musical structure, defining rhythmic patterns and requiring frequent changes of metre. These elements make such movements easily distinguishable from continuo and bass-doubling-continuo songs.

Only the most serious characters and situations are represented by four-part strings and continuo: the gods, Albion, Albanus, Augusta and a short passage for Democracy. This hierarchy is borrowed from Lully's practices. Recitative always remained for him a more weighty form of expression than song, and when, with *Bellerophon* (1679), he began to write passages for solo voice, four-part strings and continuo, they developed from his flexible recitative style rather than from songs.⁸ Gräber's writing for four-part violas, voice and continuo shows this same reliance on recitative. It also provides another indication of his knowledge of Lully's latest compositional developments. Lully first used a voice accompanied by four-

⁸ P. Howard, *The Operas of Jean-Baptiste Lully*, p. 56.

part strings and continuo in *Bellerophon*,⁹ and the first dialogue for two characters accompanied by the same forces appears in *Persée* (1682).¹⁰ In this same 'mature' opera, he wrote the first 'aria for a major character with an introductory instrumental ritournelle melodically integrated with the aria'.¹¹ Grabu uses all of these techniques in *Albion and Albanus*.

While the addition of the instrumental parts heightens the level of expression by creating a richer texture, the strings are ultimately a glorified accompaniment only; they very rarely achieve independence from the vocal line or continuo. At most, they vaguely portray the sentiment expressed in the text, as in the rhythmic agitation of the strings at the end of Hermes's second accompanied passage (ex. 2). Just as in bass continuo accompanied recitative, the focus remains on the vocal line and a clear delivery of the text.

The passages for solo voice, four-part violas and continuo in *Albion and Albanus* can be divided into three categories by form and context. The two passages for Augusta (no. 3, bars 27-46 and no. 35, bars 20-41) show the greatest amount of formal organisation and are the easiest to characterise as songs. 'Oh Hermes, pity me' from Act I is a short ABA' form set in the same metre (2) throughout. The second act passage 'Oh Jealousy' is a binary form with an instrumental prelude derived from the vocal material (see Chapter 7). The obvious formal organisation and use of musical and/or textual repetition sets Augusta's songs apart from the other accompanied passages. 'Oh Jealousy', of all the movements in *Albion and Albanus*, most closely resembles what one thinks of as an operatic aria: a dramatically static passage where the character sings about her emotions in a closed musical structure. Even here, however, the text dominates the rhythmic

⁹ This is an aria for Amidosar in Act II, scene vi.

¹⁰ *Persée*, V, viii.

¹¹ P. Howard, *The Operas of Jean-Baptiste Lully*, p. 185.

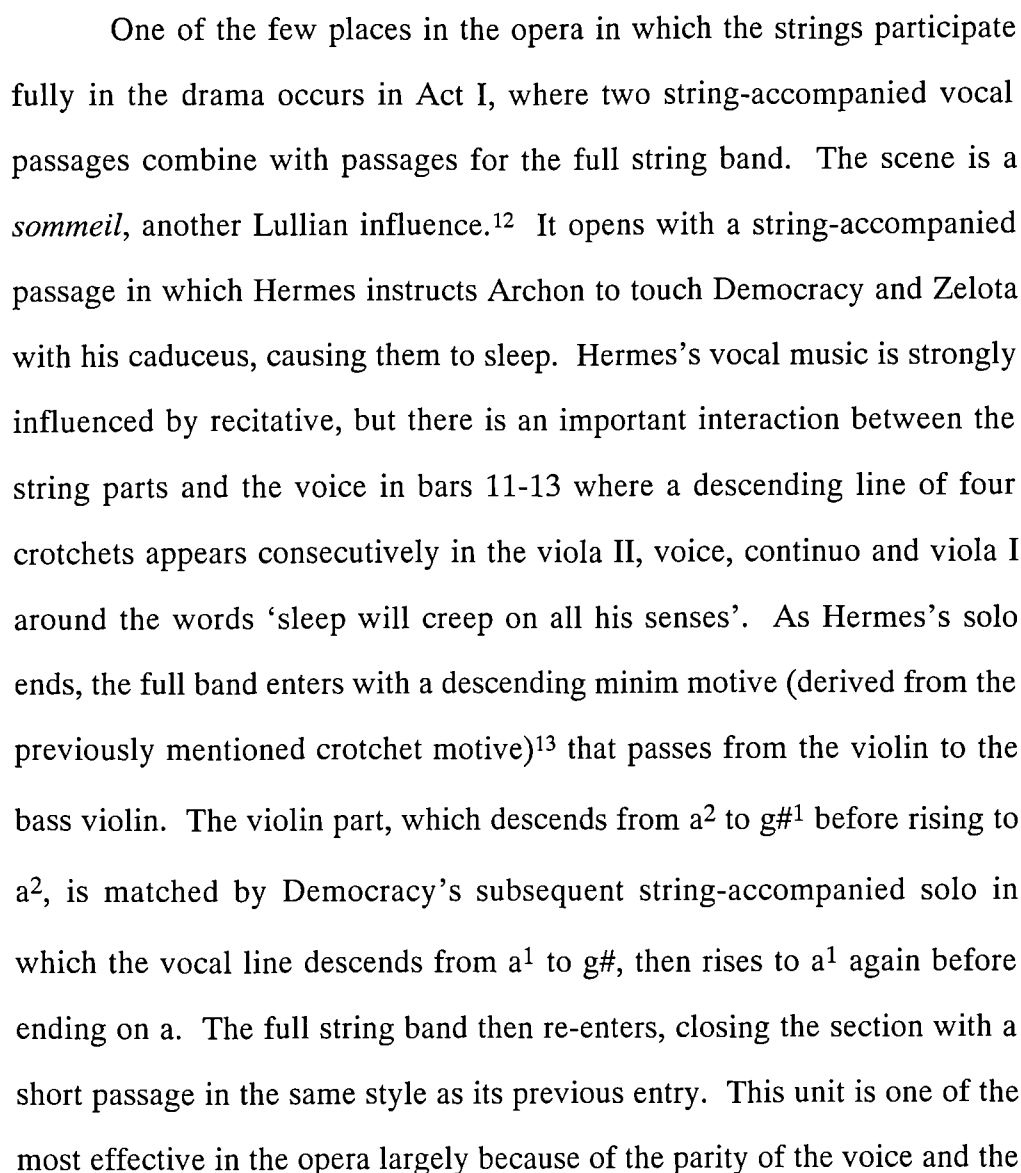
patterns of the music and there is no use of the elaborate passage-work that characterises contemporary Italian arias. Aside from the formal aspect of ‘Oh Jealousy’, the compositional style is identical to that of other passages for solo voice, four-part violas and continuo.

Ex. 2 Act II, ii, ‘Delude the fury of the foe’ (no. 38), bars 29-33

blood, Cries venge-ance, cries venge-ance loud a - bove, cries venge-ance, cries venge-ance, loud a - bove.

Movements for Apollo in Act II (‘All Hail! Ye Royal Pair’ – no. 41), and Proteus in Act III (‘Albion lov’d of Gods and Men’ – no. 62) also display some formal organisation, though both are through-composed. In the libretto, Dryden divided these solos into verses of two and three stanzas respectively. Grabu mirrors this division by separating each stanza with a short passage for the full string band. He does not, however, use any repetition of musical material to link the stanzas or the interludes with one another. Several song-like features make Apollo’s the more attractive of the two movements. Grabu makes little use of melisma in either, but Apollo’s song contains a telling ornamentation of the word ‘glory’ (ex. 3). Four bars later, he sets the word ‘equal’ to five tied semibreves, at which point the musical interest passes temporarily into the instrumental parts. Proteus’s song, in contrast, is set syllabically throughout. When the voice is singing, the strings play an accompanimental role only, and when the musical focus

Ex. 3 Act II, ii, 'All Hail! Ye Royal Pair' (no. 41), bars 21-23



¹³ The metre change from C to 2 means that the crotchets in the former tempo move at the same speed as the minims in the latter.

instruments. It is perhaps no coincidence that another of the most telling passages in the opera (though a much shorter one) is the Act III sleep music for Proteus, where the strings once again actively advance the drama.

The final three passages for voice, four-part strings and continuo lean more closely towards recitative because of their context. They form a discussion between Hermes, Albanus and Albion in which Albanus's possible exile is debated (no.s 38 and 39). Each passage is through-composed and the last two, for Albanus followed by Albion, are continuous. An eight-bar section of continuo recitative for Albion comes between the string-accompanied passages for Hermes and Albanus. In compositional style, the continuo recitative and accompanied recitative are indistinguishable; their juxtaposition reveals the only difference between them to be their accompaniments. Similarly, Hermes's two passages, one with continuo alone (no. 38, bars 1-15) and the other supported by continuo and violas (bars 58-74), show no discernible difference in style save for the accompanimental texture. It is hard to see why Grabu did not set all of the dialogue between the three characters in the fully accompanied style. Nevertheless, almost all of the large section of Act II in C minor, stretching from Hermes's entrance through to Apollo's song, 167 bars, employs string accompaniment.

Despite this being the longest passage of string-accompanied solo music in the opera, the instruments are dramatically insignificant. They play alone in the three-part ritornel (no. 40) and in the brief interlude within Apollo's song only. Otherwise, their primary dramatic significance comes from their absence; the simple texture of Albion and Albanus's duet at the end of the series of richly-textured accompanied recitatives greatly increases its intimacy.

Thus, in *Albion and Albanus* the use of four-part string accompaniment for the voice produces a heightened expression only in

terms of texture. It does not represent a more extensive dramatic role for the strings within the opera, since they are given lines with motivic significance on rare occasion only. This is a result of the fact that the passages, though often song-like, are developed from recitative, and are sometimes indistinguishable from it. The text dominates the form and rhythm of all the solo music accompanied by violas and continuo.

Duets and Ensembles

Grabu makes frequent use of duets within *Albion and Albanus* and their forms and structures share many details with the solo songs, including a predilection for through-composed forms. Only three of the duets make use of formal repetitions of musical material. The duet for the Nereids, 'From the low palace of Old Father Ocean' is a sung minuet and therefore requires a binary structure. Augusta and Thamesia's first act duet 'The Royal Squadron marches' (no. 19) is in a ternary form which was presumably prompted by the ternary form of the lyrics; it is one of the few places in which Dryden offers a short-range repetition of several lines which implies an analogous musical structure. Albion and Albanus's Act II duet, 'The rosy-finger'd morn' (no. 39, bars 67-80) is through-composed, but a repeat of the complete duet is explicitly notated in the score. The duet is the climax of a long string-accompanied dialogue between Hermes, Albanus and Albion, and Grabu perhaps felt that a repetition was necessary to balance the lengthy dialogue and to emphasise the strength of the relationship between Albion and Albanus.

The song-and-chorus structures explored earlier find a parallel in two song-and-duet pairings for Augusta and Thamesia. In Act I their duets 'No more the king of floods am I' (no. 6, bars 59-99) and 'A Commonwealth's a load' (no. 10, 56-77) both emerge from song-like material presented by Thamesia which is repeated as a duet for Thamesia

and Augusta. Song-like duet passages arise from recitative in a similar way to the song-like solo passages discussed above. In contrast to those for Augusta and Thamesia, the duet sections for Democracy and Zelota do not have any formal unity which separates them from surrounding passages of recitative.

Imitative writing, largely absent from the rest of the opera, is a conspicuous feature of Grabu's duets for Thamesia and Augusta, 'No more the king of floods am I' and 'The Royal Squadron marches'. There is also a short imitative passage for Democracy and Zelota (no. 27, bars 34-36), but the rest of the duet writing in *Albion and Albanus* is homophonic, and Grabu at no point exploits a duet to show two characters simultaneously expressing different emotions.

Ensembles for three or four voices are rare; besides the trio sections of the Chacon, there are only three passages in the whole of the opera for more than two voices. They are all short interjections of only a few bars and there are no movements that could properly be termed ensemble movements. 'Let the saints ascend the throne' (no. 56), from Act III, comes closest. It opens with a short passage for four soloists, followed by a short solo, a repeat of the ensemble material, another solo, and finally an instrumental dance. The four-voice ensemble acts as a sort of ritornello, and the dance is tied to it through the use of the same rhythmic pattern. The other two ensemble passages in the opera follow the model (on a small scale) of song-and-chorus structures discussed above. One character presents a musical and textual idea that is repeated by an ensemble. Like the majority of the duet writing, all of the vocal ensemble music is completely homophonic.

Chorus

The chorus plays an important role in *Albion and Albanus*, another feature it shares with the operas of Lully. Unlike contemporary composers of Italian opera, Lully focused attention upon the chorus allowing it to participate fully in his works. He used the chorus both dramatically (for instance, when it describes Phaëton's plunge to earth) and formally, to provide structural unity in prologues and *divertissements*. Gräber's use of the chorus follows the same principles.

The structural function of the chorus in *Albion and Albanus* is evident in its placement as the final movement in each act and in its placement and pairings with solo movements in each of the two second act masques. Its most potent dramatic usage is in the first act, where it makes a short interjection encouraging Augusta to stand firm against Democracy and Zelota ('Resist, resist' – no. 9b), where it joins with Augusta to renounce her betrayal of Albion ('We'll wash away the stain' – no. 7), and where it welcomes Albion's return from exile ('Hail Royal Albion, hail!' – no. 21a & 24). Yet despite the chorus's undoubted importance in the opera, it never acts alone. All but one of the choruses in *Albion and Albanus* is prefaced by a solo which provides some or all of its melodic and bass material. Nevertheless, the chorus is always of at least equal weight to the solo which precedes it, and often of greater weight.

The adaptation of a song into the ensuing chorus has interesting implications for the melodic material. There are three possibilities for the transformation. If the chorus is introduced by a soprano song, the melody line is taken over exactly by the sopranos of the chorus, and the bass continuo accompaniment of the song is taken over more or less exactly by the basses. When a chorus is introduced by a counter-tenor solo, the melodic material may be transposed up an octave to the choral sopranos (in which case the bass continuo line is taken over by the choral basses), or it

may be more freely adapted to the choral soprano line. When a bass solo introduces a chorus, the solo line is repeated exactly by the choral basses and the choral sopranos are given new material.¹⁴ This new material usually has very little melodic distinction and thus the melodic focus remains on the choral bass line.

Grabu's practice of converting songs into choruses means that the melodic and harmonic features of the choral writing are in all ways identical to the songs. The rhythmic character of song-and-chorus units tends to be determined by the text. Two choruses in particular, 'We'll wash away the stain' (no. 7) and 'Renown, assume thy trumpet' (no. 74), gain their distinctive rhythmic patterns from the declamatory features of their respective lyrics. Dance rhythms are also apparent in some movements. The solo and chorus 'See, the god of seas attends thee' uses a gavotte-like rhythm and at least two of the chorus movements, the Chacon and 'Renown, assume thy trumpet', were accompanied by stage dancing.

The choruses are mostly homophonic, though of all the types of movements found in the opera, they are the most likely to contain contrapuntal passages. Both the Act I chorus 'Hail, Royal Albion' (no. 25) and the Act II chorus 'Let us laugh' (no. 33) make use of descending stepwise figures in imitation towards the end of each movement. The contrapuntal writing is undistinguished and always drifts back into homophony, but the general lack of imitative textures throughout the opera make it notable nevertheless. The Act III chorus 'O thou who mount'st th'ethereal throne' (no. 72) is conspicuously contrapuntal. After Acacia's introductory solo, the choral voices enter with a rising figure in imitation. In addition, the ubiquitous string accompaniment is absent, creating an unambiguous parody of the church style for Albion's apotheosis. It is well

¹⁴ The one exception is the Act III chorus 'To rule by love', in which Albion's solo introduction is freely adapted in the chorus.

to remember that Charles II, having converted to Catholicism on his deathbed, was not given a state funeral, and only the most modest musical element was included in the observance of his funeral rituals.¹⁵ Grabu's music seems to aspire to state funeral music, and initially it is successful. The gradual ascent in pitch of three octaves from the initial G of the basses, coupled with the *a cappella* texture, is highly effective. Even so, Grabu can only sustain the independent part-writing for 23 bars before returning to his standard homophony and subsequently succumbing to the light and airy song 'Now Albion is come'.

Apart from the examples mentioned above, the part-writing for the inner voices is bland and simply fills in the necessary harmonies in the same manner as do the viola parts in instrumental movements. The limited tessitura of the alto line (c¹-a¹) frequently creates a large gap between it and the soprano voice which, is usually filled by the first viola part of the accompanying strings. Likewise, Grabu frequently gives the third of a chord to the first violas at the final chord in a cadence, leaving the vocal parts with an open fifth.

Throughout the opera, Grabu slavishly doubles the voice parts at the unison with strings. There are sometimes insignificant differences in rhythms between the voice and instrumental lines which double them, but there is almost never any difference in pitch. Throughout the first two acts, the doubling is consistent; sopranos are doubled by the violins, altos by the second violas, tenors by the third violas and basses by the bass violins and bass continuo. The first viola line is independent of any vocal line as regards pitch, though its rhythmic patterns are constrained by the predominant rhythmic patterns of the movement, which are dependent upon the lyrics. In the third act, Grabu inexplicably alters the established pattern

¹⁵ B. Wood, 'Purcell's funeral music for Queen Mary', *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell*, ed. Michael Burden (Oxford, 1996), p. 78, n. 45.

of doubling. Here, the alto line is doubled by either the first or second violas, and the tenor line is doubled by either the second or third violas, with changes in the doubling sometimes taking place within a movement. There is no apparent musical reason for this change, since the choral parts in the third act are in no essential way different from those in the previous two acts.

Grabu makes only the most tentative attempts to exploit the chorus for its distinctive sound, an unfortunate circumstance since both instances are successful. The most extensive is 'O thou who mount'st the e'thereal throne' (see above). In the other, the Act I chorus 'Hail, Royal Albion', Grabu, for the briefest moment, employs a polychoral device, pitting the strings against the voices (ex. 4).

The forms of the individual choral movements vary, though as with the songs, they are all through-composed. They may be divided into two types: movements in which the choir and strings play together throughout and movements in which the strings play short interludes between choral entries. Of the former type there are four examples, all of which are too short to be of any formal interest in themselves. The movements of the second type are sectional and built upon the alternation of choral and string entries. In all cases the string interludes are rhythmically and melodically distinct from the choral sections. While the string interludes are characterised by dotted rhythms and quaver patterns, the choral sections tend to move in even crotchets and occasionally in even quavers. There is no transfer of motives between the chorus and the strings, though the distinctive rhythmic motives of the interludes may in some cases be derived from rhythmic patterns in the choral sections. Three of these choruses display a similar formal construction: choral entry – string interlude – choral

entry – string interlude – choral entry.¹⁶ In other choruses the alternation between chorus and strings does not present a symmetrical pattern. The *da capo* aria form of the concluding grand chorus, ‘Renown, assume thy trumpet’, is clearly distinct in form from those noted above (see Chapter 5).

Ex. 4 Act I, ‘Hail Royal Albion, hail!’ (no. 24), bars 1-7

The musical score for 'Hail Royal Albion, hail!' (no. 24), bars 1-7, is presented in a two-system format. The first system includes staves for Vn (Violin), Va I (Viola I), Va II (Viola II), S A (Soprano Alto), and T B (Tenor Bass). The lyrics are 'Hail Roy - al Al - bion, hail:'. The second system continues the score, showing a key signature change from C major to D major (indicated by a sharp sign) and a measure number 6. The score includes a variety of musical notation, including notes, rests, and a key signature change.

¹⁶ The movements are ‘We’ll wash away the stain’ (no. 7), ‘Hail, Royal Albion’ (no. 24) and ‘To rule by Love’ (no. 51).

While Grabu's chorus does play an important role in the opera, his ability to use it as an independent body is inferior to Lully's. Whereas Grabu's chorus functions only in conjunction with a soloist who in effect leads it, Lully was able to employ his chorus independently of a solo introduction. However, it must be remembered that Lully had the opportunity to experiment with the use of the chorus in a long series of operas. Had Grabu written another opera after *Albion and Albanius*, he may have found greater freedom in his use of the chorus.

6.3 Instrumental Music

What small praise Grabu's music has garnered from its critics is usually focused on the instrumental writing. Peter Holman finds 'the best of Grabu's orchestral dance music ... capable of making a considerable effect in the hands of the sort of orchestra he would have known',¹ while Franklin Zimmerman writes, with a sense of some surprise, that 'a few of the instrumental pieces really are quite good'.² Curtis Price imagines Purcell himself 'marvel[ling] at the complete control in the five-part symphonies, whose inner voices show a suavity rivalling the finest continental music of the day'.³

Certainly Grabu composed music of good quality with greater consistency in instrumental movements than in vocal passages. Absolved from the difficulties of setting a language not his own, he shows a sure hand with rhythmic motives and a confidence in handling irregular phrase lengths. A great many of the characteristics of his vocal music are also present: a limited harmonic vocabulary, little use of dissonance, and a simple melodic line. The 'obsessive correctness'⁴ of Grabu's part-writing is always evident. Dissonance is kept to a minimum, especially at cadences, and when it does occur, it is usually handled with refined and well-structured suspensions. Peter Holman's assertion that 'Locke's magnificently angular, dissonant, and contrapuntal part-writing would have struck Grabu as being barbarous and old-fashioned'⁵ rings true, and in some ways Grabu's elegant style is one of his greatest attributes. Nevertheless, this elegance can be a hindrance in a dramatic context where it limits the variety and range of expression.

The instrumental writing in *Albion and Albanus* shows even less evidence of English influence (such as chromatic, polyphonic lines) than is

¹ *Four and Twenty Fiddlers* (Oxford, 1993), p. 388

² *The Works of John Dryden, xv: Plays: Albion and Albanus, Don Sebastian, Amphitryon*, ed. E. Miner, G. B. Guffey and F. Zimmerman (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1976), p. 346

³ *Henry Purcell and the London Stage* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 268

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 268

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 387-388

found in the opera's vocal music. Likewise, Grabu's style seems to be purposefully un-Italian in the same way as that of Lully, whose harmonic style Patricia Howard has described as 'deliberately isolationist'.⁶ Nevertheless, Grabu did make advances upon the musical models he adopted from Lully. Most notably in the Concert of Venus and the Chacon, he was able to manipulate form, and the combination of different instrumental groupings, in ways that are different from Lully's.

The treatment of form within instrumental movements of the opera is, for the most part, extremely conservative. Seventeen of the twenty-six five-part instrumental movements are binary dances with repeats. Among the remaining movements there is a French overture, a rondo, a chacon and several preludes, some of which are independent, and others of which are joined directly to a vocal movement. Grabu's handling of binary dance form is simple and consistent. In major keys the first strain always ends on the dominant, while in minor keys the mediant is sometimes used instead. In all but one of the major-key movements there is a full cadence on the dominant, but in minor keys Grabu often uses a half-cadence at the end of the A section (see ex. 1 below). The second strain always begins in either the dominant or the mediant, and returns to the tonic. In the great majority of cases the second strain is longer than the first, though the proportions vary. In consequence, the first strain of a dance movement tends to have a more regular and balanced phrase structure, while the second strain, which, by virtue of its length has greater scope for the use of sequences and extensions, tends towards an irregular phrase structure.⁷ The repetition of melodic material from one strain to another is rare, but the use of a common rhythmic motive in both is a characteristic of many of the movements.

⁶ P. Howard, *The Operas of Lully*, p. 100.

⁷ Lully's binary movements display a similar construction. See P. Howard, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

Phrase patterns within the instrumental movements vary widely between those with regular structures and those that display little or no regularity. As one might expect, numbers such as the Act I Marche and the Act III Minuet are completely regular in their phrase structures. Other dance movements with quick tempos and very strong rhythmic patterns, such as the Ayre for the Mariners, the Second Ayre and the Ayre for the Sectaries, also display regular phrase lengths and patterns. However, those movements that are not based upon stylised dances, such as the preludes, the Overture and the character dance the Ayre for the Devils, are irregular in both the length of phrases and in their organisation.

As in the vocal writing in the opera, Grabu restricts himself to closely related keys, and chromaticism within individual lines is kept to a minimum. Even movements which might seem to require picturesque harmonic treatment, like the Act II Ayre for the Devils, stick rigidly to an unobtrusive motion from one key to another. On the few occasions where harmonic tension is used to complement the stage action, it is the result of voice-leading rather than of an unexpected chord or modulation. The Act III Ayre for the Fighting White Boys and Sectaries employs a series of suspensions, including a double suspension in bar 35, which dissonances seem to provide a musical characterisation of the *mêlée* between Albion's opponents (ex. 1).

This example also shows another aspect of Grabu's restrained musical depiction of stage action. In bar 30, the introduction of a repeated crotchet rhythm breaks what has been the predominant, and monotonous, rhythmic pattern of the movement. The disruption is increased in bar 34 by the introduction of minims tied across the bar, and combined with the series of suspensions discussed above. Before bar 30, the movement is undistinguished, consisting of a repetitious rhythmic motive supported by an anodyne circle of fifths progression. It does not, however, conflict with the stage directions:

The White Boys dance about the Saints: The Saints draw out the Association, and offer it to 'em ...

while bars 30-40 portray the disintegration of cooperation between the two groups:

They refuse it and quarrel about it: Then the White Boys and Saints fall into a confus'd Dance, imitating fighting: The White Boys at the end of the Dance, being driven out by the Sectaries with Protestant Flails.

Ex. 1 Act III, Ayre for the Fighting Whiteboys and Sectaries (no. 59), bars 28-40

Rhythmic gestures instead of harmonic devices are used to depict the evil spirits in the Act II Ayre for the Devils. Furious semiquaver passages in the outer string parts were presumably accompanied by unnatural physical gestures and dance steps and combined with fantastic costumes. Grabu had already written a dance with similar musical elements in his incidental music for *Valentinian*, the *Air pour les songes affreux*. Lully's many dances for phantoms, furies and other devilish characters are clearly the models. They are characterised by the same frenzied semiquaver passages and by an anacrusis usually shorter than a crotchet.⁸ Abundant examples can be found in Lully's

⁸ P. Howard finds that Lully's dances of this type for various demons, furies and spirits 'fail to communicate any supernatural atmosphere, let alone horror or fear', op. cit., p. 151.

works, including the *Entrée des furies* from III, v of *Phaëton*, which Grabu is sure to have heard.

Most of the dances do not require music to accompany stage movement as specific as that detailed in the Ayre for the Fighting White Boys and Sectaries. In these cases Grabu appears to have chosen a specific dance rhythm to provide the appropriate generalised mood for a given set of characters. The dances for Mercury's followers and for the Graces and Loves are set with elegant minuet-like strains, while the Ayre for the Mariners is a jaunty gavotte. The musical style of some dances seems to be used satirically as well; the romping gavotte that accompanies the Sectaries' dance is surely meant to ridicule their veneer of piety, while the White Boys, who were in effect courtiers to the Duke of Monmouth, are provided with a courtly branle to which they dance, as the stage directions suggest, in a 'Fantastick' manner. Of the sixteen binary dances in the opera, only one is named, the third act Minuet. Others among the dances conform more or less to recognised dance rhythms, as listed in Table 1 below.

The other main binary instrumental form in the opera is the French overture which opens Act I. It carries all of the important hallmarks of Lully's overtures, which are its undoubted models: a grand opening section in duple metre with dotted rhythms, followed by a quick imitative second section whose counterpoint collapses to homophony after the entrance of the fifth part. Like many of Lully's overtures, Grabu returns to a 'drag coda' at the close of the second section. This is not by any means a standard practice of Grabu's (nor was it of Lully's); although the Overture to the *Pastoralle* (published with the instrumental music of *Valentinian*) also ends with a slow section, overtures found in theatre suites just as often end without one.⁹ The Overture to *Albion and Albanius* is the longest and best of Grabu's overtures, and is enhanced by a particularly convincing rising sequence which leads to the return of the

⁹ For instance, see the two overtures in *GB-Lep* Q784.21 and one in *US-NH* Filmer 9.

slower opening tempo (bars 38-46); a greater than usual care in the voice leading of the inner parts is also apparent.

Table 1 Dance rhythms in *Albion and Albanus*

| Title in score and libretto | Time sig. | Key | Type of dance |
|--|-----------|-----|-----------------|
| Ritornel | 3 | C | |
| Ayre (two dances) | 3 | c | Saraband |
| | 3 | c | |
| Ayre for Mercury's Followers | 3 | d | Minuet |
| Ayre for the Mariners | 2 | C | Gavotte |
| March | 2 | a | Branle |
| Ayre for the Four Parts of World | ♩ | a | |
| Second Ayre (rondo) | 3 | a | Canaries |
| Ayre for the Devils | ♩ | F | Character dance |
| Second Ayre for the Devils | 3 | F | |
| Ayre for the God of Waters | ♩ | C | |
| Ayre for the Tritons | 2 | d | Gavotte |
| Minuet | 3 | d | Minuet |
| Ayre for the Boys in White | ♩ | D | Branle |
| Ayre for the Sectaries | 2 | D | Gavotte |
| Ayre for the Fighting White Boys and Sectaries | 2 | D | Bourée |
| Ayre for the Graces and Loves | 3 | g | Minuet |
| Entry of Hero's | ♩ | g | Entrée grave |

The single rondo form in the opera is the Second Ayre from Act I, whose rhythmic profile and consequent quick tempo suggest something of the feel of a canaries. The most interesting aspect of the dance, however, is the final cadence, for the resolution to the tonic is elided with the opening of the final chorus.¹⁰ Rondo forms appear regularly in other dance suites by Grabu, so it is perhaps surprising to find only one amongst the dance movements of the opera, and none in its vocal music.

The recurrent preludes and ritornels of the opera are more freely structured than the dances. They are used to introduce acts or movements, and to accompany the entrance and exit of gods. All of the movements of this type in five parts are called preludes, while those in three parts are usually, though not always, called ritornels. With the exception of the Act I ritornel for the

¹⁰ A factor that may suggest a specific proportional relationship between the two movements (see Chapter 8).

entrance of Juno and the five-part prelude for the entrance of Proteus, all are single-section, through-composed movements without repeats.

The five-part preludes fall into two types, those that are free-standing and those that introduce other movements. The latter use musical material which is closely related to that found in the movement which the prelude introduces. The three examples in the opera preface Pluto's song 'Let us laugh', Augusta's song 'Oh Jealousy' and the final chorus 'Renown, assume thy trumpet'. All begin and end in the tonic and cadence on the dominant at some point in between, but their nature as introductory material, and their brevity, prevent them from exploring other key levels.¹¹

The remaining free-standing preludes are independent of any other movements in their musical material. They include the prelude in the Ayres before the Opera, the two preludes which flank Proteus's song in Act III, and the Concert of Venus. All are of a length which allows movement to tonal movement similar to that found in the binary dance forms. However, the absence of a formal structure, and of the harmonic direction to the dominant or mediant inherent within the binary dance form, exposes a weakness in Grabu's technique: he is unable to sustain musical and harmonic interest through a larger-scale, single-section movement. Without the constraint of a binary form, Grabu's music wanders aimlessly through closely related keys. Instead of a specific motive which might be developed and repeated at different tonal levels, Grabu offers a continuous and formless melodic line, usually unified by a consistent and often monotonous rhythmic motive, as in the Prelude which follows Proteus's song. In the Prelude of the Ayres before the Opera, Grabu extends the second half of the movement through a sequential pattern based upon a suspension chain, but fails to give the

¹¹ The prelude to the final chorus is the longest of these at 26 bars and includes a cadence on the sub-dominant as well as the dominant.

sequence any harmonic direction. Beginning on the dominant, it moves through a flattened seventh to a cadence on the sub-dominant, after which the sequence is revived for three more bars before the final cadence. The flat-side direction of the sequence, combined with its unfocused harmonic direction, produces a laboured and soporific effect.

Harmonic and melodic sequences are occasionally used as an important device for generating musical material in instrumental movements, a device infrequently found in the vocal music. However, as we have just seen, they lack the drive associated with Italianate-style progressions. The melodic material which the progressions support is never couched in a violinistic idiom like that which Corelli was developing around this time, and the progressions themselves tend to feel clumsy and lack rhythmic drive. Aside from the Prelude (no. 1) mentioned above, Grabu also extends the sequence in the first section of the Ayre for the Fighting White Boys and Sectaries *ad nauseam*. On occasion sequences are used to better effect as, for instance, in the Overture. In general, however, Grabu shows little sign of developing the types of harmonic and motivic development that were to allow Italian composers (and indeed Purcell) greatly to extend the length of single movements.

Two of the preludes nevertheless provide some of the best music in the opera. In these movements, Grabu circumvents the limits of his technique by dividing one into two sections and structuring another on the alternation between different groups of instruments. The Prelude to Proteus's song (no. 61) is discussed further in Chapter 7, though here it is worth noting that it is the only prelude in two contrasting sections. Both end in the tonic and they are, in effect, two small movements placed back to back. While the first section achieves a dramatic final cadence through a carefully-

structured use of register and chromaticism, the second and longer section falls victim to similar problems to those found in the Prelude which follows Proteus's song.

The Concert of Venus is not given the designation 'Prelude' in the score, though it functions as one, accompanying the entrance of Venus on a scallop shell. The importance of the title 'Concert' rather than 'Prelude' is evident in the scoring and compositional devices employed within it. It is scored for full strings and a pair of recorders, and Grabu makes good use of the different groupings this combination of instruments allows; there are sections for full strings, full strings and recorders, a pair of recorders and continuo, a pair of violins and continuo, and delicate exchanges between the paired recorders and violins. Peter Holman suggests that it is 'probably the earliest concerto-like movement written in England',¹² and it has some similarities to the concerto as it was then being developed by Corelli. The movement expands the very tentative alternation between paired violins and recorders found in the Chacon (bars 213-229). Here the opposition of various textures is the basis for the entire movement. It has a rondo-like framework, with four sections for full strings (joined by recorders in the last two) separated by episodes combining the paired recorders and violins. In the first trio entry, the recorders repeat the material of the tutti on the dominant. In the second trio section, the recorders begin with the material of the tutti, but subsequently develop new material which they then contest with two violins. Throughout the remainder of the movement there is no repetition of material between the tutti and trio groups, nor between subsequent sections for the same group, though all of the material is governed by common rhythmic patterns. The music here is very strong and the skill with which Grabu contrasts different instrumental textures at close quarters must have caught the

¹² op. cit., p. 384.

attention of English composers, especially Purcell, whose Prelude to 'Behold, O mighty'st of Gods' from *Dioclesian* is surely a response (see Chapter 10).

Aside from the number of voices, the principal difference between three-part ritornels and preludes and five-part preludes is one of compositional technique. Three-part movements are much more likely to contain sections with independent voice-leading. Two of these, the Act I entrance of Juno and the Prelude to Act III, open with imitative entries in the upper parts, the only instrumental movements in the whole of the opera to begin in such a manner. The Act III Prelude in particular contains some of Grabu's most thoroughly polyphonic writing, with points of imitation passing through all three parts. There are, of course, examples of three-part ritornels that are wholly or mostly homophonic in texture, but in comparison to five-part instrumental movements, independent part-writing is much more pronounced. These three-part ritornels also tend to be shorter than those in five parts, and thus avoid much of the aimless wandering found in several of the latter.¹³

Throughout all of the five-part instrumental movements musical interest is concentrated in the outer voices. There is, however, no evidence to suggest that Grabu left the composition of inner parts to an underling, as Lully did. Though they are generally rather pedestrian, there are passages where the inner voices take on a greater interest. When the outer voices have more active rhythmic lines, the inner voices tend to move in dotted rhythms, with one of the voices occasionally joining an outer part in thirds or sixths (see for instance the Ayre for the Devils). Imitation between the outer voices is fairly common, but rare in the inner parts, and when it does occur in the latter, it tends to be an isolated event within any given piece. Inner voices may come to the fore for a bar or two at a time, perhaps when they carry a suspension or a rhythmic motive that is momentarily different from the other the viola parts.

¹³ The only ritornel longer than twenty bars is that which accompanies the entrance of Juno in Act I; it is also the only three-part movement in a binary form with repeats.

Grabu was not incapable of writing more sustained polyphony, as can be seen in some of the three-part movements, and particularly in the Prelude to Proteus's song. In the opening fourteen bars of this movement all five parts manage at some point to move independently, and there are usually at least three parts with fully independent motion at any one time. This passage also displays a greater freedom with chromaticism. Grabu's avoidance of contrapuntal textures is likely to be one of style and taste rather than want of ability.

The lack of dissonance in Grabu's writing is noteworthy, especially in comparison to some of his English counterparts. The majority of the dissonances in the instrumental music come in the form of carefully prepared suspensions. Many movements have no more than one or two suspensions tucked neatly into the inner voices. There are some movements in which a chain of suspensions is used as a pronounced compositional device, but otherwise Grabu is very frugal with them.

Grabu's final cadences provide a particularly good example of the way in which he studiously avoids dissonance. Almost every final cadence in the five-part instrumental movements (and a majority in the choral and three-part movements) ends with an anticipatory tonic quaver in the violin. Consequent with this, the part with the leading-note also has an anticipatory tonic quaver, thus avoiding the harmonic interval of a minor second. Such a rigid cadential formula leads to an extremely routine series of cadences; nearly 80% of the final cadences of instrumental movements in the opera end with one of the following four variants of the same cadence (numbers refer to scale degrees):

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|--------|-------|----------|--------|-------|----------|--------|-------|----------|--------|-------|
| A | Vn | 2-1 | B | Vn | 2-1 | C | Vn | 2-1 | D | Vn | 7-1 |
| | Va I | 7-1 | | Va I | 7-1 | | Va I | 5-4-3 | | Va I | 5-4-3 |
| | Va II | 5-4-3 | | Va II | 5-5 | | Va II | 7-1 | | Va II | 2-1 |
| | Va III | 5-5 | | Va III | 5-4-3 | | Va III | 5-5 | | Va III | 5-5 |

Other final and internal cadences in the opera that do not conform to the aforementioned patterns still avoid any dissonance stronger than that found in a dominant seventh chord.

Grabu's handling of half cadences at the midpoint of minor key binary movements displays a similar regularity that borders upon sounding like repeated thematic material, though this is surely not the intention.¹⁴

Ex. 2

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a string ensemble. The first system, labeled 'Overture bars 15-16' and 'Ayre for Mercury's Followers bars 12-13', shows a half-cadence in the first system. The second system, labeled 'Ayre for the Tritons bars 8-9' and 'Entry of Hero's bars 9-10', shows a similar half-cadence in the second system. The notation includes staves for Violin (Vn), Viola I (Va I), Viola II (Va II), Viola III (Va III), and Bass Violoncello (B Vn). The music is written in a minor key, with a key signature of one flat. The time signature is 3/4. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines.

Passing dissonances are the most piquant to be found in Grabu's instrumental writing. They are, however, usually an incidental result of voice leading and are most likely to be found on weak beats. Where Purcell might engineer an inner voice so that it creates frequent dissonances with other parts, such a practice was incongruous to Grabu's style, where contrapuntal detail was sacrificed to a clean harmony and texture that focused on the outer voices. Only on rare occasions does he allow the dissonance caused by voice leading to come to the fore. A particularly jarring simultaneous cross-relation is found in Mercury's Act II accompanied arioso (ex. 3),¹⁵ and a pair of

¹⁴ See also the cadence to the first section of the ritornel accompanying Juno's entrance in Act 1.

¹⁵ Curtis Price has interpreted this clash as an aspect of the bitterness of the advice Mercury his giving to Albion at this point. *Henry Purcell and the London Stage* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 268.

harmonic seconds make a delicious effect in the ritornel for the entry of Juno in Act I (ex. 4), but such instances are infrequent. Given Grabu's obsessive cleanliness at cadences, the passing dissonance of example 5.a & b, just a bar before a cadence is even more surprising. However, the fact that such moments can be picked out easily from a work of some two hours in length is the exception that proves the rule.

Ex. 3 Act II, 'With pity Jove beholds thy state' (no. 38), bars 25-29

HERMES

A sac - red flood Of roy - al blood,

Va I
Va II
Va III

Va IV
Bc

Ex. 4 Act I, Ritornel for the Entry of Juno (no. 17), bars 23-25

{Vn II}
[Vn II]

Bc

5 6

Ex. 5.a Act I, Overture (no. 4), bars 50-51

Vn
Va I

Va II
Va III

B Vn

Ex. 5.b Act I, Ayre for the Four Parts of the World (no. 22), bars 15-16

Vn
Va I

Va II
Va III

B Vn

Perhaps the finest of the dance movements in the opera, and certainly the most famous, is the Chacon. In terms of scale, form, variety of forces and compositional detail it is the most ambitious piece in the opera, and the quality of the music rises almost fully to the challenge. A close scrutiny of it reveals both Grabu's careful structure and pacing and the accomplished detail of the writing.

The Chacon is based on a simple four-bar subject, repeated with harmonic and melodic variations over 365 bars. Despite the harmonic and melodic changes, it is not a modulating ground, remaining for the whole of the movement in C, though it explores both the major and the parallel minor. The movement can best be divided into four sections, with each of the first three presenting one verse of text (Table 2).

Examination of the first section reveals a pattern with which the others can be compared. The first instrumental passage (bars 1-24) is comprised of three sets of paired repetitions of the bass. In each instance the violin cadences on the mediant or dominant at the end of the first four bars, and the tonic at the end of the second. Each of the three pairs of phrases has a different melodic line and rhythmic profile and there is no significant interplay between the bass and the other parts. The first vocal entry is similarly straight forward (bars 25-40), consisting of four of the four-bar bass repetitions grouped in two eight-bar phrases. The first is structured identically to those in the previous instrumental section, but the second withholds the down-beat resolution of the first cadence, giving a strong sense of the second half being a response to the first.

Another instrumental episode follows (bars 41-52), this time for a trio of two recorders and continuo in a new phrase grouping. Here there are three presentations of the bass; the first cadences with the top voice on the mediant, the second is a half cadence as in the previous vocal passage and the third a full cadence. Now the full chorus and strings present the first verse again

(bars 53-68). The melody and bass lines, but not the second treble, are identical to those in the vocal trio section, and there is no reharmonization of the material.

Table 2 Structure of the Chacon

| Bar no. | Length | Key | Instr./Vocal Forces | Text |
|----------|--------|-----|--|---------------------------------------|
| A | | | | |
| 1-24 | (24) | C | 5-pt strings | |
| 25-40 | (16) | C | Vocal trio | 'Ye nymphs, the charge is royal' |
| 41-52 | (12) | C | Inst. trio: recorders, continuo | |
| 53-68 | (16) | C | 5-pt strings and chorus | 'Ye nymphs, the charge is royal' |
| 69-96 | (28) | C | 5-pt strings | |
| B | | | | |
| 97-112 | (16) | C | 5-pt string | |
| 113-140 | (28) | C | Vocal trio | 'Pleasure, pleasure shall attend you' |
| 141-156 | (16) | C | Inst. trio: recorders, guitars, continuo | |
| 157-184 | (28) | C | 5-pt strings and chorus | 'Pleasure, pleasure shall attend you' |
| 185-212 | (28) | C | 5-pt strings | |
| C | | | | |
| 213-228 | (16) | c | Inst. trio: recorders vs violins, continuo | |
| 229-248 | (20) | c | vocal trio | 'See at your bless'd returning' |
| 249-276 | (28) | c | 5-pt strings | |
| 277-296 | (20) | c | 5-pt strings and chorus | 'See at your bless'd returning' |
| 297-312 | (16) | c | 5-pt strings | |
| D | | | | |
| 313-365 | (53) | C | 5-pt strings | |

A further five-part instrumental episode of 28 bars follows. In the first 16 bars two repetitions of the bass supporting a running quaver pattern in the upper voice are contrasted with two repetitions where the running quavers pass to the bass. Both the phrase grouping and the surface rhythm undergo a diminution in the next 8 bars, and the exchange of material between the outer voices is in invertible counterpoint. One further repetition of the chacon theme extends the semiquaver motion in the bass before the original version of the theme reappears, signaling the beginning of the B section.

A review of the A section reveals a carefully planned increase in complexity in several musical elements. First, after the initial exposition there is a gradual build-up of forces from vocal trio to full choir and from instrumental trio to full strings. The rhythmic complexity also builds from the simple crotchet patterns of the opening, through running quaver passages to the final semiquaver patterns. In addition, the interaction between the outer parts increases towards the close of the section. Underpinning these elements is the chacon bass; for the most part Grabu uses two four-bar phrases per group, but he is careful both to include several three-phrase groupings, and to vary the links for those phrases grouped in twos between cadences where the upper voice ends on the mediant or dominant, half cadence, and even an interrupted cadence (bar 81).

Section B follows the same pattern as A and shows a similar increase in complexity from beginning to end. In addition, Grabu increases the complexity and detail from section A to section B, primarily by harmonic means. Section A contains only two accidentals, an f sharp in bar 13 and a b flat in bar 81. In B the frequency and force of these accidentals is increased. An f sharp in the vocal trio creates the first firm secondary dominant harmony. The full chorus contains an additional secondary dominant, created by an f sharp in the viola II and alto lines, reharmonising the material from the vocal trio (compare bars 135 and 179). Likewise the b flat makes inroads, providing a very strong inflection in the bass line of both vocal sections and making a brief appearance at bar 148 of the instrumental trio. Finally, at the end of the section, the two accidentals are juxtaposed in adjacent bars (209-210) after which point the Chacon shifts to the minor.

Grabu is again careful to vary the phrase groupings, most noticeably differentiating the A vocal section from the B. In B there are three phrase groups, the first two formed of two repetitions of the chacon bass, and the

third of three. One further intensification from A to B can be found in the instrumental trio where guitars are added to the pair of recorders.

Throughout the Chacon Grabu allows a greater than usual amount of structured and passing dissonance. 7-6 suspensions permeate the whole of the movement, occurring regularly on the down-beat of the third bar of the chacon pattern. Passing dissonance is also frequent. Most interesting are several cadences where an anticipatory tonic occurs in only one part, causing a harmonic minor second which, as we have seen, is studiously avoided in the rest of the opera (see bars 56, 96, 148 and 224).

The C section, which starts with the shift to the minor, observes the pattern set previously, but the position of the instrumental trio is changed. There is, once again, an increase of complexity in comparison to sections A and B. In terms of instrumentation, a greater complexity is found in the dialogue between paired violins and paired recorders in the trio section. The move to the parallel minor continues the increase in harmonic tension from the diatonic A to the more harmonically interesting B section. The phrasing of the vocal section is also carefully planned to contrast with the earlier examples. The text fits neatly into two 8 bar phrase groups as in A, but Grabu adds a repeat of the final line of text to stretch the second group to 12 bars.

This vocal section is the most skilfully crafted of the three, thanks to Grabu's careful attention to voice leading. In the vocal trio section, passing dissonances in bars 238 and 240 decorate an ascending bass line whose motion is transferred to the 2nd treble in bar 241, at which point a bass descent counters the ascending upper voices. The parallel full chorus is the richest of all, with a double suspension in bar 283 and the passing dissonances created by the first viola in bars 286 and 291.

Likewise, the five-part instrumental episode, which separates the two vocal passages, is more expressive than those before. Interaction between the outer parts is intense, and the inner parts achieve their greatest level of

independence. There is diminution of the surface rhythm over the course of the passage, and an interrupted cadence preserves the momentum between the penultimate and final repetitions of the theme at the climax of the passage.

In all ways the C section represents the apogee of the movement, and it is clear that Grabu builds carefully towards it. However, after the final choral entrance, the movement loses its way. The 69 bars that follow are for full strings alone; there are neither vocal entries nor trio passages. While the writing is competent, there is no sign of the steady increase in musical complexity found earlier in the movement. The return of the major only briefly relieves the static texture and predictability of the compositional design. One wishes to believe that Grabu was forced to spin out the movement for extra-musical reasons, perhaps at the request of the choreographer. Given the deliberate and effective design of the first three-quarters of the piece, it is difficult to understand him abandoning his careful planning at this point.

One other aspect of the Chacon is of particular interest. In the penultimate presentation of the bass there is a distinctive change in its harmonic and melodic profile through the use of a first inversion secondary dominant to F major. An identical device can be found in the last presentation of the theme in the Passacaille of *EIRE-Dtc* 413, accompanied by a very similar melodic line. The progression also appears at the end of the first of the two movements that make up the Ayre (the third of the Ayres before the Opera). In each of these instances, the placement of the progression suggests that Grabu considered it to be a closing gesture (ex. 6.a, b & c). The same device can be found in Lully's chaconnes; in *Cadmus et Hermione* (bars 125-131) its position 34 bars from the end focuses less attention on it than in examples 6.a, b and c below, but in *Phaëton* it occurs within eight bars of the end of the movement (136-144). Interestingly, Purcell uses a similar feint towards the subdominant as a closing gesture in the final variation of his chaconne from *The Fairy Queen*.

Ex. 6.a Act II, Chacon (no. 45), bars 357-361

Vn Va I
Va II Va III
B Vn

Ex. 6.b Passacaille, *EIRE-Dtc*, bars 57-61

Tr 1
Tr 2
Bass

Ex. 6.c Ayres before the opera, Ayre (no. 3), bars 23-29

Vn Va I
Va II Va III
B Vn

The flattened seventh of these progressions may be an influence of Lully's French style. Writing on Lully's operas, Patricia Howard observes a 'modal feel, or sub-dominant turn of phrase, mostly occur[ing] in instrumental numbers. The flattened seventh is particularly associated with dance movements; the arias do sometimes contain an actual modulation to the sub-dominant in their opening phrases'.¹⁶ Numerous examples of the same harmonic tendency can be found in Grabu's opera. The Ayre for the Devils provides a good example, in its strong orientation towards the sub-dominant and sub-tonic. The opening progression of the movement (in F major) is symptomatic; though it leads to a dominant harmony, Grabu dwells on a B

¹⁶ op. cit., p. 108.

flat chord in the second bar which is approached by the interval of a fourth in the bass. This sub-dominant leaning permeates the beginning of Act II, with similar progressions opening both the Act II prelude and Pluto's recitative.

The instrumental music in *Albion and Albanus* is generally of a high standard, and the binary dances in particular are consistent in their solid craftsmanship. In comparison to a composer such as Purcell, Grabu's talent did not lie in melody, though several of the triple-time dances do have tuneful first sections. His assured skill at part-writing and his elegant style are, on the other hand, frequently evident. Furthermore, the parameters of the binary structure provided an ideal situation for Grabu's talents, since their small scale and in-built tonal direction suited his limited harmonic vocabulary. Though the rhythmic patterns in the dances are simple, frequent hemiolas at the end of phrases in triple-time enliven them. When Grabu ventures beyond the binary form, the results are uneven; in several of the preludes there is an absence of harmonic direction and of rhythmic interest. His lack of fluency or refusal to adopt Italianate techniques of sequential harmonic patterns and motivic repetition at different tonal levels forces him to stretch his compositional ideas to the point of tedium. However, where he attempts to structure movements using other techniques, such as the alternation of instruments in the Concert of Venus, or the repeated bass of the Chacon, he is more successful. Though the Chacon is, in the final analysis, only a qualified success, the form, pacing and use of instrumentation suggest that Grabu had laid the foundations for greater successes in subsequent works. Unfortunately for him, *Albion and Albanus* was his last opportunity to write on a large scale for the abundant resources of the United Company.

Chapter 7

Grabu's Borrowings from Lully

Though there has been little close examination of Grabu's music for *Albion and Albanus*, received opinion has consistently agreed that it is in the French style. Roger North wrote that the opera was 'of a French genius', and Dent, in *The Foundations of English Opera*, dealt with it under the chapter heading *French Influences*. More recently, Franklin Zimmerman has challenged the extent to which Grabu's musical style was indebted to that of Lully's. In particular, he chose to compare Grabu's opera with *Cadmus et Hermoine* which Lully composed in 1674. He rightly points out that Grabu was still in England at this time, and could have had no first-hand contact with Lully's newly developed French Opera.¹ It is not surprising then that 'Grabu's aesthetic differed both in small details and in grand design from that of the Lullian model',² at least when compared to the early operas like *Cadmus*. His argument, however, is flawed by a failure to consider Grabu's return to France between 1679 and 1683.³ When we look at the operas Grabu may have heard during this period, the story is different. *Albion and Albanus* shares a great deal of its basic musical forms with those found in *Proserpine* (1680) and *Persée* (1682). Even more striking is its relationship to *Phaëton*, which opened for public performance on April 27, 1683. This was the last of Lully's operas Grabu would have had the opportunity to see, and comparison of the two demonstrates that Grabu was *au fait* with the very latest of Lully's developments, particularly the use of the full orchestra to accompany arias and recitative-like dialogues between characters. In fact, several direct parallels can be found between

¹ Grabu had been exposed directly to Cambert's efforts, however.

² *The Works of John Dryden*, xv: *Plays: Albion and Albanus, Don Sebastian, Amphytrion*, ed. E. Miner, G. B. Guffey and F. Zimmerman (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1976), p. 344.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 344.

movements in *Phaëton* and in *Albion and Albanus*. While comparison of these passages emphasises Grabu's debt to Lully, it also shows him adapting and altering the models to his own ends, and, in some instances, surpassing Lully's originals. Nevertheless, Curtis Price's comment that the opera 'is a *tragédie en musique* in all but language'⁴ is only a slight overstatement, for there can be little doubt that Grabu turned to Lully's operas of the early 1680s as his model for *Albion and Albanus*.

The clearest case for Grabu's borrowing of music and forms from Lully can be found by comparing the Proteus scenes from *Phaëton* and *Albion and Albanus*. As we have seen in Chapter 3, both Betterton and Grabu appear to have had the opportunity to see *Phaëton*, and there can be no doubt that Grabu borrowed Lully's music for a somnolent Proteus in writing his own musical setting for the same character in *Albion and Albanus*.

This sleep music concludes I, v of *Phaëton*, the first in a series of four scenes which builds to the climactic oracle at the end of the act. In I, v, Proteus leads his followers to the shore, then retires to a grotto to rest. Clymène enters (I, vi) and persuades her brother, Triton, to help her obtain an oracle from Proteus. Triton and a group of sea gods awaken Proteus (I, vii); he changes shape in an attempt to flee, but is forced to give his dire prediction of Phaëton's fate (I, viii).

When Betterton, Dryden and Grabu imitated this episode in *Albion and Albanus*, they compressed it into one scene. Albion and Acacia approach the sleeping Proteus for an oracle. He awakens and changes shapes but, unable to escape, is forced to offer Albion a prophecy. Grabu's debt to the earlier opera is unmistakable. Nevertheless, a comparison of the

⁴ C. Price, 'Political allegory in late-seventeenth-century English opera', *Music and Theatre: Essays in honour of Winton Dean*, ed. Nigel Fortune (Cambridge, 1987), p. 2.

two passages shows how Grabu altered his model to create music that advances the action.

Lully's music, which serves as a prelude to Proteus's bass solo, can be divided into three sections: A, A', and B (ex.1). The construction of the two A sections is based upon three-part invertible counterpoint. In A', the middle voice takes over the bass material of bars 1-6, but increases the harmonic interest by the addition of two suspensions. Furthermore, the $e\sharp$ and $e\flat$ in the upper voice of bar nine create an arresting chord progression. The short B section introduces ascending lines in the upper voices to counter the bass descent, followed by a gentle cadence which ushers in the solo voice.

As in *Phaëton*, Grabu's version of the sleep music opens with the upper voices in parallel thirds, their motive passing to the bass in bar six (ex. 2). In like manner, the bass line descends steadily over the course of the passage; Lully's descends from c^1 to $E\flat$, Grabu's from g to C . Within the bounds set by these similarities, Grabu achieves a more direct structure, and a greater dramatic effect.

Grabu counters the descending bass line with a nine-bar ascent from $f\sharp^1$ to g^2 in the violin. He adds chromatic colouring towards the end of the passage, yet, unlike Lully, he puts it to a dramatic purpose, heightening the harmonic tension at the approach to Proteus's awakening. The tortured violin line of bars 12-13 inverts the original three-minim motive, changing it from a relaxed figure to a tense one which accentuates the climb to g^2 , the highest note thus far. Just after it is reached, a metre change introduces an abrupt shift to the quick-moving transformation music. Grabu co-opts most of the salient features of his model but, where Lully provided a dramatically static depiction of Proteus's drift into sleep, Grabu created a passage with clear dramatic movement; even without the stage pantomime, the listening

audience would have perceived Albion and Acacia's stealthy approach to Proteus, and their sudden seizing of him which occasions his awakening.

Ex. 1 *Phaëton*, Act I, v

The musical score for Ex. 1 from *Phaëton*, Act I, v, is presented in three systems. The first system, labeled 'A', contains measures 1 through 5. The second system, labeled 'A'', contains measures 6 through 10. The third system, labeled 'B', contains measures 11 through 15. The music is written for three staves: Treble, Alto, and Bass. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The first system (A) has measures 1-5. The second system (A') has measures 6-10. The third system (B) has measures 11-15. Fingerings and breath marks are indicated below the notes.

In *Phaëton*, Proteus's transformations are separated from the sleep music. The shape-changes take place in I, vii, during an air sung by Triton which begins with, and is broken by, orchestral interludes of running quaver passages (ex.3). The abbreviated nature of the scene in *Albion and Albanus* allows for the juxtaposition of the furious transformation and the sleep music. Music for the former is also similar to that in *Phaëton*. They share rapid quaver passage-work in the violin and a sprightly duple metre (ex. 4). Unlike the sleep music, however, Grabu's transformation music has no dramatic direction. It is busy but nondescript, and entirely suitable as an accompaniment to the spectacle of Proteus's on-stage metamorphosis into a lion, a crocodile and a dragon. Grabu wisely concentrated his most

interesting music before the audience's attention was directed toward the stage action, and in so doing increased the dramatic effect of the spectacle by bringing the music to a climax just as the visual feast begins.

Ex. 2 *Albion and Albanus*, Act III, i, Prelude (no. 61), bars 1-15

Considering the similarities discussed above, it seems likely that Betterton may have attempted to emulate the scenic design of this section of *Phaëton* just as Grabu imitated the music. Whether or not Proteus's cave in *Albion and Albanus* looked like the scene from Act I of *Phaëton* as preserved in Jean Berain's sketch (see Chapter 9), it must surely have been in Betterton's mind's eye after his 1683 trip to France. Likewise, he surely would have studied the way in which Proteus's shape changes were accomplished at the Paris Opéra. Triton's aria, during which Proteus changes shape in *Phaëton*, would seem to allow about two minutes for the scenic spectacle,⁵ while the complete prelude in *Albion and Albanus* is well

⁵ The movement lasts 2' 8" in the only available recording: *Phaëton*, Les Musiciens du Louvre, Marc Minkowski, director (Paris, Erato), 1994.

under two minutes long.⁶ Several factors may account for the discrepancy. First, in *Albion and Albanus*, the libretto indicates only three forms into which Proteus metamorphoses. Five are described in *Phaëton*. It also seems possible that in the latter, the shape changes took place only during the five instrumental interludes, during which Triton is silent.

Ex. 3 *Phaëton*, Act I, vii

Ex. 4 *Albion and Albanus*, Act III, i, Prelude (no. 61), bars 15-24

That Lully's prelude is less dramatic than Grabu's is not a fault; in the context of the first act of *Phaëton*, Lully had the leisure to build tension slowly. The sleep music is not the dramatic goal of the act; instead, dramatic tension is directed towards Proteus's climactic oracle in the final scene. Lully is entirely successful in this objective. Proteus's accompanied aria is a *tour de force* of dramatic writing. The analogous aria for Proteus in *Albion and Albanus*, 'Albion loved of gods and men' (no. 62), does not

⁶ 1' 20" in the production at Dartington International Summer School, 7 August 1997.

compare favourably, but this is the fault of the librettist as much as of Grabu. Unlike the dire fate forecast for Phaëton, Albion is told he 'is the care of heaven', something that has been made abundantly clear through the course of the opera. Perhaps Grabu recognised that Proteus's oracle lacked dramatic energy, and decided to focus his efforts on the spectacular sleep and transformation element of the scene. What is evident is that Grabu was able to adapt Lully's model to his own ends with great success. His use of the sleep music and the transformation music is not a simple borrowing. In the context of the scene he was given, he created an extremely dramatic moment, far exceeding anything suggested by the libretto.

Another of Grabu's successful adaptations from Lully is the Act II air, 'Oh, Jealousy'. The direct model appears to be I, i of *Phaëton*, the air 'Heureuse une âme indifferente!' (ex. 5), in which Libye reflects on the peace of soul allowed to those untouched by love, while lamenting the loss of her own peace. The air is accompanied by violas in four parts (clefs c1, c2, and two c3s) and continuo, and is preceded by a prelude for strings which is simply an instrumental version of the complete air. The rhythmic structure is provided by the text as evinced by the frequent metre changes between 2/2 and 3/2. The air itself is a binary form in which only the A section is repeated.

Ex. 5 *Phaëton*, Act I, i, 'Heureuse une âme indifferente!'

Vn
Va I
Va II

Va III
BC

2 6 6 4 3

6 b5 6 4 3

7 6 b 6 b6 6 b5 b6

LIBYE 25 tr tr

Heu - reuse une ame in - dif - fe - ren - te! Le tran -

6 b 4 4 2 6 6 b5

30 30

quil - le bon - heur dont j'es - tois si con - ten - te ne me se - ra - t'il point ren -

6 4 # 6

1. 2. 35

du? du? Dans ces beaux lieux tout est pai - si - ble; He -

las? que ne m'est il - pos - si - ble D'y trou - ver le re - pos que mon

6 b5 6

40

cœur a per - du! He - las, He - las! que ne m'est il pos -

4 3 7 6 b 6 b6

45

si - ble D'y trou - ver le re - pos que mon cœur a per - du!

2 b6 b4 6 4

Augusta's air 'Oh, jealousy' (no. 35), is structured almost identically. Grabu, however, presents only the A section of the air in the prelude, refashioning it to end in the tonic instead of the dominant. As in Libye's air, the B section is longer, and here again, Grabu takes a hint from Lully. In bars 41-42 of 'Heureuse une âme indifferente', Lully intensifies the word 'hélas' by repeating it one tone higher, then releases the tension by returning to a tonic harmony in bar 44, after which the air continues for four more bars. Grabu also uses an ascending vocal line to emphasise 'alas' in

Augusta's air, but the intensification is heightened by the use of semitones, by the fact that the vocal line is an integral part of the structure of the aria, and by the resolution of the harmonic tension these semitones create. 'Oh Jealousy' opens over a tetrachord descending from f to c by semitones. In bars 18-22, Grabu reverses the tetrachord motion; the vocal line rises from c² to f² (ex. 6.a & b), creating a convincing conclusion which has structural as well as emotional significance. The force of the vocal line is compounded by delaying its harmonic resolution until the final bar of the air, instead of the penultimate bar where the voice first reaches f².

Ex. 6.a *Albion and Albanus*, Act II, ii, 'Oh Jealousy!' (no. 35), bars 1-4

Ex. 6.b *Albion and Albanus*, Act II, ii, 'Oh Jealousy!' (no. 35), bars 37-41

Grabu's word-setting is, in this case at least, superior to his model. Lully was given six lines to set, four composed primarily of iambs, and two wholly of anapests. Both the lines with anapestic rhythm ('Le tranquille bonheur dont j'estois si contente', and 'D'y trouver le repos que mon coeur a perdu!') are set to the pattern $\text{♪♪♪} \text{♪♪♪}$ etc. Furthermore, the second

anapestic line is repeated and set to the same pattern, with the result that twelve of the aria's 24 bars share an identical rhythmic profile. In contrast, Dryden provided eight iambic lines, with which Grabu achieved considerable rhythmic variety. In the first three bars, Grabu stretches the first syllable 'Oh' over two beats, adding an effective ornament, then elongates 'thou' over the bar-line to emphasise the words 'raging ill'. He alternates even crotchets with dotted crotchets and quavers over the next 10 bars (ex. 6.b). A sensitive reflection of the matching word rhythms of the lines 'My first offences yet remain,/ Nor can repentance love regain' is created by setting them to identical rhythmic patterns. Finally, to emphasise the rising chromatic line which ends the aria, he sets most of it in even minims, but allows a crotchet rest to set off the exclamation 'alas!'. Musicologists who have criticised Grabu's word-setting have been selective in their choice of examples.

Saturne's air, 'L'envie en vain fremit', from the prologue to *Phaëton* provided more elements which Grabu found deserving of imitation. It is a binary bass-doubling continuo song with a three-part instrumental prelude. Grabu appropriated the most conspicuous elements of the second section of the song for use in Thamesia's Act II air 'See, the god of seas attends thee' (exs. 7 & 8). These elements are: 1) a pedal tone in the bass voice and continuo, 2) quaver passage-work in the upper voices during the length of the pedal tone, and 3) scalar descent of an octave in the bass line approaching the cadence which follows the pedal tone.

Grabu follows Lully in using the pedal note as the root of a dominant harmony for the subsequent cadence. Lully includes three pedal tones in his air, Grabu two, both of which, on d¹ and g, correspond with the last two pedal notes in Lully's air. Finally, in both songs the quaver

movement of the upper voices over the pedal note is aimless;⁷ there is no attempt to order the passage-work into a sequence such as one would expect in a composition in the Italian style.

Ex. 7 *Phaëton*, Prologue, ‘L’envie en vain fremit’

Musical score for Ex. 7, *Phaëton*, Prologue, ‘L’envie en vain fremit’. The score is in 2/2 time. It features Vn I and Vn II parts, SATURNE BC (bassoon/contrabass), and a vocal line. The lyrics are: son ton - nerre in - spi - re l'e - froy dans le temps mes-me qu'il re - po - se.

Ex. 8 *Albion and Albanus*, Act II, ii, ‘See, the god of seas attends thee’ (no. 44), bars 45-52

Musical score for Ex. 8, *Albion and Albanus*, Act II, ii, ‘See, the god of seas attends thee’ (no. 44), bars 45-52. The score is in 2/2 time. It features Vn I and Vn II parts, THAM. Bc (bassoon/contrabass), and a vocal line. The lyrics are: Wel - come to the wa - t'ry - plain, Wel - come to the wa - t'ry plain.

Thamesis’s song is a more ambitious movement than that for Saturne. The piece itself is of structural importance in the arch form of the Masque of the Sea which closes Act II, for it reappears after the Chacon,

⁷ Grabu pointedly eschews imitating the quaver pattern of ‘wat’ry’ in the upper parts that immediately follow (bars 2-3 of ex. 8).

rescored for full chorus and five-part strings. The A section of the song bears little resemblance to the A section of *Saturne's* air. It is, in fact, a much better passage of music, owing primarily to the well-crafted bass sequence in bars 13-15, a device Grabu rarely uses in vocal movements.

While they do not provide specific compositional models, a pair of moving duets from *Phaëton* may have been the inspiration for the second act duet between Albion and Albanus. In *Phaëton*, one of the sub-plots involves the ill fated love of Libye and Epaphus. Despite her love for Epaphus, Libye has been given by her father, Mérops, to Phaëton in marriage. In the second and fifth acts of the opera, they sing duets lamenting their thwarted love. Lecef de la Vieville records that the first, 'Que mon sort serait doux' was a favourite of Lully's, while the second, 'Hélas, une chaîne belle' was favoured by contemporary audiences. That the two movements were singled out in discussion of the opera attests to their popularity. Both duets are intimate passages in two parts, with the continuo doubling the bass voice.

The remarkable use of a passage in Grabu's song 'Injurious charmer' from the music to *Valentinian* demonstrates that the first *Phaëton* duet in particular made an impression on him. The rhythmic profile of the text setting, the shape of the quaver patterns in the bass line, and the bass line's prominent diminished fourth point to 'Que mon sort serait doux' as a model (exs. 9 & 10).

Ex. 9 *Phaëton* Act II, iv, 'Que mon sort serait doux'

Libye

Que mon sort se - roit doux si je vi - vois, si je vi - vois pour

Epaphus

Que mon sort se - roit doux si je vi - vois, si je vi - vois pour

Bc

#4
2

vous! Que mon sort se - roit doux, Que mon sort se - roit doux si je vi -

vous! si je vi - vois pour vous! Que mon sort se - roit doux si je vi -

7 6 7 6 7 6 7 b6

vous, si je vi - vois pour vous!

vous, si je vi - vois pour vous!

7 6 4 b

Ex. 10 *Valentinian*, 'Injurious Charmer', bars 52-60

Ere you prove false or I un - kind, To - ge - ther both ex -

Ere you prove false or I un - kind, To - ge - ther both ex -

Bc

3

-pire, Ere you prove false or I un - kind, Ere you prove false or I un - kind,

-pire, Ere you prove false or I un - kind, Ere you prove false or I un - kind,

Grabu set the only ‘love’ duet in *Albion and Albanus* in the same intimate two-voice texture. Here, however, the love is filial, not romantic. Near the close of the second act, Hermes and Albanus persuade Albion that he must send the latter into exile. The two brothers agonise over their parting in an extended string-accompanied arioso passage. When both are resigned to fate, they sing a simple duet accompanied by continuo alone (no. 39, bars 67-80). While Lully undoubtedly created a poignant intimacy in the duets between Epaphus and Libye, Grabu realised a latent possibility in Dryden’s libretto which gives the duet between Albion and Albanus a more dramatic sense of intimacy. Just as in *Albion and Albanus*, Libye and Epaphus share emotionally tortured dialogues before each of their duets. At issue is their personal love, and Lully sets the dialogues in recitative accompanied only by bass continuo, a suitably personal scoring for the situation. The dialogue between Albion and Albanus is both a matter of state importance and of personal love between the brothers. Grabu exploits this duality by accompanying the dialogue with violas in four parts, creating a grandeur fitting to the brothers’ status. For the final duet, he shifts to a two-voice texture accompanied only by bass continuo. This dramatic reduction of forces transfers the focus to the personal nature of the brothers’ relationship. Here, Grabu deepens their characterisation through musical means alone, developing an intimacy not present in the libretto. As James Winn points out: ‘when the brothers join their voices at the end of this scene, a moment with great operatic promise, Dryden backs away from passion or even substance, writing them a vapid little song.’⁸ Grabu redeems the moment with a superb duet of great tenderness.

The Act II Chacon is the most frequently mentioned movement from

⁸ J. A. Winn, *When Beauty Fires the Blood: Love and the Arts in the Age of Dryden* (Ann Arbor, 1992), p. 271.

Albion and Albanus, and comment upon it often includes an ambivalent remark about its length. In context of the time, however, the Chacon is more notable for its structure (see Chapter 6.3). Grabu's important innovation lies in the integrated contrast of vocal and instrumental forces, and the contrast of trio and full sections within both of these elements. Though Lully wrote similar movements, including chaconnes in *Cadmus et Hermoine*, *Thésée*, and *Phaëton* and a passacaille in *Persée*, which contrast trio textures with full orchestra, none of them make use of a vocal element, nor do they compare in length to the Chacon in *Albion and Albanus*. Lully's opera *Amadis* (1684), however, shares these features; it contrasts vocal and instrumental forces, and is of unprecedented length. Though Grabu probably left France in late 1683, it is probable that he knew *Amadis* was in the process of composition, and possible that he knew some of the details of the opera. *Amadis* received its première at the Paris Opéra on 18 January 1684, and would have been in rehearsal for some time before.

The chaconne in *Amadis* is a massive movement in two parts. The first, for instruments only, is 306 bars in length, while the second, 248 bars long,⁹ is scored for full orchestra, full chorus, and soloists in various combinations; there are no instrumental interludes in the second part, hence the vocal and instrumental textures are completely segregated. Despite its 554 bars, the astonishing final instruction of the opera reads: 'Après cela l'on danse encore une fois la chaconne, et les chœurs reprennent *Chantons tous en ce jour &c.* pg. 255. *jusques à l'endroit où il y a fin*', an addition of 330 bars!

Musical interest in the movement depends upon the alternation of

⁹ This includes a reprise of the first 24 bars of the vocal chaconne. The 1684 Ballard edition ends in c minor, with the instruction 'on reprend le commencement du grand chœur *Chantons tous en ce jour.* pg. 255 *jusques à l'endroit où il y a fin.*' The reprise is structurally indispensable since it returns the movement to the tonic major, a point neglected by Joyce Newman in her discussion of the movement in *Jean-Baptiste de Lully and his Tragédies Lyriques* (Ann Arbor, 1979), pp. 96-97.

full and solo sections, on variations of the bass line, and on variations of the upper voices. While presentations of the bass pattern in the instrumental portion of the chaconne are freely structured, the vocal section is invariably set in groups of two four-bar patterns. There are three possible structures: 1) the bass line is repeated exactly in both presentations, 2) the bass line of the second presentation is repeated exactly at an octave displacement, 3) on one occasion the bass line forms an eight bar phrase. Despite the variety of vocal textures, the result is unavoidably monotonous.

One is tempted to believe that Grabu knew at least of the conspicuous elements of the *Amadis* chaconne (its exceptional length and the combination of instrumental and vocal forces) when he came to write *Albion and Albanus*. His Chacon is on a large scale (365 bars) and contrasts different textures and forces. Within these parallels, he achieves a greater variety of compositional effect through a leaner structure, and through making the Chacon the centre of an arch-like structural unit.

Unlike Lully, Grabu shifts between instrumental and vocal sections throughout the body of the Chacon, and the variety he achieves is much in advance of Lully's effort. Though not indicated in the score, it is likely that different groups of wind instruments took the trio sections in the *Amadis* chaconne; however, it is unlikely that there was any alternation between different instruments within individual trio passages as occurs between bars 212 and 228 in *Albion and Albanus*. If the knowledge of the use of both instrumental and vocal forces in *Amadis* was an inspiration for Grabu, his facility at combining and varying them certainly eclipsed Lully's. Furthermore, Grabu avoids writing long stretches where variations of the bass pattern are presented in pairs, as in the vocal section of the *Amadis* chaconne. Dryden's division of the text into three sections of different lengths means that each vocal section is of a different length, adding greater

variety to the setting.

Structurally, the Chacon is asymmetrical and, in isolation, slightly unsatisfying. The 24-bar instrumental opening is overbalanced by a 69-bar instrumental section which closes the movement, and there is no vocal section to complement the return to the tonic major. This asymmetry, however, makes the Chacon dependent upon the larger arch structure of the *divertissement* which ends Act II, and is therefore integrated within it. The vocal section that seems to be missing from the final 53 bars of the Chacon, where the tonic major returns, is supplied by the recapitulation of 'See the god of seas attends thee', Thamesis's solo reworked for full chorus and orchestra. Whereas Lully creates an arch structure using only the material of the chaconne (A instrumental chaconne: B vocal chaconne: A repeat of instrumental chaconne + choral tag), Grabu's Chacon is the centre-piece of a much richer structure.

Two other borrowings by Grabu, one from *Bellerophon* and another from Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* have already been discussed (see Chapter 6.1, especially exs. 9.a & b and 12.a & b). Though Lully's operas provided important models for Grabu, he did not simply pilfer ideas and transfer them unchanged into his own work. In most cases, Grabu altered his model to suit his own musical and dramatic situation, and usually created a more concise and dramatically charged passage than that from which he borrowed. The Chacon in particular shows him adapting the salient features of the *Amadis* chaconne, its length and its juxtaposition of instrumental and vocal forces, and creating a movement which outstrips it in variety and in structure. Taken as a whole, *Albion and Albanus* may not be the equal of any of Lully's operas, but the best of its passages can stand comfortably alongside Lully's work in terms of quality. Grabu's borrowings, far from showing him to be the poor epigone of Lully many labelled him, reveal a skilled craftsman with an eye for dramatic effects.

Chapter 8

Performing *Albion and Albanus*

The influence of the Lully's operas is clearly evident in *Albion and Albanus* in terms of both form and style. This situation suggests that aspects of the performance practices of Grabu's opera may also resemble those common to the Paris Opéra under the direction of Lully. A comparison of the 1687 edition of *Albion and Albanus* with the editions of Lully's operas printed during his lifetime provides an excellent starting point for an assessment of the performance practices surrounding the English production. Even a cursory glance at the Christophe Ballard editions of Lully's operas shows that they provided the direct model for the printed score of *Albion and Albanus*, sharing as they do even the hand correction of errors.¹ Neither the 1687 edition of *Albion and Albanus*, nor the Ballard editions of Lully were produced for theatrical performances, and performance information taken from these sources must be tempered by this knowledge. However, the presentation of the score in the Ballard editions is fairly consistent from one opera to the next and some aspects of performance practice can be deduced from the manner of the presentation. To the extent to which it imitates this presentation, one can make similar deductions about the performance of *Albion and Albanus*, without losing sight of the fact that a different performing organisation (the United Company) was employed. Grabu was clearly familiar with French performance practices and would certainly have attended performances of Lully's operas during his return to France between 1679 and 1683. Bearing in mind that *Albion and Albanus* was to be the next best thing

¹ L. Rosow, *Armide at the Paris Opera: A Performance History: 1686-1766*, unpublished PhD dissertation (Brandeis University, 1981), Chapter 1. Rosow carefully assesses the 1686 edition of *Armide*, detailing both stop-press and manuscript corrections. There are many similarities with the copies of *Albion and Albanus*. However, since the printed edition of *Armide* was produced during the performance run of the opera, the stop-press and manuscript corrections sometimes represent recomposition, something that is not evident from the copies of *Albion and Albanus*.

to an imported French opera, one can safely assume that Grabu attempted to imitate French models as closely as possible, including the manner of performance, when he came to work on *Albion and Albanus*.

The continuo in *Albion and Albanus*

The most important aspect of performance practice revealed by an inspection of the printed score reveals is the treatment of the bass continuo. The presentation of the continuo line in *Albion and Albanus* is clearly derived from that of the Ballard editions. It is designated 'The BASS continued', a literal translation of 'Basse-Continue' in the latter. It is present throughout the entire opera except in solely instrumental movements for five-part strings and in a few other instances that will be discussed below. In almost all movements that involve only five-part strings, the bass line is undesignated and unfigured.² In movements involving four-part chorus and instruments, two bass lines are present, a sparsely figured continuo stave at the bottom of the system, designated 'The BASS continued', and a stave for the bass violin (untitled) directly above it. Aside from the figures, the two staves are usually identical, though in two circumstances they vary. First, the bass violin occasionally traces an ornamented version of the continuo part (in, for example, the chorus 'Resist, and do not fear' – no. 9.b). Second, in choral-orchestral movements where two solo instruments or voices alternate with the full orchestra with a concerto-like effect (as in the Act II Chacon), the bass violin line appears only with the full orchestra,³ while the continuo appears throughout. This is a clear indication that two separate groups are to play the

² The exceptions to this rule are the three 'Ayres before the Opera'. These five-part pieces have a single, unfigured bass line designated 'The Bass continued'. It seems likely that this designation is simply a printing oversight and that these pieces should be treated as their counterparts within the body of the opera. The four other dances that contain figures are dealt with below.

³ Once again there is an exception in the Act I chorus 'Hail Royal Albion, hail,' (no. 24) bars 41–49. Here, both the continuo and instrumental bass accompany the two violins. In light of the fact that in all other analogous situations the instrumental bass drops out when solo instruments or voices are present, this again seems to be a printing oversight.

different bass lines, and it signals Grabu's imitation of the French practice of dividing the musicians into the *petit chœur* and the *grand chœur* (see below). These aspects of the presentation of the score are all shared by the Ballard editions of Lully's operas.⁴

The lack of figures and a specified continuo line in the movements for five-part strings alone suggests that no continuo group accompanied them. A similar practice seems to have been observed in Lully's operas, as well as in other French musical-theatre productions of the period.⁵ Specific support for this interpretation is provided in a set of printed part-books to Lully's opera *Isis*, in which the continuo is separate from the instrumental bass and has the instruction: 'Basse continue. Qui comprend toute la Piece, excepté les Airs de Danse qui sont dans la Basse de Violon.'⁶ Furthermore, both the *vingt-quatre violons* of the French court, and the Twenty-four Violins of the English court had a history of playing without continuo support.⁷ The production of John Crowne's *Calisto* (1675) – in which one group of musicians, including continuo players, seems to have accompanied the vocal music from in front of the stage, while another, consisting of string players, two oboes, trumpets and drums, and four guitars, provided dance music from behind the stage – may furnish an English precedent for continuo-less dance music that would have

⁴ For a detailed examination of continuo practice in Lully's operas, see G. Sadler, 'The Role of Keyboard Continuo in French Opera 1673-1776', *Early Music* 8 (1980), pp. 148-156.

⁵ G. Sadler, op. cit. Rebecca Harris-Warrick argues that no continuo group whatsoever accompanied Philidor's masquerade *Le Mariage de la Grosse Cathos*. The nature of the performance (in which all of the performers marched onto the stage at the beginning and off at the end) makes this a special case, but she also cites Philidor's ballet *Le Canal de Versailles*, and his copies of Lully's ballets in which vocal airs and recitatives are figured and dance pieces are not. See *Musical Theatre at the Court of Louis XIV* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 68-73. Wanda R. Griffiths reports a similar situation in the 1694 edition of Elisabeth-Claude Jaquet de La Guerre's opera *Céphale et Procris* (printed in *parties réduites* by Christophe Ballard, Paris, 1694): 'Most of the dances are lacking both figures and the words *Basse Continue*, while all of the simple recitatives and dialogue airs indicate *Basse continue* and figures are present. As for the choruses, the words *Basse continue* usually appear, but no figures are present'. See 'Brossard and the Performance of Jaquet de La Guerre's *Céphale et Procris*', *Performance Practice Review* 8 (1995), p. 35.

⁶ G. Sadler, op. cit., p. 155.

⁷ P. Holman, 'Reluctant Continuo', *Early Music* 9 (1981), pp. 75-78.

fitted neatly with the parallel French practice.⁸ Certainly, the five-part string writing of the French style leaves no harmonic gaps requiring a continuo group to fill them.

Four of the twenty-one movements in *Albion and Albanus* for five-part strings alone (all with no designation 'The BASS continued') have isolated figures, raising the possibility that the continuo group did, on occasion, accompany dance movements. The four movements all occur in the third act, and in at least one instance, the Ayre for the Graces and Loves (no. 67), the purpose of the figuring seems clear. One figure, a ♭, appears under the last chord of the second ending which concludes the movement. The final note of the bass is tied to the next bar in which begins a recitative. The figure here seems to indicate continuity between the two sections, the continuo group entering on the final chord of the dance and moving directly into the ensuing recitative. The next instance, the Prelude (no. 61) that precedes Proteus's accompanied air, 'Albion lov'd of Gods and Men' (no. 62), contains figuring towards the end of both sections of this two-section movement. Perhaps the continuo group played here because the Prelude was directly attached to a vocal movement.⁹ It is interesting to note that the Prelude which *follows* Proteus's air (no. 63) is also scored for five-part strings with no bass continuo designation and is completely unfigured. In the final two instances, the Ayre for the Tritons (no. 51), and the Ayre for the Fighting Boys and Sectaries (no. 59), there is no clear explanation for the figuring. The first has one figure, the second three. The figures are consistent with the chords under which they appear, and they were surely not added by the printer. Perhaps a continuo group was added to some dance movements as a colouring device. As will be

⁸ P. Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 366-69. Holman suggests that the guitarists 'may have played continuo, or they may have played some of the dances by themselves' (p. 368).

⁹ There is a Prelude to Augusta's accompanied song 'Oh, Jealousy' for 5-part strings, but here the bass line is both figured and designated 'the BASS continued.' This Prelude is much shorter than that to Proteus's song, and it is also composed of the same musical material as the song, which is not the case in the Prelude to Proteus's song.

seen below, there would be no difficulty in having the continuo group play with the string band, since, unlike that in *Calisto*, they must have been placed in close proximity.

The *petit chœur* and *grand chœur* in *Albion and Albanus*

The orchestra of the Paris Opéra was divided into two bodies, the *petit chœur* and the *grand chœur*. No documents detailing the exact organisation of the groups exist for the period of Lully's activity, though they do exist from the early 18th century. The earliest of these records, from 1704, divide the orchestra into a 33-member *grand chœur*: 9 dessus de violon, 3 hautes-contre de violon, 3 tailles de violon, 2 quintes de violons, 8 basses de violon, 8 flûtes (divided into recorders, oboes and bassoons), and a 10 member *petit chœur*: 1 batteur de mesure, 2 dessus de violon, 2 theorbes, 1 clavecin, 2 basses de violon, 2 basses de viole.¹⁰ The basic division of labour is easy to surmise, and is reinforced by the evidence in the published scores. The *grand chœur*, essentially the *vingt-quatre violons* (and the woodwinds that doubled the outer parts), played the five-part dances and accompanied the choruses. The *petit chœur* served as continuo group and included the solo instrumentalists who played the frequent three-part textures in the operas. Records indicate that the size of the Académie Royale de Musique hardly varied over the first half of the eighteenth century,¹¹ and it seems likely that Lully's orchestra was very similar. This is the performing ensemble Grabu would have expected for an opera and for which he composed *Albion and Albanus*.

As we have seen, in *Albion and Albanus*, the bass violin part drops out during shifts to a three-part texture in movements for chorus and strings, leaving the bass continuo as the lone bass voice. Along with the evidence

¹⁰ L. Rosow, 'Performing a Choral Dialogue by Lully', *Early Music* 15 (1987), p. 331. See also J. R. Anthony, *French Baroque Music from Beaujoyeux to Rameau* (London, 1973), pp. 90-96.

¹¹ J. R. Anthony, op. cit., p. 92.

that the bass continuo was usually silent in movements for five-part strings alone, and the evidence that this practice seems to be the same as that in Lully's operas, it is clear that Grabu was following the French practice of dividing the instrumentalists into *petit* and *grand choeurs*. Further implications of this conclusion suggest that the *petit choeur* performed the majority, if not all, of the three-part textures in the opera. This would include the numerous ritornels for two unspecified treble instruments and continuo (see Table 1.a below); the songs for bass voice (e.g. Archon's 'From the Caledonian shore' in Act I), in which the vocal line doubles the continuo line and supports two violins (or recorders in the case of Thamesius's Act II solo 'Old Father Ocean'); the trio sections within larger movements (e.g. the Act II Chacon); and all the recitative and songs for single voice and continuo. Such an importation of French practice was not necessarily new. The division between continuo and string band seems to have been present in *Calisto*, and may also have been used in productions such as *The Tempest* and perhaps even John Blow's *Venus and Adonis*.¹²

It seems certain that the *petit* and *grand choeurs* of *Albion and Albanus* must have been placed very close to one another. Two situations illustrate this point: the alternation between three-part and five-part textures in some movements, and the use of four-part violas and continuo to accompany some songs. In the Concert of Venus (no. 65), pairs of recorders and violins alternate with each other and with five-part strings. The pairs of solo instruments presumably would have been drawn from the *petit choeur* while the five-part strings comprised the *grand choeur*. Exchanges between them would seem to have required a close proximity.¹³ A similar sense of ensemble would have been necessary in the songs accompanied by four-part violas and continuo. The continuo group would be drawn from the *petit choeur* while the

¹² P. Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers*, pp. 371-385.

¹³ A point made in P. Holman, *ibid.*, p. 384.

violas would presumably play from the *grand choeur*.¹⁴ Only close proximity would allow for good ensemble.

In some of the songs accompanied by four-part violas and continuo, this group alternates with another five-part texture, the full string texture of violin, three violas and bass. This latter scoring is present only in interludes where the voice part is silent, and it is an indication of the entrance of the *grand choeur*. In these movements, however, there is always a single bass line only, designated 'the BASS continued.' Despite the lack of any specific indication, it is surely essential that the bass violins of the *grand choeur* enter with the rest of the strings and the continuo group. In this instance, the directions in the edition of *Albion and Albanus* differ from those of the Ballard editions of Lully's operas; in the latter, where the *basse de violon* and *basse-continue* share the same stave, a designation for both sometimes appears under the bottom stave.

Instrumentation

The bulk of the instrumental music in *Albion and Albanus* is written in the French five-part string style. From top to bottom the clefs used are: g1 (violin), c1, c2, c3 (violas) and f4 (bass violin).¹⁵ In France, three violas of different sizes but identical tuning were used. In Restoration England, however, this five-part scoring was extremely rare, and it is not known whether or not three different sizes of violas would have been available for *Albion and Albanus*.¹⁶ One piece of evidence may suggest that Grabu did not expect

¹⁴ The list of the *petit choeur* in 1704 (see above) does not include violas. Since Lully's operas frequently require four-part violas and continuo to accompany solos, these violas must have been drawn from the *grand choeur*.

¹⁵ The bass violin was the largest member of the violin family tuned to BB flat, F, c, and g. There was no 16' bass instrument in use in England (or in France) until around 1700.

¹⁶ Locke's 'Be thou exalted, Lord' (1666) is the only surviving piece by an English Restoration composer in the French-style string scoring. See P. Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers*, pp. 403-405. The Italian-style five-part scoring (g2, g2, c2, c3, f4) enjoyed a brief vogue in the late 1680s and early 90s. Purcell used it in Queen Mary's birthday ode 'Now does the glorious day appear' (1689). In the preface to his edition of the work, Bruce Wood states that a larger viola played the second viola part, and that this instrument

three different sizes (and presumably different timbres) from the violas. In movements in which four violas and bass continuo accompany a solo voice, the viola parts are always notated in the following clefs: one c1, one c2 and two c3s. Lully composed similar movements for his operas, but here the division of the viola parts differs from one number to the next. In *Phaëton*, for example, three different combinations are used. The violas in the movements for Libye, Epaphus, and Protée are notated: one c1, one c2, and two c3s. The Sun's accompanied arioso is notated: two c1s, one c2, and one c3, while Phaëton's is notated for one violin (g1), and three violas (c1, c2, c3). Lully was presumably exploiting the slightly different sound each of these combinations could produce. Grabu either could not rely on three different sizes of violas, or he simply did not worry about this sort of detail in his scoring.

Evidence suggests that the balance in Lully's orchestra heavily favoured the outer voices in five-part scorings, a logical outcome of the fact that most of the musical interest was focused on these lines. Reference to the structure of the Académie Royale de Musique in 1704 indicates that at least ten instruments played the highest line and a similar number played the bass, while no more than eight violas were left to fill in the three inner parts.¹⁷ There is no evidence as to the deployment of instrumentalists in *Albion and Albanus*, but the sound and structure of Lully's opera orchestra must have been an important influence on Grabu. As with Lully, the concentration of musical interest in the outer voices would have demanded that they dominated the instrumental balance.

The only instruments other than violins that are designated in the score are flutes (i.e. recorders), explicitly indicated in Acts II and III, and guitars,

continued to be used in England 'into Handel's time, when it was termed the tenor viola'. *The Works of Henry Purcell*, vol. 11, *Birthday Odes for Queen Mary Part 1* (London, 1993), p. xi.

¹⁷ L. Rosow, 'Performing a Choral Dialogue by Lully', p. 331 and J. R. Anthony, op. cit., p. 95.

which are specified in the second-act Chacon only. In addition to these, the final stage-direction in the word-book reads:

A full Chorus of all the Voices and Instruments: Trumpets and Ho-boys make Returnello's of all Fame sings; and Twenty four Dancers joyn all the time in a Chorus, and Dance to the end of the Opera.

There are no designated parts for trumpets or oboes in the score, and the use of trumpets in particular seems to be wishful thinking on the part of Dryden or Betterton. The closest likenesses to 'Returnello's' in the final chorus actually occur between entries of the chorus and a trio of soloists (ex. 1.a), where two treble instruments play above the bass continuo. The instrumentation of the treble duo is not explicitly indicated, but the top line continues from what is clearly the violin line of the five part-string scoring, while the second line appears, after a change of clef, on the viola I line. Though some of the musical material mimics a trumpet idiom (especially bars 101-106) the second treble line has several a¹s which would not have been possible on the natural trumpet (this does not rule out oboes, however). The same is true of the trumpet-like figuration in ex. 1.b.

Ex. 1.a 'Renown, assume thy trumpet' (no. 74), bars 100-106



Ex. 1.b 'Hail Royal Albion, Hail' (no. 24), bars 41-49



The presence of oboes in the opera is another matter, one best approached through the explicit indications of recorders in the score. In all likelihood, the two recorder players required for movements such as the Concert of Venus would also have had the ability to play the oboe. Grabu's *Pastoralle*, which seems to include music for the play *Valentinian*, staged in February of 1684,¹⁸ may be seen to confirm this. It contains two dances that bear handwritten rubrics; one reads 'air pour les hautbois' and the other 'air pour les flûtes'. Presumably the same musicians played both instruments. These movements are laid out in five-parts, and there is no indication of what either the recorders or oboes are to play. It seems reasonable to conclude that they doubled the violin line, for it was the practice in Lully's opera orchestra that woodwinds frequently doubled the outer parts of the five-part string movements.¹⁹ The same practice may well have been employed in *Albion and Albanus*.

The most likely movements to include oboes are those for full chorus and strings where they would have doubled the violins. Good evidence for

¹⁸ P. Holman, 'Valentinian, Rochester and Louis Grabu', *The Well Enchanting Skill: Music, Poetry, and Drama in the Culture of the Renaissance: Essays in Honour of F. W. Sternfeld*, ed. J. Caldwell, E. Olleson and S. Wollenberg (Oxford, 1990), pp. 127-141.

¹⁹ J. R. Anthony, op. cit., p. 95. L. Rosow, 'Performing a Choral Dialogue by Lully', p. 331.

this practice exists in France, and Purcell uses oboes in a similar fashion in *Dioclesian*. In some cases, recorders may appropriately double the violins, particularly in movements concerning subjects with which the recorder was frequently associated,²⁰ such as the Act III Ayre for the Graces and Loves.

While the use of oboes in *Albion and Albanus* is a strong possibility, evidence of the use of bassoons is uncertain. Although long a feature of Lully's orchestra, the first mention of the instrument in English sources occurs in Purcell's *Dioclesian*. Nevertheless, just as the use of recorders in the opera suggests that oboes were also used, the seeming presence of a bass recorder in The Concert of Venus suggests the possibility that the player of the bass recorder could also double on bassoon. The Concert of Venus is printed on five staves and alternations between recorders and violins are indicated by the rubrics 'flutes', 'violins' and 'all'. These rubrics also appear above the bass line. While the latter may simply indicate a change between two contrasting continuo groups, one supporting a pair of violins and the other a pair of recorders, it may also indicate the use of a bass recorder. A precedent for a similar use of the bass recorder can be found in John Blow's anthem 'Lord, who shall dwell in they tabernacle?'. Bruce Wood suggests that this anthem was 'possibly composed in the mid-1670s and extensively revised after 1680, the passages involving recorders being new'.²¹ With reference to this anthem, Peter Holman speculates on the possible use of a bass recorder and bassoon in Purcell's ode 'Swifter, Isis, swifter flow'.²² However, until further information is found, there is nothing harder than circumstantial evidence to argue for the presence of a bassoon in *Albion and Albanus*

Nine ritornels or preludes, scored for two trebles and bass continuo,

²⁰ E. Hunt, *The Recorder and its Music* (London, 1962), p. 58. Recorders were often associated with themes involving love.

²¹ *Musica Britannica L* (London, 1984), p. xix. A facsimile of the opening pages of the anthem includes a passage with the rubric 'Base Flute'. Wood suggests that the manuscript (King's College, Cambridge, Rowe MS 22) is in the hand of John Walter and was copied c. 1685 (p. xxv).

²² *Four and Twenty Fiddlers*, p. 424.

appear in *Albion and Albanius* (Table 1.a). These movements open each act, accompany the entrance of gods, and punctuate supernatural events. Instrumentation for these movements is never specified. This lack of detail may mean that the instrumentation was taken for granted; only occasionally does the rubric ‘violins’ appear in movements for five parts, but violins are undoubtedly required, and this may have been the case for the preludes and ritornels. If the division of instrumentalists into the *petit chœur* and the *grand chœur* described above was employed for *Albion and Albanius*, then a pair of violins from the former would have covered the treble lines in three-part movements. The style and ranges of these treble lines, however, are indistinguishable from the style and ranges of the lines in other sections where recorders are specified. In fact, it is a conspicuous feature of the opera that there is almost no instance of idiomatic writing for any instrument. As a result, a pair of oboes or recorders would serve just as well in any of these three-part movements (barring the entry of Juno (no.17), where the second treble has an e¹, too low for the recorder). Again, reference to Lully’s practice is instructive. In *Phaëton*, there are three-part ritornels scored for ‘Taille de Flutes’ in the Prologue, and for ‘tous les violons’ (as opposed to the *petit chœur* only) at the opening of Act IV. Lully clearly took pains to use different instrumental colours, and the necessity of indicating ‘tous les violons’ may well attest to the fact that single violins from the *petit chœur* were the norm in three-part movements. It is possible that Grabu employed similar instrumental variety in *Albion and Albanius*, though the score lacks explicit indications.

Table 1.a Three-part Ritornels and Preludes

| No. | Title | Tr. I | Tr. II | Bass | Instrumentation |
|-----|-------------------------------|---|--|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| 5 | Ritornel opening Act I | d ² -b _♭ ² | a ¹ -g ² | D-d ¹ | not specified |
| 17 | Ritornel entry of Juno | g ^{#1} -a ² | e ¹ -f ² | D-d ¹ | not specified |
| 18 | Ritornel solo for Iris | a ¹ -b ² | g ¹ -f ² | E-e ¹ | not specified |
| 21b | Ritornel 'Hail, Royal Albion' | b ¹ -a ² | g ^{#1} -e ² | E-e ¹ | not specified |
| 26 | Prelude opening Act II | c ² -b ² | g ¹ -f ² | F-d ¹ | not specified |
| 40 | Ritornel entry of Apollo | b ¹ -c ³ | f ¹ -g ² | C-c ¹ | not specified |
| 48 | Prelude opening Act III | a ¹ -b _♭ ² | f ¹ -g ² | F-d ¹ | not specified |
| 64 | Ritornel holy fire | f ¹ -b _♭ ² | f ¹ -g ² | F-b _♭ ¹ | not specified |
| 70 | Ritornel entry of Apollo | g ¹ -a ² | f ^{#1} -e _♭ ² | D-d ¹ | not specified |

In contrast, movements for voice, two treble instruments and bass continuo (Table 1.b) are usually precisely scored. Only Thamesia's 'Medway and Isis' lacks specific instrumentation. Either recorders or violins are appropriate, but the resemblance of this song, both musically and textually, to the Act II 'Old Father Ocean', suggests that recorders may be the best choice. Grabu also includes recorders in the Chacon that ushers Albanus to sea; he seems to have associated them with nautical themes.

Table 1.b Movements for voice, two treble instruments and bass continuo

| No. | Title | Tr. I | Tr. II | Bass | Instrumentation |
|-----|--|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| 11 | 'From the Caledonian Shore' Archon (bass) | c ¹ -c ³ | g ¹ -f ² | D-d ¹ | violins |
| 15 | 'Medway and Isis' Thamesia (bass) | b ¹ -a ² | g ¹ -f ² | E-d ¹ | not specified |
| 28 | 'I wonder'd how of late' Pluto (bass) | a ¹ -b _♭ ² | f ¹ -g ² | F-d ¹ | violins |
| 30 | 'Take him, make him' Pluto, Alecto (basses) | c ¹ -b _♭ ² | f-b _♭ ² | F-d ¹ | violins |
| 31 | 'Let us laugh' Pluto (bass) | a ¹ -b _♭ ² | f ¹ -g ² | F-e _♭ ¹ | violins |
| 42 | 'Old Father Ocean' Thamesia (bass) | b ¹ -c ³ | g ¹ -f ² | G-e ¹ | recorders |
| 44 | 'See, the God of Seas' Thamesia (Bass) | b ¹ -b ² | g ¹ -g ² | G-c ¹ | violins |
| 49 | 'Behold ye Pow'rs' Albion (bass) | b ¹ -b _♭ ² | f ¹ -a ² | C-a ¹ | violins |

Both 'Let us laugh' and 'See, the God of Seas' have sections with five-part strings, though never when the voice part is present.

'Behold ye Pow'rs' is a four-voice texture since Albion's line does not double the bass continuo. In all other movements listed above, the bass voice doubles the bass continuo.

What wind players would have been available for the production of *Albion and Albanus*? A group of French wind players first arrived in England in 1673.²³ Grabu is likely to have known them through the production of *Ariane, ou le Mariage de Bacchus*, in which he seems to have had a hand (see Chapter 2). Both Blow and Purcell provided parts for oboes and recorders in several odes and anthems dating from 1680-82 and it seems that these same Frenchmen would have played them. However, after 1682, Purcell composed no parts for woodwind instruments until 1686, which fact has led Peter Holman to conclude that the group of French wind players left England in 1682.²⁴ If this is the case, the rubrics indicating oboes and recorders in *Valentinian*, and the recorders specified in *Albion and Albanus*, would seem to mark the return of woodwinds to English music.

Other evidence suggests that Grabu was closely involved in the return of woodwind players to England. Robert Ford has demonstrated a circumstantial relationship between Grabu and wind players active in France through Nicolas Dieupart's book of trios (now *US-NH* Filmer MS 33). This set of part-books, which originated in France in 1680, may have travelled to England some time around or after 1683, and Ford has speculated that they may have been brought by Grabu or by a French wind player associated with him. Ford asserts that 'the wind provenance of MS 33 can scarcely be doubted' and that 'in view of the connection between Dieupart and his colleagues and Grabu in France, it was probably from amongst the former that [Grabu] chose the oboists needed for the English performances of his own operas'.²⁵

²³ Ibid., pp. 343 and 267.

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 424-425. Holman notes the exception of Purcell's duet 'Soft notes and gently raised', which though it does not carry a specific date, falls in a position in *GB-Lbl* R. M. 20.H.8 which suggests it might have been written in 1683.

²⁵ R. Ford, 'Nicolas Dieupart's book of trios', *Recherches sur la Musique Française Classique* 20 (1981), pp. 67 and 52 respectively.

It is unclear how, if at all, Ford's speculations may mesh with a list of James II's remodelled private music from August 1685, many of whose members must have played in Grabu's opera. The list names only one player specifically allotted to a wind instrument place: 'For the flute: Monsieur Mario'. Peter Holman's analysis of the list shows that at least four others were known to be woodwind players.²⁶ In addition to 'Monsieur Mario' (François Mariens), other recorder players were James Paisible, François La Riche, John Banister II, and Robert King, and they were all probably able to double on the oboe. The list post-dates the opening of *Albion and Albanus* by less than three months. Banister and King were formerly members of Charles II's twenty-four violins and most probably were involved in the opera. Paisible, Mariens and La Riche were newly appointed to James's Private Music. Paisible and Mariens seem to have had close associations with James's household before he became King, and it is reasonable to assume that they would have been available to perform in a work written partially in his honour. Two other wind players may also have been active in England at the time of *Albion and Albanus*. James Arnau and Lewis Brunot were, along with Mariens and Paisible, listed as members of 'his late Majesty's private musick' in a warrant to the Treasury Chamber of 9 February 1687/88. The warrant made provision to pay them for service from Midsummer 1678 to Christmas 1684, and though Arnau and Brunot are not mentioned in any other court records, their association with Mariens and Paisible suggests that they were wind players.²⁷

With the use of wind instruments in the opera comes the important matter of where these players were situated. In the operas of Lully, wind

²⁶ P. Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers*, pp. 417-425.

²⁷ *A Biographical Dictionary of English Court Musicians*, compiled by A. Ashbee, D. Lasocki, asst. by P. Holman and F. Kisby (Aldershot, 1998), p. 27.

instruments were commonly played on the stage or in machines.²⁸ Would the same have occurred in *Albion and Albanus*? There is no specific stage direction indicating as much, though there are precedents in English stage productions. The 1674 production of *Ariane, ou le mariage de Bacchus* calls for on-stage wind players. In V, iii of *Psyche*, Apollo descends in a machine accompanied by musicians:

The scene changes to Heav'n. In the highest part is the Palace of Jupiter; the Columns and all the Ornaments of it of Gold. The lower part is all fill'd with Angels and Cupids, with a round open Temple in the midst of it. This Temple is just before the Sun, whose Beams break fiercely through it in divers places: Below the Heav'ns, several Semi-circular Clouds, of the breadth of the whole House, descend. In these Clouds sit the Musicians, richly Habited. On the front-Cloud sits Apollo alone. While the Musicians are descending, they play a Symphony, till Apollo begins, and sings as follows.

The description shares many similarities with the descent of Apollo in the third act of *Albion and Albanus*:

Whilst a Symphony is playing; a very large, and a very glorious Machine descends: The figure of it Oval, all the Clouds shining with Gold, abundance of Angels and Cherubins flying about 'em, and playing in 'em; in the midst of it sits Apollo on a Throne of Gold: he comes from the Machine to Albion.

This same machine was reused in the 1696 dramatic opera *Brutus of Alba* in which production five gods managed to fit inside of it (see Chapter 9). Clearly, there was room for musicians in this machine and perhaps in other machines used in *Albion and Albanus*. There must then be the possibility that some of the ritornels that accompanied the entrances of gods were played by on-stage musicians.

The Vocal Music

In his dedication to *Albion and Albanus*, Grabu expresses his dissatisfaction with the vocal resources available for the production:

²⁸ P. Howard, *The Operas of Lully*, unpublished PhD dissertation (University of Surrey, 1974), p. 131; R. Harris-Warrick, 'Magnificence in motion: Stage musicians in Lully's ballets and opera', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 6 (1994), pp. 189-203.

The only Displeasure which remains with me, is, that I neither was nor could possibly be furnish'd with variety of excellent Voices, to present it to Your Majesty in its full perfection. Not withstanding which, You have been pleas'd to pardon this Defect, as not proceeding from any fault of mine, but only from the scarcity of Singers in this Island.

One can imagine that Grabu's complaint was well justified, though it certainly would have won him few friends amongst his English colleagues. In terms of its vocal requirements, the opera was the most demanding production to play on the Restoration stage. There are 20 roles, plus several sections that may have required soloists from the chorus. When one considers the possible doubling of parts, a minimum of 14 singers is required, in addition to a chorus which must be divisible into at least two different groups. The characters, clefs, ranges, and possible doublings can be seen in Table 2. Four sopranos are required (with the same singer taking Augusta in I and II, and Acacia in III), one counter-tenor, four tenors, and five basses (the part of Neptune amounts to 3 bars only). Presumably the soprano parts were the most difficult to fill, since these singers would have been drawn from the United Company, while some of the men could have been engaged from the Chapel Royal or the King's Private Music.

Prior to *Albion and Albanus*, the most elaborate productions to be staged by the London theatre companies had been *The Tempest* and *Psyche*. Both required a large cast of singers, but since the music was interspersed with passages of dialogue, the singers would have had plenty of time to rest and to change into new costumes if they were doubling several roles. Judith Milhous estimates that *Psyche* required 6 women and 10 men, all of who could sing and dance.²⁹ Though this is a similar number of singers to that required for Grabu's opera, not one of the major roles is as long as those in *Albion and Albanus* and the majority of the singing is given to male voices.

²⁹ J. Milhous, 'The Multimedia Spectacular on the Restoration Stage', *British Theatre and the Other Arts, 1660-1800* (London, 1984), p. 47.

Table 2 Clefs and Ranges of Characters in *Albion and Albanus*

| | Clef | Range | Appearances | | |
|----------------------------|------|---|-------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| Augusta | g2 | e ¹ -a _b ² | I, II | Double with Acacia | only 1 a _b ² |
| Juno | g2 | e ¹ -g ² | I | Double with Venus | |
| Iris | g2 | f ^{#1} -f ² | I | Double with Asebia | |
| Acacia | g2 | f ¹ -f ² | III | Double with Augusta | |
| Asebia | g2 | f ^{#1} -g ² | III | Double with Iris | |
| Venus | g2 | f ¹ -g ² | III | Double with Juno | |
| Zelota | c1 | e ¹ -g ² | I, II, III | | |
| Hermes | c2 | g-c ² | I, II | Double with Fame | only 1 g |
| Democracy | c3 | f-c ² | I, II, III | | only 1 c ² |
| Albanus | c3 | b-a _b ¹ | I, II, III | | |
| Apollo (Phoebus) | c3 | a _b -b _b ¹ | II, III | | |
| Proteus | c3 | g-b _b ¹ | III | | |
| Fame | c3 | a-c ² | III | Double with Hermes | only 1 g |
| Thamesis | f4 | G-f ¹ | I, II | | |
| Archon | f4 | G-d | I | Double with Alecto | |
| Pluto | f4 | F-e _b ¹ | II | Double with Tyranny | |
| Alecto | f4 | A-e _b ¹ | II | Double with Archon | |
| Albion | f4 | G-e ¹ | I, II, III | | |
| Tyranny | f4 | F-e ¹ | III | Double with Pluto | |
| Neptune | f4 | f [#] -d ¹ | II, III | | Sings 3 bars in III only |

We also know the boys of the Chapel Royal (or some of them) were made available for *The Tempest* in 1674.³⁰ Whether or not they took part in the production of *Psyche* is unknown. Locke's preface to the opera hints that it taxed the companies' musical resources:

Then, against the performance, [it is claimed] They sing out of Tune. To which with modesty it may be answer'd, He or she that is without fault may cast the first Stone: and for those seldom defects, the major part of the Vocal performers being ignorant of Musick, their Excellencies when they do well, which generally are so, rather ought to be admired, then their accidental mistakes upbraided.³¹

No production between *Psyche* and *Albion and Albanus* required more

³⁰ A. Ashbee, *Records of English Court Music* (Snodland, 1986), i, p. 138.

³¹ M. Locke, *Dramatic Music*, ed. Michael Tilmouth, *Musica Britannica* LI (London, 1986), pp. xix-xx.

extensive forces than the former, and there is no evidence or compelling reason to believe that the London theatrical companies (company by 1685) developed their vocal resources over this period. Thus, when the United Company began its production of *Albion and Albanus*, it must have had more or less the same resources that were overtaxed in the less ambitious *Psyche*.

Grabu's frustration must have been heightened by his awareness of Lully's resources at the Paris Opéra. There Lully had an organisation with over ten years of experience in staging opera, the Académie Royale de Musique, which also served as a training ground for singers. Grabu was placed in the situation of writing a full-blown opera for a company that normally specialized in small musical entertainments placed within spoken plays.

There is no cast list for *Albion and Albanus*, nor other record positively identifying any member of the production, but a list of possible singers can be created from various sources. Charlotte Butler may have sung in the opera. She took the parts of Philidel and Cupid in the 1692 production of *King Arthur*, and seems also to have sung in *Dioclesian*. As early as 1675 she had appeared in the court masque *Calisto*, and she had made her public stage debut in 1680.³² Mrs. Norris was a member of the United Company in 1685 and is listed as the singer, with (John) 'Reading', on the song 'Come, Jug, my honey, let's to bed' in D'Urfey's *Choice Songs* (1684).³³ The popular actress Anne Bracegirdle was also admired for her singing, and is listed as a member of the company for this season, but was probably only

³² O. Baldwin and T. Wilson, 'Purcell's Sopranos', *The Musical Times* 123 (1982), pp. 602-9. For Butler as an actress see E. Howe, *The First English Actresses* (Cambridge, 1992).

³³ W. van Lennep, ed., *The London Stage 1600-1800*, vol.1 (Carbondale, 1965), p. 331. There is no record of her performing after 1684, but this does not rule her out as a possible singer in *Albion and Albanus*. See also *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers and other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800*, ed. Philip H. Highfill and others (Carbondale & Edwardsville, 1973-), xi, pp. 49-50.

eleven years old in 1685.³⁴

John Bowman may also have sung in *Albion and Albanus*. He was a regular actor and singer in the theatre, and played the singing role of Atticus in the 1680 production of *Theodosius*, and that of Grimbald in *King Arthur*. He appears to have had a baritone voice with a usual range of G-f¹.³⁵ John Reading, earlier mentioned in connection with Mrs. Norris, may be a candidate for the lowest roles in the opera, those of Pluto and Tyranny, both of which require several Fs. He is recorded in print as having sung roles that cover a range of F-g¹, including Corydon in *The Fairy Queen*.³⁶

Possible tenors and counter-tenors include John Freeman. He first enters theatrical records in the 1690s, listed as the singer on single sheet copies of 'Sound, Fame' and 'Let Monarch's Fight' from *Dioclesian*.³⁷ He would have been around nineteen years of age in 1685,³⁸ and it is tempting to imagine him singing the role of Fame in the final chorus of *Albion and Albanus*, as this movement seems to have been the model on which 'Sound, Fame' was built (see Chapter 10). Fame's song, however, extends from a-c², a tone higher than the highest note in parts Freeman is known to have sung.³⁹ The leading actor and playwright William Mountfort was also a singer. He started his acting career with the Duke's Company in 1678 and would have

³⁴ She is listed in the company list in *The London Stage*, p. 331. There is debate over the year of her birth. See Lucyle Hook, 'Anne Bracegirdle's First Appearance', *Theatre Notebook*, vol. 13 (1959), pp. 133-36, and E. Howe, *The First English Actresses* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 85-88. Hook's argument for the year of 1674 (as opposed to about 10 years earlier) is the most convincing.

³⁵ See O. Baldwin and T. Wilson, 'Purcell's Stage Singers', *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell*, ed. M. Burden (Oxford, 1996), pp. 105-6. Ranges for all songs he is documented as having sung are give here: one has a g¹ and two have an F.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 111-12 and 281.

³⁷ *The Works of Henry Purcell*, vol. 9, *Dioclesian*, ed. J. F. Bridge and J. Pointer, rev. M. Laurie (London, 1961), p. 162.

³⁸ *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers and other Stage Personnel in London*, v, pp. 406-407.

³⁹ O. Baldwin and T. Wilson, 'Alfred Deller, John Freeman and Mr. Pate', *Music and Letters* 50 (Jan. 1969), pp. 103-110, and in 'Purcell's Stage Singers', pp. 279-280.

been twenty-one in 1685.⁴⁰ His known range was d-b₁, and he sang Purcell's songs for *A Fool's Preferment* in 1688.⁴¹ In the first roster of James II's Private Music, recorded in August 1685, Thomas Heywood is listed as a tenor in 'the vocall part'.⁴²

The highest note either Mountfort or Freeman is known to have sung is b₁. Three of the roles from *Albion and Albanus*, Hermes, Democracy and Fame, require a c². Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson argue that this is the point at which voices are divided between a high tenor and a counter-tenor or falsettist.⁴³ Though he does not make a firm assertion, Timothy Morris comes to a similar conclusion, and his description of high alto parts as having 'a range of about a-d², with an occasional g at the bottom of the range', describes the role of Hermes perfectly.⁴⁴ Hermes was almost certainly sung by a falsettist, since his string-accompanied arioso in Act II, 'Delude the fury of the foe', depends upon a strong c² (ex.2). Though the part reaches as low as g, the tessitura lies between b₁ and c², and it is the only male role notated in the c² clef (the same clef Purcell used in solos for the counter-tenor, John Howell). Democracy, in contrast, sings only one c², and the tessitura is lower than that of Hermes; a large percentage of the role lies between f and b. This role may better suit a high tenor. One singer can double fame and Hermes, and it seems likely that this voice was drawn from the King's Private Music or the Chapel Royal. John Howell, the counter-tenor who sang 'Hark each tree' in Purcell's 1692 St. Cecilia ode was probably too young to have sung in the production. William Turner, who sang in *The Tempest* and *Calisto*, John

⁴⁰ *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers and other Stage Personnel in London*, x, pp. 354-59.

⁴¹ O. Baldwin and T. Wilson, 'Purcell's Stage Singers', pp. 107-9 and 280.

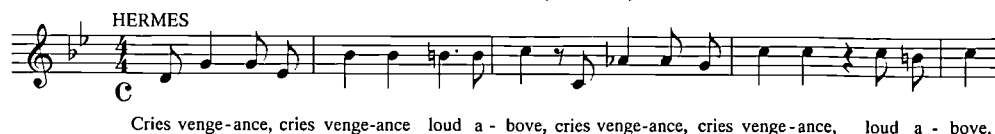
⁴² P. Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers*, pp. 417-18.

⁴³ O. Baldwin and T. Wilson, 'Alfred Deller, John Freeman and Mr. Pate'.

⁴⁴ Morris, T., 'Voices and Pitch in the Concerted Works', *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell*, M. Burden, ed. (Oxford 1996), p. 132.

Abell and Josiah Bouchier are possibilities.⁴⁵

Ex. 2 Act II ‘Delude the fury of the foe’, (no. 38) bars 29-33



have saved two costume changes. 'Let us laugh' must be the chorus referred to in the critical poem on the opera found in *A Journal from Parnassus*:

Flecknoe: Gods! this from the Bays! whose last dull Opera
Scarce knew the blessing of the Poet's day.
Bays! who with Rainbows, Flutes, and Peacocks' Tails
The needy bankrupt Players has undone,
In hopes that where the blund'ring Poet fails,
The Painter or the Fidler would atone:
But all in vain! the gaudy Project miss'd
And whilst the Furies sung, the Audience hiss'd.⁴⁶

During II, i, the Cities of Act I could change to Tritons and Sea Nymphs to join the Rivers in the Chacon and final chorus of II, ii. Albion's train, which enters with him in the middle of II, ii, probably did not sing.

Act III contains little information regarding the entrances and costuming of the chorus. In III, i, it seems that Acacia and Albion enter alone. The word-book calls for the two characters to make a 'chorus of both' of Albion's solo 'To rule by love', but in the score it is laid out for four-part chorus. Whether Albion should be accompanied by a train singing this chorus, or whether it should be sung from offstage cannot be ascertained, though it seems that Dryden at least envisaged Albion as appearing alone. Later in the act, Democracy sings: 'See friendless Albion there alone/ Without Defence/ But Innocence'.

Before the entrance of Democracy, Nereids rise out of the sea and sing a duet, and Tritons perform a dance. The Nereids may be interchangeable with the Sea Nymphs of the previous act, but whether the duet was sung by solo voices or a group of singers is impossible to determine.

Democracy, Zeal, Asebia and Tyranny now enter. Their dialogue is punctuated by lines designated 'chorus' in the word-book, though there is no indication of attendants who might make up such a group, and the music is clearly scored for the four solo voices. This serves as a reminder that, in the Restoration, the term 'chorus' did not necessarily indicate the same large

⁴⁶ Quoted in H. Macdonald, *John Dryden: A Bibliography of Early Editions and of Drydeniana* (Oxford, 1939), p. 128.

group of singers that it does in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Two voices could form a 'chorus' and this fact should inform speculation as to the number of voices making up choruses within the opera.

Towards the end of Act III, Venus enters accompanied by Graces and Loves, and Albanus enters accompanied by Heroes. By this point, all the chorus singers used earlier in the opera would have had time to change costumes, and the final choruses could have been sung by all.

There is little evidence to suggest the number of available chorus singers, their division into sections or the types of voices used in each section. If Grabu did attend performances at the Paris Opéra, he would have been accustomed to female sopranos, since they were the only vocal type used for the soprano choral parts. The practice in the English theatre is not clear. As we have seen above, boys from the Chapel Royal did sing in at least some performances of *The Tempest* (though what they sang is unclear), and Shadwell indicates that the 'Song for the Three Elizian Lovers' from *Psyche* was sung by boys. The huge scale of *Albion and Albanus*, and the fact that it is expressly written in praise of Charles II (perhaps at his command), suggest that he may have made the resources of the Royal Music, perhaps men and boys from the Chapel Royal, over to the United Company. Of course, by the time the opera opened, Charles had died, his brother James had replaced him as monarch, and the production had been delayed several months. Whether this would have had any influence on the availability of performers for the opera is unknown.

A large number of chorus voices would not have been necessary. If one takes the chorus 'Let us laugh' from II, i as an example, four soloists (two basses, one soprano, and one high tenor) were already on the stage, and the strings strictly double the chorus parts. Four chorus singers costumed as Furies would, if joined by the solo voices, have sufficed to execute the chorus. Perhaps as few as twelve chorus voices were enough for the entire opera. At

least eight (four each of Cities and Rivers) would seem necessary to cover the choruses of the first act and the second-act Chacon, four others could join with the soloists for ‘Let us Laugh’ in II, i, and all twelve could join together with soloists in the choruses that close Act III.

The ranges of the choral parts are much smaller than those of the solo parts, except in the bass, and they are similar to those used in both Purcell’s *Dioclesian* and Lully’s *Phaëton* (Table 3).

Table 3 Voice ranges in choral parts

| | <i>Albion and Albanus</i> | <i>Dioclesian</i> | <i>Phaëton</i> |
|---------|---|--|--------------------------------|
| Soprano | a ¹ -g ² | g ¹ -a ² | g ¹ -a ² |
| Alto | b _b -b _b ¹ (tessitura c ¹ -a ¹) | b-b ¹ | c ¹ -c ² |
| Tenor | f-g ¹ (tessitura g-f ¹) | d-g ¹ (tessitura g-f ¹) | f-g ¹ |
| Bass | G-e ¹ | G-e ¹ | G-e ¹ |

Metre in *Albion and Albanus*

Grabu’s use of metre in the vocal sections of *Albion and Albanus* presents several problems. He followed the example of Lully’s French recitative style, which involved frequent changes of metre, a style that differed considerably with that of any English composer of the Restoration. The relationships between metres in the vocal sections of *Albion and Albanus* are therefore sometimes considerably different to those one might expect to find in English declamatory writing.

Grabu uses four time signatures in recitative passages: 2, **C**, 3 and 3/2.

On two occasions he also uses 3/8, and on one occasion **♩** (this time signature is more frequent in instrumental movements). These time signatures are fairly consistent with those used by Lully in his later operas. While in his early operas Lully used **C**, **♩**, and 3 almost exclusively, by the late 1670s 2

The relationship between the time signatures within recitative passages in *Albion and Albanus* is fairly straightforward; a general rule covers the majority of situations (and can be applied to ex. 3 below):

Ex. 3 ‘Nymph of the city’ (no. 10), bars 9-23

There are, however, some instances where this rule does not apply, particularly with regard to 3. When the recitative shifts into more song-like passages, that is, where there is a regular metrical stress and the vocal line takes on a more

⁴⁸ The relationship corresponds to that laid out by the French theorist Etienne Loulié, and described in L. Rosow in 'The Metrical Notation of Lully's Recitative', p. 406.

melodic character, a shift from 2 to 3 often requires a ♩ = ♩ relationship.

Example 4 shows this relationship explicitly. The three-quaver anacrusis into the triple-time section is clearly derived from the rhythmic profile of the ensuing chorus, 'We'll wash away the stain' as is the whole of Hermes's prefatory solo. A ♩ = ♩ relationship between 2 and 3 is necessary to link the anacrusis with the solo and chorus.

Within a given passage of recitative, 2 and C will share the same pulse, even when they follow one another directly. As Lois Rosow points out, 2/4 did not exist in French music of the day,⁴⁹ or in English music, and in *Albion and Albanus*, 2, at least in recitative sections, generally functions as would the modern 2/4. Thus, it often seems to be an arbitrary decision when Grabu shifts from one bar of C to two bars of 2. There are some instances where the change may indicate an alteration in mood, perhaps a greater excitement or agitation. In Hermes's Act I accompanied recitative, for instance, the two bars of 2 placed in the middle of a passage in C appear to be an unnecessary notational device. The change, however, occurs immediately after the mention of Zeal, and probably indicates a temporary agitation in the musical line (ex. 5).

Like 2 and C, 3 and 3/2 are more or less interchangeable within passages of recitative, except where they follow one another directly. In the few cases where this happens, 3 seems to indicate a faster tempo than 3/2,

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 407.

though there is not necessarily any specific proportional relationship in pulse.⁵⁰

Ex. 4 ‘Thou glorious fabric, stand!’ (no. 6), bars 151-158

Then by some loy-al deed re-gain Thy long lost re-pu-ta-tion, To wash a -

-way the stain, That blots a no-ble na-tion,

Ex. 5 ‘Take my caduceus’ (no. 13), bars 10-17

Com-mon-wealth will want pre-ten-ces, Sleep will creep on all his sen-ses. Zeal that

lent him her as-sis-tance, Stand a-maz'd with-out re-sis-tance.

The relationships outlined above are, of course, only a guide to the interpretation of metre in *Albion and Albanus*. There must have been some flexibility in the pulse that responded to the dramatic needs of a particular passage, and pulse relationships would have applied only to bars that followed one another immediately. A bar of 3/2 would not necessarily be the same speed as one in the same metre 20 bars earlier. Furthermore, there are some places where a shift in pulse is required or desirable either within a bar or from one bar to the next. At the end of the song-like passage in 3 seen in example

⁵⁰ For instance, a shift from 3 to 3/2 between nos. 12 and 13 seems to indicate a slower tempo for Hermes's accompanied recitative. A similar instance is found in the dialogue 'Injurious Charmer' from the music for *Valentinian* published in *Pastoralle* (1684).

6, a shift of the pulse beginning with the anacrusis to bar 118 may be desirable to slow the tempo to a speed at which the recitative can be delivered without rushing. Though a proportional change, halving the speed of the crotchet, would return the tempo to the one in use before Hermes's song-like passage, a slightly faster tempo would perhaps better suit Augusta's agitated state.

On rare occasion, Grabu makes a change in the pulse clear by using a verbal cue. Juno's 'Why stay we here on earth' (no. 19) begins as recitative in 3 and moves seamlessly into a song-like passage at the words 'Tis time to mount above'. There is no change of metre, but the marking 'Gay' indicates a faster tempo.

Ex. 6 'Thou glorious fabric, stand!' (no. 6), bars 114-121

The musical score for 'Thou glorious fabric, stand!' (no. 6), bars 114-121, is presented in three staves. The top staff is for AUGUSTA, the middle for HERMES, and the bottom for a basso continuo. The time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are: AUGUSTA: 'Oh ne-ver, ne-ver will I'; HERMES: 'Rise, rise, Au-gu-sta, rise!'; Basso Continuo: 'rise, Ne-ver will I cease my mourn-ing; Ne-ver wipe my weep-ing eyes,'. The score includes fingerings (6, 6, 4, #, 5, 6) and a key signature change to D major (one sharp) indicated by a # symbol.

Metre in the recitative of *Albion and Albanus* presents a slightly clearer situation than in that of Lully. The primary reason is that while Lully even in his later operas continued to use both ♩ and 2 (though his use of ♩ decreased with time), Grabu uses 2 almost exclusively. In her article on metre in Lully's recitative, Lois Rosow suggests that Lully both used ♩ and 2 interchangeably and discretely to indicate a change either of mood or of speed. However, she also quotes Jaques Hotteterre writing, in 1719, that Lully used

these two time signatures ‘rather indifferently’.⁵¹ Grabu’s almost total abandonment of C in recitative passages may be seen as a partial confirmation of the latter. His recitative style is obviously based on that of Lully’s latest operas, and it is clear that he had studied at least one of them (*Phaëton*) in score. The fact that he saw no need to use both C and 2 may well indicate that there was little real difference between them.⁵²

One must also take care not to assume indiscriminately that metres and metre relationships are the same in recitative as in instrumental movements, choruses and independent songs. Both in France and England, time signatures often had implied, if sometimes inconsistently, tempos. C was generally considered to be slower than C , and C slower than 2, for example. Rosow’s comments on Lully’s operas apply equally to *Albion and Albanus*: ‘metres implying contrasting tempos evidently move at the same pace when they alternate in recitative’.⁵³

Many of the adjacent instrumental, choral and dance movements in the opera can be linked by proportional relationships. In some cases the relationships seem to be directly signaled in the score. The elision of the final cadence of the Second Ayre (no. 23) to the beginning of the subsequent chorus, ‘Hail, Royal Albion, hail’ (no. 24) strongly suggests that the pulse of the former (one in a bar triple time) becomes the pulse of the latter (two in a bar duple time). The commonest of the old mensural proportions, the *sesquialtera* relationship, in which one bar of triple time is equated to half a

⁵¹ L. Rosow, ‘The Metrical Notation of Lully’s Recitative’, p. 405. The quotation from Hotteterre can be found in his book, *L’Art de preluder sur la flûte à bec, sur le haubois, et autres instrumens de dessus*, Paris, 1719, reprint (Geneva, Minkoff, 1978), p. 57.

⁵² A clear example of the equivalence of C and 2 can be found in Grabu’s *Pastoralle*. In the final duet and chorus ‘Aymons berger, aymons’, the duet opens in C . After an intervening bar of 3 a duple metre returns, and though the melodic material duplicates portions of the earlier bars in C the metre is now 2. When the chorus repeats the material of the duet, all of the duple passages are in 2.

⁵³ L. Rosow, ‘The Metrical Notation of Lully’s Recitative’, p. 407.

bar of quadruple time, is clearly signalled in the link between Thamesis's Act II song 'Old Father Ocean' (no. 42) and the Ayre for the God of the Waters (no. 43) by the printing of the time-signature of the Ayre in the last bar of the song. An extended use of proportional tempo relationships is found in the Act II Masque in Hell where they link five consecutive movements (see Table 4).

Table 4 Proportional Tempo Relations in the Act II Masque in Hell.

| | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| No. 30 | No. 31 | bar 40 | No.32 | No.33 | bar 15 | No.34 |
| 8 \downarrow . $\underbrace{\quad}_{3} \downarrow$. \rightarrow | 3 \downarrow . \rightarrow | 2 \circ \rightarrow | Φ \downarrow . \rightarrow | 3 \downarrow . \rightarrow | 2 \circ \rightarrow | 3 \downarrow . |

Ornamentation

The printed score of *Albion and Albanus* contains no explicit ornamentation markings. Nevertheless, an incomplete picture of what embellishments might have been used in the original performances can be built from internal evidence in the score, evidence from Grabu's *Pastoralle* (which does contain some ornament markings), and knowledge of both French and English practices of ornamentation.

The Ballard editions of Lully's operas contain one type of ornament mark only: '+'. The absence of similar markings in *Albion and Albanus* is surprising given how closely the presentation of the score follows the model of Ballard's editions, and considering the fact that a comparable mark, 't', is used throughout the print of *Pastoralle*. The usage of 't' in *Pastoralle* is very similar to the usage of '+' in Lully's score and can be summarized as follows:

A) Instrumental passages

1) In 5-part dances ornament markings are usually confined to use at cadences in the violin part. On rare occasions there is an ornament marking in the viola I part at a cadence.

2) In 3-part ritornels, ornament markings are more frequent, and are sometimes found in non-cadential positions or at half-cadences. Violin I markings far outnumber those for violin II.

3) In the single bass-doubling-continuo song, the violin I line is heavily ornamented.

B) Vocal passages

1) Ornaments are most common in song-like sections for solo voice where they occur in both cadential and non-cadential positions. Passages that lean more to recitative contain fewer ornament markings.

2) In choral sections, there are ornaments on the soprano part and very rarely on the alto part. Though the violin and soprano double each other in choruses, ornament marks are sometimes, but not always, duplicated in both parts.

The use of trills according to these principles is surely appropriate to *Albion and Albanus*, but this alone is unlikely to be completely sufficient. Lully is well known to have exerted great control over the ornamentation used in the performance of his music, but as several commentators have pointed out, his stance was a reaction against a tradition of ornamentation which he felt to be excessive, not a total rejection of it.⁵⁴ Patricia Howard suggests that 'his operas must have been performed with a wealth of vocal and instrumental decoration', and offers the list of ornaments provided by Georg Muffat as a record of the possibilities while considering their application 'substantially a matter of guesswork.'⁵⁵

⁵⁴ See for example, F. Neumann, *Performance Practices of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (New York, 1993), p. 511.

⁵⁵ P. Howard, op. cit., p. 129.

Evidence for a pair of related ornaments in *Albion and Albanus* helps to explain a seemingly strange feature of the Act III chorus ‘O thou who mount’st th’etherial throne’ (no. 72). The initial soprano entry of the chorus (ex. 7) shows the word ‘throne’ shifted to a position one beat before it might normally be expected. The same device occurs in the alto and tenor voices as well and it can be explained as an instance of a pre-beat *port de voix*, an ornament that ‘repeats the preceding note and rises stepwise to its following parent note.’⁵⁶ The *port de voix*’s sister ornament, the *coulé* (in which the ornamental note descends to its parent note) is found in a pre-beat position in Augusta’s Act II monologue. The *port de voix* in the Act III chorus is particularly instructive, since it is not found in Acacia’s solo which precedes the chorus, a solo which is otherwise identical to the choral soprano entry. This situation may suggest that Grabu felt it necessary to make the grace explicit to the choral singers, but depended upon the soloist to insert it here and perhaps in other places throughout the opera without indication.

Ex. 7 Act III, ‘O thou who mount’st th’etherial throne’ (no. 72), bars 54-62



Several instances of written-out pre-beat ornaments can also be found in the *Pastoralle* (e.g. ex. 8), and these, along with the examples in *Albion and Albanus*, bear a strong resemblance to a manuscript version of a solo from the opera *Céphale et Procris* by Jacquet de La Guerre. Written at some point between 1687 and 1692, and performed at the Paris Opéra in 1694, portions of the opera were presented at Sébastien de Brossard’s Académie in Strausbourg.⁵⁷ Brossard prepared parts for this performance, amongst them

⁵⁶ F. Neumann, *Ornamentation in Baroque and Post-Baroque Music* (Princeton, 1978), p.49. Neumann further indicates that it ‘can assume any rhythmic shape, from full anticipation to straddling, to full on-beat placement’ in *Performance Practices of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, p. 303.

⁵⁷ Brossard’s material is discussed in W. Griffiths, ‘Brossard and the Performance of Jacquet de La Guerre’s *Céphale et Procris*’, *Performance Practice Review* 8 (1995), pp. 28-53.

an ornamented part for the bass soloist.⁵⁸ The ornaments include several *ports de voix* written in the same manner as those in examples of Grabu above. Wanda Griffiths has compared the manuscript with the 1694 printed version of the opera in which none of these ornaments are included. On-beat *port de voix* are also used, as well as trills and intervals of a third filled in by passing notes. Clearly Brossard thought it appropriate and necessary to embellish the very plain version of the vocal line found in the printed version.

Ex. 8 *Pastoralle*, ‘Helas que vous estes pressant’



Brossard’s ornamentation of de La Guerre’s opera is separated in time and place from *Albion and Albanus*. Nevertheless, it springs, as does Grabu’s opera, from the model of Lully, and the resemblance in the written-out *ports de voix* in the two operas and the *Pastoralle* make Brossard’s ornamentation a possible model of good practice. It should not be forgotten, however, that the ornamentation in *Albion and Albanus* involved a convergence of two performing styles. Whatever expertise Grabu may have had in French performance practices, his opera was performed by English players and singers, whose own practices are sure to have affected the performances.

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 45-48.

Chapter 9

Stage Design and Dance in *Albion and Albanus*

Any full examination of *Albion and Albanus* must explore the spectacular scenery, costumes and dance that adorned the performance. The fact that the libretto and the score are preserved for us in a state very similar to that in which they were known by the opera's executants makes detailed discussion of the words and the music relatively easy, and can lead us to ignore the dance and the scenic design which, by their nature, have not survived. We would be mistaken, however, to imagine that the music and poetry made the greatest impact on the opera's patrons. Dance and spectacle were enormously important aspects of the Restoration theatre experience, and both played a vital role in *Albion and Albanus*. In particular, the integration of dance into *Albion and Albanus* is such that the plot progresses through dance alone in one passage of Act III. Undoubtedly, there were members of the audience in June 1685 who found the production wholly entrancing with or without the music. Commentators who have placed the blame for the alleged failure of the opera on the music, apart from ignoring the documentary evidence, have failed to imagine the visual impact of the performance. Writing in 1776, John Hawkins's derogatory remarks about the opera's 'ridiculous pageantry'¹ exemplify the loss of the Restoration aesthetic, which found such show not ridiculous, but utterly justified.

In different ways, both Dryden and Ferrand Spence attest to the audience's fascination with spectacle. Spence, who revelled in 'the Beauty of the Machines, and Decorations,' explains

Opera's ... must accept only of extraordinary and supernatural Adventures ... breaking all unities of time, place and action, I mean as the leaps, not only from one place of the

¹ J. Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, ed. O. Wessely (Graz, 1969), p. 707.

earth to another, but from Earth to the Empyrean Heav'n and from Heav'n to Hell: While the simple habitants of the lunar planet little think what work we make with them in Dorset-Garden.²

Dryden had an ambiguous relationship with spectacular stage machinery. He at once realised its appeal, but, as Ben Jonson had before him, lamented the way a visual feast so easily outshone his own carefully fashioned plays. In the Prologue to *Albion and Albanius*, he could not help satirising the spectacle in which he was a collaborator:

Wee now prescribe, like Doctors in despair,
The Diet your weak appetites can bear.
Since hearty Beef and Mutton will not do,
Here's Julep dance, Ptisan of Song and show.³

In imagining the visual aspects of the opera, much information is available, though there are no direct graphic representations. Fortunately, of the few extant illustrations of other Restoration theatre productions, two engravings are relevant to *Albion and Albanius*. The libretto of the opera provides a far richer resource in the form of copious stage directions detailing the elaborate frontispiece, scenery, and machines, some of which are described with additional details in plays where these designs were reused. Furthermore, there is good reason to consider the wealth of drawings of scenes and costumes, mostly by Jean Berain, from productions at the Paris Opéra.

Thomas Betterton, who is strongly implicated by Dryden in the creation of *Albion and Albanius*'s stage design, travelled to France on several occasions to examine French practice. In Chapter 3, we saw that his 1683 trip coincided with the successful run of Lully's *Phaëton* and that Betterton may well have seen the opera in performance. Perhaps he also

² F. Spence, *Miscellanea: or Various Discourses Written Originally by the Sieur de Saint Evremont and made English by Ferrand Spence*, (London, 1686). The comment is taken from the dedicatory essay, which is not paginated.

³ *The Works of John Dryden*, xv: *Plays: Albion and Albanius, Don Sebastian, Amphytrion*, ed. E. Miner, G. B. Guffey and F. Zimmerman (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1976), p. 14.

arranged for a backstage tour of the Palais Royal in order to examine the scenes and machines in more detail. *Albion and Albanus* contains one scene involving Proteus (Act III, lines 130-156) whose description is nearly identical to a group of scenes from Act I of *Phaëton*. Furthermore, Grabu unquestionably borrowed music from the latter in setting the former (see Chapter 7). With these facts in mind, it is reasonable to speculate that the visual form of Proteus's cave in *Albion and Albanus* was not simply modelled on the description in Quinault's libretto, but on the scene used at the Paris Opéra. This situation suggests the possibility that other scenes from the Paris Opéra influenced those that appeared on stage at Dorset Garden, an assertion that will be confirmed below. *Albion and Albanus* seems to represent a cross-fertilisation of French design, especially that of Berain, and English design with its roots in the court masques of Inigo Jones, just as the score mixes French-style music with Dryden's English libretto. Thus, to the slim pictorial evidence from English sources, we may add scene and costume sketches from the French stage. Whether or not Betterton specifically emulated Parisian designs, we can be fairly certain he saw them at first hand.

Good visual approximations of several scenes, machines and costumes from *Albion and Albanus* can be developed through reference to contemporary pictorial sources and by examining scene descriptions from earlier English productions which may have influenced designs for *Albion and Albanus*. The Frontispiece, which framed the stage, provides the first example of the latter. *The Tempest*, in its operatic form of 1674, boasted 'a new Frontispiece, joyn'd to the great Pylasters, on each side of the Stage ... [it] is a noble Arch, supported by large wreathed Columns of the Corinthian order.' The addition of such a frontispiece seems to have been of special note; descriptions of them are rare for Restoration productions. It must have covered the proscenium arch, providing an added attraction for theatre

patrons by replacing the usual frame to the action.⁴ *Albion and Albanus* also had a frontispiece, and the similarity of its description to that of *The Tempest* seems to indicate that the latter served as a model. 'A new Frontispiece is seen, joyn'd to the great Pylasters, which are on each side of the Stage ... behind these Figures are large Columns of the Corinthian Order.'

As part of the opera's first scene, there appeared 'On either side of the stage, next to the Frontispiece, a Statue on Horse-back of Gold ... one of these ... is taken from that of the late King, at Charing-Cross; the other from that Figure of his present Majesty ... at Windsor'. This second statue can still be seen at the Chelsea Hospital,⁵ while other aspects of the scene (described directly below) can be partially reconstructed by piecing together two contemporary engravings.

The Scene, is a Street of Palaces, which lead to the Front of the Royal Exchange; the great Arch is open, and the view is continued through the open part of the Exchange, to the Arch on the other side, and thence to as much of the Street beyond, as could properly be seen.⁶

An engraving of a scene from the 1674 production of *Ariane* at Drury Lane shows a street of palaces leading to a view of London Bridge (plate 17). With the substitution of a contemporary engraving of the Royal Exchange (plate 2,⁸ in which there is even a hint of the view through the great arch to the street beyond), a reasonable approximation of the scene can be imagined.

Several machines descend in Act I, though we have little information with which to form a picture of them. Mercury, Juno and Iris all enter on machines, the first drawn by ravens and the next by peacocks, while the

⁴ R. Southern, *Changeable Scenery* (London, 1951), p. 185.

⁵ *The Works of John Dryden*, xv, p. 370.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁷ This illustration is reproduced from plate 17 of J. Powell's *Restoration Theatre Production* (London and Boston, 1984).

⁸ *Ibid.*, plate 4.

PLATE 1

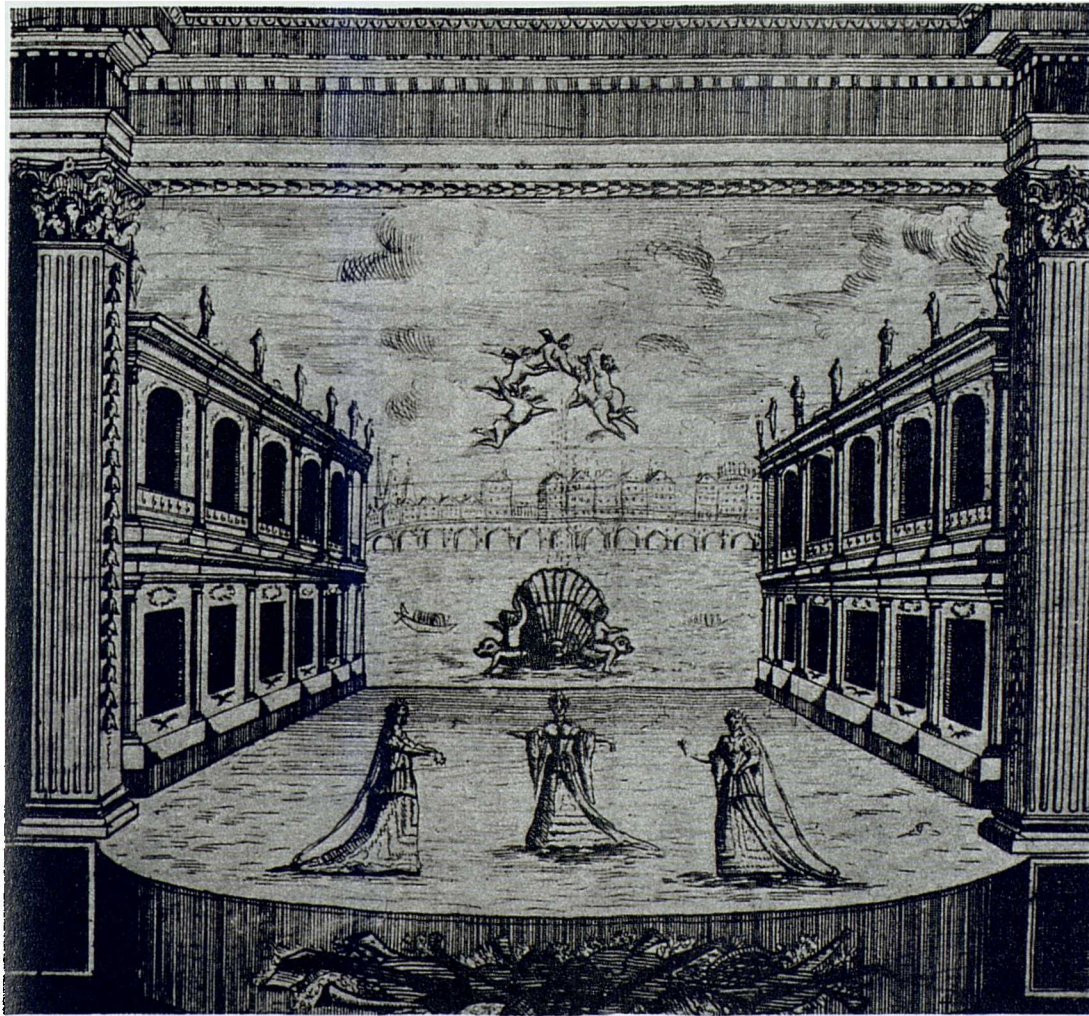
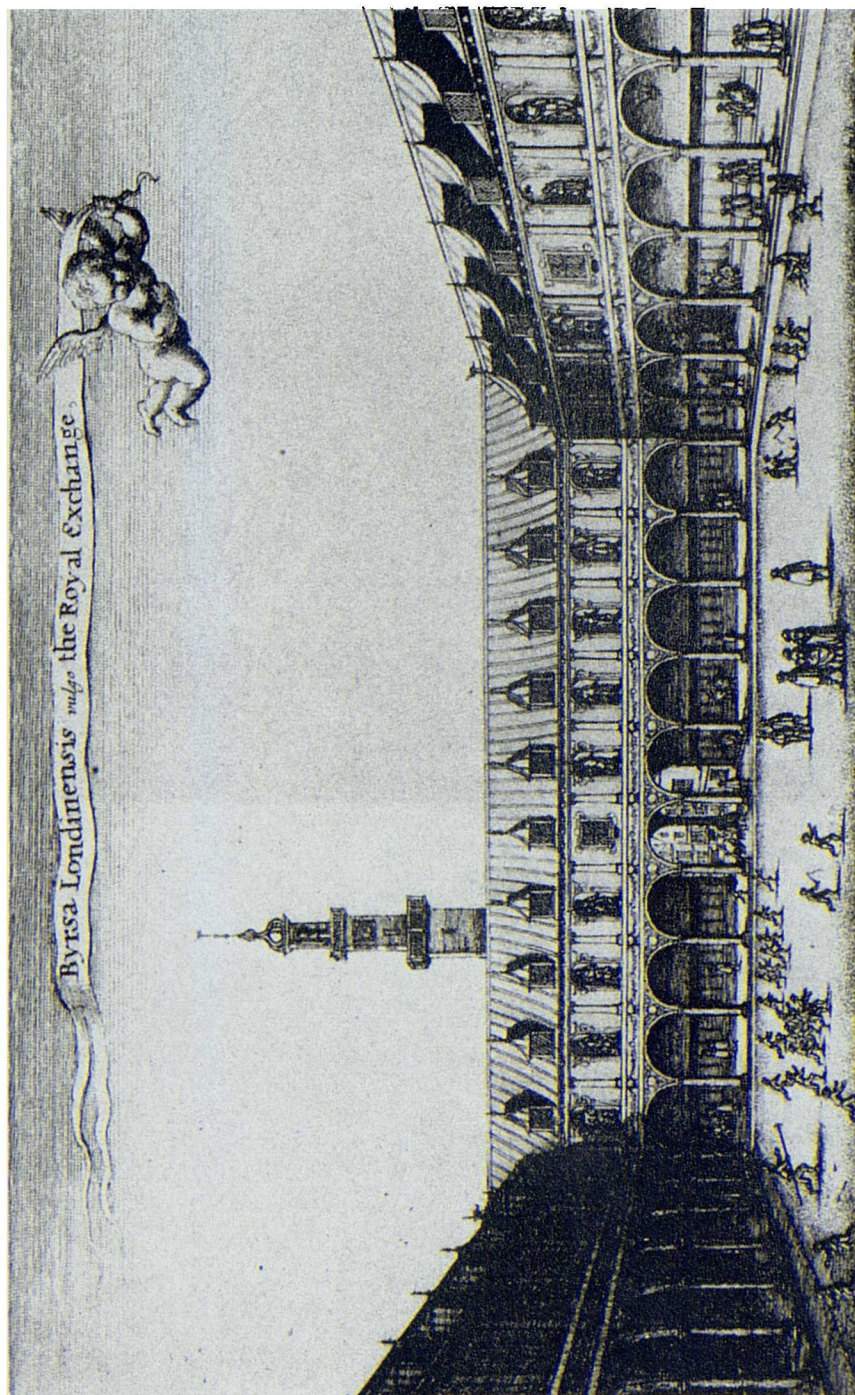


PLATE 2



third machine is based on a vision seen at sea by Captain Christopher Gunman in 1684. A sketch of this vision appears in his diary, though it is difficult to imagine how it might have been translated into a stage machine.⁹ One costume from Act I, that of the river Thamesis, may be imagined from Jean Berain's costume design for 'Fleuve Sangar' in *Atys* (plate 3¹⁰).

Many more pictorial sources can be brought to bear in imagining the scene in hell that opens Act II. Included in a set of engravings for Elkannah Settle's *The Empress of Morocco* (1673) is a one of 'a Hell, in which Pluto, Proserpine, and other Women-Spirits appear seated, attended by Furies' (plate 4¹¹). Just a few years later, another hell scene came to the Dorset Garden stage in *Psyche*.

The Scene represents Hell, consisting of many burning Ruines of Buildings on each side: In the foremost Pieces are the Figures of Prometheus and Sisyphus, Ixion and Tantalus. Beyond those are a great number of Furies and Devils, tormenting the Damned. In the middle arises the Throne of Pluto, consisting of Pillars of Fire; with him Proserpina; at their feet sit Minos Aeacus, and Rhadamanthus. With the Throne of Pluto arise a great number of Devils and Furies, coming up at every rising about the House. Through the Pillars of Pluto's Throne, at a great distance, is seen the Gate of Hell through which a Lake of Fire is seen; and at a huge distance, on the farther side of that Lake, are vast Crowds of the Dead, waiting for Charon's Boat.¹²

This last description is very close to that in *Albion and Albanus*.

The Scene is a Poetical Hell. The Change is Total, the Upper part of the House, as well as the Side Scenes. There is the Figure of Prometheus chain'd to a Rock, the Vulture gnawing his liver; Sisyphus rowling the Stone, the Belides, &c. Beyond, abundance of Figures in various Torments. Then a great Arch of Fire, Behind this, Three Pyramids of Flames in perpetual agitation. Beyond this, glowing Fire which terminates the prospect.¹³

The scene from *Psyche* would seem to follow the engraving from *The Empress of Morocco* fairly closely, especially in the case of the throne, and

⁹ The sketch is reproduced in *The Works of John Dryden*, xv, p. 28.

¹⁰ This illustration, and all subsequent ones by Berain, is reproduced from J. de la Gorce, *Berain, dessinateur du Roi Soleil* (Paris, 1986).

¹¹ J. Powell, *Restoration Theatre Production*, plate 18.

¹² M. Locke, *Dramatic Music, Musica Britannica* vol. LI, ed. M. Tilmouth.

¹³ *The Works of John Dryden*, xv, p. 30.

the devils and furies rising at various points on the stage. In fact, only the upper halves of the two downstage devils in the engraving are visible, suggesting that they are indeed rising through trap doors. Likewise, the scene description from *Albion and Albanus* has a great deal in common with that of *Psyche*, particularly in the representations of Prometheus and Sisyphus. Therefore the engraving from *The Empress of Morocco* apparently represents the first stage of a recurring hell scene that evolved in each subsequent production.

Further material informing our picture of the scene can be gleaned from a Jean Berain design showing how infernal spirits rose from beneath the stage (plate 5). Although there is no indication in *Albion and Albanus* of the furies rising, they do so in every other English production we have mentioned, and since other characters rise in the second scene of Act II, the lack of a stage direction in this instance must be a simple omission.

Several drawings of costumes from French productions can be added to the simple engravings of Pluto, the furies and the devils in *The Empress of Morocco*. One of Berain's costumes from *Isis* shows the fury Ernnis holding snakes and a flaming torch (plate 6), while his sketch for Lully's *Proserpine* (1680) provides an image of Pluto (plate 7).

Apollo makes two entrances in *Albion and Albanus*, and the machine on which he appears in the second act bears a striking similarity to Berain's drawing of the chariot for *Phaëton* (plate 8):

The farther part of the Heaven opens and discovers a Machine; as it moves forwards the Clouds which are before it divide, and shew the Person of Apollo, holding the Reins in his hand. As they fall lower, the Horses appear with the Rays and a great glory about Apollo.¹⁴

Apollo's presence on the English stage was of course, nothing new. He appears, for instance, in *Pysche*:

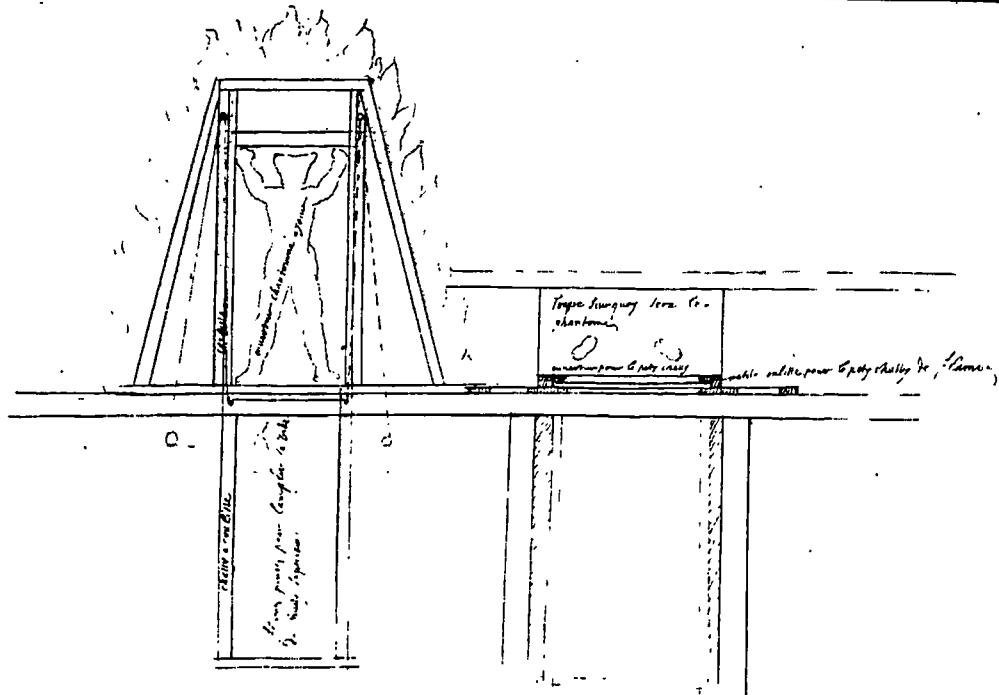
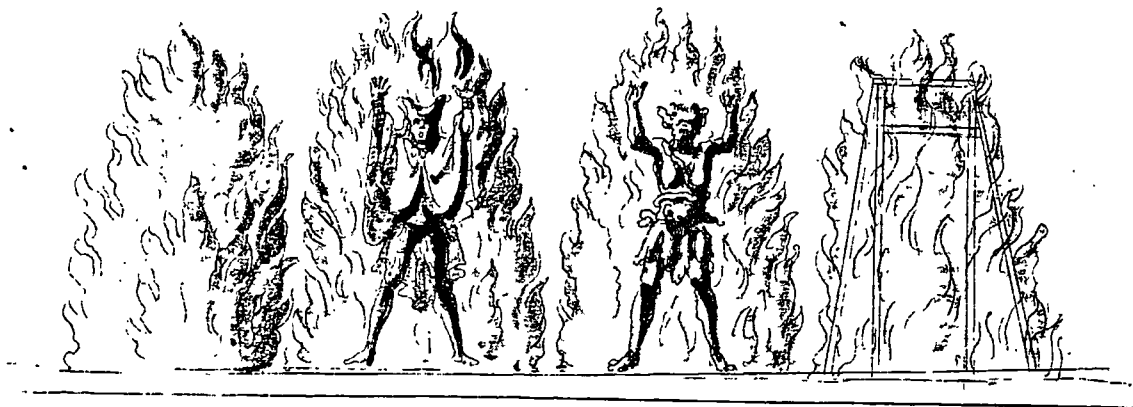
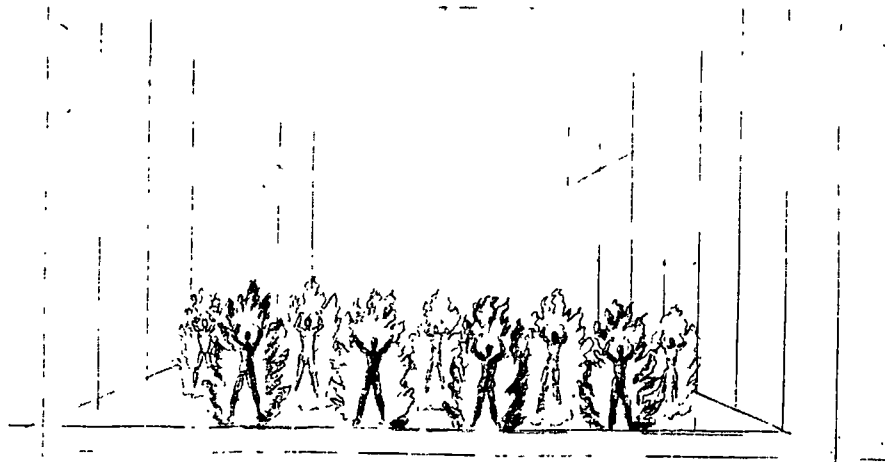
¹⁴ Ibid., p. 39.

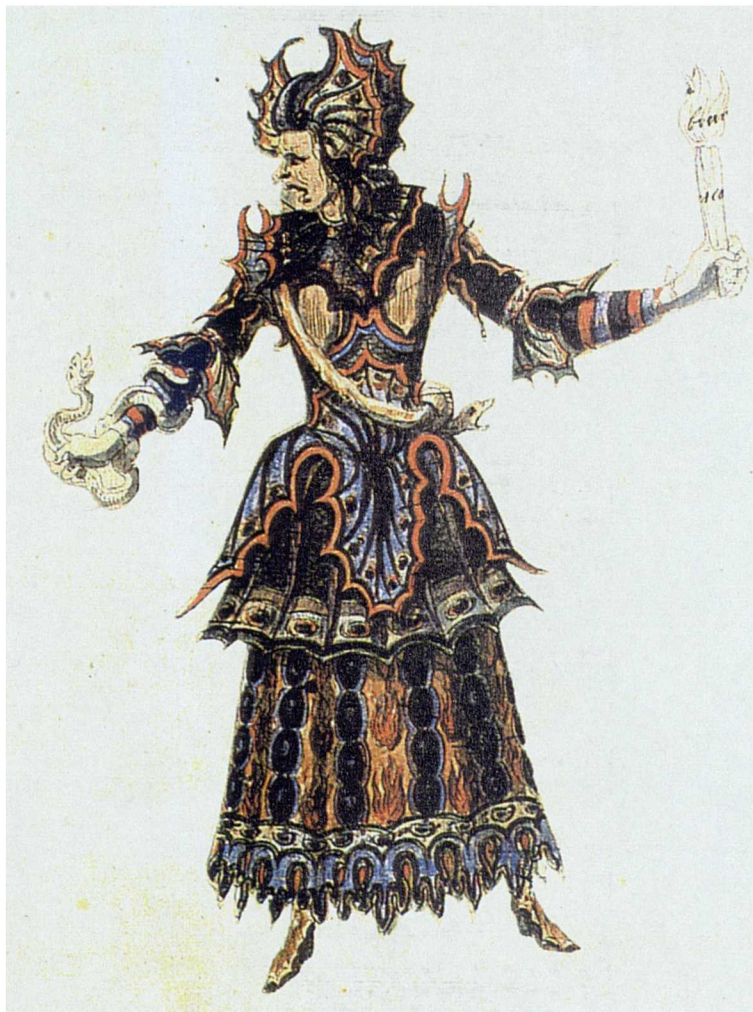


PLATE 4



PLATE 5







Psyche V, iii – 1675

The scene changes to Heav'n. In the highest part is the Palace of Jupiter; the Columns and all the Ornaments of it of Gold. The lower part is all fill'd with Angels and Cupids, with a round open Temple in the midst of it. This Temple is just before the Sun, whose Beams break fiercely through it in divers places: Below the Heav'ns, several Semi-circular Clouds, of the breadth of the whole House, descend. In these Clouds sit the Musicians, richly Habited. On the front-Cloud sits Apollo alone.¹⁵

The god makes an entrance on a machine similar to that in *Psyche* in the final act of *Albion and Albanus* (see below). However, his entrance in the second act is on a different machine, one drawn by horses. Berain's drawing for *Phaëton* matches the description of it far better than the English precedent from *Psyche*. This chariot was the highlight of the scenic spectacle in *Phaëton*, for the team of horses drawing it actually broke apart above the stage. Given the similarity between the Proteus episodes in the two operas, and Betterton's presence in France during the run of *Phaëton*, Berain's sketch for Apollo's chariot may reasonably be considered as a model for the machine on which Apollo enters in the second act of *Albion and Albanus*, though the latter machine does not disintegrate in mid-air. This same machine from *Albion and Albanus* is surely that which reappeared several years later in *The Fairy Queen*, the word-book to which further enhances our picture it:

A Machine appears, the Clouds break from before it, and Phoebus appears in a Chariot drawn by four Horses.¹⁶

The earlier mentioned engraving from *Ariane* is also helpful in imagining the setting of Act III of *Albion and Albanus*. If we replace the street of palaces with 'a row of Cliffs [that] fill up each side of the stage'

¹⁵ Locke, *Dramatic Music*, p.

¹⁶ *The Works of Henry Purcell*, vol. 12, *The Fairy Queen*, ed. J. S. Shedlock, revised by Anthony Lewis (London, 1968), p. xviii. Julia and Frans Muller have suggested that Berain's drawing was the model for the chariot in *The Fairy Queen* in 'Dioclesian on the Dorset Garden Stage', *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell*, ed. Michael Burden (Oxford, 1996), p. 23.

(like the design of the wings for *The Siege of Rhodes*),¹⁷ and replace the view of the Thames and London Bridge with ‘a view of Dover taken from the sea’, a relatively good idea of the scene can be formed. Acacia and Albion would enter on the forestage, while the Nereids, Proteus’s cave and Venus’s machine would all rise behind them in the water which began at the shutters and reached to the back of the stage.

As discussed earlier, the description in Act III of Proteus’s cave strongly resembles that in Act I of Lully’s *Phaëton*. Berain’s sketch of the scene still survives (Plate 9) and the analogous scene in *Albion and Albanus* may have looked much like it. The machine on which Venus enters later in the act, with its ‘great Scallop-shell ... drawn by dolphins’, is likely to have resembled that from Lully’s 1674 production, *Alceste*, showing the nymph Thetis in a chariot drawn by dolphins (plate 10). A later sketch by Berain for Venus’s chariot in *La Naissance de Vénus* (plate 11)¹⁸ shows a similar machine, and offers a glimpse of the mechanism by which it moved about the stage.

Shortly after Venus’s entrance in *Albion and Albanus*, Apollo enters on a machine different from that in Act II.

Whilst a Simphony is playing; a very large, and a very glorious Machine descends: The figure of it Oval, all the Clouds shining with Gold, abundance of Angels and Cherubins flying about’em, and playing in’em; in the midst of it sits Apollo on a Throne of Gold.¹⁹

This machine was not originally planned for the production since it is used in the portion of the opera added after Charles’s death. It bears some resemblance to Apollo’s machine in *Psyche* (see above), but there is enough difference between them to suggest that it was either a new, or a significantly refashioned older machine. In either case, it is likely to have put the scenic designers at Dorset Garden to some trouble and expense,

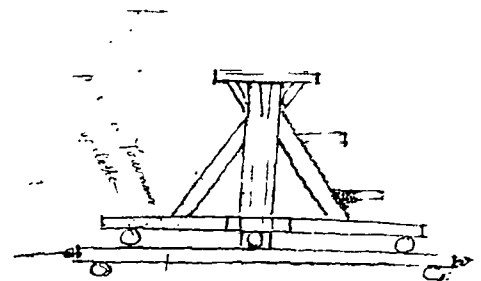
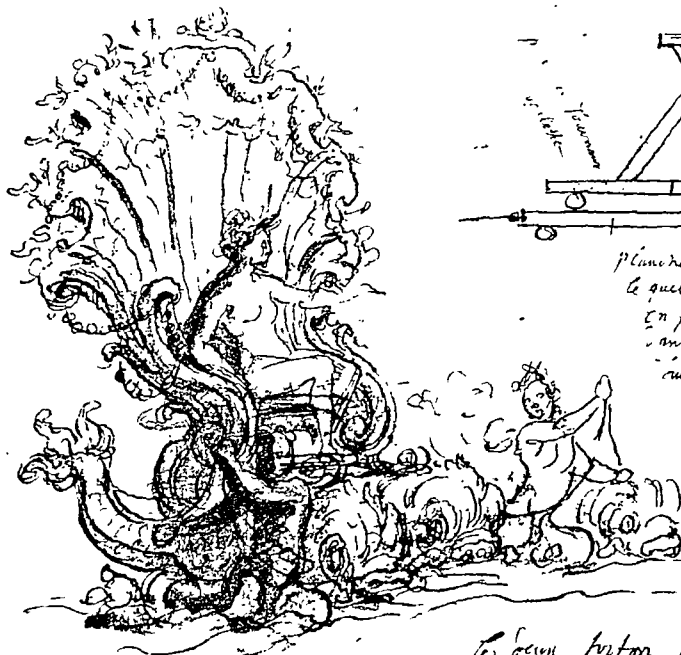
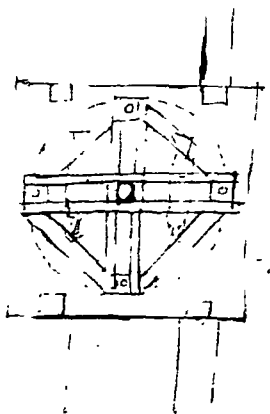
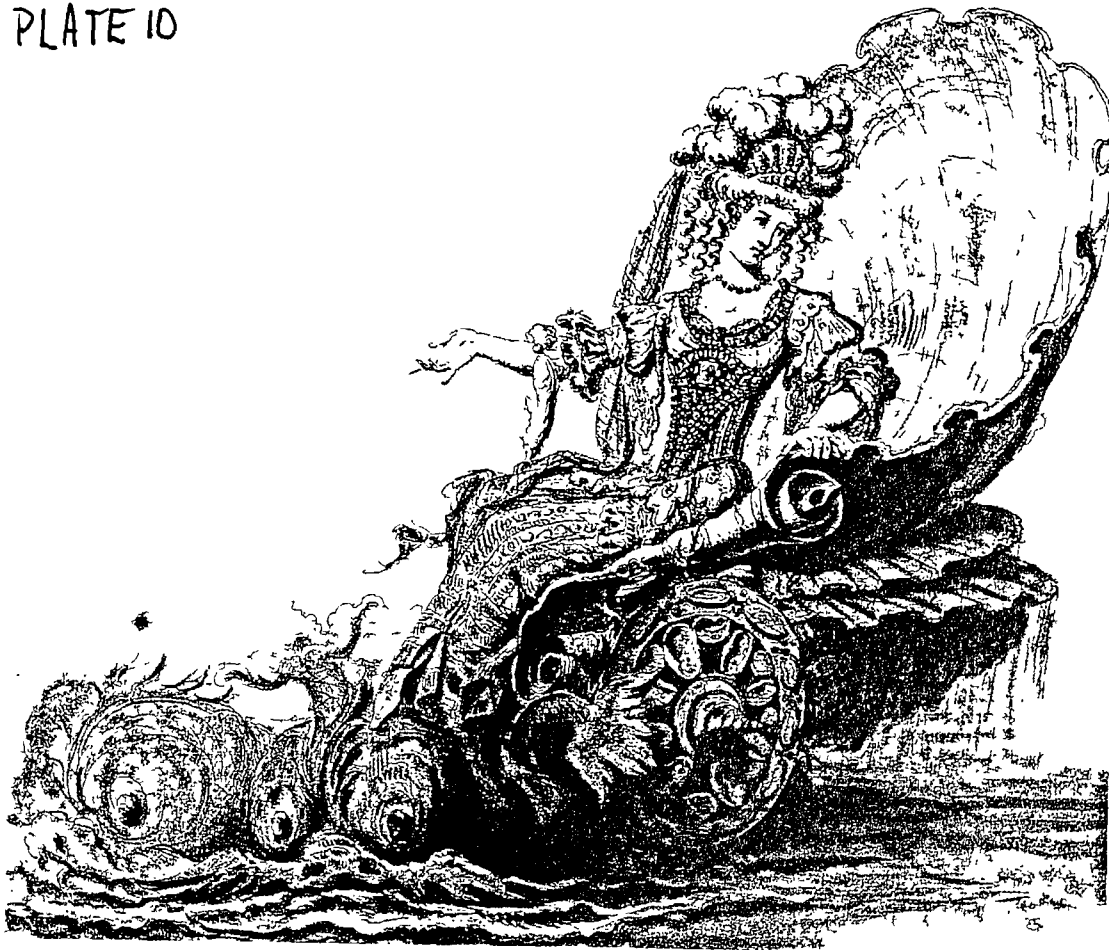
¹⁷ See plate 13 in Powell, *Restoration Theatre Production*.

¹⁸ Opera by Colasse, 1696.

¹⁹ *The Works of John Dryden*, xv, p. 51.

PLATE 9





plancheur qui mène, et
le quel porte l'eau de
en puits
dans la cassette
pour voir

Les deux fontons pour voir l'eau
la maitre une carte : pensez...
Le plancheur sans lais est une eau
par la l'inter une l'os l'aug le
ou bien l'inter l'inter, dans la ma l'aug
qui appelle l'inter l'inter l'inter
l'inter l'inter l'inter l'inter l'inter
l'inter l'inter l'inter l'inter l'inter



since it would have to have been prepared between February and early June and fitted into an already elaborate staging procedure.

Act III of the opera also provides a situation where the scenic design is necessary to advance the dramatic action. Zelota and Democracy's final attempt to destroy Albion is to employ a 'one-Ey'd Archer' to shoot him. As the archer moves into place 'a fire arises betwixt [him] and Albion' (Act III, line 167). When their plot fails, the antagonists try to escape, but find their path blocked by another fire. Hemmed in, they sink below the stage, presumably back to hell. In terms of drama, this is an unquestionably flimsy device, but it nevertheless brings the stage design from the realms of the purely spectacular directly into the action.

The opera's final scene featured a globe resting on a pedestal which rose from the centre of the stage, above which is shown a 'a Vision of the Honors of the Garter'. This pedestal served as Dryden's parting shot to an old (and by then deceased) enemy, the Earl of Shaftesbury.

On the Front of the Pedestal is drawn a Man with a long, lean, pale Face, with Fiends Wings, and Snakes twisted round his Body: He is incompast by several Phanatical Rebellious Heads, who suck poyson from him, which runs out of a Tap in his side.²⁰

The elaborate staging of *Albion and Albanius* cost the United Company dearly, and the unlucky circumstances of its stage run meant that very little of the production's costs were recouped. However, while the immediate result of the production may have been financially disastrous, much of the scenery for it was reusable, and the experience the company gained in mounting such an extravagant undertaking clearly paid off in the dramatic operas of Purcell five years later. Elsewhere I have alluded to the idea that *Albion and Albanius* underlined the company's deficiencies in performing large amounts of vocal music, a problem that seems to have

²⁰ Shaftesbury had suffered an internal injury from a carriage accident. A silver tube was placed in his side to drain the discharge occasioned by the injury.

been remedied by the time Purcell's works were staged. Here it is useful to see how many of the scene designs for the opera were subsequently recycled in productions staged at Dorset Garden.

The most famous, or, rather, most notorious machine from *Albion and Albanus* is Juno's chariot on which she enters in Act I. It was drawn by peacocks and 'As it descends, it opens and discovers the Tail of the Peacock, which is so Large, that it almost fills the opening of the Stage between Scene and Scene'. The chariot merited specific comment from Ferrand Spence and *The Raree Show*, and it made a reappearance in the fifth act of Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* (1692), and later in George Powell's *Brutus of Alba, or Augusta's Triumphs* (1696).²¹ A chariot drawn by peacocks was to carry Juno at her first entry in Congreve and Eccles's *Semele*, while Iris was to enter on a rainbow. The opera, however, was never staged, though both of these machines were probably inspired by those left over from *Albion and Albanus* and in use at Dorset Garden for many years afterwards.

Mercury's chariot, which descends at the opening of the opera, reappeared in the 1694 masque *The Rape of Lucretia by Jupiter* whose initial stage direction is identical to that in *Albion and Albanus*: 'Mercury descends in a chariot drawn by Ravens'.²² This same machine may well have been used in the stagings for the competition involving Congreve's *The Judgement of Paris* performed at Dorset Garden in 1701. As previously noted, Apollo's chariot from the second act was reused in the closing masque of *The Fairy Queen*, while the scene design for the Honours of the Garter which appears in *Albion and Albanus*'s final scene found a place in *King Arthur*.²³

²¹ This dramatic opera should not be confused with Nahum Tate's 1678 play, *Brutus of Alba*.

²² *The Rape of Lucretia by Jupiter – A Masque* (London, 1694).

²³ See A. Pinnock, 'King Arthur expos'd: a lesson in anatomy', *Purcell Studies*, ed. C. Price (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 250-251.

Though many productions subsequent to *Albion and Albanus* made use of single machines or scenes, one production, *Brutus of Alba, or Augusta's Triumphs*, employed almost every scenic element from the opera. Written by George Powell and performed at Dorset Garden in late 1696, *Brutus of Alba* is a dramatic opera, and the texts of the musical interpolations are for the most part adapted from *Albion and Albanus* (see Chapter 10 and Appendix C). The singing characters are also drawn from Grabu and Dryden's collaboration, so many of the costumes may have been reused.

Table 1

Characters that appear in both *Albion and Albanus* and *Brutus of Alba*

| | | | |
|----------|--------|---------|----------|
| Augusta | Juno | Pluto | Nereids |
| Thamesis | Hermes | Alecto | Watermen |
| Apollo | Iris | Tritons | |

Table 2

Scenes and Machines borrowed from *Albion and Albanus* for *Brutus of Alba*

| Scene from <i>Brutus of Alba</i> | <i>Albion and Albanus</i> |
|---|---|
| ACT I The Scene is the River of Thames, the Prospect reaches as far as can be seen from the Bridge, in a clear Day: | II, ii The Scene changes to a Prospect taken from the middle of the Thames; one side of it begins at York-Stairs, thence to White-Hall, and the Mill-Bank, &c. The other from the Saw-Mill, thence to the Bishop's Palace, and on as far as can be seen in a clear Day. |
| On one side of the Stage, lies Augusta, attended by Cities; on the other, Thamesis, attended by Rivers. | I, i [Augusta and Thamesis] lye on Couches, at a distance from each other, in dejected postures; She attended by Cities, He by Rivers. |
| Hermes <i>Descends in his Chariot</i> , drawn by Ravens. | I, i Mercury descends in a Chariot drawn by Ravens. |
| The Scene Changes to a Poetical Hell, there is a Figure of Prometheus chain'd to a Rock, the Vulture gnawing his Liver; Sisiphus rowling the stone, beyond abundance of figures in various torments; then a great Arch of Fire, behind this a Pyramide of Flames in perpetual agitation, behind this glowing fire which Terminates the Prospect; then rises the Court of Pluto, with him the Furies and Alecto. | II, i The Scene is a Poetical Hell. The Change is Total, the Upper part of the House, as well as the Side Scenes. There is the Figure of Prometheus chain'd to a Rock, the Vulture gnawing his liver; Sisiphus rowling the Stone, the Belides, &c. Beyond, abundance of Figures in various Torments. Then a great Arch of Fire, Behind this, Three Pyramids of Flames in perpetual agitation. Beyond this, glowing Fire which terminates the prospect. |
| ACT III Juno descends on her Peacock. As it comes near the Stage, the Clouds open and discover the Tail of the Peacock, which is so wide, it almost covers the Stage. | I, i The Clouds divide, and Juno appears in a Machine drawn by Peacocks; while a Symphony is playing, it moves gently forward, and as it descends, it opens and discovers the Tail of the Peacock, which is so Large, that it almost fills the opening of the Stage between Scene and Scene. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Iris descends on a rainbow and comes forward. | I, i Iris appears on a very large Machine. This was really seen the 18th of March 1684. by Capt. Christopher Gunman, on Board his R. H. Yacht, then in Calais Pierre: He drew it as it then appear'd, and gave a draught of it to us. We have only added the Cloud where the Person of Iris sits. |
| ACT IV Scene, the Thames | II, ii see above |
| Dance of Six Watermen | I, i A Dance of Watermen in the King's and Duke's Liveries. |
| Apollo descends in his Chariot | II, ii The farther part of the Heaven opens and discovers a Machine; as it moves forwards the Clouds which are before it divide, and shew the Person of Apollo, holding the Reins in his hand. As they fall lower, the Horses appear with the Rays and a great glory about Apollo. |
| ACT V As the King enters, the Cave of Proteus rises, which consists of Twelve Arches of the Tuscan Order: The Frontispiece is adorned with a Triton, a Nereid, and several Sea-monsters, enrich'd with Mother-Pearl, Coral, and Sea-shells. At the farther end Proteus appears, with his followers, who come forward and sings. | III, i The Cave of Proteus rises out of the Sea, it consists of several Arches of Rock work, adorn'd with mother of Pearl, Coral, and abundance of Shells of various kinds: Thro; the Arches is seen the Sea, and parts of Dover Peer: In the middle of the Cave is Proteus asleep on a Rock adorn'd with Shells &c. like the Cave ... He comes toward the front of the Stage, and Sings. |
| A very large Machine descends, the figure of it is Oval, the Clouds Gold, with Figures of Cherubims flying about. In the Machine sits Apollo, Cupid, Mars, Vulcan, Juno, Venus etc. | III, i Whilst a Simphony is playing; a very large, and a very glorious Machine descends: The figure of it Oval, all the Clouds shining with Gold, abundance of Angels and Cherubins flying about 'em, and playing in 'em; in the midst of it sits Apollo on a Throne of Gold: he comes from the Machine to Albion. |

In several instances, the descriptions of the scenes in *Brutus of Alba* supplement and clarify those in *Albion and Albanus*. They confirm, for instance, the earlier conclusion that characters in the Poetical Hell of *Albion and Albanus* rose through traps in the stage floor. Likewise, they expand the description of the machine upon which Apollo enters in Act III of *Albion and Albanus*. In the latter we are told that it is 'very large, and very glorious' while in *Brutus of Alba* it is found to be large enough to carry six gods. This knowledge permits the possibility that musicians may have played from the machine when it descended in *Albion and Albanus* since there certainly would have been room for them. Perhaps most interesting is the description of Proteus's cave found in *Brutus of Alba*, which differs from that in *Albion and Albanus*. Either the cave was refashioned for *Brutus of Alba* with 'Arches of the Tuscan Order' replacing 'Arches of

Rock work' (though the former would not seem to warrant the word 'cave'), or the scene looked like some combination of the two descriptions, like that in the Berain sketch from *Phaëton* where man-made columns meld into an arch of rock.

Dance in *Albion and Albanus*

Evidence that helps us to reconstruct and visualise the choreographic elements of the production is more scarce than that for the scenic design. A lack of source material regarding stage dancing in the Restoration theatre, as well as the movements of the soloists and chorus, once again make it necessary to turn towards French practice, on which more information is available. We cannot assume that practices in both the French court and theatre were the same as those in England, but Betterton's trips to France, including that of 1683, suggest that he was familiar with French theatrical dance. Moreover, from the productions of *Ariane* and the *Ballet et Musique pour le Divertissement du Roi de la Grande Bretagne*, we know that French dancers and choreographers had brought their work directly to England. Three of these dancers, Pécour, Lestang, and Romain Dumirail, had direct contact with Grabu (see Chapter 2), and they all subsequently performed in productions supervised by Lully.²⁴ In addition, there survives a nearly complete musical theatre production by the composer, dancer and choreographer Jean Favier, who had previously collaborated with Cambert on the *Ballet et Musique pour le Divertissement du Roi* at the English court. The work provides a great deal of information on his choreographic principles. Thus, while we cannot say what aspects of French dance and choreographic practices, if any, were adopted in the English theatre, we can

²⁴ Lestang and Dumirail also appeared at the English court in *Calisto*. It is worth noting that Grabu attended rehearsals with these dancers, and the possibility that he played some part in rehearsing them cannot be discounted. He may well have attempted to emulate Lully's practice of not only composing and rehearsing music to his theatrical productions, but also choreographing and rehearsing the dancers, and sometimes dancing himself.

certainly learn many aspects of performance with which the creators of *Albion and Albanus* were familiar.²⁵

The starting point for examining dance in *Albion and Albanus* must of course be the score and libretto. For the most part, these two sources tell us little beyond where dances occurred within the work and what groups of characters performed them. On several occasions the number of dancers is also either given or suggested by the title. Only in the third act, where the plot is advanced through dance – that is the series of three dances from the Ayre for the White Boys through the Ayre for the Fighting White Boys and Sectaries – is there any indication of what the dancing must have looked like. As one can see in Table 3, in contrast to most of the dances in the opera, the descriptions of the group from Act III provide a vivid picture of the stage action.

With the information provided by the score and libretto, several inferences can be made about the numbers of performers involved in individual dances and in the whole production. First, it seems reasonable to assume that the twenty-four dancers in the final chorus represent all of those used in the opera, and that these dancers were distinct from the singers.²⁶ Furthermore, it seems reasonable to divide these dancers into two groups of twelve, where one group perform the formal dances associated with the opera's protagonists, and the other perform anti-masque-like, fantastic dances associated with the opera's antagonists. Such a division can in part be deduced from the libretto's direction that twelve dancers perform in one

²⁵ Richard Semmens in his chapter 'Dance Music in Purcell's Operas', *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell*, ed. by M. Burden (Oxford, 1996) surveys the influence of French theatrical dance in England and comes to the conclusion 'that in most ways the theatrical dance of France and England c.1685-1720 was essentially the same' (p. 187). He notes Grabu's involvement in *Ariane*, but never mentions *Albion and Albanus*, though the information contained in the score and word-book of the opera is surely an important link between French and English theatrical dance and therefore is an important factor in understanding dance in Purcell's operas.

²⁶ I am assuming that, since the dancers 'joyn all the time in a Chorus, and Dance to the end of the Opera', they could not have also sung, and thus, that the singers and dancers must be two distinct groups.

Table 3 Dances in *Albion and Albanus*

| Movement number and title in score | Title in libretto | No. of Dancers | Description of the dance |
|---|---|----------------|--|
| ACT I | | | |
| 8 Ayre for Mercury's Followers | Dance for Mercury's Followers | | |
| 16 Ayre for the Marines | A Dance of Watermen in the King's and Duke's liveries | | |
| 22 Ayre for the Four Parts of the World | Entry; Representing the Four parts of the World | | |
| 23 Second Ayre | – | | |
| ACT II | | | |
| 32 Ayre for the Devils | A single Entry of a Devil | 1 | |
| 34 Second Ayre for the Devils | An Entry of 12 Devils | 12 | |
| 43 Ayre for the God of Waters | ?(Neptune rises out of the Water ...) | | ?(Neptune rises out of the Water, and a Train of Rivers, Tritons, and Sea Nymphs attend him) |
| 45 Chacon | Chacon | | |
| ACT III | | | |
| 45 Ayre for the Tritons | Tritons dance | | |
| 53 Minuet | – | | (Instrumental) |
| 54 Minuet | – | | (Vocal: Two Nereids) |
| 55 Ayre for the Boys in White | The Boys in White begin a Fantastick Dance | 6? | |
| 57 Ayre for the sectaries | Six sectaries begin a formal affected Dance | 6 | Six sectaries begin a formal affected Dance, the two gravest whisper the other Four, and draw 'em into the Plot: They pull out and deliver Libels to 'em, which they receive. |
| 59 Ayre for the Fighting White Boys and Sectaries | The White Boys dance about the Saints ... | 12? | The White Boys dance about the Saints: The Saints draw out the Association, and offer it to 'em: They refuse it and quarrel about it: Then the White Boys and Saints fall into a confus'd Dance, imitating fighting: The White Boys at the end of the Dance, being driven out by the Sectaries with Protestant Flails. |
| 67 Ayre for the Graces and Loves | Graces and Loves Dance an entry | | |
| 69 Entry of Hero's | Here the Heros Dance is perform'd | | |
| 75 (Prelude and Final Chorus) | Twenty four Dancers joyn ... | 24 | Twenty four Dancers joyn all the time in a Chorus, and Dance to the end of the Opera. |

of the Ayres for the Devils.²⁷ The three dances in Act III involving the White Boys and the Sectaries may be seen to confirm this. It seems plausible to balance the six dancers explicitly designated in the Ayre for the Sectaries with six White Boys. Thus, twelve dancers would perform the Ayre for the Fighting White Boys and Sectaries, neatly corresponding to the twelve devils of Act II.²⁸

If these dancers were balanced by twelve more associated with the protagonists, six of the latter could have been employed in the Dance for Mercury's Followers and six in the Dance of Watermen of Act I.²⁹ Likewise, in Act II, the characters who enter with Neptune in the Masque of the Sea may have been divided into six Tritons and six Sea Nymphs (dancers), and the same Train of Rivers (singers) that attended Thamesis in the first act.³⁰ We may also assume that the same six Tritons dance the Ayre for the Tritons in Act III, while the former Sea Nymphs could have become Nereids to dance the instrumental Minuet (No. 53). Finally, these twelve dancers would be split into two equal groups to dance the complementary Ayre for the Graces and Loves and Entry of the Heroes towards the end of the act.

There is little to no information to suggest who the dancers were, and one may doubt, given the inconsistency between the opera's final stage direction, specifying oboes and trumpets, and the score, which does not indicate either instrument, whether the company would have had twenty-four dancers available. The final act of *The Fairy Queen*, however, suggests

²⁷ There is a discrepancy between the libretto and the score in that one of the dances is described as 'a single entry of a devil' in the libretto, while the title of both of the dances is given in the plural in the score. See Chapter 4.

²⁸ Such a division for the Ayre for the Fighting White Boys and Sectaries would conform to the symmetry that predominates in the dances in *Le Mariage de la Grosse Cathos*. R. Harris-Warrick and C. Marsh, op. cit., p. 65.

²⁹ It may be relevant to recall that in the Dance of the Waterman in *Brutus of Alba, or Augusta's Triumph*, six dancers are specified (see Table 2).

³⁰ If twelve Tritons and Sea Nymphs in the Masque of the Sea balanced the twelve devils from the Masque in Hell, such a parallel would have matched Grabu's plan to give the masques parallel musical structures.

they did, since it concludes with a Grand Dance of twenty-four persons, perhaps after the example of *Albion and Albanus*.

The lack of an acknowledged choreographer is particularly conspicuous. Downes was careful to note *St. Andre* as the choreographer of *Psyche* and Josias Priest as the choreographer for *Dioclesian*, *King Arthur*, and *The Fairy Queen*; it seems odd that he neglected the choreographer of *Albion and Albanus* when dance played such an important part in the production. Perhaps Betterton also engaged a French choreographer at the same time that he engaged Grabu, though only the composer's name appears in relation to Betterton's French sojourn.

With the information on dancing provided from the libretto and score exhausted, it is useful to compare *Albion and Albanus* with French sources and to speculate about what aspects of French theatrical dance may have influenced it. One source of primary importance is Jean Favier's *Le Mariage de la Grosse Cathos*, a masquerade, performed at Versailles in 1688. Detailed instructions from the work have survived, including both the music, and choreographic and dance notation. Rebecca Harris-Warrick and Carol Marsh have distilled several general principles from the work, which, they suggest, shed light on dance and movement in Lully's operas,³¹ and which also have resonances in *Albion and Albanus*. First, they note that 'at any one time there is but a single focus for the audience and a single idea being expressed ... Thus if four dancers perform a menuet, that menuet represents the action of the moment, and none of the remaining characters would do anything that could draw the attention of the audience to themselves'.³² In the case of a chorus that is also a dance a single focus still exists, since 'the dancers act out the singers' words, serving as active bodies for the choir;' however, 'the visual and textual manifestations of a single

³¹ R. Harris-Warrick and C. Marsh, op. cit., especially pp. 59-66.

³² Ibid, p. 60.

idea may be consecutive rather than simultaneous'.³³ All of these principles resonate in *Albion and Albanus*. It is easy to imagine in the Chacon, for instance, the dancers remaining still during the sung passages and coming to the fore during the instrumental interludes. There are frequent pairings of a vocal movement with a dance on the same theme, most obviously the two solo-chorus-dance series in Act III: 'Peace and Pleasures' followed by an entry for the Graces and Loves, and 'But above all human measure' followed by an entry for the Heroes. The final chorus of *Albion and Albanus* combines singing and dance, and here we may imagine the singers in a static position, while the dancers provide a complementary visual presentation. In fact, it seems likely that the chorus was usually static, perhaps arrayed in a line across the borders of the stage. Such an arrangement exists throughout *Le Mariage de la Grosse Cathos*. Likewise, Lois Rosow, examining practices at the Paris Opéra after 1700 in order to speculate on Lully's operas, surmises that the chorus probably stood in a line along the sides of the stage and was more or less immobile. 'Thus, Lully's chorus provided only the voices of the characters it represented; the actions of those characters were supplied by dancers'.³⁴

Harris-Warrick and Marsh also identify three types of dance: abstract (or formal), mimetic, and pantomimic.³⁵ The first are constructed primarily of familiar dance steps in abstract figures such as circles and squares. The second, while still using recognisable dance steps, include gestures taken from real life. The final type, pantomime, may be completely stepless and instead consist of gesture alone. Lully was extremely influential in developing this last type of dance, one of the most

³³ Ibid, p. 61.

³⁴ L. Rosow, 'Performing a choral dialogue by Lully', *Early Music* 15 (1987), pp. 325-330, especially 329-330.

³⁵ R. Harris-Warrick and C. Marsh, op. cit., p. 64. Patricia Howard makes a similar distinction, dividing dances into two types, formal (menuet, passepied, gigue) and pantomime (character dances based on traditional patterns but modified to interpret the character or incident portrayed), *The Operas of Jean-Baptiste Lully*, p. 146.

famous exemplars coming from *Isis*, where the movements of the cold people are ‘composed entirely of gestures and external signs of people shivering with cold; and ... not so much as a single step of our ordinary dance’.³⁶ The first two types of dance certainly had English parallels; abstract dance would have been as common on the Restoration stage as in France. Likewise, the mimetic dances would have found a parallel in the anti-masque section of the court masques, and in stage dances like the one described by Cosmo the Third, visiting the King’s Theatre in 1669:

A well-arranged ballet, regulated by the sound of various instruments, with new and fanciful dances after the English manner, in which different actions were counterfeited, the performers passing gracefully from one to another, so as to render intelligible, by their movements, the acts they were representing.³⁷

Whether the Restoration stage also had stepless pantomimic dance is uncertain; Purcell certainly knew of the cold scene from *Isis* which served as his model for the scene of the Cold Genius in *King Arthur*. In *Albion and Albanius*, most of the dances associated with the protagonists were probably formal and abstract in nature. Yet it is obvious from the stage directions that the dances for the White Boys and Sectaries were mimetic and perhaps pantomimic in nature.³⁸ Not only would this allow the dancers to make these characters grotesque, but also such a style would be necessary since these dances carry forward the dramatic plot; the gestures would have had to clearly communicate the action to the audience. A similar concern for grotesquerie must also have characterised the dances for the devils in the Act II Masque in Hell.

It is clear from the evidence presented in this chapter that strong circumstantial evidence links French scenic and dance practices with those

³⁶ Abbé Dubos, as quoted in R. Harris-Warrick and C. Marsh, op. cit., p. 64.

³⁷ The play described was *Love’s Mistress*, performed on 24 May 1669. See *The London Stage 1660-1800*, i: 1660-1700, ed. W. B. Van Lennep (Carbondale, 1965), p. cxxxvii.

³⁸ A point completely ignored in R. Semmens discussion of choreography for Purcell’s operas, op. cit.

in England. Furthermore, *Albion and Albanus* provides a direct link through which these practices could have been both transferred and strengthened. The neglect into which the opera has fallen has caused several writers on the dramatic operas of Purcell to miss the role *Albion and Albanus* may well play in linking French and English theatrical practices. Likewise, the failure to analyze carefully the scenic and dance elements of the opera has masked the extent to which Dryden and Betterton succeeded in integrating these elements into its dramatic action. No other English production to play on the Restoration stage could boast not only a dramatic role for the music (a necessity in through-composed opera), but also a dramatic role for both the scenic design and dance. Weaknesses in aspects of both the drama and music of *Albion and Albanus* are apparent, but so too are the successes in many of its individual parts. A measure of respect for the creators in terms of the latter must balance the criticism heaped upon them for the opera's shortcomings.

Chapter 10

The Legacy of *Albion and Albanus*

Albion and Albanus enjoyed only the briefest of lives before disappearing permanently from the English stage. This circumstance might suggest that its influence was equally inconsequential and short-lived. At first glance this seems to be a reasonable conclusion – no other through-composed opera appeared upon the stage for another fifteen years and the work's French style soon became thoroughly outdated.¹ Yet such a dismissal is premature, and even the most hostile of Grabu's detractors have admitted that the work exerted at least some influence on Purcell.² Prior to the composition of *Albion and Albanus*, Grabu himself is likely to have had a more significant effect on English music than has yet been recognized, at least in terms of the spread of French style and practice. As Robert Ford has pointed out, 'the music historian must recognize that the French style had no more immediate proponent in England'. Nevertheless, the opera and the exigencies of its performance had the greatest impact on English theatrical music. It has elsewhere been suggested (see Chapter 8) that Grabu's connections with French wind players and the demand for such players in the performance of the opera was an important factor in re-introducing the oboe and recorder to England. Similarly the requirement for a greater number of capable English singers, and extravagant machines and stage designs, forced the United Company to develop its infrastructure of material and personnel. Though *Albion and Albanus* initially left the company with serious financial problems, there was some long-term consolation to be found in the improved stock of

The 1686 performance of *Cadmus and Hermione* and the 1689 school performance of *Dido and Aeneas* are exceptions, though the former (and possibly the latter) was not a newly composed work.

¹ E. J. Dent, *Foundations of English Opera* (Cambridge, 1928), p. 167.

² R. Ford, 'Nicolas Dieupart's book of trios', *Recherches sur la Musique Française Classique* 20 (1981), p. 52

scenes and machines and in the experience gained from mounting the most elaborate creation to appear on the Restoration stage.

If *Albion and Albanus* did not create enough enthusiasm (and hence profit and/or patronage) to spawn more through-composed operatic works, or to reverse the decline in popularity among English composers of the French style, it did, as we have noted, influence Purcell. While several writers have commented upon this influence, the degree and specific nature of it has gone largely unstudied. Edward Dent reckoned that ‘there can ... be little doubt that Purcell studied the score with discriminating attention, for there are a few passages that can often and easily be paralleled in the English composer’s operas’,⁴ but he made little suggestion as to what these parallels might be. Peter Holman finds that Purcell ‘borrowed some superficial features of Grabu’s music’, while Martin Adams writes that ‘*Dioclesian* is indebted in concept and detail to a few definable models, notably Grabu’s *Albion and Albanus*’,⁵ though once again, what these details are remains for the most part unspecified.

Curtis Price, examining *Albion and Albanus* in the context of his discussion of *Dioclesian*, provides the most detailed description of Grabu’s influence upon Purcell. Price offers the style of a series of grand choruses and heroic arias in the dramatic opera’s second act, the ground ‘Triumph victorious Love’, and the blandness of many of *Dioclesian*’s numbers as evidence of Grabu’s influence.⁶ Yet even here the particulars are sketchy. There are, undoubtedly, both general and specific ways in which Grabu and his opera made an impact upon Purcell. *Dioclesian*, Purcell’s first large-scale theatrical composition after *Albion and Albanus*, understandably contains the most frequent and obvious examples, but hints of Grabu’s influence can be

⁴ Dent, op. cit., p. 167.

⁵ P. Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 383-384; M. Adams, *Henry Purcell: The origins and development of his musical style* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 63.

⁶ C. Price, *Henry Purcell and the London Stage* (Cambridge, 1984), chapter 6.

found as early as *Dido and Aeneas*, and the welcome odes for James II. While specific models from Grabu may not be evident in Purcell's later dramatic operas, the musical and dramatic lessons (both positive and negative) he gleaned from studying Grabu's score (and probably seeing the opera in production) surely remained with him.

It is certainly possible that general aspects of Grabu's French style could have affected Purcell during the former's first extended stay in England, perhaps through exposure to his French-style dances and overtures. Similar, if less concentrated, aspects of French musical fashion were likely to have reached Purcell through his contact with Pelham Humfrey as well, and it would be a keen scholar indeed who could find and demonstrate Grabu's specific influence before 1684. However, in *Dido and Aeneas* one can discern what may be Grabu's first direct influence on Purcell. The Echo Dance for the Furies from Act II of *Dido* bears the unmistakable traits of a French-style dance for evil or fantastic spirits. In particular, the short anacrusis and the furious violin roulades are typical features of a type of supernatural dance common in Lully's works (see Chapter 6.3). Grabu provided one in *Albion and Albanus*, and had published another, *Air pour les songes affreux*, in June of 1684. This dance is likely to have been written for Rochester's *Valentinian*, a performance of which took place at court on 11 February 1684.⁷ Purcell may have had the opportunity to hear and see it, and if, as has been suggested, *Dido* was composed in 1684, the possibility exists that he used Grabu's dance as a model for his own Echo Dance for the Furies.⁸ As was to be the case

⁷ *Pastoralle*, London, 1684. See P. Holman, 'Valentinian, Rochester and Louis Grabu', *The Well Enchanting Skill: Music, Poetry, and Drama in the Culture of the Renaissance: Essays in Honour of F. W. Sternfeld* (Oxford, 1990), pp.127-141.

⁸ B. Wood and A. Pinnock, "'Unscarr'd by turning times'?: the dating of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*", *Early Music* 20 (1992), p.388. It should be noted that in the same article, Wood and Pinnock stress that borrowings between Purcell and Blow occurred 'almost exclusively from each other's recent music ... usually it is only a few months or even weeks' (p. 381). If Purcell did write *Dido and Aeneas* in 1684, a borrowing from Grabu's music for *Valentinian* would conform to this pattern. See Chapter 6.1 for the discussion of the possibility that Grabu borrowed from *Dido*.

with subsequent borrowings, Purcell outstrips Grabu in inventiveness and musical expression, for he was able to combine the characteristics of a conventional French theatre dance with an echo effect that is spiced by his own ingenious harmonic manipulations of the repeated material.

Several aspects of Purcell's odes from 1685 onwards suggest that he may have been assimilating practices from Grabu's opera performed in that year. In particular, Purcell's woodwind writing appears to have been spurred on by the example of Grabu. Though he had first written for woodwinds in odes dating from 1681-2, oboes and recorders are subsequently absent from Purcell's works for more than a three year period until 'Ye tuneful Muses' in 1686. Peter Holman has suggested that the French wind players for whom Purcell wrote in the early 80s left Britain shortly after the performance of 'What shall be done in behalf of the man' in 1682.⁹ If this is the case, *Albion and Albanus* signals the return of woodwinds to England, and Purcell was quick to make use of them again. Furthermore, Purcell's use of woodwinds in alternation with other instruments or voices is more assured in 1686. In comparison with the ritornel from 'What shall be done in behalf of the man',¹⁰ which alternates recorders and violins, the verse trio 'To music's softer, but yet kind and pleasing melody' from 'Ye tuneful Muses', which alternates recorders with voices, is both a more confident and a more substantial passage. Grabu's skilful handling of contrasted strings and recorders in the Concert of Venus may well have influenced this section of 'Ye tuneful Muses', and seems to have prompted a more direct reply from Purcell in *Dioclesian* (see below).

Certain features of the 1687 ode for James II, 'Sound the trumpet, beat

⁹ P. Holman, *Henry Purcell* (Oxford, 1994), p. 157.

¹⁰ The ritornel follows the text 'And now every tongue shall make open confession/ That York, royal York, is the next in succession' and is repeated after the passage which ends 'Still may Charles/ Cherish with princely care this royal mate'.

the drum' also suggest that Purcell had been challenged and influenced by *Albion and Albanus*. The most obvious comparison lies between the chaconnes in both works. Purcell's chaconne cannot be considered to be a direct reply to Grabu's; that was to wait until the full resources of a theatrical performance were at his disposal. Nevertheless, the movement does evince an absorption of several lessons from Grabu's Chacon. Martin Adams suggests that Purcell's 'explicitly French piece' was a response not only to *Albion and Albanus*, but to Lully's *Cadmus et Hermione* (performed in London in 1686) which also contains a large chaconne. He says of the two French-style pieces that 'Lully's is by far the best' and goes on to demonstrate the ways in which Purcell's composition differs from Lully's.¹¹ Purcell's piece exhibits 'contrapuntal manipulation [such as] part and melodic inversion, [creating] variations which change the harmonic progressions,' and 'bold groupings of variations, sharply contrasted in textural type, harmonic colouring and rhythmic character'.¹² He also emphasizes the idea that Purcell's chaconne displays a greater sense of musical drama than does Lully's.

Interestingly, several of the elements that Adams attributes to Purcell can be found in Grabu's Chacon. As we have seen in Chapter 6.3, Grabu provided carefully differentiated rhythmic variations that display a staged increase in surface rhythm. Purcell employs a similar increase in rhythmic intensity in bars 1-56. Grabu also carefully builds the harmonic complexity of the Chacon, and while it certainly does not reach the level of sophistication that Purcell's does, it goes much further than Lully's harmonically bland offering.¹³ These factors, along with a more sophisticated approach to

¹¹ M. Adams, op. cit., p. 52.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Lully employs no planned gradation of rhythmic or harmonic intensity. The movement contains only a smattering of flats, and every repetition of the theme cadences solidly on the tonic. When we compare this to the Chacon in *Albion and Albanus* (see Chapter 6.3), Adams's unsupported assertion of the superiority of Lully's composition must be questioned. Grabu's Chacon is compared to that which Lully wrote for *Amadis* in Chapter 7.

instrumentation, contribute to an inherent musical drama within the movement, an element that is, as Adams rightly asserts, clearly missing from Lully's chaconne. Grabu's miscalculation in the length of the movement's final section should not obscure the successful aspects of structure, elements which do not seem to have escaped Purcell's attention.

The solo and chorus units, 'See, the god of seas attends thee', which frame Grabu's Chacon, may also have found a resonance in the chorus 'With plenty surrounding and loyalty sounding' which precedes Purcell's chaconne. Both contain passages where a long held note in the bass is elaborated by the strings, upper voices of the chorus or both. The texts may have played some part in suggesting the parallel; in *Albion and Albanius*, the latter (representing James) is 'welcom[ed] to the wat'ry plain', while in the ode, the chorus are 'sounding/ Io peans of joy/ ... to the monarch of Britain and lord of the Ocean [James once again]' (ex. 1.a, b, c). Likewise, the passages of non-sequential running quaver thirds which decorate the end of Purcell's chorus (bars 31-36) resemble those found in example 1.a and elsewhere in Grabu's opera.

Grabu's influence can be seen most clearly in Purcell's first dramatic opera, *Dioclesian*. The nature of the influence has taken many forms, and it seems in some places that Purcell intended to trump specific movements and practices in Grabu's opera.¹⁴ Nevertheless, Curtis Price has argued that *Dioclesian* is not necessarily an assault on Grabu's abilities.¹⁵ Rather, *Albion and Albanius* must have served more as a learning experience for all involved, especially Dryden and Betterton, and for Purcell as a spectator. Purcell's imitation several of Grabu's techniques shows an understanding of the opera's successful aspects, rather than an attempt to ridicule it.

¹⁴ E. Dent, op. cit., p. 202.

¹⁵ C. Price, op. cit., pp. 268-269.

Ex. 1.a*Albion and Albanus* Act II, 'See, the God of seas' (solo), bars 27-30

Vn I
Vn II

Tam

Bc

Wel - come to the wa - t'ry - plain,

Ex. 1.b*Albion and Albanus* Act II, 'See, the God of seas' (chorus), bars 27-30

Vn I
Va I

Va II
Va III

S
A

T

B
B Vn
Bc

Wel - come to the wa - t'ry plain, Wel - come to the wa - t'ry

Wel - come to the wa - t'ry plain,

Wel - come to the wa - t'ry plain, Wel - come to the wa - t'ry

Wel - come to the wa - t'ry plain,

plain; Wel - come to the wa - t'ry plain;

Wel - come to the wa - t'ry plain, Wel - come to the wa - t'ry plain;

plain; Wel - come to the wa - t'ry plain;

Wel - come to the wa - t'ry plain;

Ex. 1.c

Sound the trumpet, beat the drum, 'With Plenty surrounding', bars 12-22

The musical score is written for five parts: Violins I and II, Viola, Alto, and Bass. It is in 3/4 time. The lyrics are: "g And l y ty d g l - cæ - an, l - Pæ - an - s of Pæ - an - s f l - Pæ - an, l -". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'p' and 'f'.

At its most superficial level, Purcell's debt to *Albion and Albanus* may be seen in the publication the full score of *Dioclesian* after the manner of the 1687 print of Grabu's opera. Grabu had modelled his publication on the Ballard editions of Lully's operas, even following the practice of making manuscript corrections of printing errors, a feature also found in Purcell's score. However, many more substantive influences in terms of musical form and style are apparent in Purcell's score.

From the opening bars of *Dioclesian*, Purcell's intention of responding directly to *Albion and Albanus* is evident. It is surely no coincidence that a French-style overture, which closely resembles the overture to Grabu's opera, precedes Act I of *Dioclesian*. Purcell's use of a 'drag coda' to end the movement, and his choice of a dotted quaver pattern in the

fast section, clearly parallel similar features in the overture to *Albion and Albanus* (ex. 2.a & b).

Ex. 2.a *Albion and Albanus*, Overture, bars 18-24

The musical score for Ex. 2.a consists of three staves: Violins I (Vn I), Violins II/III (Va II, Va III), and Bass Violoncello (B Vn). The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The first system shows the beginning of the section with a '2' marking under the second staff. The second system continues the melodic development, with 'simile' markings above the first and second staves, indicating repeated rhythmic patterns. The third system shows further melodic elaboration with 'simile' markings above the first, second, and fourth staves.

Ex. 2.b *Dioclesian*, Overture, bars 21-27

The musical score for Ex. 2.b consists of four staves: Violins I and II (Vn I, Vn II), Viola (Via), and Bass Violoncello (B Vn, Bc). The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The first system shows the beginning of the section with a '4' marking under the second staff. The second system continues the melodic development, with a 'tr' marking above the first staff, indicating a trill. The third system shows further melodic elaboration with a '4' marking under the second staff.

Perhaps the most important aspect of *Albion and Albanus* to attract Purcell's attention was Grabu's use of concerto-like alternations between pairs of opposing instruments. The Concert of Venus in Act III is constructed around the contrast between paired recorders, paired violins and the full string band (see Chapter 6.3). Though, as noted earlier, Purcell had experimented

with similar effects in the early 80s, Grabu's Concert was both more substantial and more confident. Purcell seems to have carefully observed Grabu's practice, and in the prelude to the chorus 'Behold, O mighty'st of gods' he writes a movement with concerto-like alternations between strings and oboes which may have been modelled on the Concert of Venus. The variety in the length of exchanges between the oboes and strings of the former seem clearly to echo the similar exchanges between recorders and violins in the Concert of Venus. Martin Adams sees this prelude and chorus as 'epitomis[ing] Purcell's sureness of touch,' with one of its most important features being 'the masterly use of distinct groups of strings and oboes, in all three possible combinations'.¹⁶ In fact, Grabu's movement exploits an additional sonority lacking in the Purcell, the use of paired violins with continuo alone.

Purcell more than compensated in terms of sonority in the spectacular ground 'Triumph victorious Love'. In addition to expanding upon Grabu's concerto effect, it offers a riposte to *Albion and Albanius*'s massive Chacon. Many of the similarities between the two are superficial. Both share the same key, C major with a move to the tonic minor, and both conclude with a separate movement for full chorus. Both also exploit contrasting forces; Grabu's Chacon is scored for five-part strings, two recorders, guitars, three soloists, and chorus, while Purcell's movement uses four-part strings, a pair of trumpets, three oboes and a bassoon, and three soloists.¹⁷ Aside from these similarities, the compositions could not be more different.¹⁸ Grabu's movement is a true chaconne; he does not strictly repeat the bass, instead running it through many rhythmic and melodic variations. Purcell's

¹⁶ M. Adams, op. cit., p. 291.

¹⁷ In a personal communication, Bruce Wood has suggested that recorders took the two upper parts of the trio section between bars 94 and 110. If this is so, it shows Purcell using every instrument available to him to expand upon the precedent of elaborate instrumentation set by Grabu.

¹⁸ A point made by C. Price, op. cit., p. 286.

movement is more or less a strict ground, altered only to allow a movement to the parallel minor. While the concerto-like shifts between sonorities may have been inspired by Grabu's practice, the musical material is thoroughly Italianate. Yet one cannot help thinking that the lessons Purcell learned from Grabu's Chacon in terms of structure and balance are more than skin-deep. Purcell must have recognized that the miscalculations in the structure and proportion of Grabu's Chacon, for he corrects all of its formal mistakes. Where Grabu neglected to bring the voices back at the return of the tonic major, Purcell brings them back with a restatement of their original material. Likewise, where Grabu over-extended the return of the tonic major, Purcell foreshortens it (a technique he also used in 'Sound the trumpet, beat the drum'). Recognizing the strength of closing the Chacon in *Albion and Albanus* with a duple chorus, Purcell does the same, but the brevity of the return to the tonic major in the ground means that the chorus carries a greater force.

A parallel between two extended solo and chorus movements from the operas provides an equally interesting instance where Purcell and his librettist drew upon Grabu and Dryden's collaboration. The final chorus from *Albion and Albanus*, 'Renown, assume thy trumpet', seems to have served as the model for *Dioclesian*'s 'Sound, Fame' and subsequent chorus 'Let all rehearse'. Both are in praise of the eponymous heroes of the respective operas, and it seems logical enough to suppose that *Dioclesian*'s librettist would refer to the staging and lyrics of 'Renown, assume thy trumpet' while Purcell would refer to the music.

In examining 'Renown, assume thy trumpet' and 'Sound, Fame', the most obvious similarity lies in the text. Thomas Betterton provides the important link. He was intimately involved in the production of *Albion and Albanus* from its inception, and must have had an important hand in its rehearsals and staging. Dryden tells us in his preface to the opera:

The descriptions of the Scenes, and other decorations of the Stage, I had from Mr. Betterton, who has spar'd neither for industry, nor cost, to make this Entertainment perfect, nor for Invention of the Ornaments to beautify it.

It seems safe to assume that Betterton would have known the text of the opera as well.

The adaptation of the Massinger and Fletcher play *Dioclesian* into a dramatic opera is generally attributed to Betterton.¹⁹ There is no definitive evidence that he also wrote all of the lyrics, however. Some commentators have mentioned Dryden as a possible author for particular texts.²⁰ Certainly, there are close similarities between some texts in *Albion and Albanus* and in *Dioclesian*. Whether this indicates that Betterton consulted *Albion and Albanus* in writing these passages, or whether he sought Dryden's help with some sections, or whether Dryden himself wrote some of the texts, cannot be ascertained. There can be little doubt, however, that Dryden's lyrics from *Albion and Albanus* were consulted in writing the song and chorus 'Sound, Fame' and the closing chaconne 'Triumph victorious Love'.

The texts share numerous correspondences, among them their purpose (praising a great leader), the personification of Fame, and many similar words, images and rhymes. Even the staging of 'Renown, assume thy trumpet', with Fame standing on a globe, seems to have found a resonance in the lines 'stand in the centre of the universe' in *Dioclesian*. The texts are reproduced below with their important similarities underlined.

Albion and Albanus Dryden and Grabu 1685:

Fame rises out of the middle of the Stage, standing on a Globe
[sings]:
Renown, assume thy Trumpet!
From Pole to Pole resounding
Great Albion's Name;
Great Albion's Name shall be
The Theme of Fame.

¹⁹ J. Muller, *Words and Music in Henry Purcell's First Semi-Opera, Dioclesian* (Lewiston, 1990), pp. 30-32.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 72-73.

Record the Garters glory:
A Badge for Hero's, and for Kings to bear:
And swell th'Immortal Story,
With Songs of Gods, and fit for Gods to hear.

Dioclesian Betterton? and Purcell 1690:

Sound, Fame, thy brazen trumpet sound!
Stand in the centre of the universe,
And call the list'ning world around.
While we in joyful notes rehearse,
In artful numbers, and well-chosen verse,
Great Dioclesian's story.
Let all rehearse,
In lofty verse,
Great Dioclesian's glory.
Sound his renown,
Advance his crown
Above all monarchs that e'er blest the earth.
Oh sacred Fame
Embalm his name,
With honour here, and glory after death.
All sing his story,
Raise, raise his glory
Above all monarchs that e'er blest the earth.
Oh sacred Fame
Embalm his name,
With honour here, and glory after death.

In 'Triumph, victorious Love', an echo of the text from 'Sound, Fame' returns, including a line lifted nearly intact from 'Renown, assume thy trumpet':

Then all rehearse,
In noble verse,
The glory of all-mighty Love.
From pole to pole his fame resound,
Sing it the universe around!

In addition, the twenty-four dancers who accompanied *Albion and Albanus*'s final chorus are matched in *Dioclesian* by 'those who are on the stage, and those who are in the several divisions of the machine [performing a] grand dance to the tune of the Chorus ['Triumph, victorious Love']'.

Purcell too seems to have cast his eye over both the music and word-book of *Albion and Albanus*. When he came to set the text of 'Sound, Fame', he must have realised it paralleled the final chorus of the earlier opera. If he compared Grabu's music to the opera's final stage direction, he would have noticed a discrepancy:

A full Chorus of all the Voices and Instruments: Trumpets and Ho-Boys make Returnello's of all Fame sings; and Twenty four Dancers joyn all the time in a Chorus, and Dance to the end of the Opera.

The score of *Albion and Albanus* indicates neither oboes nor trumpets, and, while the presence of the former seems very likely, no such support exists for the latter. In the chorus, the closest things to 'ritornellos of all Fame sings' are the trio passages for two treble instruments and bass continuo that are interspersed with choral entries. One of these passages does imitate trumpet figuration (bars 100-105), but the second treble line contains several a¹s which were unavailable on the natural trumpet, and it is almost certain that violins (and perhaps oboes) were intended here.

Purcell's 'Sound, Fame' includes a trumpet that imitates all that the voice sings. Though the voice part is not, as in *Albion and Albanus*, sung by a character explicitly called 'Fame,' the parallel is clear enough: Purcell's movement expressly realises the stage directions to the final chorus of *Albion and Albanus* where Grabu's did not. Unlike Grabu, Purcell placed all of the solo vocal section before the chorus, creating a free-standing movement built on a ground bass. He chose a similar vocal range to that of Fame in the earlier opera, but slightly narrower: a compass a-a¹ as opposed to a-c² in *Albion and Albanus*.²¹

'Let all rehearse' is the longest single choral movement in *Dioclesian*, and to achieve this length Purcell turned to several of Grabu's techniques. In Purcell's pre-1684 choruses, string accompaniment plays a subsidiary role to that of the voices. While instrumental ritornellos may appear on either side of a chorus, within a chorus itself the instruments rarely play without the voices. Grabu, however, often lengthens his choruses with string interludes (see

²¹ Both solos are given in the alto clef in the original editions. See Chapter 8 for the possibility that both solos were sung by John Freeman.

Chapter 6.1),²² and he does so in ‘Renown, assume thy trumpet’ with both trio passages and passages for the full string band. For instance, the repetitions of the text ‘great Albion’s name’ in Grabu’s chorus (beginning at bar 85) are punctuated with trio passages. Purcell uses the same technique surround similar repetitions of ‘All sing his story’ (beginning at bar 119) in ‘Let all rehearse’. Yet, where Grabu used two violins, Purcell employed two trumpets, once again realizing the final stage direction of *Albion and Albanus* where Grabu did not. In bars 52-57 of ‘Let all rehearse’, Purcell inserts a string interlude in the manner of Grabu in ‘Renown, assume thy trumpet,’ using a rhythmic figuration that bears a strong resemblance to a similar interlude in the Act I chorus ‘We’ll wash away the stain’ (ex. 3.a & b).

Ex.3.a *Albion and Albanus* Act I, ‘We’ll wash away the stain’, bars 25-32

The musical score for Ex.3.a is presented in two systems. The first system includes staves for Vn, Vla 1, Vla 2, Vla 3, S, A, T, B, B Vn, and Bc. The vocal parts (S, A, T, B) have the lyrics 'na - tion.' written below them. The instrumental parts (Vn, Vla 1, Vla 2, Vla 3, B Vn, Bc) feature complex rhythmic patterns. The second system continues the instrumental parts, showing a continuation of the rhythmic figuration.

²² As Margaret Laurie points out, Grabu’s choruses ‘were on a scale hitherto unknown in England’. See *The Blackwell History of Music in Britain: The Seventeenth Century*, ed. Ian Spink (Oxford, 1992), p. 320.

Ex.3.b *Dioclesian* Act IV, ‘Let all rehearse’, bars 52-57

Martin Adams describes the insertions as ‘rather obvious, short-breathed alternations between choral and orchestral groups’,²³ a criticism that could just as well be levelled at Grabu. Nevertheless, Purcell expands upon the expressive range of this chorus by shifting to D minor in a section that resembles the awesome passages that are frequently found in his sacred choral music (ex. 4). Such a dramatic and expressive shift was probably beyond Grabu’s artistic reach.

Curtis Price detects the influence of Grabu in the series of C major arias and choruses which follow ‘Charon the peaceful shade’ in Act Two. This music represents some of ‘the grandest, cleanest, most “correct” music [Purcell] ever wrote’.²⁴ ‘Let the soldiers rejoice’ is particularly straightforward in its part-writing. The voices frequently move together in thirds or sixths and there is very little passing dissonance, while the chorus contains two carefully-prepared Grabu-like suspensions (bars 43-44 and 49-50 of ex. 5). Likewise, the strings strictly double the voices at the unison or octave throughout, one of the few places in the score where this happens. Yet even here, the on-beat dissonances of bars 45 and 52 are stronger than

²³ Op. cit., p. 291.

²⁴ C. Price, op. cit., pp. 263, 276.

anything that might be found in a similar passage from *Albion and Albanus*, such as the chorus 'Hark! the peals the people ring'.

Ex. 4 *Dioclesian* Act IV 'Let All rehearse', bars 110-118

The musical score for Ex. 4 from *Dioclesian*, Act IV, bars 110-118, features a vocal ensemble of Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass, accompanied by Violins I and II and Viola. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor), and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are: "O! O! sa - cred Fame, O! sa - cred Fame, Em - balm his name With ho - nour here and glo - - - ry af - ter death." The vocal parts enter in unison, with the instrumental parts providing harmonic support. The score is presented in two systems, with the first system covering bars 110-114 and the second system covering bars 115-118.

Ex. 5 *Dioclesian*, Act II ‘Let the soldiers rejoice’ bars 43-53

Vn I and Oboe I
Vn II and Oboe II

Vla & Tenor Oboe

A

tr

-joice with a ge - ne - ral voice, re -

T

-joice with a ge - ne - ral voice,

-joice, re - joice with a ge - ne - ral voice, re - joice.

B

B-Vn & Bassoon
Bc

joice with a ge - ne - ral voice,

re - joice re - joice, re - joice with a ge - ne - ral voice,

with a ge - ne - ral voice.

Grabu's supernatural dances from *Valentinian* and *Albion and Albanus* (the latter entitled Ayre for the Devils) find another resonance in *Dioclesian*. As Peter Holman has pointed out, *Dioclesian*'s Act II Dance of Furies 'is full of the rushing scales used in French dances for demons and Furies'.²⁵ Purcell's dance shows this French influence in only a part of a multi-sectional structure with several different string figurations that also draw heavily upon the English anti-masque tradition. The dance is also noted for its slow and mysterious introduction, which is reused to great effect in the Act IV Butterfly dance. Price identifies Locke's curtain tune to *The Tempest* as a likely model, and certainly there are several important similarities here.²⁶ But Grabu's prelude to Proteus's song in Act III of *Albion and Albanus* also

²⁵ P. Holman, *Henry Purcell*, p. 203.

²⁶ C. Price, op. cit., p. 278.

comes to mind. Just as in *Dioclesian* ‘a dreadful monster ... moves slowly forward’, in *Albion and Albanus* we imagine Albion creeping slowly towards the sleeping Proteus. Price describes Purcell’s music becoming ‘more chromatic and tortuous, mixing flats and sharps in equal numbers’, and Grabu’s music does the same. Finally, in both compositions, after the cadence of the slow section, the movements break into dances. Interestingly, both movements deal with transformations; in *Albion and Albanus* Proteus changes into a variety of different shapes during the music which follows the slow introduction, while in *Dioclesian* a monster is transformed into a group of dancing furies in the first instance, and a tomb is transformed into a cupola supported by termes which turn into dancing butterflies in the second.

In Purcell’s *King Arthur* one can again trace aspects of Grabu’s influence in several of the movements for chorus and in the passacaglia. Purcell’s use of instrumental passages within choral movements is exploited fully in both the Act I sacrifice scene and the Act I solo and chorus ‘Come if you dare’. In these two movements, Purcell’s integration of instrumental passages, and the inclusion of a variety of solo vocal combinations, is more sophisticated than anything found in *Albion and Albanus*. Nevertheless, the chorus ‘‘Tis Love that has warm’d us’ from Act III shows Purcell using the same sort of instrumental filling as in ‘Let all rehearse’ and several examples from *Albion and Albanus* (compare ex. 6 with ex. 3.a & b above). It should be noted, however, that in ‘Tis Love’, Purcell tightens the relationship between the instrumental and choral passages by using the distinct figuration of the former sections to accompany portions of the choral entries.

Ex. 6 *King Arthur* Act III, 'Tis Love that has warm'd us', bars 282-293

The passacaglia from the fourth act of *King Arthur* proves in many ways to be a better parallel to Grabu's Chacon than does 'Triumph victorious Love'. Its length, use of vocal and instrumental resources, and the manipulations of the repeated bass line all find precedents in the Chacon from *Albion and Albanus*. At 201 bars in length, the passacaglia is the largest of Purcell's chaconnes and passacaglias to be found in the dramatic operas, a feature that was surely intended to court comparison with Grabu's effort. In terms of instrumental writing, Purcell, as Grabu had before, makes use of short interchanges between strings and oboes, but extends the technique far beyond the brief passage in Grabu's Chacon. Purcell likewise includes vocal passages which are repeated by the full chorus as Grabu had, but he employs a greater variety of textures, including a solo, an imitative duet, and trio sections. Where Grabu's vocal sections are completely homophonic Purcell introduced both a polyphonic duet ('No joys are above the pleasures of love') and highly effective exchanges between the choral voices on the word 'no'. Purcell also chose to treat his bass pattern freely, as Grabu had done, and drops it out

completely for one of the trio passages for the nymphs ('In vain are our graces'). It seems, then, that Purcell was carefully responding in kind to every aspect of Grabu's Chacon.

The passacaglia seems to have satisfied Purcell in terms of his response to Grabu's opera, for after *King Arthur* the dramatic operas contain no movements that directly parallel movements in *Albion and Albanus*. Any of Purcell's techniques that might have originally been inspired by *Albion and Albanus* were now thoroughly his own and only a slight echo of Grabu's opera is apparent in *The Fairy Queen* and *The Indian Queen*. Perhaps the memory of the paired masques from the second act of *Albion and Albanus*, the Masque of Hell and the Masque of the Sea, played a role in the abstract structure Purcell used for the Masque of the Seasons in Act IV of *The Fairy Queen* and its pairing with the Act II Masque for Titania. Edward Dent suggested that the Masque of Fame and Envy from *The Indian Queen* owes something to the finale of *Albion and Albanus*, 'Renown, assume thy trumpet'.²⁷ Apart from the fact that the character Fame appears in both, the link seems rather tenuous. This masque seems, instead, to have more to do with the previously mentioned masques from *Albion and Albanus*'s second act. The fact that this section from *The Indian Queen* is framed by instrumental movements and makes use of repetitions of the choral harmonisation of Fame's opening solo (both immediately following the solo and before the final trumpet tune), echoes some of the structural procedures in Grabu's opera.

Albion and Albanus continued to exert an influence on English musical theatre after the death of Purcell. As we have seen in Chapter 9, the 1696 production of *Brutus of Alba, or Augusta's Triumphs* made extensive use of stage designs and machines built for *Albion and Albanus*. Likewise, almost all of the texts to the sung portions of this work draw upon Dryden's

²⁷ E. Dent, op. cit., p. 224.

libretto.²⁸ *Brutus of Alba* is a dramatic opera in five acts. The spoken and sung portions of the text have little to do with one another, and there is a definite division between singing and speaking characters.²⁹ The names of George Powell and John Verbruggen appear on the 1697 edition of the opera, though Curtis Price suggests that an ‘anonymous adapter’ provided the musical portions of the work.³⁰ Daniel Purcell wrote some of the music for the opera, since he published eight songs from it in 1696.³¹ Whether he composed music for the rest of the work as well is unknown; certainly the extant songs account for only a small part of what the opera requires.

The textual borrowings range from odd lines or phrases, and paraphrases of passages, to complete passages. Where only phrases or ideas have been borrowed, there is very little possibility that Grabu’s music could have been reused. However, with passages that have been borrowed intact, there is some possibility that Grabu’s music may have been borrowed as well. Several such instances can be cited. The opening four lines of sung text are identical in both works, and Grabu’s setting of these lines begins and ends in D minor. In *Brutus of Alba*, Augusta takes over from Mercury after these four lines, and thus Grabu’s music could have been fitted in. The text of Augusta’s subsequent aria is based upon that of the same character’s first aria, ‘Oh Hermes, pity me’, in *Albion and Albanius*. This text, however, could not be fitted to Grabu’s music without great violence being done to the poetry, though the following passage for Thamesius, which turns into a duet with Augusta, could easily be accommodated to the Grabu’s music for the parallel passage in *Albion and Albanius*.

²⁸ The text of the relevant musical sections of the libretto is reproduced in the Appendix B.

²⁹ This division is clearly defined at the beginning of the printed text; the speaking characters are listed under the rubric ‘Dramatis Personae’ and the singing characters under the rubric ‘Singers’.

³⁰ See ‘Political Allegory in late-seventeenth-century English opera’, *Music and the Theatre: Essays in honour of Winton Dean* (Cambridge 1987), p. 18.

³¹ *The single songs, with the dialogue, sung in the new opera call’d Brutus of Alba* (London, 1696).

Perhaps more likely would be the reuse of Grabu's closing chorus from Act I of *Albion and Albanius* in Act IV of *Brutus of Alba*. Here the adapters of the latter work inserted the complete text of 'Hail Royal Albion, Hail' just as it appears in Dryden's original; Grabu's setting of the text could easily have been reused. All such musical borrowings, however, would have jarred with Daniel Purcell's music. In particular, the gulf between their styles when writing vocal music might seem so great as to preclude mixing them in a single work. Nevertheless, there is some possibility that Purcell knew at least some of Grabu's score. Curtis Price suggests that one of the nine songs from *Brutus of Alba* that Purcell had printed shows an awareness of Grabu's music in the parallel section of *Albion and Albanius*.³² Price compares 'Great Queen of Hymen's hallow'd fires' from Act III of *Brutus of Alba* with Grabu's setting of 'Great Queen of nuptial rites' (ex. 7.a & b). The similarities are superficial at best. Both passages share the same key, a rising interval at the text 'Great Queen', and a resemblance in the setting of 'adore thee', 'before thee' and 'obey thee'. A greater degree of correspondence is suggested by a short passage from Purcell's 'If mortals laugh and sing' and Grabu's 'when mortals laugh and love' (ex. 8.a & b). Even here, the melismas on 'laugh' are a stereotypical response to this word.

³² 'Though he [D. Purcell] did not indulge in musical parody to any appreciable degree, there is, for example, enough similarity between his 'Great Queen of Hymen's hallowed fires' and Grabu's 'Great Queen of Nuptial Rites' to suggest that Purcell knew the earlier score'. See 'Political Allegory in late-seventeenth-century English opera', p. 18.

Ex. 7.a *Albion and Albanus* Act I (no. 18), bars 30-49

THAMESIS

Great queen of gath'r-ing clouds, Whose mois-ture fills our floods; See, we

Bass Continuo

35

AUGUSTA

Great queen of nup-tial

fall be - fore thee, Pro - strate we a - dore thee.

40

rites, Whose pow'r the souls u - nites, And fills the ge - nial bed with chaste de -

45

-lights; See, we fall - be - fore thee, Pro - strate we a - dore thee.

Ex. 7b *Brutus of Alba* Act III, 'Great Queen of Hymen's hallow'd fires'

Great Queen of Hy-men's hal-low'd fires, The sov' - reign of all chaste - de - sires, That

6

with true - joy the ge - nial bed in - spire; Great - spire; See, see what bend - ing

11

11 knees - we pay thee, Thus a - dore thee, thus, thus o - bey thee, See what bend - ing knees we -

16

16 pay thee, Thus, thus, - a - dore thee, thus, thus o - bey thee. See, thee.

Ex. 8.a *Albion and Albanus* Act I no. 19 bars 1-5



Ex. 8.b *Brutus of Alba* Act III 'If mortals laugh and sing' bars 1-4



While the reuse of Grabu's vocal music seems unlikely, other instrumental music from *Albion and Albanus* might have been accommodated more easily. Music to accompany the descents of Mercury, Juno, and Apollo (two passages) was readily available in Grabu's score, in addition to the Dance for the Mariners, which could easily have accompanied *Brutus of Alba*'s Dance of Six Watermen. Perhaps Grabu's music for Proteus once again graced the original sets for this scene reused in Act V of *Brutus of Alba*.

There is no direct evidence that music from *Albion and Albanus* was used in *Brutus of Alba*. As we have seen, the only known music for this dramatic opera is the set of eight songs by Daniel Purcell. Of these eight, the texts to only four appear in the 1697 libretto, and only three of these songs set texts that had been adapted from *Albion and Albanus*. If the musical similarities between these two songs and the parallel passages in *Albion and Albanus* do suggest Purcell's knowledge of Grabu's opera, perhaps that knowledge was gained in the process of patching together a full score for *Brutus of Alba* using some passages from the earlier opera. This conjecture is based on circumstantial evidence, but given the extensive amount of music needed for the 1696 production, and the very small amount still extant, it must remain a possibility.

The last known manifestation of *Albion and Albanus*'s influence on the English stage occurs almost a century after its first performance. Thomas Arne's afterpiece, *The Fairy Prince*, performed at the Theatre Royal in 1771, takes the text of its final chorus from that of the final chorus of *Albion and Albanus*. George Colman provided the libretto for *The Fairy Prince*, which he based upon Ben Jonson's *Oberon*. The setting for the work is Windsor castle, which seems to have brought to Colman's mind the final scene of *Albion and Albanus*, also set at Windsor. In the advertisement that prefaces the libretto, Colman admits to borrowing Dryden's chorus, the only difference from the original version being the substitution of 'George' for 'Albion'.³³ Arne's vocal score for the masque was printed, though it lacks two choruses, one of which is the setting of Dryden's text. Whether Arne consulted or even knew about Grabu's setting is unknown. The key scheme of the third and final part of the masque, which this chorus closes, suggests that it was in the key of E flat major.³⁴ Grabu's chorus is in C major. Nevertheless, Roger Fiske suggests that in a modern revival of Arne's work, Grabu's chorus would make a satisfactory replacement for the missing final chorus.³⁵

Though Grabu's music had little effect on Henry Purcell's musical syntax, it does seem to have had an effect in terms of the latter's use of instrumentation and the structuring and pacing of both individual movements and groups of movements. Certainly the range of examples cited above suggests that Grabu's influence was more than purely superficial. Unfortunately for Grabu, comparisons with Purcell are almost always damaging, for they point out Grabu's inability to move beyond the limits of

³³ See *The Fairy Prince* in G. Colman, *Dramatic Works* vol. 4 (London, 1777).

³⁴ R. Fiske, *English Theatre Music in the 18th Century* (Oxford and London, 1973), pp. 613-614.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 361. Franklin Zimmerman seems to have mis-interpreted Fiske's comments to suggest that Arne actually used Grabu's music: 'the most telling testimonial in favor of the work is that of Thomas Augustine Arne, who borrowed the entire finale as the ending to his masque, *The Fairy Prince*'. *The Works of John Dryden, xv: Plays: Albion and Albanus, Don Sebastian, Amphytrion*, ed. E. Miner, G. B. Guffey and F. Zimmerman (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1976), p. 355.

the French style, and his frequent lack of dramatic inspiration. Of course few (if any) of Purcell's peers can bear extended comparison with him, and Grabu's inability to do so should not be taken as an indication that he was a poor composer, but that he was a competent rather than a great one. That Purcell was able to draw useful lessons from *Albion and Albanius* says much for Grabu's ability, despite that fact that some commentators place various of Purcell's own supposed miscalculations on Grabu's shoulders.³⁶

³⁶ Edward Dent seems to blame what he perceives as 'over-elaboration' in *Dioclesian* on Purcell's attempt to better Grabu. He likewise suggests that the incongruous placement of the Masque of Fame and Envy in *The Indian Queen* was 'an attempt to reproduce the effect of a somewhat similar scene in *Albion and Albanius*. See *The Foundations of English Opera*, pp. 224 and 202-203. Curtis Price insinuates Grabu's damaging effect when describing *Dioclesian* as Purcell's weakest large-scale dramatic work: 'how much of this blandness is owing to the influence of *Albion and Albanius* is impossible to know' (*Henry Purcell and the London Stage*, p. 288).

Chapter 11

Reception History

Both Grabu and his opera *Albion and Albanus* have attracted severe criticism from modern musicologists. In particular, Edward Dent's *Foundations of English Opera*, in which he describes Grabu's music as 'indescribably dull' and the opera as 'a monument of stupidity', has set the tone for a majority of twentieth-century commentary. However, apart from scrutiny of its elaborate scenery, very little investigation has been made into the opera, especially the music. Franklin Zimmerman's 1976 discussion of the music remains the most complete to date, and it is hard to argue with his conclusion that

it would be interesting, in view of the unanimity of received opinion, to know how many of the opera's most trenchant critics actually have taken the time and trouble required to play and sing through the whole of *Albion and Albanus*.¹

If this is the case, how did the low critical opinion of the opera first develop? Three factors have combined to relegate the opera to a mere footnote in the history of Restoration music: first, the modern misinterpretation of contemporary opinion of Grabu and his music; second, the apparent failure of the opera and a misunderstanding of the reason for this; and third, a defensive and anti-French musicology. Unravelling these strands requires a return to contemporary reports of Grabu and the opera, an examination of what part of this information was used by subsequent historians, and an examination of how this information was interpreted. Once the cloak of received opinion has been removed, a more objective approach to the opera's artistic and historical significance and influence will be possible.

¹ *The Works of John Dryden*, xv: *Plays: Albion and Albanus, Don Sebastian, Amphytrion*, ed. E. Miner, G. B. Guffey and F. Zimmerman (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1976), pp. 323-361.

Before turning to reports of the opera, it is important to establish contemporary opinion of Grabu himself. Grabu's arrival in England happily coincided with the period during which Pepys was keeping his diary. He touches upon Grabu several times but the most famous, or notorious, entry is his report of another composer's perspective on Grabu, that of Pelham Humfrey, recently returned from France:

The truth is, everybody says he [Humfrey] is very able; but to hear how he laughs at all the King's Musick here ... that they cannot keep time nor tune nor understand anything, and that Grebus the Frenchman, the King's Master of musique, how he understands nothing nor can play on any instrument and so cannot compose, and that he will give him a lift out of his place, and that he and the King are mighty great, and that he hath already spoke to the King of Grebus, would make a man piss.²

This censorious attack on Grabu is so often quoted that an understanding of the context in which it was made is vital. The passage represents Humfrey's opinion, not Pepys's, and as such not only is this opinion questionable owing to the circumstances, but also it is undermined by Pepys's later comments about Humfrey. The latter, encouraged by the King, had travelled to France to observe and learn at first hand the latest French musical style. Extremely talented and vain, Humfrey must have returned expecting to receive an important post in the court musical establishment, only to find that a true Frenchman had already taken control of the King's Musick. Viewed in this light, his comments look more like professional jealousy than reasoned criticism. Perhaps they even reflect Humfrey's knowledge of Lully's scheming at the French Court, whereby the Florentine composer ingratiated himself with the King and eventually took control of the court musical establishment. Pepys, reflecting on his encounter with Humfrey, found his remarks irritating:

nor do I see that this Frenchman [referring to Humfrey and his newly frenchified air] do so much wonders on the

² 15 November 1667. The *Diary of Samuel Pepys*, viii, ed. R. Latham and W. Matthews (London, 1974), pp. 539-540.

theorbo, but without question he is a good musician; but his vanity doth offend me.³

Pepys implies that Humfrey's comments must be viewed sceptically, coming as they did from a vain and ambitious musician.

Pepys's own opinions of Grabu's musical talents were mixed. On 1 October 1667 he went

to White-hall and there in the Boarded-gallery did hear the music with which the King is presented this night by Monsieur Grebus, the master of his music – both instrumental (I think 24 violins) and vocall, an English song upon peace; but God forgive me, I was never so little pleased with a consort of music in my life – the manner of setting of words and repeating them out of order, and that with a number of voices, makes me sick, the whole design of vocall music being lost by it. Here was a great press of people, but I did not see many pleased with it; only, the instrumental music he had brought by practice to play very just.⁴

This last phrase, 'to play very just', presumably meant playing in time and in tune, and is a direct contradiction of Humfrey's assessment of the King's Musick. The next year, on 15 April, he went 'to the fiddling concert, and heard a practice mighty good of Grebus.' Later, Pepys acquired what is now the only extant copy of Grabu's *Pastoralle*, and a copy of *Albion and Albanus*, putting them both in matching bindings. As a keen musical enthusiast, Pepys would most certainly have attended a performance of the opera though by 1685 he was no longer recording his daily activities, and his purchase of a copy seems to indicate at least a passing appreciation.

No other testimony to Grabu's musical proficiency exists prior to the production of *Albion and Albanus*. A great confidence in his abilities can be inferred, however, from Betterton's decision to employ Grabu as composer, and his concurrent assurance to Grabu of a pension from the United Company. As discussed in Chapter 3, it is hard to imagine Betterton

³ Ibid. This passage is incorrectly read as referring to Grabu in *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers, and other Stage Personnel in London 1660-1800*, vi: Garrick to Gyngeell, ed. Highfill, Burnim, and Langhans (Carbondale and Edwardsville, 1973), p. 291.

⁴ *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, viii, p. 458.

entrusting such an expensive project to the hands of someone whom he considered less than fully capable of the endeavour. Previous experience of Grabu's music for theatrical productions during the 1670s must have convinced the manager of his abilities.

Contemporary sources that comment specifically upon *Albion and Albanus* represent three viewpoints: 1) comment on the opera from the heavily vested interests of Dryden and Grabu, 2) more or less neutral accounts from the court, and from the translator Ferrand Spence, and 3) caustic attacks on the opera and its creators including at least one person who harboured a personal grudge against the librettist.

Dryden's Preface to the opera offers Grabu strong support and praises his music. Though he devotes the majority of the preface to the defence of the libretto in anticipation of 'some little Judges, who not understanding thoroughly, wou'd be sure to fall upon the faults, and not ... acknowledge any of the Beauties',⁵ Dryden makes room for his own and other people's approval of the music:

I may without vanity, own some Advantages, ... as have given the composer Monsieur *Grabu* what occasions he cou'd wish, to show his extraordinary Tallent, in diversifying the Recitative, the Lyrical part, and the Chorus: In all which, (not to attribute any thing to my own Opinion) the best Judges, and those too of the best Quality, who have honor'd his Rehearsals with their Presence, have no less commended the happiness of his Genius than his Skill. And let me have the liberty to add one thing; that he has so exactly express'd my Sence, in all places, where I intended to move the Passions, that he seems to have enter'd into my thoughts, and to have been the Poet as well as the Composer. This I say, not to flatter him, but to do him right; because amongst some *English* Musicians, and their Scholars, (who are sure to judge after them,) the imputation of being a *French-man*, is enough to make a Party, who maliciously endeavour to decry him. But the knowledge of *Latin* and *Italian* Poets, both of which he possesses, besides his skill in Musick, and his being acquainted with all the performances of the *French Opera's*, adding to these the good Sence to which he is Born, have rais'd him to a degree above any Man, who shall pretend to be his Rival on our Stage. When any of our Country-men excel him, I shall be glad, for the sake of old *England*, to be

⁵ *The Works of John Dryden*, xv, p. 9.

shown my error: in the mean time, let Vertue be commended,
though in the Person of a Stranger.⁶

Dryden's comments must be read with the understanding that he himself had something to gain from the success of the opera. They do, however, have the ring of truth, in some cases confirmed by independent sources, and are uncannily prescient. The opera was most probably well received by 'those of the best Quality', presumably those of the court circle, since it is hard to imagine Charles's courtiers censuring a production so blatantly aimed at his glorification. Indeed, an independent letter from court circles indicates that the rehearsals were greeted with great approval (see below). However, Dryden was aware that the opera was an expensive and highly significant project. Those who were left out of the circle of collaborators were sure to be jealous. Evidently, opposition to *Grabu* had already materialised. Dryden's remarks imply that this criticism was based firmly upon *Grabu*'s nationality, whatever musical reasons might be given. There is little indication that Restoration composers engaged in the same sort of mutually abusive campaigns as those of contemporary writers. In this light, the professional jealousy *Grabu* elicited seems only to have been a handle onto which was fastened a club of xenophobia. As we shall see below, Dryden's prediction that 'Scholars' would take up the bludgeon afterwards was only too accurate.

Dryden is the only witness to have commented upon the opera on different occasions. His preface, written before Charles's death, is followed by a postscript explaining the changes in the production required by this unfortunate event. He adds to the previous appraisals of the opera that of the deceased King:

He had been pleas'd twice or thrice to command, that it
shou'd be practis'd, before him, especially the first and third
Acts of it; and publickly declar'd more than once, That the
composition and Chorus's, were more Just, and more
Beautiful, than any he had heard in England. How nice an

⁶ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

Ear he had in Musick is sufficiently known; his praise
therefore has establish'd the Reputation of it, above censure,
and made it in a manner Sacred.⁷

It is significant that Charles's praise was directed entirely at the music. Dryden, giving voice to the words of the dead King, neglected the opportunity to include any acclaim for his own work.

In the printed score of 1687, Grabu added to Dryden's remarks his own dedication to James II.⁸ It provides little new information on the opera's reception apart from the fact that James attended a performance, and that he overlooked the deficiencies in musical execution of which Grabu had been aware. Whatever these might have been, the composer was pleased enough with his own efforts to see the music published in a fine edition.

Unsurprisingly, Dryden and Grabu present a favourable reception of the opera, with the troublesome exception of a small clique of English musicians. A letter from Edward Bedingfield to the Countess of Rutland, dated January 1, 1685, confirms Dryden's claim that the opera was favourably received:

We are in expectation of an opera composed by Mr. Dryden and set by Grabuche, and so well performed at the repetition that has been made before His Majesty at the Duchess of Portsmouth's, pleaseth mightily, but the rates proposed will not take so well, for they have set the boxes at a guinea a place and the pit at half. They advance £4,000 on the opera, and therefore must tax high to reimburse themselves.⁹

This 'repetition' is likely to be one of those attended by Charles, and Grabu in his dedication makes an important point concerning the manner of these rehearsals. He writes to James II:

My late gracious Master ... more than once condescended to be present at the Repetition, before it came into the publick View. Your Majesty has also pleased to do me the same Honour, when it appear'd at Your Theater in greater Splendour, and with more advantages of Ornament.¹⁰

⁷ Ibid., p. 12.

⁸ *Albion and Albanus* (London, 1687). There is some speculation that Dryden may have helped Grabu in the writing of the dedication. See J. A. Winn, *John Dryden and His World* (New Haven and London, 1987), p. 618, n. 46.

⁹ *Historical Manuscripts Commission*, XII, v, ii, p. 85.

¹⁰ *Albion and Albanus* (London, 1687).

The rehearsals attended by Charles could have been performed with only minimal scenery and staging; perhaps a few costumes and some dancing at most: therefore the aspects of the opera that ‘pleaseth mightily’ must have been the music and the libretto. Dryden’s account of Charles’s opinion would seem to indicate that the music was the primary attraction, while the combination of Dryden’s remarks and Bedingfield’s letter suggests the possibility that praise for the opera was more than simply a sycophantic nod to the King.

More support for this conclusion comes from the translator Ferrand Spence who apparently saw the production at Dorset Garden. Spence’s comments on the opera come from the dedicatory preface to his translation of several of St. Evremond’s essays, which contains in particular his essay on opera. Published in 1686, the book is dedicated to Thomas Milton, the nephew of the poet.¹¹ Spence seems to have been a friend of some of those who undertook the production:

And I hope, sir, that I shall obtain your pardon both for the tediousness and the unpolish’d neglect of this discourse, especially in this part of it, wherein I have so few helps, seeing I do at once plead the cause of Friendship, and, perhaps, of good sense: For, this portion of the Stage’s diversion [Opera] being but a Novice in our Theatre, and having just receiv’d the Royal Approbation and encouragement, as it would be unmannerly to let anything slip the Press, that so much as indirectly strikes at the design, so it wou’d be as severe too, and to the detriment of the Actors, who have been at immense charges in carrying it on, and some of whom of Eminent judgement and sense I am proud to call my Friends.¹²

In the essay, *Albion and Albanius* is used to rebut St. Evremond’s arguments against the operatic form. Spence had evidently obtained a copy of the

¹¹ Thomas Milton (1647-1694). Son of Christopher Milton, he was admitted to the Inner Temple in 1670, married Martha Fleetwood in 1672, was called to the bar in 1677 and succeeded to the post of Deputy Clerk of the Crown in 1673. See W.R. Parker, *Milton: A Biography* (Oxford, 1968).

¹² F. Spence, *Miscellanea: or Various Discourses Written Originally by the Sieur de Saint Evremond And made English by Ferrand Spence* (London, 1686). The dedicatory essay is not paginated. Several sections of the dedication have been reproduced in Appendix B.

libretto, since his arguments show he had carefully read Dryden's Preface.

The production itself greatly impressed him:

I will only bring our *Albion and Albanus* into his [St. Evremond's] consideration, which not only for the amussitated [sic] management of the subject-matter, and the ingenious contrivance of the versification, but for the great and Godlike argument, for the Heroic design of it's Instruction, for the admirable and sumptuous performance in the sweetness of the Musick, in the Harmonique Movements and Postures, in the richness of the Habits, and the Beauty of the Machines, and Decorations, we may oppose in competition with any thing, that ever Paris or Venice it self did yet see. Notwithstanding the general design is but as yet in a State of Probation.¹³

The emphasis here is placed less on the music than on the staging and especially the libretto. Nevertheless, Spence was an enthusiastic supporter of every aspect of *Albion and Albanus*. He felt that opera was a valid theatrical genre, finding Dryden's libretto admirable and well written, the production exemplary, and Grabu's music entirely pleasing. He would certainly have been surprised to find it criticised as 'a monument of stupidity.'

In contrast to Spence's laudatory remarks, several poems attack the opera, one of which has had a particularly deleterious effect on subsequent critical opinion. Frequently quoted in passages about the opera, *The Raree-Show* piles censure upon every aspect of *Albion and Albanus*. It has been argued recently that the heart of the poem is more concerned with the fact that many actors were left without work (because the opera was sung throughout) than with the music.¹⁴ Though actors must have despaired at the loss of work, the poem is direct in its criticism of Grabu and his music:

Betterton, Betterton, thy decorations,
And the machines were well-written we knew;
But all the words were such stuff we want patience,
And little better is Monsieur *Grabu*.

Yet if thou thinkest the town will extol 'em,
Print thy dull notes, but be thrifty and wise;
Instead of angels subscrib'd for the volume,
Take a round shilling, and thank my advice.¹⁵

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ C. Price, *Henry Purcell and the London Stage* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 266.

¹⁵ The complete poem is reproduced in Appendix B.

Unfortunately for the actors, the poem would lead one to believe that at least some people found the opera interesting:

Prentices, fops, and their footmen admire him [Dryden]
Thanks patron, painter, and Monsieur Grabu.

While critics may find ammunition in *The Raree-Show* to denigrate the opera itself, there is no evidence here that *Albion and Albanus* failed in the eyes of the public.

The identity of only one of the contemporary detractors of the opera is known. Gerald Langbaine included a short account of *Albion and Albanus* in his 1691 book, *English Dramatick Poets*. With Dryden as librettist, the opera had little chance of finding favour with Langbaine, an outspoken critic of his work.¹⁶ However, he left the words of reproach to an unacknowledged poet:

How well our Author has drawn his other Characters, I shall
leave to the decision of the Criticks: as also whether
Monsieur *Grabut*, or our Poet deserves the preference; or
either of them merit those Applauses which Mr. *Dryden* in
both their Names challenges as their due; since I find an
Author of a different Opinion, who thus describes them.
Grabut his Yoke-mate ne're shall be forgot,
Whom th'God of Tunes upon a Muse begot.
Bays on a double score to him belongs:
As well for writing as for setting Songs.
For some have sworn, (th' Intrigue so od Is laid)
That Bayes and He mistook each others Trade
Grabut the Lines, and He the Musick made.¹⁷

Two more anonymous poems add to the opprobrium placed upon *Albion and Albanus* by seventeenth-century writers. A selection from *A Journal from Parnassus* (an anonymous and unpublished manuscript probably written in 1688) provides the only description of an unfavourable reception by the general theatre-going audience:

¹⁶ See the commentary by John Loftis to Langbaine's *English Dramatick Poets*, Augustan Reprint Society (Los Angeles, 1971).

¹⁷ G. Langbaine, *English Dramatick Poets*, p. 152. The whole of the passage pertaining to *Albion and Albanus* is reproduced in Appendix B.

Flecknoe: Gods! this from Bays! whose last dull Opera
Scarce knew the blessing of the Poet's day.
Bays! who with Rainbows, Flutes, and Peacocks' Tails
The needy bankrupt Players had undone,
In hopes that where the blund'ring Poet fails,
The Painter or the Fidler would atone:
But all in vain! the gaudy Project miss'd
And whilst the Furies sung, the Audience hiss'd.¹⁸

The speaker 'Flecknoe' represents Dryden's (Bays) rival, Thomas Shadwell, with whom he had traded biting satires over the course of the previous five or six years.¹⁹ In this light, the *Journal*, which satirizes both authors, cannot be read as an objective report, especially those words from the mouth of Flecknoe. Furthermore, the foundation of this passage looks slightly unsteady under close scrutiny. The 'Poet's day' was traditionally the third night of a production (and sometimes sixth) from which the box office proceeds went to the playwright. What the arrangement would have been for *Albion and Albanus* is unknown since Grabu's effort was such a major part of the production. The opera ran for six performances and thus two 'Poet's days' and it was cut short by political events, not by any failure of the opera. Whether or not the audience hissed some or any of the performances, there is no indication that the opera had outlasted demand when it closed.

'An Epilogue Spoken to the University of Oxon by Mrs. Cook' (to what play is unknown), though more closely concerned with Dryden and his conversion to Catholicism, directs a passing blow at Grabu.

In these our Pious times, when writing Plays
Was thought a Sin,—
And nothing Sanctify'd but *Opera's*,
When to *Pindarick* Farce, true Sense gave place,
And Musick yielded to *Grabugh's* Grimace,
Then to expect a Prologue was in vain,
Not Gold its wonted Influence cou'd retain,

¹⁸ H. Macdonald, 'A Journal from Parnassus', *Times Literary Supplement*, 17 October 1936, p. 844.

¹⁹ Among others, Dryden penned *The Medall* and portions of *The Second Part of Absalom and Achitophel* in 1682; Shadwell responded with *The Medal of John Bayes* that same year.

Oxon must never hear a Laureat's Muse again.
In a new Convert, after such a Call,
To write for you, had been Heretical.²⁰

The contemporary attacks on the opera are no more numerous or reliable than those which indicate its success. However, as any politician knows, slander and mudslinging are more entertaining than reasoned debate, and historians campaigning for the genius of English Restoration music seem to have given anecdotes of the French-style opera's failure more ink and more credence.

One more account can be added to those above. In their brevity, the remarks of John Downes, the prompter for the United Company, add nothing to our knowledge of the opera's critical reception, but they make absolutely clear the single most important cause which brought an end to its run.

In Anno 1685. The Opera of *Albion and Albanus* was perform'd; wrote by Mr. Dryden, and Compos'd by Monsieur Grabue: This being perform'd on a very Unlucky Day, being the Day the Duke of Monmouth, Landed in the West: The Nation being in a great Consternation, it was perform'd but Six times, which not Answering half the Charge they were at, Involv'd the Company very much in Debt.²¹

The Duke of Monmouth and his supporters had for several years argued that he should succeed his father Charles to the throne, thus preserving a Protestant succession. In some quarters his cause had found friends so that when he landed in the West of England the threat of imminent civil war was real. News of the invasion reached London on June 13. At this point, the opera had played six nights since opening on June 3. With news of the invasion, Dorset Garden seems to have closed; there is likely to have been little taste for theatre, especially an opera so political in its content, among a populace still harbouring memories of one civil war and now facing another.

²⁰ *Poems on Affairs of State Part III* (London, 1698), p. 173. Sybil Rosenfeld dates the epilogue to 1686, for it refers to 'Dryden's conversion to Catholicism. The exact date of Dryden's conversion is not known, but Wood quotes verses "made by one John Driden, poet Laureat, who turn'd papist in May or June 1686"'. 'Some Notes on the Players in Oxford 1661-1713', *Review of English Studies* 19 (1943), p. 370.

²¹ J. Downes, *Roscus Anglicanus* (London, 1708), p. 40.

The situation remained unsettled until Monmouth was apprehended on 8 July and beheaded in London one week later. It is not surprising that the opera was not reopened in the middle of the summer, nor in the next theatrical season. The opera had already incurred extra expenditure and rehearsal time because of its postponement at the time of Charles's death. Similar measures would have been necessary to revive the opera after the June closure, and by this time the company had far outspent its resources. Furthermore, the person for whom it was written was now dead, and though Dryden had included much flattery of James, the work had lost its *raison d'être*. No defect in the artistic quality of the opera caused it demise, but rather bad luck and an unfortunate choice of subject matter.

By the time Roger North came to discuss the opera, the exact circumstances of its performance had been obscured. His comments, like those of Downes, are brief and devoid of criticism, and he seems also to have been unaware that the opera was performed at all:

The first full opera that was made and prepared for the stage, was the *Albanio* of Mr. Grabue, in English, but of a French genius. It is printed in full score, but proved the ruin of the poor man, for the King's death supplanted all his hopes, and so it dyed.²²

The opera also merited a short notice in an anonymous book of 1728, *The Touchstone: or Historical, Critical, Political, Moral, Philosophical and Theological Essays upon the reigning Diversion of the Town*. The first essay in the book is mainly concerned with Italian opera in England, but, as a preface to his argument, the author provides a history of opera (drawing heavily upon Dryden's preface to *Albion and Albanus*) and English musical theatre. He includes a list of 'Drammatick Operas' including those by Purcell, and sums it up with the following:

These I believe were the principal, if not the whole that appeared upon our Stage, nothing was admitted in any other musical Way, excepting *Dryden's Albion and Albanus*; which consisted all together of MUSICK in Recitative and

²² *Roger North on Music*, ed. J. Wilson (London, 1959), p. 311.

Airs; tho' I believe more after the *French* than *Italian* Gou'
being set to Musick by a *frenchman*.

Despite its being completely set to music, the French nature of the opera seems to be enough to relegate *Albion and Albanus*, together with the dramatic operas, to

the second Age of OPERAS, as we then stiled them; but I absolutely deny them that Title; that Term implying a regular, compleat musical Entertainment, which they never could arrive at, till they entirely came into a finished *Italian* Plan; nor do we bestow the Name of OPERA on any Drama, but those where every word is sung.²³

John Hawkins's *General History of Music* provides the first extended historical view of *Albion and Albanus*. He gives a brief account of the circumstances of the opera's performance, and describes some of its 'ridiculous pageantry,' including a long note explaining the harsh satire on the Earl of Shaftesbury in the final scene. As to the opera's critical reception, he concludes:

and he [Downes] intimates that the consternation into which the kingdom was thrown by this event was a reason why it was performed but six times, and was generally ill received.²⁴

Hawkins includes the whole of *The Raree-Show* in a footnote glossing the assertion that the opera was ill-received. His concluding phrase (quoted directly above) is ambiguous with regard to whether Downes implies the opera's poor reception, but as we have seen, Downes made no comment on this matter. Furthermore, a review of the source material shows that the comments of *The Raree-Show* are not the only indications of the opera's reception. Nevertheless, Hawkins's negative remarks about the scenes and his allegation that the opera was ill-received have influenced many later commentators.

²³ *The Touchstone*, p. 10.

²⁴ J. Hawkins, *A General History of Science and Practice of Music, A new edition with the author's posthumous notes* (London, 1875), ii, ed. Othmar Wessely (Graz, 1969), p. 707.

Charles Burney also reserved a small space for *Albion and Albanus*. He recognised the difficulty of attempting an opera with such an unambiguous political agenda.

Upon perusal of this drama, it seems hardly possible, so near a revolution, that it should have escaped condemnation upon party principles; as, under obvious allegories, Dryden has lashed the city of London, democracy, fanaticism, and whatever he thought obnoxious to the spirit of the government at that period. Had Orpheus himself not only composed the poem and the Music but performed the principal part, his powers would have been too feeble to charm such unwilling hearers.²⁵

As for the composer, Burney believed that Dryden's flattery of him was aimed more at Charles II and his Francophile tastes than at Grabu who, he says, was 'not ... very agreeable to the Antigallicans of this country, or, indeed, to unprejudiced judges of Music'. He is also the first to remark upon the injustice of the choice of Grabu as composer, when Henry Purcell may well have been available.

Grabu and *Albion and Albanus* went largely unnoticed by nineteenth-century historians, but, at the beginning of the twentieth century, with the increased interest in antiquarian music, his name began to reappear. The commentary this interest generated is striking for its distinct split along the English Channel. As Dryden predicted over two hundred years earlier, Grabu's 'French' origins are enough to convict him among English 'scholars'. English writers all belittled Grabu's work, often with a ferocity that calls their criticisms into question. French writers, on the other hand, were much more approving in their assessment. There are several causes for this paradox. In his book on Tomaso Albinoni, Michael Talbot, discussing changing attitudes towards early music, identifies a national bias in its revival.

Finally, the growing permeation of culture by nationalist sentiment encouraged the revival of older music as a patriotic

²⁵ C. Burney, *A General History of Music From the Earliest Ages to the Present Period* (London, 1789), 2 vols. with critical and historical notes by Frank Mercer, ii (London, 1935), pp. 646-648.

enterprise. In fact, the very remoteness in time of a Bach, a Rameau, or a Purcell made them all the more suited to be torch-bearers of a national heritage. Not by accident, the great collected editions of the nineteenth century and the first part of the present century were without exception published in each composer's home country.²⁶

In England, Purcell was the chief beneficiary of antiquarian interest and he became the torch-bearer of English musical heritage. Critics, however, found it difficult to accept that his music for the theatre was not in the now all-important form of through-composed opera. The fact that, under Purcell's nose, a Frenchman had written a full-length opera in English seems to have galled English musicologists. French musicologists, in the process of rediscovering the operas of Lully would, however, have found much to relish in the score of *Albion and Albanus*, since it clearly emulates Lully's style.

Several examples from the early twentieth-century literature precisely illustrate the divide. W. J. Lawrence, in 1912, began neutrally, describing Grabu as 'a mediocre French composer'.²⁷ A year later, in the second edition of the *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (repeated without significant change in two subsequent editions), the failure of *Albion and Albanus* was addressed.

It has been asserted that its failure was occasioned by the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion ... the real causes, however, were the innate worthlessness of both drama and music'.

Despite the lack of evidence to support this conclusion, this entry served for 70 years to inform inquiries into the opera. Similarly, the remarks of Pepys's diary are repeated uncritically: 'Grabu's incapacity both as performer and composer were commented upon by Pelham Humfrey.'²⁸

The most detailed, and most derisive, early work on *Albion and Albanus* came from Edward Dent. *Foundations of English Opera* (1928) is

²⁶ M. Talbot, *Tomaso Albinoni: The Venetian Composer and His World* (Oxford, 1990), p. 3.

²⁷ W. J. Lawrence, *The Elizabethan Playhouse and Other Studies* (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1912), p. 149.

²⁸ W. H. Hadow, 'Grabu, Lewis', *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edition, ed. J. A. Fuller Maitland, ii (London, 1913).

liberally peppered with contemptuous remarks on Grabu and the opera. To previously cited extracts, one can add ‘worst misfortune of all [for the opera], the music had been composed by Louis Grabu.’²⁹ As in the *Grove* article, Dent lays the blame for the opera’s failure squarely on Grabu, following the same incorrect and incomplete evidence of an earlier historian.

That the failure of the opera was due more to Grabu than to anyone else is fairly clear from the satirical poem quoted by Hawkins.³⁰

Dent obviously looked through the score, for he quotes several musical examples. How completely he examined it must be questioned, however. A few pages earlier, he finds several aspects of Lully’s *Phaëton* worthy of praise, an opera Grabu had obviously studied and imitated with success. Dent also fails to explain why, if the opera was so poor in composition, ‘there can be little doubt ... that Purcell studied the score with discriminating attention, for there are a few passages that can often and easily be paralleled in [his] operas’.³¹ In a similar vein, he contends that ‘the air for the Graces and Loves [in *Albion and Albanus*] shows a certain charm and variety of treatment’.³² A great deal more of the opera is unquestionably of a similar quality, including the *Chacon*. Nevertheless, Dent found the latter ‘of the poorest quality’.³³

French critics offer a very different opinion. Against the *Grove* article we can compare Roman Rolland’s assessment of Grabu in *Encyclopédie de la Musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire*:

²⁹ E. Dent, *Foundations of English Opera* (Cambridge, 1928), p. 161.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 165-166.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 168-169.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

Grabu n'avait sans doute aucune originalité, mais il était un bon musicien, très au courant de l'art français.³⁴

In *Histoire de l'Opéra en Europe*, he is even more emphatic in his praise of the opera: 'elle ne manque point de mérite ... elle est claire, élégante, d'une mélodie facile et superficielle'.³⁵

W. H. Grattan Flood came to exactly the opposite conclusion to his English counterparts when discussing the reception of the opera.

l'ouvrage fut si bien accueilli qu'il semblait qu'il dût devenir à la mode. Hélas, la révolte de Monmouth mit une fin à ce bel opéra pour un certain temps.³⁶

Andre Tessier claimed that the opera 'n'eut qu'un succès médiocre', but that Grabu was 'un musicien dont les œuvres mériteraient d'être étudiées de près, car elles eurent sûrement de l'influence sur l'orientation de la musique anglaise'.³⁷ Unfortunately, no succeeding French musicologist took up the challenge. Grabu may have written music in the French style, but he wrote it in England to English lyrics and it was left to English musicologists to tell the story.

However, English (and American) musicologists found little reason to look further into *Albion and Albanus*. Writers following the lead of Dent's explorations into early English opera simply repeated his damning critique of Grabu. Examples are too numerous to list, but R.E. Moore, Eric Walter White, Donald Grout and others have perpetuated this interpretation.³⁸ Most scathing is Denis Arundell's attack in *The Critic at*

³⁴ R. Rolland, 'L'Opéra au XVIIe siècle Angleterre', *Encyclopédie de la Musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire*, ed. A. Lavignac (Paris, 1925), p. 1884. The date appended to this article is 1912.

³⁵ R. Rolland, *Histoire de l'Opéra en Europe* (Paris, 1895), p. 297.

³⁶ W. H. Grattan Flood, 'Quelques précisions nouvelles sur Cambert et Grabu à Londres', *Revue Musicale* 9 (1928), p. 361. When considering Flood's remarks, it must be remembered that he was an Irish Catholic, and that he allowed both his religious and nationalist beliefs to influence his writing.

³⁷ A. Tessier, 'Robert Cambert à Londres', *Revue Musicale* 9 (1928), pp. 117-118.

³⁸ R.E. Moore, *Henry Purcell and the Restoration Theatre* (London, 1961), pp. 71-72; E. W. White, *The Rise of English Opera* (London, 1951), pp. 38-40; D. J. Grout, *A Short History of Opera*, second edition (New York, 1965), pp. 137-138.

the Opera, a book dedicated to Dent's memory. Arundell makes no attempt to disguise his xenophobia, describing Grabu as a 'refugee second-rater', 'a second-rate alien' and in seeming contradiction, 'third-rate'.³⁹ He parades Dent's old arguments and once again produces '*The Raree-Show*', concluding that it represents the truth while Dryden's prologue could only have been obsequious flattery. Unfortunately Arundell and others seem to have deemed examination of the complete score an unnecessary labour.

Only in the 1970s was the opera thoroughly re-evaluated by Franklin Zimmerman as part of the commentary on *Albion and Albanus* in the University of California's edition of Dryden's complete works. In his brief analysis, he countered the prevailing opinion that the opera and its music were inherently worthless, though he stopped short of suggesting that a performance of it was feasible.⁴⁰ Subsequently, Curtis Price, Peter Holman and James Winn have challenged the received opinion that Grabu's music was the cause of the opera's failure. These re-evaluations, however, have for the most part been offshoots of larger studies on the music of Purcell, the music of the English Court, and the life and works of John Dryden, so that an in-depth examination of the opera was not appropriate.

An additional barrier towards a greater understanding of the opera has been the continuing lack of access to either the score or performances and recordings of the opera. Currently, only one movement from the opera is available on compact disc,⁴¹ and there has been, until now, no modern edition of the music. The first complete modern performance of the opera was given on 7 August 1997 at the Dartington International Summer School directed by Anthony Rooley. Though it did not reveal the work to be a

³⁹ D. Arundell, *The Critic at the Opera* (London, 1957), pp. 132-143.

⁴⁰ 'As performable opera, the work is probably irretrievable'. *The Works of John Dryden*, xv, p. 355.

⁴¹ The Concert of Venus, along with the instrumental music from *Valentinian*, is available in *Four and Twenty Fiddlers: Music for the Restoration Court Band*, The Parley of Instruments, directed by Peter Holman (Hyperion, 1993).

masterpiece, the performance cast doubt on Zimmerman's conclusion that a modern performance of the opera was impracticable, and it suggested that a modern recording of the opera might help to rehabilitate it in the eyes of modern critics.

Chapter 12

Conclusion

Albion and Albanus occupies a pivotal position in the course of Restoration musical theatre. It represents the furthest advance of all-sung opera in England until the eighteenth century, and marks the point after which the main catalyst of spectacular stage entertainments, Thomas Betterton, chose the path of dramatic operas instead of through-composed operas. Though many musicologists have laid the blame for this turn of events on the alleged poor quality of Grabu's setting of *Albion and Albanus*, this study has shown that extra-musical considerations were the true cause. A detailed examination of contemporaneous documents mentioning *Albion and Albanus* does not provide any preponderance of evidence which suggests that the artistic elements of the production were a cause either of its failure to run for more than six days or its failure to earn a profit for the United Company. Rather, *Albion and Albanus* falls into a category inhabited by *Psyche* and *The Fairy Queen*, of productions that cost so much to mount that an unsubsidised run of performances could not return a profit healthy enough to merit more frequent attempts at similar works. Instead, works such as *The Tempest* and *Dioclesian*, which were equally popular, but simpler and hence more profitable to stage, were, understandably, favoured by the United Company. In addition, *Albion and Albanus* suffered from the circumstance of calamitous timing. What production could be expected to survive the death of the Sovereign for whom it was written, and to withstand the distraction of a threatened civil war?

An understanding of the events and circumstances of the run of *Albion and Albanus* allows the possibility of an unbiased examination of the work itself. Grabu's structuring of large-scale divertissements, if lacking in tonal variety, is otherwise well-balanced and well-conceived, and

the evidence of the solid craftsmanship of the music should finally lay to rest the unfounded assessment of Grabu as an incompetent composer. Likewise, the frequent labelling of Grabu as ‘a second-rate composer’ must be reconsidered. The fact that no other composers of the period could consistently match the level of inspiration of Henry Purcell, including Locke and Blow, has not prompted scholars to dismiss these ‘lesser’ composers as they have Grabu. Grabu’s instrumental music in particular can sit comfortably alongside that of his English contemporaries, and as Peter Holman has pointed out, it is more a matter of style rather than ability that separates Grabu from Locke.¹ Nevertheless, a certain bias of Anglophile musicology has preferred the English style to that of France, and so Grabu’s reputation, in the midst of a great flowering of English music after the Restoration, has unjustly suffered.²

The lack of respect granted to Grabu’s music has caused it, and *Albion and Albanus* in particular, to be overlooked. Such neglect has come at a high cost, for this opera has much to offer in the understanding of musical theatre in the Restoration period. Most importantly, this oversight has veiled the role of *Albion and Albanus* in the transference of French theatrical practices to the English stage. This study has argued that, in the process of organising *Albion and Albanus*, Thomas Betterton gained first-hand knowledge of the Paris production of Lully’s *Phaëton*, and that he and Grabu subsequently attempted to imitate aspects of this work. Furthermore, Grabu had a thorough acquaintance with French theatrical practices, both through his work on *Ariane* in the 1670s and his experience in France in the early 1680s, during which he seems to have written the small-scale dramatic work *Pastoralle*. Certainly he would have brought this experience to bear in writing, and advising Betterton on, *Albion and Albanus*. This body of

¹ *Four and Twenty Fiddlers* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 387-388.

² Graham Sadler has dealt with the lesser status granted to French Baroque music in his editorial essay for *Early Music* 21 (1993), pp. 338-339.

evidence has been largely ignored, even in the year of Purcell's tercentenary celebrations, when several books explored both Purcell's work and the theatrical milieu in which he worked.³

Purcell's reaction to *Albion and Albanus* has likewise been difficult to measure owing to the lack of a modern edition of the work and a complete examination of its music. Grabu's use of concerto-like alternations of instruments, his structuring of chorus movements, his organisation of series of movements, and his handling of the Chacon seem to have been observed with close attention by Purcell, whose use of similar techniques and forms indicates that he held Grabu's work in greater esteem than did many later commentators. Likewise, many people who either saw or knew of the opera apparently found it worth collecting in the form of its 1687 full score, for some 24 copies are still extant in libraries throughout the world.

The information to be found in the score of *Albion and Albanus* has repercussions for performance practice on both sides of the English Channel. Since Lully's monopoly on operatic composition in France prevented his peers from writing opera until after his death, *Albion and Albanus* is the only French-style opera to have been composed during the Florentine's reign over the Académie Royal de Musique. Given the fact that Grabu knew Lully's music in some detail, the score of *Albion and Albanus* offers important insights into Lully's practices. In particular, the absence of a bass continuo line and figuring in most of the instrumental movements in *Albion and Albanus* corresponds to similar evidence in Lully's scores. Likewise, Grabu's use of metre is consistent with that of

³ Two chapters in particular, 'Dioclesian and the Dorset Garden Stage', by Franz and Julia Muller, and 'Dance Music in Purcell's Operas' by Richard Semmens, in *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell*, ed. by M. Burden (Oxford, 1996) completely overlook the information available in *Albion and Albanus*, despite both suggesting the influence of French theatrical practices on the English stage.

Lully's and offers further information of the latter's use of 2 and ϕ . Finally, a convention seemingly present in Lully's operas, whereby the status and type of a bass character that sings bass-doubling continuo songs is different to that of a bass that sings a passage with the same instrumentation but an independent vocal line, is confirmed by a similar hierarchy in *Albion and Albanus*.

While this study has shown the important position that *Albion and Albanus* holds in English operatic development, it has also uncovered several other aspects of Grabu's life and works that offer scope for further research. John Buttrey's article on Cambert in London has shown that members of the French government were keenly aware of his and other French musicians' activities at the English court.⁴ Grabu's activities are also likely to have been observed, and in this light, his initial move to England may eventually be proved to have been undertaken for political as well as musical reasons. Further investigation of Grabu's return to France between 1679 and 1683 may also shed light on the traffic of music and musicians across the channel at this time. Robert Ford's examination of *US-NH Filmer MS 33* has suggested the possibility of Grabu's connection with wind musicians at Louis XIV's court,⁵ while this study has demonstrated his knowledge of Lully's operatic works. French documents and manuscripts may have more to offer on the nature of Grabu's activities there.

Finally, it is the hope of this author that further performances and a recording of *Albion and Albanus* will be undertaken. There are compelling reasons, both musical and historical, to argue for such a venture, since only in performance can we hope to fairly judge the true quality of the work and

⁴ 'New light on Robert Cambert in London, and his *Ballet en Musique*', *Early Music* 23 (May 1995), pp. 199-221.

⁵ 'Nicolas Dieupart's book of trios', *Recherches sur la Musique Française Classique* 20 (1981), pp. 45-75.

to compare it with its relations, French opera and English dramatic opera. The performance of Purcell's dramatic operas, which were considered unstageworthy earlier in this century, is now supported by scholars and has been vindicated by performers. Interest in, and performance of, Lully's operas has gone through a similar renaissance. The precursors of Purcell's works, *Psyche* and *The Tempest*, have been granted space in the recorded repertoire, thanks both to their influence on Purcell and to their own artistic merit. Gräber's *Albion and Albanus* surely deserves similar treatment.

APPENDIX A

Manuscript and Printed Sources of Grabu's Music

Though a study of all of the material in the following lists was not a primary concern of this thesis, contact with many of the sources of Grabu's music, and with articles examining them, has allowed me to compile the most complete catalogue of which I am aware. All of the concordances except those regarding *GB Lbl* Add. MS 19759, *GB-Lcm* 1144, *US-NH* Filmer MS 9 and *GB Ob* MS Mus. Sch. 44 are taken from Robert Ford's article on *US-NH* Filmer MS 33 (see note 1 below). Ford was apparently unaware of the concordance between *GB-Ob* MS Mus. Sch. 44 and *A Collection of Several Symphonies and Airs in Three Parts ... for Violins, Flutes and Hautbois*. Footnotes offering further information regarding these sources have been provided where appropriate.

1) A List of Manuscript Sources of the Music of Louis Grabu

| Library | Manuscript and Date | Contents | Description | Concordances |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <i>EIRE-Dtc</i> | MS 413 ¹ 1680s | Passacaille in D a3 Overture in C a3 | Three part-books perhaps copied by Thomas Bullamore | <i>A Collection of Symphonies</i> ² <i>US-LC M2.1.L9 case</i> <i>US-NH Filmer MS 33</i> |
| <i>F-Pn</i> | Vm7 4822 ³ | ‘Courons, courons’ a3 (S,S,B) | Grabu’s piece is not attributed | <i>US-NH Filmer MS 33</i> |
| <i>GB-CDp</i> | MS 1.39 ⁴ | Four airs in D (nos. 13-16) a1 (tr.1) | | <i>A Collection of Symphonies</i> <i>US-LC M2.1.L9 case</i> <i>US-NH Filmer MS 33</i> <i>Vade Mecum (1679)</i> |
| <i>GB-Cu</i> | 23.E.13-17 ⁵ | Bouree a4 Menuet a4 Airs pour les suivans de Jupiter a4 | Four part-books; contains music from <i>Pastoralle</i> | <i>Pastoralle</i> ⁶ |
| <i>GB-En</i> | 5777 ⁷ 1670-80s | Act Tunes? a1 (tr.1) Seven pieces including dance for ‘Mercury’ | Violin tune-book from the library of the Ker family, Newbattle Abbey, Midlothian; probably written in London during the 1670s and 80s | |

¹ P. Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 369-70

² *A Collection of Several Symphonies and Airs in Three Parts ... for Violins, Flutes and Hautbois* (London, 1688). See the list of printed sources below.

³ R. Ford, ‘Nicolas Dieupart’s Book of Trios’, *Recherches sur la Musique Française Classique* 20 (1981), p. 55.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ *Pastoralle* (London, 1684). See list of printed sources below.

⁷ P. Holman, op. cit., pp. 364-365.

| | | | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------|---|--|---|
| <i>GB-Lbl</i> | Add. MS 17853 ⁸ | Chaconne a1 (tr. 1) | | <i>US-LC M2.1.L9</i> Case |
| <i>GB-Lbl</i> | Add. MS 19759 | ‘One night when all the village sleep’ (sic.) a1 | ‘Arise ye Subterranean Wind’ attributed to Grabu, but written by Humfrey; Late 17th Century miscellany belonging to Charles Compleman | <i>Choice Ayres and Songs, Book III</i> |
| <i>GB-Lbl</i> | Add. MS 29283-5 1680s | Act Tunes for <i>The Disappointment</i> a3 | Three part-books owned by Thomas Fuller 1682; Grabu’s pieces are dated 1684 | |
| <i>GB-Lbl</i> | Add. MS 31429 1680s | Five pieces in C a3 | Three part-books owned by Thomas Fuller 1682; Grabu’s pieces are dated 1684 | |
| <i>GB-Lcm</i> | 1144 ⁹ | Act tunes for <i>Maid’s Tragedy</i> a2 (tr. and bass) Act tunes for <i>Double Marriage</i> a2 (tr. and bass) | The <i>Double Marriage</i> tunes are attributed to Purcell in this manuscript, but to Grabu in the concordance | <i>US-NH Filmer 9</i> |
| <i>GB-Lcm</i> | MS 2054 ¹⁰ | Two vocal passages from <i>Pastoralle</i> ‘Aymons berger tout aime’ and ‘Aymons berger puisque’ | Primarily vocal excerpts from Lully’s operas; handwriting is in French style | <i>Pastoralle</i> |

⁸ R. Ford, op. cit., p. 56.

⁹ F. Zimmerman, *Henry Purcell 1659-1695: An Analytical Catalogue of his Music* (London, 1963), pp. 268-269. C. Price, *Music in the Restoration Theatre* (Ann Arbor, 1979), p. 162.

¹⁰ R. Ford, op. cit., p. 55.

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|---------------|--|---|---|--|
| <i>GB-LEp</i> | Q 784.21 L969 | Act tunes for <i>Oedipus</i> a4 Act tunes for unknown play a4 | Four part-books | |
| <i>GB-Ob</i> | MS Mus. Sch. C44 | Two pieces in B flat a3 | Five parts – two copies of tr.1 and Bass, one of tr.2 | <i>A Collection of Symphonies</i> |
| <i>GB-Och</i> | 362 | Air in G a1 | | |
| <i>US-LC</i> | M2.1.L9 Case ¹¹ 1693 | 61 anonymous trios a3; nearly half are concordant with A <i>Collection of Symphonies</i> | A single book in <i>tafelmusik</i> format; dated ‘Edinburg, May 1693’ | <i>A Collection of Symphonies Vade Mecum</i> (1679) <i>GB-CDp</i> MS 1.39 <i>EIRE-Dtc</i> MS 413 <i>US-NH</i> Filmer MS 8 <i>US-NH</i> Flimer MS 33 |
| <i>US-NH</i> | Filmer MS 8 ¹² | Chaconne a1 (bass) | This piece is unascibed | <i>US-LC</i> M2.1.L9 Case |
| <i>US-NH</i> | Filmer MS 9 ¹³ 1700? | 1. Act Tunes a3 <i>Double Marriage</i> 2. Act Tunes ? a3 | Three part-books; music for plays from 1682-1700, apparently in chronological order. | <i>GB-Lcm</i> 1144 |
| <i>US-NH</i> | Filmer MS 33 ¹⁴ 1680-85 | 26 pieces a3 including music for <i>Pastoralle</i> ; several of Grabu’s pieces are dated 1681 | Three part-books copied in the main in France by Nicolas Dieupart | <i>Pastoralle A Collection of Symphonies US-LC</i> M2.1.L9 case <i>Vade Mecum</i> (1679) <i>GB-CDp</i> MS 1.39 <i>EIRE-Dtc</i> MS 413 <i>F-Pn</i> Vm7 4822 |

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 54-55.

¹² Ibid., pp. 56.

¹³ See note 6 above.

¹⁴ R. Ford, op. cit., pp. 45-75.

2) A List of Printed Sources of the Music of Louis Grabu

| Sources | Date of Publication | Contents |
|--|---------------------|---|
| <i>The Pleasant Companion: or New Lessons and Instruction for the Flagelet</i> | 1675 | Four tunes, 1 st treble parts only |
| <i>Vade Mecum for the Lovers of musick, shewing the excellency of the recorder ...</i> | 1679 | Three tunes, 1 st treble parts only |
| <i>Choice Ayres and Songs Book II</i> | 1679 | Song: 'Hark how the songsters of the grove' from <i>Timon of Athens</i> |
| <i>Choice Ayres and Songs Book III</i> | 1681 | Song: 'Close in a hollow, silent cave' Song: 'One night while all the village slept' from <i>Mithridates</i> |
| <i>Choice New Songs ... by Tho. D'Urfey</i> | 1684 | Song: 'All loyal hearts take off your brimmers' |
| <i>Pastoralle</i> ¹⁵ | 1684 | French pastoral; Vocal and instrumental music for <i>Valentinian</i> ¹⁶ |
| <i>The Theatre of Music Book I</i> | 1685 | Song: 'When Lucinda's blooming beauty' |
| <i>A Collection of Twenty Four Songs ... Most within the compass of the flute</i> | 1685 | Song: 'When Lucinda's blooming beauty' |
| <i>Albion and Albanus</i> | 1687 | Opera |
| <i>A Collection of Several Simphonies and Airs in Three Parts ... for Violins, Flutes and Hautbois</i> ¹⁷ | 1688 | 36 three-part instrumental pieces |
| <i>The New Treasury of Music</i> | 1695 | Song: 'When Lucinda's blooming beauty' |

¹⁵ Publication information is not provided in the edition, but can be found in *The London Gazette* of 23 June 1684. See M. Tilmouth, 'A Calendar of References to Music in the Newspapers published in London and the Provinces' (1660-1719), *Royal Music Association Research Chronicle* 1 (1961), p. 6. The title page is reproduced in P. Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers*, p. 382.

¹⁶ Peter Holman has convincingly argued that the instrumental music, which follows the *Pastoralle* in this edition, was composed for the 1684 performance of Rochester's *Valentinian*. See 'Valentinian, Rochester and Louis Grabu', *The Well Enchanting Skill: Music, Poetry, and Drama in the Culture of the Renaissance: Essays in Honour of F. W. Sternfeld* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 127-141

¹⁷ In this edition the composer is anonymous. Concordances with several manuscripts (see manuscripts list above) confirm that Grabu composed many of the pieces, and Robert Ford suggests that 'the conclusion that the whole ... was the work of Grabu seems inescapable; musically, the entire edition is of a piece' (op. cit., pp. 53-54).

APPENDIX B

Documents on the Early Reception History of *Albion and Albanus*

i.

*The Raree-show, from Father HOPKINS*¹

From Father Hopkins, whose vein did inspire [him],
 Bayes sends this raree-show to publick view;
Prentices, fops, and their footmen admire him,
 Thanks patron, painter, and Monsieur *Grabu*.

Each Actor on the stage his luck bewailing,
 Finds that his loss is infallibly true;
Smith, *Nokes*, and *Leigh* in a Feaver with railing,
 Curse poet, painter and Monsieur *Grabu*.

Betterton, *Betterton* thy decorations,
 And the machines were well written we knew;
But all the words were such stuff we want Patience,
 And little better is Monsieur *Grabu*.

D— me, says *Underhill*, I'm out of two hundred,
 Hoping that rainbows and peacocks would do;
Who thought infallible Tom could have blunder'd,
 A plague upon him and Monsieur *Grabu*.

Lane, thou hast no applause for thy capers,
 Tho' all without thee would make a man spew;
And a month hence will not pay for the tapers,
 Spite of Jack Laureat and Monsieur *Grabu*.

Bayes, thou wouldst have thy skill thought universal,
 Tho' thy dull ear be to musick untrue;
Then whilst we strive to confute the Rehearsal,
 Prithee learn thrashing of Monsieur *Grabu*.

With thy dull prefaces still wouldst thou treat us,
 Striving to make thy dull bauble look fair;
So the horn'd herd of the city do cheat us,
 Still most commending the worst of their ware.

Leave making operas and writing Lyrics,
 'Till thou hast ears and canst alter thy strain;
Stick to thy talent of bold Panegyrics,
 And still remember the breathing the vein.

Yet if thou thinkest the town will extol'em,
 Print thy dull notes, but be thrifty and wise;
Instead of angels subscrib'd for the volume,
 Take a round shilling, and thank my advice.

¹This text is quoted from J. Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music, A new edition with the author's posthumous notes* (London, 1875), ii, ed. Othmar Wessely (Graz, 1969), p. 707.

In imitating thee this may be charming,
Gleaning from Laureats is no shame at all:
And let this song be sung next performing,
Else ten to one but the prices will fall.

ii.

Extracts from the dedicatory essay to *Miscellanea: or Various Discourses Written Originally by the Sieur de Saint Evremont And made English by Ferrand Spence*²

Preface: To my honour'd friend Thomas Milton Esq.

But, to leave it in suspences whether all the Aristotelian and Horation Precepts are nicely requisite in the composition of a Comedy, and not to return back and enquire here, whether the same dispute may be warped also to tragedy, we can make no manner of question, but that Opera's or pieces of Machine are not subject to their Jurisdiction, but are wholly out of the pale of those two Men's Territories, since they are of a later date, and owe their original to Florence in Lorenzo de Medici's time or to the Venetians, who (as Mr. Dryden thinks, might gather them up from the wrecks of the Grecian and Roman Theatres, which were adorn'd with Scenes, Musick, Dances and Machines, especially the Athenian).

Comedy ought to have everything likely and probable, i.e. only natural and ordinary Events; Opera's which are a species, that stand in opposition to the former, must accept only of extraordinary and super-natural Adventures: But Tragedy, like the Aristotelian virtue, is to lye snudging betwixt them both, being compounded of marvellousness and possibility. So that hence we see, the vices and imperfections of a Comedy, are the virtues and beauties of an Opera. Nothing is more wicked in a comedy than the slipping and alteration of the Scene: But nought is so rich and excellent in an Opera as the breaking of all the unities of time, place and action, I mean as the leaps, not only from one place of the earth to another, but from Earth to the Empyrean Heav'n, and from Heav'n to Hell: While the simple habitants of the lunar planet little think what work we make with them in Dorset-Garden. In a Comedy, nothing is so unmercifully unsupportable, as to ungigg or explicate the

² London, 1686. Original spellings, capitalisations and punctuation have been retained. The copy consulted is GB-Lbl 641.a.1.

Intrigue by a miracle, or by the kind arrival of some [Deus ex machina]: Whereas in an Opera, nothing is so charmingly ravishing, as these sorts of miracles and these Apparitions of Divinities, when men have some ground and reason to introduce them.

From this wide distinction betwixt the nature of Comedy and Opera, it may be determin'd, that either my Authour did not understand the right notion of Operas, when he terms them, ev'n beyond a litteral sense, Comedies in Musique, or else he means that abused Constitution of them, which he himself derides, when they are compell'd in Musick to negotiate the inferiour and common affairs of civil Life. In this Observation he certainly shakes hands with truth, and I am sure, you, sir, will take his side: For I, partly, believe, that should a Man drillingly sing and warble out an errand to his Laquais, the Fellow might, perhaps, go, but I fancy, he would make more hast to Court than to the place appointed him in his message, that he might be the first to make Friends for his Master's Estate.

I will not here examine my Authour's judgement in singing, nor the Preference he gives the French to the Italian Operas, such an attempt being extraneous to my undertaking: But since he damns the very essential constitution of this Theatrical Entertainment, notwithstanding the incivility, I think myself engag'd to see him contradicted. And I hope, Sir, that I shall obtain your pardon both for the tediousness and the unpolish'd neglect of this discourse, especially in this part of it, wherein I have so few helps, seeing I do at once plead the cause of Friendship, and, perhaps, of good sense: For, this portion of the Stage's diversion [Opera] being but a Novice in our Theatre, and having just receiv'd the Royal Approbation and encouragement, as it would be unmannerly to let anything slip the Press, that so much as indirectly strikes at the design, so it wou'd be as severe too, and to the detriment of the Actors, who have been in immense charges at carrying it on, and some of whom of Emminent judgement and sense I am proud to call my Friends.

All the reasons, therefore, which I can find my author goes upon, in subverting root and branch, the constitutive Principles and foundation of Opera's are two. The first is more general. That it is impossible for the mind of Man to be sincerely

pleas'd, when it has so little to do, and that tho, perhaps, it may be at first surpriz'd into some delight, yet, afterwards, it presently sinks into it self, and becomes tir'd and drooping. The other is, that he never saw an Opera, but what to him appeared foolish and contemptible, either in the disposition of the subject, or in the composure of the Verses.

In reply to these reasons: This principle is acknowledg'd as a Basis and Groundwork in all Arts and Sciences, that those who first invented them, and gav'em all the perfections requisite to their Frame, Nature and Constitution, ought to be Supream Dictators in whose steps, all the following Disciples are to tread: Otherwise, they tread awry. So that, as the Italians did first pitch upon and accomplish in all it's numbers this Entertainment of Operas, whoever undertakes to compose an Opera, must wholly square his measures to their design. This my Critick ought to have consider'd, before he had gone, and committed High-Treason against one of the most establish'd and most famous Laws among Men of Wit, but not having the fear of Authourity before his Eyes, and by contriving some new Atheistical Regulations, according to which he would alter the settled Government.

But (it seems) his reason so to do: No Man of sense can be taken with things, which have no sense in'em: The mind does not find matter enough in'em, to employ itself about nothing but noise and fine shews: And the Ludgate-audience, provided they be neither Deaf nor Blind were by Predestination devised to be charmed by these superareial practices:

[In contradiction of the second]: I will only bring our Alb. and Albanus into his consideration, which not only for the amussitated management of the subject-matter, and the ingenious contrivance of the versification, but for the great and Godlike argument, for the Heroique design of it's Instruction, for the admirable and sumptuous performance in the sweetness of the Musick, in the Harmonique Movements and Postures, in the richness of the Habits, and the Beauty of the Machines and Decorations, we may oppose in competition with any thing, that ever

Paris or Venice it self did yet see. Notwithstanding the general design is but as yet in a State of Probation.

The argument is both according to and beyond the Poets own Heart, both litterally true and super-naturally Historical. The miraculous Restauration and Deliverances of the two Royal Brothers, with the Apotheosis of our late Immortal and cheris'd Monarch. The Instruction easie and fresh in our Memories, Treason defeated by the Almighty, and his Vice-gerents preserv'd. We are not constrain'd like our Neighbour Nations, to feign Poetical Tales: We have daily new-Subjects for Operas set before our Eyes, and we see ours acted first on the true Theatre of the World.

The conduct sublime, yet no great chasms in it, but such as rather seem to heighten than stint the minds of the audience. The Verses pure, fluent and fill'd with a Coelestial and Blissful Cadence, no thing in our Language, yet extant, comparable to it. And we can find but one and twenty Apostrophes (I mean of distinct Words) through the whole Series of the verse.

This was a way of writing, first observ'd and introduc'd by Mr. Waller: And without this, the contrivance of Operas could never stand. And as there is a sweetness in the middle, so is there an end of the verse, which is chiefly caus'd by the Dissyllable and Trissyllable Rhymes, lately much us'd in our Songs, and borrow'd originally from the Italians. For, it is generally of the Constitutive nature of all Italian verses, of what number of syllables soever they be, to have the Accent upon the Penultima. There are some indeed, which they call *Sdrucchioli* on slippery verses, that lay it upon the Ante-penultima, their final Cadence running swift: Whereof we have many examples in this English Opera, as being naturally Competible to it's Constitution, as may be proved by this instance.

The Italians, as they have preserv'd many things of the Latine through their whole Tongue, so have they retained a sort of verses, nam'd *Sciolti*, without Rhyme: Wherein that excellent Traduction of Virgil's *Æneis* is written by Hannibal Caro, from whom, I am of opinion, Sir, that great man of your name, whose enlarged Genius, you inherit, separated from the unhappy and fatal malignities, which belong'd

to that Age, took his design. The body consists of Heroique verses of eleven Syllables, but he sometimes mixes the sdruccioli of twelve, and then principally, when he makes the Gods to Speak as in the Sybill's Answer in the Sixth Book.

Verrano i Tencri al regno di Lavinio,
Di cio t'affido. Ma benstoito desser vi
Si penteranno. Guerre, guerre horri bili
Sorgere ne veggio, et pien di sangue il Tevere.

As to the performance, I will not inquire whether our English voices are so fine and fit for things of this nature: I will rather suspend my judgement with my Authour, remembering, that things cannot at first receive their ultimate perfection, qui non est hodie, cras magis aptus erit; and that there is a strife among Musicians as well as Men of all other Professions:

I will not strain in commending the vision of the Honours of the Garter, in which we see the Glories of our August Prince with all the lesser Deities about him.

Divisum Imperium cum Jove
Caesar habet.

Neither will I mention the Peacock which had the Samiseen (who stamp'd it's Pourtraiture upon their Coins, because Juno, to whom it was dedicated, was by them adored) they would not only have Worshipped her but the bird too, and, perhaps, more the very Pourtraict. She, indeed is appointed by the Poets to convert the Eyes of Argus in the Peacock's Train: But here the Spectator does wish for his eyes to look upon the Bird it self, as being as rare a sight, as when it was first transported from the Barbarians into Greece, at which time Aelian tells us, that among the Athenians it was not to be seen without Money ...

I will not enlarge, Sir, upon these Occurences, because they have already betray'd me into a great deal of Pedantry, tho I have made it my scope all along to keep at as great a distance as I could from the Anonymous Translator, who some days ago put forth these Stage Essays. I will say nothing in derogation of his Traduction, nor build upon the ruins of another Mans; But I do not doubt that if he had ponder'd more, he would have thoroughly understood his Author, and a little more pains woul'd have better spoke his Acquaintance with honest Will. Lilly.

Albion and Albanius, an Opera perform'd at the Queen's Theatre in *Dorset-Garden*, and printed in Folio, *Lond.* 1685. 'The Subject of it (as the Author says) is wholly Allegorical; and the Allegory it self so very obvious, that it will no sooner be read, than understood. I need not therefore take the pains to acquaint my Reader, that by the Man on the Pedestal, who is drawn with a long, lean, pale Face, with Fiends Wings, and Snakes twisted round his Body: and incompast by several Phanatical Rebellious Heads, who suck Poyson from him, which runs out of a Tap in his Side, is meant the late Lord *Shaftsbury*, and his Adherents. I shall not pretend to pass my censure whether he deserv'd this usage from our Author, or no; but leave it to the judgments of Statesmen and Polititians. How well our Author has drawn his other Characters, I shall leave to the decision of the Criticks: as also whether Monsieur *Grabut*, or our Poet deserves the preference; or either of them merit those Applauses which Mr. *Dryden* in both their Names challenges as their due; since I find an Author of a different Opinion, who thus describes them.

*Grabut his Yoke-mate ne're shall be forgot,
Whom th'God of Tunes upon a Muse begot.
Bays on a double score to him belongs:
As well for writing as for setting Songs.
For some have sworn, (th' Intrigue so od[d] is laid)
That Bayes and He mistook each others Trade
Grabut the Lines, and He the Musick made.*

³ London, 1691, pp. 151-152. Original spellings, capitalisations and punctuation have been retained. The text is drawn from the facsimile edition reprinted by the Augustan Reprint Society with an introduction by J. Loftis (Los Angeles, 1971).

APPENDIX C

Extracts of lyrics from the musical sections of *Brutus of Alba, or Augusta's Triumphs*¹

ACT I

The Scene is, *the River of Thames, the prospect reaches as far as can be seen from the Bridge, in a clear Day: On one side of the Stage, lies Augusta, attended by Cities; on the other, Thamesis, attended by Rivers.*

Hermes Descends in his Chariot, drawn by Ravens.

Her And *Hermes* too appears, to chear your Sorrows.

Hermes sings.
Thou Glorious Fabrick stand, for ever stand;
Well worthy thou to Entertain
The God of Traffick, and of Gain,
To draw the Concourse of the Land,
And Wealth of all the Main.

Augusta Sings.
Aug O *Hermes*, pity take
Of her, who Europe's Pride was seen,
And this fair Isle's Imperial Queen.
Albion's Darling Bride adorn'd,
Till my Absent Lord I mourn'd
And whilst my Turtle-moans I make,
Oh Hermes, pity take.

Thamesis Sings.
Tha And I the Noble flood, who pour
My Plenteous Urn on her Rich Shoar,
No more the Prince of Fields, I Reign,
Nor she the Queen of Albion's Fame.

Aug Oh *Hermes*, pity take.

Tha Oh *Hermes*, pity take.

Chor To thee for pity now we call,
O! God-like *Hermes*; pity all.

Mer Cease, fair *Augusta*, cease thy Sorrow,
And tho' to Day thou mourns't, thou'lt smile to Morrow.
Thy Mourning Prayer, and Evening Dreams,
The Albion with his smiling Beams,
Returns so Glorious, Bright and Gay,
He rivals the Great God of Day!

Chor Our *Albion* with his smiling Beames,
Her While *Gallick* foes which Envy see
Your Monarch's happy Victory.
Augusta, ought not to Despair,
For *Albion's* Heavens peculiar Care.

¹G. Powell (London, 1697). Original spellings, capitalisations and punctuation have been retained. The copy consulted is GB-Lbl 83.a.7.(.7).

Mercury ascends

Tha *Since our Albion is returning
All our blazing Bonfires Burning,
Joyn each Loyal Heart and Hand,
Each Attending
All Knees Bending
Triton's Sounding
Shores Rebounding,
Send my Jolly Neptunes Sons to Land.*

*A Dance of Nerieds.
Augustus, Thamesis, and their Attandance [sic.] all Sink.*

*The Scene Changes to a Poetical Hell, there is a Figure of Prometheus
chain'd to a Rock, the Vulture knawing his Liver; Sisiphus rowling the stone,
beyond abundance of figures in various torments; then a great Arch of Fire,
behind this a Pyramide of Flames in perpetual agitation, behind this glowing
fire which Terminates the Prospect; then rises the Court of Pluto, with him
the Furies and Alecto.*

Pluto *Sings* *From Hills of Ice, and Heaps of rowling Snow,
From Lakes of Fire, that neither Ebb nor Flow;
From Sulphurous Flames, and from Pestiferous Mists,
From Terrors Infinite, where howling Guests,
Almost Affect there Torturers with their Cries,
Where souls for ever Burn, and never Die;
Where misery is always but begun,
And only wretched certainties are known,
Come we to know, what Coreb wou'd Demand.*

PLUTO sings

Pluto *Of all my whole Infernal Brood,
I'll give you one well Nurst in Blood,
The Eldest Child of black Perdition,
One that is fit to serve Ambition.*

Alecto *See Noble Prince, how ready he stands
With Blood-shed Eyes, and Crimson Hands!*

Minos *He the Glorious work will do,
For Mischiefs his Delight,
The Bloody Business then pursue;
And shrow'd his Glories in Eternal Night.
He was for mighty Mischief made,
Mischief is his Darling Trade.*

Fury *Great Prince, I am at hand,
To Obey thy great Command;
And fear not me,
For you shall see
His great Renown
I'll soon pull down,
From its tow'ring Eagles Flight,
That soar'd high as the Poles,
To Creak with the Bat*

Chor *And Hoot, Hoot, Hoot, with the Owles.*
Then you Furies advance,
Lead, lead up a Dance,
All shall be well
And we'll frolick in Hell,
For our Enemy now we are humbling.
Make his subjects Rebel
We shall soon Fill up Hell,
And rejoyce, while the Wretches are Tumbling.

Advance of Envy.

ACT 2

A Dialogue between a *Triton* and a *Nayad*

Triton *Oh! Turn and be kind ...*
[this text is not based on *Albion and Albanus*]

After the Dialogue rises eight Statues who leap of [f] their Pedestals and Dance, after the Dance they sink with the Fountain.

ACT 3

Mer *Mercury sings.*
See, the opening Clouds divide asunder,
and see, see, yonder,
The Angry Wife of Jove, descending from Above,
More loud than all Jove's Thunder.

Juno descends on her Peacock. As it comes near the Stage, the Clouds open and discover the Tail of the Peacock, which is so wide, it almost covers the Stage. Juno comes forward, and sings.

Juno *No, Hermes, no, all Quarrels cease,*
In Heaven, as well as Earth, 'tis Peace;
Jove by the Stygian Lake has swore,
His Wand'ring Love should Rove no more.

Tha *Thamesis sings.*
Great Queen, who shin'st with those bright Beams,
Whose Glory guilds my Streams,
See what Bending Knees we pay Thee,
Thus Adore Thee, thus Obey Thee.

Aug *Augusta sings.*
Bright Queen of Hymen's hollow'd Fires,
The Sovereign of all Chast Desires,
That with true Joy the Genial Bed inspires;
See what Bending Knees we Pay Thee,
Thus Adore Thee, thus Obey Thee.

Chor *Great Queen, &c.*

Iris descends on a Rainbow, and comes forward.

Juno *Say Iris say, from the Battavian Strand,
What News hast thou brought o're?
Hast thou Obey'd my Great Command,
And brought Great Albion safe to Shore.*

Iris *Neptune, his Brother, Lord o'th' Ocean,
And his Sea-Nymphs whole Devotion;
Venus in her Shell attends him,
Her Fair Hand, and Smiles, she lends him,
Thousand Prayers to waft him o're,
And carefully has brought him safe to Shore.
See, see, the Crowds, and Joys all round,
Welcome Thunders all before,
Till the Gods Joyn in the Chorus,
Welcome, Heaven and Earth resound.*

Mer *If Mortals Laugh and Sing,
'Tis time we Gods take Wing,
To mount and send her down,
The Guardian of his Crown;
Astrea who from Earth was driven,
Till Albion call'd her back from Heaven.*

Chor *Then all prepare to Sing his Fame,
Sing all, Sing all, Great Albion's Name:
For 'twas by Mighty Jove Decreed,
This Island should by him be freed.*

While this Chorus is Singing, Juno, Iris, and Mercury ascend.

ACT 4

[Coreb] Waves his Wand, and a Banquet rises, they sit down, and two Scaramouch Men, and two Scaramouch Women Enter and Dance: Then two Harlaquin Men and Women. After the Dance, Coreb speaks.

The SCENE changes to the Cliff of Dover, Augusta, Thamesis and their Followers rise out of the Sea and Sing.

CHORUS

Chor *Hail Royal Albion! Hail to thee!
Sent from the Gods, to set us free
From Bondage, and from Slavery.*

Tha *Hark, I am call'd; old Father Ocean
Calls my Tide;
Come away.
On the Mounting Billows dancing,
See the Royal Bark advancing;
The Waves, The Wind and Sea,
Are all a Albion's dear Devotion.*

1st Triton *See the Merry Boatswain too,
Has call'd his Jolley Crew,*

Chor Come, come, come, &c.

A Dance of six Watermen.

Nept *See, see, the Sea Gods trim thy Sails;
Every Nymph in all her Pride.*

1st Triton *Wafted by the Calmer Gales,
O're thy own Main Triumphant Ride.*

Aug *Each Nereid does her Locks adorn,
And every Triton minds his Horn:
The Lovely Mermaid too, behold
How shee Combs her flowing Gold:
Without a Snare, or Charm, she sings,
Welcome to the best of Kings.*

Chor Welcome, &c.

Apollo descends in his Chariot.

Apollo *Albion all Hail! Thou Sacred Head!
Heavens Darling Care, no Danger dread!
For Walls of Fate, thy Life Enclose,
The Plots of thy Malitious Foes,
Abhor'd above, Expos'd below,
Their own dull Light shall shew
Treason, which her Infernal Train
Works in her Hellish Mines in vain.*

Chor *Albion, all Hail, &c.*
Apollo *My Oracles declare, When he has done
His finish'd Work of Fate,
And broke the Universal Yoke,
A Smiling Race of Years, his Reign shall Crown.*

A Song of Three Parts.

*At Albion's Return, this Happy Isle,
Driese up her Widows Tears;
And with a Smile, Plumes like a Bride,
With Joy and Pride.
The Meadows smile, the Groves and Flowers are Gay,
All Nature chears up at this Great and Glorious Day.*

Chor *At Albion's Return, &c.*

ACT 5

SCENE, the Thames

*As the King enters, the Cave of Proteus rises, which consists of Twelve
Arches of the Tuscan Order: The Frontispiece is adorned with a Tritan, a
Neired, and several Sea-monsters, enrich'd with Mother-Pearl, Coral, and
Sea-shells. At the farther end Proteus appears, with his followers, who come
forward and sings.*

A SONG

Proteus *Albion, belov'd of Earth and Heaven,
Bid rough War and Battel cease;
Return with Fame when thou hast driven
The hunted Tyrant down and given
Europe a Universal Peace.*

Chor Albion belov'd, &c.
Proteus Albion! Albion! *Heaven attends him;*
Heaven its Guardian Angels lends him;
Nor wonder Heaven's best smile defends him,
When for Heaven his Sword he draws,
His Standard's Heaven, and Heaven's his cause.

MUSICK
A very large Machine descends

Apollo *From the Imperial Courts of Jove,*
From the great Divan above,
I come to bid the conquering Albion reign,
Sovereign Lord of Land and Main:
Albion, nurst in honour's School,
Shall with Heroick Virtues rule.

A Symphony: After that, a Dialogue.
[the following texts are not based upon *Albion and Albanus*]

Cupid Cupid sings.
The God of Love with all his Train ...

A SONG

'Tis vain to tell me I am deceiv'd ...

A Symphony

As Apollo's Heaven ascends, the Temple of Fame rises.

Fame *You Nymphs that attend the Sovereign Barge ...*

Chor *Pleasure and Joy shall waft him o'er ...*

A Dialogue between an Old Man and a Young Girl

Old Man *Why dost thou fly me, pretty Maid ...*

Finis

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