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**Musical narration, performance and excess:  
the creation of horror in the Swedish opera  
*Tintomara* by Lars Johan Werle**  
(Johanna Ethneresson Pontara)

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## Zusammenfassung

Johanna Ethnersson Pontara untersucht die verschiedenen Schichten in der Oper *Tintomara* von Lars Johan Werle und Leif Söderström (Stockholm 1973), die auf der Novelle *The Queen's Jewel* von Carl Johan Love Almqvist basiert und deren Aussage durch die Kompositionstechnik erweitert wird, so Pontaras These. Durch die Montage der verschiedenen Stile bringt Werle das Verhältnis von Narration und Performance ins Oszillieren. Vor allem aber nutzt er seine Erfahrung als Filmmusikkomponist um Schockeffekte, wie man sie von der Musik in Horrorfilmen kennt, herzustellen und auf die Körper der Zuhörenden Macht auszuüben. Ethnersson Pontara wendet Theorien des Films an und kann so zeigen, dass die Orientierung und Veranlagung Tintomaras, einem Hermaphroditen, durch das in Romanzen, Porno- und Horrorfilmen traditionelle Machtgefälle zwischen männlichen Subjekten und weiblichen Objekten unterwandert wird.

## Abstract

Johanna Ethnersson Pontara examines the different layers in the opera *Tintomara* by Lars Johan Werle and Leif Söderström (Stockholm 1973), based on the short story *The Queen's Jewel* by Carl Johan Love Almqvist. Pontara's thesis claims that the opera's message is expanded by the composition technique. By assembling the different styles Werle brings the relationship between narration and performance to oscillation. He uses his experience as a film music composer to create shock effects, such as those caused by the music in horror films, in order to perform them on the listeners' bodies. Ethnersson Pontara applies film theories to reveal how the orientation and disposition of the hermaphrodite Tintomaras is undermined by the power disparities between male subjects and female objects as they are traditionally represented in romances, porn and horror films.

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## Musical narration, performance and excess: the creation of horror in the Swedish opera *Tintomara* by Lars Johan Werle

### *Introduction*

Swedish composer Lars Johan Werle's third opera *Tintomara* was received with enthusiasm by contemporary critics.<sup>1</sup> However, Werle's former collaborator on opera, director and librettist Lars Runsten, expressed a more negative attitude to it. His response appears from a letter that he wrote to Werle after the opera's opening performance in Stockholm on 18 January 1973. He states that *Tintomara* consists of a lot of beautiful music, however, it does not work as a musical drama. In spite of the fact that he had great experience of opera in all forms, he found it difficult to understand the performance.<sup>2</sup>

This response to *Tintomara* is of interest in this article as it reveals a certain idea of the role of music in opera. Runsten was originator of the radical ideas that were realized in the collaborations with Werle on opera in the 1960s.<sup>3</sup> The letter, however, shows an attitude that is highly conventional when it comes to the role of music in opera. Runsten describes how he was seduced by Werle's beautiful music; however, he was not captured by the opera as drama. According to his description the music was insufficiently integrated into the overall action. Then, what is the role of music in this opera?

Lars Johan Werle (1926-2001) was one of the most important opera composers in Sweden from the middle of the 1960s until the early 1980s, with operas such as *Dreaming about Thérèse* (*Drömmen om Thérèse*, Stockholm 1960-64), *The Journey* (*Die Reise*, Hamburg 1965-69, *Resan*, Stockholm 1970) and *Tintomara*

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Leif Aare, "'Tintomara': Första akten mäterlig, andra ojämn, tredje svag," in: *Dagens Nyheter*, 19 January 1973; and Carl-Gunnar Åhlén, "Operan får ett glansfullt 70-tal," in: *Svenska Dagbladet*, 19 January 1973; and Alf Thoor, "En opera att älska," in: *Expressen*, 19 January 1973.

<sup>2</sup> Lars Runsten, *Letter to Lars Johan Werle*, Bygdö 21 January 1973.

<sup>3</sup> See Johanna Ethnersson Pontara, "Music as Excess. *Die Reise* and Neo-Baroque Aesthetics in Opera from the 1960s," in: *STM-Online* 16 (2013), [http://musikforskning.se/stmonline/vol\\_16/ethnersson/index.php?menu=3](http://musikforskning.se/stmonline/vol_16/ethnersson/index.php?menu=3) (accessed 15.08.2016); and Johanna Ethnersson Pontara, "Narrative and performative modalities in the Swedish opera-in-the-round *Dreaming about Thérèse*," in: *STM-SJM* 96 (2014), no. 2, <http://www.musikforskning.se/stm-sjm/node/19>

(Stockholm 1971-73). Although celebrated Werle often had to defend the stylistic eclecticism of his music.<sup>4</sup> Contemporary critics as well as scholars have characterized him as postmodernist.<sup>5</sup> The most famous of Werle's stage works, *Animalen* (Gothenburg 1979), is a hybrid genre that draws from opera and musical. In the 1960s he also composed film music, for example to Alf Sjöberg's *The Island* (*Ön*, 1964-66) and Ingmar Bergman's *Persona* (1965-66) and *Hour of the Wolf* (*Vargtimmen*, 1966-68).<sup>6</sup>

With point of departure in Runsten's letter, and focusing on the montage of musical styles that characterizes *Tintomara*, my aim in the present article is to provide an exploration of music's relationship with the overall action in this opera. Scholars have previously shown how the opera's combination of narrative and performative musical structures contributes to a layer of meaning that is added to meanings that are represented by media from visual and verbal systems. Music adds the dimension of theatre, for example, which is a dimension that is essential in the novel on which the opera is based.<sup>7</sup>

In this article Werle's experience as film music composer in the 1960s is seen as a reference for him as opera composer.<sup>8</sup> Departing from some key scenes in the opera, I will pay attention to a combination of musical narration and performance with excess. As narration music contributes to the fictive world that is represented on stage, and as performance music is highlighted as music that is to say as an aesthetic object and as display.<sup>9</sup> Excess is here seen as a

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<sup>4</sup> See for example Herbert Connor, *Samtal med tonsättare*, Stockholm 1971, pp. 148–149 and Lennart Hedwall, "Lars Johan Werle och hans 'Vaggsång för jorden Ett tonsättarsamtal med Lennart Hedwall,'" in: *Musikrevy* 42 (1987), no. 7–8, p. 299.

<sup>5</sup> See for example Joakim Tillman, "Postmoderna pionjärer i svensk konstmusik," in: *Nutida Musik* 42 (1999), no. 4, pp. 8–24.

<sup>6</sup> See Ingmar Bergman, *Letter to Lars Johan Werle*, Stockholm 8 September 1964 and Lars Runsten, *Letter to Lars Johan Werle*, Gentofte 27 October 1965.

<sup>7</sup> See Johanna Ethnersson Pontara, Joakim Tillman, "Drottningens Juvelsmycke som postmodern opera: vad musiken har att säga till om i Lars Johan Werles *Tintomara*," in: *Dramatikern Almqvist*, ed. Anders Burman, Roland Lysell and Jon Viklund, Hedemora 2010, pp. 204–218.

<sup>8</sup> On the role of Werle as composer of film music, see Ingmar von Heijne, *Lars Johan Werle*, Stockholm 2007, pp. 75–76.

<sup>9</sup> Compare with Peter Kivy, "Speech, Song, and the Transparency of Medium: A Note on Operatic Metaphysics," in: *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 52 (Winter, 1994) no. 1, pp. 67–68.

musical and sounding exaggeration that creates a sensational effect on the body of the spectator in accordance with film theorist Linda Williams' concept of 'body genre'.<sup>10</sup> I show how that through this combination of roles music not only adds a layer of meaning to meanings narrated by verbal and visual media, but also adds a layer of meaning to the novel on which the opera is based.

The study is primarily based on the score and the vocal score of the revised version of the opera for performance in Gothenburg in 1976, and on a recording of the adaptation of this same version for Swedish television from 1977.<sup>11</sup>

### *Theoretical considerations*

Runsten's response to *Tintomara* highlights the fact that music's relationship with the overall action narrated by visual and verbal media (scenography, action, costume, lighting, text) has varied through the history of opera. The role of music may be of drawing the audience more deeply into the fictive world through interplay with visual and verbal media, on the one hand, and to create distance through tensions in relation to narratives of other media, on the other.<sup>12</sup> Just like in film, music in opera has different roles through musical codes. These codes may contribute to narrative meanings, such as creating atmosphere and dramatic increase, representing characters, expressing thoughts and emotions.<sup>13</sup> Many musical codes have their origin in mimesis aesthetics. Music philosopher Peter Kivy has argued that music expresses a

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<sup>10</sup> Linda Williams, "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess," in: *Film Quarterly* 44 (Summer, 1991), no. 4, pp. 2–13.

<sup>11</sup> Score: Lars Johan Werle, *Tintomara* Opera in two acts after Carl Jonas Love Almqvist's *The Jewellry of the Queen*. Text Leif Söderström, Stockholm 1972; Vocal score: Lars Johan Werle, *Azouras Lazuli Tintomara La Tournerose* Opera in two acts after Carl Jonas Love Almqvist's *The Jewellry of the Queen*. Text Leif Söderström, Stockholm 1972; Libretto: Lars Johan Werle (Music), Leif Söderström (Text), *Azouras Lazuli Tintomara La Tournerose* Opera in three acts after Carl Jonas Love Almqvist's novel *The Jewellry of the Queen*, Stockholm 1973; Recording of the production at the Stora Teatern in Gothenburg in 1977 made by Swedish television.

<sup>12</sup> See for example Carolyn Abbate, Roger Parker, *A History of Opera*, New York and London 2012; Christopher Morris, "'Too much music': the media of opera," in: *The Cambridge Companion to Opera Studies*, ed. Nicholas Till, Cambridge 2012, pp. 95–116.

<sup>13</sup> See Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard melodies: Narrative Film Music*, Bloomington 1987, pp. 82–89.

certain emotion through resembling the appearance and behaviour of a person expressing that emotion.<sup>14</sup>

Scholars have also discussed how music can be seen as expressive in virtue of the feelings it arouses in the listener. Philosopher Derek Matraver's 'arousal theory' takes the effect on the audience into consideration.<sup>15</sup> This casual relation between music and audience is emphasized through the medium of the singer. Through the opera singer music may have the role of seduction, spectacle and display.<sup>16</sup> The performance may generate interjections of interactivity from audience members that in turn influences the performance in accordance with the 'performative loop' of the performative aesthetics of theatre theoretician Erika Fischer-Lichte.<sup>17</sup> This relation between performance and audience is highlighted with the division Kivy has made between a 'representational attitude' and a 'concert attitude'. Audience members are not only "attending to a character in the drama making an expressive utterance", but also, and in certain kinds of opera primarily, to "a singer giving a 'performance'".<sup>18</sup> The concert attitude implies that music has the role of exhibition rather than of narration. Audience members are overwhelmed by the musical action of the singer.<sup>19</sup>

In some instances, this transformation of the role of music from narration into performance can be compared to the concept of metadrama. The musical moment gets the status of a play within the play and the status of the opera character can be seen as a role-playing within the role. According to theatre theorist Richard Hornby the metadramatic experience for the audience is one of

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<sup>14</sup> Peter Kivy, *Sound Sentiment: An Essay on Musical Emotions Including the Complete Text of The Corded Shell*, Philadelphia 1989, pp. 57–70.

<sup>15</sup> Derek Matravers, *Art and Emotion*, Oxford 1998, pp. 114–144.

<sup>16</sup> See also Michelle Duncan's interpretation of the voice in opera (including for example tone, pitch and intonation) from the concept of performativity, which means that focus is on its effect rather than its meaning. Michelle Duncan, "The Operatic Scandal of the Singing Body: Voice, Presence, Performativity," in: *Cambridge Opera Journal* 13 (2004), no. 3, pp. 283–306.

<sup>17</sup> Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*, trans. Saskya Iris Jain, London 2008, pp. 38–39; See also Williams, "Film Bodies" (see nt. 10), pp. 2–13.

<sup>18</sup> Kivy, "Speech, Song, and the Transparency of Medium" (see nt. 9), p. 68.

<sup>19</sup> Kivy, "Speech, Song, and the Transparency of Medium" (see nt. 9), pp. 67–68.

dislocation of perception, which may vary from mild to disruptive.<sup>20</sup> In this way music contributes to placing the audience at a distance from the narration. Framing this kind of musical situation as a 'mise-en-abyme', musicologist William Cheng has shown how the narrative is 'de-temporized' and 'de-linearized'. He posits that "watching a spectacle within a spectacle [...] can easily collapse into a 'direct' experience of spectacle, leaving exterior narrative frames nipping only sporadically at the fringes of one's consciousness."<sup>21</sup>

A further important role of music that can be distinguished in opera is to create shock and surprise. This role is of particular interest when it comes to compositions characterized by pluralism of styles. Departing from postmodern film, which she compares to the historical baroque in the visual arts, Italian film scholar Cristina Degli-Esposti discusses the effect of excessive techniques. The technique of style pluralism ('morphing of forms') determines, with her words "a reaction which both places us at a distance and draws our interest by shocking and surprising us".<sup>22</sup> In the use of shock and other overwhelming emotions and actions meaning, according to Fischer-Lichte, serves the purpose of effect.<sup>23</sup>

Through excessive techniques music has certain effects on the body of the spectator/listener. From the perspective of cinema Williams has described how the body of the spectator through shock effects is "caught up in an almost involuntary mimicry of the emotion or sensation of the body on the screen".<sup>24</sup> This physical effect is, according to her, what makes the horror film an example

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<sup>20</sup> Richard Hornby, *Drama, Metadrama and Perception*, Lewisburg 1986, p. 32.

<sup>21</sup> William Cheng, "Opera en abyme: The prodigious ritual of Korngold's *Die tote Stadt*," in: *Cambridge Opera Journal* 22 (2011), no. 2, p. 119. Compare with Fischer-Lichte's description of this kind of perception: 'the spectators' perception might gain a special quality, which precludes the question of other possible meanings, functions, or usages, or also of other framing contexts for the phenomena's emergence. Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance* (see nt. 17), p. 141.

<sup>22</sup> Cristina Degli-Esposti, "Sally Potter's Orlando and the Neo-Baroque Scopic Regime," in: *Cinema Journal* 36 (Autumn, 1996), no. 1, pp. 79–80.

<sup>23</sup> See Fischer-Lichte's distinction between meaning and effect in *The Transformative Power of Performance* (see nt. 17), pp. 150–155. She posits that as effect, music/sound does something 'physically' to the listener/spectator rather than means something.

<sup>24</sup> Williams, "Film Bodies" (see nt. 10), p. 4.

of a 'body genre'.<sup>25</sup> Just like through the role as performance, through the role of excess music demands certain responses from the audience. In this way shock effects affect the power relation between performance and auditorium.

### *Tintomara: content and performance*

The opera *Tintomara* was a commission for Kungliga Teatern (today the Royal Opera) in Stockholm to celebrate the Bicentenary of the King Gustav III's foundation of the opera house in 1773. It was given its first performance in Stockholm on 18 January 1973, with Stig Westerberg as conductor. The libretto, by Leif Söderström, was based on the novel *The Queen's Jewel (Drottningens Juvelsmycke)*, 1834, by the Swedish author Carl Johan Love Almqvist (1793-1866). The novel deals with the tale of the beautiful but sexless hermaphrodite Tintomara, with whom both sexes fall in love, and with the political intrigues that follow the assassination of King Gustav III at a costume ball in the opera house 1792. The libretto is based on Almqvist's original lines, but the text of the novel is shortened.<sup>26</sup>

Although the reception of the first production of *Tintomara* was mainly positive,<sup>27</sup> the opera was cut and revised for the production at the Stora Teatern (The Grand Theatre) in Gothenburg on 7 March 1976. Originally structured in three acts and 29 scenes, prologue and epilogue, the revised version is structured in two acts and 27 scenes, prologue and epilogue. In total, the opera in this version consists of twenty-two characters, a choir, a ballet ensemble and symphony orchestra. Some scenes include a concertino group (its instrumentation differs from one scene to another), which is positioned on or behind the stage. The music of this group can also be tape-recorded.

The opera is set in the days of the historical event of the assassination of King Gustav III, 'The Theatre King', on 16 March 1792. The main characters are the

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<sup>25</sup> Williams, "Film Bodies" (see nt. 10), p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> See Ethnersson Pontara, Tillman, "Drottningens Juvelsmycke som postmodern opera" (see nt. 7), p. 206.

<sup>27</sup> See Aare, "'Tintomara': Första akten mästerlig, andra ojämn, tredje svag" (see nt. 1); Åhlén, "Operan får ett glansfullt 70-tal" (see nt. 1); and Thoor, "En opera att älska" (see nt. 1).

sisters Amanda and Adolfine, their lovers Ferdinand (the fiancé of Amanda) and Clas Henrik (the fiancé of Adolfine), and the beautiful hermaphrodite Tintomara. Two historical events are of main importance for the development of the action: the costume ball at the Royal Opera on 16 March 1792, and the firing of the pistol-shot at King Gustav III in this very evening. These events are starting signal for the intrigues between the four lovers and Tintomara.

After the assassination they are all forced to leave Stockholm. It turns out that Ferdinand and Clas Henrik have participated in the conspiracy against the king. Tintomara has stolen the royal jewel to show her mother, who was a royal actress in her youth, but when she is going to return it the jewel is gone. Furthermore, it turns out that Tintomara was misled by the conspirators when she innocently seduced King Gustav III in the corridors of the opera house during the fatal evening. The sisters Amanda and Adolfine leave Stockholm for Stavsjö Manor to recover from the mental illness that the experiences at the costume ball have caused them. Also Ferdinand and Clas Henrik take refuge in the neighbourhood of Stavsjö. At Stavsjö Manor and its forests each of the four lovers learns to know Tintomara, and unintentionally she/he makes them fall in love with her/him. The tale comes to a tragic end. In despair Ferdinand assassinates Tintomara at a mock-execution, which is staged to silence her/him when it comes to the conspiracy against the king.

*The opera as a combination of musical narration and musical performance*

*Tintomara* consists of a multi-layered web of new-composed music, partly in modernistic style, and historical references, primarily from 18th and 19th century, using allusions to and quotations from composers such as Mozart, Joseph Martin Kraus and Puccini. A speaking narrator guides the audience throughout the opera. This spoken part is mainly performed in a reserved manner without musical accompaniment. When it comes to musical language, instrumentation and distribution of music and sound *Tintomara* adheres to genre conventions in a more obvious way than Werle's previous operas. The opera can be characterized as music theatre; that is to say, often "the music

might be defined as a function, or extension in sound, of the action”.<sup>28</sup> Different musical styles of a multi-layered web have specific roles, such as creating atmosphere, and expressing feelings and thoughts from point of view of the characters.<sup>29</sup>

*Tintomara* as composition is characterized by sung melody. Runsten writes in his letter that he missed Werle’s exciting music dramatic means from the two earlier operas, the technique of combining song with ‘pure’ speech.<sup>30</sup>

Nonetheless, he considers a moment of lyrical arioso as the highpoint of the opera, ‘Splendour such a splendour’ (act I, scene 8). It is Tintomara’s mother Clara that performs the arioso (the celebrated Swedish soprano Margareta Hallin performed the character) when Tintomara shows her the royal jewel.<sup>31</sup> This was the only moment during which Runsten was captured by the opera performance.<sup>32</sup> This number is example of music as drama through vocal and orchestral adaptation of a motif characterized by certain musical codes (chromatics and a falling tritone). If taking the overall action into consideration music appears to anticipate the dreadful fate of Tintomara through this motif.

An important technique of narration in the opera is recurring musical motifs. A motif consisting of an ascending minor/major seventh chord is, for example, connected to the character Tintomara. Although this character is the centre of the action, her/his music is comparably simple and neutral. The reactions that she/he generates in the men and women that surround her/him, on the other hand, have a dramatic and ‘attracting’ expression.<sup>33</sup> In this way music

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<sup>28</sup> The description is borrowed from Mosco Carner in: Mosco Carner, *Giacomo Puccini: Tosca*, Cambridge Opera Handbooks, 3rd ed., Cambridge 1985, p. 91.

<sup>29</sup> For an example of this, see the analysis of the costume ball in Ethnersson Pontara, Tillman, “*Drottningens Juvelsmycke* som postmodern opera” (see nt. 7), pp. 207–210.

<sup>30</sup> *Dreaming about Thérèse* and *The Journey* are characterized by an extensive range of vocal sounds, from spoken language to recitative and normal singing. Runsten posits that through this technique song could be motivated from a realistic point of view. Runsten, *Letter to Lars Johan Werle* (see nt. 2).

<sup>31</sup> Vocal score, pp. 92–100; Score, p. 90.

<sup>32</sup> Runsten, *Letter to Lars Johan Werle* (see nt. 2).

<sup>33</sup> When it comes to attracting music, see Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality*, Minneapolis 1991, p. 58; See also Suzanne Cusick, “Of Women, Music, and Power: A Model from Seicento Florence,” in: *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality*, ed. Ruth Solie,

contributes to a turn of focus from Tintomara to the emotions that she/he generates in other characters.<sup>34</sup>

Act II, scene 22 offers example of how recurring motifs add a layer of meaning to meanings narrated by verbal and visual media.<sup>35</sup> In this scene recurs a motif of ascending fourths from act I, scene 3. In act I, scene 3 the motif opens the vocal line of Amanda's aria 'Your hands are pitch black'.<sup>36</sup> The sighing character of the motif is an expressive parallel to the sorrow Amanda expresses in the situation. This sorrow is a result of a confused state of mind that borders on insanity (for a description of this situation see below 'Music as excess'). In act II, scene 22 Tintomara has realized that she/he must leave Stavsjö Manor and its forests as Amanda, Adolfine, Ferdinand and Clas Henrik all have fallen in love with her/him. As she/he takes farewell of her/his favourite place (Lindamot) she/he performs a simple song that she/he also sang when she/he discovered the place earlier in the opera (in act I, scene 14).

However, in the new context the song is accompanied by a quiet, disturbing sound constellation. All of a sudden Tintomara takes notice of how four characters approach her from different directions. A rhythmic transformation of the motif from the aria 'Your hands are pitch black' is introduced unexpectedly and as a strong contrast dynamically. The quiet and obscure atmosphere, created by persistent chromatic interjections by strings in piano pianissimo, is interrupted by the forceful expression of the motif that now is more clearly defined rhythmically and melodically, and performed in forte by woodwinds and brass. Referring to the despair of Amanda in act I, scene 3 the meaning of insanity is added to the action of the situation through the motif. In this way music narrates the mental condition that inhabits the four lovers as a result of

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Berkeley 1993, pp. 281–304; and Carolyn Abbate, "Opera, or the Envoicing of Women," in: *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality*, ed. Ruth Solie, Berkeley 1993, pp. 225–258.

<sup>34</sup> Compare with Ethnersson Pontara and Tillman, "Drottningens Juvelsmycke som postmodern opera" (see nt. 7), p. 206.

<sup>35</sup> Vocal score, p. 211; Score, p. 70. See also the analysis of the scenes of the costume ball (act I, scene 3 and 4), in Ethnersson Pontara, Tillman, "Drottningens Juvelsmycke som postmodern opera" (see nt. 7), p. 209.

<sup>36</sup> Vocal score, p. 48; Score, p. 41.

their feelings for Tintomara. Notably is also that music together with verbal and visual media here creates a climax that not only is dramatic but also surprising. This way of creating dread through unexpected re-contextualization of a musical motif reminds of techniques used in the genre of horror film.<sup>37</sup>

According to Runsten the use of music and scenography as effect rather than as narration was the opera's main problem. He claims in the letter that act I was the weakest act, that is to say the act that evolves around the costume ball (scene 2–4). It was probably the costume ball that he referred to with the description of the scenography as inadequately integrated into the action and bringing the thoughts to 'Disneyland'.<sup>38</sup> Scholars have previously concluded that music and scenography have the roles of display as much as of narration in these scenes.<sup>39</sup>

Runsten also opposes the frequent vocal exhibitions of the opera.<sup>40</sup> Most characters have one monologue each that is set as an aria-like number. Even if these numbers are not characterized by a clear autonomous structure in musical terms, they are to be seen as formal and aesthetic entities. In his analysis of *Tosca* Carner has described this kind of entities as "lyrical enclaves".<sup>41</sup> Some of the opera's lyrical enclaves, just like the arioso 'Splendour such a splendour' of Clara mentioned earlier (act I, scene 8), are integrated into the narrative as they develop from the action both in terms of music and text. They are experienced as realistic expressions in the situation of the fictive world.<sup>42</sup> Others are experienced as in tension with the narration both musically and dramatically.<sup>43</sup>

In an interview about the opera Werle stated that music should add something to the text. He described the aria of King Gustav III's assassinator Anckarström 'Mattias looks down on us' in act I, scene 7,<sup>44</sup> as a musical situation where the

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<sup>37</sup> See Neil Lerner, "Preface: Listening to Fear/Listening with Fear," in : *Music in the Horror Film. Listening to fear*, ed. Neil Lerner, New York 2010, p. x.

<sup>38</sup> Runsten, *Letter to Lars Johan Werle* (see nt. 2).

<sup>39</sup> See Ethnersson Pontara, Tillman, "Drottningens Juvelsmycke som postmodern opera" (see nt. 7), pp. 207–210.

<sup>40</sup> Runsten, *Letter to Lars Johan Werle* (see nt. 2).

<sup>41</sup> Carner, *Giacomo Puccini: 'Tosca'* (see nt. 28), p. 95.

<sup>42</sup> See for example act I, scene 14; act II, scene 22 and 18.

<sup>43</sup> See for example the arias in act I, scene 3 and act II, scene 19 and 24.

<sup>44</sup> Vocal score, p. 85; Score, p. 81.

action was elaborated on another level than the textual and the visual.<sup>45</sup>

However, in relation to the same opera he also stated that the most important role of the music was to create a physical effect on the audience and that the voice was of particular importance for the creation of this effect.<sup>46</sup>

Of special interest is how Werle plays with narrative and performative levels of music through montages of and allusions to different musical styles. Act II, scene 24,<sup>47</sup> contains an allusion to the monologues of early opera conventions using a combination of musical representation and vocal display. However, these two roles of music are exaggerated and distorted through the musical language. A character on stage narrates an event of action through performing different roles. The character Crispin, the servant of the dictator Reuterholm (who only participates with this very number) performs a monologue in which he narrates how Tintomara was discovered in the guise of royal musician, the clarinetist Philip, at the barracks of the royal chapel. Through a speech-like vocal performance, often in an uncomfortable high register Crispin musically performs different dramatic characters to the accompaniment of a dissonant ostinato figure. His speech is illustrated by onomatopoeic figures in winds and percussion. The piece can be compared to the comic bravura piece of the page Valletto in Monteverdi's *The Coronation of Poppaea* (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*). In a similar manner the real (of the fictive world) is transformed into theatrical illusion through musical role-playing within the role.<sup>48</sup>

Approached from the point of view of the performance this moment is also example of a transformation of the represented into the real. The character of the drama and the realistic singer almost entirely coalesce. Rather than contributing to the narration of the overall action, this piece has the role of vocal and scenic display. The vocal line, characterized by rhythmic repetitions in a high register which unexpectedly is

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<sup>45</sup> Bengt Emil Johnson and Lars Johan Werle, "Att tonsätta Almqvist," in: *Artes*, 4 (1977), p. 50.

<sup>46</sup> Gunilla Petersén, "Tonsättaren Lars Johan Werle," in: *Program to the Performance of Tintomara by Kungliga Teatern. Stockholm* (1981), pp. 24–25. Compare Fischer-Lichte's analysis of the materiality of the voice in *The Transformative Power of Performance* (see nt. 17), pp. 125–130.

<sup>47</sup> Score, p. 95 and Vocal score, p. 234.

<sup>48</sup> Compare also Ellen Rosand's analysis of this moment from point of view of musical objectification, which is a technique that can be seen as a means by which to further reinforce the performative role of music, in Ellen Rosand, "Monteverdi's mimetic art: *L'incoronazione di Poppea*," in: *Cambridge Opera Journal* 1 (July 1989), no. 2, pp. 117–118.

fragmented by halting pauses, not only creates a comical effect but also is virtuous. It is a bravura number for the baritone singer that performs this character. In the score Crispin's monologue is labelled a vocal and scenic bravura piece. It is also said that this piece might be omitted. Accordingly, the monologue is not considered necessary to the overall action.

The piece is best understood as example of metadrama in accordance with Hornby's concept. It is a play within the play that probably brought about a dislocation of perception.<sup>49</sup> The audience is in this manner provoked to participate in the performance through the musical action of the singer.<sup>50</sup>

### *Music as excess*

With the arias in *Tintomara* the role of music borders on excess through vocal display, culminations and climaxes.<sup>51</sup> Another important means by which excess is created in relation to the narration is modernistic musical techniques. Sudden modernistic outbursts, for example, are means to surprise as much as means to create atmosphere and culmination. This is the case in the moment when Tintomara is confronted by the four characters in love with her at Lindamot in act II, scene 22. The confrontation culminates in a dramatic climax that results in Ferdinand firing a pistol-shot at Clas Henrik. The shot is directly followed by screams from the characters and thereafter a strong sforzando figure in the whole orchestra gives way to a chaotic sonic world. Of importance is, however, that this dynamic explosion is delayed through a brief pause, which reinforces its effect.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Hornby, *Drama, Metadrama and Perception* (see nt. 19), p. 32; Compare with Cheng, "Opera en abyme" (see nt. 20), p. 119.

<sup>50</sup> See Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance* (see nt. 17), p. 54. The words of film theorist Tom Gunning can be borrowed to characterise music's relation to the audience, it can be seen as 'exhibitionist confrontation rather than diegetic absorption'. Tom Gunning, "The cinema of Attractions – Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde," in: *Early Cinema – Space, Frame, Narrative*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser and Adam Barker, London 1990, p. 66.

<sup>51</sup> Compare Fischer-Lichte's analysis of 'voice and language split' in *The Transformative Power of Performance* (see nt. 17), pp. 126–130.

<sup>52</sup> On this double role of modernistic outbursts, see also act III, scene 30.

The prologue offers example of a similar role of music. The narrator describes the creature of Tintomara, his speech is surrounded by passages performed in concerted interplay by an invisible choir. After an unaccompanied description of how she/he affects the human mind, the choir returns with a strong dissonant in forte fortissimo on 'Lazuli' (the second name of Tintomara). An expanded orchestral accompaniment with agitated figures in strings contributes to the forceful impact. Drawing on a conventional code of misfortune, the exclamation might be seen as an expression of the meaning of the text and as an anticipation of the outcome of the overall action. However, in the context, not preceded by any similar motif, it appears above all as a means to create shock and surprise.

Two moments in the opera are especially interesting when it comes to the role of music as excess. They occur in two scenes in which Anckarström, the assassinator, appears together with one respectively of the two sisters Amanda and Adolfine. With the character of Anckarström, set as a bass voice, Werle alludes to conventions of opera from the 18th and 19th centuries when it comes to the 'evil' character (for example Osmin in Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*).<sup>53</sup>

In act I, scene 7, Adolfine has left the theatre and walks home alone, affected by the event of the pistol-shot at the king. Her monologue is characterized by strong emotions expressed in recitative. Suddenly a man with a mask-covered face turns up (Anckarström),<sup>54</sup> and reveals that he is the person who has tried to assassinate the king. Adolfine tries to make him take the mask off, but he refuses. In their dialogue music has the role of extension in sound of the action, with a combination of traditional and modernistic sonic worlds. A ghostlike atmosphere is created by tremolo-effects, timbral-effects and unresolved dissonances and the vocal lines fluctuate between recitative, arioso and vocal outbursts.

An agitated demanding from Anckarström, 'I wont let you go until you obey me girl', which is represented mimetically by music, culminates in the monologue

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<sup>53</sup> Compare with Carner, *Giacomo Puccini: 'Tosca'* (see nt. 28), p. 92.

<sup>54</sup> Vocal score, pp. 76–87; Score, p. 64.

‘Mattias looks down on us’, which is set as an aria.<sup>55</sup> Music here has the role of performance as much as of narration through the aria’s extension, uniting motivic repetitions, vocal culminations and climaxes. The moment is to be seen as a play within the play, as Anckarström begs Adolfine to perform the role of his executioner. They are at the execution place, and the action takes place under the view of the statue of Mattias, the ghost of punishment.

Of interest is that the aria is initiated with an unexpected sforzando figure, a dissonant in forte dynamics that explodes in woodwinds, brass (flute I-II, oboe I-II and trumpet I-II) and percussions (piatto piccolo, tanburine milanese, tambour de basque). The impact of this figure is reinforced by a cry of despair of Adolfine.<sup>56</sup>

The sforzando figure and the cry are repeated throughout the aria as uniting elements. It appears as the cry of Adolfine is a response to the agitated demand of Anckarström, and a possible interpretation of the aria is that it represents the

<sup>55</sup> Vocal score, p. 85; Score, p. 81.

<sup>56</sup> Music example 1, Vocal score, p. 85; Score, p. 81.

interior of Adolfine. Through it we see the reality from her perspective. She is horror-stricken and later in the opera she becomes insane. This way of letting modernistic music represent a subjective distortion of reality is a common feature in cinema. However, the role of the sforzando figure is more ambiguous as it anticipates the cry. Rather than representing a point of view of any of the characters it appears as a means of the composer to create an effect of shock and surprise.<sup>57</sup>

According to Werle in this aria music adds a level of meaning to the text.<sup>58</sup> Of interest is how the level that is added not only contributes to the meanings narrated by verbal and visual media, but also to the meanings narrated by Almqvist's novel. Although a ghostlike atmosphere surrounds the dialogue in the novel, the situation is not explicitly characterized by horror.<sup>59</sup> The technique of first absorbing the audience into the narration and then create a shock effect has affinity with a role music may have in cinema, not least in horror films. Film music theorist Philip Hayward describes horror film as a tradition in which the roles of music oscillate between creating engagement and identification, on the one hand, and unnerve and shock the audience, on the other.<sup>60</sup> According to film music theorist Neil Lerner this is a technique that affect us at a primal level.<sup>61</sup>

The multi-layered role of music is even more emphasized in act I, scene 3. Amanda is alone, lost in the theatre, and hunted by daemons. She thinks that her fiancé Ferdinand loves her sister Adolfine. Her jealousy escalates when she sees a disguised person, who she believes is Ferdinand (who actually is the

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<sup>57</sup> Compare the music in cinema that philosopher Jerrold Levinson has ascribed to the 'implied filmmaker', which is music 'as a direct reflection of authorial stance or personality', in "Film Music and Narrative Agency," in: *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, 6th ed., ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, Oxford 2004, p. 510.

<sup>58</sup> Johnson, Werle, "Att tonsätta Almqvist" (see nt. 45), p. 50.

<sup>59</sup> Carl Johan Love Almqvist, *Drottningens Juvelsmycke (1834)*, Samlade verk 6, Törnrosens bok Duodesupplagan., vol. 4, ed. Lars Burman, Svenska Vitterhetssamfundet, Stockholm 2002, pp. 89–96.

<sup>60</sup> Philip Hayward, "Introduction. Scoring the Edge," in: *Terror Tracks: Music, Sound and Horror Cinema*, ed. Philip Hayward, London 2009, p. 10.

<sup>61</sup> Lerner, "Preface: Listening to Fear/Listening with Fear" (see nt. 37), p. x.

king), hunt for a disguised person, who she believes is Adolfine (who actually is Tintomara).<sup>62</sup> She hears the man who she believes is Ferdinand (the king) talk to his confidant about a person that she believes is Adolfine (Tintomara) and faints. In this unconscious condition she breaks into a cry of despair.

With this desperate woman giving a forceful expression of emotions, Werle alludes to conventions of early opera history. The musical structure is in line with musical conventions for this kind of situation. It is initiated by an accompanied recitative, 'Heavens, she stole the jewel from me' where Amanda expresses various strong emotions reinforced by figures in the orchestra. The vocal line is based on mimesis aesthetics, resembling the stylized appearance of a person expressing these kinds of emotions.<sup>63</sup> The emotions are expressed against a ghostlike atmosphere created by dissonances and harmonics in the accompaniment, which indicate that they are performed in an unconscious, dreamlike state of mind. The recitative is initiated as a musical and dramatic deviation from the situation, with the opening cry of despair consisting of an extended high note in piano dynamics. Through this vocal expression musical narrative is interweaved with vocal display.<sup>64</sup>

In the following monologue, 'Your hands are pitch black', the still unconscious Amanda laments her fate. The aria opens as a contrast to the recitative and has a lyrical, regular character with the vocal line's repetition of a short sighing motif to sustained accompaniment. The music imitates the human expression of sorrow with certain codes. However, recitative and aria is, in accordance with genre conventions, tied together as a formal and aesthetic entity. The aria's initial motif appears already before the recitative (in a ghostlike shape through harmonics), a motif that returns also later in the aria and accompanies the vocal line. Through this structure the emotion expressed is highlighted together with the dreamlike mental condition of the character. This structure is also a conventional way of transforming musical narration into performance. If relating to a discussion Kivy has had concerning the relative transparency of the

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<sup>62</sup> Vocal score, pp. 48–49; Score, p. 40.

<sup>63</sup> See Kivy, *Sound Sentiment* (see nt. 14), pp. 57–70.

<sup>64</sup> For this kind of 'operatic' expression see also act I, scene 4.

medium music, this structure contributes to the opacity of music when it comes to representation and illustration.<sup>65</sup>

However, the aria is ended by sudden exclamations: ‘assassin, assassin’. These inarticulate cries of fear deviate from the overall musical expression, and appear comparable to the excessive techniques that according to Williams characterize certain film genres: “Aurally, excess is marked by recourse not to the coded articulations of language but to inarticulate cries of pleasure in porn, screams of fear in horror, sobs of anguish in melodrama”.<sup>66</sup> The interruption of musical structure through a realistic expression functions as a means by which to intensify the effect of sensation on the audience. This technique appears also later when the touch of a hand on her body, and the meeting with a face covered by a mask makes Amanda come to her senses again with dramatic cries: ‘Away, away, persecuting, terrible phantoms’. Here the impact is intensified through a chaotic transformation of the orchestral accompaniment and an expanded orchestration.<sup>67</sup>

Of particular interest is an unexpected change of character after the first vocal line of the stanza. The lyrical character of the main motif is interrupted by a sudden sforzando figure, a dissonance in forte. Initiated by trumpets and percussions, it explodes in the whole orchestra.<sup>68</sup> The figure can be compared to the stinger chord of film music. It is a musical code of horror that can be traced back to early opera history. It can, for example, be compared to the chromatic change that marks the entrance of the messenger, Sylvia, in the second act of Monteverdi’s *Orpheus (L’Orfeo)*. This figure functions both as a means to create atmosphere and as a means of excess. It may be interpreted both from the point of view of Amanda (the reality is represented through the confusion of her unconscious state of mind) and from the point of view of the composer and as such as a means to make the audience react to the music.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Kivy, “Speech, Song, and the Transparency of Medium” (see nt. 9), p. 68.

<sup>66</sup> Williams, “Film Bodies” (see nt. 10), p. 4; See also Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance* (see nt. 17), pp. 127–128.

<sup>67</sup> See also Amanda’s scream after the shot at King Gustav III in act I, scene 4.

<sup>68</sup> Vocal score, pp. 48–49; Score, pp. 41–42.

<sup>69</sup> Music example 2; Compare with Levinson, “Film Music and Narrative Agency” (see nt. 57), p. 510.

Meno mosso  
Amanda

Di na hän der är o ram svar ta, fast ditt an sik te är

vitt.

Tamb. mil  
Rim-shot  
Cymbal

Di na hän det är o

(blåsare)

This very moment highlights the oscillating roles between music as narration and music as performance. The “concert attitude”, according to Kivy,<sup>70</sup> is not only interweaved with musical codes of sorrow, but is interrupted by an interjection that creates shock and surprise. In this way the role of music can be related to the performative aesthetics of Fischer-Lichte, and to the concept of ‘body art’ formulated by Williams.<sup>71</sup> The music appears as excessive through unexpected intensity.

The roles of music in this moment might be compared to the roles of visual and aural means to create the startle effect in horror film.<sup>72</sup> The moment includes

<sup>70</sup> Kivy, “Speech, Song, and the Transparency of Medium” (see nt. 9), pp. 67–68.

<sup>71</sup> Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance* (see nt. 17), pp. 38–39; and Williams, “Film Bodies” (see nt. 10), pp. 2–23.

<sup>72</sup> Psychologists and physiologists refers to the ‘startle’ reflex when it comes to the effect of shock and surprise. This effect is according to film music theorist James Wierzbicki created so long as the music begins abruptly and loudly. See James Wierzbicki, “Psycho-Analysis. Form and Function in Bernard

what film theorist Robert Baird sees as “the core elements of a film startle effect”: “(1) a character presence, (2) an implied off-screen threat, and (3) a disturbing intrusion into the character’s immediate space”.<sup>73</sup> The implied threat and the disturbing intrusion are the daemons of Amanda, on the one hand, and Anckarström who is hovering around her, unnoticed by Amanda but noticed by the audience, on the other. The aria is a way of changing tempo of the scene. Through the aria Werle “manipulates pacing at the crucial moment of the treat intrusion”.<sup>74</sup> The startle effect is created through the contrast between the narrative “near motionlessness” of the aria and the “frenetic movement” implied by the “shock cut” of the dissonance.<sup>75</sup> The stinger is not only a narrative surprise but also a formal one, as it is a violation of the musical performance of the singer. In Almqvist’s novel the moment has a ghostlike atmosphere, however it is not explicitly characterized by horror.<sup>76</sup> Also this is an example of how music creates this level in the scene.

### Conclusion

*Tintomara* was composed some years after Werle’s collaboration with Swedish film director Ingmar Bergman on *Persona* and *Hour of the Wolf*. Just like these films the opera is characterized by a quiet sonic world,<sup>77</sup> which at certain moments is broken by sudden shock effects. The scenes of Amanda and Anckarström and Adolfine and Anckarström respectively offer example of how the music, through a pluralism of styles, not only oscillates between the roles of narration and performance, but through unexpected intrusions of sounds music also adds the level of shock and surprise. Through this combination of roles, music adds a level of meaning not only to the meanings created by verbal and

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Herrmann’s Music for Hitchcock’s Masterpiece,” in: *Terror Tracks: Music, Sound and Horror Cinema*, ed. Philip Hayward, London 2009, p. 16.

<sup>73</sup> Robert Baird, “The Startle Effect: Implications for Spectator Cognition and Media Theory,” in: *Film Quarterly* 53 (Spring, 2000), no. 3, p. 15.

<sup>74</sup> Baird, “The Startle Effect” (see nt. 73), p. 16.

<sup>75</sup> Baird, “The Startle Effect” (see nt. 73), p. 16.

<sup>76</sup> See Almqvist, *Drottningens Juvelsmycke* (see nt. 59), pp. 66–68.

<sup>77</sup> See Runsten’s comment that he missed dynamics and engagement, especially regarding the narrator, in his letter to Lars Johan Werle (see nt. 2).

visual media, but also to Almqvist's novel, namely the dimension of horror. As the shock effects affect the power relation between performance and auditorium, the audience as a collective is taken into consideration through this dimension. Of interest is that the startle effect appears as a means of highlighting a certain power construction. The technique is used in situations that can be compared to what Williams' sees as "sadistic power and pleasure of masculine subject positions (...) dominating feminine objects".<sup>78</sup> Accordingly, rather than the sexually ambiguous hermaphrodite Tintomara, in the opera, it is a traditional gender discourse that is exposed by music and sound.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Williams, "Film Bodies" (see nt. 10), p. 6.

<sup>79</sup> I wish to extend warm thanks to Dr Joakim Tillman from the Department for Musicology and Performance Studies, Stockholm University, to whom I am indebted for many important observations in this article.