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NOT JUST A PRETTY VOICE:
CATHY BERBERIAN AS COLLABORATOR, COMPOSER AND CREATOR

by

Kate Meehan

A dissertation presented to the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
of Washington University in
partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

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Kate Meehan

2011

Abstract

During her relatively brief career, Cathy Berberian (1925-83) became arguably the best-known singer of avant-garde vocal music in Europe and the United States. After 1950, when she married Italian composer Luciano Berio, Berberian premiered almost thirty new works by seventeen different composers and received the dedications of several more. Composers connected to her include: John Cage, Igor Stravinsky, Darius Milhaud, Sylvano Bussotti, Henri Pousseur, Bruno Maderna, Bernard Rands, Roman Haubenstock-Ramati, and of course, Berio. Berberian's creative activities ranged widely and she participated many of the major postwar musical movements, including tape and electronic music, music theater, the baroque music revival, and baroque-inspired covers of songs by the Beatles, in addition to her ongoing experiments with extended vocal techniques. She also created her own widely acclaimed compositions.

Based primarily on archival research, this dissertation examines Berberian's contributions to avant-garde musical culture from the 1950s until her death in the early 1980s. It relies on interviews, correspondence, manuscript scores, personal papers, concert programs, and reviews to argue that Berberian played a vital role in both the creation and reception of the music written for and with her. She was a central figure in postwar musical circles yet her story has been largely neglected. This study situates Berberian as one of the foremost interpreters of contemporary music in the second half of the twentieth century.

Each chapter focuses on a different aspect of Berberian's musical life, both in relation to the composers in her coterie and as an independent musician. The first chapter questions the nature of authorship by looking at the ways Berberian collaborated with

composers on electronic compositions. Two subsequent chapters extend this idea to works meant for live performance by highlighting the specific musical characteristics associated with Berberian, including multilingual texts, extended vocal techniques, and a fundamental visual component. The final three chapters discuss Berberian's activities as a composer and as a creator of wide-ranging recitals that involved diverse repertoire. As a whole, this dissertation challenges the traditional privileging of composers over performers by showing how a performer such as Berberian had a tremendous influence on the sound and image of contemporary music.

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This dissertation would have been impossible without the assistance and support of numerous individual and organizations. First and foremost, I owe Cristina Berio the utmost gratitude for granting me access to her private collection. She generously opened her home to me and was always on hand to answer questions, decipher handwriting, and share memories. This project would not exist without her help.

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Thanks to Bernard Rands and Candace Smith for sharing their memories of Cathy Berberian and answering specific questions about events that happened decades ago.

I am grateful to some of my undergraduate professors for starting me on this path. Sabine Feisst originally sparked my interest in this project when she taught Cage's *Aria* in a class on twentieth-century music. Madeline Williamson opened my eyes to the often hidden roles played by musical women and first encouraged me to pursue musicology. Kay Norton was a great mentor who helped launch me on this journey.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
List of Examples	vii
Introduction	1
Chapter One: Cathy's Disembodied Voice	27
Chapter Two: Cathy's Musical Style	64
Chapter Three: Cathy on Stage	130
Chapter Four: Cathy as Composer	171
Chapter Five: Cathy's Changing Repertoire	206
Chapter Six: Cathy's Recitals	240
Conclusion	270
Appendix A: Works Dedicated to and/or Premiered by Cathy Berberian	279
Appendix B: Selected programs of Berberian's performances, 1958-83	282
Bibliography	309

List of Examples

1.1	Helms, “Text for Bruno Maderna”	43
2.1	Cage, <i>Aria</i> MS 1, p. 8	75
2.2	Cage, <i>Aria</i> MS 1, p. 4	76
2.3	Cage, <i>Aria</i> MS 2, p. 1	77
2.4	Cage, <i>Aria</i> MS 3, p. 10	78
2.5	Berio, <i>Epifanie</i> , movement “a,” p. 7	88
2.6	Berio, <i>Epifanie</i> , movement “c,” p. 2	89
2.7	Bussotti, <i>Voix de femme</i> from <i>Pièces de chair II</i> , p. 18	107
3.1	Berberian dress design for <i>Epifanie</i>	135
3.2	Berberian <i>Folk Songs</i> costume list	137
3.3	Berio, <i>Circles</i> , stage layout	141
3.4	Berberian dress design for <i>Circles</i>	143
3.5	Bussotti, <i>La Passion selon Sade</i> , stage layout	151
3.6	Bussotti, <i>La Passion selon Sade</i> , p. 7	152
3.7	Scherchen, <i>Wai</i> , stage layout	159
3.8	Scherchen, <i>Wai</i> , p. 4	160
3.9	Rands, <i>Ballad 2</i> , p. iii	163
4.1	Carmi, <i>Stripsody</i> , p. 1	182
4.2	Berberian, <i>Stripsody</i> , p. 1 (excerpt)	183
4.3	Berberian, <i>Stripsody</i> , p. 8 (excerpt)	186
4.4	Berberian, <i>Stripsody</i> , p. 11 (excerpt)	187
4.5	Berberian, <i>Stripsody</i> , p. 11 (excerpt)	187

4.6	Berberian, <i>Stripsody</i> , p. 11 (excerpt)	189
4.7	Photo of Berberian singing <i>Stripsody</i>	191
5.1	Andriessen, “Ticket to Ride” from <i>4 Beatles-Liedjes</i> , p. 10	212
5.2	Ardley, “She’s Leaving Home,” p. 7	217
5.3	Berberian’s planned 1967 Venice Biennale recital program	219
6.1	Program list, “From Monteverdi to Cage”	245
6.2	Program list, “À la recherché de la musique perdue”	253
6.3	Stage set for “À la recherché de la musique perdue”	256
6.4	Program list, “Second Hand Songs”	260
7.1	Program for “Hommage à Cathy Berberian”	275

Introduction

During her relatively brief career, Cathy Berberian (1925-83) became arguably the best-known singer of avant-garde vocal music in Europe and the United States. Between 1950, when she married Italian composer Luciano Berio (1925-2003), and her death in 1983, Berberian premiered almost thirty new works by seventeen different composers and received the dedications of several more. Composers connected to her include: John Cage (1912-92), Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971), Darius Milhaud (1892-1974), Sylvano Bussotti (b. 1931), Henri Pousseur (1929-2009), Bruno Maderna (1920-73), Bernard Rands (b. 1934), Roman Haubenstock-Ramati (1919-94), and of course, Berio. She also commissioned and premiered arrangements of works by composers as varied as Monteverdi, Puccini, and John Lennon and Paul McCartney.

Berberian's creative activities ranged widely. She contributed to the production of some of the earliest and most influential electronic music compositions, participated in the ongoing reinterpretation of music theater in the 1960s, joined in the revival of baroque music, and refashioned her own recitals into theatrical spectacles. She performed in the most famous venues in the world – La Scala, Teatro la Fenice, Carnegie Hall – and at major festivals of contemporary music in Venice, Darmstadt, Donaueschingen, Holland, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Warsaw, and Zagreb. She shared stages with some of the most renowned performers, conductors, and ensembles in the world, including pianists David Tudor and Yvonne Loriod, conductors Bruno Maderna, Michael Gielen, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, and Michael Tilson Thomas, the Chicago, Boston, and Berlin Symphony Orchestras, the London Sinfonietta and the Ensemble Intercontemporain, and choreographers Ann Halprin and Jacques Lecoq. Her accompanists were often well-

known pianists in their own right and included Frederic Rzewski, Bruno Canino, Louis Andriessen, Leonard Stein, and David Burge. As if this were not enough, she also created her own widely acclaimed compositions.

In everything she did, Berberian retained a strong sense of agency: she not only successfully interpreted the often eccentric and inexact musical demands of the composers who sent her scores, but often collaborated directly with them throughout the creative process. In this sense, Berberian actively contributed to the compositional styles of a number of the composers in her sphere, and thereby left an indelible mark on vocal composition in the second half of the twentieth century. This dissertation represents the first large-scale scholarly appraisal of her multifaceted creative life.

Not a biography, this dissertation instead pursues Berberian's path through different aspects of her varied career. The central argument is a basic one: performers play as vital a role as composers in the way music is both created and received. Deceptively simple, it is an argument that has not often been made. It takes seriously the complex responsibilities of performers, treating them as more than just interchangeable automatons. As a virtuoso performer, Berberian shaped the way compositions were written and heard, and she took an active role promoting those works she deemed important and interesting. Her imprimatur often assured a work's placement in the canon, as the list of works dedicated to her and still included in history books and on concert stages attests. Bernard Rands recently praised not only her vocal technique but also the fact that she was "in many ways unique among vocalists in her intelligent and often brilliant advocacy for the music of our time – not just that of Berio."¹ In short, Berberian

¹ Personal e-mail communication, January 25, 2011.

was a central figure in avant-garde musical circles in the post-war period; her story is an important one that has yet to be fully told.

Traditionally, the discipline of musicology has focused on composers and the techniques they use to construct written compositions. Richard Taruskin has labeled this the “poietic fallacy,” which he describes as: “the conviction that what matters most (or more strongly yet, that all that matters) in a work of art is the making of it, the maker’s input.”² Taruskin uses the example of Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) to demonstrate that while some composers and techniques may prove fascinating to scholars and critics (and other composers), the resulting music holds very little interest for actual listeners. It is possible to extend Taruskin’s argument to embrace the role of performers. While he reasons that those writers whose work reflects the poietic fallacy care primarily (or only) about how the notes interact on the page and not about the aural results, in order to discuss the role of listeners, we must also take into account the contributions made by performers. After all, listeners generally cannot hear musical compositions without the mediation of performers, although some composers have bypassed this potential weakness through electronic means. Performers such as Berberian further complicate the notion of “the maker’s input” by involving themselves in the compositional process. When a performer participates in the making of a composition, she disrupts the longstanding hierarchy between composer and performer. While much of the discussion that follows concentrates on how compositions were made, it shows that the making cannot easily be separated from the performing.

² Richard Taruskin, “The Poietic Fallacy,” *The Musical Times* 145, no. 1886 (2004): 10.

Performers from all periods have recently started to receive greater attention from musicologists, and performance as a general topic of research has been growing. In her book *Boccherini's Body: An Essay in Carnal Musicology*, Elisabeth Le Guin extends the “reciprocal relationship between performer and composer” even beyond the composer’s lifetime, with her view that performers continue to interact with composers through the written notes on the page.³ Le Guin has used her own experience performing the works of Luigi Boccherini (1743-1805) to demonstrate the importance of embodiment – the crucial physical relationship that performers have with the music that they play. Mary Ann Smart has focused her attention on operatic performance in the nineteenth century, specifically the ways that movement and gesture formed a crucial part of certain works, including Auber’s *La Muette de Portici* (1828) and Bellini’s *I Puritani* (1835).⁴ In her discussion of the Bellini opera, Smart highlights the intimate connection between voice and body through the example of Fenella, who begins her arias offstage. As the audience hears Fenella’s voice without seeing her body, the audience’s attention renders “the invisible paradoxically concrete and embodied.”⁵ Performers’ voices are indistinguishable from the bodies that produce them, and together, audible voices and visible (and invisible) bodies combine to create the overall effect of opera.

Scholars have also begun adopting a similar focus on performance in avant-garde music, marking a notable change from earlier research emphasizing composers,

³ Elisabeth Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body: An Essay in Carnal Musicology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

⁴ Mary Ann Smart, *Mimomania: Music and Gesture in Nineteenth-Century Opera* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

especially those devoted to serialism (a paradigmatic example of the poietic fallacy at work). Amy C. Beal has shown the importance that cultural organizations in West Germany had on the development of experimental music by American composers and performers including John Cage and David Tudor (1926-96).⁶ She has looked at the interconnected roles played by performers, composers, and administrators, as well as the importance of patronage and politics in the creation and support of American experimental music.

Of all the performers prominent in postwar avant-garde circles, pianist David Tudor has thus far received the greatest critical attention. John Holzaepfel has shown that Tudor systematically realized the highly indeterminate scores dedicated to him in conventional notation, resulting in unexpectedly regular repetitions of what were intended to be spontaneous, improvisational pieces.⁷ James Pritchett, in turn, has argued that Tudor effectively assumed the role of composer for some of Cage's works as a result of the myriad decisions he made in realizing the scores.⁸ Eric Smigel has focused on the rhythmic complexity present in many of the works written for Tudor and has demonstrated that Tudor's method of using stopwatches and clock time influenced Cage to adopt the technique himself.⁹ Beal has concentrated on Tudor's performances of

⁶ Amy C. Beal, *New Music, New Allies: American Experimental Music in West Germany from the Zero Hour to Reunification* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

⁷ John Holzaepfel, "David Tudor and the performance of American Experimental Music, 1950-59" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1994).

⁸ James Pritchett, *The Music of John Cage* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993).

⁹ Eric Smigel, "Alchemy of the Avant-Garde: David Tudor and the New Music of the 1950s" (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 2003).

American experimental music at Darmstadt to show his central role in spreading American influence in Europe.¹⁰

Tudor and Berberian were similarly exceptional. Each was associated with a specific composer – Cage and Berio, respectively – but they also collaborated widely. A comparable situation existed with pianist Yvonne Loriod (1924-2010), who worked closely with and eventually married Olivier Messiaen, and mezzo-soprano Jan DeGaetani (b. 1933), who premiered many of George Crumb’s vocal works. While discussions of Messiaen and Crumb often mention these important women, there exist no comprehensive studies of their own contributions to these (and other) composers’ music.

Similar research needs to be carried out on a great variety of virtuoso performers from the 1950s and 60s who did not have such intense personal relationships. Italian flutist Severino Gazzelloni (1919-92) premiered numerous works by many of the same composers who worked with Berberian, including Berio, Haubenstock-Ramati, and Maderna, but a detailed study of his role has yet to be written. The list of important performers from the postwar period who would also benefit from thoroughgoing reexamination include oboists Lothar Faber (b. 1922) and Heinz Holliger (b. 1939), trombonists Vinko Globokar (b. 1934) and Stuart Dempster (b. 1936), recorder player Franz Brüggen (b. 1934), vocalists Bethany Beardslee (b. 1927), William Pearson (1934-95), and Dorothy Dorow (b. 1930), pianists Bruno Canino (b. 1935) and Antonio Ballista (b. 1936), and the piano duo of Aloys (b. 1931) and Alfons Kontarsky (1932-2010), all of whom pressed composers to write difficult, experimental works. Scholars might also

¹⁰ Amy C. Beal, “David Tudor in Darmstadt,” *Contemporary Music Review* 26, no. 1 (February 2007): 77-88.

examine the impact of important collectives, like the Ensemble Intercontemporain, which commissioned and premiered new, innovative music. Some of this research is beginning to appear. The London Sinfonietta and Musica Elettronica Viva have recently been the subjects of substantial essays, and a German dissertation in progress focuses on the work of Vinko Globokar.¹¹

Berberian had much in common with Tudor and Gazzelloni, as the critic Lodovico Mamprin acknowledged in 1967: “Cathy Berberian is for the voice what Severino Gazzelloni is for the flute or David Tudor for the piano.”¹² One notable difference was her status as a woman. Other influential performers such as Loriod and De Gaetani were also female, and like Berberian, they each maintained close relationships with a particular (male) composer. But the ways in which their experiences differed from those of their male counterparts deserves study.

In Berberian’s case, at least, gender and sexuality played important roles in her many creative relationships. They also clearly affected the way audiences and critics perceived her. Berberian’s status as Berio’s wife in the early part of her career established her image as a dedicated and loyal helpmate who stayed largely in the background. As numerous documents attest, Berio fostered this perception, downplaying or denying Berberian’s influence beyond that of a general source of inspiration.

¹¹ David C. H. Wright, “The London Sinfonietta 1968-2004: A Perspective,” *Twentieth-Century Music* 2, no. 1 (2005): 109-36; Beal, “‘Music is a Universal Human Right’: Musica Elettronica Viva,” in *Sound Commitments: Avant-Garde Music and the Sixties* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Sabine Beck, “Vinko Globokar: Improvisation und Komposition” (Ph.D. diss. in progress).

¹² Mamprin, “La Fenice è impazzita per Cathy Berberian.” Newspaper clipping following Berberian’s September 1967 performance at the Venice Festival. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

As their careers simultaneously blossomed in the late 1950s and early 60s, Berberian largely seemed content to let Berio have the spotlight. While she started to work with other composers, many of her early performances coincided with presentations of Berio's music. As she wrote to Leonard Stein in 1961:

I don't accept engagements that take me away from Luciano for any length of time. I'm not in the racket to be a career girl. I'll continue what I'm doing at the right intervals, timing them so that Luciano is there on his own, etc.¹³

Yet Berberian drastically changed her image and goals after she separated from Berio in the mid-60s. She dyed her naturally dark hair a platinum blond and seized control over her career, even composing her own works. Her dual status as a performer and a woman, two roles seen as less important in the male-dominated world of contemporary composition, had a decisive impact on the critical reception of her compositional debut with *Stripsody* in 1966. Controversies surrounded many aspects of the work, including its sexually charged title, her status as both performer *and* composer, and the work's unusual use of "lowbrow" comic strip sound effects. As far as her personal interactions with other composers, Berberian's status as a woman seems to have held less importance. Some composers, particularly Bussotti, turned it to their advantage by writing scores that emphasized her body and her sexuality.

While over the course of her career Berberian's attitude seems to have shifted from a devoted wife and helpful singer to a fiercely independent woman and opinionated performer, her journey was not quite so simple. Early in her relationship with Berio, Berberian acted as a full collaborator by authoring the texts that Berio set in *Opus*

¹³ Berberian to Stein, [1961]. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

Number Zoo (1950) and *Summer Night Blues* (1956). At the height of her career, Berberian carried on varying types of relationships with different composers almost simultaneously. Soon after her collaboration with Cage on *Aria* in 1958, Berberian acted as a more traditional performer, recreating conventionally written notation in works by Franco Donatoni (1927-2000) and Angelo Paccagnini (1930-99). A few years later, a similar situation occurred: following extensive cooperation with Berio on the creation of *Folk Songs* (1963), she sang works by Milhaud and Stravinsky that had not been tailored to her voice in any discernible ways. At the same concert in which she made her compositional debut in 1966, Berberian also sang new works by Berio and Pousseur. In 1971, she premiered serious vocal-orchestral works by Rands and Maderna even as she worked on her own humorous recital programs that placed her in the center of attention. Generally, however, Berberian steadily assumed more control over her own performances. She asserted herself more readily after her 1964 separation from Berio, even as her role constantly fluctuated between singer, composer, and independent performer, and, often, various combinations of the three.

Economics had a significant impact on Berberian's choices throughout her career. She frequently worried about money, especially after her separation from Berio, which forced her to support herself financially for the first time. In early 1970 she responded to a letter she had received from Louis Andriessen in which he had chastised her for dwelling too much on money, which he viewed as materialistic. She told him:

We must all think of ourselves not as artists but artisans. Whatever good we can create will be dignified by the title of "art" by others... This is a Cathy fable – but the moral is you must not laugh or sneer at my "negotiations." I donated my services for chicken feed long enough.¹⁴

¹⁴ Berberian to Andriessen, [1970]. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

While I have not found detailed financial records for Berberian, various archival documents indicate what she was paid at different points in her career. Her fees rose steadily from the late 1950s through the 1970s, indicating an increase in popularity. In 1960, when Berio and Berberian performed at the Monday Evening Concerts in Los Angeles, they each only received \$10 or \$15 per piece performed. (For Berberian this would have equaled \$30 or \$45 for the concert, around \$225 or \$340 in 2011 dollars.)¹⁵ By the mid-1960s she asked for between \$350 and \$500 per concert (today equivalent to about \$2,400 to \$3,400), plus round-trip airfare. She doubled her pay by 1969 to between \$750 and \$1,000 per concert (today approximately \$4,500 to \$6,000), plus airfare. Her requested fee peaked in 1976 when Berio demanded \$2,500 for himself and \$1,500 for Berberian (today \$9,700 and \$5,800, respectively) plus first-class tickets for a planned performance in Mexico.¹⁶ Berberian made a decided effort to attract larger audiences in the late 1960s and 1970s, and she largely succeeded, as evidenced (at least in part) by her larger fees. These numbers begin to explain some of the decisions Berberian made during her career and show her growing popularity over time.

Berberian's career choices reflected her constantly shifting identity, which frequently crossed national and artistic boundaries. She grew up in the United States but moved to Italy as a young woman, and she stayed there for the rest of her life. The

¹⁵ Performers generally earned \$10 per piece, but Stein, embarrassed by the amount, suggested to Lawrence Morton, the director of the concert series, that they raise the pay to \$15. Correspondence from Stein to Morton, November 25 and December 1, 1959, Morton collection, UCLA. As cited in Dorothy Lamb Crawford, *Evenings On and Off the Roof: Pioneering Concerts in Los Angeles, 1939-1971* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 184.

¹⁶ Berio to Jorge Velazco, June 30, 1976. Paul Sacher Foundation (hereafter PSS), Berio collection.

musicians and intellectuals she met in Italy, and especially in her adopted hometown of Milan, introduced her to contemporary music and helped launch her as an avant-garde singer. She formed an integral part of a group that revolved around the Studio di Fonologia Musicale in the 1950s and included Berio, Maderna, and Umberto Eco, and a revolving cast of other composers and performers who visited Milan, including Cage, Pousseur, Andriessen, Bussotti, and Gazzelloni.¹⁷ Together with these musicians, Berberian entered the wider world of European contemporary music festivals in the late 1950s, and she also began regular tours in the United States. In addition to her dual identity as American and Italian, Berberian kept a strong connection to her Armenian heritage. She expressed this interest by frequently singing Armenian folk songs, urging composers to include Armenian texts in their compositions for her, and extending her attention to folk songs from other cultures, especially those of Eastern Europe.

Berberian's comfort crossing national, and linguistic, borders also extended to her tendency to cross artistic boundaries. While Berberian identified primarily as a performer, she also composed her own music and worked behind the scenes as a collaborator with multiple composers. It was, and is, common for composers to also act as performers, especially of their own works, yet Berberian moved in the opposite direction when she began to write music. Her actions complicate the notion of authorship as distinct from performance, as she moved from collaborating with composers and

¹⁷ The networks of composers, performers, and intellectuals present in many European and American cities proved vital for the composition and performance of avant-garde and experimental music in the post-war period, and remain a potentially fruitful avenue for future research. For a detailed study of the specific network of experimental composers and performers in New York in 1964, see Benjamin Piekut, *Experimentalism Otherwise: The New York Avant-Garde and Its Limits* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

interpreting their works to creating compositions of her own. Whereas many male composers, including Berio, began their careers as performers (after all, Berio and Berberian met when he agreed to accompany her), they generally focused on composition as their ultimate calling. Berberian, by contrast, never attempted to make composition her vocation. Instead, she treated composition almost like a hobby, an approach that upset some composers who devoted themselves to the craft.

Berberian also showed ease moving between different genres and musical styles. For *Stripsody*, she was inspired by comic strips, a decidedly “low” form of entertainment. She frequently performed *Stripsody* alongside Berio’s *Sequenza III* (1966) and other “serious” avant-garde compositions, implicitly asserting her belief that they both deserved a place on stage. Similarly, in her recital programs from the 1970s, Berberian often juxtaposed high and low influences. “À la recherché de la musique perdue,” for example, used Proust as the basis for a parody of an amateur recital in a Parisian salon circa 1900. Most of her recitals demonstrated diversity in terms of combining works from very different historical and stylistic periods, as exemplified by her “From Monteverdi to the Beatles” program, and they also frequently mixed serious and humorous approaches to performance.

Berberian refused to stay entrenched in any particular milieu and instead displayed a willingness to experiment, an openness that fueled her wide-ranging and successful career. She displayed many of her catholic interests as a young woman in New York, and continued to develop and expand them once she arrived in Italy. While this dissertation does not attempt to provide a comprehensive look at Berberian’s life, her early activities anticipate some of her later work and warrant brief discussion.

From New York to Milan: Berberian's Early Career

Cathy Berberian was born Catherine Anahid Berberian on July 4, 1925, in Attleboro, Massachusetts. Her Armenian parents both immigrated to the United States – her father, Ervant, from Bulgaria and her mother, Louise (née Héloïse Sudbeazian), from Turkey. The family moved to New York while Berberian was very young, and she grew up mainly in the outer boroughs of New York City. Her parents remained very close to their extended family members who had also immigrated to the U.S. and actively participated in New York City's sizable Armenian community. As a teenager, Berberian became a member of the Armenian Folk Group and learned traditional Armenian folk dancing and singing. She also pursued a variety of creative activities. She excelled in literature as a high school student, and simultaneously developed her skills as an actress. In 1941 she appeared as "Subscription Girl" in a performance of the play *Up Pops the Devil* by the Champlain Players, a theater group in Essex, New York, where she also acted in other plays produced by the same summer stock group.¹⁸

Meanwhile, Berberian pursued a career as an opera singer. Late in life, in multiple sources, Berberian claimed to have fallen in love with opera as a young girl while listening to her mother's records of singers like Tito Schipa, Feodor Chaliapin, and Amelita Galli-Curci. In February 1983, shortly before her death, Berberian wrote a private paean to music that begins:

I fell down the long rabbit hole into the wonderland of music when I was about seven years old. I came across a pile of "78" records in an unused Victrola (how's that for a dated word?) and I remember first and foremost the voice of Tito Schipa singing the Cavatina from "The Barber of Seville," and I was hooked! From then

¹⁸ The program is in the private collection of Cristina Berio.

on music meant mostly singing, and at first mostly opera. At around the time, I secretly vowed to be a singer.¹⁹

To achieve her goal, Berberian began to take voice lessons and studied standard operatic excerpts as a soprano. She supplemented her lessons with classes at New York University and Columbia University in pantomime, stagecraft, costume design, and theater. She also expanded her repertoire of folk dancing to include both Spanish and Indian dance styles in anticipation of one day performing the roles of Carmen and Lakmé.

Berberian started to achieve some success as a singer in 1945, when she twice performed on the CBS radio program “New Voices in Song.” Her repertoire choices for her first appearance, on July 15, reveal her interests and abilities at that point in her life: Mozart’s “Non so più” from *Le Nozze di Figaro*; Thurlow Lieurance’s “Deer Flower,” based on a Native American melody; the Armenian folk song “Under the Apple Tree”; Reynaldo Hahn’s “L’Heure Exquise;” the Russian folk song “Two Guitars” sung with its original text; and two songs from Bainbridge Crist’s “Chinese Mother Goose Rhymes.”²⁰ This mixture of art and folk songs already demonstrates the facility with languages that would become one of Berberian’s hallmarks. In the course of only six selections, Berberian managed to include examples of five different languages: Italian, English, Armenian, French, and Russian. (These same five languages reappeared in Cage’s *Aria* over a decade later.) Berberian re-appeared on the program several months later, singing songs by Mozart and Bizet, among others.²¹

¹⁹ Private collection of Cristina Berio. It has been published in Marie Christine Vila, *Cathy Berberian, Cant’actrice* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 348.

²⁰ The transcript of the radio broadcast is in the private collection of Cristina Berio.

²¹ Vila, 39.

That same year (1945), Berberian performed several times in recitals organized by her voice teacher, Lucile Kellogg, each entitled “An Evening of Song.” Again, she showed off her language abilities and her somewhat daring repertoire choices. An anonymous review following a performance in November mentions that she “sang in Russian, Armenian and English,” while neglecting to reference the songs performed by the other singers on the program.²² Berberian’s multilingual performance already stood out as unusual and therefore noteworthy. Another anonymous review from June compares her selections, which included “Stormy Weather” as an encore, with the “more conventional concert repertoire” sung by other participants.²³ Throughout all of these early appearances, Berberian mixed folk and art songs, presaging the diverse interests she would display throughout her career. She also included “Stormy Weather,” a jazz standard, thereby bridging the divide separating art from popular music, another line she repeatedly obscured later in life.

Berberian believed it essential to her operatic training to study in Europe, and she took her first available opportunity to do so in 1948. One of her cousins, a student of French literature, received a scholarship to study in France for three months, and Berberian accompanied her. While in Paris, Berberian took lessons with Marya Freund (1876-1966), a soprano famous for her performances of modernist music. Freund had premiered the part of the Wood Dove in Schoenberg’s *Gurrelieder* in 1913, gave the first French performance of his *Pierrot lunaire*, and also sang works by contemporary

²² Private collection of Cristina Berio.

²³ Clippings of reviews for concerts on June 10 and November 18 are in the private collection of Cristina Berio.

composers including Satie, Milhaud, and Poulenc. Though Berberian later claimed that she had not studied *Pierrot* with Freund, it seems likely that she studied some of the modernist vocal repertoire from the early part of the twentieth century. In any case, she left Paris determined to return, and with an abiding desire to sing opera.

Once back in New York, Berberian apparently began a campaign to convince her parents to let her resume her studies in Europe. According to her biographer, Marie Christine Vila, Berberian made a deal with her parents that she would go to Paris for one year, and if she had not “succeeded,” she would return to New York.²⁴ Her parents consented, but decided that she should go to Milan instead, which had a sizeable Armenian population, including some distant relatives. Berberian arrived in Milan in late 1949 and began voice lessons. Once in Italy, Berberian learned about the scholarships offered by the Fulbright Foundation and she applied for money to support her vocal studies. She needed an accompanist to help her with the recording she was required to submit as part of her application, and found Luciano Berio, then a student at the Milan Conservatory (Conservatorio di musica “Giuseppe Verdi” di Milano). A scheduling conflict prevented Berio from accompanying Berberian for her actual recording, and they rehearsed together only once. He located another accompanist to help with her application, which consisted of bel canto arias and Armenian folk songs. Berberian won the Fulbright in June 1950, enabling her to continue her studies in Milan without her parents’ financial support.

A few months after they first met, Berio and Berberian became romantically involved. Their relationship progressed quickly, and they married on October 1, 1950.

²⁴ Vila, 42.

They began to influence each other musically almost immediately, and the importance that each played in the musical life of the other is difficult to overstate. One of their first collaborations came in 1951, when they staged a performance of Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* in the coastal town of Porto Maurizio, not far from Oneglia, the town in northwestern Italy where Berio was born and raised. The couple did much of the work of putting on the performance themselves: Berio conducted while Berberian directed and sang the role of Alisa.²⁵ Their work together soon switched to a focus on new compositions by Berio, and he began to write numerous pieces for Berberian to sing. Over the coming decades they worked together on many compositions and performed together regularly.

Berio's earliest works for Berberian came in the first years of their marriage. In 1952, she premiered three works. The *Quattro Canzoni Popolari* (1952) comprised his earlier collection of *Tre Canzoni Popolari* (1946-47) with the addition of a fourth song, "Avendo gran disio," which he later gifted to Berberian. His *Deus Meus* (1951), for voice and three instruments, has never been published. *Chamber Music* (1953), for female voice, clarinet, violin, and harp, set three poems by James Joyce, an author whose works Berio would revisit multiple times in later years.

Berio's *Opus Number Zoo* (1950-51) took advantage of Berberian's skills as a reciter rather than as a singer. Initially scored for four unspecified instruments, Berio revised the work in 1951 for speaker and wind quintet. He revised the work again in 1970, putting the text into the instrumentalists' parts and omitting the need for a separate speaker. Berberian wrote the initial text, which was altered by the American opera

²⁵ Program in the PSS, Berio collection.

director and choreographer Rhoda Levine for the final edition. Berberian's original English poems can be found in the manuscript score of the unpublished 1951 version of the work held at the Paul Sacher Foundation. Additionally, Patrick Otto has published the texts in his recent article on *Opus Number Zoo*.²⁶ The published version of Berio's score, from 1975, omits any mention of Berberian's textual contributions, leaving her participation unidentified.²⁷

Berberian also wrote the text for *Summer Night Blues*, a song for voice and piano that Berio composed in 1956. This song has not been published, and has been discovered only recently by musicologist Angela Ida De Benedictis, who located the manuscript score in the archives of Berio's first publisher, Suvini Zerboni.²⁸ She also found a recording of the piece, sung by Berberian, in the archives of the Studio di Fonologia, but unfortunately she has not written much on this piece, and its precise contents remain a mystery. Its presence suggests the possibility of other similar projects that may not have survived, or that remain uncovered.

Berberian's premiere of *Chamber Music* in the spring of 1953 was her last performance before the birth of her daughter Cristina on November 1 of that year. She stopped working publicly for five years and concentrated on raising her daughter, though, as we have seen, she continued to work privately with Berio on projects like *Summer Night Blues*. She also recorded excerpts from Purcell's *Fairy Queen* with Maderna in

²⁶ Patrick Otto, "Écritures d'*Opus Number Zoo* de Luciano Berio: Mise en Œuvre d'un Processus Compositionnel," *Musurgia* XI/1-2 (2004): 95-118.

²⁷ Berio, *Opus Number Zoo* (Universal Edition, U.E. 15637, 1975).

²⁸ Angela Ida De Benedictis, *Radiodramma e Arte Radiofonica: Storia e Funzioni della Musica per Radio in Italia* (Torino: EDT, 2004), xxiii.

1956, and contributed to *Ritratto di città* (1956), an electroacoustic work by Berio and Maderna. She returned to the stage in 1958, following her work in the recording studio on Berio's *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)*. The tape work premiered on a concert given by the Incontri Musicali, a concert series devoted to contemporary music run by Berio and Maderna. Three days after the premiere of *Thema* on June 14, Berberian appeared in the next concert of the series in Naples, where she performed works by Stravinsky and Ravel. This performance, along with the dissemination of *Thema* in concerts across Europe, led other composers to start paying attention to Berberian; many soon began writing works for her. In 1959 Berberian premiered works by two other composers living in Milan, Franco Donatoni and Angelo Paccagnini. Though their works, *Serenata* and *Brevi Canti*, respectively, did not take advantage of the skills Berberian would soon make her specialty, they did help to establish her as a serious, competent performer of modernist vocal works.

In 1964, Berberian experienced a personal crisis when she discovered Berio's infidelity. He had taken a teaching position at Mills College as a replacement for Milhaud in 1963-64 and started a relationship with a student there named Susan Oyama. Berberian learned about the relationship after she joined Berio in California, and they began a protracted separation. The precise dates of the dissolution of their marriage are difficult to determine: Italy did not allow divorce, but Berberian filed for an official separation in the fall of 1964. Yet Berio took out a life insurance policy in April 1966 listing Berberian as his wife and beneficiary, so they must have still been married at that point. However, he began calling Oyama his wife soon afterward, and their daughter Marina was born only three months later (in July 1966). Berio and Berberian eventually annulled their marriage

in 1972. In the initial years of their separation, their relationship was understandably strained, but by 1966 they began to work together again. Berio composed some of his most well-known works for Berberian after their marriage ended, including *Sequenza III* (1966) and *Recital I (for Cathy)* (1972).

Berberian's health steadily declined from the late 1970s as she gained a significant amount of weight and lost most of her vision (the two maladies seem to have had separate causes). Despite her physical ailments, she continued to tour almost constantly, giving at least 21 performances in 1982.²⁹ She died from a heart attack on March 6, 1983, while in Rome to record a performance of *The Internationale* for an RAI broadcast on the hundredth anniversary of the death of Karl Marx. Only after her death did those close to her learn that she had secretly married Luigi Manca, who had been her manager for a number of years. The marriage had taken place in Las Vegas on December 26, 1981. (Berberian lied about her date of birth on the marriage certificate, shaving five years off her age, perhaps in an attempt to seem closer in age to Manca, thirteen years her junior.³⁰)

Methodology and Sources

This dissertation draws largely upon primary sources. Cristina Berio, Berberian's only daughter and Berio's eldest child, has kept an extensive collection of her mother's materials. At her home in Los Angeles, Berio maintains a large quantity of Berberian's

²⁹ From 1966 to 1982, Berberian averaged around two dozen performances per year. This number represents a minimum number and includes only known performances; no doubt many remain unidentified.

³⁰ The marriage certificate is in the PSS, Berberian collection.

correspondence, her private notebooks, drawings of costume designs, her 1970 calendar, her 1978 and 1979 daily diaries, concert programs, reviews and other newspaper and magazine clippings, and manuscript scores. Thanks to her continued relationship with some of her mother's close friends, Berio has many years' worth of letters that Berberian sent to both Leonard Stein and Louis Andriessen. Both men were among Berberian's closest confidants, and her correspondence with them provides valuable details about her private and public life. Berio also has the tapes of an interview Berberian recorded with Silvana Ottieri in the early 1980s, which she has partially transcribed and translated.

The Paul Sacher Foundation (Paul Sacher Stiftung, or PSS) in Basel, Switzerland also has an extensive assortment of primary source materials related to Berberian and many of the composers who worked with her. Their collections for Berio, Maderna, Andriessen, Haubenstock-Ramati, Stein, Pousseur, Stravinsky, Hans Werner Henze, and Dieter Schnebel contain letters from Berberian, programs, reviews, and manuscript scores. They also have a small Berberian collection with limited but interesting materials, including her second marriage certificate and other personal documents. Universal Edition, Berio's main publisher, gave their archives to the Sacher Foundation, and its correspondence with Berio and Berberian reveals the amount of control Berberian sometimes exerted over the publication of Berio's works.

Secondary sources related to Berberian are minimal. The most comprehensive is the French biography by Marie Christine Vila, *Cathy Berberian, Cant'actrice*. Although often hagiographic, it provides a detailed chronological look at Berberian's life and career and proved to be a very helpful source for my own work. David Osmond-Smith, a Berio scholar, wrote a brief but useful article on Berberian entitled "The Tenth Oscillator:

The Work of Cathy Berberian 1958-1966.”³¹ While restricting himself to the first part of Berberian’s career, Osmond-Smith’s personal recollections give an informative look at her work with Berio and Bussotti, among other composers. Berberian’s friend and oboe d’amour player Jennifer Paull has written a series of essays published in her book *Cathy Berberian and Music’s Muses*.³² These essays look at Berberian’s personality and career from the perspective of a close friend. Musicologist Francesca Placanica has devoted some attention to Berberian in the form of a master’s thesis and a conference paper.³³ Her work has studied Berberian as a collaborator who had an active role in the creation of the works in her repertoire, but largely consists of translations of primary sources. Finally, Dutch filmmaker Carrie de Swaan produced a documentary on Berberian, *Music Is the Air I Breathe: Cathy Berberian (1925-1983)*.³⁴ Containing interviews with people close to Berberian, including Berio and Andriessen, as well as older clips of Berberian’s performances and interviews, the documentary provides a valuable visual record of Berberian and those who knew her best.

Research on the composers who worked with Berberian is often surprisingly sparse. Osmond-Smith wrote a short book on Berio that discusses Berberian’s

³¹ Osmond Smith, “The Tenth Oscillator: The Work of Cathy Berberian 1958-1966.” *Tempo: A Quarterly Review of Modern Music* 58 (227): 2-13.

³² Paull, *Cathy Berberian and Music’s Muses* (Vouvry, Switzerland: Amoris Imprint, 2007).

³³ Placanica, “Cathy Berberian: Performance as Composition” (M.M thesis, Southern Methodist University, 2007); and “‘Unwrapping’ the Voice: Cathy Berberian’s and John Cage’s *Aria* (1958),” paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society, Philadelphia, 2009.

³⁴ de Swaan, *Music Is the Air I Breathe: Cathy Berberian (1925-1983)*, 1994.

involvement in his life and compositional process, and he also translated and edited a set of interviews with Berio.³⁵ Ivanka Stoïanova wrote a lengthy monograph on Berio that includes interviews with both Berio and Berberian.³⁶ Italian scholars have conducted considerable research on the institution of the Studio di Fonologia Musicale in Milan, which has identified much of Berberian's work in the recording studio.³⁷ Paul Attinello has published work on Sylvano Bussotti highlighting Berberian's influence on the composer.³⁸ Numerous scholars have studied John Cage, but only a few have focused on his vocal music, or indeed, have mentioned it at all.³⁹ Unfortunately, many of the other composers who collaborated with Berberian have not attracted much attention from musicologists, and their work remains largely unknown.

³⁵ Osmond-Smith, *Berio* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991); Rossana Dalmonte and Bálint András Varga, *Two Interviews*, trans. and ed. David Osmond-Smith (New York, M. Boyars, 1985).

³⁶ Ivanka Stoïanova, "Luciano Berio: Chemins en musique," *La Revue Musicale* 375-377 (Paris: Éditions Richard-Masse, 1985).

³⁷ Nicola Scaldaferrì, *Musica nel Laboratorio Elettroacustico: lo Studio di Fonologia di Milano e la Ricerca Musicale negli Anni Cinquanta* (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1997); Veniero Rizzardi and Angela Ida De Benedictis, *Nuova Musica alla Radio: Esperienze allo Studio di Fonologia della RAI di Milano, 1954-1959* (Rome: RAI ERI, 2000).

³⁸ Paul Attinello, "The Interpretation of Chaos: A Critical Analysis of Meaning in European Avant-Garde Vocal Music, 1958-68" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1997); Attinello and David Osmond-Smith, "Gay Darmstadt: Flamboyance and Rigor at the Summer Courses for New Music," *Contemporary Music Review* 26, no.1 (2007): 105-114.

³⁹ See Pritchett; William Fetterman, *John Cage's Theatre Pieces: Notations and Performance* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1996); Rebecca Y. Kim, "In No Uncertain Musical Terms: The Cultural Politics of John Cage's Indeterminacy" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2008).

Scope and Chapters

Each chapter of this dissertation focuses on a different role that Berberian played as a musician. While the chapters move in a loosely chronological manner, they are specifically organized by theme. The first three chapters focus on Berberian's collaborations with other composers, in live and recorded compositions. Although much of this work happened between 1958 and 1964, a significant amount continued through the late 1960s and into the 1970s. The final three chapters concentrate on this latter period, during which Berberian exhibited greater creative independence following her split from Berio. Yet there was considerable overlap between these two segments in Berberian's career, and it is important to note both the changes and the continuities.

Chapter 1 examines Berberian's work in the recording studio, especially at the Studio di Fonologia Musicale. Just as Berio initially gained attention for his work on pieces like *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)* (1958) and *Visage* (1961), Berberian also attracted notice for their use of her voice. She also worked with Maderna and Pousseur in the recording studio, and she participated in very different ways in the different works that feature her voice. This chapter considers the complicated questions that arise with works that have been "composed" by one person but that involve considerable effort from Berberian, who often remained nameless. As a result, I argue that in some situations, Berberian participated mainly as a performer and in others as more of a co-creator who deserves greater credit for her contributions.

Chapters 2 and 3 both center on Berberian's collaborations with composers for works performed live. The second chapter identifies the particular characteristics that became associated with Berberian: multilingual texts, an assortment of vocal styles and

timbres, vocal and bodily sound effects, percussion performance, and indeterminacy. Organized by musical characteristic, this chapter highlights Berberian's contributions to the works written for her to pinpoint the impact she had on the composition and performance of each. The third chapter singles out the use of movement and gesture in Berberian's repertoire to show how important these elements were for her. The range of theatrical effects that became common in works written for Berberian had a great effect on her own individual performances, discussed in chapter 6.

The fourth chapter discusses Berberian's activities as a composer. She completed only two works, *Stripsody* and *Morsicat(h)y* (1969), but they had an outsize influence on how she perceived herself and how other composers and critics viewed her. These compositions marked a definite shift in Berberian's career: while she continued to perform works written for her by other composers, she also appeared independently more often and demanded greater recognition for her efforts.

Chapter 5 looks at Berberian's changing repertoire in the late 1960s. She displayed greater diversity in her repertoire choices, exploring older pieces as varied as Monteverdi's *Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* (1624) and Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912). She also ventured into popular music with baroque-inspired covers of songs by John Lennon and Paul McCartney, arranged for her by Berio and Andriessen. Chapter 6 follows Berberian's expanded repertoire into her creation of themed recital programs, which she treated as if they were works of art in themselves, complete with costume, lighting, sets, and movement. These recitals encompassed much of Berberian's existing repertoire, juxtaposing art and popular music and sharply divergent musical styles.

The conclusion explores Berberian's continuing impact following her death in 1983. It examines the compositions that have been dedicated to her in memoriam by some of the composers she most adored: Berio, Bussotti, Cage, and Andriessen. It also looks at the ways that other performers have attempted to perform Berberian's repertoire and how her contributions have continued to make a mark on contemporary vocal music.

Overall, this dissertation seeks to place Cathy Berberian at the center of the story of avant-garde music from the late 1950s through the early 1980s. Perhaps most importantly, it demonstrates how Berberian's collaborative work with composers and her own independent activities as composer and performer left, and continue to leave, an enduring mark on the sound of contemporary vocal music. Its primary aim is documentary, to lay a firm foundation for future investigations of the many interrelated issues raised by Berberian's career, namely changing conceptions of authorship, the interactions between composers and performers, the importance of national, sexual, and gender identities, and the nature of the voice as an exceptional instrument due to its inseparability from the body of the performer.

Chapter 1: Cathy's Disembodied Voice

Electro-acoustic works form a small but important part of Berberian's repertoire. Perhaps more than any other type of collaboration, her participation in the composition and performance of these pieces complicates the notion of authorship and blurs the line between composer and performer. The level of her contributions varied widely, from a carefully prescribed performance of a specific text to an improvisation involving significant autonomy. In every case, she deserves recognition for her work as a performer, but in some instances, she merits further acknowledgment as a co-creator. The electro-acoustic works that feature Berberian's voice vary widely within this continuum, ranging from pieces in which she had minimal input to those in which she made major creative decisions.

Despite the often crucial role Berberian played in the recording studio, she was frequently ignored by the composers who took sole credit for their studio creations. For example, at the premiere of Berio's *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)*, his first major electro-acoustic work, the program neglected to mention Berberian as the source of the sounds Berio used to fashion the completed work.¹ Berberian was not the only performer to be overlooked in this way. On the same program as *Thema's* premiere, Stockhausen's *Gesang der Jünglinge* (1956) similarly appeared without reference to Joseph Protschka, the boy whose voice figures as the central sound source in the work.² The lack of need for

¹ Concert of electronic music presented by the Incontri Musicali, June 14, 1958, Naples. Program in the PSS, Maderna collection.

² Musicologist Katherine Kaiser has recently identified Protschka and studied his role in the development of the piece. "Who Sang Stockhausen's *Gesang der Jünglinge*?" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society, Indianapolis, November 2010.

the performer's presence for a successful "performance" of works like *Thema* and *Gesang* allowed for a dissociation between the performer and his or her voice. Yet Berberian took action to preserve her connection to many of the electro-acoustic works featuring her voice, both behind the scenes in her private dealings with composers, and on stage, as she assumed some pieces into her own concert repertoire.

Berberian's voice appears on numerous tape pieces, most of them recorded at the Studio di Fonologia Musicale in Milan during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Osmond-Smith has credited Berberian with lending her voice to many "little things for radio" during this time period, including commercial work for radio programs as well as musical works.³ Though the records of the Studio di Fonologia often neglected to note the performers on commercial broadcasts, at least one, the radio comedy *Aspetto Matilde* (1959) with music composed by Bruno Maderna, featured Berberian's voice.⁴ The earliest electro-acoustic piece in which Berberian's voice definitely turns up is the collaborative work *Ritratto di città* (1954). She also worked on five later electro-acoustic works: *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)* (1958), *Dimensioni II* (1960), *Visage* (1961), *Votre Faust* (1966) and the background music for Fernando Arrabal's play *The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria* (1967). Berberian played a different role in the production of each of these pieces, sometimes acting primarily as a performer and sometimes as more of a co-creator. This chapter will detail the impact Berberian had on each work. It reveals the different ways she made her voice heard in the recording studio, both literally and

³ Osmond-Smith, "Tenth Oscillator": 3.

⁴ The records of the Studio tapes have been published in *Lo Studio di fonologia: Un diario musicale 1954-1983*, ed. Maria Maddalena Novati (Italy: Ricordi, 2009). The Studio's logbook has been edited by Angela Ida De Benedictis and printed in *Nuova Musica alla Radio*, 292-313.

figuratively, and how she preserved her connection to many of these works subsequently by incorporating them into her live performances.

The Studio di Fonologia Musicale and *Ritratto di città*

Although electronic music studios had been in existence since 1948, when Pierre Schaeffer (1910-95) founded the Groupe de Recherche de Musique Concrète in Paris, and were quickly established in other cities including Cologne and New York, young composers in Italy initially remained unaware of the possibilities offered by this new technology. Berio did not hear electronic music until the early 1950s when he attended the first public concert in the U.S. to include electronic music at the Museum of Modern Art on October 28, 1952.⁵ Berio returned to Milan determined to explore such resources himself. He published a critique of the concert in which he discussed the “very low intrinsic musical value” of what he heard but also recognized its applicability to the “sonorization of radio, television and cinema scripts.”⁶ Luigi Dallapiccola, with whom Berio had studied in 1952 at Tanglewood, furnished him with a letter of introduction to Luigi Rognoni, an Italian musicologist who worked at the Italian radio station RAI (Radio Audizioni Italiane, now Radiotelevisione Italiana), and encouraged him to make

⁵ The concert was primarily devoted to instrumental music by Varèse, but also included Vladimir Ussachevsky’s *Sonic Contours* and Otto Luening’s *Low Speed, An Invention on a Twelve-Tone Theme* and *Fantasy in Space*.

⁶ Berio, “Musica per Tape Recorder,” *Il Diapason*, IV/3-4 (1953): 10-13. As quoted in Angela Ida De Benedictis, “Opera Prima: *Ritratto di Città* and the Beginning of Electroacoustic Music in Italy,” trans. Alessandra Petrina in *Nuova Musica alla Radio*, 28.

himself known at the Milanese branch of the station.⁷ In a letter to Berio the following year, Dallapiccola commented that “after all, the bad habit of not being able to have a comedy on the radio without more or less ‘concrete’ music, perhaps now turns to your advantage.”⁸ By that point Berio had already begun working at RAI on music for television, beginning a long association between the composer and the station.⁹

While working at RAI, Berio composed his first independent electro-acoustic piece, *Mimusique no. 1* (1953), featuring the manipulated sounds of a gunshot, a tam-tam, and an unnamed female voice. Although Berio never disclosed who produced the anonymous voice, it was likely Berberian, whom Berio had married a few years earlier. After all, Berio would have used the resources most readily available to him, and it seems doubtful that he would have hired a singer for this purpose when his talented wife could easily do the job. In addition, Berio had recently composed a number of pieces specifically for Berberian to sing, including *Chamber Music* that same year. If the voice on the recording is in fact Berberian’s, it marks the earliest recording of her voice. Her anonymity in this work prefigured the way composers would continue to treat her contributions to their studio creations.

Berio’s interest in electro-acoustic music grew following this initial experiment, especially after he met and befriended the Italian composer and conductor Bruno

⁷ Rossana Dalmonte and Bálint András Varga, *Two Interviews*, trans. and ed. David Osmond-Smith (New York: M. Boyars, 1985), 11.

⁸ “E, in fondo, il malvezzo di non poter più dare una commedia alla radio senza commenti musicali più o meno ‘concreti,’ forse questa volta torna a tuo vantaggio.” Dallapiccola to Berio, November 6, 1953. PSS, Berio collection.

⁹ A letter from the General Director of RAI to Berio on June 18, 1953 specifies a contract from June 15 to August 31, 1953. PSS, Berio collection.

Maderna. Together, they drafted a proposal to set up an electronic music studio at RAI, which opened under the name Studio di Fonologia Musicale in August 1955.¹⁰ Berio and Maderna initially served as co-directors. They gave their first concert of electronic music in May 1956 and began to invite foreign composers to work there, including Henri Pousseur, who visited in 1957, and John Cage, who stayed for a few months in the winter of 1958-59. Berio and Maderna also organized a concert series called *Incontri Musicali*, devoted to performing twentieth-century music, as well as a journal by the same name. The journal appeared in four issues between 1956 and 1959 while the concert series ran twice, in Milan in 1957 and in Naples in 1958. Berberian returned to concert performance in Naples after a five-year hiatus from live performance (though she did work in the recording studio during that time).

Before the Studio di Fonologia was officially established, however, Berio and Maderna teamed up to create the composition *Ritratto di città*, a musical portrait of Milan. They began the project with the intention of convincing the director of RAI, Filiberto Guala, to accept their proposal for an electronic music studio. In November 1954, Berio had presented Guala with a “plan for the formation of an ‘Experimental Center of Radio Research’” and he and Maderna wanted to show what they could accomplish using electronic means.¹¹ Consisting mainly of a *musique concrète* collage of sounds recorded in numerous locations throughout Milan, *Ritratto di città* also included

¹⁰ For more information on the Studio di Fonologia Musicale, see Scaldaferrì, *Musica nel Laboratorio Elettroacustico*; De Benedictis, *Radiodramma e arte radiofonica*; *Lo Studio di fonologia*; Rizzardi and De Benedictis, *Nuova Musica alla Radio*.

¹¹ “Progetto per la costituzione di un ‘Centro Sperimentale di Ricerche radiofoniche,’” printed in Piero Santi, *La nascita dello ‘Studio di Fonologia Musicale’ di Milano*, *Musica/Realtà V*, no. 14 (1984): 167-88.

synthetic sounds as well as voices recorded in the studio. The ethnomusicologist Roberto Leydi contributed a text, read by actors Nando Gazzolo and Ottavio Fanfani, which gave impressions of the city from different times of day and various recognizable locations.¹² Leydi, Maderna, and Berio all decided on which scenes of the city to include before beginning work on the project. Maderna and Berio started creating the soundscapes before Leydi finished drafting the final text. The piece thus consisted of two parallel projects, text and music, that came together on a single tape recorded in November 1954.¹³

Berberian and Marise Flach, a choreographer, became involved in the project when asked to lend their voices to a number of scenes. Although both women were acknowledged as “voci” in the archival records of the Studio di Fonologia,¹⁴ their contributions have largely been ignored.¹⁵ Both women’s voices appear as part of the sound world of Milan depicted in *Ritratto*. For example, in the “Ave Maria” section, Berberian and Flach alternate chanting the prayer in different languages (Italian, English, Greek, Armenian, German, and Russian), altering their voices each time to create the effect of six different people praying. Their voices may appear in other scenes as well, but their specific contributions were not noted in the Studio records and remain challenging to perceive. Overall, the women apparently had little influence over the

¹² For a detailed analysis of the work see De Benedictis, “Opera Prima.”

¹³ The work has been released on a CD included with Rizzardi and De Benedictis, *Nuova Musica alla Radio*.

¹⁴ The archival records have been published in *Lo Studio di fonologia*.

¹⁵ In her analysis of *Ritratto*, De Benedictis never mentions Berberian or Flach. See “Opera Prima.”

conception of this piece, contributing only short performances. Nevertheless, their voices are ingrained in the sound of *Ritratto*, part of the soundscape of Milan as imagined by Berio and Maderna.

Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)

Berberian's voice next appeared in two compositions Berio created in 1958 based on James Joyce's *Ulysses*. The project began as a collaborative effort between Berio and Umberto Eco, working under a commission from RAI to prepare a work for the Prix Italia, a media competition run by RAI. The planned broadcast, titled *Homage to Joyce: Documentary Evidence on the Onomatopoeic Quality of Poetic Language (Omaggio a Joyce: Documenti sulla qualità onomatopeica del linguaggio poetico)*, explored the sonorous aspects of onomatopoeia, considering the interaction of sound and noise and the point at which language becomes pure sound. Much like *Ritratto di città*, a spoken narrative structures the program, beginning by comparing the Sirens of Homer's *Odysseus* with those of Joyce's *Ulysses*. After this introduction, the narrative begins in earnest with a meditation on onomatopoeia:

There is a moment in the existence of a language when the word, prior to any conventional usage, becomes one with the object it denominates: this is the moment of onomatopoeia, in which the object acquires an almost tangible apparency through the sounds that suggest it.¹⁶

Various examples of onomatopoeia from a number of different cultures follow this opening statement, including English poetry as well as fragments of ethnographic recordings made by Roberto Leydi in Africa and the Americas. The introduction to the

¹⁶ The full text can be found in Rizzardi and De Benedictis, *Nuova Musica*, trans. Anne Prina Ricotti, 340-55.

“Sirens” chapter of Joyce’s *Ulysses* forms much of the remaining text of the piece, read in the original English by Berberian, in French translation by Flach and Eco, and in Italian by actor Ruggero De Daninos, actress Nicoletta Rizzi, and writer and politician Furio Colombo.

Berio combined the assorted readings in numerous ways, with the recordings broken down into smaller segments of words, syllables, and phonemes. The narrators explain each step of the editing process and comment upon the results. The program closes with a final elaboration of Berberian’s reading, using electronic means to alter her original recitation. The narration explains that such editing of the material was done “in order to discover its possibilities and tendencies, since this is what should be done for seeing what happens, for seeing up to what point the material can be decomposed, controlled, recomposed.”¹⁷ RAI ultimately judged *Omaggio a Joyce* too experimental for presentation at the Prix Italia. Giulio Razzi, the director of radio programming, told Berio that while he found the work “splendid,” he ultimately viewed it as “an experiment” and therefore it could not “be considered a complete work, to be presented to an international evaluation committee.”¹⁸ The radio station may have even found the work unfit for broadcast, as the tape of *Omaggio a Joyce* kept in the Studio archives notes a “recording date” but no “date of transmission.”¹⁹

¹⁷ Ibid., 354.

¹⁸ Razzi to Berio, July 16, 1958. PSS, Berio collection. As trans. by Alessandra Petrina in Rizzardi and De Benedictis, *Nuova Musica alla Radio*, 278.

¹⁹ See archival records in *Lo Studio di Fonologia*.

This project stemmed from the enthusiasm Berio shared with Eco for Joyce and other English-language writers who employed onomatopoeia, including Edgar Allan Poe, Dylan Thomas, and W.H. Auden. Although fragments of literature by all these writers were used in *Omaggio a Joyce*, Joyce's "Sirens" chapter from *Ulysses* became the focal point of *Thema* due to its musically influenced construction.²⁰ Eco took credit for introducing Berio to the work of Joyce and their mutual interest in the writer for sparking the radio project:

We often found ourselves with Berio, in his house on Via Moscati where Cathy made fabulous Armenian cuisine... And we constantly discussed each others' projects. At the time, I worked on Joyce. Luciano worked on him a little, but had never thought of setting one of his texts to music. Then, I spoke enthusiastically of Chapter 11, "The Sirens," comprised of particularly sonorous material and with a fugal structure. We began to read the text together and conceived the idea of an experimental radio broadcast that would be called *Omaggio a Joyce* – this was the preliminary to the definitive piece.²¹

Berio also credited Eco with introducing him to Joyce's work, telling an interviewer in the early 1980s: "I introduced him to linguistics and he introduced me to Joyce."²²

²⁰ The influence of music on Joyce's writings has received significant attention. See for example the essay collection ed. Sebastian D.G. Knowles, *Bronze by Gold: The Music of Joyce* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999), and Zack Bowen, *Bloom's Old Sweet Song: Essays on Joyce and Music* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995).

²¹ "On se trouvait souvent chez Berio, dans sa maison à la Via Moscati où Cathy faisait de la cuisine arménienne fabuleuse... Et on discutait interminablement sur les projets de chacun. A l'époque, je travaillais sur Joyce. Luciano le connaissait un peu, mais n'avait pas songé à faire de la musique à partir de ses textes. Alors, je parle avec enthousiasme du chapitre XI, 'Les sirènes,' constitué d'un matériau sonore très particulier et avec la structure de fugue. On commence à lire ensemble le texte et là naît l'idée d'une émission radiophonique expérimentale qui s'appelait *Omaggio a Joyce* – c'était la version préalable de la pièce définitive." Eco, interview by Stoianova, February 7, 1978, 149.

²² Berio, interview by Varga, *Two Interviews*, 142.

But Eco could not possibly have introduced Berio to Joyce's work. Five years before they met, Berio set three poems by Joyce in his *Chamber Music*, written for (and dedicated to) Berberian, and by the late 1950s he knew other composers who had set Joyce's words as well.²³ Berio even demonstrated specific familiarity with *Ulysses* as early as 1955 when he wrote to Dallapiccola about the book *James Joyce's Ulysses* by Stuart Gilbert that he had brought to Italy from New York.²⁴ Instead, it seems possible that Berberian had initially brought Joyce's poems to Berio's attention, or at least helped him explore some of these difficult texts in his new language. When Berio met Berberian in 1950, he did not speak any English, and she gradually taught him the language, even writing him letters in both English and Italian so he could see the connection between them. Notably, Berio's first work with an English text was *Opus Number Zoo*, a chamber work with allegorical texts by Berberian. Yet Eco still deserves credit for inspiring Berio to set the Siren chapter of *Ulysses* and for encouraging the development of the project.

Inspired by working on the radio program, Berio decided to craft a composition from the raw material of Berberian's reading, calling the finished result *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)*. It premiered on June 13, 1958 in Naples on the second series of Incontri Musicali concerts. The only other recorded material Berio kept from the planned radio broadcast was a short passage of a rolled "r" in the phrase "morbida parola" from the Italian translation.

²³ Dallapiccola, *Tre Poemi für Sopran und Kammerorchester* (1949) and John Cage, *The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs* (1942).

²⁴ "riavevo nelle mani uno studio sull'Ulisse (J.Joyce's Ulysses di Stuart Gilbert) che avevo portato da New York per Lei," February 9, 1955. PSS, Berio collection. Berio referred to Stuart Gilbert, *James Joyce's Ulysses: A Study* (London: Faber & Faber, 1930).

Soon after he completed *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)*, Berio published an article about the work entitled “Poetry and Music – An Experience” (Poesia e musica – un’esperienza).²⁵ He explained in his article that the text became his focus for *Thema*, especially the sounds of the spoken words as separate from their meanings. Berio saw himself producing a new form of poetry “as a verbal message distributed in time,” with electronic music providing a better understanding of the poetry than “public, on-stage reading of the verses.”²⁶ He first organized the words in the reading “according to a scale of vocal colors...ranging from A to U, diphthongs included” and used this method to also shape the structure of the piece.²⁷ The original order in which the words appeared made no difference for his classification; he used Berberian’s reading of the text as a quilt that he could take apart and then sew back together in a different pattern.

Berio largely ignored Berberian’s contribution to the sound of *Thema*, despite the fact that she provided almost all of the musical material he used in the composition. In his article “Poetry in Music,” Berio explained the technical means he used to produce the work and discussed the important relationship between text and music, but he never mentioned Berberian as the reader of that text. Berberian’s contribution became “vocal material.”²⁸ As musicologist Hannah Bosma describes, “in Berio’s own article about the piece, Berberian’s particular, impressive voice is reduced to anonymous linguistic

²⁵ Berio, “Poetry and Music – An Experience,” in *Nuova Musica alla Radio*.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 238.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 248.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

material, a neutral extension of the written text.”²⁹ When he did discuss the importance of the (unnamed) voice, he stated only that the piece attempted “a gradual musical development of the verbal elements alone, as they were proposed by a female voice reading a poetic text.”³⁰ Berio thereby separated the voice of the woman from the woman herself, as if the person who produced that voice made no difference to the outcome of the piece. Nevertheless, Berio occasionally acknowledged Berberian’s role, as when he later stated that *Thema* was one of a group of pieces “linked to Cathy Berberian’s voice,” but he clearly viewed her reading of the text as a fairly minor part of the work as a whole.³¹

Berberian gave herself more credit when she discussed the development of *Thema*. She recognized the importance of her own interpretation of Joyce’s words and said that it was up to her “to decide how to read it.”³² In an interview from the early 1980s she tried to boost her own contribution, pointing out that it was “entirely based” on her voice, which Berio used as “the foundation, the source material, and the source for the elaborations.”³³ She also placed herself at the origin of the work, stating that “we,” meaning Berio and herself, “had decided with Umberto Eco to make a sort of collage of

²⁹ Hannah Bosma, “Musical Washing Machines, Composer-Performers, and Other Blurring Boundaries: How Women Make a Difference in Electroacoustic Music,” *Intersections: Canadian Journal of Music* 2, no. 3 (2006): 104.

³⁰ Berio, “Poetry in Music,” 238.

³¹ Berio, interview by Dalmonte, *Two Interviews*, 94.

³² “Il m’a donné le texte de Joyce et c’était à moi de décider comment le lire.” Berberian, interview by Stoianova, February 5, 1978, 150.

³³ Berberian, interview by Ottieri.

the three” translations of Joyce’s *Ulysses*.³⁴ Yet she also contradicted herself somewhat in the same interview as she distinguished between her “original reading” and “the final result created by the musical genius of Berio.”³⁵ Berberian obviously still thought of herself primarily in a performative role.

Berio and Eco supported that interpretation, with each at some point recognizing the brilliance of her reading. Eco praised her: “Cathy read ‘Les Sirènes’ in English, playing with the onomatopoeias and all the rhythms in an admirable way.”³⁶ Berio remarked on the virtuosity of Berberian’s performance, observing that at one point her reading “started flying, it entered a dimension that is difficult to describe and cannot be formalized.”³⁷ These accounts by Berio and Eco limit Berberian’s contribution to that of the reader of the text but at least recognize her talent; unfortunately, whether or not Berberian actually influenced the creative development of the work remains a mystery.

Berio’s and Eco’s remarks suggest an indifference to the specific reader of the text, as if any woman’s voice would have produced the same result. Yet Berberian’s specific performance clearly mattered; she left an enduring mark on the finished piece. Berberian’s voice saturates *Thema*, and though Berio frequently manipulated her recording to the extent that the human origin of the sounds can be difficult to decipher, a

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ “Cathy lisait ‘Les Sirènes’ en anglais, en faisant jouer les onomatopées et tous les rythmes de façon admirable.” Eco, interview by Stoianova, February 7, 1978, 150.

³⁷ Berio, “Luciano Berio, Umberto Eco, Roberto Leydi Remember the Studio di Fonologia Forty Years After Its Birth,” in *Nuova musica alla Radio*, trans. Alessandra Petrina, 228.

great deal of the piece consists of recognizable sections of Berberian's reading. In particular, the structure of the work serves to ground it in Berberian's voice, with the beginning and end retaining clear excerpts from her reading while the middle ventures farther afield. The most obvious connection comes in the frequent appearance of the "sss" sound that appears multiple times in the original excerpt but particularly in the final line: "Pearls: when she. Liszt's rhapsodies. Hissss." Although the sound approximates white noise, it also clearly comes from Berberian's mouth. Berberian emphasized the sound in her original reading (for example, by lengthening the final "s" in "rhapsodies") and its frequent appearances in the final work sound relatively unchanged. In particular, the final minute and a half (from the 7:00 mark) highlights this sound; as the altered sounds fade away, Berberian's voice becomes prominent, with her repeated "Hissss" providing a pervasive link to her original reading.

Some recent scholars have recognized Berberian's essential role in the creation of *Thema*. In contrast to writers who followed Berio's lead by privileging the technical resources used to create the piece rather than the human voice that provided the source material,³⁸ feminist scholars have attempted to show the crucial importance that Berberian's voice played in the overall sound of the work. Both Janet K. Halfyard and Hannah Bosma follow Berberian's lead by pointing out that her original reading was a performance through which she conveyed her individual interpretation of Joyce's text. Although the text was fixed, Berberian added what Bosma calls "the 'musical' part of

³⁸ See Norbert Dreßen, *Sprache und Musik bei Luciano Berio: Untersuchungen zu seinen Vokalkompositionen*, (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1982); Paul Griffiths, *A Guide to Electronic Music* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979); Agostino Di Scipio, "D'une expérience en écoute de *phoné* et *logos*: Texte, son et structure dans *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)* de Luciano Berio," *Revue DEMéter* (August 2005).

language,” incorporating “timbres, intonations, rhythms, pauses, etc.”³⁹ As a result of the individual touches that Berberian gave to her performance, Halfyard points out that Berio’s composition “is itself a response to her reading, as much as it is a response to Joyce’s text.”⁴⁰ Bosma and Halfyard have offered appropriately nuanced approaches to the issue of authorship in this work by acknowledging the “actively creative contribution” that Berberian made.⁴¹

In addition to her original reading of Joyce’s text, Berberian retained a more immediate connection to the work in both its recorded and live presentations. Berio included Berberian’s initial recitation of the text as part of all the commercial releases of *Thema* to show the connection between her reading of the text and his subsequent electronic manipulations. As such, her unadulterated recitation fills the first two minutes of this eight-and-a-half minute piece. Berio wrote to Stein in November 1959 as they planned an upcoming American tour:

Before February I will send you a better synchronization of “Thema” and also the original recording of the Joyce text (read by my wife) on which the piece is based. It would be better if you played this before the performance of “Thema,” as we have usually performed it.⁴²

³⁹ Bosma, “Female Authorial Voices in Electrovocal Music,” paper published in the Proceedings of the 1996 International Computer Music Conference, August 19-24, 1996 (San Francisco: International Computer Music Association, 1996). Also published online at <http://www.hannahbosma.nl/icmc96.htm> [Accessed February 23, 2011].

⁴⁰ Halfyard, “Text and Authority,” paper presented at the conference “Cathy Berberian: Pioneer of Contemporary Vocality and Performance,” April 27-28, University of Amsterdam. Published online at http://www.sequenza.me.uk/Berberianconference/BERBER_1.HTM [Accessed February 23, 2011].

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Berio to Stein, November 11, 1959. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

Berberian altered Berio's request, offering to "read the Joyce text 'live' before 'Thema.'" ⁴³ As she suggested, Berberian often appeared on stage to read the text before a hearing of the tape piece. Even when Berberian was not present, her original recitation played on tape gave a strong indication of her participation in the creation of the work. When she did perform live, however, her involvement became clearer and the relationship between her body and the voice heard on tape more obvious. Berberian often incorporated *Thema* into her individual recitals and programmed it throughout her career, asserting her connection to the work. This enduring interest also stemmed from the importance she ascribed to *Thema*, which she considered "one of the few masterpieces of electronic music." ⁴⁴

Dimensioni II

In March 1960, Berberian found herself back in the studio to record another experimental text, this time for Maderna. Many similarities exist in the production of Maderna's *Dimensioni II* and Berio's *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)*. In both cases, Berberian read a prewritten text in the Studio di Fonologia. Berio and Maderna then used her recorded voice as a sound source they could manipulate with electronic means into a completed composition. Both composers also tended to ignore Berberian's contributions to their works, favoring the authors of the written texts instead. But Maderna's work differed from Berio's in two important ways: it included a live component, and he continued to re-use Berberian's recorded voice after their initial collaboration ended.

⁴³ Berberian to Stein, December 13, 1959. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁴⁴ Berberian, interview by Ottieri.

The text Berberian read for Maderna's *Dimensioni II* consists of a series of phonemes assembled by the experimental German writer and composer Hans G. Helms (b. 1932) called *Text for Bruno Maderna* (see example 1.1).⁴⁵

Text for Bruno Maderna

C →

kt ← pf → ə-dA-nda ī-ni : jn→mjε !

qət ← pe : h → zu : -sü : fə-lt-kə fA-jəm →
(whisper)

de-de : i ðtA-ʔə! ze-re-dʒü-tε-ne-sy-tʃə-tʃε (!)

hu-wai-lə ts → /cough/ h →

ö : i : φe-lεx nɪ-nɔ.ɔ hi : v

CAɔ-ʒə-nεj ʒA p(a)k ←

xiC ə kə-pe : → pteʔε bA : n → ə-mə-ʔu : m üɣ-ʎi

zjam-mak-kev hi : n

tes-sə-!pɪX!! je : f-ltʃ kət-kət ɲgÄb ←

θε-ʔe!

fɪp-θək zur-rɛt tʃar-fə-kal o-rək-kɔj j → ȳm → v → ər-ʒwöj

ʎεθ a-zəɣ→bə-mu-ruf XɔX-tʃpə!

jiŋ-ɡɪ mə ki-tε-ʎax ü : → Hɔ(!) ← θ →
(inbale)

na-tʃε-fɪʃəʔ→be : ʃɪ dʒi : z →

!! phA! ≧ u :
(ff ≧ f)

Example 1.1: Helms, *Text for Bruno Maderna*

⁴⁵ Published in Gianmario Borio, "Vokalmusik als integrales Komponieren von Sprache: zum musikliterarischen Schaffen von Hans G Helms," in *Autoren-Musik: Sprache im Grenzbereich der Künste*, Musik-Konzepte 81 (Munich: Ed. Text und Kritik, 1993), 55.

Helms used phonemes that recall a variety of different languages but form no comprehensible text in any single language. According to Helms, he wrote the text “with the intention of excluding any explanatory sense of the word... The text has a uniquely phonetic meaning.”⁴⁶ Helms also included three vocal effects in his text: whisper, cough, and inhale. Osmond-Smith wrote that with the exception of these few instructions, Berberian was left alone “to devise as wide a range of vocal interpretations as she pleased.”⁴⁷ Berberian’s role was largely that of a performer whose reading, according to Vila, “constituted the base material and the source of inspiration for the piece.”⁴⁸ Maderna was inspired by Berberian’s performance of Helms’ text and let her interpretations suggest his own composition. As the Italian composer and musicologist Paolo Castaldi declared, the work, dedicated to Berberian, was “created by her voice rather than written for it.”⁴⁹

Piero Santi states that *Dimensioni II* comprised three separate uses of Berberian’s voice: recorded and electronically manipulated, recorded but preserved in its original state, and live.⁵⁰ Two commercially available recordings of the work have been released,

⁴⁶ “Questo testo fu composto con l’intenzione di escludere qualsiasi senso esplicativo della parola... Il testo ha un significato unicamente fonetico.” Helms, “Il testo per nastro di Hyperion,” program of La Biennale di Venezia, September 6, 1964. PSS, Maderna collection.

⁴⁷ Osmond-Smith, “Tenth Oscillator,” 7.

⁴⁸ Vila, 100.

⁴⁹ “elle a été plutôt engendrée par sa voix qu’écrite pour elle.” Castaldi, program notes for a performance at Warsaw Autumn, September 21, 1961. PSS, Maderna collection.

⁵⁰ Santi, “Le nuove tecnologie: musica elettronica e radiodrammi,” in *Bruno Maderna: Documenti* (Milan: Edizioni Suivini Zerboni, 1985), 156-62.

both of which seem to present only the pre-recorded portions of the work.⁵¹ As the score for the live performance has not been published, this determination is difficult to make; while the recordings include pure fragments of Berberian's voice, these likely came from the original tape Maderna created and not from an additional turn in the recording studio to add the third, live, component. This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that these recordings were not released in Berberian's lifetime, and there is no indication that she ever prepared a commercial release of the work. As it stands, *Dimensioni II* sounds like a fragmentary succession of more and less recognizable sounds. The work generally progresses from highly manipulated sounds that lose any connection to their original source in Berberian's voice to a more straightforward presentation of her vocalizations. Her voice is often superimposed onto itself to give a polyphonic effect. Despite the lack of laughter in Helms' text, the work begins with what sounds like manipulated laughter, suggesting that Berberian took a liberal approach to following the directions given to her. The work ends with fairly clear examples of Berberian's reading, but her uncomplicated recitation is made more complex by the unintelligibility of the text.

Berberian premiered *Dimensioni II* in Milan at an Incontri Musicali concert on April 9, 1960. According to Antonio Rodà, it appeared under many different titles over the next few years, and was sometimes presented as an electro-acoustic work without the live portion.⁵² As the original title suggests, the work used the same technique as Maderna's earlier *Musica su due dimensioni* (1952), which combined a recorded tape

⁵¹ *Berio/Maderna* (Acousmatrix no. 7, CD 9109); *Musica elettronica* (Stradivarius, STR 33349, 1994).

⁵² Rodà, "Varianti d'autore: *Invenzioni su una voce* di Bruno Maderna," *Musica/Tecnologia* 3 (2009): 71-97.

with live performance (written for Severino Gazzelloni). The work was presented in full at Darmstadt and Warsaw Autumn in 1960 under the titles *Dimensioni II – Invenzione su una voce* and *Invenzione su una voce*, respectively, marking a gradual change to a different title. At later performances under the titles *Invenzione su una voce* and *Invenzione per una voce sola*, the tape was presented independently.

Despite the constant presence of her voice, Berberian was often ignored in performances of *Dimensioni II*. When the piece was performed at Darmstadt in July 1960, the program listed soprano Annemarie Jung, who performed the live portion of the work, but neglected to mention Berberian. The program simply described her taped voice as “Tonband auf Phoneme von Hans G Helms.”⁵³ While the audience heard Berberian's voice, they did not know it was hers. But the program did identify Helms as the author of the text. Like Berio, Maderna favored the author of the text over the performer of that text, treating Berberian as anonymous and unimportant.

Maderna further negated the intimate relationship between Berberian's recorded voice and her physical body by incorporating the taped portion of *Dimensioni II* into his multi-faceted *Hyperion*. Moreover, in *Hyperion* he used her manipulated voice to represent a machine, no longer construing it as even human. In *Italian Opera Since 1945*, Raymond Fearn describes this element of *Hyperion* as “a gigantic Machine from which electronic sounds emitted,” making no mention of the fact that it was a person who originally created those sounds, much less Berberian.⁵⁴ The passage about *Hyperion* in

⁵³ Gianmario Borio and Hermann Danuser, *Im Zenit der Moderne: Die Internationalen Ferienkurse für Neue Musik Darmstadt 1946-1966*, Bd. 3 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 1997), 606.

⁵⁴ Fearn, *Italian Opera Since 1945* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers,

Bruno Maderna: Documenti mentions only the “phonemes from *Dimensioni II*,” also forgetting the human origin of those phonemes.⁵⁵ Rupturing Berberian’s connection to the piece almost beyond recognition, Maderna then further edited *Hyperion*, creating numerous versions that premiered throughout the late 1960s. With each successive transformation, Berberian’s original performance in *Dimensioni II* became less familiar and her connection to the work all but disappeared. Furthermore, only some versions of *Hyperion* even included *Dimensioni II*.⁵⁶ *Hyperion* and its many versions then represent Berberian’s voice in its most detached state, treated as raw material to be exploited.

Berberian objected to this unauthorized use of her recorded voice. In 1968 she wrote to Maderna to protest the inclusion of *Dimensioni II* in the various editions of *Hyperion* because “nowhere does it appear that the recorded voice is mine.”⁵⁷ She claimed to have “never received a lira for the recording,”⁵⁸ but did not ask to be treated “like Henius who demands a percentage from Nono each time that he does *La Fabbrica Illuminata*.”⁵⁹ Instead, Berberian simply requested recognition:

1997), 88. But Fearn did credit Berberian in his discussion of *Hyperion* in his *Bruno Maderna* (Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1990).

⁵⁵ Mario Baroni, “Hyperion,” in *Bruno Maderna: Documenti*.

⁵⁶ See Raymond Fearn, “Maderna’s Hyperion Cycle,” liner notes of *Bruno Maderna, Hyperion (1960-1969)* by the Ensemble Vocal Les Jeunes Solistes and Asko Ensemble, directed by Péter Eötvös, Disques Montaigne 782014 (1992).

⁵⁷ “So che hai usato una parte di questo nastro per la tua opera ma da nessuna parte risultava che la voce registrata fosse la mia.” Undated letter, PSS, Maderna collection.

⁵⁸ “non ho mai ricevuto una lira per la registrazione...” Ibid.

⁵⁹ “Ne faccio come la Henius che pretende un percentuale da Nono ogni volta che si faccia *La Fabbrica Illuminata*.” Ibid. Luigi Nono’s *La Fabbrica Illuminata* (1964) features the recorded voice of German mezzo-soprano Carla Henius (1919-2002).

I ask you only to include my name on the program when this tape, or even the minimum part of it, is performed...I do not believe my request can be harmful to your interests.⁶⁰

Maderna's reply does not survive, but events from the ensuing years indicate that the pair never came to an agreement. In the same letter to Maderna, Berberian mentioned an upcoming performance of *Dimensioni II* at the Conference of Electronic Music in Florence (June 11, 1968). This appears to be the last time Berberian ever performed the piece, suggesting that Maderna's response to her request likely disappointed.

Despite the friction, Maderna began another project with Berberian a few years later: *Ausstrahlung* (1971), a monumental work for female voice, flute and oboe soloists, orchestra, and prerecorded tape composed for the Festival of the Arts in Shiraz, Iran. As revealed in letters from R. Ghotbi, the director-general of the Festival, Berberian would have contributed her voice to both the tape and the live performances of Maderna's piece, originally entitled "Life."⁶¹ However, Berberian's conditions for recording the tape upset both Maderna and Eugenio Clausetti, an employee of Ricordi, Maderna's publisher. According to Clausetti, Berberian demanded 600,000 lire (around \$950 in 1971, equivalent to a little over \$5,000 in 2011), "a fee equal to what she receives for a concert," just to make the initial recording.⁶² She also wanted rights regarding later use of

⁶⁰ "Ti chiedo solo di fare includere il mio nome sul programma quando questo nastro, o anche la minima parte di questo, viene eseguito...Non credo che la mia richiesta possa essere nociva alle tue interesse." Ibid.

⁶¹ "Nous pensons aussi qu'il est préférable d'enregistrer la voie de Cathy Berberian sur bande et de l'avoir elle-même chanter 'Life' avec l'orchestre." Ghotbi to S.S.A. Samama (Maderna's assistant), November 2, 1970. PSS, Maderna collection.

⁶² "un cachet pari a quello che Lei riceve per un concerto (£.600.000), per la prima registrazione," Clausetti to Maderna, March 4, 1971. PSS, Maderna collection.

the tape and to prohibit the tape being released on a commercial recording without further compensation.⁶³ These stipulations were too much for Maderna; Berberian's voice was not included on the tape portion of *Ausstrahlung*, although she did perform live at the work's premiere.

Berberian's requests from Maderna for increased acknowledgment and control over her recorded voice demonstrates a significant change from her attitude toward *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)*. She never seems to have protested Berio's use of her voice in *Thema*, despite the fact that he often ignored her contribution. She frequently included the piece on her own programs, whereas she rarely performed *Dimensioni II*. The crucial differences came in the element of live performance and Maderna's re-use of Berberian's recording. Unlike *Dimensioni II*, *Thema* never included an essential live component. Berberian may have felt that Maderna's appropriation of the taped portion of the piece violated her understanding of how her recording would be used. She obviously felt a strong sense of ownership over her own recorded voice and a right to some control over its treatment. She would maintain a similar perspective with her last major electro-acoustic work, *Visage*, which she created together with Berio.

Visage

Berberian worked with Berio on *Visage* in November 1961. According to Osmond-Smith, Berio was "plainly indebted" to "the collaboration between Maderna and

⁶³ "una partecipazione su tutti i diritti per le utilizzazioni successive alla prima...il divieto di usare il nastro per riversarlo su disco, salvo una ulteriore trattativa per stabilire il compenso." Ibid.

Berberian” that had happened with *Dimensioni II* the year before.⁶⁴ Berio conceived of his new electro-acoustic work as a study of Berberian’s voice and he gave her a greater creative role than he had with *Thema*. In a 1989 interview, Berio stated: “Just as a painter makes *visages* of certain people, I wanted to make a *sound, vocal, musical visage* of a personality.”⁶⁵ According to Berberian, *Visage* began as a series of improvisations on a scenario that was “vaguely defined by Luciano.”⁶⁶ She verbalized a series of situations, using a particular “vocal gesture” for each, which she defined as “using the right inflections according to the situation.”⁶⁷ Berberian based her improvisations on actual languages; Berio described the patterns as taken from English, Hebrew and the Neapolitan dialect as well as “from the language of television, from Joyce, etc.”⁶⁸ Only one comprehensible word appears in the piece: *parole*, Italian for “words.”

More than any of the other electronic works that feature Berberian’s voice, *Visage* inspires important questions about Berberian’s contribution. These questions stem from the fact that Berberian created the source material for the piece by improvising according to Berio’s suggestions rather than reading a prepared text. As a result, she really created

⁶⁴ Osmond-Smith, “Tenth Oscillator”: 8.

⁶⁵ “De même que’un peintre fait des *visages* de certaines personnes, j’ai voulu faire un *visage sonore, vocal, musical* d’une personnalité.” Berio, interview by Flo Menezes, “Quelques visages de *Visage*,” Salzburg, August 22, 1989, in *Un essai sur la composition verbale électronique Visage de Berio*, Quaderni di Musica/Realtà 30 (Modena: Mucchi Editore, 1993), 132.

⁶⁶ “Le scénario était vaguement défini par Luciano.” Berberian, interview by Stoianova, 70.

⁶⁷ Berberian, interview by Ottieri.

⁶⁸ “ il y a toujours des modèles de l’anglais, de l’hébreu, de dialecte napolitain, du langage de la television, de Joyce...etc.” Berio, interview by Menezes, 133.

the text for *Visage*, albeit an aural text that was not conventionally notated.⁶⁹

Furthermore, *Visage* includes a relatively small amount of electro-acoustic manipulations; Berio said that Berberian's "vocal gestures were not transformed electronically, but constantly related to, and were commented upon by electronically produced sound families."⁷⁰ This technique showcases Berberian's extraordinary vocalizations, which remain central throughout the piece.

Visage retained an intimate relationship with Berberian's body despite having content that combines her recorded voice with electronically produced sounds. One of the scenarios Berberian attempted to portray was "a play of seduction."⁷¹ She said that Berio stopped her before she took it "in the bedroom," saying "No, give in, this is already too much!"⁷² He did not stop her in time for the executives at RAI, who, according to Berberian, found the piece "too pornographic" to broadcast on the Radio.⁷³ Other listeners agreed with this assessment. The critic John Dwyer judged that Berberian must

⁶⁹ Menezes has created a "listening score" of *Visage* that includes a transcription of Berberian's articulations. See Menezes, 153-67.

⁷⁰ Berio, interview by Varga, *Two Interviews*, 146.

⁷¹ "un jeu de séduction." Berberian, interview by Stoianova, 69.

⁷² "au moment où j'étais au seuil de la chambre, il m'arrêtait: 'Non, basta, c'est déjà trop!'" Ibid., 70.

⁷³ "Mais les gens de la Radio à Milan étaient choqués, ils trouvaient cette musique 'trop pornographique.'" Ibid. According to the records of the Studio di fonologia, RAI did not broadcast *Visage* until November 27, 1971, almost exactly a decade after it was recorded on November 30, 1961. See *Lo Studio di fonologia*.

know Berio “pretty well to make sounds like that into his recording equipment.”⁷⁴ And Eco concluded that Berberian

found some vocal emissions that come more from the uterus than from the mind... *Visage* was exactly an exploration of these “under-sounds” that one can produce with the lower part of the body more than with the throat.⁷⁵

These exceedingly corporeal interpretations contrast greatly with early hearings of the piece that focused primarily on the structure or language.⁷⁶ They also ensured that listeners could not separate Berberian's body from the sounds of her voice.

Visage features Berberian's voice, but much of it sounds less sexual than the above interpretations suggest. The work begins with Berberian's attempts at communication, a process that often sounds painful. She stutters and breathes heavily as she produces isolated phonemes, while the electronic sounds swirl around her, acting primarily as an accompaniment. At about 2:30, she begins to sound more verbal, as if she were speaking an unfamiliar language, but she quickly reverts to a more frantic grasping at sounds. She finally cries out around 3:20, a sound that promptly turns into laughter. The electronic sounds stop briefly, emphasizing Berberian's laugh and her first (and only) intelligible word: “parole.” The electronic sounds re-enter at 3:40, and Berberian goes back to chattering away in the unfamiliar language, twice pausing to repeat “parole.” At 6:22 she begins a flirtatious laugh, hinting at the sensuality described above.

⁷⁴ Dwyer, “Foss Wins Standing Ovation For His Composition ‘Echoi,’ *Buffalo Evening News*, March 6, 1965.” Newspaper clipping in PSS, Berio correspondence with Bussotti.

⁷⁵ “elle a trouvé des émissions vocals qui viennent plus de l’utérus que du cerveau, non? Et *Visage* était exactement une exploration des ces ‘sous-sons’ qu’on peut produire avec la partie inférieure du corps plus qu’avec la gorge.” Eco, interview by Stoïanova, 63-4.

⁷⁶ See Menezes and David Ernst, *The Evolution of Electronic Music* (New York: Schirmer, 1977).

This is drowned out by the electronic sounds that take over (at 6:55) and Berberian's moans turn to cries, as if in reaction to the violent sounds. Her sadness again turns to laughter and then a groan, which has clearly been altered by Berio (from 7:34) and the vocal and electronic sounds begin to overlap and merge until it becomes difficult to distinguish between the two. The electronic sounds briefly stop as Berberian again whispers "parole" (at 10:00) but they continue to play a larger role as the focus of attention alternates between the electronics and Berberian's voice. The piece builds in intensity from 12:40 until Berberian cries out at 13:40, another altered sound that gets repeated and overlapped, forming the section that Berberian referred to as the "Wailing Wall." Her cries start to sound more pitched and increasingly contain vibrato until a somewhat more melodic section begins at 16:00. At that point, Berberian's spoken voice appears over a background of her singing, as if she is telling a dramatic story. The electronic sounds again take over in the final minutes, completely drowning out Berberian's voice.

Berio added a visual component to *Visage* when he engaged the dancer Anna Halprin to choreograph the work. The resulting staged version premiered in Rome in May 1963.⁷⁷ While Halprin danced in the first performances, Berberian quickly took over as the center of attention on stage. The program of the 1963 Darmstadt Summer Courses lists "Cathy Berberian and friends" as the performers for the closing concert of the

⁷⁷ In a private notebook, Berberian noted the "prima realizzazione scenica" on May 2, with repeated performances on May 3 and 4. This is confirmed in a letter she wrote to Stein on March 4, 1963: "Then we all concentrate our forces for the first few days of May for the premiere of *Visage*, danced by Ann Halprin." Private collection of Cristina Berio.

festival on July 26.⁷⁸ A review of Berberian performing *Visage* in 1969 provides a synopsis of the action:

In semi-darkness, six figures take their place in front of the curtain, while a spot slowly brightens on an object in the middle that looks like a large flower but turns out to be Miss Berberian's curly head, gradually raised until you can see her features, then as gradually lowered.⁷⁹

In an interview from the early 1980s Berberian described the choreography in much the same way:

The piece would start and I would enter the stage in complete darkness, sit on a low stool, bent over with my hands covering my face, all dressed in black. In the first few minutes the audience is listening in complete darkness. I have my head down like this, and then at a precise point I start lifting my head in an extremely slow almost imperceptible motion. At the same time this focused beam of light slowly intensifies over my head. It literally takes me almost 14 minutes to raise my head completely to a position where I am facing the audience, with my hands still covering my face. That's about the time the Wailing Wall starts: the light overhead reaches its maximum intensity, I drop my hands, revealing my VISAGE and staring straight into the audience for a minute. Then very slowly I bend over to my original position, while the beam of light dims down, eventually leaving the audience in complete darkness during the last 3 minutes of the piece.⁸⁰

Berberian believed it important to give audiences “visual stimulation” during public performances of electronic music, but not so much that “the eye steal the attention from the ear.”⁸¹ Such simple choreography served to focus attention on the auditory element of the piece while maintaining a strong connection between Berberian's voice and her physical presence.

⁷⁸ Borio and Danuser, 624.

⁷⁹ Ronal Crichton, “Percussions and Stripsody,” *The Financial Times*, June 17, 1969. Clipping in the archives of C.F. Peters, New York.

⁸⁰ Berberia, interview by Ottieri.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

Although Berio privately called the work an “hommage [sic] to Cathy,” he often publicly downplayed Berberian’s contributions.⁸² Much as in his writings about *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)*, he frequently focused on the play of language in the work rather than on the creator of that language; however, he generally did at least acknowledge, “The voice is that of Cathy Berberian.”⁸³ Despite this basic recognition, many writers on *Visage* have minimized or totally ignored Berberian’s role. Robert Morgan’s comprehensive study *Twentieth-Century Music*, for example, describes *Visage* as consisting of *concrète* sounds “produced by voice” but makes no mention of whose voice.⁸⁴ David Ernst also overlooked Berberian in his survey *The Evolution of Electronic Music*, listing only “voice” as one of the “sound sources” used in the piece.⁸⁵ Such perspectives favor the conceptual role of the composer over the bodily role of the performer, even in a case like *Visage*, in which Berberian arguably played as vital a role as Berio.

More recently, scholars have begun to question the implicit hierarchy of composer and performer in the complex case of *Visage*. In one article, Bosma asks, “Why are Berberian and Berio not considered as co-authors of *Visage*?”⁸⁶ Richard Causton goes

⁸² Berio to Stein, February 14, 1962. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁸³ Liner notes for Candide Records (CE 31027, 1970).

⁸⁴ Morgan’s composer-centric history ignores Berberian’s work on other pieces as well. Robert P. Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Music: A History of Musical Style in Modern Europe and America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991), 467.

⁸⁵ Ernst, 92.

⁸⁶ Bosma, “Who Makes Electronic Music? Vocalists, Composers, Gender and Electronic Music Technology.” *Switch 2* no. 1. Available at <http://switch.sjsu.edu/switch/sound/articles/bosma1.html> [Accessed March 20, 2011].

further, describing *Visage* as “the co-creation of Berio and Berberian.”⁸⁷ Vila uses similar wording, calling *Visage* “a creation of Berio and Berberian.”⁸⁸ These assertions of Berberian’s creative importance recognize not only her studio improvisations, which seem to necessitate greater credit for authorship than the delivery of a prepared text, but also the physical effort Berberian put into the work. Some writers have emphasized the length and difficulty of the recording sessions for *Visage*, as if to show just how much Berberian contributed to the work through her sheer physical endurance. Osmond-Smith described “a series of 2-3 hour recording sessions,” with one of the sessions “devoted to exploring ‘all sorts of laughter.’”⁸⁹ Berberian told him that as a result, her diaphragm was “bruised for two days.”⁹⁰ He held Berberian’s suffering up as a model of virtue; by pushing herself to such an extent, Berberian proved herself worthy of recognition. In a separate interview, Berberian told a similar story. She remembered two three-hour recording sessions, describing the second session as “physically painful” because she “had to communicate the agony of attempting to speak a syllable and not being capable...In the end my chest was numb for three days, due to the magnitude of my physical and emotional effort.”⁹¹

⁸⁷ Causton, “Berio’s *Visage* and the Theatre of Electroacoustic Music,” *Tempo* (1995): 17.

⁸⁸ “une création de Berio et de Berberian.” Vila, 128.

⁸⁹ Osmond-Smith, “Tenth Oscillator”: 8.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Berberian, interview by Ottieri.

Berberian held an ambivalent view of her role in the creation of *Visage*. In an interview from the early 1980s, Berberian reinforced the composer-performer hierarchy, placing herself squarely in the (lower) performer level:

It is possible, although not very likely, that Luciano could have done this work with another singer, but I never could have accomplished what he did with the material. Every time I try to explain our collaboration someone says “Well then, you composed it!” I admit I composed the material he utilized, but the finished piece is brilliant because he is a great composer. It’s like giving a new alphabet to someone who then writes silly sentences, while a real writer, a real artist, creates something wonderful, creates poetry. So that is what Luciano did, using me as an instrument, a thinking instrument, a collaborating instrument. I would never be able to do what he did on my own.⁹²

Yet in the midst of this tribute to Berio’s talent, Berberian admitted that she “composed the material he utilized.” Berberian recognized that she had acted as more than just a performer of Berio’s ideas. She had actively created the source material for *Visage*.

While she may have paid lip service to Berio’s superiority, Berberian revealed her true feelings behind the scenes. She pursued financial compensation for her work on *Visage* in 1967, as revealed in letters to Universal Edition.⁹³ On May 4, 1967, Alfred Kalmus told Berio that Berberian had requested 40% of the royalties Berio received on rental fees of the tape of *Visage* because “she has contributed so much to the creation of this work.” Four days later, on May 8, Berberian informed Kalmus that Berio had agreed to share his royalties with her at the amount she had requested. Berio, however, revealed his reluctance to share money with Berberian; on May 10 he began a letter to Kalmus: “Yes, I agree about *Visage*” but quickly qualified his statement by adding “as long as this agreement doesn’t make things more complicated.” Later in the same letter he asked

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ These letters are in the PSS, Depositum Universal Edition.

Kalmus to delay the adjustment in royalty payments, deciding that he would “try to convince her of the futility of this change.”

Notably, Berio never objected to Berberian’s request on the grounds that she did not deserve monetary compensation. The financial situation between Berio and Berberian was complicated at that time: they had been separated for a few years but only recently divorced, and he was still partially supporting her (and their daughter). His correspondence with Universal Edition shows that he sometimes had the publisher send his royalty checks directly to Berberian as a form of alimony. Berberian’s request for royalties from *Visage* therefore seems like a special acknowledgment that her work on the piece was unusual in some way and deserving of compensation.

Berberian did not include *Visage* on her concert programs as often as she did *Thema*, but she kept a close relationship with the work throughout her career. Even when Berio altered *Visage* in 1972 for a performance at the Holland Festival, Berberian retained a connection to the piece. The festival commissioned the Dutch choreographer Rudi van Dantzig (b. 1933) to create a ballet based on *Visage* for the opening night, June 15, in The Hague.⁹⁴ Berio reduced the tape from twenty-one to sixteen minutes and added parts for live voices and instruments, calling the result *Après-Visage*.⁹⁵ According to the program notes accompanying the work’s premiere, the musicians would perform on stage “according to the choreographer’s concept” but their movements are not specified.⁹⁶ Berberian took part in the production but not as a performer; the program simply listed

⁹⁴ Program notes for the 1972 Holland Festival. PSS, Berio collection.

⁹⁵ The manuscript score of *Après-Visage* is in the PSS, Berio collection.

⁹⁶ Program notes for the 1972 Holland Festival. PSS, Berio collection.

“Theater work by Cathy Berberian” (Werktheater en Cathy Berberian). Her precise contributions for this performance are not detailed, although the program does mention her voice. Berio ultimately disliked the results and quickly withdrew *Après-Visage*; it was never performed again.

Votre Faust

Berberian’s next involvement with an electro-acoustic work came with her participation in the creation of Pousseur’s *Votre Faust*. This complicated work, a “fantasy in the manner of an opera,” had a long development lasting from 1960 to 1967, and it did not premiere in full until 1969. The complete work, with a libretto by Michel Butor, involved five actors, four singers, twelve instrumentalists, and a prerecorded tape featuring manipulated vocal and instrumental sounds. Various versions of the work premiered throughout the 1960s, including “Miroir de Votre Faust,” for soprano and piano (1965), “Portail de Votre Faust,” a concert version for actor, singers and musicians (1966), and “Jeu de Miroirs de Votre Faust,” an electro-acoustic version released on record in 1969.⁹⁷

Berberian was involved with the project almost from the beginning. Pousseur sent her the libretto in January 1962 and she frequently referred to it as “Notre Faust” (Our Faust).⁹⁸ She sang in the performance of “Portail de Votre Faust” on December 12, 1966 in Brussels, which she described as:

⁹⁷ Wergo, WER 60 039.

⁹⁸ Berberian to Pousseur, January 15, 1962. PSS, Pousseur collection.

a gay hodge-podge, meticulous pot-pourri, long complicated (unnecessarily) cumbersome mammoth with pink ribbons on its tail. Lots of fun to do, admirable fantasy, so incredibly frothy considering Pousseur's general tendencies.⁹⁹

Though Pousseur indicated in a letter before the performance that it would include “all the musical participants, singers, instrumentalists and tapes + Marcelle [Mercenier] as a solo-piano,” it remains unclear exactly what sounds appeared on the tape, or if it was the same as that released as “Jeu de Miroirs de Votre Faust.” Pousseur described “Jeu” as beginning with a recording of a performance of “Miroir” by Marcelle Mercenier and Basia Retchitzka in May 1966:

I composed on this the following summer a second “layer” on the elements of the tape of the opera, which I added to the recording of “Miroir.” These tape-elements are spoken elements (Henri's “inner monologue,” spoken by Michel Butor), sung elements (several syllables, words and sentences from this monologue, or “memories” from earlier scenes, for a group of 12 imaginary voices, which were also composed from the voices of Basia Retchitzka, Cathy Berberian, Louis Devos and Jules Bastin); and finally shouted elements.¹⁰⁰

So while “Jeu” does not reproduce the sounds of *Votre Faust* in total, it provides an approximation of the electro-acoustic portion of that work. In the recording, the voices blend together and often sing simultaneously. As a result, it is frequently difficult to distinguish one voice from another. Additionally, the sound of the piano often takes center stage, covering the voices or blocking them out entirely, mimicking what probably happened in live performances when the numerous performers on stage assumed the primary roles.

Berberian participated in *Votre Faust* as a performer, comparable to her work on *Ritratto di città*. She was one of several performers who contributed sounds for the tape,

⁹⁹ Berberian to Stein. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

¹⁰⁰ Liner notes for Wergo, WER 60 039.

and though her voice left an indelible mark on the final work, it also formed a fairly minor part of the whole. In addition, her work was generally acknowledged, at least on the record of *Jeu de Votre Faust* and in some concerts. However, Berberian did not participate in the eventual performance of the complete *Votre Faust*, and it remains uncertain whether her name was mentioned there as part of the source material for the work. If, as was commonly the case, her name was left off concert programs that did not also feature her performing in person, this would be objectionable, but perhaps not as egregious as the other cases discussed in this chapter. After all, in *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)*, *Dimensioni II*, and *Visage*, Berberian's voice formed either the majority or the entirety of the source material, whereas she was only one of five or more performers on the tape used in *Votre Faust*. This is an important distinction: the works based solely on Berberian's voice would not sound the same without her participation, but the tapes for *Votre Faust* could have existed largely intact without her.

The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria

Berberian's final experience recording electro-acoustic music came in late February 1967 when she improvised background music for Fernando Arrabal's play *The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria*. The exact story of this music is difficult to determine; no score or recording survives and there are conflicting versions of the work's genesis. The French composer Michel Puig (b. 1930) alleges that he was hired to compose the score and that he engaged Berberian to sing for the recorded tape.¹⁰¹ Berberian, however, described the work as hers. She wrote to Stein shortly after her recording session:

¹⁰¹ Puig, interview by Vila, January 2001. See Vila, 202-3.

While in Paris I improvised 1 1/2 hrs of vocal music for background for a new avant-guard [sic] play, “shock,” by ARRABAL: The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria. I must say that I am rather proud of the stuff that I improvised and everyone connected with the show was terribly enthusiastic.¹⁰²

In that letter Berberian did not claim sole responsibility for the creation of the work; her comment about recording an improvisation leaves room for an unmentioned collaborator to craft her sounds into a finished piece. Yet elsewhere Berberian discussed the project as her own. Program notes from a performance at Dartmouth College in the early 1970s state that she “created the background vocal music” for Arrabal’s play. More boldly, the notes accompanying her performances at the 1972 Holland Festival declare:

Cathy Berberian’s own compositions include the piano piece “Morsicat(h)y,” “Stripsody” and the stage music to Fernando Arrabal’s first performance of “The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria” in Paris.¹⁰³

These descriptions clearly ignore any possible participation by Puig.

Such conflicting accounts of the work’s authorship highlight the major issue surrounding the use and acknowledgment of Berberian’s recorded voice. Despite Berberian’s clear assumption of authorship, Puig eagerly took credit for the work when asked. Perhaps Berberian inflated her own role in the creation of the piece, for at that time she was attempting to gain credit for her work on *Dimensioni II* and *Visage*. However, Berberian never claimed authorship so unambiguously for any other works featuring her recorded voice. The most likely explanation is that Berberian recorded her own improvisation, which Puig then used largely intact as the soundtrack to accompany the play. She could have viewed Puig as an assistant who minimally cut and spliced her

¹⁰² Berberian to Stein, March 1967. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

¹⁰³ PSS, Berio collection.

work to fit the play, while Puig saw his work as more crucial to the work's outcome. In any case, the lack of surviving evidence makes firm conclusions impossible to draw.

The implicit hierarchy of composer/performer common in the post-war avant-garde ensured that Berberian received little or no credit for her efforts, even if her participation proved crucial to the outcome of the work. Recent scholarly attempts to draw attention to Berberian's participation in these works have focused on this issue of authorship, frequently crediting her as a co-author or co-creator. However, the real issue becomes the confused status of the composer/performer dichotomy, especially regarding *Visage*. Even if Berberian might not merit "author" status – after all, Berio did originate the concept and carry out the final editing – her contributions proved essential, and an understanding of her involvement becomes fundamental to an interpretation of the work. When we listen to *Visage*, we do not hear Berberian or Berio individually, but rather the result of their collaboration. The same occurs with *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)* and *Dimensioni II* – we hear Berberian's voice reading texts by Joyce and Helms as modified by Berio and Maderna. In every case, Berberian's voice is an integral part of the piece, and we cannot hear these pieces without hearing (and re-hearing) her voice.

Chapter 2: Cathy's Musical Style

Soon after Berberian made her mark in the electronic music studio with Berio's *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)*, she inspired a new style of vocal music meant for live performance. In 1958 John Cage composed his *Aria* for Berberian, a work that solidified her reputation as an avant-garde singer, launching her from the rather localized reputation she had enjoyed in Milan in the early 1950s as a singer of Berio's works. Beginning with *Aria*, and lasting through the 1970s, Berberian premiered works by over a dozen composers, many of whom worked with her throughout the compositional process. Cage's *Aria* introduced a number of musical features that became common, even customary, in the works written for Berberian in the ensuing years: texts in a mixture of languages; a breakdown of texts into phonemes (a technique already used in Berio's *Thema [Omaggio a Joyce]* but not yet employed in Berberian's live performances); an assortment of vocal styles and timbres; both vocal and non-vocal sound effects; and indeterminacy.

None of these features appeared in the works Berberian had sung up to that point. Her early performances (extending even until her premieres of Donatoni's *Serenata* and Paccagnini's *Brevi Canti* in 1959) featured modernist atonal works with large, dissonant leaps in the vocal line, intact literary texts, and limited vocal effects that extended only to "bocca chiusa" (closed mouth) and some use of Sprechstimme. While some of the techniques used in *Aria* did not originate in that work, they are notable because they became widespread in other works written for Berberian. As we will see, many of the composers who dedicated works to Berberian explored these procedures and collectively contributed to the formation of Berberian's signature style.

The precise number of works written for Berberian is difficult to determine (see Appendix A). Some, such as Roman Haubenstock-Ramati's *Twice for Cathy*, were dedicated to Berberian but never performed. She premiered others, including those by Dontoni and Paccagnini, but they were not dedicated to her, nor did they appeal to her idiosyncratic singing qualities. Still others have perhaps been lost, for letters in Berberian's archives hint that she received further dedicated manuscripts that no longer seem to be extant. For the purposes of this chapter, I will consider all of the works known to have been either dedicated to Berberian and/or premiered by her between 1959, when she premiered Cage's *Aria*, and 1972, when she first performed Berio's *Recital I (for Cathy)*.

The works written for Berberian can be divided into two stages. The first came in the early 1960s as composers explored and exploited the ideas from *Aria* in their own creations. These composers, mostly Italian and around the same age as Berberian, generally had a personal relationship with her – Berio was then her husband, Bussotti was a close friend – and explored these new techniques together with her. A turning point came in 1964, when the well-known composers Stravinsky and Milhaud each dedicated a work to Berberian, showing her growing reputation, although neither composer made use of her newly established specialties. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, composers (including some from the first stage) continued to use the techniques that had by then become associated with Berberian. Though these later works did not introduce much in terms of new techniques, they exemplify the recognition of Berberian's style by a greater variety of composers. They also show an increasing emphasis on theatricality, a characteristic considered in Chapter 3.

This chapter highlights the key aspects of Berberian's style that necessitated the most interaction between her and the composers she worked with, but these were not the only type of collaborations that need to be considered. As a result, when other aspects of the compositional process reveal a greater partnership between composer and performer, I have discussed them as relevant. In addition, while this chapter refers to many of the works premiered by or dedicated to Berberian, it is not comprehensive. Examples have been chosen either because they were important for Berberian's career or because they reveal a certain attitude about her particular strengths as a performer. Therefore, while works like Berio's *Folk Songs* and *Epifanie* receive greater attention, minor works in Berberian's repertoire like Tona Scherchen's *Wai* and Bruno Canino's *Fortis* also come under discussion. The pivotal work in Berberian's career as an avant-garde singer, Cage's *Aria*, recurs throughout the chapter because of its crucial role in the formation of Berberian's signature style.

Cage, *Aria*

John Cage went to Milan to work at the Studio di Fonologia Musicale in late 1958. He met Berio and Maderna at Darmstadt in September of that year. Following tours around Europe with David Tudor, Cage arrived in Milan in November and stayed for about three months. He began work on a piece originally entitled *Performance Mix*, which he renamed *Fontana Mix* after his Milanese landlady. The score consists of a set of papers and transparencies that Cage intended as a system for composing chance music on magnetic tape.¹ Cage realized the original version of *Fontana Mix* using the resources of

¹ For a detailed explanation of *Fontana Mix*, see Pritchett, 128-34.

the Studio di Fonologia and local sounds he recorded, including barking dogs, splashing water, and spoken Italian.² According to Cage, Berio disliked his composition, calling it “all wrong.”³ Cage rejected Berio’s criticism and completed his realization. He also added a companion piece, *Aria* for solo voice, composed for Berberian.

The twenty-page score of *Aria* contains a succession of vocal lines notated in ten different colors, each representing a different style of singing. In the published score, Cage instructed that “any 10 styles may be used and any correspondence between color and style may be established.”⁴ He also noted the choices made by Berberian, ensuring that future performers would continually have to decide whether to follow Berberian’s lead or to deviate from her selections. She chose the following rather idiosyncratic vocal styles that form the raw material for the piece:⁵

Dark blue	Jazz
Red	Contralto (and contralto lyric)
Dotted black	Sprechstimme
Black	Dramatic
Purple	Marlene Dietrich
Yellow	Coloratura (and coloratura lyric)
Green	Folk
Orange	Oriental
Light blue	Baby
Brown	Nasal

² Kenneth Silverman, *Begin Again: A Biography of John Cage* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 163.

³ Cage to Peter Yates, May 27, 1960. Letter in the Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego. As quoted in Silverman, 163.

⁴ Cage, *Aria* (New York: C. F. Peters, 1960).

⁵ Ibid.

Sixteen black squares scattered throughout the pages represent “noises (‘unmusical’ use of the voice, auxiliary percussion, mechanical or electronic devices).”⁶ The performer decides what vocal styles and noises to use; pitch, time, and dynamics are also left indeterminate. The text consists of phonemes, words, and phrases taken from five languages: Armenian, Russian, Italian, French, and English. *Aria* can be sung alone or simultaneously with *Fontana Mix* or Cage’s *Concert for Piano and Orchestra* (1958).

Cage composed *Aria* specifically for Berberian, inspired by the vocal possibilities she offered, and he dedicated the work to her. He described the process in a 1970 interview: “When I was composing *Aria* in 1958, I was around Cathy every day. I was able to write something that suited her.”⁷ Cage had apparently not intended to compose a vocal work at that time, but noticed Berberian’s talent and decided to take advantage of it. As David Revill described in his biography of Cage:

It was Cage who first saw clearly her potential as a vocalist for experimental music. “You have that fantastic voice right here in your own house,” he told Berio, “why don’t you write something for her?” Berio began *Circles*...and Cage wrote with characteristic briskness the *Aria*, dedicated to Berberian.⁸

Osmond-Smith echoed this story, writing that Cage was “amused by Berberian’s domestic vocal clowning” and so he “decided to write something for her.”⁹ Osmond-Smith described this vocal clowning as “a one-woman simulacrum of rapid tape editing

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Cage, *For the Birds* (Boston: M. Boyars, 1981), 178-79.

⁸ Revill, *The Roaring Silence: John Cage: A Life* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1992), 193. Berio did not actually begin working on *Circles* until after he received the commission from the Fromm Foundation in 1959.

⁹ Osmond-Smith, *Berio*, 60.

that leapt from one type of voice to another, but maintained the expressive integrity of each.”¹⁰ Berberian’s familiarity with the experiments that Berio, Cage, and others were conducting at the Studio di Fonologia had led her to imitate those sounds using only her voice. Berberian’s own experimentation then inspired Cage to mimic those same techniques in a work meant for live performance.

Cage capitalized upon Berberian’s unique talent for producing sound effects with her voice. Sixteen black boxes distributed throughout the score indicate “noises” to be made by the singer. Berberian chose mostly vocal sounds: “tsk, tsk; footstomp; bird roll; snap, snap (fingers) clap; bark (dog); pained inhalation; peaceful exhalation; hoot of disdain; tongue click; exclamation of disgust; exclamation of anger; scream (having seen a mouse); ugh (as suggesting an American Indian); ha ha (laughter); expression of sexual pleasure.”¹¹ Berberian had never made these sounds in her previous performances, but many of them – particularly audible breathing and laughter – became frequent elements of later works written for her.

In her description of the genesis of *Aria* in an interview from the early 1980s, Berberian portrayed a fairly large creative role for herself that extended beyond simply providing inspiration:

The idea was born like this: we were spending lots of time together, and I was always making all these different sounds and imitations of various singers. In the end he was very impressed by the range of emissions and colors of my voice. So he decided to compose this work for me – and *together with me* – and asked me to search for something in Russian and Armenian. I also started searching all my books to find French and Italian material. I think I found some Russian words from a book by Pushkin. Then I found an entire text in Russian, and an Armenian

¹⁰ Osmond-Smith, “Tenth Oscillator”: 5.

¹¹ Cage, *Aria*.

lyric. In the end the work included 5 languages, and we had agreed on 10 different emissions [emphasis added].¹²

Osmond-Smith also credited Berberian with finding the texts Cage set in the piece, writing, “Berberian gave him texts in five different languages.”¹³ However, Cage did not cite the texts he used, and his fragmented quotations make the original sources difficult to locate.¹⁴ In at least two cases, though, the authors can be readily identified. Cage took the English text from translations of works by Meister Eckhart, the medieval German Christian mystic. Cage had been reading Eckhart since at least the late 1940s, and he quoted Eckhart’s writing extensively in his 1949 article “Forerunners of Modern Music.”¹⁵ It seems likely that Cage and not Berberian actually provided this text. The French text is from various poems by Stéphane Mallarmé, a French symbolist familiar to both Cage and Berberian. Though Cage had never set Mallarmé’s words before, he had known the poet’s work since at least the early 1950s. Berberian possessed at least a basic knowledge of Mallarmé’s poetry, as she had sung Ravel’s *Trois Poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé* at a concert given by the Incontri Musicali only a few months before Cage arrived in Milan.¹⁶ Thus either one of them could have supplied Mallarmé’s texts.

¹² Berberian, interview by Ottieri.

¹³ Osmond-Smith, *Berio*, 60 and “Tenth Oscillator”: 5.

¹⁴ The Russian and Armenian texts are especially fragmentary and have been transliterated in an idiosyncratic way, making them impossible to trace. Thanks to Alyssa Yorgan for her help with the Russian text.

¹⁵ Published initially in *The Tiger’s Eye*, no. 7 (March 1949): 52-6. Reprinted in Cage, *Silence: Lectures and Writings* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1961).

¹⁶ June 17, 1958 at the Conservatorio S. Pietro a Majella in Naples. Berberian also sang Stravinsky’s *Pribaoutki* in a program that included orchestral works by Webern, Paccagnini, and Bartok.

Berberian almost certainly provided the Armenian text, as she was the only one of the pair who understood the language. She likely provided the Italian and Russian texts as well, for similar reasons. Overall, the actual selection of the texts appears to have been more complicated – and more collaborative – than described in previous accounts: Cage and Berberian both chose the texts found in *Aria*.

According to Pritchett, Cage completed his tape realization of *Fontana Mix* in late 1958 and then immediately composed *Aria* using the same methods, with the *Fontana Mix* score used “to determine the placement and duration” of the lines and squares, as well as “the colors and languages to be used.”¹⁷ The “score” of *Fontana Mix* comprises ten pages of curved lines, ten transparencies dotted with points, a transparency covered with a grid of tiny squares, and a final transparency containing a single straight line. To realize the piece, a composer combines one of the pages of curved lines with one of the transparencies with points, then overlays on them the grid and the straight line. The intersection of the line with the various other elements determines musical characteristics including duration and type of sound. While Cage intended the system as a means for creating tape music, he also began to use it for live works, including *Sounds of Venice* and *Water Walk*, both written in 1959. Berberian claimed a slightly different compositional process for *Aria*, with Cage using “his famous chance system” to determine the succession of events in the piece, though she could have been referring to the complexities of the *Fontana Mix* score.¹⁸

¹⁷ Pritchett, 132.

¹⁸ Berberian, interview by Ottieri.

Despite these assertions, some patterns in the published score of *Aria* suggest that Cage may have made more decisions based on taste than either Pritchett or Berberian acknowledged. Many of the colors retain stylistic characteristics throughout the piece, both in terms of range and contour. The yellow lines, for example, always appear in the high register and generally appear wavy, rather than straight. (They occasionally dip below the halfway mark on the vertical axis, but only when they begin in the high register.) Berberian chose coloratura style to correspond to yellow, a particularly apt choice given that the only ornament marked in the piece, a trill, appears in yellow. Purple always appears in the low register, corresponding to Berberian's choice of the seductive Dietrich. Similar relationships can be seen with orange (medium register, very wavy lines, flat contours) and green (low register, flat lines, flat contours). For these colors Berberian chose, respectively, a melismatic, somewhat nasal (and stereotypical) "oriental" and a flat, syllabic "folk." Cage also made the decision to sometimes allot multiple colors to a single line, reflecting Berberian's ability to switch rapidly between vocal styles; of the 70 vocal lines in the work, 16 of them (23%) are multi-colored. (I have defined a vocal line as an individual line surrounded by blank space.)

Berberian recalled that together, she and Cage "agreed" on the usage of ten different vocal emissions, or styles, in the work. It is therefore possible that Berberian's selections of vocal styles may have influenced Cage. That is, he may have known that she planned to include an evocation of Marlene Dietrich and that these lines needed to remain in the low register to be effective. Nonetheless, such collaboration, and particularly such practical concessions on Cage's part, is impossible to confirm. However, even if Cage did not make conscious (i.e., decidedly not random) choices based on Berberian's selected

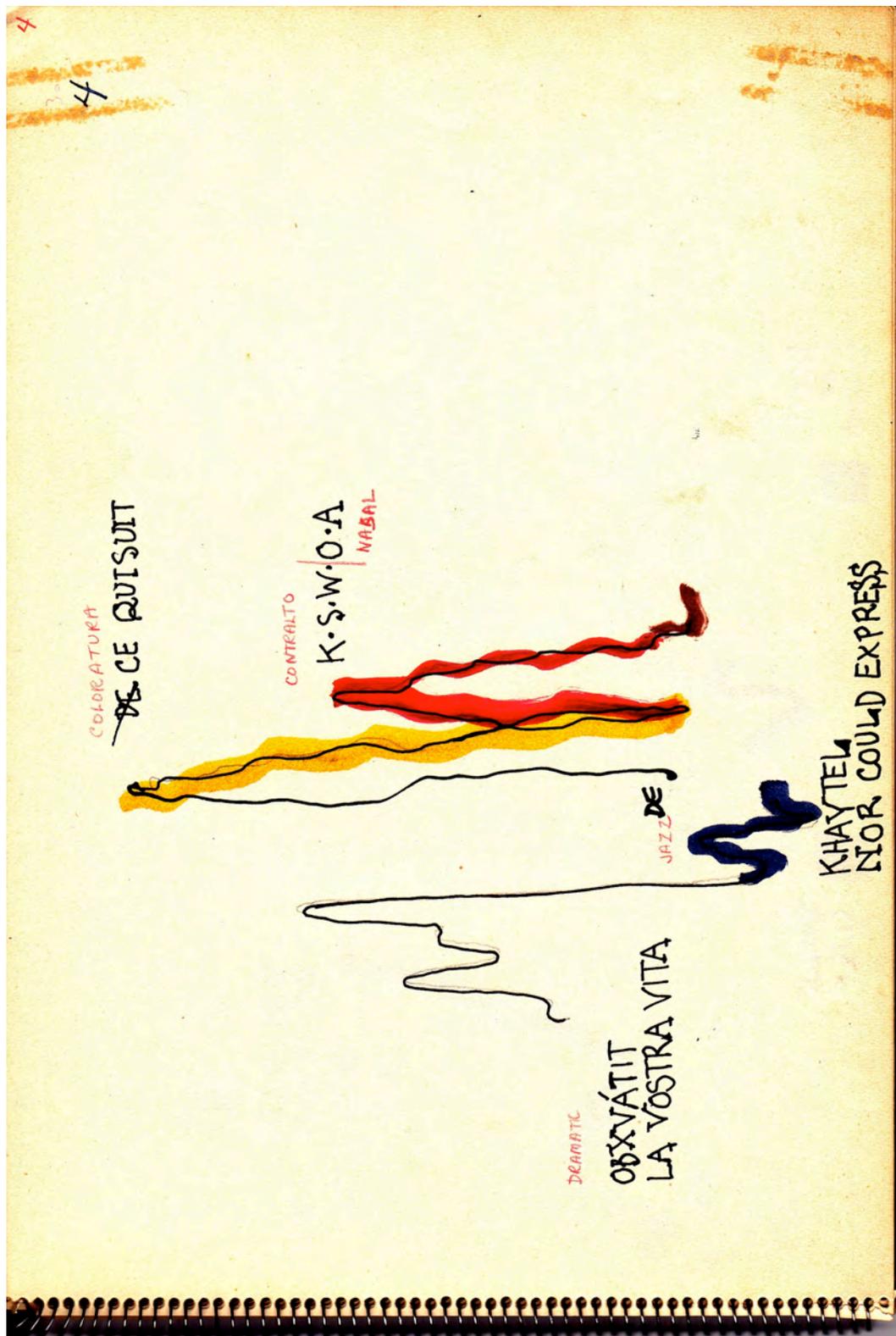
styles, he at least maintained enough similarities in terms of range and contour within the colors to challenge Pritchett's claim of composition based purely on chance procedures.

Berberian kept multiple manuscripts of *Aria* that she used in her performances of the piece. Three scores remain in the private collection of Cristina Berio, which I have numbered in what I believe to be the chronological order of their creation. At least one of them represents an earlier version of the score with the colored lines drawn in marker and crayon (hereafter *Aria* MS 1). The two later scores match the published version in almost every way. Only the placement of the coloration with regard to the black lines makes it seem as if these scores are not published copies. In the published score, each vocal line is drawn in black with the colors added in parallel, whereas in Berberian's copies (hereafter *Aria* MSS 2 and 3), the colored lines are drawn right on top of the black lines. (The subtle differences in coloration between these two scores suggest that they were originally printed in black and white, with the colors added later.) MSS 2 and 3 do, however, include the title page and prefatory instructions found in the published score, making the origin of these scores somewhat mysterious. Minor differences in Berberian's handwritten markings in MSS 2 and 3 suggest the slightly later date of MS 3. All three scores represent finished versions of the work that Berberian used for performances. She heavily annotated the scores, reminding herself which vocal styles corresponded to which colors, which noises she had chosen for each black square, and the timing of each page.

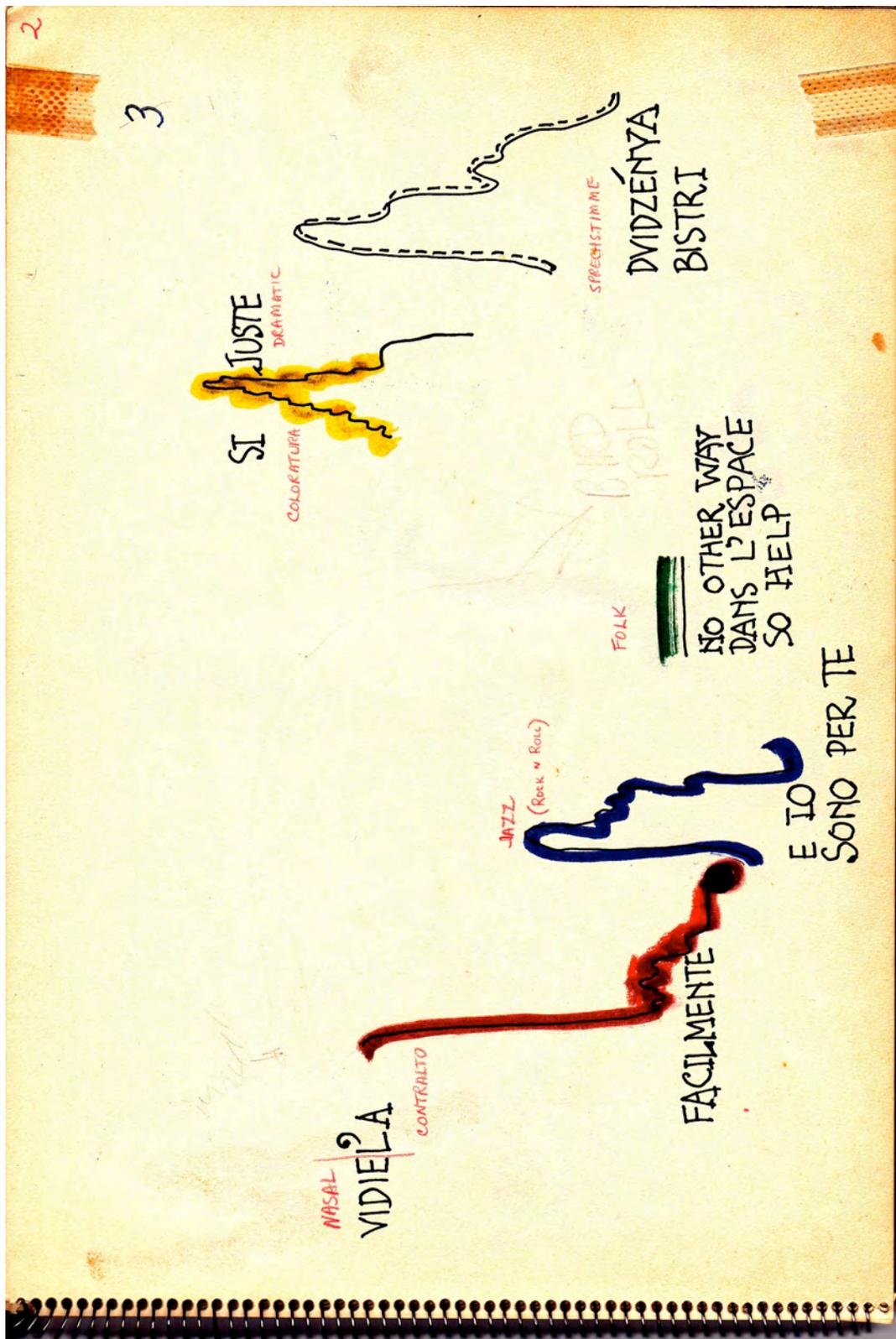
MS 1 may be Cage's original manuscript of *Aria*. Written in a red spiral sketchbook with the Italian title "Schizzi e Disegni" (Sketches and Designs), the score reveals the vocal lines drawn in pencil and covered by pen, marker, and crayon. The first page shows the title and dedication that would remain in the published score as well as

the place and date of composition (Milano 1958) and the simple signature “J.C.” Visible pencil markings suggest that this may have been the first time Cage wrote out the score. MS 1 shows few differences in text and music from the published score of *Aria*. It shows only one alteration of text placement, in the second vocal line on p. 8 (see example 2.1). An undetermined hand crossed out the original “De” in “De ce qui suit” and moved it to the beginning of the vocal line. This shift remained in later versions. A slight change also occurred in the phonemes assigned to the same line. In MS 1, the five letters appear as an undifferentiated chain, and Berberian added a vertical line to tell herself when to switch from contralto to nasal style (corresponding to the change from red to brown coloring). It is possible that Cage determined where the switch should occur, but the writing appears to be Berberian’s. In the published score, Cage added a semicolon between the W and the O to reflect this phrasing. Similarly, only one discrepancy appears in the coloration. The first line on p. 4 should show a color change from brown to red but appears as a solid red line in MS 1 (see example 2.2). Berberian signaled her awareness of this inconsistency by marking a switch from nasal to contralto in the middle of the word “Vidiel’a,” suggesting a simple mistake in the initial coloring rather than a change in technique.

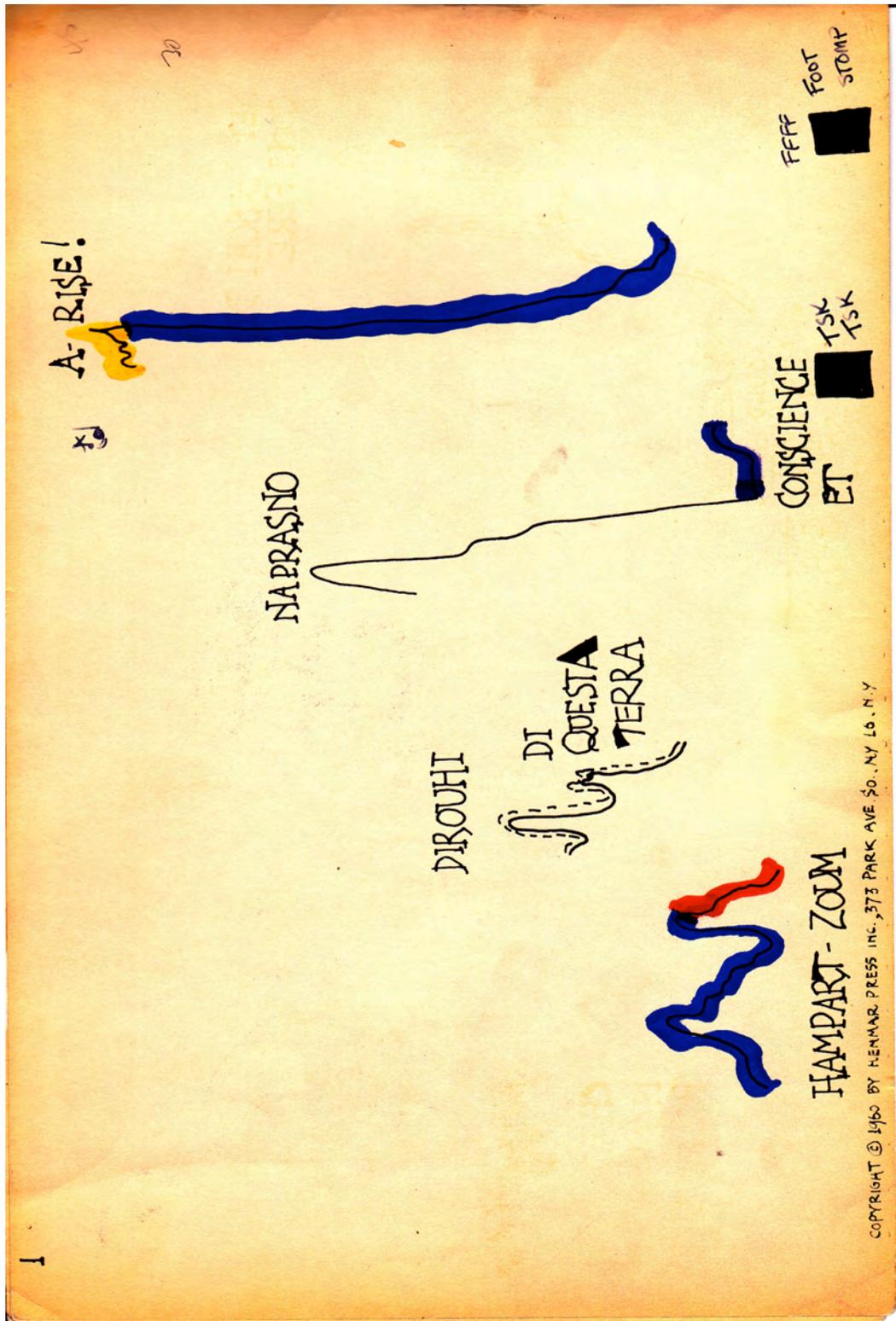
In addition to these minor variations, an examination of Berberian’s three copies of *Aria* shows how her own performance of the piece developed over time. Berberian immediately made changes in the noises she decided would correspond to the black squares; on the first page of MS 1, it appears that she changed “footstomp,” written in pencil, to “FFFF,” written in both red and black pen. Both markings appear in MS 2, suggesting that she had not yet made up her mind, despite the fact that Cage’s published



Example 2.1: Cage, *Aria* MS 1, p. 8



Example 2.2: Cage, *Aria MS 1*, p. 4



Example 2.3: Cage, *Aria* MS 2, p. 1



10

J'ÉCOUTE... À LA VIE..

Coloratura

Handwritten notes

LEGGERMENTE
S NEDZNOI

GLOIRE

Red and black flourish

TO HAVE
THE
FRUITS

Example 2.4: Cage, *Aria* MS 3, p. 10

notes indicate footstomp as the noise Berberian produced at that point (see example 2.3). By MS 3, Berberian had definitely settled on footstomp. (The only recording of Berberian singing *Aria* is accompanied by *Fontana Mix*, which drowns out the noise she actually made at that point in the piece.) However, she obviously did not want to give up on making the “FFFF” sound, as it appears on p. 5 in MS 2, where Berberian crossed out the “snap snap (fingers) clap” she had originally written, and which appeared in Cage’s notes. “Snap snap clap” reappear at their original place in MS 3. Berberian’s aversion to snapping and clapping at that point can perhaps be explained by the fact that they reappear on p. 17 in every version, though Cage did not mention this second appearance in his notes. (Cage mentioned only fifteen noises made by Berberian, although sixteen squares appear in the work.)

Berberian also modified her vocal styles as she continued to perform *Aria*. MS 3 changes the light blue coloration originally marked as “baby” to “Marilyn Monroe” (see example 2.4). This feature provides the strongest indication that MS 3 came latest in Berberian’s collection of *Aria* scores; in Berberian’s only commercially released recording of the piece, from 1961, it sounds as if she is imitating a baby and not Monroe.¹⁹ Yet a review of Berberian’s “Vocalistoria” recital from the late 1970s mentions that in her performance of the *Aria*, Berberian imitated both Dietrich and Monroe, suggesting that Berberian switched her vocal style sometime after 1961, perhaps following Monroe’s death in 1962.²⁰

¹⁹ Berio, *Circles*; Bussotti, *Frammento*; Cage, *Aria with Fontana Mix* (Time Records, 1961).

²⁰ “The ‘Vocalistoria’ by Cathy Berberian,” *Giornale*. Clipping in the C.F. Peters archive, New York.

Cage's *Aria* differed significantly from Berberian's previous repertoire, but it showed some continuity with Cage's earlier vocal works. Cage had already set texts in multiple languages in his *Solo for Voice I* (1958), which includes fragments from English, German, and French sources.²¹ That work as well as others also exhibited high levels of indeterminacy with regard to pitch, dynamics, and time. In addition, Cage had indicated that a "virtuoso performance" of the *Solo* would involve "a wide variety of styles of singing and vocal production."²² The only techniques found in *Aria* that Cage had not explored in the *Solo* were the use of nonmusical noises and the particularly colorful notation. But Cage had long explored the use of noise in his music and frequently invented new forms of notation, making neither of these practices truly innovative for him at the time.

For Berberian, however, Cage's *Aria* proved revolutionary. She premiered the piece along with *Fontana Mix* on January 5, 1959 in Rome, and while it did not immediately garner much attention, Berberian began to perform it regularly, including at Darmstadt on September 4 of that year. According to Berberian, her Darmstadt performance "had an incredible impact."²³ She believed that it was only upon hearing *Aria* that other composers understood what she was capable of doing with her voice:

I actually consider this a milestone in the history of vocal music. You see, all those creative ways of using my voice would have never come to life without John's piece. Because I was like an instrument locked in a box. No one knew what was inside it until John opened it and started playing with some of the

²¹ Cage, *Solo for Voice I* (Henmar Press, 1960). Mauricio Kagel had also set multilingual texts in his *Anagrama* (1957-58), which used French, German, Italian, and Spanish.

²² Cage, *Solo for Voice I*.

²³ Berberian, interview by Ottieri.

strings...but there were also many buttons and levers that no one had touched still, waiting to be discovered.²⁴

In this quotation Berberian depicts her voice as a passive object, an instrument, which could only be operated by someone else. Her own talent almost disappears as she praises Cage, much in the way that she lauded Berio for his electro-acoustic works featuring her voice. In fact, Berberian compared *Aria* favorably with *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)*. Although *Thema* explored Berberian's voice in new ways, she believed that the work used only her skill for "reading" whereas *Aria* showed off her "vocal possibilities."²⁵

In one interview, Berberian noted that Berio did not agree with her assessment of *Aria*'s significance and influence, but refuted him nonetheless:

And, in my opinion, it was after I had done *Aria* by Cage that he [Berio] discovered another side of my voice and new possibilities of utilizing it. He evidently knew first that I could do some different things, imitate some voices, some sounds, etc., but he had never exploited these possibilities in a musical context.²⁶

He may not have admitted it, but Berio did change the style of music he wrote for Berberian after 1959, although it took some time before he incorporated her newly discovered talents into his compositions. *Circles*, his next major work for Berberian,²⁷

²⁴ Emphasis in original. Ibid.

²⁵ Letter from Berberian to Luigi Rognoni giving her autobiography up to that point (1965). Private collection of Cristina Berio.

²⁶ "Et, à mon avis, c'est après que j'ai fait *Aria* de Cage qu'il a découvert un autre côté de ma voix et de nouvelles possibilités de l'utiliser. Il savait évidemment avant que je pouvais faire des choses différentes, imiter des voix, des bruits, etc., mais il n'avait jamais exploité dans un contexte musical ces possibilités." Interview by Stoianova, 66-7.

²⁷ On September 21, 1959, Berberian took part in the premiere of Berio's theatrical *Allez Hop*, and, while it included two songs for her, these formed a minor part of the work as a whole.

explored some aspects of her extended vocal technique but focused on theater, the only one of Berberian's specialties not exploited by Cage. Not until October 1961 did Berio delve into Berberian's new style, when he integrated multilingual texts into his *Epifanie*.

Instead, Sylvano Bussotti became the first composer to follow Cage's lead by writing a set of works that explored some of the same techniques found in *Aria*, namely: texts taken from a wide variety of languages, extended vocal techniques, and indeterminacy. These characteristics, along with multiple vocal styles and use of non-vocal sounds, became hallmarks of many of the later compositions written for Berberian. The following sections will explore in turn each of these characteristic aspects of Berberian's style.

Texts in multiple or unusual languages

In the post-war years, many composers had turned their attention to experimental literature to find suitable texts for their vocal music. Cage had already set poetry by e.e. cummings (*5 Songs*, 1938; *Forever and Sunsmell*, 1942) and James Joyce (*The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs*, 1942), but it was not until after 1945 that European composers (especially Italians) turned to similar authors. Luigi Dallapiccola set Joyce (*Tre poemi*, 1949) and Spanish poet Antonio Machado (*Quattro liriche*, 1948), Berio also set Joyce (*Chamber Music*, 1953), and Luigi Nono set surrealist poetry by Paul Eluard (*La victoire de Guernica*, 1954). However, it was the influence of electronic music techniques that led composers to treat texts as source material that could be taken apart and rearranged. Until the late 1950s, even when composers set relatively avant-garde poetry, they tended to keep the original text intact. But following the fragmentation

of texts in Stockhausen's *Gesang der Jünglinge* and Berio's *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)*, composers began to apply similar techniques in works meant for live performance, breaking down texts into phonemes that could be separated and moved around. Even though this practice occurred frequently in works written for Berberian, especially in Pousseur's *Phonèmes pour Cathy* and Berio's *Sequenza III*, she never expressed a strong opinion about this manner of text setting. Because Berberian exerted little, if any, influence over this aspect of her repertoire, and because this practice became so widespread (used by composers including Pierre Boulez, Milton Babbitt, György Ligeti, and Dieter Schnebel as well as Cage, Berio, and Bussotti), the following section focuses on the combination of languages that composers used in their works for Berberian.

After the initial mixture of languages used by Cage in *Aria*, Bussotti followed with his *Voix de femme*, which incorporates phrases from at least seven different languages: German, French, Italian, Armenian, English, Hebrew, and Hungarian, plus some nonsense words.²⁸ The number of languages used in the piece has been the subject of some debate; Osmond-Smith claimed fourteen different languages²⁹ and Vila declared a whopping forty-five.³⁰ Osmond-Smith likely took his number directly from Bussotti, who described the texts as ranging from “classical Greek poets to Genet and Braibanti, comprising fragments in 14 different languages, names of people and things and other

²⁸ Bussotti, *Voix de femme*, in *Pièces de chair II* (Milan: Ricordi, 1970).

²⁹ Osmond-Smith, “Bussotti, Sylvano” in *New Grove Online*, ed. Laura Macy (accessed December 19, 2010).

³⁰ Vila, 85.

verbal elements.”³¹ Bussotti’s description referred to the combination of the *Voix de femme* with the *Voix d’homme*, another section of the larger work *Pièces de chair II* (1958-60). The fragmentary nature of much of the text makes identifying all the possible languages very difficult, and I have only recognized the seven mentioned above.

Bussotti composed *Voix de femme* specifically for Berberian, and even included a particular reference:

Cathy had baptized me ‘Cherubino,’ and so she called me nearly always; it was in that manner that I thought about concluding the piece with a kind of sung signature, which at the same time would be a homage of thankfulness to both my benefactors [he dedicated the piece to both Berio and Berberian] – and I don’t want to deny the eighteenth-century grace of it all – making Cathy sing, as a last word, the name ‘Cherubino’ underlined by a malicious crescendo of punctuation by the tongue.³²

Bussotti incorporated other allusions to Berberian and Berio. He integrated a twelve-tone series composed by Berio (labeled “melodia di Luciano Berio”):

Luciano Berio composed in his study on the big piano, I traced my staves on the luncheon table; at one point Berio came down and, sitting on the opposite side of the table, looked at me almost as though he was about to paint a portrait, he began to write a brief melodic line, complete with all twelve sounds, and he gave it to me; I inserted the quotation immediately into my score, entrusting it to the clarinet, like a kind of playful sound treatment.³³

Bussotti also included the Armenian language at Berberian’s request. He told Vila, “Cathy wanted me to write in Armenian, and I did it on the condition that she teach me

³¹ “I testi letterari citati dalle voci vanno dai poeti classici greci a Genet e Braibanti, comprendendo frammenti in 14 lingue differenti, nomi di persone e cose ed altri elementi verbali.” Bussotti, program notes for *Deux pièces de chair*, September 10, 1965, Teatro la Fenice, Venice Biennale. PSS, Berio collection.

³² Bussotti, “Autoritratto (1958-1967),” in F. Degrada (ed.), *Sylvano Bussotti e il suo teatro* (Milan: Ricordi, 1976), 16. As translated in Osmond-Smith and Attinello, “Gay Darmstadt”: 113.

³³ Ibid.

the pronunciation of each syllable – I do not speak even a word!”³⁴ A letter from Bussotti to Berberian suggests that she did more than suggest the text he used, but even may have written it herself. On April 4, 1959 he asked her to send him “all the linguistic material (Armenian, Chinese etc.)...that you can find or ‘invent,’” which he said would be “very useful” in his preparation of the piece.³⁵ Berberian therefore played a significant role in the choice of texts Bussotti set in *Voix de femme*, not only expressing a desire for a particular language but also possibly authoring of some of the texts.

Berberian’s role diminished somewhat as she collaborated with Berio on *Epifanie* (1961), but her preference for multilingual texts made its way into the work.³⁶ Berio composed *Epifanie* as an extension of his orchestral work *Quaderni*, which had appeared in two earlier versions. Unlike Cage and Bussotti, who mixed fragments of texts from different languages, Berio kept his texts whole and distinct. Each of the five vocal movements (which alternate with seven orchestral movements) sets a complete text from one of five authors, each in their original language: Marcel Proust (French), Bertolt Brecht (German), Antonio Machado (Spanish), James Joyce (English), and Claude Simon (French). In addition, a verse by Eduardo Sanguineti (Italian) begins one of the orchestral movements, but is only to be read in certain circumstances. Berio left the structure of *Epifanie* open: he allowed for ten possible variations in the performance order of the movements, which he labeled with capital (orchestral) and lowercase (vocal) letters:

³⁴ “Cathy m’a poussé à écrire en arménien, et je le faisais à la condition qu’elle m’apprenne la prononciation de chaque syllable – je ne parle meme pas de mot!” As quoted in Vila, 85.

³⁵ Private collection of Cristina Berio.

³⁶ Berio, *Epifanie*, Universal Edition (U.E. 13217), 1969.

1. A a B c F E d G D e b C
2. A a B b C c D d E e G F
3. A a B c b D d e E F G C
4. c A a B d F b C e E G D
5. G A a B d F b C e E G D
6. G A a B e E c F d D b C
7. a B c A b F e G E D d C
8. G E c F A a B b e D d C
9. D b e G a B F c A E d C
10. G A c F a B D C d e b E

If performers chose any of the six possibilities that did not begin with G, the orchestral movement that includes the Sanguineti text, the singer is supposed to read the text; if the performance begins with G, she omits it.

Berberian played an integral role in the creation of *Epifanie* from its conception to its premiere and even its eventual publication. Heinrich Strobel, the director of the Donaueschingen Festival, commissioned the work, although that was not his original intention. He wrote to Berio in November 1960 to tell him that Boulez would premiere the second volume of *Structures* at Donaueschingen the next year and that he would like to feature *Circles* on the same program “because everybody speaks of the sensational effect of Cathy.”³⁷ Strobel soon clarified his statement, asserting that he only wanted to present *Circles* if it would be the first performance of the piece in Germany.³⁸ Berio apparently could not guarantee this condition, so Strobel changed the commission to *Quaderni II*, the second collection of a series of short orchestral pieces (*Quaderni I* premiered in 1960). In mid-December Strobel visited Milan and modified the commission. As Berberian wrote to Stein:

³⁷ “puisque tout le monde parle de l’effet sensationnel de Kathi.” Strobel to Berio, November 18, 1960. PSS, Berio collection.

³⁸ Strobel to Berio, November 28, 1960. PSS, Berio collection.

When he came to Milan 10 days ago, he asked Luciano to change the Donaueschingen commission for 1961, which was for *Quaderni II* for orchestra, and to make it for my voice, and orch. Of course, I was terribly thrilled by this, but Luciano is rather perplexed and may not do it that way because he had other musical intentions for the piece. But anyway, I'm pleased that Strobel has such faith in me as a performer.³⁹

Such an arrangement is consistent with Strobel's original desire to feature Berberian at Donaueschingen. Berberian initially expressed enthusiasm for this plan, but she quickly changed her mind. In a January letter to Stein, she complained about all the new pieces she had to learn in the upcoming year and expressed her fear about succeeding with all of them: "My only hope is that Luciano will decide not to use me in his 'Quaderni II' as Strobel had asked."⁴⁰ Ultimately, Berio presented the orchestral *Quaderni II* (*Epifanie* movements D, E, and F) independently; he then combined it with *Quaderni I* (movements A, B, and C) and added five movements for voice and orchestra and another movement for orchestra alone to create *Epifanie*. The integral nature of Berberian's involvement can be seen in Berio's description of the work to Henri Pousseur: "Quaderni I+II+Cathy."⁴¹

Berio chose the texts for *Epifanie* with the help of Eco and, eventually, Berberian. In June 1961 he told Pousseur that Eco was preparing a montage of texts from Proust, Brecht, Joyce, Montale, Sanguineti, and Rilke.⁴² This selection changed before the premiere, as Berio never set Rilke but added texts by Machado and Simon. The

³⁹ Emphasis in original. Berberian to Stein, December 26, 1960. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁴⁰ Berberian to Stein, January 24, [1961]. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁴¹ Berio to Pousseur, June 12, 1961. PSS, Pousseur collection.

⁴² Ibid.

original version of the work did include a text by Montale, spoken at the start of orchestral piece G; Berio switched this to Sanguineti in 1966. He credited Berberian with that decision: “Cathy has asked me to change this text and I am in agreement (in any case it consists of an ad libitum text); in place of Montale it will be Sanguineti.”⁴³ Berberian thus exerted important control over the texts found in *Epifanie*; not only did she decide to change the Montale text, but Berio’s mixture of texts likely came as a response to the multilingual works that Cage and Bussotti had recently written for her.

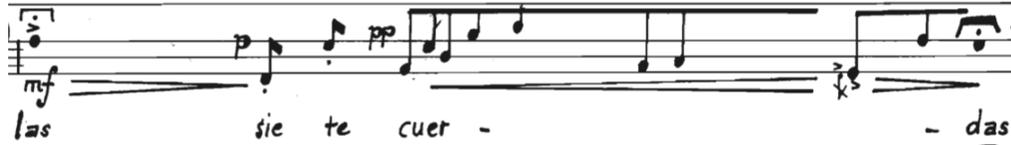
Epifanie suited Berberian in important musical ways as well. The work featured all of the extended vocal techniques than Berio had used up to that point. He had already used *bocca chiusa*, *Sprechstimme*, and sliding between pitches as early as *Chamber Music*, and *Circles* introduced his use of approximate pitches, spoken words, and singing “on the breath.” *Epifanie* exploited all of these. Notably, each of the vocal movements has a distinct character. “a,” for example, features a low range with frequent use of *Sprechstimme* (see example 2.5), whereas “c,” dedicated “à Cathy,” uses a larger range with approximate notation of pitches and detailed dynamic markings (see example 2.6).

The combination of these vocal effects with the multiplicity of languages made *Epifanie* an excellent showcase for Berberian’s talents. In 1964 Berio said that Berberian



Example 2.5: Berio, *Epifanie*, movement “a,” vocal line, p. 7

⁴³ Berio to Universal Edition, December 6, 1966. PSS, Depositum UE.



Example 2.6: Berio, *Epifanie*, movement “c,” vocal line, p. 2

was “the only one who can sing this piece well.”⁴⁴ Berberian felt a great deal of ownership for the piece as well; in 1969 she told an employee at Universal Edition “*Epifanie* cannot be performed without me (Luciano agrees on this, of course).”⁴⁵ Five years earlier she had called the piece “partly mine.”⁴⁶

Universal Edition published *Epifanie* in 1969, with the Sanguineti text proposed by Berberian. As she did with many of Berio’s works, Berberian helped with the publication. In a letter to Elena Hift from November 1969, Berberian explained that she had attached her modified version of movement “d,” which would make performance easier for singers.⁴⁷ She also indicated choices and corrections that she had made, and which she felt should appear in the score. Berberian repeatedly mentioned that in her construction, “the first double page finishes with ‘ivory’” and that the entire score should consist of two double pages. The publisher evidently did not follow her directions, as the published score runs to nine pages, and the word “ivory” appears midway through page 5. Nevertheless, Berberian’s instructions show the degree to which she involved herself with the publication of pieces she deemed important.

⁴⁴ Berio to Universal Edition, August 15, 1964. PSS, Depositum UE.

⁴⁵ Berberian to Universal Edition, June 9, 1969. PSS, Depositum UE.

⁴⁶ Berberian to Haubenstock-Ramati. PSS, Haubenstock-Ramati collection.

⁴⁷ Berberian to Hift, November 3, 1969. PSS, Depositum UE.

Following the premiere, and ensuing success, of *Epifanie*, Berio continued to combine languages in his compositions. His next vocal work, *Passaggio* (1962), albeit not written for Berberian, has a multilingual text by Sanguineti that juxtaposes Italian, German, English, and French, sometimes simultaneously in different voices.⁴⁸ Berio's theatrical *Esposizione* soon followed, also with a text by Sanguineti. Written for mezzo-soprano, two childrens' voices, fourteen instruments, and tape, it premiered at the Venice Biennale in 1963 with choreography by Halprin but was never performed again. Instead, Berio re-worked elements from the piece into *Laborintus II* for speaker, 3 female voices, 8 actors, 17 instruments, and tape. Seemingly intended for Berberian as speaker, the work features text in Italian, Latin, English and French.⁴⁹ Berberian refused to participate in the premiere in 1965 due to her ongoing personal problems with Berio, but she did perform the piece frequently beginning in the late 1960s, always as speaker. Like *Esposizione*, Berio's *Prière* (1968) appeared only once. It consisted entirely of the text, written by Berio and Italo Calvino in English, French, and Italian, which Berberian "simply read as a small sermon."⁵⁰ Berio's other works for Berberian involving multiple languages, namely *Folk Songs* and *Recital I for Cathy*, are more notable for their juxtapositions of different vocal styles rather than different languages, and so are discussed below.

⁴⁸ Berberian performed *Passaggio* at least once, at the Holland Festival on July 3, 1969. Program in PSS, Berio collection.

⁴⁹ Berberian wrote to Stein in January 1965 complaining that Berio expected her to premiere "the final version of *Esposizione* [*Laborintus*] in Paris in May." January 2, 1965. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁵⁰ "Cathy l'a simplement lu comme une petite predication." Berio to Pousseur, November 4, 1968, PSS, HP collection.

In 1968, Tona Scherchen (sometimes written as Scherchen-Hsiao, b. 1938) widened Berberian's language experience with her *Wai*. The daughter of German conductor Hermann Scherchen and Chinese composer Hsiao Shu-sien (often spelled Xiao Shuxian), Scherchen grew up in Switzerland and China and studied with Hans Werner Henze, Messiaen, and Ligeti. Her *Wai*, for mezzo-soprano and string quartet, asks the performers to play percussion in addition to their conventional parts and includes theatrical elements of movement and lighting as well.⁵¹ This difficult piece incorporates numerous vocal effects and also introduced Berberian to a new language: Chinese. Scherchen notated most of the text phonetically but also used occasional words written in Chinese symbols with a guide to the pronunciation added below. Scherchen provided extra details to help the singer pronounce the words properly by indicating approximate duration and one of four possible intonations. Berberian prided herself on her ability to sing in Chinese, an atypical language in vocal works by European composers. In a publicity brochure from around 1970, Berberian boasted of her ability to sing "in twenty languages including an aria in Chinese."⁵² Though *Wai* did not win a place in her regular performance repertoire, Berberian clearly valued the way in which it expanded her linguistic palette.

The mixture of languages had become a well-known characteristic of Berberian's style by 1971, when English composer Bernard Rands added his *Metalepsis II* to the list of works written for her.⁵³ The work, scored for mezzo-soprano soloist, SSAATB chorus,

⁵¹ Scherchen, *Wai*, Universal Edition (U.E. 14799), 1976.

⁵² Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁵³ Rands, *Metalepsis II*, Universal Edition, (U.E. 15309), 1974.

and chamber ensemble, is largely reminiscent of others written for Berberian in its use of both text and music. Rands set contrasting texts in English, French, Italian, German, and Latin, taken from English poet John Wain's "Hymn to Steel" from his poem *Wildtrack*, quotations from Mao Tse-tung, and excerpts from the Requiem Mass. Like Berio's *Passaggio*, *Metalepsis II* juxtaposes the quotations so that multiple languages are sometimes heard simultaneously. The work did not introduce any new techniques to Berberian; all of the languages were familiar to her from earlier pieces and they were used in recognizable ways. Rands' use of all these languages does, however, show the extent to which multilingual texts had become a standard aspect of Berberian's style by the 1970s.

One of the final pieces Berberian premiered came in September 1971, when she traveled to Shiraz, Iran, to perform in Bruno Maderna's monumental *Ausstrahlung*.⁵⁴ Scored for female voice, flute and oboe soloists, large orchestra, and prerecorded tape, *Ausstrahlung* consists of seven movements, or *Ausstrahlungen* (irradiations), that can be performed in any order. As discussed in Chapter 1, Berberian did not lend her voice for the recording of the tape that accompanied the live performance of the work, which instead features Maderna's children.

The organizers of the Festival of the Arts in Shiraz, which commissioned *Ausstrahlung*, wanted it to include texts that reflected Persian history and culture. In a letter from May 1970, a man identified only as R. Ghotbi, the director of the Festival, told S.S.A. Samama, Maderna's assistant, that his staff would soon send a recorded tape of

⁵⁴ Maderna, *Ausstrahlung* (Ricordi, 1988).

Zoroastrian texts.⁵⁵ A letter signed only from “the committee of the festival” was sent in July along with the promised tape.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, Maderna had pursued an alternative means for locating appropriate texts. In June he received a letter from Joachim Deppert, who expressed interest in finding Sanskrit, Tamil, and Persian texts for Maderna’s piece.⁵⁷ According to Deppert, Berberian had approached him in Saarbrücken (Berberian gave a recital there on May 30, 1970) and asked him if he would look for relevant texts during his upcoming trip to India. Although it remains uncertain whether Maderna used the examples sent by Deppert, he did set “Eastern” texts from sources including the Bhagavad Gita translated into French, English, Italian, and German.⁵⁸ Berberian likely would have been able to sing in the original languages (if provided with IPA notation), yet Maderna evidently wanted the texts to appear in European languages. His combination of Hindu sacred texts with Zoroastrian ones suggests that for him all “exotic” texts were interchangeable, and that including texts connected only to Iran sat low on his list of priorities.

Berberian did not always exert influence over the texts used in the works written for her. Yet she clearly had an affinity for languages, and composers took advantage of that ability. Letters from American composer Earle Brown to Berio and Berberian

⁵⁵ Ghotbi to Samama, May 30, 1970. PSS, Maderna collection.

⁵⁶ Farrokh Gaffary to Samama, July 11, 1970. PSS, Maderna collection.

⁵⁷ Deppert to Maderna, June 1, 1970. PSS, Maderna collection.

⁵⁸ The work also includes texts from other Indian sources (Dandin’s *Kavyadarsa* and the *Atharvaveda*), verses from Persian poets including Rudaki, Khayyam, and Sadi, and a passage from the *Avesta*, the sacred texts of Zoroastrianism. These sources have been identified by Vivienne Suvini-Hand, *Sweet Thunder: Music and Libretti in 1960s Italy* (London: Legenda, 2006), 153-171.

illustrate the way composers worked with Berberian in choosing texts for their pieces. Though he never completed it, Brown began planning a work for Berberian in early 1961, apparently following Berio's suggestion that he write such a piece. He told Berio that he "would be interested in her ideas for text," plus he had some of his own ideas as well.⁵⁹ In an undated follow-up letter to Berberian, Brown called her "a virtuosa" and said he was filling the piece with "demented 15ths" and "half-augmented octaves" to take advantage of her range and flexibility.⁶⁰ He also mentioned that "the Cathy-song is in Tibetan, Japanese, + nonsense, with a good chance of chinese + Old English (I'll see if I can get still more in, if that's not enough)." Brown clearly felt obliged (if not challenged) to include texts from multiple, uncommon languages, and his letter suggests that Berberian may have actually requested such an arrangement. At the very least, multilingual texts became a common feature of the works written for her, with nine of the twenty-six compositions she premiered after Cage's *Aria* including multiple languages and one more featuring Chinese. Many of the rest used a monolingual text broken into phonemes, so that very few of the works Berberian premiered showcased a single, intact text. This fragmented approach carried over into other elements of the works Berberian sang, including a frequent juxtaposition of diverse vocal styles.

Mixture of Vocal Styles

In addition to introducing the concept of multiple languages in a single work, Cage's *Aria* also incorporated multiple contrasting vocal styles. While influential, Cage's approach

⁵⁹ March 22, 1961. PSS, Berio collection.

⁶⁰ PSS, Berio collection.

had little immediate effect. Although many subsequent compositions written for Berberian called for specific, often rapidly shifting emotions or moods, this method did not radically change the sound of Berberian's voice from one moment to another. Thus, within the first thirty seconds or so of Scherchen's *Wai*, the affect of Berberian's delivery may have changed from mysterious to nervous to sweet, but the basic style of her singing remained the same. Only two pieces after Cage's *Aria* involved a multiplicity of vocal styles, both by Berio: *Folk Songs* and *Recital I (for Cathy)*. Both compositions underscore Berberian's strengths as a performer, showcasing not only her facility with languages, but also her remarkable ability to sing in numerous folk, pop, and classical styles.

Mills College commissioned *Folk Songs* from Berio in late 1963, while he taught as a replacement for Darius Milhaud, and the work premiered there on December 10. However, the collection has generally been dated as 1964 and Osmond-Smith listed the erroneous year as the premiere date in his catalog of Berio's works.⁶¹ Berio originally perpetuated the incorrect date beginning around 1970. In May 1966, he informed Universal Edition that the work had premiered on December 10, 1963, a fact confirmed by reviews.⁶² Concert programs from the 1960s of performance of the work (at Juilliard on May 6, 1968 and in Montreal on November 21, 1968) list the correct composition

⁶¹ Osmond-Smith, *Berio*; see also Nicola Scaldaferrì, "Folk Songs de Luciano Berio: éléments de recherché sur la genèse de l'oeuvre," *Analyse Musicale* (2001): 42-52 and Stoianova, 75-6.

⁶² Berio to "Mrs. Michel" at Universal Edition, May 15, 1966. PSS, Depositum UE. Berberian kept two reviews of the premiere; clippings in the private collection of Cristina Berio.

date, but starting in 1970, programs began to date the work as 1964.⁶³ An “author’s note” about the work on the website of the Centro Studi Luciano Berio (written after Berio revised the work in 1973) also gives the original date as 1964.⁶⁴ The reasons for the date change are unclear. As he did with many pieces, Berio continued to revise *Folk Songs* after its premiere, so perhaps 1964 refers to the finalized version of the score. But this does not explain Berio’s sudden change in the dating, years after he completed the piece, nor does it explain why Osmond-Smith mistakenly dated the premiere to 1964.

In the preparations for publication, Berio insisted that he “should not appear as the composer of it but only as the arranger (or something like that).”⁶⁵ In fact, Berio did compose two out of the eleven folk songs that form the work. He drew the others from sources familiar to both Berberian and himself, making the collection truly a joint effort. They originally gathered thirteen songs, eleven of which made it into the published score.⁶⁶

1.	Black is the color	USA – John Jacob Niles
2.	I wonder as I wander	USA – John Jacob Niles
3.	Loosin yelav	Armenia
4.	Rossignolet du bois	France
5.	A la femminisca (E si fussi (Xango	Sicily Sicily) Brazil)
6.	La donna ideale	Italy – Berio
7.	Ballo	Italy – Berio
8.	Motettu de tristura	Sardinia

⁶³ Programs in the PSS, Berio collection.

⁶⁴ Berio, “Folk Songs (author’s note),” Centro Studi Luciano Berio, www.lucianoberio.org [accessed February 19, 2011].

⁶⁵ LB to Alfred Schlee, February 26, 1964. PSS, Depositum UE.

⁶⁶ Berio, *Folk Songs*, Universal Edition (U.E. 13717), 1968.

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------|------------------|
| 9. | Malurous qu'ò uno fenno | Auvergne, France |
| 10. | Lo fiolaire | Auvergne, France |
| 11. | Azerbaijan love song | Azerbaijan |

While nominally all folksongs, at least four had a known composer. The American composer John Jacob Niles based his arrangements on Appalachian folk songs, but these were actually his original compositions. Berio composed the Italian songs in the late 1940s while a student at the Milan conservatory and included them in his unpublished collection *Tre canzoni popolari* for voice and piano. Berio and Berberian borrowed “Rossignolet du bois” from their friend Henri Pousseur and gathered the others from published and recorded sources. Nicola Scaldaferrì has identified the original sources for the eleven published songs.⁶⁷ Those taken from written sources are:

- “A la femminisca”: Alberto Favara, *Canti della terra e del mare di Sicilia* (Milan: Ricordi, 1907)
- “Motettu de tristura”: Giulio Fara, *Canti di Sardegna* (Milan: Ricordi, 1923)
- “Malurous qu'ò uno fenno” and “Lo fiolare”: Joseph Canteloube, *Chants d’Auvergne* (Paris, Heugel, 1927)

Almost all the sources of *Folk Songs* have a close connection to Berberian, who had a long history of singing folk songs. She included Armenian and Russian folk songs in her earliest recitals from the mid-1940s, and in April 1963 she gave a recital in Perugia, Italy, that ended with Armenian, Italian, French, American, and Russian folk songs.⁶⁸ She had even recorded two of the songs, “Loosin yelav” and “Xango,” in 1960, so these works formed a part of her repertoire before Berio arranged them for his

⁶⁷ Scaldaferrì, “*Folk Songs* de Luciano Berio.”

⁶⁸ Program in PSS, Berio collection.

collection.⁶⁹ Berberian also had a strong affinity for the Azerbaijan love song included in *Folk Songs*. She explained the source for this song to Elena Hift, a musicologist at

Universal Edition:

It was transcribed from a 78 rpm 10 inch record of a USSR label #16038. The name of the song is “Galaly” with the subtitle Azerbaijan Funny Song – the music is folk music, Russian text by Stroganova. There are two verses: one is in Azerbaijan and the second is in Russian. Now, this record was bought in 1940 or 1942. I don't know what royalty arrangements you have with Russia but in any case, the pronunciation of the text is purely phonetic and probably unrecognizable since I was told by a Russian that the tenor who sings on the record pronounced Russian so badly that hardly a word was understandable.⁷⁰

Though Berberian had no personal ties with Azerbaijan, she obviously felt an attraction to that particular song, and worked to make sure it became part of her repertoire.

In addition to the special attention Berberian paid to the Azerbaijan love song, she also kept careful control over all the texts used in the piece. The manuscript scores of *Folk Songs* held at the Paul Sacher Foundation show an almost complete absence of text. For example, “Black is the color” sets only incipits of lines and “Rossignolet du bois” contains no text at all. Berberian made this situation clear to Universal Edition, which eventually published the work. In a letter to Hift she wrote:

Actually, I don't know if my husband has informed you, but when I have performed these songs, I have mostly the words in front of me, there is no existent vocal part as such. Which means that I have to renew acquaintance each time with the cues in the orchestration – which is an extremely nerve-wracking situation for any singer.⁷¹

⁶⁹ These songs were included on Berberian's album *Nel labirinto della voce*.

⁷⁰ Berberian to Hift, August 30, 1964, PSS, Depositum UE.

⁷¹ Emphasis in original. Ibid.

Berio recognized that Berberian had mastery over the texts and he trusted her to make sure that they were set correctly in the published score. In August 1964 he told the publisher “Cathy has all the texts. She can add the texts to the score and I will correct the proofs.”⁷² Two years later, as printing finally began, Berberian told Alfred Schlee “to send a trial copy of the score since only I know where the syllables belong.”⁷³ Berberian worried about proper pronunciation in addition to accurate text setting. When Berberian returned the score in May 1967 she included typewritten copies of the texts so the publisher could check it against her settings, as well as “some observations and a guide for the pronunciation of the Armenian and Azerbaijan texts, as well as a few notes on other dialects: Italian and French (Auvergne).”⁷⁴ Berberian’s pronunciation guides did not make it into the final score, but she did perform a crucial role in the editing process. In April 1968, after receiving the proofs, Berberian sent back a lengthy list of corrections, mostly relating to mistakes in the text. Though some of these were minor spelling corrections (“Jesus *our* saviour” rather than “Jesus *are* saviour” in “I wonder as I wander”), some were more extensive, with an entire line of Azerbaijan text corrected with Berberian’s own phonetic spelling.

Berberian’s written record suggests that she primarily concerned herself with the texts in *Folk Songs*, yet she also clearly paid close attention to the musical styles. For each of the folk songs she carefully devised vocal styles reminiscent of the cultures that

⁷² “Cathy a tous les textes. Elle pourrait ajouter les textes à la partition et je voudrais corriger les épreuves.” Berio to Universal Edition, August 15, 1964, PSS, Depositum UE.

⁷³ Berberian to Schlee, November 25, 1966. PSS, Depositum UE.

⁷⁴ Berberian to Universal Edition, received May 18, 1967. PSS, Depositum UE.

had produced them. In recordings, she sounds as if she imitated Joan Baez for the two American songs, with a clear tone and light vibrato. She then switched her voice to a warm tone with richer vibrato for the Armenian “Loosin yelav.” Her assortment of vocal styles continues through the piece, with each language group having a unique sound. The final “Azerbaijan Love Song” contrasts with the earlier songs both in its vocal style and the accompaniment Berio devised. The tempo is faster than the rest of the songs in the collection, and overall it has an upbeat, dance-like feel. Berberian’s voice sounds somewhat strained in a higher register and she used vibrato sparingly. This range of styles led Berio to comment after Berberian’s death that he needed multiple singers to produce the same variety in *Folk Songs* that Berberian had done by herself.⁷⁵ While the diversity of singing styles seems reminiscent of Cage’s *Aria*, there is no clear evidence that Berio was directly influenced by that piece in his arrangements of the *Folk Songs*. Rather it seems as if varying her voice during her performances of different types of songs was a standard practice for Berberian and her flexibility led Berio to create this wide-ranging collection.

The combination of languages and musical styles in *Folk Songs* demonstrates the extent to which Berio tailored the work for Berberian, and worked with her on its execution. This was the last piece he created for her during their marriage; shortly after the premiere, Berberian discovered Berio’s infidelity and they separated. Perhaps as some sort of apology, Berio changed the original dedication of the work from a woman named Margaret Lyon to Berberian, so that the published score reads “to cathy.” Berberian

⁷⁵ “quando devo eseguirli, utilizzo due o tre cantanti che si dividono i pezzi.” Berio, interview by Leonore Colbert, “Cathy e le sue undici voci.” *Symphonia* 30 (September 1993): 27-8.

continued to perform *Folk Songs* during the difficult period following her separation from Berio when she often refused to perform his new works, and it featured prominently in her repertoire for the remainder of her career. The mixture of styles found in the piece also continued in Berberian's other projects, with and without Berio. Beginning in the late 1960s, Berberian created recital programs that spanned a wide variety of time periods and musical styles, while maintaining a diversity of vocal styles (see chapter 6). Berio took a slightly different approach when he worked with Berberian to create *Recital I*.

Berio's final work for Berberian, *Recital I (for Cathy)*, showed an even greater range of styles and a stronger connection to Berberian's preferred repertoire. Set for mezzo-soprano and chamber ensemble, the work incorporates a significant theatrical component as well as a mixture of musical examples taken from various historical and contemporary sources. *Recital I* includes 47 vocal excerpts that alternate with a spoken monologue; the published holograph score notates all of the spoken text but only the first and last musical examples, seeming to leave the remaining passages to the choice of the singer.⁷⁶ In the unwritten sections, Berio designated only a key, or choice between two keys, and a length of time (during which the ensemble plays notated music). Above some of these sections, however, Berio gave a short direction in barely visible handwriting. For example, in the first section (key area C major to A minor) he wrote "Monteverdi" and at the third (A minor) he wrote "Bach."⁷⁷ Though these may have been instructions, their brevity and ambiguity suggest that he meant them as reminders of the relevant excerpt, perhaps to himself as the conductor of the ensemble.

⁷⁶ Luciano Berio, *Recital I (for Cathy)*, Universal Edition (UE 13771), 1972.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

Musicologist David Metzger has helpfully identified the majority of the excerpts that Berberian sang in her only extant recording of *Recital*.⁷⁸ He has recognized a wide variety of musical styles, including examples from Purcell, Ravel, Poulenc, Wagner, Wolf, Bernstein, Stravinsky, Milhaud, Schubert, Mussorgsky, and Verdi as well as an Armenian liturgical song and a popular song sung by Marlene Dietrich. Metzger's list represents Berberian's usual, apparently fixed interpretation. Although the score seems to leave the work open to a changing assortment of excerpts, archival evidence suggests that Berberian consistently sang *Recital* with the same content. Beginning in 1964, when mention of *Recital* first appears in Berio's correspondence,⁷⁹ Berio and Berberian worked together to create both the monologue and the collection of excerpts used in the piece. In 1966 Berberian told Andriessen that she was "busy translating Andrea Mosetti's libretto for *Recital I*."⁸⁰ Berio eventually discarded this libretto in favor of one he wrote himself "with occasional reference to texts by Andrea Mosetti and Edoardo Sanguineti."⁸¹ Berberian translated Berio's libretto into English; her translation appears in both the published score (where it remains unattributed) and in the liner notes for the recording.

⁷⁸ Metzger, *Quotation and Cultural Meaning in Twentieth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 219-20.

⁷⁹ Berio initially planned for *Recital* to premiere at Palermo in May 1965. Berio to Universal Editions, October 24, 1964. PSS, Depositum Universal Edition.

⁸⁰ Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁸¹ Misha Donat, liner notes on Berio, *Recital I (for Cathy)*, LP recording, RCA Red Seal, 1973.

Although Metzger claims that Berio “selected the quotations,”⁸² in January 1972 Berberian sent Universal Edition “a list of the excerpts” that she “submitted to Luciano to be set into his ‘Recital I for Cathy’” so they could get the necessary copyright clearances.⁸³ This list does not survive, but most of the excerpts in the work came from Berberian’s existing repertory, especially recent additions like Schoenberg’s *Pierrot lunaire* and Musorgsky’s *Song of the Flea*. In response to a series of questions from Gary Milliken, then a graduate student in music theory at San José State University, Berio clarified which excerpts were not taken from Berberian’s repertoire.⁸⁴

Poulenc, “Hôtel” from *Banalités*
 Charpentier, “Quelle belle vie” from *Louise*
 Casella, “Quattro Favole Romanesche”
 Wagner, “Träume” from *Wesendonck Lieder*
 Thomas, “Je suis Titania” from *Mignon*
 Bernstein, Lamentation from *Jeremiah*
 Mahler, “Oft denk ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen” from *Kindertotenlieder*
 Verdi, “Cortigiani, vil razza dannata” from *Rigoletto*
 Delibes, “Bell Song” from *Lakmé*
 Meyerbeer, “Ombre légère qui suis mes pas” from *Dinorah*
 Donizetti, “O gioia che si sente” from *Lucia di Lammermoor*

Berberian, then, clearly had a major impact on the sound and substance of *Recital*. In fact, Berio showed knowledge of Berberian’s recently expanded repertoire (see Chapter 5); her exploration of a wider variety of musical styles therefore influenced the creation of an avant-garde work written for her.

In addition to the fact that the majority of excerpts came from Berberian’s repertoire, Berio’s treatment of those excerpts served to forefront Berberian’s experience

⁸² Metzger, 93.

⁸³ Berberian to Elena Hift, received January 3, 1972. PSS, Depositum Universal Edition.

⁸⁴ Berio to Milliken, May 9, 1977. PSS, Berio collection.

and connection to these pieces. The work begins with a long example from Monteverdi's "La lettera amorosa," which is indicated with directions in the score but without music or text: the singer (along with her accompanist) is trusted to be familiar with the song. This aria had recently become an important element of Berberian's repertoire and it opened her "From Monteverdi to the Beatles" recital (see Chapter 6). Similarly, Berio's "Avendo Gran Disio" forms the climax of the piece, as the singer performs it clearly and uninterrupted. Berio composed the song in the late 1940s and incorporated it into his *Quattro canzoni popolari*, which Berberian premiered in 1952. He eventually gave the song to Berberian as a gift and assigned her the copyright. Berberian frequently incorporated "Avendo Gran Disio" into her programs, most notably as part of a collection she put together called the *Berio Family Album*, featuring songs by four generations of the Berio family.

While singing *Recital* Berberian carefully emphasized the different musical styles encountered in the work. The opening Monteverdi sounds the same as her other recordings of the "La lettera amorosa" with only the dissonances in the orchestra during the following "Lamento della Ninfa" hinting at the dramatic situation that soon unfolds. Recollections of Berberian's performances can be heard throughout *Recital*, as in her brief quotation of "Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuss auf Liebe eingestellt" as performed by Marlene Dietrich. In that section, Berberian imitated Dietrich as astutely as she had in Cage's *Aria* many years before, with the characteristic low, husky voice. In the Russian excerpts by Stravinsky and Mussorgsky, Berberian also transformed her voice to express a full, rich, throaty style that contrasts greatly with the clear, focused sound of the Purcell and Schubert examples that precede them. Berberian altered the sound of her voice in the

narrated sections of the work as well, invoking both a stereotypical Jewish woman (“So maybe I overplayed the suffering bit”) and a Cockney accent (“You know what luv”) in addition to following directions in the score such as “pompous.” The entire piece displays Berberian’s extreme flexibility of vocal styles, and, as Berio suggested of *Folk Songs*, often sounds like the collective effort of multiple performers.

Berberian prized her ability to imitate multiple archetypes and to rapidly change from one sound to another. In 1970 she wrote to John Cage about her capabilities as a performer and in addition to drawing him a diagram of her range (almost three octaves) and assuring him that she had a vast repertoire of “noises,” she listed the variety of singing styles she could mimic:

Joan Baez, Milizia Korjus, Sarah Vaughan, Chaliapin (but doing either the “flea” or Faust), [Disney chicken character] Clara Cluck singing opera (Caro Nome), Marilyn Monroe, Marlene Dietrich, Betty Boop, old fashioned “hilly-billy,” Russian gypsy, [American opera singer] Gladys Swarthout, Callas, Sicilian peasant, I can’t think of any more except maybe Mary Garden doing “Depuis le jour,” etc. In any case, I’m willing to try anything.⁸⁵

Berberian’s abilities stretched beyond imitations of well-known opera singers to include pop singers, stereotypical folk styles, and even a Disney character. Though only Cage and Berio took full advantage of this specialty in their compositions, Berberian would later show it off in the solo recitals she designed.

Extended Vocal Techniques

As a singer who specialized in repertoire of the twentieth century, Berberian was expected to produce certain vocal effects. A number of composers from the first half of

⁸⁵ Berberian to Cage. Northwestern University Music Library Special Collections, John Cage Correspondence Collection.

the century made use of nontraditional forms of vocal declamation, including Schoenberg (*Pierrot lunaire*, 1912), Benjamin Britten (*Cabaret Songs*, 1937; *Canticle III*, 1954) and Charles Ives (“Charlie Rutlage” from *114 Songs*, 1922). These composers additionally experimented with some use of extended vocal techniques: Britten’s *Cabaret Songs* incorporates glissandos and whistling, and Ives’ “Memories” from *114 Songs* contains whistling as well. After World War II, composers further experimented with vocal sounds: Cage’s *A Flower* (1950) has the singer slide between notes and Boulez’s *Le Marteau sans maître* (1952-54) uses Sprechstimme, glissandos, and humming. Berio’s *Chamber Music* included Sprechstimme, declamatory recitation, and singing *bocca chiusa*. Cage expanded this range with *Aria*, for which Berberian invented some vocal sounds that persisted in other works written for her. Though not all the sounds Berberian used in *Aria* reappeared in other pieces, many – clicking her tongue, breathing audibly, screaming, and laughing – became standard parts of her repertoire.

In contrast to vocal writing from the early part of the twentieth century that violated the norms of traditional singing with disjunct, atonal leaps and quickly moving melismas, works written for Berberian developed a still idiosyncratic, but arguably more idiomatic, “vocal” style. These new techniques emphasized the voice as the source of sounds, with its essential and intimate connection to the body. Although earlier methods did not completely fade, sounds like breathing and laughter – familiar, everyday sounds – became central. This relates to the theatrical techniques that developed simultaneously in Berberian’s repertoire, which also emphasized the body of the performer.

The early works following Cage’s *Aria* cautiously took advantage of Berberian’s ability to make varied vocal sounds but did not push much beyond earlier techniques. In

Voix de femme, Bussotti did not explicate his complex notation, but did include pitches notated with x's as note heads, a standard notation for Sprechstimme, as well as “Bch” for bocca chiusa. Other notational intricacies, such as the differentiation between note heads with just x's and those with x's written on top of the note head, or the distinction between white and black notes, have been left unexplained (see example 2.7).⁸⁶



Example 2.7: Bussotti, *Voix de femme* from *Pièces de chair II*, p. 18

In *Circles*, Berio introduced notation for spoken words as well as text produced “on the breath.” His next piece for Berberian, *Epifanie*, used many of these same techniques, with slides, declamation, Sprechstimme and “on the breath” all making appearances.

Roman Haubenstock-Ramati wrote two works for Berberian in quick succession that make use of some extended techniques. She never performed the first, *Twice for Cathy* (1960), which is notable primarily for its indeterminacy. Haubenstock-Ramati composed the other, *Credentials, or Think, Think Lucky* (1961), on commission from Strobel for Donaueschingen.⁸⁷ After he sent Berberian the score in July 1961, she asked

⁸⁶ Paul Attinello says that he has found instructions for this piece in various archives, including at Darmstadt. Attinello, “Portraits of Intimacy: Sylvano, *voix de femme*, *Cathy*, and *la passion*.” Unpublished conference paper presented at “Cathy Berberian: Pioneer of Contemporary Vocality and Performance,” April 27-28, 2008, University of Amsterdam. Thanks to Attinello for sharing his paper with me.

⁸⁷ Haubenstock-Ramati, *Credentials, or Think, Think Lucky*, Universal Edition (U.E. 13676), 1963.

him for clarification of some of his notations and indications for performance, suggesting that she probably behaved similarly with other composers. She sent him multiple questions in a series of letters, asking what he meant by the directions “chanting,” “semi-voice,” and “throat voice.”⁸⁸ With regard to a series of notes written with x’s as note heads, she asked: “am I right in presuming they are recited (when not indicated otherwise)?”⁸⁹ She also attempted to correct his interpretation of “crying”: “‘crying’ should be either ‘shouting’ or ‘yelling’ or ‘screaming’ as you prefer, but usually ‘crying’ is understood, in English, as weeping.”⁹⁰ Though the composer’s response does not survive, he obviously assured her that he had, in fact, meant “crying,” as she grudgingly relented: “I’ll accept your ‘crying’ – my comment was taking the colloquial aspect of the word’s use into consideration – dictionaries are philologically rigid but – always are the last word.”⁹¹ She soon followed up:

Deep down inside of me, dear Roman, I still have strong reserves concerning “crying” notwithstanding the fact that dictionaries do give the definition you mentioned. Dictionaries are notoriously behind in current use of many words.⁹²

⁸⁸ Berberian to Haubensstock-Ramati, received July 26, 1961; Berberian to Haubensstock-Ramati, July 28, 1961. PSS, Haubensstock-Ramati collection.

⁸⁹ Berberian to Haubensstock-Ramati, July 28, 1961. PSS, Haubensstock-Ramati collection.

⁹⁰ Berberian to Haubensstock-Ramati, received July 26, 1961. PSS, Haubensstock-Ramati collection.

⁹¹ Berberian to Haubensstock-Ramati, July 28, 1961. PSS, Haubensstock-Ramati collection.

⁹² Berberian to Haubensstock-Ramati, received August 7, 1961. PSS, Haubensstock-Ramati collection.

Haubenstock-Ramati ultimately replaced “crying”: the published score notes “weeping” instead, showing that the composer did eventually take Berberian’s advice.

Berberian biggest reservations came with two other vocal effects Haubenstock-Ramati had asked her to perform in the piece. The first, which she managed to eliminate, was the indication of “whistling,” which she simply could not do. Berberian was not infallible; she too had her limitations. As she told him in May 1961:

I’ve tried with all my power to whistle between my teeth but it seems impossible. Do you know of those flat little bird whistles that they used to use several years ago? If a whistle is absolutely necessary it would be very easy to slip it inconspicuously into my mouth, since they are rather small and very flat. I’ve honestly tried to whistle the way you taught me but all I get is a very snaky kind of “Ssssss.”⁹³

Berberian never learned to whistle, and the published score omits whistling. Berberian opposed another indication as well: laughter. Haubenstock-Ramati began *Credentials* with laughter, which Berberian protested:

I’m terribly frightened of the first page – foreseeing my state of nerves at the beginning and knowing full well that my laughter is not the strongest element of my repertoire (especially “a freddo” as this would be) I’m afraid of making a fiasco of the beginning, which would be psychologically negative for the audience. At any rate, you can listen to what I manage and then decide.⁹⁴

Evidently, Haubenstock-Ramati approved of what Berberian could “manage,” as *Credentials* does begin with a lengthy display of laughter in combination with other extended techniques including finger snaps and tongue clicks.

⁹³ Berberian to Haubenstock-Ramati, received May 19, 1961. PSS, Haubenstock-Ramati collection.

⁹⁴ Berberian to Haubenstock-Ramati, received August 7, 1961. PSS, Haubenstock-Ramati collection.

Berio also drew on Berberian's laughter as a vocal effect in his *Sequenza III*, written five years later, possibly the most famous example of expanded vocal techniques in Berberian's repertoire.⁹⁵ Berio even called laughter "the fundamental theme" of the work.⁹⁶ Berio's initial version of *Sequenza III*, which he gave to Berberian just a few days before its premiere in May 1966, included numerous types of laughter: "convulsive, frank, bitter, hysterical, painful, muffled, ironic, belly, embarrassed, empty, cruel, malicious, sinister..."⁹⁷ Berberian disliked this aspect of the piece, as she believed that she "laughed so badly at the time."⁹⁸ Berio significantly revised the work following the premiere in Bremen. He told his publisher, Universal Edition, shortly before the premiere that he had finally finished the work, but that it was "still not definitive."⁹⁹ The next month he told them that he was "busy composing the definitive version."¹⁰⁰ Finally, at the end of July, he submitted the final score.¹⁰¹ Notably, the published version includes many types of laughter – nervous, tense, open, frantic, anxious, whining, wistful, and witty

⁹⁵ Berio, *Sequenza III*, Universal Edition (U.E. 13723), 1968.

⁹⁶ Berio, interview by Stoianova, March 23, 1978, 77.

⁹⁷ "rire convulsif, franc, amer, hystérique, douloureux, sourd, ironique, rire du ventre, rire embarrassé, vide, cruel, malicieux, sinistre..." Berberian, interview by Stoianova, July 11, 1977, 89.

⁹⁸ "je rais si mal à l'époque." Ibid.

⁹⁹ Berio to Universal Edition, received May 2, 1966. PSS, Depositum UE.

¹⁰⁰ "Je suis en train maintenant de rediger la version definitive." Berio to Universal Edition, June 19, 1966. PSS, Depositum UE.

¹⁰¹ "voila 'Sequenza III.'" Berio to Universal Edition, July 25, 1966. PSS, Depositum UE.

among others – but this was simplified from what Osmond-Smith called a “dauntingly long” list in the initial version.¹⁰²

In addition to laughter, *Sequenza III* calls for numerous other types of unusual vocal effects. Some of these, such as the use of a speaking voice, a breathy tone, and a closed mouth, had already appeared in his earlier works. Others, like mouth clicks and audible breathing, Berberian had conceived for Cage’s *Aria*, and so were established elements of her repertoire. Berio also used some techniques that had not appeared in any of Berberian’s previous works. The most prominent involved muttered text, a variation of standard spoken text. Berio also introduced coughing, an everyday sound that Berberian had never done before. He also included two difficult variations on sung pitches: tremolo and trilling. While these were common in vocal music, Berio modified them by indicating that tremolos should be “dental,” done by quivering the jaw, and that the trills should happen by moving the tongue against the upper lip. These alterations removed them from the realm of standard performance practice and into the domain of extended techniques. Berio also included bodily movements that affected the sound of the voice, among them raising the hands to cover the mouth, so the fingers can then tap against the mouth or act as a mute.

Overall, *Sequenza III* sounds frantic, an effect created by the fragmented text and the rapid succession of vocal effects. Berio commissioned the text from Swiss poet Markus Kutter, who initially provided him with a modular text in German, which was then translated into English. The text consists of nine short phrases that can be combined in various ways:

¹⁰² Osmond-Smith, *Berio*, 66.

give me	a few words	for a woman
to sing	a truth	allowing us
to build a house	without worrying	before night comes

Berio rarely sets the full phrases, and never sets the complete text. Instead, much of the text in *Sequenza III* consists of phonemes and single words. For example, the piece opens with the singer muttering a succession of text fragments: “to /co/ us for be.”¹⁰³ Even the longest intact series of words comes across as disjointed because of the repetition of words and the chaotic switching between phrases: “build a to be to me to sing a few words before to be us before a few words before to be us before give me to sing before.”¹⁰⁴ In this phrase, Berio also created new words out of the original text by shortening “before” to “be” and then creating a new phrase, “to be us.” Berio combined this fragmented text with the numerous vocal effects described above to give a frenzied feel. Even when the singer holds a series of long notes, as on the fourth line of p. 1, she has to change the vowel sounds and intersperse the notes with tremolos, mouth clicks, coughs, and to accompany herself by snapping her fingers.

Berio often described how he wrote *Sequenza III* “for Cathy” but also stated that the work was “about Cathy.”¹⁰⁵ Berio often credited Berberian as an inspiration, yet, as we have seen, he never acknowledged the influence she may have had on this piece or any others. Berberian, however, insisted that she played an important role in the creation of the final version of *Sequenza III*, an assertion supported by Osmond-Smith and corroborated by Berio’s delivery of the score to Universal Edition two-and-a-half months

¹⁰³ Berio, *Sequenza III* (Universal Edition, U.E. 13723, 1968), 1.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁰⁵ Berio, interview by Dalmonte, *Two Interviews*, 94.

after the work's premiere. Berio did not attend the premiere in Bremen, and Berberian said that when she talked to him afterward, she told him her problems with the piece.¹⁰⁶

She recounted her version of the story in an interview from the early 1980s:

We met in June in London, and he had modified *Sequenza* for the BBC performance, but it was not completed, so we talked about it, he showed it to me and I said 'Listen, that low note, that low D, I can't do it that late in the piece, I need to do it earlier or I won't have enough strength.' So he changed that and some other small things...and the piece was a lot better. Of course when I talk about it with him to this day, he maintains that the piece was always like this from the beginning! But I have the scores to prove it! And I'll tell you more, there are three versions: the original one for Bremen, the one for London, and the definitive one which reflects all the changes we did during the recording.

Berberian's original scores do not survive, but she sent a copy of one early version to Ivanka Stoïanova for her monograph on Berio. Stoïanova published the first page of what she labeled the "definitive version."¹⁰⁷ In a letter accompanying the score, Berberian described it as "version I."¹⁰⁸ This version is very similar to the published score with the exception of the fourth line, most of which appears to have been excised. The page shows multiple alterations in Berio's handwriting, and although it does not give detailed indications of how the original version of *Sequenza III* may have varied from the published version, its existence lends some credence to Berberian's account.

Other composers followed Berio's lead and pushed Berberian's capabilities. Scherchen's complex score for *Wai* includes a lengthy introduction detailing eight classes of vocal sounds, each of which is further subdivided into specific noises. These range

¹⁰⁶ Berberian, interview by Ottieri.

¹⁰⁷ Stoïanova, 60.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 68.

from normal singing (with four variations of vibrato) to familiar techniques (Sprechstimme, tongue clicks, audible breathing, various types of laughter) to new sounds (groans and sighs, tears). Scherchen explored the limits of audible breathing; whereas *Sequenza III* involves breathy whispered tones and gasps of breath, *Wai* indicates four types of “long breaths” with differing levels of audibility and two types of short breaths, in and out. Each of the almost 30 distinct sounds required by Scherchen receives its own notation, making the score incredibly complex to study and perform.

Scherchen also borrowed from Berio the practice of rapidly changing moods. The first page alone is “very mysterious, nervous and agitated, sweet, very nervous, mysterious, greatly ecstatic, serious, light, menacing.”¹⁰⁹ In the midst of these moods, Berberian sang, declaimed in Sprechstimme, groaned, clicked her tongue, whispered, and breathed in, all while moving around the stage and playing percussion. The complexity found in *Wai* makes it almost impossible to perform. The range and types of effects found in the work, combined with the use of Chinese and the requirement that Berberian play percussion while singing all suggest that Scherchen was attempting to show her mastery of writing in Berberian’s style. Though Berberian left no written record of her thoughts about the piece, she does not seem to have ever performed it after the premiere.

Bernard Rands followed this trend with his *Ballad 2* (1971), a theatrical work for voice and piano dedicated to Berberian.¹¹⁰ While not at the same intensity or frequency as Berio’s *Sequenza III* or Scherchen’s *Wai*, *Ballad 2* includes a range of emotions for the singer to emulate in a section heavily based on the *Sequenza*. Rands incorporated some of

¹⁰⁹ Scherchen, 1.

¹¹⁰ Rands, *Ballad 2*, Universal Edition (U.E. 15415), 1974.

the same emotions originally written by Berio, including a section of “urgent, tense muttering, distant and dreamy,” while using similar notation on 1- and 3-line staves. He also included many of the same effects, including the placement of the hand in front of the mouth, tongue clicks, and dental tremolo. This imitation of Berio extends for only part of the piece: at about 4’00, the piece changes to the sound of a Lied (reflecting the composer’s dedication “For Cathy – in homage to Hugo Wolf”) and it closes in the style of a cabaret performance. While Berberian never performed the piece, the range of styles and vocal effects required of the singer perfectly match the characteristics that had become Berberian’s specialty.

Non-vocal sounds and playing of instruments

As a complement to the effects that Berberian could produce with her voice, many composers made use of the sounds that she could create with her body. Cage’s *Aria* allowed for the possibility of “auxiliary use of percussion” as sound effects, an option that Berberian chose not to exercise. She did, however, stomp her foot, snap her fingers, and clap her hands, using her body to create percussive sounds. These effects became common in later works written for her, with Bussotti quickly incorporating these sounds into his compositions for Berberian. Though the arcane notation of *Voix de femme* leaves some of the specific sounds Berberian made a mystery, the initial version of *Lecture di Braibanti* (1960) calls for sounds like “stamp your feet (heels!)” (*battuto coi piedi (tacco!)*) and “snap the thumb with the other finger” (*schiodare il pollice con le altra*

dita).¹¹¹ Beginning with *Circles*, composers frequently directed Berberian to not only make sounds with her body but also to play percussion as she sang.

In *Circles* Berio included a notation for “hand clap” and also directed Berberian to play percussion.¹¹² The work includes movement as a fundamental element of its performance, and different instruments wait at each of the three locations where the singer stands. Throughout the work, she plays claves, finger cymbals, wood chimes, and glass chimes, sometimes as she sings or moves from one station to another. *Circles* brought attention to both Berio and Berberian for its innovative use of movement but also for the close collaboration between the singer and the instrumentalists during the piece.

As Berberian described:

They had to produce sounds that resembled the word that I said and I had to move the sound of the pronounced word closer to the timbre of the instruments. So, the “Sting” of the beginning, for example, exactly resembles the sound of the harp.¹¹³

Some of the instruments played by the singer double those found in the substantial percussion arrays, meaning that Berberian not only had to mimic the sound of the instruments with her voice, she also had to mimic the sound of the percussionists with her own percussion playing. The success of *Circles*, bolstered by Berberian’s apparent skill as a percussionist, then led other composers to copy this technique.

¹¹¹ Sylvano Bussotti, “Braibanti ritornelli (analysis) per voce sola,” November 7, 1959. Manuscript score in the private collection of Cristina Berio.

¹¹² Berio, *Circles*, Universal Edition (U.E. 13231), 1961.

¹¹³ “Ils devaient produire des sons qui ressemblaient au mot que je disais et moi je devais rapprocher le son du mot prononcé du timbre des instruments. Ainsi, le ‘Sting’ du début, par exemple, ressemble exactement au son de la harpe.” Berberian, interview by Stoianova, February 5, 1978, 158.

In 1962, Paolo Castaldi pushed the limits of Berberian's abilities as a percussionist with his *Tendre*.¹¹⁴ Written for "un esecutore" (a performer), *Tendre* is written for voice and 21 types of percussion:

- Triangle
- Suspended rattles
- Alpine bells or cowbells, 4 or more
- Large alpine bells
- Whip
- Claves (one pair)
- Güiro
- Wood block
- Mute skins, 6 or more
- Bass drum with pedal
- Suspended cymbal
- 2 tam-tams
- Gong
- Glockenspiel, with hammers
- Xylophone
- Vibraphone
- 6 bells
- Celesta
- Whistle
- Sheet of glass
- Paper (crumpled and torn)

The singer plays all these instruments while singing, resulting in an extremely complex and difficult work. Berberian planned to premiere *Tendre* at Darmstadt in July 1963; the original program lists the work in the closing concert of the festival.¹¹⁵ Berberian expressed nervousness before the performance, telling Haubenstock-Ramati that she

¹¹⁴ Castaldi, *Tendre*, Ricordi (131793), 1971.

¹¹⁵ Program in PSS, Andriessen collection.

would not have access to the percussion instruments until two days before the premiere.¹¹⁶ She explained her failure to perform the piece to Stein:

After Vienna, I dived into preparations for Darmstadt – a piece by Castaldi which I predicted to be physically impossible to perform. I'm supposed to play about 20 percussion instruments including vibra, xylo, drums, bongos, cowbells, etc. all the while using my voice in various, rather unpleasant ways. After 2 months work – at the final rehearsal Luciano had to admit that the piece was impossible after all! Naturally, as usual, the Maestro waits for the last minute to let me know this.¹¹⁷

Berberian's language shows the tremendous effort she had put into preparing the work – and demonstrates the enormous control Berio exerted over her performances (and over her psyche) at that point in her career. Berio and Berberian substituted a theatrical performance of *Visage* instead of *Tendre*, with Berberian “and friends” performing the mimed gestures.¹¹⁸ Berberian finally did perform *Tendre* at the Brussels Festival in December 1966, showing that the piece was not actually impossible for her.

Scherchen used a similar, if somewhat simpler, arrangement of percussion in *Wai*, written following the premiere of *Tendre*. *Wai* includes only seven types of percussion played by the singer with three types of mallets, with an additional cymbal played by members of the string quartet:

Tam-tam
Tympanum
Small, portable drum
Guero
Large fan
Very long metal or wooden necklace

¹¹⁶ Berberian to Haubenstock-Ramati, July 11, 1963. PSS, Haubenstock-Ramaticollection.

¹¹⁷ Berberian to Stein, private collection of Cristina Berio.

¹¹⁸ The 1963 program of the Darmstadt festival in Borio and Danuser lists *Visage* but does not explain the substitution.

At least 2 Chinese blocks

1 bass drum stick, 1 pair of felt beaters, 1 pair of hard wooden beaters

Still complex, this arrangement significantly simplifies the collection of percussion used in *Tendre* while retaining the theatrical effect. Scherchen evidently did not intend for the intricacy of the percussion to overshadow the vocal line. As she wrote in the instructions for the score, “for most of the time the percussion instruments supplement the vocal part or serve to give cue signals for the entry of the quartet.”¹¹⁹ Although this is true – the percussion part is spare and carefully coordinated with the vocal part – the vocal line is so difficult that even the occasional percussion strokes serve to further complicate the work. The intricacy of *Wai*, which involves movement, extended vocal technique, percussion performance, and an uncommon language, showcased Berberian’s talents in an extraordinary way.

Indeterminacy

The final characteristic present in many of the works written for Berberian was a particular kind of indeterminacy. She repeatedly expressed her preference for indeterminate works in her consultations with composers. In 1961, as Haubenstock-Ramati prepared his *Credentials, or Think, Think Lucky*, she asked him to give her adequate time to practice the piece:

But unless you plan a great deal of indeterminate sequenzas, I will need time to prepare conscientiously. With “determinate” music I’m a slow worker, and function best by the process of absorption which can be afforded only with a lengthy period of time at my disposal.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Scherchen, xiv.

¹²⁰ Berberian to Haubenstock-Ramati, April 5, 1961. PSS, Haubenstock-Ramati collection.

Haubenstock-Ramati complied with Berberian's request and gave her plenty of time to learn the piece, which included explicit notation as well as indeterminate sections.

Almost a decade later, she told John Cage the same thing: "I hope that musically you'll make it as indeterminate as possible because 'learning time' will be practically nil."¹²¹

Cage in turn gave Berberian *Song Books*, one of the most open of all the works in her repertoire. This corresponded with a general move towards greater openness in all the works written for Berberian over the course of her career.

Cage's *Aria* left many decisions (specific pitches, styles, and noises) for Berberian, but still provided an overall sense of contour and timing. Bussotti's *Voix de femme* and *Lecture di Braibanti* followed a similar path, with some openness with regard to time but with major decisions of text, pitch, and noises made by the composer. Berio did not initially experiment with indeterminate techniques in his works for Berberian, though he also abandoned rhythm and specific timing, instead specifying only the relative lengths of various sound events. Many composers were content to let her decide on timing, but they often specified general lengths of time, as in the 30 seconds per page of Cage's *Aria* or the 10-second increments of Berio's *Sequenza III*.

Haubenstock-Ramati initiated the use of true indeterminacy in Berberian's repertoire with his *Twice for Cathy* (1960), which does not seem to have ever been performed or published.¹²² The score consists of ten pages, each of which bears a letter from the phrase CITY GARDEN. These letters comprise the sole text of the piece,

¹²¹ Berberian to Cage. Northwestern University Music Library Special Collections, John Cage Correspondence Collection.

¹²² The manuscript score is in the private collection of Cristina Berio.

though they are re-arranged in numerous ways throughout. The pages can be performed in any order so that the letters from the pages form one of the phrases found in the text (e.g., GREAT CINDY). In the instructions accompanying the score, Haubenstock-Ramati asked that Berberian prepare two separate versions of the work, with the pages in different orders: one to be recorded on tape, and one to be performed live. He left the specifics of the recording to Berberian, so she could “concretize” it, varying the speed, reverberations, echo, etc., at will. He left other major decisions to Berberian as well: how to coordinate the tape with the live performance, whether or not to play castanets as she sang, and whether or not to add dancers for performances. (Presumably Berberian would have had to choreograph their movements as well.) The multitude of decisions Berberian had to make just to prepare the piece led her to tell Stein, not without justification, that she had to “compose” the work herself.¹²³ For this reason, as well as other aspects of the work that led Berberian to describe it as “a wild unlovely thing,” she never performed *Twice for Cathy*.¹²⁴

Indeterminacy reappeared in Berberian’s repertoire in 1966 when Bruno Canino, Berberian’s frequent accompanist and an accomplished pianist of contemporary music, composed his highly indeterminate *Fortis* for her.¹²⁵ Written for mezzo-soprano, flute, viola, harp, harmonium, and percussion, Berberian premiered the work at the Venice Biennale in September 1966. Although the published score looks fairly conventional – the vocal line sets fragmented Latin text and features familiar techniques like bocca

¹²³ Berberian to Stein. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Canino, *Fortis* (Ricordi, 1966).

chiusa, Sprechstimme, and spoken text – Canino added instructions that detail an extra indeterminate aspect of the piece not evident in the score. *Fortis* comprises two parts, a principal text and interpolations, which the singer combines as she sees fit. At any held note in the main body of the score (excluding the introduction and conclusion), the singer can choose to deviate from the principal text to one of the interpolations, written on separate sheets. Canino directed that the singer could choose any interpolation that shares either the same starting note as the note of departure or the same syllable of text. After completing the interpolation, during which the instrumentalists improvise, the singer returns to the principal text at the point where she had originally departed. Canino further advised that the interpolations should be spread out throughout the piece, should not number more than nine in any given performance, and that their combined duration should not exceed the duration of the principal text. Berberian left no record of her thoughts on *Fortis*, but she never recorded it and never seems to have performed it following the premiere.

In 1972, John Cage gave Berberian another highly indeterminate work, *Song Books*.¹²⁶ The work consists of ninety solos for voice, numbered 3 through 92, as if to continue the series that Cage had begun in 1958 with *Solo for Voice 1*. The solos are divided into four categories: song, song with electronics, theater, and theater with electronics. Cage characteristically left many aspects of the work indeterminate. The solos can be sung by one or more singers, who can perform any number of solos in any order, even simultaneously if possible. Solos can be repeated during a performance, and the singer(s) can combine the work with *Rozart Mix* (1965) and/or *Concert for Piano and*

¹²⁶ John Cage, *Song Books* (New York: C. F. Peters, 1970).

Orchestra (1958). In the event of two or more singers performing the work together, Cage directed that “each should make an independent program” without consulting with each other on their plans for performance.¹²⁷

Berberian premiered *Song Books* alongside Simone Rist on October 26, 1970 in Paris, during simultaneous performances of both *Rozart Mix* and *Concert for Piano and Orchestra*. Although no specific documentation of the solos performed by Berberian and Rist survives, a handful of reviews suggest the range of their actions, which involved numerous costume changes, Rist swinging on a trapeze, and Berberian cooking spaghetti and serving it to the audience.¹²⁸ Cage dedicated the work to Berberian and Rist, and the combination of singing and theater particularly suited Berberian’s strengths as a performer. Berberian had as much responsibility for preparing, or “composing,” her part as she had for *Twice for Cathy*, yet she left no record of complaints regarding the indeterminacy of *Song Books*. She planned a repeat performance in New York in March 1971, but she had to cancel it due to illness.¹²⁹

According to Cage, Berberian remained dissatisfied with several aspects of the premiere, especially the fact that she had not been the center of attention.¹³⁰ Cage alleged that Berberian would have preferred performing *Song Books* without the simultaneous performance of his other pieces, and that for the performance in New York, she wanted a more traditional performance with a strict division between performers and audience and

¹²⁷ Ibid., 1.

¹²⁸ Reviews as cited in Fetterman.

¹²⁹ Cage, *For the Birds*, 120.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 118-19.

with specific beginning and ending times. He described their compromise: they would both perform on stage, the audience would be free to move around the hall, and she would enter and leave the stage at predetermined times. He, however, would already be on stage when the audience arrived and he would continue after the “end” of the concert. Cage represented their differences as that of a closed versus an open type of performance, suggesting that Berberian did not sympathize with his definition of a truly indeterminate performance.

Notably, Berberian never repeated performances of any of the highly indeterminate works discussed in this section, if she performed them at all. This suggests that pervasive indeterminacy was not a characteristic Berberian embraced. After all, she could have performed *Twice for Cathy* or *Song Books* on her own, without the participation of other performers, making them fairly easy to insert on her recital programs if she wished. That she did not choose to perform these works multiple times shows her lack of enthusiasm for them, and perhaps, for indeterminacy in general. This contrasts with her requests that composers include indeterminate sections in their works for her so she could learn them more easily. Berberian’s preferred type of indeterminacy seems to have extended mainly to elements like relative pitch and time and not to extensive decision making on her part that drastically changed the sound of the work. In this way, Berberian revealed her closer affiliation with the innovations happening in Europe rather than those in the United States. While Cage and other New York School composers like Morton Feldman, Earle Brown, and Christian Wolff moved in the direction of increasing indeterminacy, Europeans like Berio kept stronger compositional control over their works. Even Berio’s *Questo Vuol Dire Che* (1969) (also performed

under the titles *Cela Veut Dire Que* and *This Means That*), one of his most indeterminate pieces, keeps a consistent tape component of recorded folk song examples with largely planned interruptions of other folk songs by live performers. Berberian may have liked to think of herself as a singer comfortable with indeterminacy, but her true preferences leaned toward more conventional types of performance.

Conclusion

While Berberian developed a celebrated reputation as a singer of contemporary music, not every work composed for her featured the techniques discussed in this chapter. In 1964 both Stravinsky and Milhaud decided to dedicate works to Berberian, more a reflection of her growing fame than from any particular inspiration. Milhaud's *Adieu*, for voice, flute and piccolo, viola, and harp, sets a text by Rimbaud in a lyrical, sometimes dramatic, style that does not take advantage of Berberian's facility with languages, vocal styles, or extended techniques. Though Berberian performed the piece occasionally, she confided in Haubenstock-Ramati:

I must say that the only thing I have done recently about which I am not at all convinced is the piece Milhaud wrote for me "Adieu" which is so banal it is embarrassing. But his name is big enough for him to take unfavorable comment and anyway, it no longer matters.¹³¹

Stravinsky's *Elegy for J.F.K.* suited Berberian even less, as he had originally composed it for someone else. Written in 1964 on a poem by Auden, the work premiered on April 6, 1964, sung by Richard Robinson at the Monday Evening Concerts in Los Angeles.

Berberian performed Berio's *Circles* at UCLA just four days later at a concert attended

¹³¹ Berberian to Haubenstock-Ramati, January 2, 1967. PSS, Haubenstock-Ramati collection.

by Stravinsky. According to Berberian, Stravinsky told her that she could sing *Elegy for J.F.K.* very well, and that he would adapt it for her for their upcoming concerts together on the East Coast (New York, Washington D.C., and Boston in December 1964).¹³² The only change apparent in the resulting score was the transposition of the vocal line up an octave to make it suitable for a mezzo-soprano rather than a baritone. Berberian does not seem to have held a particularly close relationship with *Elegy*, preferring some of Stravinsky's other vocal works, especially his earlier *Pribaoutki* and *Berceuses du chat*, both of which she performed frequently.

In contrast to Milhaud and Stravinsky, who dedicated works to Berberian as friendly gestures with no nods to her particular talents, other composers explicitly appealed to Berberian's style of vocal performance. Cage, Berio, Bussotti, and Haubenstock-Ramati all knew Berberian early in her career, and her success performing their pieces brought her as much, if not more recognition than it did them. While Berberian certainly influenced their styles of vocal writing, these composers also reciprocally established Berberian's style of contemporary performance. Following this early period, which lasted from Cage's *Aria* in 1958 to Berio's *Folk Songs* in 1963, younger composers sought to write in a similar style by using many of the techniques that had been developed in the earlier pieces. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, composers like Canino, Scherchen, and Rands used elements of Berberian's style – multiple languages, extended vocal techniques, ability to play percussion, and indeterminacy – to make their marks as innovative, contemporary composers. Throughout her career,

¹³² Berberian to Louis Andriessen, April 27, 1964. Private collection of Cristina Berio. Andriessen set the text from this letter in his *Letter from Cathy* (2003).

Berberian collaborated with these composers, telling them of her range and capabilities to produce vocal effects, helping them choose texts, and giving her own interpretations of their works in her live performances.

Berberian's influence extended beyond works that she actually sang. In the early 1970s, Hans Werner Henze began to plan his *Voices*, a collection of songs for mezzo-soprano and tenor with instrumental ensemble. The twenty-two songs set political poems in German, English, Italian, and Spanish, and represent a variety of styles including folksongs, light opera, and cabaret, as well as contemporary techniques of serialism and aleatory passages. Henze intended Berberian as the mezzo-soprano and American Alan Titus (b. 1945) as baritone, along with the London Sinfonietta, which had commissioned the work.¹³³ In letters to Henze, Berberian refused to sing *Voices* because of its political content:

I love and respect many of them who dedicate themselves actively for their cause. But my refusal to do anything musical in the fields either of politics or religion is extremely deep-rooted. I refused to do the Stravinsky instrumentation of the 2 Hugo Wolf Sacred Songs – idem for a mass someone wanted to write for me. I love Monteverdi but will not do his Vesperi, nor Purcell's Blessed Virgin's Expostulation. Can you understand what I'm trying to say?

Now I know you are politically "engagé" – and that's your thing – you have the right to do as you like with texts + music – I would never dare to tell you or anyone what to do, or not to do. I can only expose my own feelings about any eventual participation on my part in a future project.¹³⁴

¹³³ Virginia Palmer-Füchsel, *The Solo Vocal Chamber Music of Hans Werner Henze: The Voices of Hans Werner Henze* (Ph.D. diss., Technische Universität Berlin, May 1990, rev. 1993), 140. Palmer-Füchsel cites a letter dated August 29, 1972 from Michael Vyner, the artistic manager of the Sinfonietta, that described *Voices* as Henze's "new piece for Cathy Berberian, Alan Titus, and ensemble." This correspondence is no longer available for study at the PSS, as per Henze's wishes. Henze ignored Berberian in his account of the work's development in Hans Werner Henze, *Bohemian Fifths: An Autobiography*, trans. Stewart Spencer (London: Faber and Faber, 1998).

¹³⁴ Berberian to Henze. PSS, Henze collection.

At the bottom of Berberian's letter, Henze scribbled "L'art pour l'art is religion too," expressing his disagreement with Berberian's viewpoint. The two never came to an agreement, and *Voices* premiered in 1974 sung by Rose Taylor and Paul Sperry with the London Sinfonietta.

This episode suggests that Berberian held a special place in the minds of composers who wanted to write a particular type of vocal music that mixed languages and styles with virtuoso vocal performance. Berberian's style did not appeal to the strictest adherents of serial methods. Boulez, Stockhausen, Nono, and Babbitt stand out as notable composers who did not work with Berberian. For many others, however, Berberian's style provided a clear, if often unacknowledged, influence. Extended vocal techniques such as laughter, shouting, and audible breathing have especially permeated vocal writing since the early 1960s, appearing in a wide variety of works by composers including George Rochberg, Peter Maxwell Davies, Joan La Barbara, and Meredith Monk. Perhaps more than any other composer, American George Crumb (b. 1929) has incorporated features of Berberian's style into his own work, though he never collaborated with her. He wrote many of his vocal works for the younger American mezzo-soprano Jan DeGaetani, who shared Berberian's flexibility and ability to perform extended techniques. Works like *Night of the Four Moons* (1969), *Ancient Voices of Children* (1970) and *Apparition* (1979) show a clear influence from some of the works in Berberian's repertoire, including an emphasis on vocal effects, a limited use of indeterminacy (mainly regarding time), a mixture of singing and speaking styles, and in *Night of the Four Moons*, the technique of having the singer play percussion.

Berberian also made a distinct impression on female singers who followed in her avant-garde footsteps. Joan La Barbara, known for her experimentation with vocal sounds, sampled Berberian's spoken voice in her electro-acoustic *Cathing* (1977). She began with a recording of Berberian speaking about how she differentiated herself from singers who specialized in extended vocal techniques because she could also sing more traditional music. La Barbara clearly resented Berberian's statement and created a electronic showcase of her own vocal effects, superimposed on each other and on fragments of Berberian's spoken voice, as if to show off her capabilities. In her article "Voice is the Original Instrument," La Barbara only briefly mentioned Berberian as an influence, instead crediting her own exploration of jazz as a greater stimulus.¹³⁵

While La Barbara and other singers of her generation, including Meredith Monk and Diamanda Galás, have collaborated with composers, they have carried on very independent careers. Berberian eventually moved in that direction herself, taking more control over her performances during the 1970s. But her collaborations with composers proved fundamental for her own career, and the innovations she discovered alongside them have had a great effect on vocal performance ever since.

¹³⁵ Joan La Barbara, "Voice is the Original Instrument," *Contemporary Music Review* 21, no. 1 (2002): 35-48.

Chapter 3: Cathy on Stage

Live performances defined Cathy Berberian's career. She participated in the creation of music in numerous other ways, including lending her voice to electro-acoustic compositions, consulting with composers about their written scores, and composing music herself, but performing music in concert remained her focus and comprised the bulk of her public life. Berberian performed continually, from her youthful participation in the folk music scene in New York until her final concert just days before she died. Her appearances ranged from minor participation in shared concerts to wide-ranging solo recitals. In many of her performances, Berberian strived to create a multifaceted spectacle that involved the visual as well as the aural.

The visual aspect of Berberian's performances centered on her body, with her costumes and gestures receiving a great deal of her attention. Written scores that notate specific movements also show the extent to which composers incorporated detailed movement as part of their compositions. Knowledge of Berberian's costumes is somewhat more ephemeral. Pictures and videos of some of her performances survive, as do her sketches of dress designs and lists of what she wore for different performances, but these clues often only hint at what she wore rather than providing a definitive image. In addition to choreography and costuming, lighting and sets often played an important role in Berberian's performances. Berberian took great care with all of these visual elements later in her career, with her creation of complete, themed recitals, but they were integral elements of her performances from the beginning of her career as an avant-garde singer.

For Berberian, the newly emerging genre of music theater provided an opportunity to show off her talents as an actress, dress designer, and dancer as well as singer. Musicologist Robert Adlington has defined music theater as a distinct genre that involves a focus on the human body and the space in which bodies move.¹ Music theater uses smaller forces than appear in opera, and is performed in concert halls rather than opera houses. Unlike opera, music theater works generally lack a coherent narrative, consisting of a succession of unrelated events, and negate the illusion of reality by often placing singers and instrumentalists on the same stage and lacking naturalistic scenery. Adlington asserts that while vocalists are common in music theater, they are not required, as performers of instrumental works can use the facial expressions, bodily gestures, and stage movement that serve as markers of the genre. It emerged in the late 1950s as many avant-garde works began to exhibit elements of theater: virtuosity highlighted the act of performance through the use of extended techniques, indeterminacy required active decision making from the performer, and space was used as a musical parameter.

Many of the works written for Berberian fall under Adlington's definition of music theater. They often emphasized her body by prescribing her movement around the stage and certain bodily gestures, as in Berio's *Circles*, Scherchen's *Wai*, and Rands' *Ballad 2*. Some also highlighted the artificiality of the performance by breaking down the barrier between the singers and her accompanist(s), or the performer(s) and the audience. In many of the music theater works written for Berberian, the audience watches a woman perform, but the woman may or may not know that she is performing. She may act

¹ Adlington, "Music Theatre Since the 1960s," in *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Opera*, ed. Mervyn Cooke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 225-43.

ignorant of the audience, as in Berio's *Sequenza III*, or she may speak directly to them, as in Berio's *Recital I (for Cathy)*. In Rands' *Ballad 2*, the nature and perception of her performance changes as the work unfolds, switching from an almost voyeuristic glimpse of a singer's rehearsal to a clear final acknowledgment of the audience's presence.

Many of the theatrical elements of these works recall the characteristics discussed in the previous chapter. As Adlington has pointed out, virtuosity, as displayed through the use of extended techniques, puts a focus on the performer's body. The act of playing percussion certainly functions the same way. Theatricality suffused many of Berberian's performances to such an extent that it is difficult to draw a distinction between those works that may be classified as music theater and those that are more straightforward concert works. The works in this chapter have been singled out for the degree to which they include the elements of movement, fashion, and drama. But these should be seen as the leading examples from Berberian's repertoire, not the only ones to make use of these aspects of visual performance.

Fashion

Berberian strongly emphasized fashion in her performances. She paid close attention to how she appeared on stage, and her private notebooks and correspondence reveal her thoughts on appropriate concert attire. In the late 1960s, as she prepared for a tour in the United States, Berberian asked Stein for recommendations:

Give me an idea of concert wear – I know they're university dates but I've established a rather gorgeous reputation for individual elegance – can't remember reading reviews for any other female singer commenting on her gown – me, I manage to make serious critics in Venice, Amsterdam, and N.Y. (among others) mention my dresses. I'm terribly proud of that, even if it is a frivolous detail. In

any case, I wear only long gowns for concerts – must they be informal or may I let loose?²

Indeed, critics and other performers often mentioned Berberian's outfits, as if her physical appearance had a significant effect on the success of her performances. After Berberian's Darmstadt premiere in 1959, during which she performed Cage's *Aria with Fontana Mix* alongside David Tudor, Tudor reported back to Cage: "*Fontana Mix* was a great success in Darmstadt! Cathy was perfectly incredible (in purple!) and entertained royally."³ Tudor evidently did not feel it necessary to mention Berberian's vocal technique, but he found her outfit worthy of comment, perhaps because her purple dress would have stood out among the dark suits worn by the mostly male performers. Critic Ronald Crichton had a similar response to Berberian's 1969 performance at the English Bach Festival: "That Miss Berberian is beautiful as well as brilliant, and wears marvellous [sic] clothes is, in the not always visually appealing world of modern concerts, very welcome."⁴ By appearing in chic dresses on stage, Berberian made a name for herself as not only a talented singer but also an interesting and colorful performer.

The tremendous importance Berberian placed on the costumes she wore while performing can be illustrated by her private notebooks.⁵ She made careful lists of her costumes, with one surviving notebook from the early 1970s consisting solely of lists of

² Private collection of Cristina Berio.

³ Letter from Tudor to Cage, October 8, 1959, Northwestern University Music Library, John Cage Collection, Notations Correspondence, file 'Tudor.' As quoted in Beal, "David Tudor in Darmstadt": 82.

⁴ Ronald Crichton, "Percussions and Stripsody," *The Financial Times*, June 17, 1969. Clipping in the archives of C.F. Peters, New York.

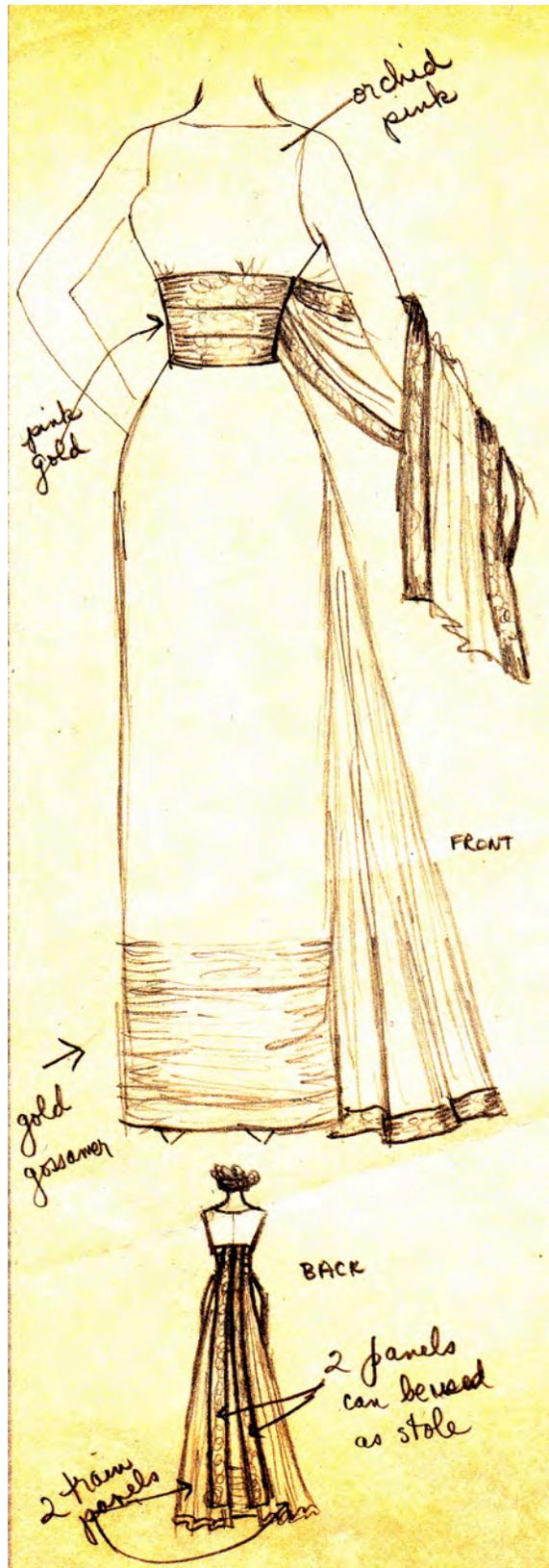
⁵ Private collection of Cristina Berio.

outfits, organized both by type of garment (e.g., dresses, skirts, hats) and by the cities in which she wore them. These lists reveal the costume choices Berberian made for different pieces, and show both the continuity and variety of her selections. For example, Berberian always listed a black outfit for *Visage*, consistent with the choreography and lighting that focused on her face. For *Epifanie* and *Folk Songs*, on the other hand, she listed several outfits that show the range of possibilities she allowed for these works. Next to *Epifanie*, Berberian wrote “black Duse” as her outfit for performances in Vienna, London, Paris and Berlin, but she also noted “black Ginger Rogers” for a 1972 Paris performance, repeating a dress that she had worn to perform *Sequenza* in London at the 1969 English Bach Festival.⁶ These both contrast greatly with the pink-and-gold dress Berberian had originally designed for herself to wear while performing the piece (see example 3.1).⁷

Berberian wore a number of different outfits, and combinations of outfits, during her performances of *Folk Songs*. She frequently noted a dress described as “pink Marimekko,” after the Finnish designer known for its brightly colored prints, and a “long violet Austrian dirndl.” For a television performance of *Folk Songs* in Vienna in 1971, Berberian simply recorded “costumes,” which she detailed in a separate notebook. She listed a total of seven costumes, corresponding to most of the languages present in the collection (she did not document her costumes for the songs from Auvergne). Her

⁶ “Duse” may refer to the Italian actress Eleonora Duse (1858-1924). Cristina Berio remembers that Berberian collected dresses worn by famous actresses including Ginger Rogers and Sarah Bernhardt. Personal communication with the author.

⁷ Berberian titled the dress design *Quaderni*, suggesting that she designed it before Berio changed the name to *Epifanie*. Private collection of Cristina Berio.



Example 3.1: Berberian's dress design for *Epifanie*

comprehensive list includes such details as accessories and even undergarments and covers a range of styles and colors from the purple velvet Armenian outfit complete with a fuchsia veil to a simple black wool dress and stockings for the Sicilian song (see example 3.2). That Berberian wore such an extensive variety of costumes when she had the flexibility of a recorded television broadcast suggests that she probably would have preferred to always wear these costumes. The sheer complexity of so many costume changes prevented such an arrangement in live performances. Yet Berberian often did change her costumes during live performances – but between works instead of between movements. At the 1969 English Bach Festival, Berberian wore different outfits for her performances of *Visage* (“turtle neck + skirt”), *Sequenza III* (“1935 Ginger Rogers”) and *Stripsody* (“Printed Liberty”). When Berberian had an opportunity to tailor her costume for each specific piece, she took it.

Berio, *Circles*

While not the first piece Berio composed for Berberian, *Circles* was perhaps the first piece that he really tailored to her talents. Aaron Copland commissioned the work on behalf of the Fromm Foundation, asking Berio for “a work lasting approximately ten minutes, for an ensemble of not more than four performers, one of whom may be a singer if you wish” for performance at Tanglewood in the summer of 1959.⁸ Berio responded that he could not fulfill such a commission so quickly, and proposed the following year instead, which satisfied Copland.⁹ Berberian was part of Berio’s conception of his new

⁸ Copland letter to Berio, January 22, 1959. PSS, Berio collection.

⁹ Copland to Berio, February 5, 1959. PSS, Berio collection.

USA. Blue dress - ringlet hairpiece

Armenian: purple velvet bolero - ivory blouse + jewelry
" " long tunic damask under dress
" " hat + braid fuchsia veil

Old French: rayon print Empire style gown - white stockings

Lucilian: black wool dress - black stockings

Italian: white blouse beige corselet
violet neckerchief violet cotton skirt
white underskirt white stockings

Sardinian: 3 pc. ivory costume with heavy embroidery
purple laced jacket
" veil

Azerbaijan: satin harem pants (very old - please be very careful how to handle)
green cotton tunic
amber pleated blouse
gold-coin hat, braid, jewelry, shoes
silk plaid waist scarf
pink veil. red silk stole

Jewelry: gold chain
" dot earrings
" chain
silver circle earrings
fake antique pendant brooch
black velvet dog collar
gold shield necklace
" coin " + belt
" + turquoise pin
" " " necklace

Shoes: black buckle
" filigree buckle
pink shoes

strapless white bra
white bra for Loran Yelov

SCORE: ^{Pellegrino} Antonio Rosso

Hotel des Ardres
Hague

~~instead~~

spray impermeabilizadora

black culottes (for Pierrot-Lucca)

wig + braids + wiglet

Example 3.2: Folk Songs costume list

work from the beginning, and he must have asked Copland if he could involve her in the piece, because Copland responded, “there is no reason why your wife should not be the singer.”¹⁰ Perhaps influenced by Copland’s praise of another of his works involving voice and harp (likely *Chamber Music*), Berio decided to compose the new work for voice, harp, and two percussionists.¹¹

Berberian told Stein less than two weeks before the premiere that Berio had not yet finished the piece and that she was having to study it “piecemeal” as he went along. Despite the rushed rehearsals, by all accounts, the premiere was a great success.¹² A few days after the premiere, on August 1, 1960, Berberian described the reviews as “incredibly favorable.” She told Stein that the hall had been “jam packed,” and that the audience had given them an “enthusiastic ovation.”¹³ Berio confirmed Berberian’s account, telling Alfred Schlee at Universal Edition that the performance had been “splendid” and that he was “very happy with this work.”¹⁴ Jay C. Rosenfeld, the critic for the local *Berkshire Eagle*, gave *Circles* a glowing review, calling it “the peak of the evening.”¹⁵ He singled out Berberian for praise:

The vocalist was Cathy Berberian, the composer’s wife, and no limit should be imposed on the credit due her for the deep impression the performance made...

¹⁰ Copland to Berio, September 23, 1959. PSS, Berio collection.

¹¹ Copland to Berio, February 5, 1959. PSS, Berio collection.

¹² Berio to Stein, July 21, 1960. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

¹³ Berio to Stein, August 5, 1960. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

¹⁴ Berio to Schlee, August 3, 1960. PSS, Depositum UE.

¹⁵ Jay C. Rosenfeld, "Wild Night at Tanglewood," *Berkshire Eagle*. Clipping in the private collection of Cristina Berio.

Miss Berberian dominated the performance by her personal magnetism...The audience gave the artist and the composer spontaneously enthusiastic acclaim.¹⁶

The success of *Circles* led to increased recognition for both Berio and Berberian.

Although they had started to gain renown in Europe, particularly through their work at the Studio di Fonologia Musicale, *Circles* established the pair as creators of innovative, theatrical works. Berberian repeated the work at the Furstenberg Schloss following the closing concert of the Donaueschingen Musiktage in 1961, introducing it to the European contemporary music scene. She described that performance as “the smash of the festival” and speculated on its importance for her career, telling Stein: “So I think now that I'm made.”¹⁷

Circles introduced theater into Berberian's repertoire. While earlier works written for her arguably involved drama – particularly the “noises” of Cage's *Aria* – none featured movement, gesture, and fashion as integral elements of their conception or performance to the same extent as *Circles*. Shortly after the premiere of *Circles*, Berio described how Berberian performed the piece:

Cathy was marvelous, she sang, directed, played, danced, as never before. I am very happy with the piece: it is a piece of theater, rather than one of “pure” music. Better, it is a purée of music and actions.¹⁸

In fact, Berio incorporated movement and gesture into every aspect of *Circles*. The score begins with a diagram showing the proper placement of the instruments and performers

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Berberian to Stein, October 23, 1961. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

¹⁸ “Cathy a Cathy a été merveilleuse, elle a chanté, dirigé, joué, dansé, come jamais. Je suis très content de la pièce: c'est une pièce de théâtre, plutôt qu'une musique ‘pure’. Mieux, c'est une purée de musique et d'actions.” Berio to Henri Pousseur, August 16, 1960. PSS, Pousseur collection.

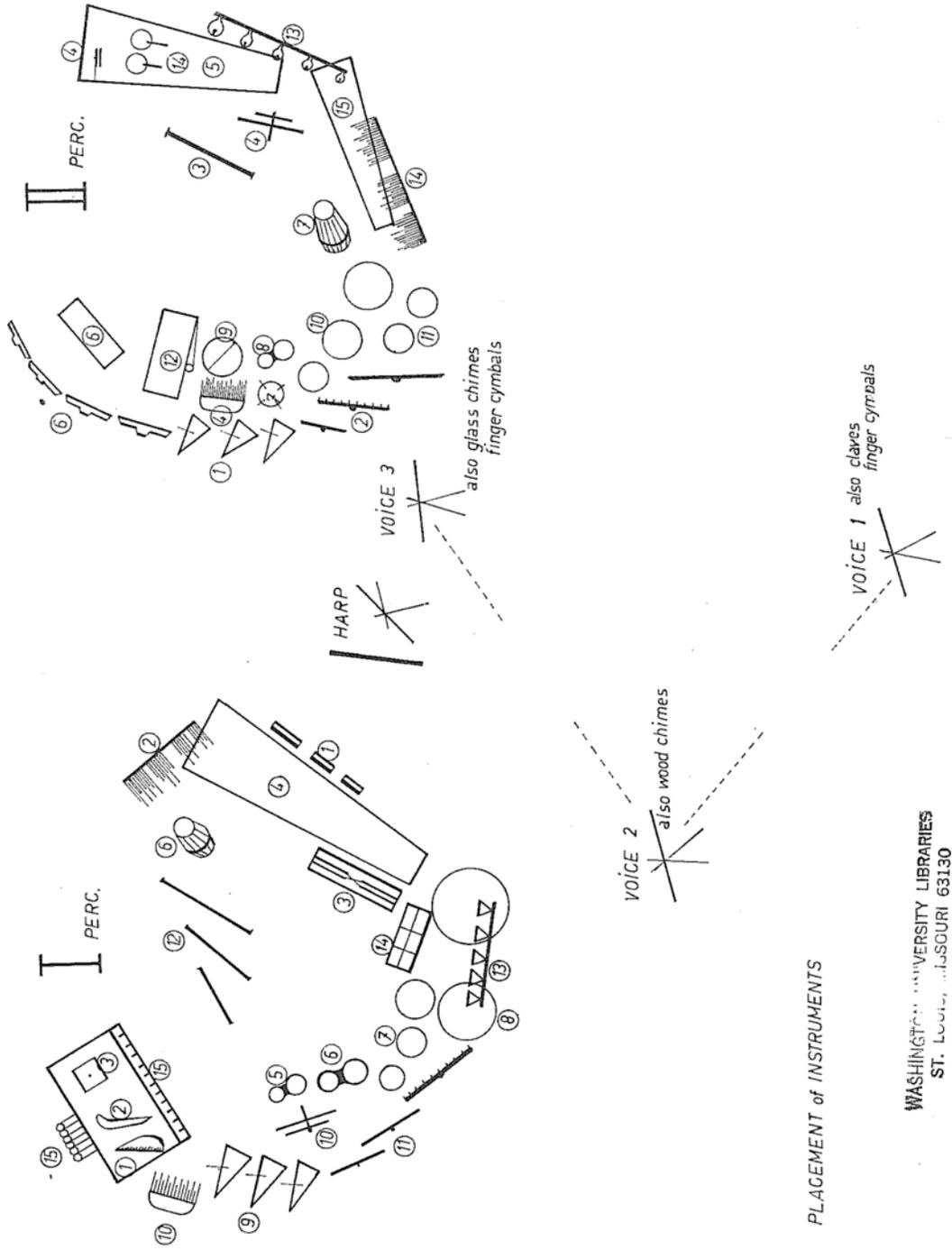
on stage, marking three locations for the singer (see example 3.3). As the piece progresses, she moves from one stand to another, moving progressively backward on stage to become a more integrated member of the ensemble. Meanwhile, the singer also gestures intermittently, acting like a conductor by beating the tempo and cuing attacks to the other performers, in addition to playing percussion. In his review of the premiere, Rosenfeld suggested that Berberian added supplementary movements beyond those called for in the score: “She gestured at times to intensify the meaning of the words and music, and at other times to replace a conductor.”¹⁹ Berberian believed *Circles* to be “the first piece of contemporary music with some theatrical action.”²⁰ Although not entirely true – she ignored significant predecessors like Schoenberg’s *Pierrot Lunaire* – the use of movement and gesture in *Circles* was certainly new to Berberian’s repertoire and became an increasingly important aspect of works written for her (and of the burgeoning genre of music theater as well).

From the beginning, Berberian had a special relationship with *Circles*. A month after the premiere, Berio described Berberian as “the only one who could sing ‘Circles.’”²¹ The following year, he successfully attempted to give Berberian the exclusive performance rights for the piece, at least temporarily. In May 1961, Ernest Hartmann at Universal Edition wrote to Berio:

¹⁹ Rosenfeld, “Wild Night at Tanglewood,” *Berkshire Eagle*. Clipping in the private collection of Cristina Berio.

²⁰ “C’était la première pièce de musique contemporaine avec de l’action théâtrale.” Berberian, interview by Stoianova, February 5, 1978, 162.

²¹ Berio to Universal Edition, September 13, 1960. PSS, Depositum UE.



Example 3.3: Berio, *Circles*, stage layout

I am pleased to confirm to you our agreement that your wife shall have the exclusive right to perform “Circles” until the end of 1962. So, this work will then be known in a special style of being performed.²²

Hartmann’s reference to Berberian’s “special style” of performing the work likely referred as much to her use of gesture as to her vocal performance, since the movements performed by Berberian distinguished *Circles* from other contemporary works.

In addition to her interpretive gestures, Berberian provided extra individualization by designing her own dress to wear during performances. She told an interviewer:

I added a small touch of myself: I made a dress very low-cut in the back and very classical in the front. I enter on stage normally, I sing facing the public, then at the moment where I do “tktktk” I turn around suddenly – which makes a very great effect.²³

Berberian’s sketch of the dress shows the design she described (see example 3.4). For the first half of the piece, the audience would have seen only the conservative front, but when she turned to walk to the second stand near the end of the third movement, they would have seen her nearly naked back. Notably, the score instructs the singer to “turn” at that point, before telling her to “walk to 2nd stand.”²⁴ At the other instance where the singer moves, at the end of the fourth movement, the score leaves out the direction to turn, telling her only to walk. This instruction perhaps gave Berberian the idea for her dress design, but it also seems possible that Berberian’s design may have compelled Berio to put the direction into the score. After all, the score was not published until 1961,

²² Hartmann to Berio, May 24, 1961. PSS, Depositum UE.

²³ “Et j’y avais ajouté une petite touché de moi: J’avais fait faire une robe très décolletée dans le dos et très classique devant. J’entrais sur scène normalement, je chantais face au public, puis au moment où je faisais ‘tktktk’ je me retournais brusquement – ce qui faisait un très grand effet.” Berberian, interview by Stoianova, February 5, 1978, 162-63.

²⁴ Berio, *Circles*, Universal Edition (U.E. 13231), 28.



Example 3.4: Berberian's dress design for *Circles*

giving Berio some time to revise the score based on Berberian's input. In any case, Berberian seems to have consistently worn a certain type of dress in her performances of *Circles*, with low-cut backs, though she probably did not always wear the original dress due to her significant weight gain as she got older. In a notebook from the early 1970s listing the outfits she wore in various cities she recorded "black lurex" for both London and Paris performances of the piece and separately described it as sleeveless black dress with a "low-cut back."²⁵ This suggests that Berberian kept all aspects of her performance of *Circles* fairly consistent.

Berberian claimed a close relationship with *Circles*. Even after her legal rights to the piece had lapsed she described it in 1964 (along with *Epifanie*) as "partly mine."²⁶ Indeed, after her separation from Berio, Berberian continued to perform *Circles* without his involvement. In June 1964, as Berberian began to create an autonomous career, she performed *Circles* in Paris as part of a theatrical series directed by Jean Marie Serreau. Berberian described it to Haubenstock-Ramati:

It is a new venture with a combination of all kinds of superior level spectacles: the evening opens with a play (short) by Becket [sic], then a film on Borjes [sic], then avant garde marionettes – after the intermission, we did *Circles*, then there was a film on Dubuffet and finally a wild performance of the Spanish anarchist playwright Valle-Inclán.²⁷

This experience represented a new step for Berberian; for the first time, she worked with artists other than musicians. From that point forward, Berberian began to incorporate

²⁵ Private collection of Cristina Berio.

²⁶ Berberian to Haubenstock-Ramati, received October 29, 1964, PSS, Depositum Universal Edition.

²⁷ Berberian to Haubenstock-Ramati, June 28, 1964. PSS, Depositum Universal Edition.

more visual elements into her concerts, with fashion and gesture forming essential parts of her performances.

Berio, *Sequenza III*

With the premiere of Berio's *Sequenza III* in 1966, Berberian had the opportunity to show off her acting skills for the first time. Berio's dramatic intentions for this piece can be seen from his opening words in the score, which describe the performer as "a singer, an actor or both."²⁸ The score is so difficult musically as to make performance by an untrained singer all but impossible, yet Berio clearly communicated his belief that the dramatic component of *Sequenza* equaled the importance of the musical content. He directed the performer to enter the stage "already muttering as though pursuing an off-stage thought," thereby subverting traditional concert protocol by having her begin the piece before the audience has welcomed her with applause. The dramatic action in *Sequenza* is supplied mainly by the voice, which moves through the emotions prescribed in the score: urgent, tense, giddy, nervous, wistful, bewildered, etc. To these the performer may add "hand, facial and bodily gestures" that accentuate the emotions she portrays. He clarified that these motions are not "conventionalized" but should "be experimented with by the performer herself according to her own emotional code, her vocal flexibility and her 'dramaturgy.'"

The combination of fragmented text, varied vocal effects, and dramatic emotions found in *Sequenza III* has led scholars to disagree about its precise meaning. Canadian

²⁸ These quotes are taken from the prefatory material of Berio, *Sequenza III* (Universal Edition, U.E. 13723, 1968).

composer Istvan Anhalt recognized the instability of the woman portrayed in the piece, but took her troubled pronouncements literally and diagnosed her with schizophrenia.²⁹ Dutch musicologist Joke Dame rightly criticized Anhalt for his overly medical analysis but resisted perhaps too strongly by insisting that the singer “is not hysterical, she is not schizophrenic.”³⁰ While she may not be schizophrenic, the character depicted in *Sequenza III* is almost certainly hysterical. She walks out on stage already muttering, giving no indication that she knows she is giving a performance, and at the end of the work her voice simply fades away as if she had been lost in her own thoughts. Dame uses the control the singer exerts over the fragmented text as evidence that she “is not falling apart.”³¹ Because she “gives form,” Dame argues, the singer shows her understanding of what she is doing.³² But the work has no clear form, and while Berio often emphasized the text by placing it in program notes and on album sleeves, it remains fragmentary and ambiguous to the listener. Overall, the lack of clear structure or narrative, the disjointed text, the frequent changes of emotion and overwhelming succession of vocal effects create an anxious, frantic, and, yes, hysterical, mood.

Dame wants to put Berberian in control of her performance of the piece, but by doing so she ignores the fact that while Berberian may have been in control, the

²⁹ Istvan Anhalt, *Alternative Voices: Essays on Contemporary Vocal and Choral Composition* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1984).

³⁰ Joke Dame, “Voices Within the Voice: Geno-text and Pheno-text in Berio’s *Sequenza III*,” in *Music/Ideology: Resisting the Aesthetic*, ed. Adam Krims (Amsterdam: G+B Arts International, 1998), 243.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

performer she portrayed is not. Dame rejects Anhalt's portrayal of a "fictional character," asserting instead that "She is a woman, she sings about a woman...but she is not acting the part of a woman."³³ I would argue, however, that *Sequenza III* does represent a character, a fictional woman whom the performer enacts, similar to the woman who appears in Berio's *Recital I (for Cathy)* six years later (or in Schoenberg's *Erwartung* over fifty years earlier, in 1909). The vocal style does not change during the performance of the piece, nor does the language, and while the work does not present a narrative, it does offer a greater sense of character than is found in, say, *Circles*. Berio wrote *Sequenza III* for, and with, Berberian, but the piece does not reveal her own personality. According to Anhalt, Berberian described the work to him as "an X-ray of a woman's inner life."³⁴ Notably, Berberian did not say it had any connection to her own inner life. As in any theatrical composition, any composition that required acting, Berberian did not represent herself as she performed *Sequenza III*. She played a role, albeit an unnamed and mysterious (and multifaceted) one. This does not mean that the role was not "hers," for the range of vocal effects and emotions that the singer must perform, and the rapidity with which she must switch from one to another, seems tailor-made for Berberian's particular dramatic and musical abilities.

The drama involved in *Sequenza III* takes this work out of the realm of conventional concert performance and into the genre of music theater. This piece remained one of Berberian's favorites from soon after its premiere, and she performed it regularly for the rest of her life. In the early 1980s she claimed to be performing it better

³³ Ibid., 236.

³⁴ Anhalt, 40.

than ever, because her recent eye problems (she lost most of her eyesight in 1979) had forced her finally to memorize the piece and perform it without a score. She said that as a result, she performed it “in a more theatrical way, because Luciano always intended it to be that way.”³⁵ For her, giving the right feeling was more important than performing the music accurately: “I may forget a small thing here and there, but I got the spirit.” This marks a significant difference from her earliest recording of the piece, which corresponds to the written score almost exactly. In fact, Osmond-Smith has asserted that Berio completed the final score of *Sequenza III* only after Berberian initially recorded it, explaining how the timings come together so perfectly.³⁶ A recording done just two years later, in 1969, clocks in almost two minutes faster, a notable difference for a nine-minute work.³⁷ This faster version likely came closer to approximating Berberian’s live performances of *Sequenza III*, when she would have focused more on the theatricality and less on proper timings. From the mid-1960s on, Berberian generally emphasized theater in her performances, and a wide range of composers began to take advantage of her dramatic abilities.

Bussotti, *La Passion selon Sade*

Around the same time that she premiered *Sequenza III*, Berberian participated in a much more overtly theatrical performance, that of Bussotti’s *La Passion selon Sade*. More than any previous work she had performed, *Passion* integrated the visual elements of costume,

³⁵ Berberian, interview by Ottieri.

³⁶ Osmond-Smith, “Tenth Oscillator”: 13.

³⁷ Berberian, *Nel labirinto della voce* (Ermitage, ERM 136, 1993).

scenery, and movement to create a fully staged drama. It showed off Berberian's newfound sexual independence by compelling her to strip off her clothes on stage and enact erotic situations, alongside other musicians and Bussotti himself. This act, combined with Berberian's almost simultaneous composition of *Stripsody*, which teased audiences with its suggestive title, served to remove Berberian from Berio's shadow once and for all. Paul Attinello has suggested that "Onlookers and colleagues saw *la passion selon Sade* as implicitly insulting to Berio, and it seems possible that he did too."³⁸ Yet Berio composed *Sequenza III* for Berberian in the midst of her first performances of Bussotti's *Passion*. Perhaps, as with their early competitiveness as Bussotti composed *Voix de femme* for Berberian in 1959, Berio responded to Bussotti's provocations with his own virtuosic piece that put Berberian in the spotlight. In any case, Berberian certainly had a fondness for Bussotti and his new work that allowed her to show off her dramatic skills as well as her body.

Bussotti began to compose *Passion*, which the score classifies as a "chamber mystery with living tableaux" (*mystère de chamber avec tableaux vivants*), in 1964.³⁹ Like many of his works, the multi-faceted *Passion* exists in multiple forms. Before a performance in Paris, he told an interviewer:

First there were four "tableaux vivants" for two pianos, commissioned by the Bremen Festival for the Kontarskys, then another stage in the development of the music in a concert in [Buffalo] New York, then a new theatrical dimension for the show at Palermo (September 5, 1965), then the performance as an oratorio in Milan last February at the Franciscan brothers of the Angelicum (yes!) and the

³⁸ Attinello and Osmond-Smith, "Gay Darmstadt": 113.

³⁹ Bussotti, *La Passion selon Sade* (Ricordi, 1966).

publication by Ricordi that foregrounded the music, and now this concentrated stage version for the Domaine [Musical].⁴⁰

As a fully staged work, *Passion* incorporates parts for female voice, mime, a child (or doll), a “noted orchestra director,” a Maestro di Cappella (played by Bussotti himself), and an instrumental ensemble comprised of organ, two pianos (with the pianists doubling on celesta and harmonium), harp, percussion, flute (doubling on alto flute and piccolo), oboe, oboe d’amore, horn, and cello. In addition to music, Bussotti’s score also details the stage layout, lighting, and movement for all involved (see example 3.5).

Bussotti composed the central role for Berberian, and the combination of singing, costume, and movement seems customized for her. The mezzo-soprano combines three characters: Justine and Juliette, the eponymous characters from the Marquis de Sade’s pair of erotic novels, as well as O, the protagonist of *Histoire d’O* by Anne Desclos (pen name Pauline Réage). In their original stories, all three characters participate in sadomasochistic sexual activity, some consensual and some coerced, and Bussotti alluded to those activities in *Passion*. The stage set includes a giant four-poster bed with a noose, a meat hook, and other “instruments of torture” hanging from it. The score pictured Berberian, drawn from the rear, as initially wearing a dress described as “sexy/coarse and crude” (see example 3.6). At the end of her first solo, the score tells the singer to undress,

⁴⁰ “Il y a eu d’abord quatre ‘tableaux vivants’ pour deux pianos, commande du festival de Brême pour les Kontarsky, puis une autre étape musicale en concert à New York, puis une nouvelle dimension théâtrale pour le spectacle de Palerme [le 5 septembre 1965], puis l’exécution en oratorio à Milan en février dernier chez les frères franciscains de l’Angelicum (oui!) et l’édition par Ricordi qui ont remis au premier plan la musique, en maintenant cette version scénique concentrée pour le Domaine.” Sylvano Bussotti, interview with Maurice Fleuret, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, December 7, 1966. As quoted in Jésus Aguila, *Le Domaine Musical: Pierre Boulez et vingt ans de création contemporaine* (Fayard, 1992), 305.

and depicts her abstractly rendered nude body. Following a section during which she sings offstage, Berberian was to reenter dressed in a “beautiful bright red frock” accompanied by an underskirt with legs and “pig feet” attached.⁴¹ Elsewhere on the same page the score describes the singer as attired in “animal clothes,” perhaps recalling the owl mask worn by O at the height of her submission.⁴²

During what Bussotti labeled a “happening” later in the score, the performance became more blatantly sexual. Many performers appeared “seminude” while the percussionist seemed “to direct the preparations of an orgy” as the singer climbed onto the bed and slowly undressed once more.⁴³ The entire cast joined her on the bed to watch a film and then returned to their instruments while Berberian remained on the bed, “scantily dressed” to sing her final solo. Although none of the performers ever participated in any actual sex, much less sadomasochistic sex, during the performance, Berberian’s sensuous behavior – along with that of the other performers, who also undressed and caressed their instruments suggestively – led organizers in Palermo to label the work * *selon Sade*. This prompted a journalist to ask whether Parisians would be so ridiculous as to label the work *Passion selon X*.⁴⁴ Bussotti stoked the controversy by

⁴¹ Bussotti, *Passion*, 9.

⁴² See Pauline Réage, *Story of O*, trans. Sabine d’Estrée (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 173-99.

⁴³ Bussotti, *Passion*, 18.

⁴⁴ A.C., “Lucifer à Paris,” *Arts-Loisirs*, November 23, 1966. As cited in Aguila, 305.

telling an interviewer that “some musical notes and some lighting may give the spectator the impression that he is witnessing some erotic frolicking” but “there is no movement.”⁴⁵

By including nudity and erotic situations on stage, Bussotti was tapping into a larger movement toward such activities being simultaneously carried out by other artists and musicians. Bussotti had long been comfortable exploring his own sexuality through his music: his *Pièces de chair II* contains what Attinello has described as “overtly homosexual texts” that “emphasize bodies as erotic objects to be enjoyed or dominated.”⁴⁶ But *Passion* pushed this impulse to a new degree as bodies appeared on stage seminude and the suggestion of sex became central to the performance. American performance artist Carolee Schneeman (b. 1939) had staged her *Meat Joy* in Paris in 1964, featuring eight partially nude performers, and would go on to release ever more provocative works, including *Fuses* (1967), a film of her having sex with her then-boyfriend James Tenney. The American cellist Charlotte Moorman (1933-91) began to explore her own nudity on stage around the same time, appearing topless at an August 1966 Berlin performance of Satie’s *Vexations*.⁴⁷ The following year she was arrested for indecent exposure at the premiere of Nam June Paik’s *Opera Sextronique*, the work that made her famous as the “topless cellist.”⁴⁸ Soon afterwards, the musical *Hair* (1967)

⁴⁵ “des notes de musique et des éclairages peuvent donner au spectateur l’impression qu’il assiste à des ébats érotiques...Mais il n’y a pas un geste.” Sylvano Bussotti, interview published in *Arts-Loisirs*, November 23, 1966. As quoted in Aguila, 306.

⁴⁶ Attinello and Osmond-Smith, “Gay Darmstadt,” 112.

⁴⁷ *The Musical Times* 107, no. 1484 (October 1966): 888.

⁴⁸ See Benjamin Piekut, “Testing, Testing... : New York Experimentalism 1964” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia, 2008), 290-91.

appeared off-Broadway featuring a brief nude scene. By contrast with the avant-garde performances of Bussotti, Moorman, and especially Schneeman, the nudity in *Hair*, which only lasted for a few seconds and did not involve any interaction between the performers, seems relatively staid, though it was arguably more famous. Bussotti's *Passion* was therefore not unique in its depiction of sexuality, but it was certainly still pushing boundaries of acceptable performance.

Pierre Boulez, the director of the Domaine Musical, anticipated *Passion* with a mixture of excitement and trepidation. In July 1966 he wrote to Suzanne Tézenas, the president of the Domaine, expressing his concerns: "To tell the truth, on reading the score, I realized that it must be furiously annoying."⁴⁹ He conceded, however, that "the visual side can save quite a few things," especially with Berberian's participation:

Cathy can make magic in a more or less dramatized performance, and that is why, either because of her, or because of the music, I think it is indispensable that the stage resources should be put in play.

Bussotti thus had Berberian to thank for convincing Boulez to fund a fully staged performance of *Passion*. While she had not actively campaigned for such an outcome, her reputation as an effective actress, as well as her talents as a singer, led Boulez to trust her with making the performance a success.

Passion received mixed reviews from critics in Paris due to its musical and dramatic content. Antoine Goléa described *Passion* as having "an exasperated pretentiousness and boredom" and questioned why Boulez, "a great composer and

⁴⁹ "A vrai dire, à la lecture de la partition, je me rends compte que cela doit être furieusement emmerdant. Le côté visuel peut saveur pas mal de choses. Cathy peut faire illusion dans une représentation plus ou moins théâtralisée, et c'est pourquoi, soit à cause d'elle, soit à cause de la musique, je pense qu'il est indispensable que les moyens scéniques soient mis en jeu." July 15, 1966. As quoted in Aguila, 308.

conductor,” would present such an absurd work.⁵⁰ At least some members of the audience agreed with him; Martine Cadieu reported that at one point someone in the back yelled, “So, are you fucking or are you making music?”⁵¹ Berberian apparently responded to this provocation by turning around and shaking her hips.⁵² Pierre Bourgeade disagreed with the other critics and wrote a positive review while acknowledging that some members of the audience booed. He claimed, however, that the cheers overpowered the booing, and he described the work as “poetry.”⁵³ Bourgeade gave Berberian the greatest credit for the success of the performance, praising her beauty, voice, and gestures while only briefly mentioning her “lack of costume.” On a copy of his review Berberian noted in the margin (in pink pen): “my theatrical ‘nudity’ is considered in the right way – poetry according to the music and to the theater – not scandalous.”⁵⁴ Boulez had been right to trust Berberian with giving a successful theatrical performance; the piece was not universally praised, but

⁵⁰ “Le vide était dans l’oeuvre, sorte de mimodrame en musique d’une pretention et d’un ennui exaspérants...Et je me demande: est-ce que vraiment Pierre Boulez, ce grand compositeur, ce grand chef d’orchestre, animateur du ‘Domaine’ depuis 1954, trouve que c’est servir la musique contemporaine que d’accueillir de semblables inepties?” Goléa, *Carrefour*, December 14, 1966. As quoted in Aguila, 309.

⁵¹ “Il y eut durant la représentation du Domaine musical une voix qui hurla du haut du poulailler: ‘Alors, vous baisez ou vous faites de la musique?’” Cadieu, *Lettres françaises*, January 5, 1967. As quoted in Aguila, 308.

⁵² “Mlle Berberian se retourna et lui répondit d’un coup de hanches.” Anonymous critic, *L’Express*, December 19, 1966. As quoted in Aguila, 309.

⁵³ “la mia cosiddetta ‘nudità’ teatrale viene considerata nel modo giusto – poesia in funzione alla musica e al teatro – non scandalistico.” Clipping in PSS, Berberian collection. The review was published as Bourgeade, “La Passion selon Sade,” *Nouvelle Revue Française* no. 171 (March 1967): 530-31.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

it generated enough interest that it was repeated in locations including Stockholm, Warsaw, and the Juilliard School in New York with Berberian singing.

Berberian described the Parisian performance to Andriessen as “a huge success.”⁵⁵ She reprised her role multiple times and showed her devotion to the work through her decision to excerpt the vocal part, an arrangement she titled “O”: *Atti Vocali*. In program notes for a 1971 recital in Toronto, Berberian stated that she arranged the work herself, “with the composer’s encouragement.”⁵⁶ Berberian’s program explained her rejection of the “traditional” recital format, which she described as “a fairly rigid ritual” and shared her introduction of “many of the elements heretofore associated with the theatre – lighting and staging effects and an overall quality of the unpredictable” in her attempt to develop an alternative style of performance. Though the program did not explicate the lighting and staging Berberian used in her Bussotti transcription, she likely incorporated some theatrical elements in her performances of the piece. Yet she also chose to record her arrangement, providing the sound of *Passion* without its essential visual component.⁵⁷

In her arrangement of “O,” Berberian excerpted the vocal line from the original *Passion* but also maintained a minimal amount of percussion, which she played herself. The virtuosic line ranges widely, from very low to very high pitches, and consists primarily of singing, occasionally interspersed with sounds such as laughter or speech. As

⁵⁵ Berberian to Andriessen, December 27, 1966. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

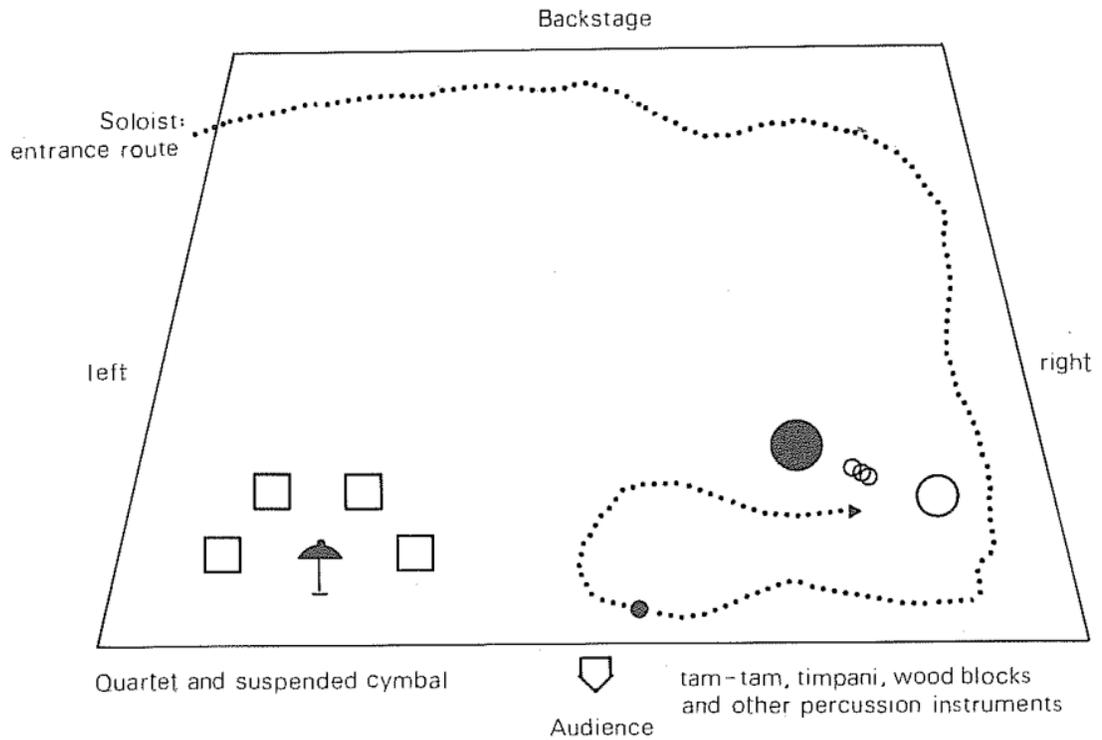
⁵⁶ Concert with pianist Paul Helmer on July 23, 1971 at MacMillan Theatre at the CBC Toronto Festival. PSS, Berio collection.

⁵⁷ Berberian recorded “O”: atti vocali in 1970 and released in on her album *MagnifiCathy: The Many Voices of Cathy Berberian* (Wergo, WER 60054).

in works like *Sequenza III*, the text is highly fragmented, with only occasional words or phrases communicated clearly. “*O*”: *Atti Vocali* is markedly less dramatic than *Sequenza III* due to the prevalence of actual lyrical singing. The piece allowed Berberian to show off her range and her flexibility in realizing large intervals, and also foregrounded her singing voice rather than her ability to produce vocal effects. Berberian’s live performance of this work with lighting and staging may have contributed to a more dramatic effect, but on a recording, Berberian’s virtuoso singing dominates.

Scherchen, *Wai*

Although no subsequent work in her repertoire approaches the sheer over-the-top theatricality of Bussotti’s *Passion*, many later compositions written for Berberian incorporated some element of theater, especially movement. In the published score of *Wai*, Tona Scherchen provided a detailed diagram showing the proper placement of the instruments on stage as well as the singer’s stage blocking (see example 3.7). Almost all of the singer’s movement takes place at the very beginning of the piece, as she enters the stage from the left rear, moves across the back of the stage, up along the right side and then across to the array of percussion. She reaches the percussion quickly, suggesting that her movement functions largely as an extended entrance, perhaps mimicking the dramatic entrance of *Sequenza III*. (Though timing is not indicated, the singer moves extensively on only the first page of a forty-page score.) In addition to this movement across the stage, Scherchen occasionally indicates specific gestures, including telling the singer to put her hand on her heart (p.1) and to make a sign of refusal (p. 3).



Example 3.7: Stage layout of Scherchen's *Wai*

Much like Berio's *Sequenza III*, *Wai* includes a large number of emotional descriptions to guide the singer as she performs the work. These often correspond to vocal sounds on almost an individual basis, with each sound assigned a different emotion or feeling. In one section of the first movement, the singer moves through the following moods and vocal effects (see example 3.8):

½ waiting, ½ crying	sobbing (with a single syllable of Sprechgesang)
with ecstasy	murmuring (with a single sob)
profound	stylized declamation
ecstasy	murmuring (with a finger click and a tongue click)
surprised	breath in
gentle	short, sung high note and murmuring
grandiose	sung held note
always exalted, nervous	murmuring
gentle, almost sensual	groan and murmuring
gentle mocking	short, sonorous sung note and murmuring
almost laughing	breath in and breath out
gentle	single syllable of Sprechgesang and murmuring
menacing	sung held note with rapid vibrato

The frequency of changing emotions, combined with the varied vocal effects, serves to give this section of *Wai* a frenzied feeling. The mood calms significantly in the second movement, which features more singing and few extended techniques or changes of emotion. The third and final movement reaches a middle ground, with a good deal of singing interspersed with vocal effects and changing moods. The wide range of emotions combined with the variety of vocal effects, the notated movements, and the singer's dual position as a percussionist, make *Wai* a highly theatrical work, one that uses vocal pyrotechnics to create a dramatic spectacle.

Rands, *Ballad 2*

The type of movement found in works like *Circles* and *Wai* was brought to the forefront in *Ballad 2* by Bernard Rands. In the published score, Rands describes the work as a “music/theatre piece” that references vocal compositions by other composers as well as other types of performance including the circus, ballet, gymnastics, and mime.⁵⁸ Meant as a reconsideration of the vocal recital, Rands wrote that he took the Lied as the basic model for his work. As such, he composed a fairly straightforward score for voice and piano, albeit one that comprises a great variety of musical styles. Yet he supplemented the score with detailed instructions on movement, gesture, lighting, and costume. He also asked the musicians to act. In addition to specific actions or emotions called for in the score, Rands' prefatory instructions tell the performers to “remain independent” and “NEVER acknowledge the presence of each other.”⁵⁹ This reveals Rands' greatest

⁵⁸ Rands, *Ballad 2*, iii.

⁵⁹ Rands, v.

divergence from an actual Lied, which has the interconnected partnership between the vocalist and pianist as its foundation. Indeed, the only real correlation with the Lied in *Ballad 2* comes in the scoring; the other actions serve to dismantle the traditional performance practice of Lied.

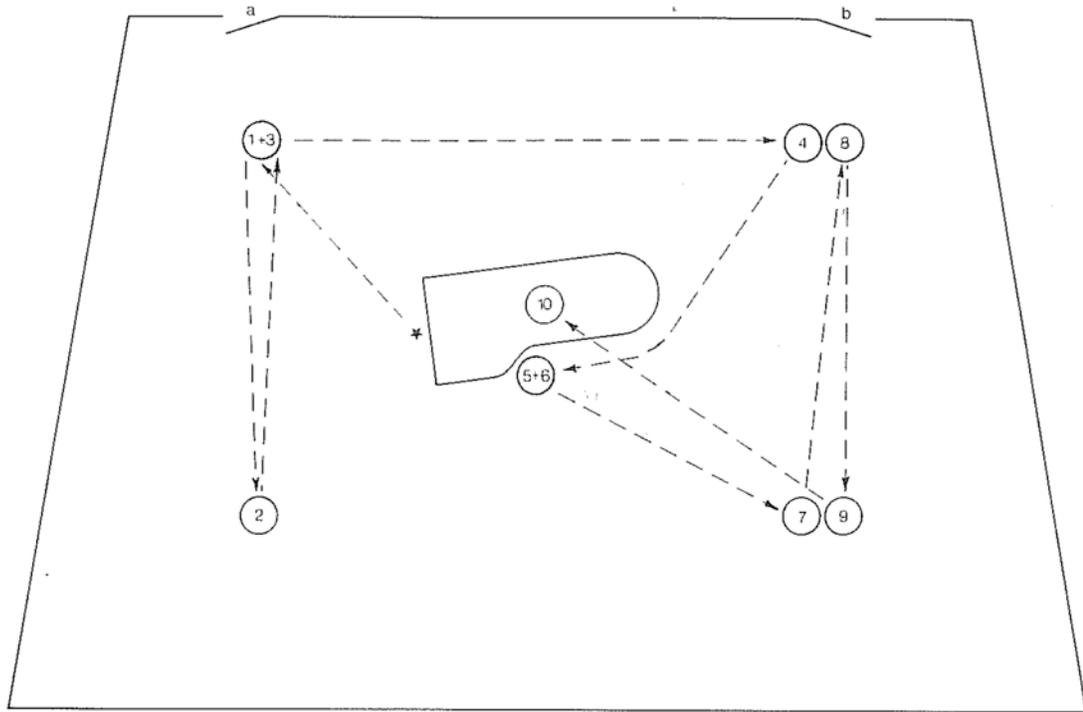
The score begins with a diagram of the stage layout, with the singer's movements carefully notated (see example 3.9). Rands then provides detailed instructions on how the performers are to move and gesture throughout the piece. The piece begins in silent darkness as the vocalist takes her initial place:

she sits at the piano, leaning forward, arms folded on the base of the music stand and her head resting on her forearms as though sleeping. Her face is towards the audience. Gradually she begins to lift her head and continues to do so *very slowly* until she reaches an upright sitting position at 0'-40." Various puzzled expressions cross her face during this slow unfolding. Finally, she turns her head to gaze at the keyboard. She must remain silent during the whole of this period.⁶⁰

As the singer lifts her head, the "lighting plot" calls for a green spotlight to gradually shine on her.⁶¹ These details of lighting and gesture recall the choreography for Berberian's performances of Berio's *Visage*. Rands' directions continue in a similarly meticulous way, telling the vocalist to move in various ways, including pretending to play the keyboard as if accompanying herself, slapping the piano, "dancing" in a specific rhythm accompanied by hand clapping, walking along an imaginary tightrope, standing in a "typical Lied position" in the curve of the piano, performing an aerobics routine "suggesting a physical education instructress," and running and leaping up to a sitting

⁶⁰ Emphasis in original. Rands, iv.

⁶¹ Ibid.



Example 3.9: Rands, *Ballad 2*, p. iii

position on the lid of the piano.⁶² Not only must the singer move energetically, the instructions even state that she must land on the piano just as the pianist plays the downbeat of the next measure; she even sings as she does so. The pianist, meanwhile, also has an active part, though it consists largely of closing and opening the piano lid as required, and studiously ignoring the singer as she moves about the stage.

Ballad 2 involves a large amount of acting in addition to the performance of specific movements. Following her “puzzled expressions” at the very beginning, the prefatory notes next instruct the vocalist to “wander dreamily,” look “petrified,” and “scurry back and forth with bewildered and terrified gestures.”⁶³ In addition to these, the

⁶² Rands, iv-v.

⁶³ Ibid.

score adds directions like “surprised!,” “warningly,” “apprehensive & disturbed,” and “derisive” – all on the first page.⁶⁴ This type of direction fades once the style switches from the varied declamation at the outset – akin to Berio’s *Sequenza III* with its spoken text, approximate notation of pitch, laughter, muttering, tongue clicks, and clapping – to the more lyrical, straightforward singing in the remainder of the piece.

Throughout, Rands’ costume guidelines amplify the theatricality of the work and help communicate the lack of cohesion between the two performers. He tells the vocalist to dress casually, as if she were simply rehearsing. He specifically suggests “coloured trousers or denim jeans and a brightly coloured sweater” with her hair either in pigtails or under a scarf. The pianist, meanwhile, comes dressed for a performance, “in white tie, tails, and white cummerbund.”⁶⁵ Such common concert dress thus becomes a costume, communicating to the audience the familiar image of a professional pianist who has “a stately poise and manner.”⁶⁶ This contrasts with the appearance of the singer, whose professionalism may be questioned not only due to her relaxed clothing, but also because of the peculiar way she moves about the stage. At the end of the piece, the vocalist (who finishes first) reveals that she has been performing for an audience all along, as she jumps off the piano and runs offstage, waving her arms, bowing, and blowing kisses as she goes. The pianist, meanwhile, completes his own performance “in the grand pianistic

⁶⁴ Ibid., 2.

⁶⁵ Ibid., v.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

manner” with his whole body emphasizing the downbeats, and he exits gracefully, bowing and formally acknowledging the audience.⁶⁷

Unlike the other works for Berberian that notate gestures in the score, *Ballad 2* prioritizes this information by placing it in the preface. The movements are so detailed that many could not fit in the score without becoming cumbersome. This forces the singer to memorize her movements as well as the sounds she produces with her voice in order to perform the piece effectively. The mobility essential to a successful performance also prevents the singer from being able to look at a score as she performs; unlike *Circles* or *Wai*, she does not remain stationary for long enough to allow for music stands.

Though Rands dedicated *Ballad 2* to Berberian, she never performed it. He has stated that she “inspired” the work, and it seems likely that the theatricality she infused into her performances of other works was one of the sources of his inspiration.⁶⁸ Her own parody of salon recitals entitled *À la recherché de la musique perdue* (see chapter 6) may also have encouraged Rands to explore a similar re-interpretation of Lied performance. Berberian left no record of her thoughts on *Ballad 2*, but Rands believes that she did not perform the piece because “There are certain theatrical elements which physically, were a little beyond her at that stage of her career.”⁶⁹ This conclusion seems plausible. Berberian was still very active as a performer in the early 1970s (Rands composed *Ballad 2* in January 1971) but she broke her ankle in June 1970 and may not have regained the necessary agility to do things like jump onto a piano. She did not stop

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Personal e-mail communication with the author, January 25, 2011.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

performing theatrical pieces, although the other compositions in her repertoire did not require her to be quite so nimble.

Berio, *Recital I (for Cathy)*

The final theatrical work composed specifically for Berberian may also be the most dramatic. Like Rands' *Ballad 2* and Berberian's *À la recherché*, in *Recital I (for Cathy)* Berio revisited the traditional vocal recital. The piece starts, like many others discussed in this chapter, by confusing the sense of a proper beginning. The singer walks out on stage already singing while a piano sits alone in the center of the stage. Without her accompanist, Berberian performs the first excerpt, Monteverdi's "Lettera amorosa," as the audience hears the piano (or harpsichord) accompaniment coming from offstage or in the pit. She "looks surprised" at the empty piano after she finishes her song, then "goes offstage furiously and is heard nagging for about a minute or so."⁷⁰ When she returns, she begins a lengthy monologue on the pleasures and perils of her life as a singer, interspersed with over forty brief quotations of varied songs and opera excerpts. As the piece goes on, she gets increasingly agitated, first at her missing accompanist (though he arrives eventually), and then as she becomes overwhelmed by the fact of her performance ("there must be someplace in this world that isn't a theater"). By the end of the work, she begs the audience to laugh and applaud before she almost catatonically sings an original Lied by Berio that eventually fades to a repeated semitone on the words "Libera nos."

Much of the drama in *Recital* comes from Berberian's performance of the monologue and the overwhelming number of quotations that she sings. Yet the

⁷⁰ Berio, *Recital I (for Cathy)*, i.

performance is augmented by the presence of another “character,” the Wardrobe Mistress, who adds to the singer’s costume periodically. Sketches of Berberian’s costume for *Recital* suggest how her appearance changed during her performances.⁷¹ She began clad in a simple black sheath dress with a long train, appropriate for a formal concert. During the performance, the Wardrobe Mistress adds items including sleeves, a stole, and rhinestone jewelry. In the published score, Berio wrote that the idea behind the “accumulation of finery” is that it “weighs down and suffocates the Singer, adding to her final madness.”⁷² Near the end of the performance, the Wardrobe Mistress changes her own clothes from her original “open smock over dowdy normal street wear” by buttoning up her smock so it becomes a nurse’s uniform.⁷³ She adjusts her manner accordingly, from “unassuming” to “authoritarian” as she takes control of the Singer. Now a Nurse, the former Wardrobe Mistress brings out “a dramatic but cumbersome headpiece” that resembles a crown with a netting of black tulle that envelops the Singer’s body; three large red tears or drops of blood adorn the front of the netting. After dismissing the Accompanist, the Nurse directs two stagehands to put the headpiece onto the Singer and then leads her to the front of the stage for her performance of the final Lied, before finally guiding her offstage to conclude the composition.

Like *Sequenza III*, the *Recital* explores the notion of a woman’s madness. The burden of years of performance and the accumulation of dozens of works in her repertoire

⁷¹ These four sketches, drawn in an undetermined hand, are housed in the PSS, Berberian collection.

⁷² Berio, *Recital I (for Cathy)*, ii.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

has left the singer overwhelmed and unable to keep control of her recital. She expresses herself by singing excerpts from other works depicting madness, especially at the end: Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Meyerbeer's *Dinorah*. As Metzger observes in his analysis of *Recital*, the many quotations serve simultaneously as "symbols of the singer's madness" and also as "the source of that agony."⁷⁴ While Berberian never experienced the histrionic madness depicted in *Recital*, its portrayal of a singer weighed down by a life lived on stage is not far from the truth. While in Athens to judge a singing competition in March 1979, Berberian wrote in her journal: "Feel so empty without working and no company."⁷⁵ Unlike the singer she portrayed in *Recital*, Berberian thrived in the public eye. In a letter to Stein from February 1967, as she judged a competition in Utrecht, she told him that she never competed because she was "never able to perform at [her] best without an audience."⁷⁶ Performing for an audience did not drive her mad but rather sustained her happiness. Yet, like the singer she represented, Berberian lived her life on stage and in some ways lost a distinction between her public and private lives.

Conclusion

Through her performances of the pieces discussed in this chapter, Berberian helped to establish the style of music theater that became common in the 1960s and has continued to grow. As we have seen, Berberian's involvement with the genre encompasses a great variety of elements, ranging from the straightforward movement of Berio's *Circles* and

⁷⁴ Metzger, 94.

⁷⁵ March 28, 1979. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁷⁶ Berberian to Stein, [February 1967]. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

Scherchen's *Wai* to the drama of Berio's *Sequenza III* and *Recital I (for Cathy)* to the complete staging, costume, and lighting of Rands' *Ballad 2* and especially Bussotti's *La Passion selon Sade*. Composers recognized Berberian's abilities in these areas and trusted her to create successful performances of their theatrical works. Berberian certainly preferred the works discussed in this chapter that gave her an opportunity to act. She performed *Circles*, *Sequenza III*, and *Recital I (for Cathy)* numerous times, and she even appeared in multiple performances of *La Passion selon Sade*. This predilection likely stemmed from multiple factors. All four works were intended for her, and reflected her own musical personality in important ways. Berberian also consistently expressed fondness for works written by both Berio and Bussotti: she wrote in the late 1960s that Berio and Bussotti "best understand" how to write for the voice.⁷⁷ But the opportunities that these works gave her to act, to perform beyond simply standing and singing, also contributed to making these works some of her favorites.

Many of the works discussed in this chapter interrogate the convention of the vocal recital. *Sequenza III*, *Wai*, and *Recital I* confuse the sense of a proper beginning by having the singer enter the stage already singing the piece. This subverts the audience's custom of welcoming the singer to the stage with applause, because if they applaud her entrance, they obscure the sound of her voice. Other recital behaviors also receive scrutiny in these works. *Ballad 2* and *Recital I* play with the relationship between the singer and her accompanist, highlighting the way that singers traditionally depend on pianists while taking their presence for granted. Even the normal dress code for recitals becomes important, as *Ballad 2* shows the discrepancy between a performer's everyday

⁷⁷ Berberian to Luigi Rognoni. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

rehearsal clothing and the formal costume worn for a performance. *Recital I* shows the singer's finery as a type of limitation that overwhelms her, eventually rendering her immobile and almost mute.

Berberian adopted a similarly skeptical attitude towards recital customs as she began to redefine her approach to vocal recitals in the 1970s. She enjoyed challenging the audience's expectation of how a recital should progress by juxtaposing disparate musical styles and mixing serious avant-garde works with popular songs. In some of her recitals, the accompanist shows up late, as he did for *Recital I*, or otherwise plays a significant role that emphasizes his importance. Even Berberian's elaborate dresses recall not only the fancy dresses often worn by singers in recital, but also her own emphasis on fashion as an avant-garde singer.

Berberian's recital programs combined unexpected repertoire with theatrical effects of costume, gesture, sets, and lighting to produce an individual type of music theater. Acting especially became an important component of Berberian's performances and she began to define herself as "an actress as well as a singer."⁷⁸ In a 1973 interview, she went as far as to declare that though she preferred to avoid labels, she would rather think of herself "as an actress who sings."⁷⁹ She began to move in the direction of more independence and greater theatricality when she made her compositional debut with *Stripsody* in 1966 and followed it with her staged recital programs soon after.

⁷⁸ Program notes for a performance of Berio's *Epifanie* with the American Symphony Orchestra at Lincoln Center, May 9 and 11, 1971. PSS, Berio collection.

⁷⁹ *Radio Times*, March 22, 1973. Clipping in the C.F. Peters archive.

Chapter 4: Cathy as Composer

Cathy Berberian began a new stage in her career in 1966 when she premiered her first composition, a solo vocal work called *Stripsody*, based on the sound effects found in comic strips. Although Berberian's tenure as a composer was brief – she completed only one other work, a short piano piece called *Morsicat(h)y* (1969) – *Stripsody* signaled a new independence in her life, both creatively and personally. From that point on, Berberian no longer relied on Berio or other composers to provide her with new pieces to sing or to propel her career forward. She continued to premiere new avant-garde works, but her career changed radically from a focus on this repertoire to a new emphasis on individual recitals featuring a wider variety of musical styles. Thus the small size of her overall compositional output is misleading. Although she wrote little, what she did compose had a substantial impact on her later career.

Berberian's new creative independence went hand in hand with the newfound sense of autonomy she experienced following her recent divorce. Her life changed radically in 1964 when she discovered Berio's infidelity and subsequently separated from him. In the time following their difficult break-up she publicly avoided him and refused to work with him or premiere his new vocal pieces, though she did keep her commitments to perform works of his that she had sung previously. In a letter to Andriessen from shortly after Christmas 1964, Berberian pointedly stated her refusal to work with Berio or perform "anything of his which requires his active collaboration or presence."¹ Despite this declaration, in the same letter she shared her intention to perform *Circles* in May 1965 at a planned concert in Zagreb, as well as to sing a concert

¹ Berberian to Andriessen. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

consisting entirely of works by Berio, including *Chamber Music*, *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)*, *Circles*, and *Visage*, in Switzerland and Freiburg in the coming months. She clarified that although she was trying to “get away from the association whenever possible” she would not refuse to perform *Chamber Music*, *Folk Songs*, *Circles*, or *Epifanie* when asked, “so long as the Maestro is not conducting.”² Berberian recognized that although the two had been separated legally, their creative association would be more difficult to dissolve. Just as Berberian became known through her connection to Berio, his vocal works had become inextricably identified with her, their foremost interpreter. Berio had occasionally worked with other singers, as with his dramatic work *Passaggio*, but much of his reputation at that point was based on the music he had written for, and with, Berberian.

The dependence was mutual, and Berberian quickly reversed her decision to avoid working with Berio. By early 1966 she consented to work with Berio once again when she agreed to premiere his *Sequenza III* at the contemporary music festival in Bremen, Germany. Their professional relationship resumed cautiously; the pair had no immediate contact while Berio composed the work, and he did not attend its premiere. Yet Berberian and Berio began to actively collaborate again in the months following the Bremen premiere of both *Sequenza III* and *Stripsody*. Although Berberian built a new career for herself apart from Berio beginning with her compositional debut, she astutely realized that such a path might not lead to success. Instead of cutting her ties with her ex-husband completely, she realized that he had helped her as much as she had helped him, and she chose to continue their musical partnership. Eventually, this professional relationship led

² Ibid.

to a personal friendship and Berberian grew close to Berio's new wife and their two young children.

Berberian emerged from her divorce with a fresh, bold look that matched her more daring role as a composer: she dyed her naturally dark hair a bright platinum blond and began to wear flashier outfits on stage. As shown in the previous chapter, Berberian had long emphasized the visual element of her stage performances, focusing on fashion as the most obvious way of creating a connection between her physical body and her audible voice. Therefore, her more flamboyant outfits built upon an already existing aspect of her creative personality. However, Berberian did change enough about her appearance – especially her hair – to mark a definite transformation from her previous persona as Berio's wife. No longer would Berberian remain in the background, receiving credit for her beautiful voice but not for her creative abilities; her intense platinum hair indicated a new assertiveness and self-confidence.

Like the female performance artists discussed by drama scholar Rebecca Schneider, Berberian used her body as a stage upon which to evoke specific associations.³ Schneider presents the idea of the “explicit body” as one that “interrogates socio-cultural understandings of the ‘appropriate’ and/or the appropriately transgressive.”⁴ Berberian used her body to make a statement about her new persona, which discarded her expected role as humble performer. She did not use explicit sexuality like the performance artists in Schneider's study, but she did evoke the images of sexy

³ Rebecca Schneider, *The Explicit Body in Performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 6-7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

blond starlets like Marilyn Monroe, with whom Vila has stated she felt a special connection.⁵ She utilized that sexuality when she performed works like Bussotti's *Passion selon Sade*, but her main transgression was instead her turn toward popular culture. A picture of Berberian singing the premiere of *Stripsody* shows her with her blond hair swept up into a beehive hairdo, wearing false eyelashes and a sleeveless shift dress.⁶ She continued this stylish look in later performances, but changed her preferred outfit to a long dress with a psychedelic print (see example 4.7 below). Berberian's fashion choices indicated her new engagement with popular culture, which often meant youth culture, as epitomized in the comic strips of *Stripsody* and her forthcoming covers of Beatles songs. Her new status as a composer also violated accepted norms of how a singer should behave. With her compositional debut, Berberian became the bold, independent, sexy blond who stood in the spotlight, both literally and figuratively.

Stripsody

Berberian made her public debut as a composer almost by chance. She had planned to give a fairly straightforward recital at the Pro Musica Nova festival in Bremen, which had commissioned new works for her to sing by multiple composers, including Berio and Pousseur. Berberian remembered commissions from two additional composers: Maderna and the young German violist and composer Johannes Fritsch (1941-2010).⁷ However, a

⁵ Vila, 134.

⁶ The picture is included in the review of the Bremen festival by Wolfram Schwinger, "Bremer Uraufführungen: Flucht in die Virtuosität," *Melos: Zeitschrift für Neue Musik* (July/August 1966): 234-37.

⁷ Berberian, interview by Ottieri.

1965 letter from Radio Bremen, the parent organization of Pro Musica Nova, to Dieter Schnebel shows that they had commissioned him to write a solo vocal composition for Berberian.⁸ In any case, only Berio and Pousseur fulfilled their commissions. Confronted with this setback, Berberian approached Hans Otte, the director of the festival, with a novel idea for completing her recital program. In addition to Berio's *Sequenza III* and Pousseur's *Phonèmes pour Cathy*, she offered to perform John Cage's *Aria with Fontana Mix*, which she had sung many times since its premiere in 1959, but never in Bremen. She also offered to add a new piece: her own *Stripsody*. Berberian's brief career as a composer had begun.

According to Berberian, she insisted that Otte formally commission *Stripsody* from her because she intended the piece to be the only one she would ever compose, and she wanted to receive treatment equal to the other composers on her program.⁹ Otte accepted her plan and agreed to pay her what she remembered as "a nominal fee" of around 75,000 lire, or \$120.¹⁰ However, Amy C. Beal has reported that Berberian received a total of around \$625 for both the commission and her performance.¹¹ This number corresponds with the fees other composers and performers earned from Pro Musica Nova: Earle Brown received about \$375 for the commission of *Corroboree* in 1963 and David Tudor earned approximately \$250 for his performance of three

⁸ Radio Bremen to Schnebel, October 29, 1965. PSS, Schnebel collection.

⁹ Berberian, interview by Ottieri.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Beal, *New Music, New Allies*, 147.

Stockhausen works in 1961.¹² The total of both men's fees equals the compensation offered to Berberian, showing that Otte likely treated her as he would any other performer or composer.

Berberian started work on *Stripsody* by assembling a collection of sounds from comic strips, which she originally planned to give to a composer to craft into a piece. Such an approach was not unusual for Berberian. She frequently helped composers find texts to set, as when she worked with Cage on his *Aria* and with Berio on *Epifanie*. According to her, *Stripsody* arose from a private performance of her comic strip texts for some friends, including Umberto Eco, a longtime comic fan. These listeners were impressed by her performance; they convinced her that the piece was already complete and did not require any outside assistance. In multiple interviews, Berberian's account of the story casts her as an unwitting participant in the composition of her own work. In one interview, she said she was "perplexed" when her friends told her that "the composition was already done."¹³ In another, Eco became the instigator who convinced her that "this is a composition" despite her own uncertainty.¹⁴ Nevertheless, as a result of this encouragement, Berberian continued to hone the piece, doing the work herself rather than delegating it to a more experienced composer.

She described *Stripsody* as "a collage of the onomatopoeic words used in comic

¹² Ibid., 146-47.

¹³ "Però mentre li recitavo improvvisando fra amici, mi è stato detto che erano già in sé musica, che la composizione era già fatta. Non volevo crederci ed ero perplessa." Berberian, interview by Emilio Gavezzotti, "La Recherche, Stripsody e Pulcinella," *Discoteca*, no. 159 (April 1976) as reprinted in *Symphonia*, no. 30 (September 1993): 25.

¹⁴ Berberian, interview by Ottieri.

strips to which the sound has been restored.”¹⁵ Berberian organized the onomatopoeia into a roughly alphabetical catalog that extends from “aaaiaiaaaa” to “zzzzz.” She then inserted short scenes that consist of sound effects or quotations from comic book characters, but are detached from the alphabetical listing and inscribe relatively brief narratives. The piece includes nine such insertions, ranging from excerpts of comics like Superman (“It’s a Bird – no; It’s a plane – no; It’s Superman!”) and Peanuts (“Good grief”) to generic scenes like a gangland murder and a fight between a cat and a dog.

Berberian’s interest in comic strips seemed a sudden change from the avant-garde works that had previously constituted her repertoire. In actuality, *Stripsody* reflected larger processes of cultural accreditation happening in the 1960s. Highbrow artists and critics were beginning to reassess their previously dismissive attitudes toward any and all popular music (especially the Beatles), and comic strips began to be considered as a form of serious art and even literature. It is important to remember that at the time she composed *Stripsody*, this cultural accreditation was still in its early stages. Plenty of highbrow artists and critics continued to deplore comics, even after others had accepted them as worthwhile art.

According to comic strip historian Thierry Groensteen, “there was a complete absence of critical, archivist and academic attention” paid to comics until the 1960s.¹⁶ However, they had long attracted notice from educators due to their suspected influence

¹⁵ Program notes for a recital at the CBC Toronto Festival, July 23, 1971. PSS, Berio collection.

¹⁶ Thierry Groensteen, “Why Are Comics Still in Search of Cultural Legitimization?” in *Comics and Culture: Analytical and Theoretical Approaches to Comics*, trans. Shirley Smolderen, ed. Anne Magnussen and Hans-Christian Christiansen (Museum Tusulanum Press, 2000), 31.

on the morality of young people. Such educators “untiringly denounced them as ‘bad for children.’”¹⁷ The situation began to change in the 1960s when European and American intellectuals, including Eco, led the move toward accepting comics. Changing attitudes can be observed in a number of developments in France from the time period. In the 1960s the French finally settled on a permanent name for comics, “bandes dessinées” (“strips that have been drawn”), rather than the hodgepodge of terms that had been employed until then, such as “histoires en estampes” (“stories told in prints”), “histoires en images” (“picture stories”), and “récits illustrés” (“illustrated tales”).¹⁸ This uniform designation indicates the growing, serious attention paid to comic strips and, therefore, the need for a widely accepted and understood nomenclature for discussing them. The French journal *Communications*, which devoted much attention to various aspects of popular culture including television and cinema, began to publish articles examining comic strips in 1970. In 1976 it released an entire issue called “The comic strip and its discourse,” which included an article by Eco and a lengthy analysis of *Stripsody*.¹⁹

Meanwhile, in Italy, Eco and Berberian had been exploring their joint fascination with comics since the early 1960s. This continued their shared interest in literature, which began with their study, alongside Berio, of works by James Joyce in the late 1950s. That discovery had led to the creation of the radio program *Omaggio a Joyce* and the electro-acoustic work *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)*. Eco and Berberian then turned their attention

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 29-30.

¹⁹ René Lindekens, “Analyse structurale de la Stripsody de Cathy Berberian,” *Communications* 24 (1976): 140-76.

to a different type of experimental text. They worked together to translate American cartoons into Italian, beginning with a collection of comic strips by Jules Feiffer, which they published in 1962.²⁰ Berberian's interest in comics thus can be dated to the early 1960s, making her creation of *Stripsody* not as unexpected as it may first appear.

The increasing critical approval of comic strips does not fully explain Berberian's interest; on a more basic level they seem to have genuinely appealed to her. Most likely, Berberian felt encouraged to explore further some of her preexisting interests because of their contemporaneous cultural reassessment. In undated program notes that she sent to Swiss harpsichordist Antoinette Vischer about *Stripsody*, she connected the work to the exploration of "the word in sound and music" that began with Berio's *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)* almost a decade earlier, making an explicit association with a recognized piece of "serious" contemporary music.²¹ The notes also mention her work on the translations of Feiffer's cartoons, described as a "labour of love," as well as the "recent European re-evaluation of comic strips as a significant mirror of society." Such justifications of the intellectual nature of *Stripsody* make it clear that Berberian recognized the need to defend her work against highbrow critics who might dismiss its origins in popular culture. However, the notes also reveal her "inordinate passion for Peanuts," explaining the defensiveness of the other comments. By composing *Stripsody*, Berberian displayed her awareness not only of popular culture, but also of the changing elite attitudes regarding it. She remained just on the edge of cultural mores, experimenting with the boundaries of

²⁰ Feiffer, *Il Complesso Facile: Guida alla Coscienza Inquieta*, trans. Umberto Eco and Cathy Berberian (Milan: Bompiani, 1962).

²¹ Program notes for an unspecified recital. PSS, Vischer collection.

acceptable subject matter but not going beyond what others had already deemed reasonable.

By the time Berberian and Eco began translating comics together, visual artists in the pop art movement such as American Roy Lichtenstein (1923-1997) had already heralded this new subject matter. *Stripsody* includes some of the same onomatopoeia featured in Lichtenstein's paintings from the early 1960s, although Berberian never acknowledged the artist as an inspiration. She did, however, connect *Stripsody* to the genre, calling it "a 'verbal' expression" of pop art.²²

Stripsody gained a clear visual association with the pop art movement when Eco introduced Berberian to the painter Eugenio Carmi. Berberian performed her piece for Carmi, who then drew some abstract images of the text "only showing the onomatopoeia made by the singer."²³ Eco saw this as a simultaneous elaboration, in which "the voice of Cathy gave more of a graphic suggestion while the illustrations of Carmi furnished more of a vocal solution."²⁴ Berberian disagreed with this assessment, emphatically describing Carmi's illustrations as "inspired by my composition *Stripsody*" and thereby implicitly denying that she might have received any inspiration from Carmi's work.²⁵ In any case, Berberian's encounter with Carmi resulted in two relatively autonomous creations –

²² Berberian to Walter Hinrichsen (pres. of Edition Peters), October 22, 1968. PSS, Depositum Universal Edition.

²³ Carmi, interview by Vila, February 2002. Quoted in Vila, 177.

²⁴ "la voce di Cathy ha dato più di un suggerimento grafico mentre l'impaginazione di Carmi ha fornito più di una soluzione vocale." Umberto Eco, "Per un vernissage non antirombo," *Stripsody* (Arco d'Alibert edizione d'arte & Kiko Galleries, 1966).

²⁵ Berberian to Stein. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

musical composition and graphic realization – that were united in a book incorporating Carmi’s illustrations, a recording by Berberian, and an introductory text by Eco.²⁶

The packaged works are apparently meant to be independent, since the recording does not literally follow what might assumed to be the “score.” Evidently, either Carmi took a very loose interpretation of Berberian’s performance of this piece, or she changed the piece considerably after working with him. Either way, the recording does not correspond to the order of the onomatopoeias laid out on the page. While Berberian’s recording includes the discrete scenes described above, Carmi’s illustrations do not. Furthermore, Carmi included a glossary containing all the sounds in the book, and Berberian’s recorded interpretations of those sounds sometimes depart drastically from his glossary. For example, the glossary defines the first word in the book, “aaahh,” as “the death rattle of a man beaten to death” (see example 4.1 showing Carmi’s corresponding illustration).²⁷ In the accompanying recording, however, Berberian sings something that could be written as “aaahh” but that sounds like Tarzan swinging through the jungle. Given such obvious disparities, it is more appropriate to view these works as sharing an initial inspiration but with very different results. Carmi’s illustrations should not be considered a score in the traditional sense of the word, since they cannot tell a potential performer how to sing *Stripsody*. Instead, they can best be seen as a suggestive artwork inspired by Berberian and that possibly influenced her in return, but that ultimately exists independently of her composition.

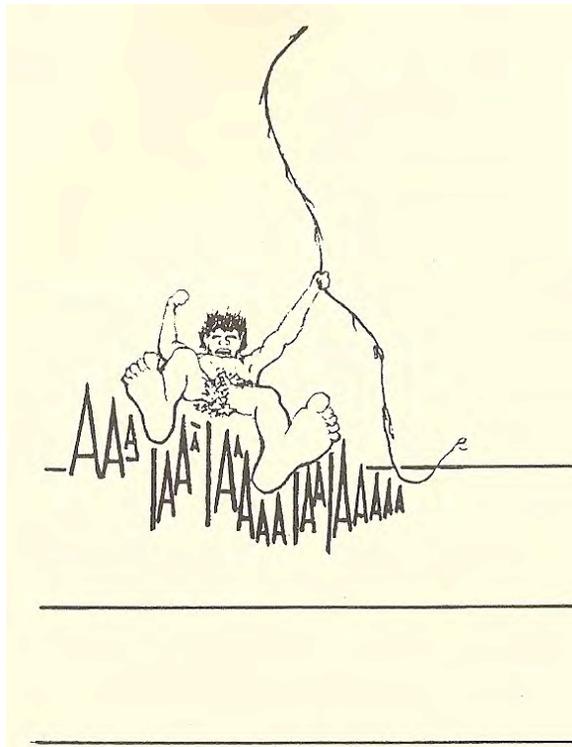
²⁶ *Stripsody* (Rome and Houston: Arco d’Alibert edizione d’arte and Kiko Galleries, 1966).

²⁷ “Rantolo di uomo colpito a morte.” Ibid.



Example 4.1: first page of Carmi's illustrations of *Stripsody*.

In 1967 *Stripsody* appeared in another graphic interpretation, this time as a somewhat more conventional score drawn by the Italian cartoonist Roberto Zamarin.²⁸ Rather than including an explanatory glossary as did Carmi, Zamarin provided pictures to help explain what each sound represents. His professionally rendered drawings give the score an amusing visual aspect. For example, the first graphic depicts Tarzan swinging from a rope to show the singer how to perform the accompanying “aaaiaaaiaaaaaiaaaaa” (see example 4.2).



Example 4.2: The first image in *Stripsody*, p. 1

More so than in the earlier collaboration with Carmi, Zamarin appears to have based his graphics on what Berberian sang; this time, the resulting score accurately represents

²⁸ Cathy Berberian, *Stripsody* (New York: C.F. Peters, 1966).

Berberian's commercially available recordings of the piece.²⁹ The score can be followed easily while listening to her renditions, and even adds to the listener's enjoyment, since the drawings include extra details that might not come across aurally. For example, a barnyard scene is bordered in the score by fence posts to clarify the setting.³⁰

Zamarin's drawings use two different types of notation. The majority of the sounds appear as onomatopoeia on a three-line staff indicating high, middle, and low registers, with a ledger line added occasionally to designate a particularly high-pitched sound. Not all the onomatopoeias are accompanied by a picture, but all have some sort of indication for articulating the sound, whether a literal or abstract picture or a type of font. These sounds follow a roughly alphabetical plan, from Tarzan's "aaaiaaaiaaa" to the "zzzzzz" of a buzzing insect. Performance notes at the beginning of the score indicate that all the sounds should be made "as if by a radio sound man ... who must provide all the sound effects with his voice."³¹ Inserted into the succession of onomatopoeia are six discrete scenes illustrating different popular comic or movie genres. These scenes retain the three-line staff but are set off from the rest of the score by double-bar lines. After the conclusion of each scene, the basic onomatopoeia material resumes at the same point in the alphabet where it left off.

²⁹ Recordings of *Stripsody* can be found on the 10-inch single LP included with Carmi's drawings (1966) and a live rendition on the LP *Magnificathy: The Many Voices of Cathy Berberian* (Mainz: Wergo, 1970).

³⁰ A 2007 performance of *Stripsody* at the Festival Luigi Nono by Karina Oganjan used an animated and colored adaptation of Zamarin's score presented on an onstage screen, displaying the relevant words and pictures as they were sung.

³¹ Berberian, *Stripsody*.

Some of these scenes refer to media other than comic strips, especially cinema. The third, and longest, scene suggests the romance genre common to both comic books and movies while also referencing Berberian's own musical interests.³² In this scene a girl waits for her lover. While she waits, she turns on the radio and hears snippets from three different broadcasts: "Sempre libera degg'io" from Verdi's *La traviata*, "Ticket to Ride" by the Beatles, and a weather report. The accompanying graphics show conventional musical notation for the Verdi quotation, which morphs into chord tablature and a picture of a hand on the neck of a guitar for the Beatles excerpt (see example 4.3). This contrast cleverly encapsulates the differences between classical music and popular music by employing each genre's distinct notation. Berberian (with Zamarin's help) thus managed to show, remarkably quickly, the breadth of her interests and singing abilities. In recordings of this piece, Berberian makes an instantaneous switch in the sound of her voice, from an operatic soprano singing Verdi to an imitation of John Lennon.

The next scene combines two separate events: a barnyard setting and a Western. The barnyard scene consists of a series of animal noises, but also includes a subtle reference to the children's book *Charlotte's Web* (1952), with a picture of a pig combined with a spider web (see example 4.4). This reference would only be accessible to someone who viewed the score, since the only audible sound is that of the pig ("oink oink"). As a short interlude separating the barnyard scene from the Western, the score shows a baby carriage with musical notes falling into it; the carriage has the following question printed on its side: "Do you lullaby Brahms?" (see example 4.5). In the extant recordings,

³² Ibid., 8-9.

tsk sem - pre li - be - ra deg - g'i - o fol - leg - g

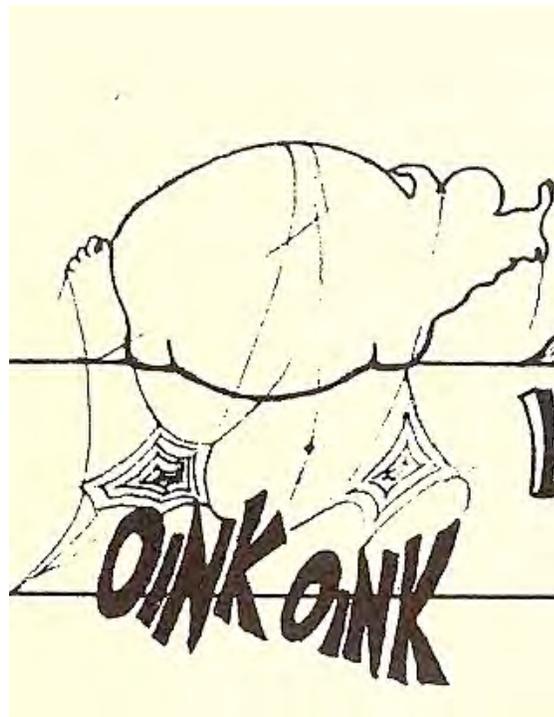
She's got a tick - et to ride She's got

Ab

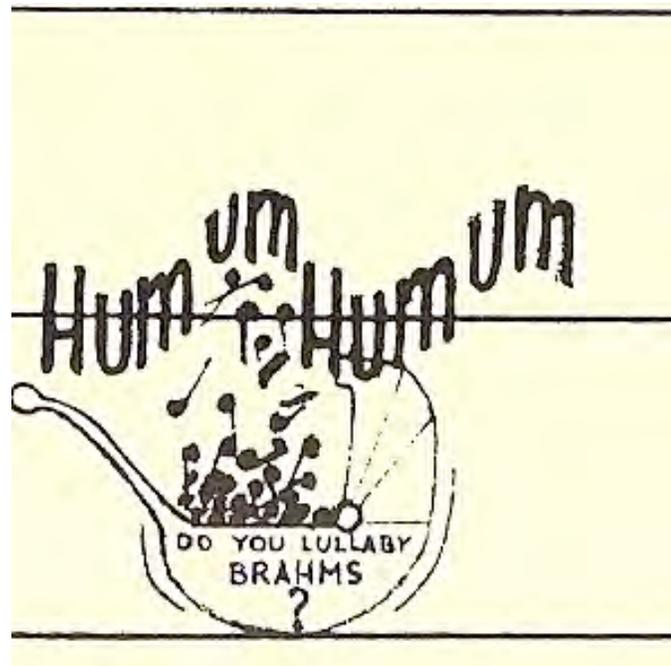
Hand diagrams showing guitar fretting and picking.

Decorative elements: a large circle on the left, a small circle on the right, and a small insect-like figure at the bottom left.

Example 4.3: *Stripsody*, p. 8



Example 4.4: *Stripsody*, p. 11



Example 4.5: *Stripsody*, p. 11

Berberian hums Brahms' famous melody but does not say the words printed on the carriage. On the next line, the reference to a movie Western is made obvious through the rendering of a filmstrip above the three-line staff (see example 4.6). Unlike some of the other important images, the listener would probably grasp the context of this scene even without seeing the filmstrip, but only there do we see the cowboy and Indian whose fighting sounds are depicted in the staff.

The second type of notation in *Stripsody* consists of three abstract insertions. These discrete events are clearly set off from the rest of the score by their lack of staff lines and their placement on separate pages. They contain complete thoughts rather than onomatopoeias, and two of the three have a distinctly juvenile appearance, as if a child, rather than a professional cartoonist, had drawn them. They provide large quotations from specific comics, privileging those over the generic sounds found in the rest of the piece. The first event gives the exclamation "You stupid kite, come down out of that tree!" a clear reference to the book *Go Fly a Kite Charlie Brown*, published in 1960 by Charles Schultz.³³ The next event also quotes a Schultz character, Frieda from the comic strip *Peanuts*, who asks "i'm Frieda and i have naturally curly hair do you lyke girls with naturally curly hair?" followed by the Charlie Brown catch phrase "Good grief."³⁴ The final event quotes a common phrase associated with Superman: "It's a bird! No, it's a plane! No, it's Superman!"³⁵ All three events would have been recognized by the majority of the audience and provided a link with the world of popular cartoon culture.

³³ Ibid., 2.

³⁴ Ibid., 6.

³⁵ Ibid., 15.

In a radio interview from 1972, Berberian expressed her intention to make *Stripsody* a humorous piece that audiences would enjoy, calling it “a very funny piece.”³⁶ Indeed, audiences clearly seem to have enjoyed *Stripsody*, as evidenced by a number of live recordings that capture the laughter greeting Berberian’s performances.³⁷ Berberian desired such a reaction; although she took this piece seriously, that did not mean it could not also be funny. According to Berberian’s friend and colleague Jennifer Paull, who has written copiously on the singer, Berberian deliberately attempted to “bring back fun and laughter to the concert stage.”³⁸ This does not mean that she tried only to be entertaining; Paull claims that Berberian’s humor was “neither slapstick nor ‘obvious.’”³⁹ Instead, she favored intellectually engaged humor, often using word play to charm her listeners, a prime example of which is the double entendre of *Stripsody*’s title.

Berberian’s wish to make people laugh came from her desire always to entertain her audiences, through whatever means necessary. Such a perspective prevented Berberian from remaining solely in the realm of avant-garde performance and led her to experiment with inspiration from popular culture, including comic strips, and soon afterward, the Beatles (see Chapter 5). She did not see a clear division between high and low art: as she wrote in one of her private notebooks, “One Man’s Kitsch is another

³⁶ Berberian, interview by Charles Amirkhanian on KPFA’s *Ode to Gravity*, November 1, 1972.

³⁷ Live recordings can be found on *Magnificathy* and in the documentary by de Swaan, *Music is the Air I Breathe*.

³⁸ Paull, 44.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 59.

Man's Kunst."⁴⁰ This point of view also led Berberian to make her performances visually as well as aurally arresting.

In order to maximize the entertainment value of *Stripsody*, Berberian requested that Eugenio Carmi design a series of panels to be used as onstage during her performances of the piece (see example 4.7). These reproduce Carmi's published abstract drawings but on a larger scale, arranged in a seemingly random order that does not follow the alphabetical sequence of the sounds.



Example 4.7: Berberian singing *Stripsody* in an undated photo

While those drawings make little sense when viewed as a traditional score for *Stripsody*, they are more successful on stage as abstract representations of her comic utterances. It

⁴⁰ Private collection of Cristina Berio.

took some time for the panels to be produced, but Berberian began using them as soon as they became available, likely sometime in early 1967.⁴¹ She wanted to use the drawings as a stage set both because she thought they would make “a fantastically new effect” and because they would “advance publicity concerning this new kind of recital” that she was beginning to fashion.⁴² Berberian thus expressed an explicit connection between her first composition and the themed recitals that dominated the latter part of her career; by combining the stage set with her bold new appearance, she moved steadily in the direction of the theatrical programs she started creating in the late 1960s.

In addition to Carmi’s panels, Berberian placed a “score” of *Stripsody* before her on a music stand during performances to convey the impression that she was literally reading comic strips aloud. “If you did it by heart, it would no longer have any relationship with the page of comic strips!” she told a young singer.⁴³ As she often wrote in the program notes for *Stripsody*, “the physical gestures in the piece are inseparable from the vocal gestures – one could say that the action is irresistibly tied to the production of sound.” In fact, one gesture involves the singer standing silently with her thumb in her mouth, possibly emulating Linus from Peanuts.

⁴¹ In a letter to Leonard Stein probably from March 1967, Berberian mentions the recent availability of “a series of graphic designs” by Carmi that she contemplated bringing to the U.S. for an upcoming performance of *Stripsody*. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ “Mais si vous le faites par cœur, il n’y a plus aucun rapport avec la page de bande dessinée!” Berberian, interview with Mildred Clary, *L’Atelier de musique de Cathy Berberian*, France Musique, February 11, 1983, Archives of Radio France. As quoted in Vila, 178.

Providing an entertaining theatrical experience for her recital audiences became an increasingly important goal for Berberian later in her career. Berberian had often designed specific dresses that she thought heightened the impact of certain pieces, as was the case with her open-backed dress for Berio's *Circles*. In the published score of *Stripsody*, performance notes indicate that all the sounds should be made with the voice and although no props are allowed, "gestures and body movements" are encouraged. When Berberian performed the piece, she emphasized her verbalizing with corresponding gestures that relate to Zamarin's drawings. For example, the piece ends with her killing a buzzing insect with the "bang" of an imaginary gun, which in performance she raised and pointed at the offending creature. She also set off the interjected scenes with a hand movement emulating the double bar lines drawn by Zamarin, thereby making it obvious to the audience when these scenes started and stopped.⁴⁴

Berberian, then, was acutely conscious of her body and her visual impact on the audience. The double entendre in the very title of *Stripsody* itself invokes the body: it suggests strip teases perhaps more readily than comic strips. Berberian did not shed any clothing during her performances of the piece (she didn't even bare her back as she had for *Circles* performances), but the insinuation that she might reveal more added an extra degree of titillation for audiences. Reviews of Berberian's early performances of *Stripsody* often mention the fact that the piece "had nothing to do with undressing," as Howard Klein put it in the *New York Times*.⁴⁵ Yet the notion of *Stripsody* as strip tease is

⁴⁴ Video of Berberian performing *Stripsody* is included in de Swaan, *Music Is the Air I Breathe*.

⁴⁵ Klein, "Cathy Berberian Sings Cage Music," *New York Times*, Oct. 26, 1966: 41.

not far from the mark if interpreted as a sense of exposure involving more than mere nudity. Indeed, as the only piece Berberian ever wrote for herself to sing, *Stripsody* stands out as a unique musical statement. She waited eight years into her career as an avant-garde singer to compose it, and never followed it with another vocal work. As a result, *Stripsody* “bared” Berberian’s own musical tastes and marked her compositional debut, a momentous and doubtless intimidating event.

The suggestion of exposure and a resulting vulnerability clearly resonated with the circumstances surrounding *Stripsody*’s premiere. A month later, Berberian wrote to Andriessen to express her surprise at the positive reception the piece had received despite sharing a program with new pieces by Berio and Pousseur. She claimed to not have expected her own work to receive equal treatment, and she shared her amazement at being “praised” by prominent critics including Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Theodor Adorno.⁴⁶ In fact, Metzger viewed *Stripsody* as the highlight of Berberian’s performance at Bremen, calling it “a funny, musically effective construction.” He commended both Berberian’s use of comic strips as a source for the piece and also the appropriate relationship between “singing and facial expression” that resulted.⁴⁷

In the same letter to Andriessen boasting of her success, Berberian demonstrated her ambivalence about her new role as a composer. She simultaneously bragged about the fact that Otte commissioned the work (“got an Auftrag for it, too!”) and that she got “rave

⁴⁶ Berberian to Andriessen. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁴⁷ “Stripsody for one Voice” ist eine lustige, musikalisch wirksame Montage aus jenem akustischen Neureich, das – von den Vokalkomponisten unbemerkt – in den Comic strips sich entfaltet hat, zugleich ein Beispiel für eine sinnvolle technische Beziehung von Gesang und Mimik...” Heinz-Klaus Metzger, “Die Bremer Tage ‘Pro Musica’ 1966,” *Die Weltwoche*, May 20, 1966: 29.

notices” for it, even as she modestly dismissed those positive reactions because for her it was only “a funny divertissement.”⁴⁸ Rather than call herself a composer, she self-deprecatingly called herself “an inventor of clever gimmicks,”⁴⁹ and, as in the letter to Andriessen, she often described *Stripsody* as a “divertimento” or “divertissement” rather than a full-fledged “composition.”⁵⁰ She rejected attempts to take the piece too seriously, as when a lengthy analysis of it appeared in the French journal *Communications*: she claimed it gave her “a great headache.”⁵¹ Similarly, when an interviewer asked Berberian about the critical and political statements contained in *Stripsody*, she rejected the idea, dismissing the question as “a typically Italian attitude of wanting to connect every cultural experience to politics” and denying that she ever had political intentions.⁵² In the same interview she said that she was partly flattered but also a “victim” of such humorless interpretations of her work, and she wondered why it was not possible to be “frivolous” without being misunderstood.⁵³ However, she also revealed her pride and

⁴⁸ Berberian to Andriessen. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁴⁹ Meirion Bowen, “Contemporary Cathy,” available at <http://www.meirion-bowen.com/mbartberb.htm>.

⁵⁰ In her letters to Stein she interchangeably used the terms “composition” and “divertissement.” Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁵¹ “Ho riportato solo un gran mal di testa.” Berberian, interview by Gavezzotti: 26. She referred to the article by René Lindekens cited above.

⁵² “Naturalmente io non sono mai stata ignara del problema politico, però devo dirle di constatare anche in lei un atteggiamento tipicamente italiano nel voler ricondurre alla politica ogni esperienza culturale.” Ibid.: 25.

⁵³ “Io sono in parte lusingata ma in parte anche vittima di queste interpretazione della mia opera... non è mai possibile essere, non dico superficiali, ma almeno leggeri senza essere fraintesi.” Ibid.: 26.

excitement in her new work, telling Alfred Schlee of Universal Edition six months after *Stripsody*'s premiere that she was "very thrilled" to be "a member of BMI as a composer."⁵⁴

Nonetheless, Berberian expressed dismay when her piece got more attention than others she thought more deserving. In a letter to Stein, she called it "frightening" how "a sheer 'pop' piece like *Stripsody* can overshadow such a strong, important work like *Sequenza*."⁵⁵ Berberian portrayed herself as less worthy of critical interest than a more serious, established figure like Berio, which likely stemmed from both her sincere confusion over the significance some commentators attributed to *Stripsody* as well as from insecurity about her new creative role. Even in an interview she gave in the early 1980s, Berberian dismissed her composition, claiming that she "never really thought it was such a great piece anyway."⁵⁶ She made such a declaration even though she performed *Stripsody* repeatedly for years after its original debut and kept detailed records of her performances of it. In fact, *Stripsody* was one of only seven pieces that she recorded in a notebook devoted to this purpose; all of the others were compositions by Berio.⁵⁷ Such inconsistency points to Berberian's enduring discomfort and insecurity about her compositional and performative roles.

⁵⁴ Berberian to Schlee, Nov. 25, 1966. PSS, Depositum Universal Edition.

⁵⁵ Berberian to Stein, February 1967. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁵⁶ Berberian, interview by Ottieri.

⁵⁷ Berberian listed her performances of *Visage*, *Epifanie*, *Folk Songs*, *Sequenza III*, *Questo Vuol Dire Che*, *Recital I*, and *Stripsody* between 1963 and 1982 in a notebook along with clippings of relevant concert reviews. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

Berberian's ambivalence became amplified by the reactions she received from other composers, especially her now ex-husband, Berio. In an interview from the early 1980s, Berberian noted that Carlos Alsina, a young Argentinian composition student of Berio's, had written to Berio objecting to Berberian giving interviews in which she discussed her composition.⁵⁸ Berio then complained to Berberian that *Stripsody* could not be called a composition, because the idea of a piece based on comic strip sounds was too ridiculous to be taken seriously, and besides, she had not received the proper training to call herself a composer. Berio was apparently the one who suggested that she call it a "divertimento." Although Alsina's purported correspondence with Berio does not survive, another student of Berio's, Fred Myrow, expressed a similar attitude. In a letter to Berio from shortly after *Stripsody*'s premiere, Myrow dismissively referred to Berberian as "a lady composer" and hoped that she would not "take the 'composer' nomenclature too seriously."⁵⁹ He worried that the novelty of *Stripsody* would draw attention away from the "better" music on the program like Berio's *Sequenza III*. But Myrow also felt confident that the excitement would fade, writing: "The publicity doesn't hurt + once its [sic] over, things will settle back into perspective."

Berberian evidently felt no need to reproach Alsina or Myrow for their negative reactions to her compositional debut. In an interview, she speculated that such composers were "probably a little envious – and rightly so" because they had spent so much time and effort studying composition and yet "this singer with her little amusing piece ... gets

⁵⁸ Berberian, interview by Ottieri.

⁵⁹ Myrow to Berio. PSS, Berio collection.

all the attention.”⁶⁰ Berio’s reaction elicited more indignation from Berberian. She resented the fact that he criticized her for promoting her piece and that he had the temerity to call it “ridiculous” without even hearing her perform, relying on the report he received from the decidedly biased Alsina. “So even though I gave in to Luciano,” Berberian stated, “I was a little hurt, or maybe offended that he was bringing me down without even having heard my piece.”⁶¹

At the time when she talked to Berio, Berberian had not yet received the reviews from the festival performances. She recalled much later that none of the pieces she premiered had gotten a positive response from audiences immediately, although critics like Metzger had later written positive reviews; she therefore spoke about the piece cautiously at first. However, when she did read the reviews, she expressed her surprise and excitement to Berio about them. In response, he still insisted that she avoid calling *Stripsody* a composition. Berberian said that she felt “vindicated” by the reviews, which satisfied her despite Berio’s dismissal of her compositional talent.⁶² She boasted to Stein about the reviews as well, telling him to read the July/August issue of the new music journal *Melos* because its review of *Stripsody* was “a rave!”⁶³ Indeed, the *Melos* reviewer, Wolfram Schwinger, called the work the “main success” of the whole Bremen festival and said that Berberian showed everyone the future of new music.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Berberian, interview by Ottieri.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Berberian to Stein. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁶⁴ “Es war der Haupterfolg der Bremer Tage.” Schwinger: 236.

Berberian's compositional debut caused deep ambivalence in the male-dominated European musical avant-garde. Some music critics like Metzger and Schwinger expressed approval of Berberian's efforts, but nevertheless resisted treating her work too seriously. Schwinger, for instance, praised *Stripsody* but still declared that "it had admittedly no musical result" and described it as a "cabaret sketch," albeit one of the "very best quality."⁶⁵ Even Eco exhibited discomfort with her new role. In his introduction to the book containing Carmi's illustrations and Berberian's recording of *Stripsody*, Eco avoided referring to Berberian as a composer, despite the fact that she credited him with convincing her to retain creative control over the piece.⁶⁶ Berberian's doubly problematic status as a performer and a woman clearly failed to suit that of composer. Modernist music's continuing opposition to popular media also inevitably worked against her.

Berberian never stopped using the term "divertimento" to describe *Stripsody*, but she did strategically revise her interpretation of the word. In an undated interview included in the documentary *Music is the Air I Breathe*, she explained that she called *Stripsody* a divertimento rather than a composition because she wanted to entertain people, implying that "compositions" are incapable of amusing audiences.⁶⁷ She thus

⁶⁵ "Das hatte zwar kein musikalisches Ergebnis, war aber ein Kabarettsketch allerster Güte." Ibid.: 236.

⁶⁶ Eco replicates Berberian's story of originally looking for a text but states that she realized that the onomatopoeias would not need music ("non avrebbe avuto bisogno di musica"). Therefore, she never actually composed a piece, only performed it. He also describes the piece as a "musical action" ("azione musicale") rather than a composition. Eco, "Per un vernissage non antirombo."

⁶⁷ de Swaan, *Music Is the Air I Breathe*.

reappropriated the term Berio had pushed on her, giving a positive spin to his stipulation and making it seem like her idea in the first place. This relates to her dismissal of *Stripsody* as nothing to take too seriously. After all, critics never discounted the work's ability to please audiences, and Berberian likewise maintained a similar attitude. She therefore could play an unassuming public role as a composer who created an entertaining trifle but who posed no threat to other, more serious composers. Despite assuming this modest attitude, Berberian continued to perform *Stripsody* throughout her career and it remained one of her most popular works.

Morsicat(h)y

Besides *Stripsody*, Berberian completed and published only one other piece: *Morsicat(h)y* for solo piano (or harpsichord). Commissioned by the Italian pianist Antonio Ballista in 1969, *Morsicat(h)y* shares *Stripsody*'s emphasis on visual performance as well as unusual concepts and their often humorous realization. Although *Morsicat(h)y* is for solo piano (or harpsichord) rather than voice, Berberian ensured that she would remain a crucial part of every performance by creating an interactive score.⁶⁸ Technically unperformable since her death, *Morsicat(h)y* requires the performer to send a coupon included in the score to Berberian who was to send back a personal message. The performer then translates this message into Morse code according to a key printed in the score; each letter corresponds to a different pitch, and the resulting series of dots and dashes is used to produce a rhythm, including rests for punctuation. The right hand plays the generated music "as quickly as possible," acting like a mosquito that moves off the keyboard during rests,

⁶⁸ Cathy Berberian, *Morsicat(h)y* (Universal Edition, 1971).

landing on the wooden part of the piano or on the knee, nose, or neck of the performer. The left hand, meanwhile, repeatedly attempts to swat the right hand/mosquito but repeatedly misses, hitting the piano or even the performer and creating a percussive sound in the process. The music stops when the left hand finally strikes the right hand/mosquito, producing a large tone cluster and killing the mosquito while the pianist says “SPLAT.” The score provides empty staves in which performers can transcribe their personal messages into musical notation; these empty staves are followed by a picture of a dead mosquito as if to reinforce the message. Finally, to conclude the piece, the pianist rubs her fingers together as if flicking off the remains of the dead mosquito.

Berberian realized at least two versions of the piece: the original for Ballista, included with the published score, and one for the Swiss harpsichordist Antoinette Vischer. She wrote both messages in Italian, which would have been logical for Ballista, an Italian, but makes less sense for Vischer, with whom Berberian communicated in French and English. The manuscript score of *Morsicat(h)y* found in the Vischer collection at the Paul Sacher Foundation is a fair copy, without the original message set underneath as in the published score. Written in Berberian’s hand, this score suggests that Berberian wrote the message and then realized the music herself, rather than leaving the realization for Vischer, as her instructions dictated.

Like *Stripsody*, *Morsicat(h)y* emphasizes theatricality. In order for the piece to be effective, the pianist must not be shy about emphasizing her own body. In concert, the actual notes comprise a fairly minor part of the whole work, clearly secondary to the performance’s unusual visual elements. Berberian’s own realization of the piece for Vischer includes a mistake. A C-natural appears where there should be a C# if the

message is to make any sense (a C# makes one word read “cuore,” or heart, whereas a C-natural yields the nonsensical “cuoce”). This minor difference would have no discernible effect on a listener even though it changes the transmitted message. Such an interpretation is strengthened by the experience of Bruno Canino, Berberian’s frequent accompanist and a performer of *Morsicat(h)y*. He commented that he often improvised rather than playing a precise message in Morse code, and that the result was “magnificent and very amusing.”⁶⁹

Berberian’s humorous intentions are evident even within her instructions for *Morsicat(h)y*. She explained the title of the piece as “a pun” with four parts that encompass the multiple references found in the work: “Morsi” for the Morse code used as the rhythm, Cathy for herself, the “author of the message and the piece,” and Mors, the Latin for death, or in Berberian’s words “the fate of this mosquito.” Finally, the title as a whole also shares a phonetic sound with the Italian word *morsicati*, meaning bitten, as if by a mosquito. Berberian further indicated that when the left hand swats at the pianist’s nose in search of the mosquito and misses, “the exasperation should make a comic effect.”⁷⁰

Audience reactions to *Morsicat(h)y* are difficult to determine, since the piece has not been recorded and concert reviews often mention the work only briefly, if at all. This seems to have been the result of a number of converging factors. First, it followed *Stripsody* by three years. Therefore, the novelty of Berberian’s compositional debut had

⁶⁹ “Naturellement, j’improvais... le résultat était magnifique et très amusant.” Canino, interview by Vila, February 2002. As quoted in Vila, 227.

⁷⁰ Berberian, *Morsicat(h)y*.

already dissipated. Perhaps just as importantly, though she often included it in her solo recital programs, Berberian did not perform the piece herself. As a result, the work likely came across as filler – something for the pianist to do while Berberian rested or prepared for her next selection. This might have been Berberian’s intention, as she generally included some solo piano pieces in her recitals to give her own voice a break. In an undated letter to Andriessen containing plans for one of their upcoming concerts, she expressed her concern about having too many “difficult, taxing” pieces to perform and suggested that a solo piano piece by him “would certainly help out.”⁷¹ Furthermore, without knowledge of the preparatory work that goes into a performance of the piece, audiences no doubt missed out on the joke. Although the visual effect remains obvious, the connection to Morse code and mosquitoes is more veiled, especially for spectators who do not understand Italian. The sound of the piano is nothing unusual: the transcription process results in a steady series of eighth and sixteenth notes that do not push any stylistic boundaries. Berberian also seems to have largely ignored the work. For example, a publicity booklet she used in the latter part of her career does not mention *Morsicat(h)y*, but focuses heavily on *Stripsody*, even including an excerpt from the published score. Despite its intriguing content, *Morsicat(h)y* was apparently an afterthought for Berberian.

Conclusion

Berberian understandably maintained a complicated relationship with her compositional activities, and she found it difficult to complete any other pieces. As early as November

⁷¹ Berberian to Andriessen. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

1966 she indicated that she was working on a new composition, writing that, “instead of a composer writing for a performer, here it will be a performer composing for a composer! It will be quite complicated and rather long to make.”⁷² This untitled piece never came to fruition; nor did the other works Berberian planned. In 1969 she claimed to be in the middle of writing a new piece for flute, clarinet, viola, harp, cello and two percussion titled “Anathema con variazioni.” This may have been the same piece she separately described as having the theme “Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue.” If so, it would have continued her humorous tendencies: the “something new” was Berberian herself on percussion. She came close to completing it and even described her plans for performing the piece live: “For the first year or two I come with the rental. It’s a very high rental.”⁷³ Another piece with the title “AWake and Read Joyce,” dating probably from the early 1970s, appears on a list of Berberian’s repertoire in one of her private notebooks, but it does not seem to have ever been performed (nor does a score survive).

Rather than pursuing a career as a composer, Berberian instead turned her creative energies toward her live performances. Her themed recitals dominated the second half of her career and provided her the creative control that she experienced with her musical compositions. Due to her own preferences and the difficulties she encountered as a woman in the male-dominated field of composition, she chose to continue channeling her creativity within her recognized field of performance. Her success with *Stripsody* led her to continue to use comedy as an important feature of her performances, and both of her

⁷² Berberian to Alfred Schlee, Nov. 25, 1966. PSS, Depositum Universal Edition.

⁷³ Bowen, “Contemporary Cathy.”

compositions appeared frequently on her recital programs alongside works by composers as varied as Berio, Claudio Monteverdi, and George Gershwin. Berberian's compositional triumph gave her the confidence to follow her own instincts and perform the music she chose. But now she relied less on established composers to give her opportunities to perform: she alone chose her repertoire and she rarely shared the stage with other performers. Berberian's compositions thus initiated a new period in her career as a self-sufficient performer.

Chapter 5: Cathy's Changing Repertoire

Following her compositional debut with *Stripsody* in 1966, Berberian began to expand her repertoire. She continued to perform her avant-garde specialties and to premiere new works, but she slowly integrated a greater range of musical styles into her performances. In combination with the established works by Berio, Bussotti, and Pousseur, Berberian introduced works by Monteverdi, Weill, Schoenberg, and Lennon/McCartney. These composers represented a great variety of changing interests for Berberian. She first explored music by the Beatles, perhaps as a corollary to the exploration of popular culture she had encountered with *Stripsody*. She also discovered new music from the first half of the twentieth century by Weill and Schoenberg that appealed to her theatrical side. At the same time, she looked far back into music history as she delved into the work of Monteverdi. Berberian found many similarities in this diverse assortment of repertoire and she started to juxtapose them in her recitals.

Berberian's overall goal with her recitals was to lure in audiences, a fact that she proudly described in a later letter to Stein. Her strategy involved "using all possible means to present our music to the average public by surrounding it with attracting and attractive items – instead of saturating them with all-contemporary music programs – and the 'system' is working."¹ She revealed some bias for "our music," referring to the contemporary repertoire that she shared with Stein, suggesting that she still preferred the avant-garde repertoire, or at least identified more closely with it. But Berberian placed a greater importance on pleasing her audiences than subscribing to a monolithic notion of serious music. Her tactic was largely successful. Berberian performed more often in

¹ Berberian to Stein. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

larger venues and more frequently overall. The number of known performances she gave each year had steadily increased since the early 1960s, but it ballooned in 1967 and remained high through the 1970s. She also appeared more often as the star of the show, giving more solo recitals and headlining concerts.

Berberian's new programming garnered larger audiences and more attention from critics, but it simultaneously pushed her away from the European avant-garde culture in which she had initially gained prominence. In fact, her new direction seems to have partially resulted from her increasing frustration with the circumscribed sphere of contemporary music. In a letter to Stein from September 1966, Berberian commented that her recent performance at the Venice Festival "went well although the festival atmosphere was lousy."² She followed with an aside asking, "aren't all festivals getting to be unbearable?"³ However, Berberian also immediately inquired if Stein had seen a recent review praising her Bremen Festival performance featuring the premiere of *Stripsody*, thereby acknowledging the positive press she received as a result of her festival appearances. Perhaps her reaction stemmed from a negative experience at the Venice Festival that year, because in a letter to Andriessen from the same time, she stated that she was "beginning to hate all Festivals and especially those of contemporary music." She also worried: "If I am not careful, I may end up hating music!"⁴ Of course, Berberian did not cease performing at contemporary music festivals, but she did find other outlets where she could foreground her changing repertoire.

² Berberian to Stein. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

³ Ibid. Emphasis in the original.

⁴ Berberian to Andriessen. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

She also found herself with a conflicted public. She had to contend with those she referred to as the “Old Guard of the Avant-Garde” who rejected her new repertoire.⁵ She labeled “the faithful of the avant-garde” as “reactionary” and described them as traditionalists because they adhered to a strict definition of serious, good music.⁶ She encountered such a negative response especially in Germany, where she felt misunderstood and “received with coldness.”⁷ Yet Berberian still viewed herself as avant-garde. For her the term meant “giving oneself to the public in an alternative way.”⁸ In this sense, she did not see a huge transformation from her established style. As she wrote to Stein: “I’m doing now what I’ve always been doing. It’s only that they are discovering it now. I haven’t changed.”⁹ But Berberian *had* changed. She sang a wider variety of music, much of which explicitly appealed to audiences. She made her performances entertaining, and she dared to suggest that her avant-garde repertoire could also be pleasurable.

This chapter examines Berberian’s changing repertoire in the late 1960s. It shows that Berberian assumed a greater sense of agency than she had exhibited earlier in her career. She alone now made decisions about what she sang. This new repertoire thus reveals Berberian’s musical tastes other than avant-garde music and the connections she

⁵ Berberian to Elena Hift. PSS, Depositum Universal Edition.

⁶ “Molti tra i fedeli dell’avanguardia di diventare sono altrettanto reazionari.” Berberian, interview by Gavezzotti: 24.

⁷ “accolto con freddezza.” Ibid.: 25.

⁸ “Il mio essere all’avanguardia non consiste tanto nel fare cose diverse; credo sia soprattutto un fatto di forma: porsi al pubblico in un modo alternativo.” Giorgio Valle, “Berberian: un concerto di mille voci,” *Grazia* no. 2068 (March 1, 1981): 51.

⁹ Berberian to Stein. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

made between vastly different styles. Her exploration also gave her the larger repertoire necessary to craft the wide-ranging recitals she began performing in the 1970s.

Berberian Sings the Beatles

On October 25, 1966, Berberian gave her Carnegie Hall premiere, sharing a program with the trombonist Stuart Dempster (b. 1936). They each presented the avant-garde repertoire for which they were known: Berberian sang selections by Cage, Pousseur, and Berio as well as *Stripsody* while Dempster played Robert Erickson's *Ricercare a 5 for Trombones* and Berio's *Sequenza V*. Yet Berberian broke away from this predictable offering by adding three Beatles songs arranged in a baroque style. Berberian did not reveal this new repertoire on the program; she had intended to sing Berio's *Circles* but was unable to do so because of unspecified "technical troubles."¹⁰ According to the *New York Times* music critic Howard Klein, Berberian announced that in its place, she would sing "some 'contemporary' music in the definition used by disk jockeys today."¹¹ This contemporary music turned out to be "Michelle" arranged by Berio, "Ticket to Ride" arranged by Thomas Simon, and "Yesterday" arranged by Peter Serkin.

Berberian had discovered the Beatles earlier in 1966, due to her daughter Cristina's enthusiasm for the group. In a letter to Andriessen from January of that year, she shared that they were "both crazy about the Beatles" and declared, "I cannot live

¹⁰ Alan Rich, "Blithe and Far-Out," *World Journal Tribune*, Oct. 26, 1966.

¹¹ Howard Klein, "Cathy Berberian Sings Cage Music," *New York Times*, October 26, 1966: 41.

without my record of their songs from HELP.”¹² Later that year she reasserted her passion and asked Andriessen if he had heard the Beatles’ latest record, *Revolver* (released August 1966), which she deemed “fabulous – especially Eleanor Rigby.”¹³ Berberian soon decided to sing some of their songs herself, and worked with a number of composers, including both Andriessen and Berio, to arrange them in historical styles.

Berberian’s collaboration with Andriessen on selected Beatles songs developed over the course of 1966. In a letter to him from that summer, Berberian mentioned that she sang four Beatles songs on BBC television, but she did not specify which songs or who had arranged them.¹⁴ In another letter from late December, she claimed to have “no piano arrangement” for the songs and stated a desire to “work them out” with Andriessen. She offered to send him the music to all the songs, which he could “transpose as necessary and find the right style for each.”¹⁵ Many years later Andriessen confirmed the collaborative relationship. In a 1999 interview, he described the genesis of the project by saying that Berberian wanted him to accompany her while she sang Beatles songs, and he suggested that they make their own arrangements, which they then did “together.”¹⁶

¹² Berberian to Andriessen, January 12, 1966. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

¹³ Berberian to Andriessen. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

¹⁴ Berberian to Andriessen. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

¹⁵ Berberian to Andriessen, December 27, 1966. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

¹⁶ Andriessen, interview by Maja Trochimczyk, Amsterdam, October 21, 1999. In *The Music of Louis Andriessen*, ed. Maja Trochimczyk (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 16.

Andriessen produced, but never published, a collection of four Beatles songs for Berberian, which he titled *4 Beatle-liedjes*.¹⁷ All the songs are set for voice and keyboard, but each has a distinctive style, some of them apparently based upon a rhyme resulting with a familiar composer's name. "Yesterday," written in the style of Gabriel Fauré, uses a legato succession of arpeggiated triplets in the piano to focus attention on the lyrical vocal line reminiscent of the French *mélodie*. Andriessen indicated that "You've Got to Hide My Love Away" [sic; the original is "You've Got to Hide Your Love Away"] should be played on harpsichord, in the manner of Henry Purcell, and the compound meter and ornamented keyboard line suggest a baroque sound. "Michelle" simulates the style of Maurice Ravel, using a chromatic accompaniment thick with parallel octaves, showy flourishes and occasional insertions of measures in triple or quintuple time. Only "Ticket to Ride" evokes no specific composer's style, although the recitative-like opening in the piano marks it as generically baroque (see example 5.1).

Andriessen's arrangements retain many characteristics of the original songs as written by John Lennon and Paul McCartney. He kept the original melodies, lyrics, and forms, and also largely kept the harmonies intact. Three songs have been transposed a whole step down from their original keys and "Ticket to Ride" has been moved down a tritone. Nevertheless, the songs remain readily recognizable, with larger historical connections suggested primarily through the texture of the accompaniment.

¹⁷ The original manuscript scores are in Cristina Berio's private collection. Transparencies of these are in the Andriessen collection of the PSS.

IV Ticket to ride.

fast. *play in D*

RIT *trmms*

Fast

poco f non legato leggiero senza Ped.

f marcato non legato pochiss. Ped.

sf f

f sim

-10-

Example 5.1: Lennon/McCartney, *Ticket to Ride*, arr. Andriessen

Berberian wrote to Andriessen in November 1966 to say that she was going to Paris to record twelve Beatles songs for Philips.¹⁸ The album, with arrangements by Guy Boyer, was released as *Beatles Arias* in France, Germany, and the U.K. and as *Revolution* in the U.S.¹⁹ Boyer used three different ensembles for his arrangements to give variety to the otherwise indistinguishable procession of songs: four songs are orchestrated for standard string quartet, four for a string quartet involving two violas, and four for a wind quintet comprising flute, oboe, English horn, bass clarinet, and French horn. Despite the variation of ensembles, these arrangements sound stylistically monotonous. The album received mixed reviews: *Time* magazine praised Berberian's "tasteful, straightforward singing" but also criticized the "comic incongruity in her highfalutin version of *Yellow Submarine*."²⁰ Andriessen sharply critiqued Boyer's arrangements, calling them "a shame" and condemning them as "humorless, uncreative, [and] stupid."²¹ Berberian never publicized her own thoughts on the album, but she never performed Boyer's arrangements live. Rather, it appears that she used his setting as a quick entry into the growing assortment of baroque Beatles records.

Berberian was not alone in her interest in the Beatles. The previous year, a pair of records appeared that recast Beatles tunes according to baroque stylistic and formal conventions. The first, *Eine Kleine Beatlemusic*, was an EP released by the "Barock and

¹⁸ Berberian to Andriessen. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

¹⁹ France: Fontana 680.279; Germany: Philips 885 524 PY; U.K.: Polydor 583702; U.S.: Fontana MGF 27564.

²⁰ "Bel Canto and the Beatles," *Time*, June 2, 1967: 58.

²¹ Andriessen to Berio, April 17, 1967. PSS, Berio collection.

Roll Ensemble” in England that set Beatles songs with string orchestra accompaniment in the styles of Mozart and Beethoven.²² Later in 1965, the early music performer and musicologist Joshua Rifkin released a better-known record, *The Baroque Beatles Book*, which presented Beatles songs in a number of baroque instrumental idioms, including a harpsichord solo and a trio sonata.²³ Boyer’s settings differed notably from Rifkin’s. Most obviously, all of Boyer’s songs featured the voice, whereas Rifkin orchestrated most of his arrangements for instrumental ensembles. Boyer also arranged only four songs that Rifkin had already released (and none that he had set with words), perhaps an attempt to avoid duplicating the earlier endeavor.

Following the release of *Beatles Arias* and her work with Andriessen, Berberian continued to seek new Beatles arrangements to perform live. Berio arranged three songs for Berberian in 1967, repeating three of Andriessen’s settings: “Michele,” “Ticket to Ride,” and “Yesterday.” These resulted from a collaboration with Berberian for her 1967 Venice Festival recital (described below). Making use of the forces he had available for Berberian’s recital, Berio set his Beatles songs for voice and chamber ensemble, with each song calling for a different combination of instruments. “Michelle,” which Berio set twice, appears in a version for two flutes and harpsichord as well as in a version for mixed winds and strings. The two settings have very different musical styles as well. The harpsichord and the chromatic, ornamented flute lines in the first suggest the baroque.

²² The B side featured music by Wagner arranged in various popular styles including Bossa Nova and the Twist. Barock and Roll Ensemble, *Eine Kleine Beatlemusic* (His Master’s Voice, 1965).

²³ Rifkin, *Baroque Beatles Book*, performed by the “Baroque Ensemble of the Meyerside Kammermusikgesellschaft” (Elektra EKS-7306, 1965).

The second version follows in Andriessen's footsteps; when he heard Berberian's performance, Italian music critic Fedele D'Amico immediately recognized it as "Ravelian."²⁴ "Ticket to Ride" uses a large ensemble of winds, brass, strings and harpsichord to give a generically baroque sound. "Yesterday" has a smaller ensemble, with the flute playing a florid obbligato melody that forms a counterpoint to the voice over the basso continuo support of the harpsichord and cello.

Like Andriessen, Berio left the melody and musical structure of the original songs basically unaltered. He did change the keys of "Michelle" and "Ticket to Ride," transposing them down a whole step and a tritone, respectively. These were the same alterations made by Andriessen, suggesting that Berberian had requested these songs in particular keys. Also like Andriessen, Berio evoked disparate styles primarily through changes in texture and accompaniment, yet he also focused on giving each song a substantial instrumental introduction and interludes. "Yesterday," for example, includes a six-measure introduction featuring the obbligato flute; similar music interrupts the song about halfway through.

Both Berio and Andriessen completed their arrangements without actually setting the text of any of the songs. In the manuscript scores of Berio's arrangements found at the Paul Sacher Foundation, only "Yesterday" includes any text at all, providing the incipets of key lines. Andriessen's unpublished score similarly does not include any words. The lack of text did not bother Berberian, as is obvious from an exchange she had

²⁴ D'Amico, *L'inesauribile Cathy: Un festival nel festival in concerto Berio-Berberian a Venezia*, "La Fiera Letteraria" no. 39, September 28, 1967. Printed in Luciano Berio and Fedele D'Amico, *Nemici come prima: Carteggio 1957-1989*, ed. Isabella d'Amico, (Milan: Rosellina Archinto, 2002), 111.

with Christine Swenoha, an employee at Universal Edition. In February 1970, Swenoha requested that Berberian lend her scores of Berio's arrangements so another singer could perform them.²⁵ When the scores arrived Swenoha expressed concern over the missing text.²⁶ Berberian responded: "Sorry. Someone will just have to buy the three Beatles songs + write the text under the vocal line – I never needed it."²⁷ Whereas Berberian had expressed her distress at the insufficient text in the manuscript of Berio's *Folk Songs*, she obviously had greater familiarity with the Beatles songs and felt comfortable performing them without the text.

Berberian's fascination with the Beatles persisted and she continued to work on new arrangements. A few years after her initial performances of their songs, Berberian wrote her ideas for some new Beatles settings on a scrap of paper that she sent to Andriessen. Dating from 1969 or later, the note shares Berberian's ideas for arranging "I Want You," "She's Leaving Home," and "Eleanor Rigby." Berberian's idea for "I Want You" involved using a Wagnerian or Verdian chest voice, and she specified that the song "should be funny."²⁸ "She's Leaving Home," by contrast, should not come across as "too funny." Berberian called it a "real lieder in the Schubert or Schumann manner" and suggested a strategy for performing both vocal lines found in the refrain of the original: the pianist would sustain Lennon's held notes while she sang McCartney's lead part. "Eleanor Rigby" also "should not be too funny" and Berberian suggested the style of

²⁵ Swenoha to Berberian, February 27, 1970. PSS, Depositum UE.

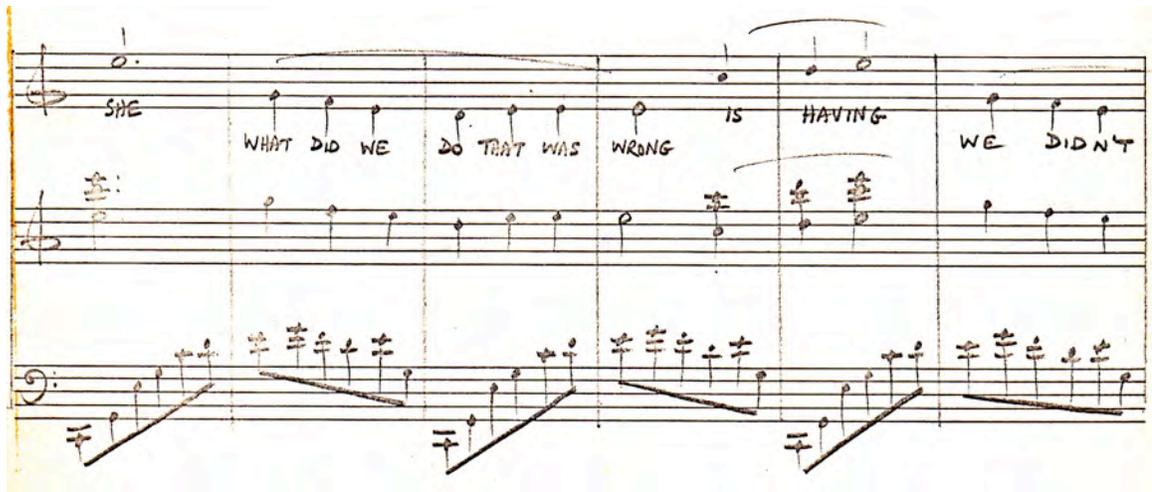
²⁶ Swenoha to Berberian, March 12, 1970. PSS, Depositum UE.

²⁷ Berberian to Swenoha, received March 19, 1970. PSS, Depositum UE.

²⁸ Private collection of Cristina Berio.

Puccini, although she left the final decision to Andriessen. No extant evidence indicates whether Andriessen ever completed these arrangements or if Berberian performed them.

In addition to Andriessen's unpublished arrangements, Cristina Berio's private collection includes a manuscript version of "She's Leaving Home" arranged by English composer Neil Ardley (1937-2004). The song comes from the Beatle's album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967), dating this arrangement probably from some time after Berberian's work with Andriessen and Berio. Arranged for voice and piano, Ardley's version preserves the vocal line from the original song. In contrast to the solution that Berberian had proposed to Andriessen for the refrain, Ardley placed both vocal parts in Berberian's line to give an antiphonal effect (see example 5.2).

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the song "She's Leaving Home" by Neil Ardley. It consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, with lyrics written below the notes: "SHE WHAT DID WE DO THAT WAS WRONG IS HAVING WE DIDN'T". The middle staff is the piano accompaniment, featuring a series of chords and melodic lines. The bottom staff is the piano accompaniment, featuring a series of chords and melodic lines. The score is written in ink on aged paper.

Example 5.2: Lennon/McCartney, "She's Leaving Home," arr. Ardley, p. 7

Unlike Andriessen's score, Ardley's does not name Berberian as dedicatee, and nothing else suggests that he arranged the song specifically for Berberian other than the manuscript's presence in Berberian's archives. No evidence shows that Berberian ever performed the song live, and she never recorded it.

Once Berberian began performing her Beatles covers, she continued to include them on several of her programs. She began to closely identify with the songs and to consider them part of her musical identity. After her individual recital at the Teatro Le Fenice as part of the 1967 Venice Biennale Musica, Berberian wrote to Stein about her “fantastic triumph.”²⁹ She described her recital as “a self portrait,” comprised of the music that she felt best represented her as a musician. Her recital began with Cage, as did her career as an avant-garde performer, and also included pieces by Berio, Henri Pousseur, Kurt Weill, the Beatles (arranged by Berio), herself (*Stripsody*), and Stravinsky. The only person missing from this list, as she pointed out, was Bussotti. In her letter, she detailed why each composer or piece meant something to her: Pousseur was a “close friend,” the works by Weill expressed her “post-jazz background,” the Beatles showed her “present Beatles kick,” *Stripsody* she wrote herself and dedicated to her daughter, Stravinsky represented “the highest point” in her career, and Berio’s *Folk Songs* symbolized both her early training in folk music as well as Berio’s long-term presence in her life.

Berberian’s final program differed slightly from the one she originally planned, which she had listed on a piece of paper labeled “Venetie recital.”³⁰ She listed her intended program as:

²⁹ Berberian to Stein. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

³⁰ Private collection of Cristina Berio.

DEBUSSY Chansons de Bilitis pf
 POUSSEUR Phonèmes pour Cathy
 CAGE Flower
 Wonderful Widow of 18 Springs
 STRAVINSKY Owl and the Pussy Cat (pf)
 Trois Histories pour Enfants (pf)

ANDRIESSEN ~~colours~~ senza titolo ancora
 WEILL 3 Songs organs (pf)
 MAC CARTNEY - 4 Songs arr. Andriessen (pf)
 LENNON
 BERBERIAN Stripsoody

Venice recital.

Example 5.3: Berberian's planned Venice recital program

As Berberian explained in a letter, she took Andriessen out of her program altogether after he did not complete his planned work for her, which she called “Colours.”³¹ To complete the program, she added *Folk Songs*, at which point Berio decided that he had to be present to “defend” his work, especially since the festival would also perform his *Epifanie*. Mario Labroca, the director of the festival, then chose to put Berio “in charge” of Berberian’s recital, in order to justify paying his expenses to Venice.³² Once given responsibility, Berio created orchestral arrangements of the Weill songs and the Beatles songs and “naturally...he did the conducting as well.”³³ Berberian did not share her

³¹ Andriessen never published a work named *Colours*. Berberian to Andriessen. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

feelings with Andriessen about Berio having authority over her recital, instead focusing on ameliorating Andriessen's hurt feelings over his exclusion. She did, however, put the phrase "in charge" in quotes herself, indicating her dubious view of the power that Berio held in the situation.

All of the composers and works listed by Berberian as part of her "self-portrait" dated from the twentieth century, with most from the post-war period. At the point of her recital in Venice, she does not seem to have created a program unified by anything but her own musical taste. She did, however, introduce some theatrical elements into her performance, as indicated by a picture of her performing *Stripsody* with the large panels designed by Carmi that accompanied a positive review of her performance in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*.³⁴ In the years following this contemporary medley, Berberian expanded her musical preferences to include larger varieties of musical styles encompassing larger swathes of music history.

Berberian Sings Weill

At the same 1966 Carnegie Hall concert in which she had premiered her Beatles songs, Berberian also sang arrangements of three Weill songs, which she later included in her "self-portrait" concert in Venice. This repertoire was not so unfamiliar for her, as she had long sung music from the first half of the twentieth century. In her early career she sang works by Debussy and Ravel, and she occasionally sang Schoenberg and Berg as well. Berberian first expressed curiosity in Weill's music in 1959, around the same time that

³⁴ Ulrich Seelmann-Eggebert, "Neue Musik vor Pop und Folk: Tendenzen und Möglichkeiten auf der Musik-Biennale von Venedig," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (November 1967): 440-42.

she began to think about performing Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* (see below).³⁵ However, she did not seriously prepare any of Weill's songs until late in 1963, when she planned a recording of them with Andriessen for February 1964. Through a series of letters, Berberian arranged the material for the upcoming recording in Hannover, Germany, probably for Telefunken Decca. The repertoire included works by Villa Lobos and Gershwin in addition to Weill, whose "Ballad of Sexual Slavery," "Speak Low," "Surabaya Johnny," and "Grand Lustucru" were listed.³⁶ This planned recording never happened, likely due to the marital problems between Berio and Berberian that surfaced early in 1964. Yet Berberian continued to work on the Weill songs and in July 1966 she wrote to Andriessen: "I sing Surabaya Johnny now very well."³⁷

At her Carnegie Hall concert, Berberian's performance of the Weill songs did not make a strong impact on reviewers, as their freshness was eclipsed by the novelty of the Beatles songs. Critic Howard Klein referenced "three Kurt Weill songs that closed the program"³⁸ whereas Alan Rich mentioned only "a Kurt Weill group."³⁹ The reviews do not even mention which songs Berberian sang by Weill, but Berberian soon performed a regular group of three: "Ballad of Sexual Slavery," "Le Grand Lustucru," and "Surabaya

³⁵ Universal Edition sent Berberian a copy of the "Song of Sexual Slavery" per her request on December 2, 1959. PSS, Depositum UE.

³⁶ Berberian to Andriessen. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

³⁷ Berberian to Andriessen, February 7, 1966. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

³⁸ Klein, "Cathy Berberian Sings Cage Music," *New York Times*, October 26, 1966: 41.

³⁹ Rich, "Blithe and Far-Out," *World Journal Tribune*, October 26, 1966.

Johnny.” Despite the lesser impression left by the Weill songs, Berberian continued to include them in her programs and often linked them with the Beatles in her performances.

Berberian took her work on the Weill songs beyond her involvement with the Beatles, however, by completing her own English translations of the original German lyrics by Berthold Brecht. Her translation of the “Ballade von der sexuellen Hörigkeit” became the “Ballad of Sexual Slavery” and remains in the Berio collection at the Paul Sacher Foundation. Berberian translated “Surabaya Johnny” as well; she told Stein that she found it necessary to make her own translations because she found the published versions “unsatisfactory.”⁴⁰ The third song in her customary trio, “Grand Lustucru,” she sang in the original French.

Berberian had some difficulty performing and publishing her translations due to disagreements with Lotte Lenya, Weill’s widow. In the letter to Stein she mentioned that her translations could not be printed in concert programs “because there is an authorized translation in the States” and Universal Edition only allowed her to sing her own versions in Europe.⁴¹ In 1968 Berberian recorded the Weill trio in Berio’s arrangements (with her translations) for a planned release on RCA records. The next year, Lenya expressed her disapproval. In April 1969, Universal Edition told Berberian that Lenya had approved Berio’s instrumentations,⁴² an approval that Stefan Brecht, Berthold Brecht’s son,

⁴⁰ Berberian to Stein. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Unsigned letter to Berberian, April 30, 1969. PSS, Depositum UE.

claimed was only his to give.⁴³ Brecht demanded that the copyright of Berberian's translation be assigned to him, while promising that Berberian would receive her proper share of the royalties. Despite Brecht's claim of ownership and approval of the recording, Lenya still blocked the release of the record because she disliked Berberian's translations. Roger Hall of RCA Records sent Berio a telegram in Japan giving him the bad news: "Lotte Lenya refuses OK Berberian translation Song of Secual [sic] Slavery and Surabaya."⁴⁴ This turn of events did not surprise Alfred Kalmus of Universal Edition, who explained: "We have had a lot of disagreeable experiences with the translation of Weill/Brecht's work. In the first place Stefan Brecht was very critical with every translation but it seems that Lotte Lenya now makes difficulties."⁴⁵ As a result, RCA never released the record. However, in 1995 BMG released the originally planned record as a CD, and listed Berberian as translator.⁴⁶ The liner notes also published Berberian's translations in full.

Regardless of these problems, Berberian continued to frequently perform her trio of Weill songs. She initially incorporated them, with her Beatles covers, into her recitals of contemporary music (as she did in for her Venice "self-portrait"). An April 1967 concert at UCLA featured works by Cage, Bussotti, Berio, and Pousseur followed by the Beatles, Weill, and *Stripsody*. This collection of works represented Berberian's

⁴³ Brecht to Berio (by way of his lawyer, Lester M. Levin), June 14, 1969. PSS, Berio collection.

⁴⁴ Hall to Berio, June 10, 1969. PSS, Depositum UE.

⁴⁵ Kalmus to Berio, October 16, 1969. PSS, Depositum UE.

⁴⁶ *Recital 1 for Cathy, Folk Songs, 3 Songs by Kurt Weill* (BMG Classics, 09026-62540, 1995).

comprehensive view of contemporary music, and eventually formed the bulk of her recital “From Monteverdi to the Beatles” (see chapter 6).

Berberian Sings Monteverdi

Berberian first demonstrated an interest in seventeenth-century music in 1956 when she recorded excerpts from Henry Purcell’s *The Fairy Queen*.⁴⁷ On the recording Berberian sang songs from *The Fairy Queen* accompanied by the Orchestra dell’Angelicum of Milan, conducted by Bruno Maderna. The record also features Maderna’s *Odhecaton* (ca. 1950), an orchestral transcription of works by Josquin, Ockeghem, and other composers that originally appeared in Petrucci’s *Odhecaton*, and Hermann Scherchen’s *Altenglische Violentänze* (ca. 1950), a transcription of an anonymous composition from ca. 1600. The recording as a whole reflects the rediscovery of early music happening in the European avant-garde in the 1950s, and also Berberian’s quick embrace of such music. Her participation, during the years in which she was supposedly inactive following the birth of her daughter (in which she also contributed to the radio program *Ritratto di città* and collaborated with Berio on *Summer Night Blues*), shows that while Berberian may not have performed on stage in the mid-1950s, she kept singing and quietly worked her way into avant-garde musical life in Milan.

Berberian began to think about singing more baroque music in the early 1960s. Stein brought up the idea in a letter to Berio in 1960, revealing the extent to which he expected Berio to make decisions about Berberian’s activities. He compared the “free” music of the avant-garde by composers like Bussotti to the Italian monody of the seicento

⁴⁷ Purcell, “Suite dalla *The Fairy Queen*” (Angelicum, LPA 970, 1956).

by Monteverdi and Luzzaschi and asked if Berberian would be interested in singing that type of music.⁴⁸ Berberian responded on her own: “I love old music but I think I have such a personalized way of singing I don’t know whether it would be the orthodox delivery required. I love doing Purcell for example and the Italian Anthology. But I’m willing to have a go at it.”⁴⁹ Nothing immediately came of Stein’s suggestion for Berberian.

Yet baroque music assumed an increasingly important place in avant-garde circles in both Europe and the United States. Both Maderna and Berio completed editions of Monteverdi’s music in the mid-1960s, and the recorder player Frans Brüggen (b. 1934) combined performances of works by Corelli and Handel with those by Andriessen and Berio.⁵⁰ As the director of Radio Bremen, Hans Otte began the Pro Musica Festival in 1961, a contemporary music festival that alternated years with Pro Musica Antiqua, an early music festival.⁵¹ Even Darmstadt began to feature works by composers including Guillaume de Machaut and Francesco Landini starting in 1962.⁵² Meanwhile, the Evenings on the Roof concerts in Los Angeles, generally dedicated to performances of new music, had featured early music on its programs since the late 1940s.⁵³

⁴⁸ Stein to Berio, September 18, 1960. PSS, Berio collection.

⁴⁹ Berberian was likely referring to the *Anthology of Italian Song of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Alessandro Parisotti, trans. Theodore Baker, 2 vols. (New York: G. Schirmer, 1922-26). Berberian to Stein, October 28, 1960. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁵⁰ Programs in Franz Brüggen correspondence with Berio. PSS, Berio collection.

⁵¹ See Beal, *New Music, New Allies*, 142-50.

⁵² See the programs published in Borio and Danuser.

⁵³ See Crawford.

In 1968, Brüggem suggested that Berberian contact Telefunken Decca, a German record company then preparing Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* with Nikolaus Harnoncourt (b. 1929) and the Concentus Musicus Wien. She told Andriessen that she would "have to turn down this possibility," claiming to be too busy to study the piece.⁵⁴ However, a few months later she wrote to Universal Edition in a panic, asking them to send her the vocal score of Malipiero's edition of *L'Orfeo*.⁵⁵ In that letter she explained that Telefunken Decca had asked her to record the parts of *La Messaggera* and *Speranza* for their upcoming album. She described the opportunity as "a very important step" in her career because it would be her first recording of "musica antica" on a major record label. Berberian's initial reluctance to do the project apparently faded once the record company specifically requested her talent. Berberian traveled to Vienna in mid-December to record her parts under Harnoncourt's direction.⁵⁶

Harnoncourt was a leading member of the early music revival in Europe. In 1953 he founded the Concentus Musicus Wien, an ensemble dedicated to historically informed performances on period instruments. The group gave their unofficial debut with Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* conducted by Paul Hindemith in Vienna in 1954. For the next few years they concentrated on researching historical performance practice and they began performing regularly in 1957. Their reputation grew, and during the 1960s they toured internationally and recorded frequently.

⁵⁴ Berberian to Andriessen, April 1968. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁵⁵ Berberian to Elena Hift, received August 26, 1968. PSS, Depositum UE.

⁵⁶ Monteverdi, *L'Orfeo* (Hamburg: Teldec, 1969).

The experience of recording *L'Orfeo* in 1968 began a fruitful collaboration between Berberian and Harnoncourt, whom Berberian later called her “ideal musician for early baroque music.”⁵⁷ Harnoncourt soon offered her the role of Ottavia in his recording of *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (also with Telefunken Decca), and on February 8, 1970 she sang in his “Monteverdi and his time” concert at the Vienna Konzerthaus. In that performance she sang three pieces by Monteverdi, the “Lamento d’Arianna” and the madrigals “Se i languidi miei sguardi (Lettera amorosa)” and “Con che soavità.” In a letter to Andriessen, Berberian described the concert as “a tremendous success,” which surprised her because she “did not sing in the ‘traditional,’ oratorio kind of style.”⁵⁸ This comment echoes her earlier remark to Stein about her “unorthodox delivery” of baroque music.

Berberian articulated her ideas about singing early music, specifically that by Monteverdi, in an undated, untitled essay found in the Berio collection at the Paul Sacher Foundation.⁵⁹ The essay compares her approach to singing baroque and contemporary music and expresses Berberian’s detailed thoughts on how to give a proper performance. She particularly criticized other singers who had performed the part of La Messaggera in *Orfeo* for using “full portentous tones,” which she found inappropriate. Instead, Berberian understood the character as a young girl who painfully communicated Eurydice’s death to Orfeo, and she therefore sang the part in a more subdued way.

⁵⁷ Berberian, interview by Amirkhanian.

⁵⁸ Berberian to Andriessen. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁵⁹ In the essay Berberian mentions recording *L'Orfeo* but not *Poppea*, dating the essay from before the *Poppea* recording in December 1973. PSS, Berio collection.

Berberian also expressed her dislike for “the over-use of embellishments and cadenzas,” a modern development that she thought violated Monteverdi’s intentions. Happily for Berberian, Harnoncourt agreed with her ideas and she described working with him as “a joy.”

Berberian’s 1970 calendar shows that she performed Monteverdi’s *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* that August, in Siena. This project seems separate from those she carried out with Harnoncourt and may have been in collaboration with Berio, who had arranged the work in 1966.⁶⁰ Since Harnoncourt and the Musicus Concentus Wien did not record *Combattimento* until 1984 and Berio had already created a stage version of the work with mixed results (one review called the staging “less satisfactory” than the music),⁶¹ it seems probable that the former couple joined forces to perform it in 1970. The duo definitely worked together on a performance of *Combattimento* in 1979, as confirmed by a program and review of a performance in Torino.⁶²

In a notebook, Berberian wrote out her “Project for *Combattimento*,” which she intended to film along with Monteverdi’s *Il Ballo delle Ingrate*.⁶³ She suggested many different visual effects, including ideas for screen shots, costumes, and the use of puppets

⁶⁰ London: Universal Edition, 1968.

⁶¹ Robert S. Coren, “Monteverdi and Berio: At the Loeb This Weekend,” *The Harvard Crimson* (January 16, 1967). Available at <http://www.thecrimson.com/article/1967/1/16/monteverdi-and-berio-pthis-weekend-harvard/> [Accessed March 1, 2011].

⁶² Enzo Restagno, “Teatro in musica,” *Stampa Sera* (Torino: March 15, 1979). Clipping and program in the private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁶³ Private collection of Cristina Berio.

to represent the fighting scenes. Berberian had clearly put significant time and effort into her research for this proposed film, and even found a baroque choreographer and a puppeteer to help with the production. In a postcard to Antoinette Vischer, Berberian mentioned her plans to go to Vienna to carry out her project with Harnoncourt for a television station in Baden Baden, Germany.⁶⁴

Berberian's film of *Combattimento* and *Il Ballo* shows the theatrical direction she had taken with her performances in the late 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, Berberian had placed special emphasis on her clothing and gestures for her performances with Harnoncourt. Her 1970 calendar indicates that she wore a black blouse with a pink corduroy skirt, an outfit that she repeated for later performances of the same work, suggesting that she hoped to make a particular statement with her clothing choice.⁶⁵ The critic Lorenzo Arruga later recalled Berberian's staged performance of "La lettera amorosa" and called her a "great actress," though he did not mention her clothing.⁶⁶ He focused on her gestures, describing her leaving the stage and rapidly re-entering, holding herself while restlessly unfolding and reading the imaginary letter.

Beginning in 1970, Berberian incorporated staging into her performances to a significant degree. In early September, she wrote to Andriessen about her initial effort at "staging" a concert in Como.⁶⁷ She listed her repertoire as Monteverdi's "La lettera

⁶⁴ Berberian to Vischer. PSS, Vischer collection.

⁶⁵ Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁶⁶ "grande attrice." Program notes for the concert "Omaggio a Cathy Berberian: nel decennale della scomparsa" (Milan, June 13, 1993): 34.

⁶⁷ Berberian to Stein. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

amorosa,” Berio’s *Visage*, and Janáček’s *Diary of a Lost Traveler* (*Zápisník zmizelého*, 1921). Her 1970 calendar duplicates this list and adds her outfits for each work: for the Monteverdi she wore the black blouse and pink skirt, for *Visage* she wore all black, and for the Janáček she described her clothing only as “Yugoslav.”⁶⁸ Berberian’s change of attire over the course of the concert recalls the costume changes she preferred during her performances of Berio’s *Folk Songs*. For her, the proper costume added an important visual augmentation of her singing. In her letter to Andriessen, Berberian also told of her plan to include “a short silent film to be projected on the tenor’s torso during the performance.”⁶⁹ This was a familiar technique from her work with Sylvano Bussotti, who sometimes devised films to accompany his stage works (for example, in *La Passion selon Sade*). The use of a film would have explicitly marked Berberian’s concert as an avant-garde performance, regardless of her varied repertoire. Even Monteverdi and Janáček could be avant-garde in Berberian’s eyes, if framed and performed in an appropriate way.

Berberian Sings Schoenberg

As a female singer who specialized in music from the twentieth-century, Berberian eventually had to confront Schoenberg’s *Pierrot lunaire* (1912). She shared with Stein the pressure she was under to perform the piece, complaining that “after every performance of *Circles* or anything else...of that kind” she was “bombarded with questions” about her plans to perform *Pierrot*.⁷⁰ Many avant-garde musicians and critics

⁶⁸ Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁶⁹ Private collection of Cristina Berio

⁷⁰ Berberian to Stein, December 30, 1961. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

viewed *Pierrot* as one of the forerunners for the experiments in vocal technique carried out by composers in the 1950s and 1960s. The English critic Colin Mason expressed this view in program notes for a 1963 performance of *Circles* at the Venice Biennale, comparing the work to two “important predecessors”: *Pierrot lunaire* and Boulez’s *Le Marteau sans Maître* (1955).⁷¹ Berberian also believed that the piece had a crucial role in the history of vocal music:

it was from “*Pierrot lunaire*” that we can date the “awakening” to the extension of vocal possibilities, which later effectively “exploded” into the “new vocality” of today as developed first by Berio, Bussotti and Cage, followed later by Haubenstock-Ramati, Stockhausen, Lygeti [sic] and others.⁷²

Berberian eventually did sing the piece, but her decade-long avoidance of it stemmed largely from her anxiety about interpreting such a well-known and respected work.

Soon after she made what may be termed her “re-debut” in 1958, people began to suggest that Berberian sing *Pierrot*. Often these ideas were directed to Berio rather than to Berberian herself (much as Stein originally asked Berio if Berberian would sing early music). In a September 1959 letter Alfred Schlee congratulated Berio on his recent appearance at Darmstadt and called Berberian “une merveille.”⁷³ He also stated that Berberian appeared to be “the perfect interpreter of ‘*Pierrot lunaire*’” and asked, “Wouldn’t she feel like doing it?” Stein had the same thought, asking Berio if Berberian had ever performed *Pierrot* and declaring that she “should be perfect for that.”⁷⁴

⁷¹ Mason, program notes for a performance on April 18, 1963 at the Teatro le Fenice, as part of La Biennale di Venezia. Program in the PSS, Andriessen collection.

⁷² Untitled, unpublished essay on *Pierrot lunaire*, PSS, Maderna collection.

⁷³ Schlee to Berio, September 9, 1959. PSS, Depositum UE.

⁷⁴ Stein to Berio, December 3, 1959. PSS, Berio collection.

Remarkably, hearing a recording of *Thema*, which features Berberian's spoken and electronically manipulated voice, prompted both men's responses. This suggests that they reacted not to Berberian's impressive vocal capabilities, which *Thema* does not really feature, but rather to the idea of Berberian as a singer of contemporary vocal repertoire.

Berberian began work on *Pierrot* in 1960 in preparation for a performance with Stein. In July she wrote to Stein that she "would like to try the English version" of the piece, showing an early interest in singing the piece in translation.⁷⁵ Stein responded positively, writing to Berio that he was "willing, able, ready and plenty excited about doing it with Cathy" and that together they "could do a smash job."⁷⁶ Berberian's idea about the English translation may actually have come from Stein, or from a desire to initially sing the piece in Los Angeles. The Monday Evening Concerts had traditionally presented *Pierrot* in English, beginning with a 1944 performance conducted by Ingolf Dahl.⁷⁷ While this practice repelled Boulez, who wanted to conduct a German *Pierrot* at the Concerts when he visited in 1963, Berberian adopted the idea as her own.⁷⁸ Berio apparently suggested a recording of *Pierrot* in addition to the planned performance, but neither of these projects materialized. Berberian asserted her own agency in the situation when she told Stein that "the recording of *Pierrot* is not as imminent as Luciano might

⁷⁵ Berberian to Stein, July 21, 1960. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁷⁶ Stein to Berio, September 18, 1960. PSS, Berio collection.

⁷⁷ December 18, 1944. See Crawford, 66-7.

⁷⁸ See Crawford, 208.

have intimated.”⁷⁹ Berio may have tried to control Berberian’s performances of the piece, but she managed to restrain his impulses.

Following her initial excitement, Berberian repeatedly expressed her apprehension about performing *Pierrot* and for some time she refused to do it. In early December 1961, she wrote to Stein about Helga Pilarczyk’s recent performance of the piece at the Schoenberg Festival put on by the Domaine Musical in Paris.⁸⁰ She expressed her considerable dislike of Pilarczyk’s interpretation, criticizing her narrow range and lack of nuance, but did not mention how her own performance would differ. A few weeks later, Berberian stated that she had “decided to do *Pierrot*” but could not bring herself to start studying it.⁸¹ She claimed to be “deathly fearful” that she could not “measure up” to the expectations people held of her eventual performance. She dropped the subject until Berio again tried convincing her to sing the piece when he proposed a performance by Berberian and Stein at Mills College for spring 1964.⁸² Berio and Stein worked out the details together and Stein informed Berberian that they intended to do the piece without a conductor, so she “should practically memorize the thing.”⁸³ These plans left Berberian “with a queasy, uneasy smile accompanied by a profound sinking sensation in my stomach.”⁸⁴ Berberian admitted that the work, which she later described as “one of the

⁷⁹ Berberian to Stein, October 28, 1960. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁸⁰ Berberian to Stein, December 1961. PSS, Stein collection.

⁸¹ Berberian to Stein, December 30, 1961. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁸² Berio to Stein, July 31, 1963. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁸³ Stein to Berberian, October 13, 1963. PSS, Berio collection.

⁸⁴ Berberian to Stein, October 18, 1963. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

most enigmatic vocal pieces to perform,”⁸⁵ left her confused; she knew what she did not like about other singers’ interpretations but she remained uncertain about how she wanted to sing the piece.⁸⁶ Undoubtedly, the fact that Berio and Stein neglected to consult Berberian in their initial plans for the work stoked her anxiety and led her to ignore their wishes. The dissolution of Berio’s and Berberian’s marriage also likely derailed any plans to perform the piece in 1964. After that, any mention of *Pierrot* disappears from Berberian’s correspondence until 1965, when Andriessen proposed a performance in Amsterdam. Berberian accepted his offer and wrote that she had begun working on it already.⁸⁷ Like her earlier plans, this performance never materialized and Berberian put off work on the piece for another few years.

Berberian finally sang *Pierrot lunaire* in 1969, after another failed attempt to perform it the previous year. She wrote to friends that she was “finally going to do Pierrot”⁸⁸ in Brussels on May 14, 1968 and that she was “very scared”⁸⁹ about it. That concert would have lasted for six hours and was to have included Stravinsky’s *Le Sacre du Printemps*, Berio’s *Visage*, and works by Berg and Varèse, but it does not seem to

⁸⁵ Berberian program notes for a concert in Torino, March 14, 1979. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁸⁶ Berberian to Stein, October 18, 1963. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁸⁷ Berberian to Andriessen. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁸⁸ Berberian to Stein. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁸⁹ Berberian to Andriessen. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

have ever happened.⁹⁰ Instead, Berberian premiered her version of *Pierrot* on December 9, 1969, at a concert in Stockholm.

As per the wishes she had first expressed in 1960, Berberian first performed *Pierrot* in English. She knew this decision would upset some traditionalists but defended her decision to Schlee: “I’ll start it in my language (which more people can understand – more than in German) then later I’ll do it in both languages.”⁹¹ Berberian viewed *Pierrot* as a cabaret piece, and since “the essence of cabaret is the comprehension of the text,” she thought it necessary to recite the text in a language that would be understood by the audience.⁹² Moreover, “Schoenberg himself desired that the performance take place in the language of the country in which it is performed and officially approved the English translation [by Ingolf Dahl and Carl Beier].”⁹³ Berberian therefore justified her use of English by claiming that it would benefit the audience, but she used English even in places where it was not the primary language. Perhaps English made sense for a location like Stockholm, as a Swedish translation would be hard to come by and would have limited appeal. However, Berberian had initially planned to use English in Brussels and

⁹⁰ Berberian did not note a performance of *Visage* from May 1969 in her records, suggesting that the concert was either completely canceled or her participation withdrawn.

⁹¹ Berberian to Universal Edition, February 3, 1968. PSS, Depositum UE.

⁹² Untitled, unpublished essay on *Pierrot lunaire*, PSS, Maderna collection.

⁹³ “Schoenberg desiderava che l’esecuzione avvenisse nella lingua del paese in cui veniva eseguito e approvò ufficialmente la traduzione in inglese.” Ibid. See Crawford, 66-7 for discussion of Schoenberg’s response to the Dahl’s 1944 performance of *Pierrot* in English in Los Angeles.

she also did so at the Festival of Angers, both places with a French-speaking population. This suggests that comprehension was not Berberian's only concern.

Berberian often resisted singing in German, at least in Germany. As she told Stein in 1960: "While I have done the Berg songs, I must confess that I feel self-conscious doing the German stuff, especially in the North. Maybe I'm over-scrupulous."⁹⁴

Furthermore, in 1965 she wrote to Dieter Schnebel to tell him that she would be performing his *Glossolalie* (1959-61) at the upcoming Zagreb Festival and asking him to replace extended portions of German text with English translations because her German was "rather weak."⁹⁵ By singing in English Berberian avoided German and secured the comfort of her native language. She also gained the satisfaction of making a bold statement. Before her planned Brussels concert Berberian told Stein that performing an English *Pierrot* "will make the critics flip their lids but give them something scandalous to chew on!!"⁹⁶

In August 1971, Berberian gave her first performance of *Pierrot* in an Italian translation, further pushing the boundaries of conventional practice. This was not her only unusual choice: she also used a microphone to project her voice. She insisted that both adaptations served to advance her goal of making the text intelligible to the audience. She further justified her decision by asserting that Schoenberg had approved

⁹⁴ Berberian to Stein, November 4, 1960. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁹⁵ Berberian to Schnebel. PSS, Schnebel collection.

⁹⁶ Berberian to Stein. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

the use of a microphone for the narrator in *Gurrelieder*.⁹⁷ Berberian claimed that Fedele D'Amico was “wildly enthusiastic about my interpretation + use of mike” but other Italian critics were less generous.⁹⁸ Massimo Mila, the music critic of *La Stampa*, declared that having an understandable text served only to highlight “the low literary quality of the verses” and the use of a microphone disturbed “the equilibrium of the voice with the instruments.”⁹⁹ Massimo Bruni, in the Torino daily *Gazzetta del Popolo*, took a slightly different perspective, enjoying the intelligibility of the text but still believing that the use of Italian damaged the “‘sound’ and cultural resonances” of the music.¹⁰⁰

Despite her promise to Schlee in 1968, Berberian never performed *Pierrot* in German. She later concocted a multilingual performance in English, Italian, and French. In a notebook, Berberian sketched her design, which showed her intention to sing each part in a different language.¹⁰¹ Her plan reflected Schoenberg’s original division of the twenty-one songs into three groups of seven. It is unclear whether Berberian ever

⁹⁷ Berberian program notes for a concert in Torino, March 14, 1979. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁹⁸ Berberian to Universal Edition, August 10, 1971. PSS, Depositum UE.

⁹⁹ “mettere in primo piano la scendentissima qualità letteraria dei versi...l’uso del microfono conturbando l’equilibrio della voce con gli strumenti...” M.M., “Quando la Berberian fa la mattatrice con un ‘nuovo’ Pierrot di Schoenberg,” *La Stampa*, 16 March 1979. Clipping in Private collection of Cristina Berio.

¹⁰⁰ “La comprensione di esso da parte degli ascoltatori ne è avvantaggiata, d’accordo, ma con danno non lieve di quanto riguarda il ‘suono’ e le risonanze culturali di questa musica.” Massimo Bruni, “Tancredi e Pierrot con la Berberian,” *Gazzetta del Popolo*, March 16, 1979. Clipping in Private collection of Cristina Berio.

¹⁰¹ Private collection of Cristina Berio.

performed her multilingual *Pierrot*, but that impulse recalls the polyglot nature of many of the works written for her earlier in her career.

Berberian did retain one crucial aspect of the original work, which involved the importance of costume and staging. Albertine Zehme (1847-1956), who had commissioned *Pierrot* from Schoenberg, had appeared on stage in the white costume of *Pierrot* with a pale face, in front of a black screen that concealed the other performers from the audience.¹⁰² Berberian retained the screen but chose for herself the look of a cabaret singer, dressed in black, “her dress open all the way to her hip,”¹⁰³ with “a boa of ostrich feathers around her neck.”¹⁰⁴ In addition to her outfit, Berberian used her body to create a theatrical atmosphere. She declared, “I have interpreted the piece with my body, my face, my hands” in order to make the work more intelligible to her audiences and to hopefully win “new converts to the music of Schoenberg.”¹⁰⁵ This approach corresponded precisely with Berberian’s attempt during that period to make contemporary music more accessible for a wider variety of audiences.

¹⁰² For contemporary reviews of Zehme’s costume and performance practice, see François Lesure, *Dossier de Presse de Pierrot Lunaire d’Arnold Schoenberg* (Geneva: Editions Minkoff, 1985).

¹⁰³ “la robe ouverte jusqu’à la hanche,” Berberian, *Au chat qui pouffe*, France Culture, February 28, 1972. As quoted in Vila, 266.

¹⁰⁴ “un boa en plumes d’autriche autour du cou,” L. Dandrel, *Le Monde*, February 2, 1971. As quoted in Vila, 266.

¹⁰⁵ “j’ai interprété la pièce avec mon corps, ma figure, mes mains” and “nouveaux convertis à la musique de Schoenberg.” Berberian, *Au chat qui pouffe*, France Culture, February 28, 1972. As quoted in Vila, 267.

Conclusion

Berberian's expanding repertoire in the late 1960s reflected the diversity of her musical interests. Many of these were not exactly new to her: baroque repertoire and music of the early twentieth century had been part of her repertoire since the mid-1950s. Yet her new emphasis on music beyond the avant-garde reflected a change in Berberian's approach to performance. She showed that she was not afraid of mixing music from "high" and "low" sources, to blend popular and art musics, and to juxtapose baroque and avant-garde styles. Berberian also used this larger repertoire as a way to move beyond her association with Berio following their split. While they continued to work together and he even arranged the Beatles and Weill songs for her, in those cases their roles had reversed. Rather than Berio composing a work for Berberian to sing (albeit with her participation), Berberian instead took the initiative and asked Berio to complete these arrangements for her. She decided on the repertoire and how she wanted the works to sound, but she consulted with Berio (and Andriessen) for their compositional skills. She also moved toward more independence as a performer overall, and she soon began to form her larger repertoire into interesting and unusual recital programs.

Chapter 6: Cathy's Recitals

As Berberian explored a wider variety of repertoire in the late 1960s, she slowly began to organize it into carefully crafted, themed recitals. She treated her recitals as artistic forms worthy of serious attention. In that way, she refocused the compositional creativity she had experienced with *Stripsody* into the creation of performances. Although she did not write most of the music she sang, she alone chose her repertoire and complemented it with theatrical elements including staging, sets, costumes, and lighting. Berberian continued to premiere new works through the 1970s, but her main focus became the live performances she created for herself that showcased her musical and theatrical tastes, which mixed older repertoire by Berio, Bussotti, and Cage, with newer additions including Monteverdi, Weill, and the Beatles.

She crafted recital programs with compelling narratives, complete with costumes and staging. Her first themed recital, "From Monteverdi to the Beatles," developed in the late 1960s as Berberian first encountered and then embraced music from those sources. She then created "À la recherche de la musique perdue," a display of fin-de-siecle songs that she performed as if she were an amateur in a Parisian salon. "Second Hand Songs" continued this "amateur" approach by featuring instrumental repertoire that had been given texts, a popular nineteenth-century tradition. These programs garnered the most attention and resulted in album releases, but Berberian also created some less-popular recitals that further demonstrated her diverse interests. "Cathy Sings America" presented a variety of musical styles from her birth country, consisting mainly of Broadway standards and Tin Pan Alley hits. She also showed interest in educating her audiences and formed didactic recitals, like her "VocaLectuRecital," which told the history of vocal

music, and an untitled program of songs by women composers. These programs differed significantly from one another, yet they all shared a common attitude that included the use of humor and theater to create deliberately entertaining performances.

Berberian intended to pioneer an innovative approach to giving concerts, and she carefully prepared what she referred to as “this new type of recital.”¹ She began conceiving of her performances in this manner in early 1967 in her performances of *Stripsody*, for which she began using Carmi’s graphic illustrations as a backdrop. This use of a stage set corresponded with the theatrical works that Berberian was performing around the same time by composers including Bussotti and Scherchen. Bussotti’s *La Passion selon Sade* especially incorporated costumes, sets, and lighting to powerful effect. Berberian’s efforts to add visual elements to her performances of *Stripsody* presaged her use of those same elements in her recital programs that developed soon afterwards.

Humor formed an essential part of most of Berberian’s recitals. Many of the new works she performed were either intrinsically funny, like *Stripsody*, or incorporated humor as central to their performance, like her baroque-inspired covers of Beatles songs. In some recital programs, with “À la recherché de la musique perdue” the most obvious example, humor suffused the experience. She conceived that recital with entertainment in mind: from her costume and stage set to her diction and intonation to her program notes, Berberian’s performance conveyed a lighthearted and witty attitude to her amused fans. In a 1969 interview, she shared her belief “in bringing more humor to modern pieces” as

¹ Berberian to Stein. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

part of her attempt to make her concerts more accessible to the general public.² In response to those who accused her “of bringing cabaret into the concert hall,” she responded, “music should never be a burden, a cultural burden, that someone has to go through in order to feel that they’re elite or one-up.”³

In addition to expressing a more expansive version of Berberian’s musical tastes, her recitals helped provide a more stable economic position. After she separated from Berio, Berberian suddenly had to support herself and her daughter with only minimal support from her ex-husband. Her letters from the years following the separation are filled with anxiety about her economic situation. In late 1964 or early 1965 she told Stein that she was “in dire circumstances financially.”⁴ As a solution, Berberian turned to her major source of income: performances. She began to tour almost constantly, and the number of her known performances increased steadily throughout the late 1960s, doubling between 1963 and 1969 (from sixteen to thirty-one) and it continued to rise in the 1970s. By the late 1960s, Berberian’s reputation had grown enough that she secured individual recitals in a variety of prestigious locations, including Carnegie Hall, the Venice Festival and the Holland Festival. Berberian both responded to and helped bring about these opportunities by expanding her repertoire beyond the modern and avant-garde works that had previously dominated her performances.

² Ian Woodward, “Avant-garde’s queen bee,” *Christian Science Monitor*, June 22, 1970: 16. Clipping in the C.F. Peters archives.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Berberian to Stein. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

From Monteverdi to the Beatles

During the late 1960s Berberian had embarked on two interconnected trajectories: redefining the vocal recital, and expanding avant-garde music to include baroque and popular music. In 1970 these goals culminated in her recital program “From Monteverdi to the Beatles.” For the first time, in September 1970 Berberian listed two concerts in her calendar that mixed the music of Monteverdi with that of contemporary composers.⁵ The first, described in the previous chapter, combined Monteverdi with Berio and Janáček in a theatrical program. At her next scheduled concert, on September 27 in Berlin, Berberian listed “Monteverdi, Debussy, Berio, Bussotti *O*, Weill, 2 piano pieces, Beatles, *Stripsody*,” marking a decisive move away from exclusively contemporary repertoire. Berberian did not abandon her contemporary recitals, however, and seems to have initially treated the pieces by Monteverdi as just another part of her avant-garde repertoire, to be added to recitals on occasion. This approach mirrored the way that she first added music from the Beatles and Weill to her performances. At an October 24 recital she presented an all-contemporary program of Cage, Bussotti, Berio, Pousseur and Berberian whereas a November 15 concert included Monteverdi, the Beatles, Stravinsky, Berio and Berberian. Notably, she seems to have associated Monteverdi with the Beatles from the start, perhaps regarding them as her most daring repertoire choices and therefore performing them only in certain circumstances.

Initially, Berberian did not give an evocative title to her new recital program. The program from her September 27, 1970 recital at the Berliner Festwochen bears no

⁵ Private collection of Cristina Berio.

descriptor apart from her name along with that of her accompanist, Bruno Canino.⁶ The program recreates the list found in Berberian’s calendar and indicates a fair number of German premieres (marked with asterisks):

Monteverdi	La lettera amorosa
Debussy	Chansons de Bilitis
	La flute de Pan
	La Chevelure
	Le Tombeau des Naiades
Berio	*Bird Girl (arr. Canino)
Bussotti	*“O” – Atti Vocali
Weill	Le Grand Lustucru
	Surabaya-Johnny
Berio	*Erdenklavier
Berberian	*Morsicat(h)y
McCartney/Lennon	Yesterday (arr. Andriessen)
	A Ticket to Ride (arr. Andriessen)
Berberian	Stripsody

This program eventually grew to encompass a larger variety of works, retaining the basic concept of mixing works from a wide range of time periods and musical styles.

Berberian first named this time-spanning program “From Monteverdi to Cage.” An undated program in Cristina Berio’s private collection bears the title “Da Monteverdi a Cage: Un panorama di stili della musica vocale” as well as notes in Italian written by Berio. The program displays a long list of works, including pieces by Monteverdi, Antonio Caldara, Purcell, Debussy, Offenbach, Weill, Stravinsky, Berio, Berberian, Bussotti, McCartney/Lennon, and Cage (see example 6.1). It also states that the singer would choose from among the pieces listed, and not necessarily in the same order as shown on the program. The program does not specify a location, date or accompanist, making it likely that Berberian used these notes as a template.

⁶ A copy of the program is in the C.F. Peters archives.

« DA MONTEVERDI A CAGE »

Un panorama di stili della musica vocale

I brani saranno scelti dal seguente repertorio, non necessariamente nello stesso ordine:

CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI

Lasciatemi morire
La Lettera Amorosa
Con che soavità
Il Lamento della Ninfa

ANTONIO CALDARA

Selve Amiche

HENRY PURCELL

Kind Fortune
Hark the Echoing Air
Ye Gentle Spirits
Dido's Lament

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Trois Chansons de Bilitis

JACQUES OFFENBACH

da « La Périchole »

KURT WEILL

La Canzone della Schiavitù Sessuale
Le Grand Lustucru
Surabaya, Johnny
Tango dei Tempi che furono

IGOR STRAWINSKY

Two Early Songs Op. 6
Three Children's Stories
Berceuse du Chat
Pribaoutki

Lettura dei brani dall'Ulisse di James Joyce usati da Luciano Berio in « Thema »

LUCIANO BERIO

Thema (*Omaggio a Joyce*)
solo nastro

Avendo Gran Desio

Sequenza III

Three Early Songs

Bird Girl

Wasserklavier (*solo piano*)

Erdenklavier (*solo piano*)

CATHY BERBERIAN

Morsicat(h)y (*solo piano*)

Stripsody

SILVANO BUSSOTTI

« O » Atti Vocali

PAUL McCARTNEY/
JOHN LENNON

Yesterday

Ticket to Ride

JOHN CAGE

A Flower

Wonderful Widow of 18 Springs

Example 6.1: "Da Monteverdi a Cage"

“From Monteverdi to Cage” marked a definite change in how Berberian gave recitals, and it proved successful. She continued to perform variations of the program for the rest of her career; Cristina Berio’s collection includes a concert program dated from February 25, 1983, only a few weeks before Berberian died. Titled “Da Monteverdi ai Beatles,” the list of works exactly reproduces that from the earlier “From Monteverdi to Cage,” and Berio’s accompanying notes are also the same.

Berberian further endorsed this program by releasing an album that reproduced much of the same repertoire, titled *MagnifiCathy: The Many Voices of Cathy Berberian*.⁷ Recorded in November 1970 with Canino on piano, the album features much of Berberian’s repertoire from the Berliner Festwochen two months earlier. With no need to rest her voice during recording sessions the way she did in live performances, Berberian featured only vocal music on her album, omitting the solo piano works (like *Morsicat(h)y*) she normally included on stage. To encompass as much variety as possible within the time limits of an LP, it includes one example from each of the Weill and McCartney/Lennon selections, presenting *Surabaya Johnny* and *Ticket to Ride*, respectively. Only Gershwin’s *Summertime* appears solely on the album and not as part of Berberian’s live programs. This suggests that Berberian was still crafting the set of works that would become “From Monteverdi to the Beatles.” (She later included *Summertime* in her “VocaLectuRecital.”)

Berberian described “From Monteverdi to the Beatles” as an overview of “vocal musical revolutions” and a presentation of “the many varied styles of singing and voice

⁷ Berberian, *MagnifiCathy: The Many Voices of Cathy Berberian* (Wergo, WER 60054).

placement.”⁸ However, her program reveals some conspicuous gaps, most obviously of repertoire from the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries apart from Caldara’s *Selve amiche* (1711), Offenbach’s *La Périchole* (1868) and Debussy’s *Chansons de Bilitis* (1897). For a program that ostensibly covered a wide variety of vocal styles, it lacked representatives from such major genres as opera buffa, Lieder, and bel canto opera. The absence of Lieder, or indeed, any German repertoire is consistent with Berberian’s ongoing aversion to singing in German. The lack of Italian arias stands out as more curious. Berberian justified her choice as a conscious avoidance of singing bel canto in Italy, which she compared to “bringing ice to the Eskimos.”⁹ However, she performed this recital all over the world, so her excuse does not completely explain her refusal to sing bel canto arias. Instead, Berberian probably chose to design a recital program that combined her new Monteverdi works with her established contemporary repertoire and tried to justify her grouping by furnishing it with a catchy title and a convenient description. With this recital Berberian did not actually attempt to survey the history of vocal music, she simply combined a variety of her own favorites.

“From Monteverdi to the Beatles” eventually became Berberian’s “standard recital,” and she used it as a model for creating other recital programs.¹⁰ Moreover, it became her least daring program, as her other productions involved less familiar repertoire, more emphasis on spectacle, and more pervasive use of humor. Berberian’s

⁸ Berberian to Pousseur. PSS, Pousseur collection.

⁹ “farlo in Italia, sua patria elettiva, mi sembrerebbe di portare del ghiaccio agli esquimesi.” Valle: 51.

¹⁰ Berberian to Pousseur. PSS, Pousseur collection.

next program focused on a much smaller range of music history and avoided avant-garde music altogether.

À la recherché de la musique perdue

Following her twin interests in the music of the past and the introduction of humor into her recitals, Berberian decided to focus her attention on fin-de-siècle Paris. In a 1977 newspaper interview she confessed her fascination with the turn of the century and by “all that was good and bad in this period.”¹¹ She displayed this taste in her choice of decor and filled her apartment “with *art nouveau* statues, ashtrays, girlie florals and decorated cups,” as well as “a collection of Pierrots with sad eyes that she had gathered while traveling all over the world” and “a small kitschy Victrola.”¹² Berberian carried this interest into her public life by creating a recital suggestive of a Parisian salon, complete with contemporaneous music and suitable costumes and sets.

With the title “À la recherché de la musique perdue,” Berberian made an explicit reference to Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu*, a connection strengthened by her premiere of the recital during the centenary of his birth in 1971. This continued the relationship between music and literature that had existed throughout Berberian’s career, beginning with her recitation of a portion of Joyce’s *Ulysses* for Berio in 1958. It also

¹¹ “tout ce qu’il y avait de bon et de mauvais dans cette période.” *La Repubblica*, March 20, 1977. As quoted in Vila, 271.

¹² “ha una collezione di Pierrots dallo sguardo triste che ha raccolto viaggiando in tutto il mondo...colorato di statuette *art nouveau*, portaceneri, donnine floreali e tazze decorate...un piccolo Vittoriale kitsch...” Miro Silvera, “Cathy Berberian: Portrait of a Prima Donna,” *Vogue Italia*, October 1977-2: 158.

allowed Berberian to directly connect her recital to the respected work of Proust, marking her recital as a serious work of art despite its witty and at times irreverent content.

Berberian closely allied herself with Proust's published thoughts on music as revealed in his essay "Éloge de la mauvaise musique" (In Praise of Bad Music).¹³ Proust asked for a reconsideration of bad music in terms of the importance of its social role. He also believed that people should continually ask themselves what makes music good or bad, and to "Detest bad music but do not despise it."¹⁴ Berberian echoed this sentiment in program notes she wrote for the recital; she recognized that many critics would label her selections as "kitsch" and she asked them to reconsider, for "it is always a question of perspective, and rather subjective even so."¹⁵ In her recital, Berberian mixed "good" music with "bad," forcing audiences to confront the sometimes tenuous border separating the two.

In addition to the clear reference to Proust, the title "À la recherche de la musique perdue" indicated that the repertoire would largely consist of "lost" music. In her program notes, Berberian stated that the repertoire had been "recovered" from "vocal music that has fallen into oblivion, wrongly or rightly."¹⁶ She viewed her "exhumation of

¹³ Published in 1896 in the compendium *Les Plaisirs et les Jours*.

¹⁴ Marcel Proust, *Pleasures and Days, and Other Writings*. Ed. F.W. Dupree. Trans. Louise Varese, Gerard Hopkins and Barbara Dupree. (NY: Howard Fertig, 1978), 117.

¹⁵ "è sempre una questione di prospettiva, e piuttosto soggettiva anche così." Program notes for "Una Serata Liberty" at the Unione Musicale, Torino, February 1, 1978. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

¹⁶ "Il programma è in massima parte basato su un repertorio recuperato tra una quantità di musica vocale caduta nell'oblio, a torto o a ragione." Ibid.

this repertoire” to be consistent with her ongoing desire to present “new” music.¹⁷ The old songs’ obscure status made them fresh “for at least two generations present in the hall.”¹⁸ Such a perspective corresponded to Berberian’s embrace of other older music, like *Pierrot lunaire*. She cared less about the date of composition than about giving an innovative presentation.

Berberian also claimed an “aleatory aspect” to her recital, connecting this dated repertoire with avant-garde sensibilities.¹⁹ In her programs, Berberian presented a long list of songs from which she would choose each evening’s particular program. She declared that at each performance, she would choose the specific songs and the order in which to perform them based on her “valuation of the musical temperament, sensibility, and sense of humor of every particular public, and it will be destined, inevitably, to vary from city to city, as from nation to nation.”²⁰ Berberian credited the Russian bass Fyodor Chaliapin (1873-1938) with the idea of printing the bulk of his repertoire in his recital programs and announcing each piece as he sang it. Copying this practice, which Chaliapin observed in the time period Berberian meant to evoke, was part of her attempt at “authenticity.”²¹ However, Berberian performed “From Monteverdi to the Beatles” the

¹⁷ “la mia riesumazione di questo repertorio” Ibid.

¹⁸ “per almeno due generazioni presenti in sala” Ibid.

¹⁹ “un aspetto aleatorio” Ibid.

²⁰ “mia valutazione del temperamento musicale, della sensibilità, del senso dell’umorismo di ogni particolare pubblico, e sarà destinata, inevitabilmente, a variare da città a città, come da nazione a nazione.” Ibid.

²¹ Berberian, “Letter to Walther,” found in one of Berberian’s private notebooks in the private collection of Cristina Berio. The letter serves as a draft of Berberian’s eventual

same way, so the technique did not simply serve as a marker of fin-de-siècle sensibilities. In addition, Berberian's biographer contends that Berberian did not actually vary her program as much as she advertised, but generally repeated her entire performance, including her supposedly improvised discourses between the pieces.²²

Chaliapin's some-time accompanist, Gerald Moore, has confirmed Berberian's interpretation of Chaliapin's recital conduct.²³ According to Moore, when he initially agreed to accompany Chaliapin he was given two hundred songs to learn. At concerts, Chaliapin sold booklets containing the texts and translations of all the songs. Before each selection, he would call out the number of the next piece he would sing, pausing for a moment to let the audience read the text and to allow the accompanist to find the appropriate music. Moore has written that he initially did not know the order of the program, and believed Chaliapin to be deciding what to sing on the spot. However, he realized after a few concerts that the repertoire was generally the same from one concert to another and the vast majority of the songs listed on the program were never performed. In this sense, Berberian had also copied Chaliapin's technique.

Berberian intended to recreate an imaginary evening in the salon of Madame Verdurin, a character in Proust's novel. The fictional Mme. Verdurin is depicted as a social-climbing snob who meddles in the personal lives of those who frequent her salon, which focused on contemporary music. Though the music in Berberian's recital ranged

published program notes for the recital. Berberian consistently composed her notes as a letter, with published examples addressed to "Rainier," "John," and "Friends."

²² Vila, 275.

²³ Gerald Moore, *Am I Too Loud?: Memoirs of an Accompanist* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1962).

from the late seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries, she posited that “a majority of the songs could have been performed at a ‘soirée chez Mme Verdurin.’”²⁴ Berberian listed a total of 37 songs in her program, representing a range of languages, time periods and genres (see example 6.2). She did not favor more famous composers; the lesser-known Carl Loewe (1796-1869) and Francesco Paolo Tosti (1846-1916) were each represented by three songs on the program, the same as Beethoven and Rossini. Berberian also did not restrict herself to “serious” music: her repertoire included an aria from Rossini’s *Cenerentola* (1817) alongside Satie’s cabaret song “La diva de l’Empire” (1904) and the American temperance movement song “Father’s a Drunkard” (1866) by Mrs. E. A. Parkhurst (Susan McFarland Parkhurst; 1836-1918). Not all the songs appeared in their original forms either; all of the Beethoven examples were instrumental works such as his Fifth Symphony arranged for voice and piano by Hermann Zilcher.

Humor played an essential role in this recital. Some of the songs originated in humorous contexts, like the examples from operettas by Gilbert and Sullivan and Offenbach. Many became funny through their arrangements, as with the added text to instrumental pieces by Beethoven, while others drew their humor from Berberian’s delivery of the words or music. For example, she called attention to certain words in Loewe’s “Tom der Reimer” (translated into “Antonio il romatore”): “I emphasized what is truly stupid in the text, and it is funny because this is a ballad that Fischer-Dieskau and Hermann Prey sing seriously in Germany!”²⁵ Berberian relied on her audience’s

²⁴ Letter to Walther. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

²⁵ “Je souligne dans le texte que c’est vraiment idiot, et c’est drôle parce que c’est une ballade que Fischer-Dieskau et Hermann Prey chantent sérieusement en Allemagne!” *Allegro*, France Culture, January 24, 1975. As quoted in Vila, 278.

Cathy Berberian eseguirà una selezione dai seguenti pezzi:

1. Gioacchino Rossini: **Chanson du Bébé**
2. Léo Delibes: **Le Filles de Cadiz** (testo: Alfred de Musset)
3. Gioacchino Rossini: **Recitativo e Aria dalla Cenerentola**
4. Giovanni Paisiello: **Nel cor più non mi sento**
5. Ludwig van Beethoven: **Adagio** dalla Sonata in do diesis minore op. 27, n. 2 (testo: Professor E. K. Griepenkerl)
6. Mrs E. A. Parkhurst: **Father's a Drunkard** (testo: Stella)
7. Frédéric Chopin: **La Valse de l'Adieu**, op. 69 n. 1
8. Jean Sibelius: **Il primo bacio**
9. Serge Rachmaninov: **Quando la luna scende in silenzio** (testo: Fet)
10. Gilbert & Sullivan: **Tit-Willow**, dal Mikado
11. Henry Purcell: **Nymphs and Sheperds**
12. Jean Baptiste Weckerlin (arrangiamento): **Maman, dites-moi** 🍷
13. Erik Satie: **La Diva de l'Empire** (testo: Dominique Bonnaud e Numa Blès)
14. Carl Loewe: **La Figlia del campanaro**
15. Carl Loewe: **Antonio il rimatore** (testo: T. Fontane)
16. Carl Loewe: **Le Ragazze sono come il vento**
17. Camille Saint-Saëns: **Danse Macabre** (testo: Henri Cazalis)
18. Cesar Cul: **Statua nello Zarskoie Zelo** (testo: A. Puskin)
19. Modest Musorgskij: **La ballata della pulce** (testo: Goethe)
20. Reynaldo Hahn: **Offrandes** (testo: Paul Verlaine)
21. Léo Delibes: **Pourquoi dans les grands bois**, dalla Lakmé (testo: Gondinet e Gille)
22. Liza Lehmann: **There are Fairies at the Bottom of our Garden** (testo: Rose Fyleman)
23. Arthur Sullivan: **The lost Chord**
24. Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov: **Schiavo della rosa, l'usignolo** (testo: A. Koltzov)
25. Jacques Offenbach: **Les Fariniers, les charbonniers**
26. Jacques Offenbach: **Que voulez-vous faire**
27. Ludwig van Beethoven: **Sii tu benedetto!** dalla Sinfonia n. 5 in do minore (arrangiamento Zilcher)
28. Ludwig van Beethoven: **Alla notte**, dalla Sonata in fa minore op. 57 (arrangiamento Zilcher)
29. Ottorino Respighi: **La Mamma è come il pane caldo**
30. Ottorino Respighi: **E se un giorno tornasse**
31. Francesco Paolo Tosti: **Malia**
32. Francesco Paolo Tosti: **Ninon**
33. Francesco Paolo Tosti: **Pianto di monaca**
34. Adolfo Berio: **Ti ricordi**
35. Ernesto Berio: **Che dice la pioggerellina di marzo?**
33. Liszt-Schipa: **Sogno d'amore**
37. Gioacchino Rossini: **Duetto dei gatti**

La proposta discografica di Aurelio Gariazzo

« Wie einst im schönern Tagen »
 Brani di Loewe, Rossini, Fauré, Offenbach, Hahn ecc.
 Cathy Berberian, mezzosoprano
 Bruno Canino, pianoforte
 Karlheinz Zöllner, flauto
 Wolfgang Böttcher, violoncello
 Album di 2 dischi EMI 187-30681/82

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Example 6.2: “À la recherché de la musique perdue”

familiarity with this repertoire to truly appreciate her skewed performance, and she recounted the audience bursting with laughter, “because they have not thought how ridiculous these phrases are with music.”²⁶ She did not, however, treat all of the songs in this manner, and she left it up to the audience to decide which pieces were funny. She said that she did not “try to ‘distort’ the pieces, but simply to present them as if they were done by an amateur in a salon.”²⁷ As such, she sometimes did not sing to the best of her ability, but rather tried to mimic an amateur performance.

Berberian’s approach frequently made critics uncomfortable, as was the case with the reviewer from the *New York Times* who described “the unstable mixture of nostalgia and burlesque” in the recital and pronounced that “the show might have been better if the lines of demarcation had been drawn more clearly.”²⁸ Similarly, the critic of *l’Unita* described the danger of such a program turning into “farcical vulgarity” but asserted that Berberian’s “culture” saved her recital from such a fate.²⁹ Yet some critics embraced Berberian’s humor, or at least acknowledged the audience’s evident enjoyment. The critic of *Musical America* recognized that Berberian “was playing it for laughs...and there can

²⁶ “parce qu’ils n’ont jamais pensé combine c’est ridicule ces phrases avec la musique.” Ibid.

²⁷ *Times*, October 17, 1972. As quoted in Vila, 273.

²⁸ Allen Hughes, “Music: Cathy Berberian Sings and Acts,” *New York Times*, September 18, 1973.

²⁹ “Certo, per fare operazioni del genere senza cadere nella volgarità farsesca bisogna avere la cultura della Berberian e del suo magnifico partner Bruno Canino.” C.P. [Carlo Piccardi], “Serata ‘liberty’ all’Unione Musicale con Cathy Berberian e Bruno Canino,” *l’Unita*, February 5, 1978. Clipping in the private collection of Cristina Berio.

be no question that she got them.”³⁰ Berberian accepted the mixed reactions she received from her audiences, but viewed them as generally positive:

One part of the public seized the spirit of my grotesque performances, and applauded laughing...some others took things seriously, but applauded the same because of the pleasures of the songs. Only in Rome did they not have much understanding, they wanted to intellectualize the spectacle.³¹

She understood that not everyone would find her salon funny, but she did expect her audiences to enjoy themselves nonetheless. The only improper reaction, in her mind, was to overly intellectualize her performance instead of receiving it as entertainment.

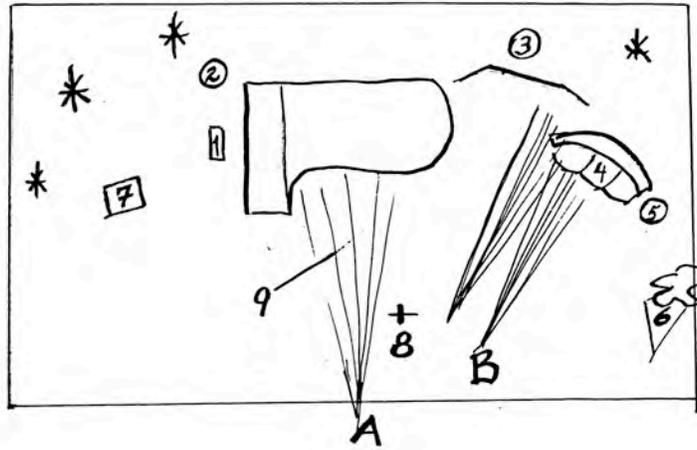
Berberian paid as much attention to her staging as she did her music. For the premiere in 1971, the Festival of Berlin commissioned a costume from the French designer Erté (Romain de Tiroff) of lilac satin covered in feathers and sequins, which Berberian wore for each subsequent performance. Canino always acted as Berberian’s accompanist for this recital, and he dressed in a period costume complete with a ruffled shirt peeking out of his tuxedo and a fake mustache. Berberian gave very specific directions about the staging to those who programmed her recital. On a paper she sent to organizers, Berberian specified the objects that she wanted to appear on stage, along with their proper placements (see example 6.3).³²

To properly evoke a bourgeois salon, Berberian required an old gramophone, potted plants, a screen, a period couch with a small side table, a rug and a statue. Berberian clarified that the statue should be “in bad taste” from the appropriate period

³⁰ “Cathy and camp,” *Musical America*, December 1973: 13.

³¹ Berberian quoted in “Cathy Berberian: ‘lost’ music, but with humor,” *La Stampa*, (Torino) February 1, 1978. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

³² Included with her 1978 Torino recital. Private collection of Cristina Berio.



- 1 Sedia per pianista
- 2 Sedia per ragazza che gira le pagine: giovane, capelli lunghi, taglio 42-46
- 3 Paravento
- 4 Divano fine secolo
- 5 Tavolo piccolo
- 6 Statua
- 7 Vecchio grammofono (se possibile)
- 8 Microfono per le annunci
- 9 Tappeto che va dal piano a metà divano
- * Piante grasse

- Porterò il mio costume e il vestito per la ragazza.
- La scena ben illuminata come un salotto _ in più gli spot ai punti **A** e **B** come indicati, usando gelatine rose pallide.
- Le statue dovrebbe essere di cattivo gusto dell'epoca; possono essere anche porta candela o porta lampade, purché siano di pessimo gusto e grande abbastanza da distinguere.

Example 6.3: Stage set for “À la recherche de la musique perdue”

and that a candle or lamp could be substituted as long as they were large enough to be seen from the audience and were also “in poor taste.” She also requested specific lighting, with “pale pink gelatins” covering the spotlights pointed at where she would stand to sing and where she would sit on the couch between pieces. Berberian treated the page-turner like any of the other objects on her diagram, specifying that the girl should be “young, with long hair, size 42-48.” The girl’s size mattered because Berberian provided her costume, which Canino remembered as a “very modest dress with small blue and white checks.”³³ Completing the salon atmosphere, Berberian chose to remain on stage between the songs, resting on the sofa (which she sometimes shared with the page turner) to “sip a glass of sherry or liquor.”³⁴ This contributed to the relaxed atmosphere Berberian desired in all of her recitals from the 1970s; she invited her audiences to enjoy themselves and modeled that behavior with her own evident pleasure during her performances.

Berberian released an album of her Proust-inspired recital in 1974 named “There Are Fairies at the Bottom of Our Garden” after the song by Liza Lehmann (1862-1918). Recorded live at the Edinburgh Festival, the album retains much of the excitement and comedy of Berberian’s performances, but lacks the visual elements so vital to the recital. Berberian attempted to overcome this drawback through the use of photographs and a witty message to the listener inscribed on the dust jacket. Written as if a review of a recent salon performance by Berberian, the album notes praise her talent and hint at some of the performative aspects of her recital. For example, they reveal her “graciousness” in

³³ “robe très modeste à petits carreaux bleus et blancs.” Canino, interview by Vila, February 2002, 276.

³⁴ “je sirote un verre de sherry ou de liqueur.” *Times*, October 17, 1972. As quoted in Vila, 275.

allowing Canino to play a solo piano work, but share her exasperation when the piece ran longer than expected. Another deliberate blunder involved an imaginary colleague, who failed to show up for the final number, “Father’s a Drunkard.” Canino thus had to fill in the second voice part “spontaneously” to complete the song. These notes communicate the general mood of Berberian’s recital and show the extent to which she made it like a genuine salon performance, remaining in character throughout. While the recording transmits the sound of Berberian singing (and the audience laughing), the album cover further conveyed the level of humor involved in the creation of a performance that also comprised acting, costumes, and sets.

Second Hand Songs

Over the course of her research into fin-de-siècle music for her Proust recital, Berberian discovered numerous arrangements of instrumental works for voice and piano. Berberian included a number of these arrangements in “À la recherche de la musique perdue,” as they suited the salon atmosphere of that recital. She found so many of these pieces, however, that she soon decided to construct a new program featuring them, which she titled “Second Hand Songs.” Popular among amateurs and salon singers in the late nineteenth-century, such arrangements allowed singers to present popular works of classical music in a salon setting. The French singer Pauline Viardot (1821-1910), for example, set twelve of Chopin’s mazurkas to poems by Louis Pomey and frequently sang

them, a practice that evidently pleased Chopin because it brought popularity to his own music.³⁵

As with her previous recitals, Berberian provided her audience with a list of works from which she would choose each evening's specific repertoire (see example 6.4). It quickly becomes apparent that only about half of the works Berberian chose actually fit the concert's theme. The remainder consists of "light" songs by well-known composers in their original forms. Berberian also included Andriessen's Beatles arrangements and her own *Stripsody*, which, combined with her re-use of pieces by Beethoven, Chopin, and Liszt from "À la recherché de la musique perdue," made this recital largely a reiteration of music she had sung before. Berberian, of course, did not acknowledge this in her program notes for "Second Hand Songs," nor did she admit that only half the works on her program fit the intended theme.

Instead, humor tied all of the varied works on the program together. More than either of Berberian's previous recitals, "Second Hand Songs" featured humor as the defining element of its conception. In her program notes for "Second Hand Songs," Berberian stated her intention to arouse "smiles, laughs, or better, hilarity" in her audience as part of her "insatiable need to bring back the fun in musical performance."³⁶ She followed her own notes with a list of quotations by distinguished figures intended to reinforce her espousal of humor as a worthy form of entertainment. She headed her list for a 1981 performance with a quote she attributed to Socrates: "To know what is serious

³⁵ Beatrix Borchard, "Viardot, Pauline" in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, (accessed March 20, 2010).

³⁶ 1978 program notes, Eliseo Theatre in Rome. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

i brani saranno
scelti dal seguente
repertorio:

BEETHOVEN - Silcher	Sonatas and Symphonies
Griepenkerl	Moonlight Sonata
Hebrew Liturgy	For the New Moon
CHOPIN - Hamelle	Sur Une Tombe
	Chère Nuit
	Valse de l'Adieu
Viardot	Coquette
	Aime-toi
Gaines	This Fair and Beateous Song
HAYDN - Viardot	Canzonetta
PAGANINI	E pur amabile
ČIAJKOVSKIJ	Dans les gouffres de l'enfer
DEBUSSY	Pierrot
PUCCHINI	Sole e amore
SAINT-SAENS	Danse Macabre
MENDELSSOHN - Barbier	Chanson du Printemps
STRAUSS	I'm in Love with Vienna
BACH - Farrar	Supplication
KREISLER - Farrar	The Whole World Knows Love Comes and Goes
LISZT - Schipa	Liebestraum
VERDI - Liszt	Rigoletto Paraphrase
GRIEG	Now
RAVEL	The Lamp Is Low
BIZET - Busoni	Carmen
BIZET - Hammerstein	Dat's Love
DEBUSSY	My Reverie
STRAVINSKY	Summer Moon
BEATLES - Andriessen	You've Got to Hide Your Love
	Yesterday
	Ticket to Ride
BERBERIAN	Stripsody
ROSSINI	Cat Duet

Example 6.4: "Second Hand Songs"

we must also know what is funny.”³⁷ This sentiment echoed Berberian’s embrace of kitsch in her Proust recital and her belief in the constant reevaluation of the line separating good and bad taste, and high from low culture.

Perhaps as a result of this humorous approach, critics responded to “Second Hand Songs” in a very positive way. Following performances in Birmingham and London in November 1976, critics raved, describing the recital as “artistry of the highest order,”³⁸ and “one of the most deft and delicate, as well as one of the funniest and most hugely enjoyable, shows she has conceived.”³⁹ Berberian did not mix serious and funny the way she had with “À la recherché de la musique perdue” and so did not confuse critics; they understood her performance as a funny show and more readily accepted her presentation.

VocaLectuRecital

Berberian shifted tactics with her next recital, which took a didactic approach to performance, but she retained her focus on eclecticism and entertainment. She developed a “VocaLectuRecital” for the Festival of Holland in 1977 that blended elements of lecture and recital, providing a narrated history of the voice punctuated with brief musical examples. Although a program of this recital does not survive in its entirety, newspaper reviews of a performance entitled “Vocalistoria” in Milan indicate the breadth of

³⁷ I have been unable to find any source for this quote.

³⁸ Barrie Grayson, “Cathy Berberian,” *The Birmingham Post*, November 12, 1976. Clipping in the PSS, Berberian collection.

³⁹ Dominic Gill, “Second-Hand Songs,” *Financial Times*, December 1, 1976. Clipping in the PSS, Berberian collection.

Berberian's survey.⁴⁰ She began with the "sounds of the primitives,"⁴¹ then moved through Gregorian chant, troubadour and trouvère chansons, followed by examples from Ockeghem, Girolamo Savonarola, John Dowland, Giovanni Bardi, Caccini, Mozart, and Rossini – all before intermission. The second half of the program began in the nineteenth century but skipped arias by Wagner, Verdi and Puccini because they "did not belong in her repertoire."⁴² Instead, she sang excerpts by Offenbach, Debussy, Ravel, and Stravinsky, as well as from contemporary pieces like *Pierrot lunaire*, Cage's *Aria*, and Berio's *Sequenza III* and jazz selections like Gershwin's *Summertime*.

Like "Second Hand Songs," this recital repeated a good deal of Berberian's existing repertoire. It expanded the material of "From Monteverdi to the Beatles," developing the same wide-ranging view and including much of the same music. Berberian's major innovation with "Vocalistoria" was to introduce an educational component into her performance, featuring her speech rather than her singing. She did, however, manage to incorporate a visual aspect as well, as one colleague remembers the performance beginning with Berberian on her hands and knees "imitating the sounds of the Cro-Magnon."⁴³ Berberian's accompanist, Canino, also played an important role,

⁴⁰ The private collection of Cristina Berio contains a group of unattributed newspaper clippings, seemingly sent out by Berberian as publicity for this recital, as it was included in a packet that contained a publicity photo, program notes, stationery on which to print a program or poster, and a list of technical requirements. Information about the musical contents of the program is taken from these clippings.

⁴¹ "suoni dei primitivi." Lorenzo Arruga, "L'Arte di stonare ma solo per gioco." Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁴² "non appartenendo questi autori al suo repertorio." C.M.C., "La lezione di Cathy." Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁴³ "imite les bruits de Cromagnon." Camille Roy, interview by Vila, 311.

moving from the harpsichord to the piano as appropriate and even occasionally taking a turn on the tambourine.

Vila claims that “Vocalistoria,” while popular at its premiere in the Netherlands, “unmistakably failed” before the Italian public.⁴⁴ The Italian newspaper reviews suggest a different story, though it must be noted that the clippings found in Cristina Berio’s private collection were those collected by Berberian, presumably chosen because they gave positive assessments. Although some of the critics shared the sentiment of wishing for “a little less history and a little more recital,” a few also indicated that Berberian received significant applause and several encores.⁴⁵ Little information exists to establish how often Berberian performed this lecture-recital. In any case it did not supplant “From Monteverdi to the Beatles,” which Berberian continued performing through the last months of her life.

Women Composers

In the late 1970s Berberian began a new project focused on music written by women. Though it did not involve humor, other elements common to her earlier recitals remained constant. Most notably, the recital featured works from many different time periods, continuing the stylistic diversity present in “From Monteverdi to the Beatles” and “Vocalistoria.” The recital also emulated “Vocalistoria” by including what one critic called “a combination of information and enjoyment,” with Berberian educating the

⁴⁴ “incontestablement failli.” Vila, 311.

⁴⁵ “un poco meno storia e un poco di più recital.” D. Cour., “Conferenza vocalistica della Berberian.” Private collection of Cristina Berio.

audience about the many unfamiliar composers on the program.⁴⁶ Finally, Berberian connected “Women Composers” to “À la recherche de la musique perdue” by stating that her “work of these years has also consisted of an accurate ‘search’ for unknown compositions.”⁴⁷

In 1976, Berberian described her preparation for the recital by claiming to have “collected the names of at least 230 female composers” from which she selected a “varied and chronologically extensive” program.⁴⁸ She described the resulting recital as “beginning in 1500 with Anne Boleyn and ending in 1975.”⁴⁹ Though no program survives, in a number of interviews Berberian listed the composers whose works she featured, including Fanny Mendelssohn, Clara Schumann, Alma Mahler, Pauline Viardot, Maria Malibran, Mary Stuart, Marie Antoinette, Francesca Caccini, and Barbara Strozzi.⁵⁰ Berberian began planning the recital, or at least publicizing her plans, in 1976 but did not start performing it for a number of years. Her 1978 and 1979 diaries discuss her work on the program but never mention performances. In addition to a recital program, Berberian also planned an album, even signing a contract with the conductor

⁴⁶ “Cathy Berberian: ‘lost’ music, but with humor,” *La Stampa* (Torino), February 1, 1978. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁴⁷ “Il mio lavoro di questi anni è consistito anche in una accurata ‘recherche’ di composizioni sconosciute.” Valle: 53.

⁴⁸ “ho raccolto i nomi di almeno 230 compositrici.” Berberian, interview by Gavezzotti: 21.

⁴⁹ Berberian to Pousseur. PSS, Pousseur collection.

⁵⁰ Berberian, interview by Gavezzotti; Valle; “Cathy Berberian: ‘lost’ music, but with humor,” *La Stampa*.

Mario di Bonaventura.⁵¹ She also planned to release an anthology of the material,⁵² and worked on the translations herself.⁵³

Berberian created this collection of music by women amid the rise of second-wave feminism and the sexual revolution. One interviewer in 1976 asked her if the recital on women composers was “of a feminist type,” a description that Berberian rejected.⁵⁴ She conceded, “Perhaps the starting point comes from a feminist instinct,” but quickly stated that her work had nothing to do with “Women’s Liberation,” perhaps rejecting a political label just as she had told Henze that she refused to sing political songs.⁵⁵ As proof of her lack of feminist sensibilities, Berberian cited her desire not to have a female accompanist for her recital. In 1981 Berberian said that she “had not thought about it at all,” and claimed that she was simply interested in “making music.”⁵⁶ She revealed her ambivalence about the issue in a 1978 interview when she stated, “this is a way of doing feminism.”⁵⁷ Berberian’s changing attitude recalls her conflicted feelings following the premiere of *Stripsody* in 1966. In both cases, Berberian had difficulty articulating her

⁵¹ Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁵² “il testo sarà pubblicato negli Stati Uniti come antologia.” “Cathy Berberian: ‘lost’ music, but with humor,” *La Stampa*.

⁵³ Berberian mentioned her translations in her diary on January 1 and February 12, 1979. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁵⁴ “di tipo femminista.” Berberian interview by Gavezzotti: 21.

⁵⁵ “Forse lo spunto può essere venuto da un femminismo istintivo, se vogliamo, che però non ha niente a che fare con il ‘Women Liberation.’” Ibid.

⁵⁶ Valle: 53.

⁵⁷ “questo è un modo di fare del femminismo.” “Cathy Berberian: ‘lost’ music, but with humor,” *La Stampa*.

attitude towards her newfound feminist actions. She did make an important statement with “Women Composers,” just as she had with *Stripsody*: she placed herself and other women who were mostly known for their roles as performers on the same level as male composers and showed her belief in the equality of their works.

Cathy Sings America

Berberian’s final themed recital originated in 1981, at a concert sponsored by the Swiss-Italian broadcasting station RSI (Radiotelevisione Svizzera di Lingua Italiana) devoted to the music of the United States. She divided her recital into two sections, with the first half borrowing the technique of lecturing to her audience that she first developed for “Vocalistoria” and featuring music “sung in the house, in concert and on stage.”⁵⁸ While this part of her program did not specify the songs Berberian sang to illustrate her speech, it did provide a long list of American composers. The list contains more and less familiar names, ranging from the little-known Francis Hopkinson (1737-91) and Dan Emmett (1815-1904) to major composers like Samuel Barber, Cage, and Charles Ives. The common thread uniting these disparate composers was that they created songs popular in the U.S. that remained “generally unknown in Europe.”⁵⁹ This description echoed Berberian’s reasoning that her Proust recital featured music unfamiliar to the audience, and thus qualified as “new” music. The second half of “Cathy Sings America,” by contrast, featured American popular music that had influenced music throughout “the

⁵⁸ “che si cantava in casa, in concerto e sulla scena.” Berberian, program notes for “Cathy Canta L’America,” February 9, 1981. Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁵⁹ “generalment sconosciuta in Europa.” Ibid.

entire world.”⁶⁰ Organized into groups, this part of the recital showcased early blues songs (“St. Louis Blues”), entries by well-known songwriters like Gershwin (“Embraceable You”), Cole Porter (“Night and Day”), and Irving Berlin (“Anything You Can Do”), and songs from popular musicals (“America” from *West Side Story*) and films (“Whistle While You Work” from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*).

One unusual feature of this recital was the list of performers who appeared on the program alongside Berberian. Together with the pianist Massimiliano Damerini and guitarist Carolyn Steinberg was Candace Smith, one of Berberian’s voice students. Berberian shared the stage with Smith for at least part of her recital. A review by Carlo Piccardi indicates that during the second half of the recital Berberian alternated with Smith, singing the songs “immediately in succession.”⁶¹ Sharing the concert allowed for a nonstop series of songs, whereas if Berberian performed alone she would have needed breaks. Berberian had long incorporated solo piano works into her recitals so she had a chance to rest, but this seems to be the first time that she invited another singer onto the stage to help her complete her performance.

Berberian considered this recital “a little like an act of rebellion,” because she was “known for doing Monteverdi, contemporary music and salon music.”⁶² Of course, when she started singing Monteverdi and salon music she had not been known for those either,

⁶⁰ “in tutto il monde.” Ibid.

⁶¹ “immediato di successi.” Carlo Piccardi, “L’America di Cathy Berberian,” Private collection of Cristina Berio.

⁶² “un peu comme un acte de rébellion, parce que je suis connue pour faire Monteverdi, la musique contemporaine et la musique de salon.” Inter-Actualités Magazine, France Inter, March 6, 1982. As quoted in Vila, 324.

but by the 1980s she had been singing that repertoire for a number of years. Singing American popular music was probably not as rebellious as Berberian suggested, especially considering that RSI had commissioned her to create the recital. Indeed, Piccardi expressed surprise that Berberian had never sung that repertoire before and praised RSI for creating the opportunity.⁶³ By this point, too, Berberian had been singing “light” music for well over a decade, including other types of popular music like the Beatles.

Conclusion

In addition to the recitals detailed in this chapter, Berberian created other programs that she performed less frequently and for which little evidence survives. She described all of her programs in an undated letter to Pousseur, and in addition to “À la recherche de la musique perdue,” “Second Hand Songs” and “Women Composers,” she listed “Italian song from 1400 to today” and “Folk Songs and the composer (Beethoven to Berio).” Berberian’s 1978 diary mentioned her work on the “folk program” for an upcoming performance in London; she later noted a recital in London on August 9 but did not specify her repertoire.⁶⁴ The diary also records work on a “clown piece,” which may have referred to either to a recital or to a specific work. A few weeks after the initial reference, Berberian noted that she talked to “gorgeous hunk Gianni Damiani” (a young Italian poet) about a clown piece he wanted to write for her. In any case, the only evidence that a recital with a clown theme ever happened comes from an undated note Berberian wrote

⁶³ Piccardi, “L’America”

⁶⁴ Private collection of Cristina Berio.

on the stationary of the Hotel Schweizerhof in Berlin: “Tonight I will propose several ways of musical clowning.”⁶⁵ The note also mentions the “famous or notorious ballad” by Carl Loewe, “Tom der Reimer,” which had appeared in “À la recherche de la musique perdue.”

Though Berberian’s original recitals occupied much of her time and attention in the latter part of her career, she never abandoned her performances of contemporary music. In fact, she kept premiering new music even after she began creating her recitals. She created both Cage’s *Song Books* and Berio’s *Recital I* in 1971, the same time that she began to sing “From Monteverdi to the Beatles” and “À la recherché de la musique perdue,” and, as late as 1979, William Walton dedicated his *Façade 2* to her.

Overall, Berberian’s recital programs represent a major segment of her career, one in which she assumed total control over her performances. She continued many aspects of her earlier roles as a collaborator, composer and performer, but she blended them according to her preferences. For example, her collaborative relationships reversed as she took over the creative role and told her (generally male) accompanists what to do, and in some cases even how to look. Berberian’s recitals can thus be seen as an extension of the creative independence she began exploring with *Stripsody*.

⁶⁵ Private collection of Cristina Berio.

Conclusion

Cathy Berberian played a central role in the performance and composition of avant-garde vocal music in the post-war years. She inspired numerous composers to create works featuring her unique voice, and her preferences and talents had a considerable effect on the content of those pieces. Her voice has not always been recognized, and it can be easy to forget the role of a performer whose contributions remain hidden. Particularly in the electro-acoustic works created from her recorded voice, Berberian's role has often been overlooked. Yet when we hear these works, we hear her actual voice. Berberian's other repertoire acts no differently: when we hear the music written for her, we continue hearing her influence. As a performer, she did not leave an easily identifiable written mark on the works in her repertoire, but her traces persist nonetheless.

Beyond the approximately thirty works dedicated to and/or premiered by Berberian, she had a significant effect on musical life in other ways. She participated in some major musical movements: she performed at Darmstadt and other contemporary music festivals, she was one of the first "classical" musicians to sing Beatles songs, she helped to initiate the move towards increasingly theatrical performances during the 1960s, and she participated in the revival of baroque music. Through her independent performances and compositions, she set an important example for the female singers who followed her. In the ensuing years, it has become almost standard for avant-garde and experimental singers like Laurie Anderson, Meredith Monk, Diamanda Galas, and Joan La Barbara to compose their own works and to assume a commanding presence on stage with performances that blend elements of theater and music.

Berberian's influence has continued to be felt since her death in 1983. Over the course of her lifetime, Berberian made a tremendous impact on those who worked with her and those who heard her perform. In the years since her death, a number of composers and performers have made tributes to her talent and musical style. Cage, Bussotti, and Berio, Berberian's primary collaborators, all composed works in her memory. Another group of four composers, including Andriessen, created a group of compositions performed at a memorial concert on the tenth anniversary of her death. Avant-garde and experimental singers have also continued to honor Berberian's memory by performing in concerts and on recordings dedicated to her. The range of activities carried out by these musicians, especially with regard to the musical techniques they highlight, reveals the legacy Berberian has left on contemporary vocal composition and performance.

Berio, who composed at least nineteen works for and with Berberian during her life, dedicated a single composition to her after her death. The Chamber Orchestra of Lausanne premiered the work, entitled *Requies*, in an incomplete form in March 1984.¹ Berio completed the composition in 1985. The early performance, almost exactly a year after Berberian's death, suggests that Berio rushed to have the work ready as a memorial to her. Remarkably enough, *Requies* is scored for chamber orchestra and includes no vocal line. Perhaps Berio thought that a singer could not pay proper tribute to another singer, but he has left only a cryptic description of his intentions for the work. In program notes, Berio described how the orchestra does not truly play a melody but rather

¹ Berio, *Requies* (Universal Edition, U.E. 19149, 1985).

“describes a melody: but only as a shadow can describe an object or an echo a sound.”²

With *Requies*, Berio therefore only hinted at any connection to Berberian rather than referring to a technique or style associated with her.

Bussotti and Cage wrote much more personal memorials. Bussotti authored the text himself for his *In Memoriam (Cathy Berberian)*.³ Written over the course of late 1983 and early 1984, the Italian poem reveals his admiration for Berberian and his sincere love for her. The voice declaims his words over dissonant, complex passages played by the flute, viola, and piano. While as in many of Bussotti’s works the notation leaves the vocal technique somewhat unclear, it appears that the vocal line consists of a few notes that function like reciting tones. The result is something of an atonal, disjunct reference to medieval chant.

Cage also dedicated his *Nowth Upon Nacht* “in memoriam Cathy Berberian” and completed it in July 1984.⁴ This brief song holds many connections to his *The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs* (1942), which Berberian frequently performed in her recitals. Cage set text from page 556 of Joyce’s *Finnegan’s Wake* for both compositions, and he specified that *Nowth Upon Nacht* should be performed immediately following *Wonderful Widow*. The scoring for both songs is the same, with the voice accompanied only by a piano used for its percussive sounds. A few major differences highlight the emotionally charged nature of *Nowth Upon Nacht*. While both songs are declaimed using only a few

² Berio, program notes for *Requies*. Website of the Centro Studi Luciano Berio, www.lucianoberio.org [Accessed March 1, 2011].

³ Bussotti, *In Memoriam (Cathy Berberian)* (Ricordi, 1984).

⁴ Cage, *Nowth Upon Nacht* (Henmar Press, 1984).

pitches, *Nowth Upon Nacht* has a much higher tessitura, resulting in a strained sound from the vocalist. The piano part also contributes a more anxious feeling; instead of the subtle knocking sounds of *Wonderful Widow*, in *Nowth Upon Nacht* the singer (or an accompanist) aggressively slams the lid shut. David Revill has written that the song “invites an emotional interpretation, by listener and performer, making it as near to expression – of rage – as Cage had come for decades.”⁵ Cage obviously recognized that the pieces of his that Berberian performed most frequently – *Wonderful Widow* and *A Flower* (1950) – were not those he had written expressly for her. He styled his memorial song accordingly, and wrote a personal tribute in her memory.

In addition to these works written soon after her death, Berberian inspired multiple concerts dedicated to her memory. Some of these happened almost immediately, as with a concert Berio entitled “Evening for Cathy” in November 1983 in Naples that presented his *Sequenza III*, *Visage*, and *Folk Songs*. Curiously enough, the concert program omits Berberian’s name, describing *Visage* as only “for magnetic tape.”⁶ Perhaps Berio or the concert organizers believed that Berberian’s voice on the tape would have been obvious to the audience due to the concert’s title. Or perhaps once again, Berberian lost credit for her crucial role in the creation of that seminal work.

On the tenth anniversary of Berberian’s death, an “Homage to Cathy Berberian,” also directed by Berio, was performed in both Florence and Milan on June 8 and June 13, 1993. The program included much of Berberian’s favored repertoire in

⁵ Revill, *The Roaring Silence: John Cage: A Life* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1992), 276.

⁶ “Serata per Cathy,” November 23, 1983, Naples. Program in the PSS, Berio collection.

combination with Berio's *Requies* (see example 7.1). A group of four singers came together to perform all the works on the program, and they shared the performance of *Folk Songs*. It was likely this experience that led Berio to comment that he needed four singers to convey the effect Berberian had achieved when she performed *Folk Songs*.⁷ The singers represented a range of backgrounds, with each woman specializing in a different style of music. German Ute Lemper (b. 1963) mostly sings jazz and popular music from Weimar Germany, and she released an album of Weill songs in 1989. Notably, in this concert, she sang the Weill songs in the original German and not with Berberian's translations, making them perhaps a better representation of her own style than a nod to Berberian. Monica Bacelli (b. 1963), an Italian, specializes in Italian lyric opera, especially by Mozart, and she repeatedly worked with Harnoncourt. Luisa Castellani and Adria Mortari both sing contemporary music and had worked with Berio previously.

A final major memorial concert to Berberian occurred twenty years after she died, in March 2003. The singer Cristina Zavalloni (b. 1973) organized the concert and named it "With All My Love: Hommage to Cathy Berberian Twenty Years Later" (Con tutto il mio amore: Omaggio a Cathy Berberian vent'anni dopo). The program mixed songs from Berberian's repertoire with new works commissioned for the occasion. Zavalloni began the concert with excerpts from Berio's *Folk Songs*, songs by the Beatles (with Andriessen's arrangements), and Offenbach's "Ah! quel diner," an aria from *La Périchole* (1868). The four new works came from a variety of composers, including Castaldi and Andriessen, who knew Berberian and worked with her. Two other young

⁷ de Swaan, *Music is the Air I Breathe*.

Monteverdi La lettera amorosa
Mezzosoprano: Monica Bacelli. Clavicembalo: Ulla Casalini

Berio Sequenza III [1966]*
per voce sola
Soprano: Luisa Castellani

Cage A Flower
The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs
Soprano: Luisa Castellani

Weill/Berio Die Ballade von der sexuellen Hörigkeit [1975]*
Da «Die Dreigroschenoper»
Surabaya-Johnny [1972]*
Da «Happy End»
Le grand Lustucru [1972]*
Da «Marie Galante»
Solista: Ute Lemper

~

Berio Requies [1985]*
per orchestra

Folk Songs [1973]*

Solisti: Ute Lemper, Monica Bacelli, Luisa Castellani, Adria Mortari

1. Black is the Colour (Luisa Castellani)
2. I Wonder as I Wander (Ute Lemper)
3. Loosin yelav (Monica Bacelli)
4. Rossignolet du bois (Luisa Castellani)
5. A la femminisca (Ute Lemper)
6. La donna ideale (Adria Mortari)
7. Ballo (Adria Mortari)
8. Mottettu de tristura (Luisa Castellani)
9. Malurous qu'ò uno fenne (Luisa Castellani)
10. Lo fiolaire (Monica Bacelli)
11. Azerbaijan Love Song (Luisa Castellani, Adria Mortari)

Ort-Orchestra della Toscana

Direttore

LUCIANO BERIO

Example 7.1: Program of the “Homage to Cathy Berberian”

composers only knew Berberian by reputation. Uri Caine's *In Memoriam Cathy Berberian* (with text by Zavalloni) and Claudio Lugo's *FutuRétro #1* have not been published or recorded. Neither has Castaldi's *A Fair Mask*, which, according to Vila, featured a polyglot text in German, English, French, Latin, and Spanish.⁸ Castaldi, who had written his percussion-heavy *Tendre* for Berberian in 1963, decided to emphasize another feature of Berberian's style in this memorial work. This work, and the concert as a whole, highlighted Berberian's vast range, both in terms of languages and musical styles.

Andriessen's *Letter from Cathy* is the only work from this project to have been published and it also holds the strongest connection to Berberian, as she unwittingly wrote the text.⁹ Andriessen set most of a letter that Berberian had sent him on April 27, 1964, right after she had discovered Berio's infidelity and returned to Europe without him. In addition to her domestic upheaval, she had also just met Stravinsky, one of her favorite composers, and she told Andriessen of how he complimented one of her recent performances and decided to adapt his newly written *Elegy for J.F.K.* for her. Andriessen left out more unadventurous portions of the letter in which Berberian updated him about her upcoming performances and congratulated him on a recent scholarship he had won.¹⁰ Berberian wrote her letter in English, the standard language she used to communicate with Andriessen, but she quoted Stravinsky in French. Andriessen left the quotation as she had written it, giving this work a bilingual text. The rest of the work does not really

⁸ Vila, 347.

⁹ Andriessen, *Letter from Cathy* (Boosey & Hawkes, 2003).

¹⁰ The original letter is in the private collection of Cristina Berio.

emphasize vocal techniques associated with Berberian but it does draw attention to the voice, which sings Berberian's words in a clear, straightforward manner. Amazingly enough, *Letter from Cathy* is the only published work to feature a text written by Berberian, almost forty years after she wrote it.

Perhaps more than any other contemporary singer, Zavalloni has continued to perform in the same style as Berberian. She has worked with many of the same composers: she has collaborated with Andriessen since 1999 (and premiered his *La Passione* in October 2002), sang the role of Justine-Juliette-O in Bussotti's *La Passion selon Sade* on a European tour of the work in 1998, and began singing works by Berio around the same time. In 2002 she sang a program à la Berberian: De Falla's *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas*, Berberian's *Stripsody*, and Berio's *Folk Songs*. She released a self-titled CD in 2003 that contained mostly new music but also the De Falla songs, Berio's *Quattro Canzoni Popolari*, and the Beatles songs arranged by Andriessen.¹¹ Zavalloni does not just perform some of Berberian's repertoire, she has also emphasized her ability to rapidly switch between a variety of different musical styles. Andriessen has said that he highly values this trait, which reminds him of Berberian. In an interview about his recent monodrama *Anaïs Nin* (2009-10), which features Zavalloni in the title role, he praised her "amazing ability to rapidly switch moods and styles, which comes from her versatility with different musical languages, from medieval to contemporary."¹² Even more than keeping similar repertoire, Zavalloni

¹¹ Cristina Zavalloni, *Cristina Zavalloni* (Sensible Records, 2003).

¹² Andriessen, interview in October 2010, published on the website of Boosey & Hawkes, www.boosey.com/cr/news/Andriessen-interview-about-new-monodrama-Ana-s-Nin/12084 [Accessed March 3, 2011].

has maintained Berberian's approach by choosing to mix an assortment of styles to create individual programs that show off her versatility.

Berberian's legacy persists in multiple ways: her influence on singers such as Zavalloni, who have adopted her repertoire and singing style; the virtuosic compositions she inspired and helped create; the recordings of her voice on both commercial albums and in electro-acoustic works; and the memories of those who knew her or saw her perform. While comprehensive research remains to be done on topics surrounding Berberian, including experimental and avant-garde vocal music in the second half of the twentieth century and other important performers from this period, her significant influences are undeniable. She left a powerful impression on composers, performers, and audiences of avant-garde (and other) music and acted as a vital force in the creation and dissemination of vocal music in the late twentieth century.

Appendix A: Works Dedicated to or Premiered by Cathy Berberian

- * Dedicated to CB
- ° Premiered by CB
- Arranged for CB

Works listed chronologically, in order of performance (or if never performed, by date of composition)

Dates of composition are given in parentheses if different from the premiere date

Berio, <i>Opus Number Zoo</i> (1951) [°] text by Berberian revised in 1970 with text by Rhoda Levine (based on Berberian)	Milan, 1952
Berio, <i>Deus Meus</i> [°]	Milan, 1952
Berio, <i>Quattro Canzoni Popolari</i> [°] <i>Dolce Cominciamento</i> <i>La Donna Ideale</i> <i>Avendo Gran Disio</i> <i>Ballo</i>	Milan, 1952
Berio, <i>Chamber Music</i> ^{*°}	Milan, 1953
Berio, <i>Summer Night Blues</i> [°] text by Berberian	recorded at RAI, 1956
Berio, <i>Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)</i> [°]	Naples, June 14, 1958
Cage, <i>Aria</i> (1958) ^{*°}	Rome, January 5, 1959
Donatoni, <i>Serenata</i> [°]	Milan, April 11, 1959
Paccagnini, <i>Brevi Canti</i> [°]	Darmstadt, September 3, 1959
Berio, <i>Allez-Hop</i> [°]	Venice, September 21, 1959
Bussotti, <i>Voix de femme</i> ^{*°} excerpt from <i>Pièces de chair II</i> (1958-60) [*]	Milan, April 9, 1960 Paris, October 22, 1970
Maderna, <i>Dimensioni II</i> [°]	Milan, April 9, 1960

Berio, <i>Circles</i> °	Tanglewood, August 1, 1960
Bussotti, <i>Torso, letture di Braibanti</i> °	Paris, December 7, 1960
Haubenstock-Ramati, <i>Twice for Cathy</i> (1960)*	
Haubenstock-Ramati, <i>Credentials, or Think, Think Lucky</i> °	Donaueschingen, October 21, 1961
Berio, <i>Epifanie</i> *°	Donaueschingen, October 22, 1961
Bussotti, <i>Memoria</i> °	Rome, 1962
Berio, <i>Esposizione</i> °	Venice, April 18, 1963
Berio, <i>Visage</i> (1961)°	Rome, May 2, 1963
Berio, <i>Folk Songs</i> •°	Oakland, December 11, 1963
Milhaud, <i>Adieu</i> °	Palermo, 1964
Berio, <i>Rounds with Voice</i> °	recorded 1964
Stravinsky, <i>Elegy for J.F.K.</i> •	New York, December 6, 1964
Bussotti, <i>La Passion selon Sade</i> °	Palermo, September 5, 1965
Berberian, <i>Stripsody</i> °	Bremen, May 1966
Berio, <i>Sequenza III</i> *°	Bremen, May 1966
Pousseur, <i>Phonèmes pour Cathy</i> *°	Bremen, May 1966
Canino, <i>Fortis</i> °	Venice, September 6, 1966
Pousseur, <i>Votre Faust</i> °	Brussels, December 12, 1966
Castaldi, <i>Tendre</i> (1966)°	Brussels, December 14, 1966
Lennon/McCartney, arr. Andriessen (1966)•°	
Lennon/McCartney, arr. Berio•°	Venice, September 11, 1967
Weill, arr. Berio•°	Venice, September 11, 1967

Scherchen, <i>Wai</i> °	Donaueschingen, October 19, 1968
Berio, <i>Prière</i> °	Paris, October 29, 1968
Berio, <i>El Mar la Mar</i> (1953; rev. 1969)°	Royan, March 29, 1969
Berio, <i>Cela Veut Dire Che</i> ° later performed as <i>Questo vuol dire che</i> and <i>This Means That</i>	Royan, April 4, 1969
Cage, <i>Song Books</i> *°	Paris, October 26, 1970
Berio, <i>Magnificat</i> (1949)°	Turin, 1971
Rands, <i>Metalepsis II</i> °	London, May 3, 1971
Maderna, <i>Ausstrahlung</i> °	Shiraz, September 4, 1971
Rands, <i>Ballad 2</i> (1971)*	
Berio, <i>Recital I (for Cathy)</i> *°	Lisbon, May 27, 1972
Walton, <i>Façade 2</i> (1979)*	
Puccini, <i>E l'uccellino</i> (1899), arr. Bussotti•°	Torre del Lago, August 4, 1981

Appendix B: Selected Programs from Berberian's Performances, 1958-83

Principal Sources

Programs in the private collection of Cristina Berio

Programs in the Paul Sacher Foundation

Luciano Berio collection

Bruno Maderna collection

Note: all information has been taken directly from programs unless otherwise noted. Titles and names of composers and performers have been changed to the standard forms as necessary.

Abbreviation:

prem.: world premiere

June 17, 1958 – Incontri Musicali, Conservatorio S. Pietro a Majella, Naples

Orchestra dell'Associazione "A. Scarlatti"

Concert directed by Franco Caracciolo (with the participation of the soprano Cathy Berberian)

<i>Sinfonia</i> , op. 21	Anton Webern
<i>Trois Poèmes de Mallarme</i>	Maurice Ravel
<i>Pribaoutki</i>	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Quattro Studi</i> for orchestra	Angelo Paccagnini
<i>Divertimento</i> for strings	Béla Bartók

April 11, 1959 – I Pomeriggi Musicali, Teatro Nuovo, Milan

in collaboration with the Incontri Musicali

directed by Bruno Maderna

with the collaboration of the mezzo soprano Cathy Berberian

<i>Canti per tredici</i>	Luigi Nono
<i>Serenata</i> for 16 instruments with female voice (prem.)	Franco Donatoni
<i>Serenata</i>	Goffredo Petrassi
<i>Concerto</i> op. 24	Anton Webern
<i>Continuo</i> (electronic music)	Bruno Maderna
<i>Gesang der Jünglinge</i> (electronic music)	Karlheinz Stockhausen
<i>Aria with Fontana Mix</i>	John Cage
<i>Rimes</i> for different sound sources	Henri Pousseur

September 3, 1959 – Darmstadt

First Chamber Concert of the Days for New Music

String quartet no. 11, op. 87
in the sixth-tone system

Alois Hába

Novák Quartet

Brevi canti for mezzosoprano and piano (prem.)

Angelo Paccagnini

Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano
Niccolò Castiglioni, piano

Mouvements for two op. 27 (prem.)

Claude Ballif

Severino Gazzelloni, flute
Aloys Kontarsky, piano

Kreuzspiel

Karlheinz Stockhausen

Alfred Schweinfurter, oboe
Wolfgang Marz, bass clarinet
David Tudor, piano
Christoph Caskel, Heinz Haedler,
Manfred Wehner, percussion
Karlheinz Stockhausen, conductor

Quartetto for strings

Luciano Berio

Novák Quartet

Cangianti for piano (prem.)

Niccolò Castiglioni

Niccolò Castiglioni, piano

Two Books of Study for Pianists

Cornelius Cardew

Cornelius Cardew, Richard Rodney Bennett, piano

April 4, 1959 – Darmstadt

Kranichsteiner Composition Studio III

<i>Transición II</i> for piano, percussion and two tapes	Mauricio Kagel
<i>Interpolations</i> , <i>Mobile</i> for flute (prem.)	Roman Haubenstock-Ramati
<i>Aria with Fontana Mix</i>	John Cage
<i>Thema – Omaggio a Joyce</i>	Luciano Berio
<i>Musica su due dimensioni</i> for flute and tape	Bruno Maderna

Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano
Severino Gazzelloni, flute
David Tudor, piano
Christoph Caskel, percussion
Mauricio Kagel, sound design

April 9, 1960 – Incontri Musicali, Milan Conservatory, Milan

<i>Mobile</i>	Henri Pousseur
<i>Frammento*</i> (prem.)	Sylvano Bussotti
<i>Structures</i>	Pierre Boulez
<i>En blanc et noir</i>	Claude Debussy
<i>Dimensioni II</i>	Bruno Maderna
[unknown]	Luciano Berio

Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano
Alfons and Aloys Kontarsky, piano

* *Voix de femme*, from *Pièces de chair II*

May 10, 1960 – Monday Evening Concerts, Los Angeles

<i>Density 21.5</i>	Edgard Varèse
<i>Syrinx</i>	Debussy
<i>Sequenza</i>	Luciano Berio
<i>Musica su due dimensioni</i>	Bruno Maderna
Severino Gazzelloni, flute	
<i>Le Merle noir</i>	Olivier Messiaen
<i>Sonatine</i>	Pierre Boulez
Severino Gazzelloni, flute Leonard Stein, piano	
<i>Aria with Fontana Mix</i>	John Cage
Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano	
<i>Voix de femme</i>	Sylvano Bussotti
Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano Leonard Stein, piano	
<i>Omaggio a Joyce</i>	Luciano Berio
<i>Continuo</i>	Bruno Maderna

Note: Program taken from Crawford, *Evenings On and Off the Roof*, 187.

August 1, 1960 – Tanglewood

<i>Ricercare and Doubles</i>	Peter Maxwell Davies
<i>Circles</i> (prem.)	Luciano Berio
<i>Second Sonata</i>	Roger Sessions
<i>Septuplet</i>	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Sextet</i>	Bohuslav Martinu

Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano
Paul Jacobs, piano
Musicians of the Boston Symphony Orchestra
Richard Burgin, conductor

Note: Program taken from Jay C. Rosenfeld, "Wild Night at Tanglewood." Newspaper clipping in the private collection of Cristina Berio.

October 21, 1961 – Donaueschingen

Chamber Concert

<i>Monadés III</i> (prem.)	Jacques Guyonnet
<i>Entelechie I</i> for 5 instrument groups (prem.)	Peter Schat
<i>Credentials, or Think, Think Lucky</i> for Sprechstimme and 8 instruments (prem.)	Roman Haubenstock-Ramati
<i>Permutazioni a cinque</i> for wind quintet	Mátyás Seiber
<i>Structures</i> for two pianos, second book (prem.)	Pierre Boulez

Cathy Berberian, voice
Yvonne Loriod, Pierre Boulez, piano
Wind Quintet of the SWF
Members of the SWF Symphony Orchestra
Hans Rosbaud, conductor

October 22, 1961 – Donaueschingen

Orchestra Concert

Contrasts (prem.)

Gunther Schuller

Wind Quintet of the SWF

Epifanie (prem.)

Luciano Berio

Cathy Berberian, voice

Atmosphères (prem.)

György Ligeti

Orchestervariationen op. 31

Arnold Schoenberg

SWF Symphony Orchestra
Hans Rosbaud, conductor

January 31, 1962 – Domaine Musical, Paris

Signes (prem.)

André Boucourechliev

Caractères pour piano

Henri Pousseur

Circles

Luciano Berio

Kontakte

Karlheinz Stockhausen

Note: Program taken from Aguila, *Le Domaine Musical*, 286.

April 18, 1963 – La Biennale di Venezia

<i>Gardens without Walls</i> , on electronic music	Henri Pousseur
Choreography by Ann Halprin	
<i>Circles</i>	Luciano Berio
Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano Francis Pierre, harp Jean-Claude Casadesus, Jean-Pierre Drouet, percussion	
<i>Esposizione</i> (prem.)	Luciano Berio
Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano Massimo Monti, Roberto Gavirati, children's voices Choreography by Ann Halprin The Dancer's Workshop Company of San Francisco Electronic music by the Studio di Fonologia Quartet of soloists directed by Berio	

April 28, 1963 – Perugia

<i>Nymphs and Shepherds</i>	Henry Purcell
<i>Chansons de Bilitis</i>	Claude Debussy
<i>Pribaoutki</i>	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Tre liriche popolari</i>	Luciano Berio
La donna ideale Avendo gran disio Il ballo	
<i>Siete canciones populares Españolas</i>	Manuel de Falla
Canti popolari armeni, italiani, francesi, americani, russi, ecc.	
Cathy Berberian Berio, soprano Frederic Rzewski, pianoforte	

December 10, 1963 – Mills College, Oakland, California

<i>Chansons de Bilitis</i>	Claude Debussy
<i>Don Quichotte à Dulcinée</i>	Maurice Ravel
<i>Five Poems of Anna Akhmatova</i>	Sergei Prokofiev
<i>Siete canciones populares Españolas</i>	Manuel de Falla
<i>Folk Songs</i> (prem.)	Luciano Berio

Note: Program taken from newspaper clippings in the private collection of Cristina Berio.

December 6, 1964 – Philharmonic Hall, Lincoln Center, New York City

December 7, 1964 – Constitution Hall, Washington D.C.

December 9, 1964 – Symphony Hall, Boston

<i>Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme</i> , excerpts	Richard Strauss
<i>Abraham and Isaac</i> sacred ballet for baritone and orchestra	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Pastorale*</i> for violin, oboe, English horn, clarinet, bassoon	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Elegy for J.F.K.</i> for three clarinets and mezzo-soprano	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Berceuses du chat</i> for three clarinets and mezzo-soprano	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Pribaoutki</i>	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Pulcinella</i> Suite	Igor Stravinsky

Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, conductors
Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano
Andrew Foldi, bass-baritone
Isaac Stern, violin*

* Only for the New York concert

September 10, 1965 – La Biennale di Venezia

Symphonic Concert

<i>Esercizi</i> for 23 wind instruments (prem.)	Ivan Vador
<i>Deux pieces de chair</i> for mezzosoprano, baritone and chamber orchestra (prem.) a) voix d'homme b) voix de femme	Sylvano Bussotti
Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano William Pearson, baritone Françoise Deslogères, ondes martenot	
<i>Immer wieder</i> (R.M. Rilke) for soprano and eight instruments (prem.)	Roman Vlad
Michiko Hirayama, soprano	
<i>Divertimento II</i> for string orchestra (prem.)	Franco Donatoni
<i>Canto di Empedocle</i> (da F. Hölderlin) for baritone and orchestra (prem.)	Marcello Panni
William Pearson, baritone	
<i>Synchromie</i> for orchestra	Niccolò Castiglioni
Danielle Paris, conductor Orchestra del Teatro la Fenice	

May 7/8, 1966 – Pro Musica Nova, Bremen

<i>Aria with Fontana Mix</i>	John Cage
<i>Sequenza III</i> (prem.)	Luciano Berio
<i>Phonèmes pour Cathy</i> (prem.)	Henri Pousseur
<i>Stripsody</i> (prem.)	Cathy Berberian

Note: I have not found a program for this concert, and the date varies depending upon the source.

September 6, 1966 – La Biennale di Venezia

Concert of Chamber Music

In collaboration with the Italian Society of Contemporary Music

<i>Nuclei</i> for two pianos and percussion (prem.)	Riccardo Malipiero
<i>Sestetto</i> for string quartet, harpsichord, and celesta-glockenspiel (prem.)	Gianfranco Maselli
<i>Aleatorio</i> per quartetto d'archi	Franco Evangelisti
<i>Reticolo: 11</i> for harpsichord, string quartet, celesta, glockenspiel, harmonium, harp, guitar, and mandolin (prem.)	Aldo Clementi
<i>Fortis</i> for female voice and instruments (prem.)	Bruno Canino
<i>Quintetto</i> in four parts for flute and piccolo, trumpet, trombone, vibraphone-cymbals- glockenspiel, harmonium-piano (prem.)	Francesco Pennisi

Cathy Berberian, mezzosoprano
Mariolina de Robertis, harpsichord
Piano Duo Bruno Canino – Antonio Ballista
Quartetto Nuova Musica
Complesso Buonomo, percussion
Bruno Martinotti, conductor
Musicians from the orchestra of the Teatro la Fenice

October 25, 1966 – Carnegie Hall, New York City

<i>A Flower</i>	John Cage
<i>The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs</i>	John Cage
<i>Aria with Fontana Mix</i>	John Cage
<i>Phonèmes pour Cathy</i>	Henri Pousseur
<i>Ricercare à 5</i> for trombone and tape	Robert Erickson
<i>Sequenza V</i>	Luciano Berio
<i>Stripsody</i>	Cathy Berberian
Three Songs Michelle Yesterday She's Got a Ticket to Ride	John Lennon/Paul McCartney
Three Songs	Kurt Weill

Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano
David Burge, piano
Stuart Dempster, trombone

April 7, 1967 – UCLA

<i>A Flower</i>	John Cage
<i>The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs</i>	John Cage
Fragments	Sylvano Bussotti
<i>Cocktail Music</i>	Salvatore Martirano
<i>Sequenza III</i>	Luciano Berio
<i>Phonèmes pour Cathy</i>	Henri Pousseur
Three Songs	Kurt Weill
<i>Klavierstück IX</i>	Karlheinz Stockhausen
<i>Stripsody</i>	Cathy Berberian
Songs	John Lennon/Paul McCartney

Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano
Leonard Stein, piano

Note: program taken from Martin Bernheimer, "Cathy Berberian in Recital Held at UCLA," *Los Angeles Times*, April 10, 1967: 30.

September 9, 1967 – La Biennale di Venezia

Symphonic Concert in Commemoration of Hermann Scherchen
in collaboration with the Italian Society of Contemporary Music

<i>6 Stücke</i> for orchestra, op. 6	Anton Webern
<i>Due studi</i> for orchestra	Wladimir Vogel
<i>Decima Sinfonia</i> (Atropo)	Gian Francesco Malipiero
<i>Epifanie</i> for soprano and orchestra	Luciano Berio

Cathy Berberian, soprano
Bruno Maderna, conductor
Orchestra of the Teatro la Fenice

September 11, 1967 – La Biennale di Venezia

Concert of the soprano Cathy Berberian

<i>A Flower</i>	John Cage
<i>The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs</i>	John Cage
<i>Phonèmes pour Cathy</i>	Henri Pousseur
<i>The Owl and the Pussycat</i>	Igor Stravinsky
Luciano Berio, piano	
<i>Trois Histoires pour enfants</i>	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Pribaoutki</i>	Igor Stravinsky
Songs	Kurt Weill, arr. Berio
Songs	John Lennon/Paul McCartney, arr. Berio and Peter Serkin
<i>Stripsody</i>	Cathy Berberian
<i>Folk Songs</i>	arr. Luciano Berio

Musicians from the Orchestra of the Teatro la Fenice
Luciano Berio, conductor

October 19, 1968 – Donaueschingen

<i>Tetraktys</i> for string quartet (prem.)	Nikos Mamangakis
<i>Sincronie</i> for string quartet	Luciano Berio
<i>Stripsody</i>	Cathy Berberian
<i>Wai</i> for voice and string quartet with percussion instruments (prem.)	Tona Scherchen

Cathy Berberian, voice
Italian Chamber Society

October 29, 1968 – Les Journées de Musique Contemporaine, Paris

Berio Day

Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)

Momenti

Visage

Laborintus II

Prière (prem.)

Différences

Chemins II

Nones

Chemins III

Epifanie

Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano
Ensemble Musique Vivante
Diego Masson, conductor

Note: these works were performed at three separate concerts over the course of one day.

February 12, 1969 – Turin

I Concerti dell'Unione Musicale
Incontri con la musica contemporanea

<i>A Flower</i>	John Cage
<i>The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs</i>	John Cage
<i>Chansons de Bilitis</i>	Claude Debussy
<i>4 Lieder op. 2</i>	Alban Berg
“O” soli atti vocali da <i>La Passion selon Sade</i>	Sylvano Bussotti
<i>Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)</i>	Luciano Berio
<i>Sequenza III</i>	Luciano Berio
<i>Visage</i>	Luciano Berio
<i>Stripsody</i>	Cathy Berberian

Cathy Berberian, soprano
Marianosa Bodini, piano

March 29, 1969 – Festival de Royan

Concert of the Juilliard Ensemble

Works by Luciano Berio

Serenata for flute and 14 instruments

Deux pieces for violin and piano (prem. rev. version)

Chamber Music for mezzo-soprano, clarinet, cello and harp

Chemins II for viola and nine instruments

El Mar La Mar for two female voices and five instruments (prem.)

Différences pour 5 instruments et bande magnétique

Cathy Berberian and Simone Rist, voices

Jeanne Baxtresser, flute

Romuald Tecco, violin

Dennis Russel Davies, piano

Serge Collot, viola

Luciano Berio, conductor

April 4, 1969 – Festival de Royan

Berio-Maderna Concert

Cela Veut Dire Que (prem.)

Luciano Berio

Cathy Berberian and Christiane Legrand, voices

Swingle Singers

Sandra Mantovani, reciter

Quadrivium for orchestra and
percussion soloists (prem.)

Bruno Maderna

Philharmonic Orchestra of the O.R.T.F.

Bruno Maderna, conductor

Sinfonia for eight voices and orchestra

Luciano Berio

Swingle Singers

Philharmonic Orchestra of the O.R.T.F.

Bruno Maderna, conductor

May 30, 1970 – Saarbrücken

<i>A Flower</i>	John Cage
<i>The Wonderful Widow of 18 Springs</i>	John Cage
<i>Chansons de Bilitis</i>	Claude Debussy
<i>Lettera Amorosa</i> for solo voice in genere rappresentativo	Claudio Monteverdi
<i>Sequenza III</i>	Luciano Berio
2 Songs Le Grand Lustucru Surabaya-Johnny	Kurt Weill
2 Beatle Songs Yesterday He's Got a Ticket to Write [sic]	Paul McCartney/John Lennon
<i>Stripsody</i>	Cathy Berberian

Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano
Bruno Canino, piano

August 27, 1970 – Siena

<i>Serenata</i>	Bruno Maderna
<i>Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda</i>	Claudio Monteverdi
<i>Etwas ruhiger im Ausdruck</i>	Franco Donatoni
<i>Estri</i>	Goffredo Petrassi
<i>Melodrama: new for Europe</i>	Luciano Berio

London Sinfonietta
Soloists Cathy Berberian and Herbert Handt
Luciano Berio, conductor

September 27, 1970 – Berliner Festwochen, Berlin

<i>La Lettera Amorosa</i>	Claudio Monteverdi
<i>Chansons de Bilitis</i>	Claude Debussy
<i>Bird Girl</i>	Luciano Berio, arr. Bruno Canino
<i>“O” – Atti Vocali</i>	Sylvano Bussotti
<i>Le Grand Lustucru</i> <i>Surabaya-Johnny</i>	Kurt Weill
<i>Erdenklavier</i>	Luciano Berio
<i>Morsicat(h)y</i>	Cathy Berberian
<i>Yesterday</i> <i>A Ticket to Ride</i>	Paul McCartney/John Lennon arr. Louis Andriessen
<i>Stripsody</i>	Cathy Berberian

Cathy Berberian, voice
Bruno Canino, piano

October 26, 1970 – Paris

<i>Song Books</i>	John Cage
<i>Rozart Mix</i>	
<i>Concert for piano and orchestra</i>	

Cathy Berberian, Simone Rist,
and John Cage, performers

November 15, 1970 – Lucca

<i>La Lucchesina</i> (for eight voices with basso continuo) (modern prem.)	Gioseffo Guami arr. H. Handt
<i>Se I Languidi Miei Sguardi</i> (Lettera amorosa)	Claudio Monteverdi arr. G. F. Malipiero
<i>Lamento d'Ariana</i>	Claudio Monteverdi arr. N. Harnoncourt
<i>Ticket to Ride</i>	John Lennon/Paul McCartney arr. L. Andriessen
<i>Pribaoutki</i>	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Sequenza III</i>	Luciano Berio
<i>Folk Songs</i>	Luciano Berio
<i>Stripsody</i>	Cathy Berberian

Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano
Soloists from the Orchestra da Camera Lucchese
Herbert Handt, conductor

May 3, 1971 – English Bach Festival, London

<i>Metalepsis II</i> (prem.)	Bernard Rands
<i>Histoires pour enfants</i>	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Pribaoutki</i>	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Tempi Concertati</i>	Luciano Berio
<i>Tongues of Fire</i>	Jani Christou

Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano
Agnes Baltsa, mezzo-soprano
Gerald English, tenor
Spiro Sakkas, baritone
London Sinfonietta
London Sinfonietta Chorus
Luciano Berio and Michael Adamis, conductors

June 19, 1971 – Wiener Festwochen, Vienna

Composers of the 20th Century

<i>Alma redemptoris mater</i> for flute, oboe, two clarinets, horn, bassoon	Peter Maxwell Davies
<i>Chamber Music</i> for voice (Cathy Berberian), clarinet, cello, harp	Luciano Berio
<i>Air for Soprano</i> for voice (Elise Ross), violin, viola, cello, piano	Luciano Berio
<i>O King</i> for voice (Elise Ross), flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano	Luciano Berio
<i>Trois Histoires pour Enfants</i> for voice (Cathy Berberian), flute, harp, guitar, bass	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Berceuses du Chat</i> for voice (Cathy Berberian) and three clarinets	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Laborintus II</i> for three solo voices (Elise Ross, Eleanor Capp, Elizabeth Harrison), eight speakers, narrator (Cathy Berberian), seventeen instruments and tape	Luciano Berio

Cathy Berberian, soprano
Elise Ross, soprano
The London Sinfonietta
Members of the London Sinfonietta Chorus

September 25, 1971 – Berliner Festwochen, Berlin

“A la recherché de la musique perdue”

Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano
Bruno Canino, piano

June 1972 – Holland Festival

June 15 – The Hague

The Residentie Orkest
Michel Tabachnik, conductor
Cathy Berberian, theater work

Allez Hop

Luciano Berio

The National Ballet

Après-Visage

Luciano Berio

Rudi van Dantzig, choreographer

June 24-26 – Amsterdam; June 28 – Scheveningen

Cantata

Harrison Birtwistle

Recital

Luciano Berio

Laborinthus II

Luciano Berio

The London Sinfonietta
The London Sinfonietta Chorus
David Fielding, staging
David Pountney, director
Cathy Berberian, soprano
Elise Ross, soprano

June 27 – Utrecht

Epifanie

Luciano Berio

Concertsuite (from the *Fairy Queen*)

Henry Purcell

Symphony no. 100 “Military”

Joseph Haydn

Cathy Berberian, soprano
The Utrechts Symphonie Orkest
Francis Travis, conductor

October 17, 1972 – Queen Elizabeth Hall, London

“A la recherché de la musique perdue”

Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano
Bruno Canino, piano

May 27, 1973 – Tokyo

The Cathy Berberian Show

<i>Deux mélodies</i> , op. 6	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Deux poèmes de Paul Verlaine</i> , op. 9	Igor Stravinsky
<i>Chansons de Bilitis</i>	Claude Debussy
<i>Family Album</i>	Berio family
<i>Sequenza III</i>	Luciano Berio
<i>Bird Girl</i>	Luciano Berio, arr. Bruno Canino
<i>Le Grand Lustucru</i> <i>Surabaya Johnny</i>	Kurt Weill
<i>Yesterday</i> <i>Ticket to Ride</i>	John Lennon/Paul McCartney
<i>Stripsody</i>	Cathy Berberian

Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano
Yuki Takahashi, piano

September 14, 1973 – Town Hall, New York City

“A la recherché de la musique perdue”

Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano
Bruno Canino, piano

April 18, 1974 – Carnegie Hall, New York City

International Festival of Visiting Orchestras

Spectrum Concert: “Music Theater”

Melodrama, “Hamlet’s Soliloquy” C.P.E. Bach

Melodrama, “Schön Hedwig” Robert Schumann

Melodrama, “The Blind Singer” Franz Liszt

Michael Wager, narrator
Michael Tilson Thomas, piano

Suite for Woodwinds and Strings no. 1 in C major Johann Sebastian Bach

Wendy Hilton Dance Company

Recital I (for Cathy) Luciano Berio

Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano
Sahan Arzruni, piano

Michael Tilson Thomas, conductor
Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra

August-September 1975 – Music Rostrum Australia

August 29 – Sydney; September 11 – Melbourne

Monteverdi to the Beatles: A Panorama of Revolutions in Music

Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano
William Christie, piano (Sydney)
Joyce Hutchinson, piano (Melbourne)

September 2 – Sydney

Laborintus II Luciano Berio

Points on the curve to find Luciano Berio

Folk Songs

Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano
Roger Woodward, piano
Luciano Berio, conductor

September 7 – Sydney

Calmo Luciano Berio

Serenata Bruno Maderna

Differences Luciano Berio

Sequenza III Luciano Berio

Pribaoutki Igor Stravinsky

5 Petites Symphonies Darius Milhaud

June 1977 – Holland Festival

June 8 – The Hague; June 10 – Amsterdam

VocaLectuRecital

Cathy Berberian, soprano
Bruno Canino, piano

February 1, 1978 – Torino

Una Serata Liberty [À la recherché de la musique perdue]

Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano
Bruno Canino, piano

February 14, 1978 – Rome

Second Hand Songs

Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano
Harold Lester, piano

March 14, 1979 – Torino

Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda
for soprano, tenor, baritone, 3 violas,
cello, contrabass and harpsichord

Claudio Monteverdi
arr. Luciano Berio

Pierrot lunaire op. 21 for Sprechstimme,
piano, flute (and piccolo), clarinet
(and bass clarinet), violin (and viola)
and cello

Arnold Schoenberg

Gruppo musica insieme di Cremona
Giorgio Bernasconi, conductor
Cathy Berberian, soprano
Osvaldo Tourn, tenor
Giancarlo Ceccarini, baritone

November 28, 1979 – Torino

Façade, an Entertainment on texts by
Edith Sitwell for piccolo, flute, clarinet,
bass clarinet, alto saxophone,
trumpet, percussion, cello and reciter

William Walton

Différences for flute, clarinet, harp, viola,
cello and tape

Luciano Berio

Folk Songs

Luciano Berio

Gruppo musica insieme di Cremona
Giorgio Bernasconi, conductor
Cathy Berberian, soprano
Jack Buckley, reciter

February 9, 1981 – Ticino

Cathy Sings America

Cathy Berberian, voice
Candace Smith, voice
Carolyn Steinberg, guitar
Massimiliano Damerini, piano

June 14, 1981 – Florence

Second Hand Songs

Cathy Berberian, mezzo-soprano
Harold Lester, piano

February 25, 1983 – Pescara

From Monteverdi to the Beatles

Cathy Berberian, soprano
Massimiliano Damerini, piano

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Northwestern University Music Library Special Collections, Evanston, Illinois
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Louis Andriessen Collection
Cathy Berberian Collection
Luciano Berio Collection
Roman Haubenstock-Ramati Collection
Hans Werner Henze Collection
Bruno Maderna Collection
Henri Pousseur Collection
Dieter Schnebel Collection
Igor Stravinsky Collection
Depositum Universal Edition
Antoinette Vischer Collection

Private collection of Cristina Berio, Los Angeles, California

Correspondence

Berberian's letters to Louis Andriessen and Leonard Stein
Letters to Berberian from various people including Sylvano Bussotti,
Umberto Eco, Roman Haubenstock-Ramati
Letters from Luciano Berio to Leonard Stein

Concert programs

Manuscript scores

Newspaper and magazine clippings

Berberian's 1978 and 1979 diaries and 1970 calendar

Private notebooks with recital plans, costume lists, records of performances, etc.

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