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The purpose of this dissertation is to provide a guide to the performance and musical understanding of the role of Zerbinetta from the 1916 version of Richard Strauss's opera *Ariadne auf Naxos*. As one of the titans of the repertoire for high soprano, the role requires considerable study. This dissertation addresses the sizeable singing obligation and technical difficulties of the role, Zerbinetta's musical requirements, character traits, and material pertinent to historical and dramatic matter. In doing so, it provides the performer with a well-rounded foundation on which to base her interpretation of the character.

A GUIDE TO THE PERFORMANCE AND MUSICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE
ROLE OF ZERBINETTA FROM RICHARD STRAUSS'S *ARIADNE AUF NAXOS*

by

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For Jared and Cobie.

And for Eureka Robinson.

APPROVAL PAGE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dissertation is to provide a guide to the performance and musical understanding of the role of Zerbinetta from the 1916 version of Richard Strauss's opera *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Due to its extreme technical difficulty, it is necessary for a soprano considering the role of Zerbinetta to be thoroughly familiar with its requirements in agility, stamina and extremes of range. In addition, a rich understanding of her character as well as knowledge of the musical and dramatic aspects of the role serve to prepare the singer for a well-rounded performance of this character .

As a titan of the operatic repertoire for high soprano, the well-known *commedia del'arte* figure Zerbinetta should be approached with significant preparation. Her twelve-minute monologue alone, exclusive of the challenges of the rest of the role, warrants deep study. Its vocal acrobatics, dramatic requirements, length and need for pacing point towards the need for a well-informed singer. The requirements for the entire role in agility, stamina, and extreme vocal range demand a seasoned voice, housed in a singer with a secure knowledge of personal aptitude in each area.

When pitches are discussed throughout this document, the system used by the Acoustical Society of America is employed. This method labels middle C as C4. Therefore, the Queen of the Night's high F is referred to as F6, and so forth. Currently,

the only scores in existence of the 1916 version of the opera are reprints of the original publications, which include an orchestral score and a piano and voice reduction. For the duration of the text, it is assumed that the reader has access to a copy of the piano and voice reduction.¹

¹ Richard Strauss, *Ariadne auf Naxos: Oper in einem Aufzug nebst einem Vorspiel, Klavierauszug mit Text*, Opus 60 (Germany: Boosey and Hawkes, 1916); A misprint exists in the piano-vocal score of the opera. Within the *recitativo accompagnato*, there is a descending minor third that should be notated as a descending perfect fifth. Three measures before rehearsal 107, Zerbinetta sings, “Treulos! Sie sinds!” [Faithless! They are!] The F5 should descend to a B-flat 4 and not the D5 printed. The orchestral score confirms this misprint. The majority of recordings use the correct pitch.

CHAPTER II

RICHARD STRAUSS'S *ARIADNE AUF NAXOS*

A Brief History of the Opera

In 1900, composer Richard Strauss met poet and librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal. The two began a working partnership that lasted three decades. The collaboration between the artists resulted in six operas, including *Elektra*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, *Die ägyptische Helena* and *Arabella*. The genesis for *Ariadne auf Naxos* was a concept created expressly for Max Reinhardt and his theater in Berlin. Upon seeing Molière's play *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, Hoffmannsthal decided it could be combined with their opera to create a new kind of *divertissement*, an opera with a simultaneously performed *intermezzo*.²

Revision of the Opera and Transformation of the Role

From the outset, the length of the opera was long and the plot extremely convoluted. The addition of the Molière, a substantially detailed plot in its own right,

² Norman Del Mar, *Richard Strauss: A Critical Commentary on His Life and Works*. Vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1969), 4; *Intermezzo*: a miniature comic opera in Italian involving two characters (rarely three or more), performed in segments between the acts of a larger work, usually an *opera seria*. *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “*Intermezzo*,” accessed September 3, 2016, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.uncg.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/O002509?q=intermezzo&search=quick&pos=4&_start=1#firsthit.

inserted more subject matter to an already in-depth story line.³ The original version of *Ariadne auf Naxos* premiered on October 25, 1912 in Stuttgart with Strauss conducting and Reinhardt's Berlin company performing the Molière.⁴ The performance was unsuccessful for a number of reasons. In addition to requiring an acting troupe and a singing cast, both stories were entirely too detailed to be combined and the work lasted longer than necessary (over six hours). Strauss maintained that those who came for the play were not interested in the opera and those interested in the opera were not entertained by the play.⁵ As a result, the work underwent many changes. The Molière story was removed and replaced by a musical Prologue explaining the combination of the *intermezzo* and the opera. This change inserted Zerbinetta into the first act. Strauss took the opportunity to expand the depth of Zerbinetta's candor and her relationship with the Composer by arranging a duet for the two.⁶ The duet includes Zerbinetta's most lyric singing within the opera, highlights the juxtaposition between her onstage and offstage personalities, and exposes the capacity of her empathetic abilities.⁷ Additionally, several changes were made to highlight the contrast between Ariadne's constancy and Zerbinetta's erratic nature.⁸

Another noteworthy change that came with the revision was a reduction in Zerbinetta's role in length and range. Her second aria was cut from the revised version.

³ Del Mar's account of the 1912 version and its 1916 revision is a detailed and excellent resource for further study.

⁴ Daviau and Buelow, *The Ariadne auf Naxos of Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Richard Strauss*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 54.

⁵ Del Mar, *Richard Strauss: A Critical Commentary on His Life and Works*. 9.

⁶ Ibid., 108.

⁷ Ibid., 26.

⁸ Ibid., 27.

Moreover, Strauss altered the key, which changed the F-sharp 6's to E-natural 6's. While still above the staff, the slight drop in range made the piece accessible to more sopranos.

Plot Synopsis

Prologue

The Prima Donna (later Ariadne)	soprano
The Tenor (later Bacchus)	tenor
Zerbinetta <i>commedia dell'arte player</i>	coloratura soprano
Harlequin <i>commedia dell'arte player</i>	baritone
Scaramuccio <i>commedia dell'arte player</i>	tenor
Truffaldino <i>commedia dell'arte player</i>	bass
Brighella <i>commedia dell'arte player</i>	high tenor
The Composer	mezzo-soprano
His Music-Master	baritone
The Dancing-Master	tenor
The Wigmaker	baritone
A Footman	bass
An Officer	tenor
The Major-Domo	spoken

Opera

Naiad <i>nymph</i>	high soprano
Dryad <i>nymph</i>	contralto
Echo <i>nymph</i>	soprano
Ariadne	soprano
Bacchus	tenor
Zerbinetta	coloratura soprano
Harlequin	baritone
Scaramuccio	tenor
Truffaldino	bass
Brighella	high tenor

Setting A sizeable room in the ornate house of a rich Viennese gentleman, where later the opera-within-the-opera is to take place.

Prologue (Act I)

Preparations are underway for an evening of performance in a rich patron's house. The Music-Master receives news from the Major-Domo—an *opera buffa* will take place after his pupil's *opera seria* (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) and before the nine o'clock fireworks. Zerbinetta, the star of the *opera buffa*, escorts a handsome officer from her dressing room. As the young Composer arrives, hoping to provide last minute notes to his opera singers, he discovers the news about the evening's schedule. The Dancing-Master remarks ironically about the situation while the *commedia* troupe and the opera singers agonize over the news. The Major-Domo returns with further orders. To enliven the Ariadne story and its dull location (a desolate, desert isle) and to make sure the fireworks take place on time, the patron of the evening has ordered that the opera and *commedia* take place simultaneously. The two stories will intermingle in an improvisatory style.

A resulting uproar sounds from the singers, actors, and the Composer about the necessary cuts. As the Prima Donna (later Ariadne) and Tenor (later Bacchus) each urge cuts of the other's part, Zerbinetta speaks with the Composer about the plot into which the *commedia* players must insert themselves. While learning the plot, she charms the Composer and is intrigued by his naïve belief in love. The Composer is captivated by Zerbinetta and regains his hope in love and music. After their encounter, he sings about the holiness of music. As the curtain prepares to rise, the *commedia* troupe runs across the stage, practicing their tricks. The Composer realizes that the compromise of cutting

his opera and interpolating the lowly *commedia* troupe will profane his beloved work.

Realizing that he was distracted by Zerbinetta, he returns to his frustration.

Opera (Act II)

The second act opens as the opera begins. Theseus has abandoned Ariadne on the island of Naxos. Three nymphs comment on her heartbroken condition. In front of her cave, Ariadne sings as she recalls memories with Theseus. From offstage the *commedia* actors hear her and doubt their ability to cheer her. As they join Ariadne onstage, Zerbinetta persuades Harlequin to sing a song to encourage the opera's leading lady; yet, Ariadne is unmoved and continues singing about her anticipation of the god of Death. Her dim manner is too sad for the *commedia* figures, who take the opportunity to insert their dancing and singing in hopes of cheering Ariadne. She does not care for their approach, so the men of the troupe leave their leader to the task. Zerbinetta approaches Ariadne woman to woman, but as reality mixes with performance, the latter is indignant that Zerbinetta is stealing her spotlight and retires to her cave. The comedienne sings a grand aria about her experiences with love, advising that one only needs to wait for the next man to come along. Zerbinetta's *commedia* colleagues return to the stage to insert their entertainment. All four proceed to woo her until she leaves with Harlequin. Suddenly, the nymphs herald the arrival of Bacchus. As Ariadne waits for Death, she mistakes the youthful Bacchus for the god of the underworld. Ariadne and Bacchus experience an awakening through their encounter and are transformed through the discovery of a new love together.

CHAPTER III

CHARACTER INFORMATION

***Commedia dell'arte* Origin: The Funny Girl**

Zerbinetta's character is taken from the Italian *commedia dell'arte* figure. Such stock figures were part of *intermezzi*. The *commedia* performers from *Ariadne auf Naxos* are never given real names, simply identified by their stage names; however, each performer portrays a specific *commedia* character representing a general archetype. Common understanding acknowledges Harlequin as a resourceful and romantic figure, Truffaldin as a crafty and boastful fellow (also a variation of the *commedia* Harlequin character), Scaramuccio as a grimacing and cowardly stereotype, and Brighella as a masterful liar and witty schemer. Duchartre provides further character details in his book on *commedia* history.⁹

In contrast to the easily recognizable male *commedia* personalities, Zerbinetta's is based on the stock character Colombina (discussed further in the following section) and a lesser-known character, Zerbinette, who originates from a Molière work titled *Les Fourberies de Scapin* (*The Deceits of Scapin*).¹⁰ In this work Zerbinette is a penniless gypsy who falls in love with Léandre, while her friend Hyacinthe falls in love with

⁹ Pierre Louis Duchartre, *The Italian Comedy* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1966).

¹⁰ Molière, *Les Fourberies de Scapin* (Germany: Tradition Classics, 2011).

Octave. The noblemen's fathers return from a trip eager to share plans of arranged marriage with each son only to find out that they have already married. Each father threatens to renounce his son's marriage. Scapin, Léandre's egotistical and dishonest but wise valet, takes action. He deceitfully coordinates enough money from the other parents to allow each son to keep his marriage together. The story ends as the true identities of Hyacinthe (Léandre's long lost sister) and Zerbinette (Octave's long lost sister) are realized and the families are joined in happiness and wealth.

Burlesque Roots: The Girl Next Door

Throughout the opera *Ariadne auf Naxos*, a clear class distinction is illustrated between the lowly troupe of comedic actors and the lofty operatic singers. The juxtaposition is apparent in the genre from which the characters come. The burlesque roots of the *commedia* figures are used to caricature serious subjects and the *commedia* characters themselves generally represent servants, gypsies, and working class types. In contrast, the operatic characters are derived from Greek mythology and sing about holy and thought provoking subjects. The *commedia* figures' common *intermezzo* origin and jesting caricatures are distinctly different from the more serious derivation and topics of the *opera seria* into which they are inserted. The difference between Zerbinetta and Ariadne is even represented by ends of the alphabet, "the A and Z of the female spectrum, a relationship symbolized by their very names."¹¹

¹¹ Daviau and Buelow, *The Ariadne auf Naxos of Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Richard Strauss*, 140.

Strauss's and Hofmannsthal's Zerbinetta is a working class stereotype. Rudlin and Crick rightly compare her to Colombina, another stock *commedia* figure.¹² Indeed, Hofmannsthal's early sketches for the opera confirm that Zerbinetta began as a Colombina figure,¹³ similarly related to lower class positions such as the gypsy girl, servant, or maid and is commonly connected to a love plot. She is flirtatious but wise, as is Zerbinetta.¹⁴

Amorous Nature: The Coquette

Zerbinetta is always portrayed in connection with a love story. She is often in the midst of choosing a lover, speaking or singing about love, or helping someone with a love match due to her vast knowledge of men. Zerbinetta's romantic history is similar to Colombina's. Colombina often plays the lover of Harlequin, the wife of Pierrot, and the one pursued by Pantalone—roles Zerbinetta also fills. The quintet following her monologue appropriately illustrates Zerbinetta's character type. Each of her male *commedia* counter-parts attempts to woo her. She teases each man and ends the quintet by pairing herself amorously with Harlequin.

Role as Comedienne in *Ariadne auf Naxos*

As the comedienne in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Zerbinetta provides comic relief and illustrates contrast between the light-hearted *intermezzo* and the serious opera. Evidenced

¹² John Rudlin and Olly Crick, *Commedia dell'arte: Handbook for Troupes* (New York: Routledge, 2001), ziii.

¹³ Del Mar, *A Critical Commentary on His Life and Works*, 4.

¹⁴ Rudlin and Crick, *Commedia Dell'arte: A Handbook for Troupes*, 144.

by her *intermezzo* background and *commedia dell'arte* origin, Zerbinetta's purpose is entertainment. The comedic improvisations performed along with her *commedia* colleagues break up the serious subject of the Opera. As early as the Prologue, the presence of Zerbinetta and her improvisatory troupe provides relief as they insert short bursts of activity that pull focus from the classical singers. During Zerbinetta's introduction of her colleagues, the four *commedia* men dance out of Zerbinetta's room. Their actions lighten the focused atmosphere of preparations occurring for the evening. After their antics, the Composer realizes that their presence will mar his opera's purity and renounces his friendship with the Music Master as a result. His reaction returns the focus to the serious subject of the upcoming Opera. Zerbinetta and the comedians reappear at the end of the first act, interrupting the Composer's thoughts on the holiness of music. As they appear, the composer realizes once again how their presence will pollute his work.

(Zerbinetta appears at the back and, with an impudent whistle, calls her troupe onto the stage. Harlequin comes hastily out of the room on the right, buckling his belt as he runs on stage.)

Composer: "What is that? Where are they running to?" (*Scaramuccio arrives, like Harlequin, putting the final touches on his costumne.*) "These creatures!..." (*Truffaldino and Brighella also come out.*) "Into my sanctuary doing their sommersaults [*sic!*]! Ah!"¹⁵

The comedic interjections continue throughout both acts of the opera. As expected, the *intermezzo* takes place during the opera. The comedians insert themselves

¹⁵ Nico Castel, *Four Strauss Opera Libretti* (New York: Leyerle Publications, 2002), 389.

as Zerbinetta sees fit. The constant juxtaposition of *commedia* and *seria*, ordinary material and sacred subjects, is exhibited through the intermingling of the common actors and revered opera singers. Zerbinetta, as the leader of her troupe, represents this contrast. Her monologue is the height of comedic interjection, in that it highlights her improvisatory wit and completely halts the opera. Strauss's stage directions continually reference Ariadne endeavoring to ignore Zerbinetta. After many attempts, Ariadne concedes the stage as Zerbinetta continues her interjection.

Zerbinetta: ...*(taking a step forward, though Ariadne pays no attention whatsoever)*...
...*(She moves still nearer with a curtsey. Ariadne covers her face in order not to see her.)*...
...*(Ariadne retires to the mouth of her cave.)*...
...*(Ariadne withdraws completely into her cave. Zerbinetta addresses her words of consolation to the now invisible Ariadne.)*...¹⁶

In Zerbinetta's last interjection, as Ariadne and Bacchus are singing their love duet at the end of the Opera, she repeats text from her monologue. The texture of her melody has changed as Strauss notes, "leise und diskret" (quietly and discretely).

Zerbinetta: (*Zerbinetta appears from the wings, pointing over her shoulder to Bacchus and Ariadne.*) "When each new god arrives, we surrender silently."¹⁷

An example of the contrast between Zerbinetta's *comedienne* figure is found in the Prima Donna's reaction to Zerbinetta and the four players, which is similarly as dramatic as the Composer's. The Prima Donna remarks loudly and purposefully about

¹⁶ Ibid., 402 - 403.

¹⁷ Ibid., 427.

the *commedia* troupe's presence, which starts the childish feud between the two sopranos. (The quarrel continues throughout the opera, as each diva fights to gain the spotlight and attention as *prima donna*.)¹⁸

Prima Donna (*opening her door and beckoning to the Music Master*):
“Have you sent for the Count? (*She steps forward a little and notices Zerbinetta and the rest*) Phooey! What kind of apparitions are those? (*to the Music Master, not exactly in a low voice*) We with this sort of people in one pot! Doesn't anyone here know who I am?”¹⁹

While Zerbinetta displays her most empathetic and human aspects in the Prologue and her most base and vulgar attributes in the Opera, Ariadne is her opposite. In the Opera, Ariadne represents, “the symbol of human steadfastness,” yet in the Prologue, she is portrayed “...in a most unattractive light as a petty, vain, scheming woman...”²⁰ Further discussion on the contrast between the two characters is presented in chapter four, under the section titled *Zerbinetta’s Defining Relationships* and subheading *Zerbinetta and Ariadne*.

¹⁸ Daviau and Buelow, *The Ariadne auf Naxos of Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Richard Strauss*, 61.

¹⁹ Castel, *Four Strauss Opera Libretti*, 367.

²⁰ Daviau and Buelow, *The Ariadne auf Naxos of Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Richard Strauss*, 112.

CHAPTER IV

MUSICAL ELEMENTS

Zerbinetta: A Sizeable Role

From the beginning of his work on *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Strauss considered Zerbinetta the leading character in the opera. His preparatory sketches illustrate that he always had in mind a tour-de-force vehicle for her. Her monologue (“Grossmächtige Princessin”) is that vehicle. Even after the deletion of her second act aria (“Princessin! Welchen Botenlohn hab ich verdient”) during the revision process, the role of Zerbinetta still commands audience’s attention for a significant portion of act two. With the addition of the Prologue, Strauss added further attention to the character. The insertion of a duet between Zerbinetta and the Composer provides more depth to their connection. During the Prologue, brief conversations among Zerbinetta and her *commedia* colleagues and also between Zerbinetta and the Prima Donna provide information on the soprano’s character attributes.

In addition to a considerable amount of singing, Zerbinetta is onstage during the second act for quite a long time with no respite. There is no opportunity for the soprano to exit the stage to regroup, rest, or check her voice before her most significant solo singing in the opera. Thus, a soprano engaged for the role must sing wisely, spending enough energy on the requirements of each recitative or ensemble early in the Opera

while conserving for the solo requirements that lie ahead. Zerbinetta's singing commitments during the second act are considerable (table 1).

Table 1. Zerbinetta's Second Act Singing Requirements

Format	Title	Performer(s)
Recitative	Wie jung und schön	Zerbinetta, Harlequin, Truffaldin
Aria	Ein schönes war	Ariadne
Recitative	Ich fürchte, großer Schmerz	Zerbinetta, Harlequin, Truffaldin, Scaramuccio
Aria	Toll, aber weise	Ariadne
Aria	Lieben, Hassen, Hoffen, Zagen	Harlequin
Recitative	Es gibt ein Reich	Ariadne
Aria	Du wirst mich befreien	Ariadne
Quartet	Die dame gibt	Harlequin, Truffaldin, Scaramuccio, Brighella
Quintet	Es gilt, ob Tanzen... Wie sie sich schwingen	Harlequin, Truffaldin, Scaramuccio, Brighella, Zerbinetta
Recitative	Grossmächtige Princessin	Zerbinetta
Aria	Noch glaub' ich	Zerbinetta
Rondo with variations	Als ein Gott	Zerbinetta
Recitative	Hübsch gepredigt	Zerbinetta, Harlequin
Finale	Eine Störrische zu trösten	Zerbinetta, Harlequin, Truffaldin, Scaramuccio, Brighella

An Inventory of Zerbinetta's Musical Material

In order to understand this role further, a brief view of Zerbinetta's musical requirements throughout the opera is important. Zerbinetta begins the Prologue with three cursory interjections of recitative, each less than a page long. These provide fragmentary views into her character, as they use the declamatory tone and integrated coloratura similar to that of her monologue in the Opera. A fourth recitative is more lyric

in nature and directly precedes her duet with the Composer. The orchestral accompaniment throughout this recitative is consistently fuller than her previous recitatives. The lyricism continues as the recitative transitions smoothly into the duet (“Ein Augenblick ist wenig”). The lyric singing in the duet is in clear contrast to the upcoming, second-act monologue and concludes her singing requirements in the Prologue.

Upon her entrance in the Opera, Zerbinetta sings two passing interjections of recitative before joining the men’s quartet (“Die dame gibt”). The following quintet (“Es gilt ob Tanzen...Wie sie sich schwingen”) contains material that is representative of her onstage persona and aligns with her upcoming monologue. It includes buoyant, coloratura singing and less lyric passages. The monologue (“Grossmächtige Princessin”) requires the most resources from the singer during the opera. (It is discussed in further detail in the following sections.) Following the monologue, there is a brief recitative between Zerbinetta and Harlequin that leads to his song (“Hübsch gepredigt”). The quintet finale (“Eine Störrische zu trösten”) uses modified music from Zerbinetta’s monologue in her melody. Within the quintet, Zerbinetta and Harlequin sing a duet, partitioned against the singing of the three other *commedia* men. Finally, Zerbinetta returns toward the end of Ariadne and Bacchus’ love duet with a brief recitative of repeated text from her monologue.

Musical Elements Used to Present Zerbinetta

There are four different categories that represent identifiable musical characteristics of the role of Zerbinetta: rhythm, melody, phrasing, and instrumentation. As the monologue in the Opera constitutes the majority of Zerbinetta's solo singing, most of the elements exist there. Brief mention will be made of the duet between Zerbinetta and the Composer, where characteristic elements also surface.

Rhythm

Two rhythmic elements stand out among those in Zerbinetta's music; each element represents a specific character attribute. The first rhythmic element (RE1) consists of two thirty-second notes followed by an eighth note. It most often appears two or three times in a row. Daviau and Buelow describe Zerbinetta as "flashily brilliant, witty, yet surprisingly compassionate."²¹ RE1 expresses this brilliance and wit with two assertive, thirty-second note upbeats to the following eighth note, which consistently lands on a strong beat. Like Zerbinetta's *commedia* character, the rhythm is a parody of the serious topic she addresses. The first time RE1 appears is at the orchestra's entrance in Zerbinetta's recitative as she begins her well-known monologue (ex. 1).²² It is presented three times in a row, its most common form of occurrence.

²¹ Daviau & Buelow, *The Ariadne auf Naxos of Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Richard Strauss*, 184.

²² Richard Strauss, *Ariadne auf Naxos: Oper in einem Aufzug nebst einem Vorspiel, Klavierauszug mit Text*, Opus 60, 147.

Example 1. (RE1): Beginning of *Recitativo Accompagnato*

The entrance of this rhythmic element heralds the beginning of Zerbinetta's control of the audience's attention, as the monologue moves from *recitativo secco* to a more grounded *recitativo accompagnato*, which ushers in a steady eighth-note beat. The element next returns as Zerbinetta prepares to mock Ariadne's stoicism. It is presented twice in succession and again three times in succession and with the substitution of a half note for the last eighth (ex. 2).²³

Example 2. RE1: Twice and Three Times in Succession

²³ Richard Strauss, *Ariadne auf Naxos: Oper in einem Aufzug nebst einem Vorspiel, Klavierauszug mit Text*, 147.

The ruling rhythm of the repeated eighth note is interrupted by the appearance of RE1. The orchestra supports Zerbinetta's phrase, mocking Ariadne with the repetition of RE1, which mimics the rhythm of " hören" (hear). The next appearance of RE1 happens six measures later (ex. 3).²⁴ Zerbinetta sarcastically describes Ariadne's state as a proud, immobile statue and the comedienne cannot hold her composure. The consistent eighth note is once again interrupted by the appearance of the mimicking RE1, Zerbinetta's comedic insertion into the *seria* rhythm. The second instance varies slightly, as the descending octave from F-sharp 5 to F-sharp 4 is extended by a major second and ultimately lands on E4. The slight variation illustrates Zerbinetta's noticeably ruffled composure as she begins to get frustrated with the stubborn Prima Donna.

Example 3. RE1: Twice in Succession

The musical score shows two staves. The top staff is for voice (Soprano) and the bottom staff is for piano. The vocal line starts with a rest, followed by a melodic line. The piano accompaniment consists of eighth-note chords. Measure 11 begins with a piano dynamic 'p'. The vocal line starts with 'Sie wol - len' and then reaches a high note. The piano accompaniment has a eighth-note chord. Measure 12 begins with a piano dynamic 'pp'. The vocal line continues with 'kei-ne an - de - re Ver - trau - te'. The piano accompaniment has a eighth-note chord.

The recitative section of Zerbinetta's monologue is largely populated by appearances of RE1. With the arrival of the aria comes the second rhythmic element, triplets. While triplets make appearances towards the end of the *recitativo accompagnato*, they become integral in the aria. At the start of the aria, Strauss changes

²⁴ Ibid., 148.

the meter from four beats per measure to three, gradually weaving the playful rhythm into the texture of the aria.

The triplets illustrate Zerbinetta's carefree spirit. In his *History of Opera*, Sadie shares that *intermezzi* often included motives that represent items such as crying and laughter.²⁵ Triplets first appear as the word, “schlecht” (bad) turns into laughter (ex. 4, box A).²⁶ The rhythm is continued (with different melodic shape) in the orchestra (ex. 4, box B).

Example 4. Triplets: in Voice and Orchestra, #1

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff contains vocal parts and piano parts. Box A highlights a triplet pattern in the vocal line. Box B highlights a continuation of the triplet rhythm in the piano accompaniment. The score is in 3/4 time, B-flat major.

Varied use of the triplet rhythm appears in the second section of the aria as Zerbinetta remembers each lover with a touch of the flirtatious, carefree element on each man's name and on the word, “Scheinen” (seems to be, ex. 5, p. 21).²⁷

²⁵ Stanley Sadie, ed., *History of Opera* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990), 80.

²⁶ Richard Strauss, *Ariadne auf Naxos: Oper in einem Aufzug nebst einem Vorspiel, Klavierauszug mit Text*, 153.

²⁷ Ibid., 155-157.

Example 5. Triplets in Voice and Orchestra, #2

Allegro scherzando

A

So war es mit Pa - glia - zzo und Mez - ze - tin! Dann war es Ca -

Pno.

B **117** **C**

vi - cchio, dann Bu - rat - tin, dann Pas-qua - riel - lo! Ach und zu - wei - len will es mir

Pno.

D **118**

Schei - nen, wa - ren es zwei!— Doch nie - mals Lau -

Pno.

nen im - mer ein Müs - sen, im - mer ein neu - es be - klom - me - nes

Pno.

(Example 5 cont'd)

Stau
Pno.

119

Herz so - gar sich sel - ber nicht ver - steht, gar sich

Pno.

E

sel - ber nicht ver - steht

Pno.

In the above example, the orchestra joins the singer's triplets one measure after rehearsal 117. Expecting Zerbinetta to continue the pattern she has initiated, the orchestra continues the triplets in the following measure. Zerbinetta flirtatiously avoids the rhythm only to return to it teasingly a measure later. As the aria continues, triplets appear intermittently in the vocal and orchestral lines until they become the most prominent and driving part of the cadenza, as seen later in example 16 (p. 30).

The frequency with which both rhythmic elements appear and the characteristics that they represent makes them integral parts of Zerbinetta's onstage character. Triplets appear periodically during Zerbinetta's recitative within the Prologue, however they are used to accommodate speech-like rhythms for the libretto and not in a manner essential to character expression. Nowhere do they appear during Zerbinetta's duet with the Composer, which constitutes her only significant singing within the Prologue.

Melody

Three melodic elements in the role of Zerbinetta warrant discussion: turns, vaulted phrasing, and chromatic passages. These melodic elements appear throughout Zerbinetta's monologue.

The Turn

The turn appears both in Zerbinetta's vocal line and in the orchestra. While it is used as a flirtatious device, it also provides a way for Zerbinetta to evade the clutches of men (for example, her *commedia* colleagues onstage) and thus, maintain her autonomy. The turn is commonly followed by an upward interval of a third or larger. The first turn happens in the *recitativo accompagnato* of the monologue, simultaneously in the piano and the flute under the word “Sinn” (sense, ex. 6).²⁸

²⁸ Richard Strauss, *Ariadne auf Naxos: Oper in einem Aufzug nebst einem Vorspiel*, Opus 60, orchestral score (Germany: Boosey and Hawkes, 1916) 153.

Example 6. Turn: *Recitativo Accompagnato*

The musical score consists of six staves. The top staff is for the 1st Flute (I Fl.), showing a melodic line with grace notes and slurs. The second staff is for the 1st Horn (I Hn. (E)), which is silent (-). The third staff is for Zerbinetta, showing a vocal line with the lyrics "Sinn da - nach?". The fourth staff is for the Piano (Pno.), featuring a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes with dynamic markings *mf* and *pizz.*. The fifth staff is for the Cello (Vcl.), and the sixth staff is for the Double Bass (Vcl.). Various performance instructions are given: *pizz.*, *f*, *arco*, and *f*.

The next turn happens intertwined with triplets, in the vocal line of the second section of the aria, as Zerbinetta mentions her lovers. With the exception of Burattin, each man is recalled with a turn that ornaments his name (see ex. 5, p. 21, boxes A - D). The orchestra later repeats the rhythm (one measure after rehearsal 117). As the monologue progresses, turns appear with growing consistency in both the melody and orchestral accompaniment. Zerbinetta uses one on the word “Staunen” (astonished), which the orchestra immediately repeats (rehearsal 119). This passage directly mimics that of the lovers’ names.

The turn appears again at rehearsal 124, once in each of the first four measures (ex. 7).²⁹ It embellishes the melody on the words “küßte” (kissed) and “Wangen” (cheek), is imitated in the orchestra, and reemerges on the word “Gott” (god).

Example 7. Turn: “Küßte,” “Wangen,” and “Gott”

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is for the voice, with the vocal line starting with "noch ruhiger" and continuing with "küß - te er mir Stirn und Wan -". The piano accompaniment is shown below, with dynamics "p" and "pp". The bottom staff is also for the piano, with lyrics "stets genau der Sängerin folgen". The score then continues with another section of vocal and piano parts.

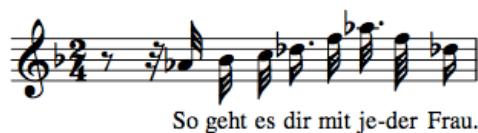
Vaulted Phrasing

Another representative melodic element is referred to here as vaulted phrasing. The *comedienne*'s phrases often sprint upwards, aurally illustrating her witty jabs. Sometimes the phrases include a quick descent, but not always. This vaulting action exists solely in the Opera. One example is found in a dialogue between Zerbinetta and

²⁹ Richard Strauss, *Ariadne auf Naxos: Oper in einem Aufzug nebst einem Vorspiel, Klavierauszug mit Text*, 160.

Harlequin. After his song, Harlequin shares that he is moved by Ariadne's situation and Zerbinetta retorts that he is moved by all women (ex. 8).³⁰ The phrase incorporates a quick octave ascent from A-flat 4 to A-flat 5 and immediate descent to D-flat 5 highlighting the soprano's frustration on the word "jeder" (every).

Example 8. Vaulted Phrasing: "jeder"



The next vaulted phrase has a similar ascent, rising from C-sharp 5 to C-sharp 6 (ex. 9). The octave jump text paints Zerbinetta's chills as she remembers how previous lovers pleased her.

Example 9. Vaulted Phrasing: "andere"



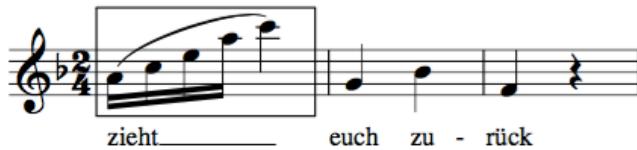
Considering the precedent of a quick octave ascent, twice set, the next two vaulted phrases stand apart, each rising an octave and a third (ex. 10 and ex. 11).³¹ Noted *poco tranquillo*, the slower tempo further confirms the slight difference of melodic

³⁰ Richard Strauss, *Ariadne auf Naxos: Oper in einem Aufzug nebst einem Vorspiel, Klavierauszug mit Text*, 117.

³¹ Ibid., 144 & 145.

formula. The leisurely tempo and longer note values assume a more tranquil atmosphere, suggesting that these memories are cherished by Zerbinetta.

Example 10. Vaulted Phrasing: “zieht”



Example 11. Vaulted Phrasing: “Singen”



The previous three phrases appear in the quartet before Zerbinetta’s monologue.

Within the monologue, the soprano uses vaulted phrasing four times in a row as she approaches the cadenza of the aria. The repeated motion rises from B-flat 4 to B-flat 5, D4 to D5, and then A4 to A5 twice (ex. 12).³²

Example 12. Vaulted Phrasing: “gar sich selber”



³² Ibid., 157.

Chromatic Passages

Chromatic passages appear both in ascending and descending motion throughout the entire opera. Like Zerbinetta, the chromaticism is witty, purposeful and appealing. The *comedienne* uses the tension of consecutive leading tones to her advantage. In descending pattern, chromaticism can be found in Zerbinetta's recitative and the rondo (both from the monologue) and in her interjection before the quintet ("Eine Störrische zu trösten"). Zerbinetta uses chromaticism to sarcastically ask Ariadne if she wishes rocks and waves to be her sole companions (ex. 13).³³

Example 13. Descending Chromatic Passages: “als diesen Fels und diese Wellen haben?”



The driving sixteenth notes and the tempo marking *etwas gemessen* (a little measured) purposefully pester Ariadne. The second example of chromaticism happens during the throes of Zerbinetta's romantic memories (ex. 14).³⁴

Example 14. Descending Chromatic Passages: “(hin)-gegeben war ich...”



³³ Ibid., 148.

³⁴ Ibid., 161.

The *tranquillo* tempo and the tied, triplet rhythms provide a feeling of slipping, as Zerbinetta recalls her scandalous affairs. The third example illustrates a similar feeling, as the actress entices her *commedia* colleagues at the end of her cadenza (ex. 15).³⁵

Example 15. Descending Chromatic Passages: Cadenza

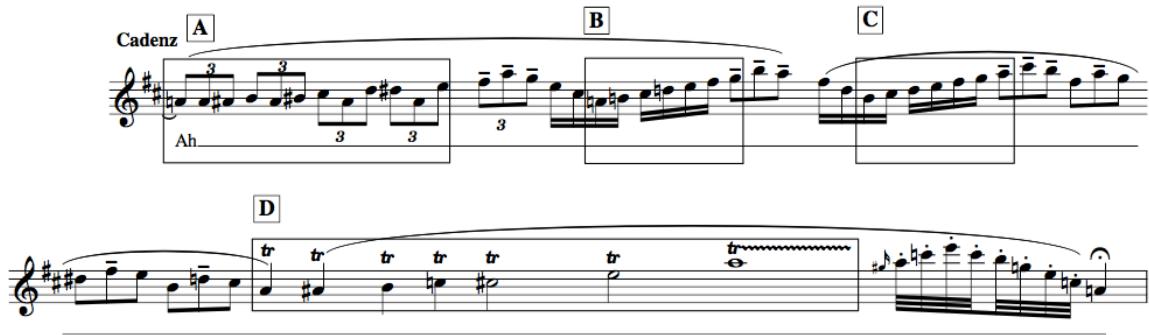


In ascending motion, chromaticism occurs in Zerbinetta's major cadenza at the end of her two-part aria. Just as Zerbinetta is artful and indirect at times, so is the chromaticism within her melody. Instead of ascending straightforwardly, the first instance uses larger and larger intervals as the soprano ascends from A4 to A5 (ex. 16, box A).³⁶ The upper note of the intervals leads the chromaticism. The second instance appears at the end of the cadenza, as the trills ascend chromatically from A4 to A5 (ex. 16, box E).

³⁵ Ibid., 167.

³⁶ Ibid., 157.

Example 16. Ascending Chromatic Passages: Cadenza



Ornamentation

Strauss wrote in the baroque style for the *Ariadne auf Naxos* project. This style appears in his use of baroque form, ornamentation, instrumentation, and orchestration. The original orchestra reflects this choice, as it was composed of fifteen to twenty performers. However, the orchestra eventually swelled to thirty-six performers, many of whose parts have soloistic performance aspects. The harpsichord was also replaced by a piano, a more modern day instrument.³⁷ Still, the composer's version of baroque style differs from traditional baroque style. The baroque *da capo* format, which allows the singer to create ornamentation, does not exist in this opera. The ornamentation is incorporated into the melody. Zerbinetta's ornamentation, largely melismatic coloratura, is written into her melodic lines as an essential and integral part of her role. Three types of melismatic coloratura serve as fundamentals for the soprano role: diatonic scales,

³⁷ Daviau & Buelow, *The Ariadne auf Naxos of Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Richard Strauss*, 38.

arpeggiated phrases, and wandering and widening phrases. Each type appears within the Opera but not in the Prologue and is used as a way to extend a phrase.³⁸

Diatonic Scales

The diatonic scale emerges during the *recitativo accompagnato* of Zerbinetta's monologue. The word, "gelogen" hosts an octave leap from A4 to A5 and descends on a D Major scale (ex. 17).³⁹

Example 17. Diatonic Scales: "gelogen"



The next section of the aria includes ascending diatonic scales that appear in the vocal line five measures after rehearsal 119. Each scale begins in the fourth octave of the piano and rises a full octave (see ex. 5, box E, p. 21). Further diatonic scales are found in the cadenza at the end of the aria (see ex. 16, boxes B and C, p. 30).

Arpeggiated Passages

Arpeggiated passages make up the most common form of Zerbinetta's ornamentation. While some arpeggiated passages appear within the quintet ("Wie sie

³⁸ One exception is the appearance of an arpeggiated phrase that illustrates laughter in Zerbinetta's duet with the Composer.

³⁹ Richard Strauss, *Ariadne auf Naxos: Oper in einem Aufzug nebst einem Vorspiel, Klavierauszug mit Text*, 152.

sich schwingen”), the *tranquillo* tempo differentiates them from the fast-paced coloratura of Zerbinetta’s aria. Despite the slower tempo, it is still useful to note arpeggiated phrasing within the quintet. The words “andere” (other), “zieht” (attracts), and “singen” (to sing) are set in ascending arpeggiation (see ex.’s 9, 10, and 11, pp. 26 and 27). In the monologue, arpeggiation is used when Zerbinetta laughs about how she is unable to stay loyal (see ex. 4, box A, p. 20). A second example of arpeggiated laughter emerges at the end of the soprano’s cadenza following her aria (ex. 18). Both instances follow the same formula, ascending a fifth and then descending an octave.

Example 18. Arpeggiation: Laughter



Another example of arpeggiation appears on the word “hingegeben” (devoted), falling and rising in triplet rhythms (ex. 19).⁴⁰

Example 19. Arpeggiation: “hingegeben”



Wandering and Widening Phrases

Typical of Straussian style, wandering and widening phrases are commonly found in Zerbinetta's music. Such phrases include wide intervallic leaps that embellish the

⁴⁰ Ibid., 159.

melody and circle the harmonic goal before reaching it. Two relevant examples can be found in the monologue. In the recitative, Strauss utilizes text painting on the word, “Verwandlungen” (transformations) to illustrate Zerbinetta’s transformation (ex. 20).⁴¹ The melody wanders from B-flat 5 to C5 in a roundabout direction using major and minor sixths, a minor seventh, and a diminished fourth. The odd harmonic progression, notes borrowed from different keys juxtaposed between different vocal registers, and marking *frei* [free] suggests a feeling of uninhibited freedom and intimacy.

Example 20. Wandering and Widening Phrases: “Verwandlungen”



The cadenza at the end of aria section is another example of wandering and widening phrases (see ex. 16, p. 30). The melody uses intervals with top notes that ascend with chromatic intent but sidestep a few pitches, while each lower note stays rooted on A4. As the cadenza progresses, the next phrase descends a fifth and rises an octave (from E5 to A4 to A5). Yet, the melody overshoots its aim by a major second, moving through B5 and then landing on its intended note, A5. The phrase is repeated a major second higher and then falls in a triplet rhythmic pattern. After seven trills and an arpeggiation, the cadenza ends on A4, the very note on which it started.

A final example of wandering and widening phrasing is found in the cadenza before the *commedia* quintet (ex. 21). As Zerbinetta wonders why God made men “so

⁴¹ Ibid., 151.

verschieden” (so different), Strauss once again employs text painting. Three different patterns of ornamentations represent three different men. Each pattern descends in a different wandering fashion. The first pattern falls in groups of four notes; the first two pitches ascend and the second two descend (box A). The second pattern is made up of groupings of descending major, minor and diminished sixths and sevenths (box B). The third pattern ascends on an A-major seventh chord and then descends chromatically (box C).

Example 21. Three Ornamentation Patterns

The musical score consists of two staves of music. The top staff shows three patterns labeled A, B, and C. Pattern A has a bracket under it with the German text "so ver-schei". Pattern B has a bracket under it with the German text "den ge-". The bottom staff shows a ritardando (rit.) followed by a tempo marking langsam, with a 3 overline indicating a triple time feel.

Instrumentation

Strauss masterfully set Zerbinetta's monologue for the coloratura's voice. When the melody lies in the middle and lower registers, orchestration is light and the voice is unimpeded. The orchestration consists mostly of piano and some brief, scattered interjections from the oboe, strings, and horn. When the voice sings in a higher register, fuller orchestral support is provided in the form of more instruments, the use of octaves, and doubling notes. In this way, the composer adjusts the size and volume of the orchestral accompaniment to better support the singer in higher registers and to offer

transparency in the lower registers, so as not to cover her voice. Furthermore, the flute and piano are linked to the character Zerbinetta.⁴² As the recitative transitions from *secco* to *accompagnato*, the flute introduces the previously mentioned RE1 (ex. 22).⁴³ The flute repeats the figure throughout the recitative (ex. 23).⁴⁴

Example 22. Instrumentation: Flute Introduces RE1

⁴² Daviau and Buelow, *The Ariadne auf Naxos of Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Richard Strauss*, 175.

⁴³ Richard Strauss, *Ariadne auf Naxos: Oper in einem Aufzug nebst einem Vorspiel*, orchestral score, 152.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 153.

Example 23. Instrumentation: Flute Repeats RE1

I Fl. *mf*

Zerbina
Sinn da nach
Sie wol-len mich nicht

Pno. *mf*
p
f

Vla. *pizz.*
f pizz.
arco

Vc. *arco*
p
3

I Fl. **103**

Bsn.

1 Hn. (E)
 hö - ren
 schön und stolz und re - gungs - los, als wären Sie die Sta - tu - e
fp etwas gemessen

Pno. *mf*
3

Vla. **103**

Vc.
p
3

Db.
p
3

(Example 23 cont'd)

The musical score shows a dialogue between the orchestra and the piano. The piano part is highlighted with a box around measures 13-14. The vocal line for Zerbinetta is present in the bassoon and horn parts. The lyrics in the score are:

auf Ih-rer eig - nen Gruft.
Sie wol-len kei-ne an - de-re Ver trau - tes

The piano is also closely aligned with Zerbinetta. It acts as a dialogue partner throughout her monologue. It begins the piece in the same register as her melody and maintains a dialogue with her throughout. Sometimes it responds to her (ex. 24, rehearsal 105) and other times it provokes, as in the phrase, “Eine kurze Nacht...” (ex. 24, rehearsal 107).⁴⁵ It also doubles her part (ex. 25, boxes A, B, and C).⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Ibid., 154-5.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 152.

Example 24. Instrumentation: Piano in Response to Zerbinetta (Rehearsal 105) and Provoking Zerbinetta (Rehearsal 107)

105 *(Allegro assai)*
ziemlich rasch

Ver-las-sen! in Ver-zwei-flung! aus - ge-setzt! Ach, _____ sol-cher

Pno.

106

wü - sten In-seln sind un - zäh-li ge auch mit-ten un-ter Men-schen, ich, ich sel-ber ich ha-be ihr - er meh -

Pno.

- re-re be-wohnt und ha-be nicht ge-lernt, die Män - ner zu ver - flu - chen. Treu - los

Pno. $\left(\begin{matrix} 3 \\ 3 \end{matrix}\right)$ ff f

sie sinds! un - ge - heu - er, oh - ne Gren - - zen!

Pno. ff ff

(Example 24 cont'd)

107 *(al rigore di tempo)*
festes Zeitmaß

Ei - ne kur - ze Nacht, ein ha - sti-ger Tag, ein We - hen der Luft, ein fließ - end-er

Pno.

Blick ver - wan - delt ihr Herz! A - ber sind

Pno.

Example 25. Instrumentation: Piano Sharing Zerbinetta's Melody (Boxes A, B and C)

Moderato, stets streng im Zeitmaß (senza alcuna licenza) M. J=84 A

(mit einer tiefen Verneigung vor Ariadne)

Zerbinetta Pno.

Groß - mächt-i - ge Prin - zes - sin, wer ver - stün - de nicht, daß so er - lauch - ter und er - ha - be - ner Per - so - nen

B

Zerbinetta Pno.

Trau rig - keit mit ei - nem an - de - ren Maß ge - mess - en wer - den muß, als der ge - mei - nen Sterb - lich - en.

101

C

(einen Schritt näher tretend, doch Ariadne achtet in keiner Weise auf sie)

Zerbinetta Pno.

Je - doch, sind wir nicht Frau - en un - ter uns, und schlägt denn nicht in je - der Brust ein

(Example 25 cont'd)

The musical score consists of six staves. The top staff is for the 1st Flute (I Fl.), which has a single note followed by a dynamic **f** and a grace note. The second staff is for Zerbinetta, who sings "un - be - greif - lich, ein un - be - greif - lich Herz?" The third staff is for the Piano (Pno.), with dynamics **mf**, **f**, and **dim.**. The fourth staff is for the 1st Violin (Vln. I). The fifth staff is for the Cello (Vcl.). The bottom staff is for the Double Bass (Vla.). The score includes various dynamics like **f**, **mf**, and **glissando**, and performance instructions like "(G Saite)" and "(abermals näher, mit einem Knix)".

The discussion above illustrates the means by which the musical features of a particular role help to depict the character. It is equally important to consider her text in detail. Chapter Four considers dramatic information found in both Zerbinetta's text and that of other characters who sing about her and to her.

CHAPTER V

DRAMATIC CONSIDERATIONS

Through dialogue in the libretto, we learn that Zerbinetta is typecast. The Dancing Master mentions that Zerbinetta acts as herself when playing on the stage. From his perspective, she is a straightforward, simple person who can be explained in a few words. His view supports the idea that the information from her monologue and onstage presence is consistent with her offstage personality.

Tanzmeister: "...Ich rufe indeß Zerbinetta. Wir erklären ihr in zwei Worten die Handlung. Sie ist eine Meistrin im Improvisieren: da sie immer nur sich selber spielt, findet sie sich in jeder Situation zu recht, die andern sind auf sie eingespielt: es geht alles wie am Schnürchen."

Dancing Master: "...In the meantime, I will call Zerbinetta. In two words we can explain to her the plot. She is a master at improvisation, since she always only plays herself, she finds herself at home in any situation, the others are used to her timing, it will all go like clockwork."⁴⁷

The libretto shows Zerbinetta as flirtatious and witty, fitting qualities for a comedic, improvisatory performer. Her flirtatious manner is exhibited in both acts of the opera. Zerbinetta's first appearance in the Prologue shows her leaving her dressing room in a negligée and with an officer. Later she flirts with the Composer and empathizes with him about being misunderstood. During the Opera, she tempts each one of the four *commedia* men and sings about amorous affairs with more men, mentioning the names

⁴⁷ Castel, *Four Strauss Opera Libretti*, 379.

Pagliazzo, Mezzetin, Cavicchio, Burratin, and Pasquariello. The list proves Zerbinetta is fickle in regard to men. She uses them for her pleasure. Her monologue text supports this observation.

Zerbinetta: “Noch glaub’ ich dem einen ganz mich gehörend, noch mein ich mir selber so sicher zu sein, da mischt sich im Herzen leise betörend schon einer nie gekosteten Freiheit, schon einer neuen verstohlenen Liebe schweifendes, frisches Gefühl sich ein. Noch bin ich wahr und doch ist es gelogen, ich halte mich treu und bin schon schlecht...”

Zerbinetta: “When I think I still belong entirely to one man, and think I feel quite sure of myself, there steals into my heart, a mildly deluded, and as yet untasted freedom, a new, stealthy love and roving, shameless emotions! Still I am true, and yet, it’s a lie, I think myself true and am already wicked...”⁴⁸

The libretto also reveals Zerbinetta’s wit. In addition to the ability to judge situations and react quickly onstage, she chooses her words carefully. Her monologue in the Opera begins, “Grossmächtige Prinzessin...” (Most powerful Princess).⁴⁹ Strauss sets the first syllable on a lengthy half note. This gives the listener the impression that Zerbinetta is simply singing, “Gross...,” which translates to English as, “fat.” This mastery of language is a mark of Zerbinetta’s comedic and improvisatory skills.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 404.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 401.

Zerbinetta's Defining Relationships

Zerbinetta is further understood through her relationships with other characters.

Three defining relationships shed light on her nature:

1. Zerbinetta and the four *commedia* figures, which illustrates her function as a leader in relationships with men
2. Zerbinetta and the Composer, which displays her humanity
3. Zerbinetta and Ariadne, which highlights the class distinction between the *opera buffa* actors and *opera seria* singers

Zerbinetta and the *Commedia* Figures

Zerbinetta is the chief member of her troupe. This is demonstrated in the first interaction with her *commedia* associates as she delivers a command through recitative for them to bring her makeup supplies. The men immediately comply. Later in the scene, Zerbinetta's reign is further supported as she forthrightly states the *commedia* group's goals for the evening. The frank, bold nature of her recitative includes repeated notes punctuated by imperative, descending intervals at the end of each phrase. Both the phrasing and text illustrate that Zerbinetta expects no contradictory response from her colleagues. She commands her *commedia* colleagues in improvisation, directing their actions on stage.

Zerbinetta: "Kindskopf! Merkt auf: wir spielen mit in dem Stück „Ariadne auf Naxos“. Das Stück geht so: Eine Prinzessin ist von ihrem Bräutigam sitzen gelassen, und ihr nächster Verehrer ist forerst nicht angekommen. Die Bühne stellt eine wüste Insel dar. Wir sind eine muntere Gesellschaft, die sich zufällig auf dieser wüsten Insel befindet. Ihr richtet euch nach mir, und sobald sich eine Gelegenheit bietet, treten wir auf und mischen uns in die Handlung."

Zerbinetta: “What a child you are!” (*turning her back on him and saying to her four partners, who have joined her*) “Take notice: We will take part in the piece “Ariadne on Naxos”. The piece goes like this: A princess has been deserted by her bridegroom, and her next lover has not yet turned up. The stage represents a desert island. We are a merry company who by chance finds itself on this desert island. You take your cues from me, and as soon as an opportunity presents itself, we’ll get on stage and join in the action.”⁵⁰

Zerbinetta’s initial entrance with an officer and her later experience with the Composer establish the flirtatious soprano’s influence over men in various stations. Through these exchanges the audience observes that men do Zerbinetta’s bidding both onstage and offstage. She is obeyed both in her life and in her performances.

Strauss musically illustrates Zerbinetta’s controlling relationship with men. Each exchange with them is used towards Zerbinetta’s advantage. With the officer, she is flirtatious and flowery, using her wiles to gain what she desires. She dances around neighboring tones on the words, “keine kleine” (no small) and “wird mir gelingen” (I will succeed) and bates him with the suggestive, ascending phrases, “Oder meinen Sie, es wird mir gelingen?” (Or do you think I will succeed?, ex. 26).

⁵⁰ Ibid., 383-384.

Example 26. Zerbinetta and the *Commedia* Figures: Recitative

etwas ruhiger

(noch sehr im Negligée, mit dem Offizier aus dem Zimmer rechts)

Zerbinetta **Pno.**

schnell

Erst nach der

p

Zerbinetta **Pno.**

O - per kom-men wir da - ran. Es wird kei - ne klei - ne Mü - he ko - sten, die Herr-schaft-en wie - der

Zerbinetta **Pno.**

la - chen zu - ma - chen, wenn sie sich erst ei - ne Wei - le ge - lang - weilt ha - ben.

Zerbinetta **Pno.**

27

(coquett) (Der Offizier küßt ihr stumm die Hand; sie gehen nach rückwärts, sprechen weiter)

O-der mei-nen Sie, es wird mir ge - lin- gen?

espr.

Zerbinetta and the Composer

Zerbinetta's encounter with the Composer displays her humanity. After realizing Strauss's intent to highlight Zerbinetta as a focal point in the opera, Hofmannsthal desired to make the coquette more than simply a singing star. Del Mar says that the librettist thought Zerbinetta's monologue showed her as an unfeeling machine, incapable of arousing emotion in the listener. The duet for the Composer and Zerbinetta was the writer's attempt to "create a figure capable of some human warmth...It was through this change that Zerbinetta became a real character in the opera."⁵¹ Del Mar recognizes the juxtaposition of words and music in the duet. While Zerbinetta's text is "extremely cynical and provocative," Strauss's musical setting almost convinces the listener that a love duet is taking place. (This is not far removed from Strauss's original idea for an affair between the Composer and Zerbinetta.) During the duet, Zerbinetta shares that while people think her fond of crowds, she is lonely. "Törichtes Mädchen mußt du sagen" (Foolish girl you should say) she says, declaring that she could be true forever to the right man. Yet in the next act, she sings about her fickleness with men and how she can never stay true to only one. As it has been established that Zerbinetta is a consistent character onstage and off, one can deduce that she is playing with the Composer's emotions. The elastic phrasing of Zerbinetta's duet music contrasts her music everywhere else. As she entices the Composer, her signature trills, triplets, and fast coloratura are replaced by more melancholy, indirect phrases. Zerbinetta entices him,

⁵¹ Del Mar, *Richard Strauss: A Critical Commentary on His Life and Works*, Chilton Book Company, Philadelphia, 1969, 59.

ending by sharing, “Du sprichst was ich fühle...ich muß fort” (Your words reveal my inner feelings...I must go, ex. 27). The melody winds around suggestively, as Zerbinetta plays on the Composer’s naiveté. Further supporting evidence of her seduction is found in Strauss’s stage directions to the two singers, where the composer suggests that Zerbinetta deliver her lines “seeming sincere, with extreme coquetry.”

Componist (*verloren*): “Was wollen Sie in diesem Augenblick damit sagen?”

Zerbinetta (*scheinbar ganz schlicht, mit äußerster Coquetterie*): “Ein Augenblick ist wenig, ein Blick ist viel. Viele meinen daß sie mich kennen, aber ihr Auge ist stumpf. Auf dem Theater spiele ich die Kokette, wer sagt daß mein Herz dabei im Spiele ist? Ich scheine munter und bin doch traurig, gelte für gesellig und bin doch so einsem.”

Componist (*lebhaft*): “Wer es sein dürfte, den du ersehnest. Du, Du bist wie ich das Irdische unvorhanden in deiner Seele.”

Zerbinetta: “Du sprichst was ich fühle. Ich muß fort. Vergißest du gleich wieder diesen einen Augenblick?”

(*Zerbinetta macht sich los, läuft ab*)

Composer (*forlorn*): What do you mean, at this moment, by a thing like that?”

Zerbinetta (*apparently quite sincere and very coquettish*): “A moment is nothing...a glace is too much. Many think that they know me, but their eyes lack perception. On the stage I play the coquette, who says that my heart is in the part I play? I appear merry but am however sad, I pass for being fond of company, and am yet so lonely.”

Composer (*naïvely enraptured*) “Sweet, incomprehensible girl!”

Zerbinetta: “Foolish girl, you should say, who sometimes allows herself to long for that one man to whom she could be true, true to the end.”

Composer: "Whoever it may be for whom you long! You! You are like me...earthly things have no place in your soul."

Zerbinetta (*tenderly*): "You put into words what I feel...I must go. Are you going to forget right away this one moment?"

Composer: "Can such a moment as this be forgotten in all eternity?"

(*Zerbinetta breaks away and runs off...*) ⁵²

⁵² Castel, *Four Strauss Opera Libretti*, 385 - 387.

Example 27. Zerbinetta and the Composer: “Du sprichst was ich fühle...ich muß fort”

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is for Zerbinetta, starting with a rest. The second staff is for the Piano (Pno.), with dynamic markings *p*, *cresc.*, *pp subito*, and *espress.*. The third staff continues the piano part. Measure 100 begins with a vocal entry by Zerbinetta: "Du sprichst," followed by "was ich fühle," "ich muß fort." The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with eighth-note chords. The vocal line is lyrical, with sustained notes and melodic contours. The piano part becomes more active in the later measures, with eighth-note patterns and dynamic changes. The score concludes with a piano coda.

Zerbinetta and Ariadne

Zerbinetta's interaction with Ariadne highlights the class distinction between the *opera buffa* players and the *opera seria* singers. Ariadne represents an ideal, all that is noble and high class. Her character is drawn from Greek mythology, which represents the mystical and unknown. Her art form is opera, an expensive pastime associated with

wealthy people and requiring the knowledge of different languages and the study of singing. Even Ariadne's love story is classic. She is faithful to one man only and imagines herself finished with life when Theseus abandons her. When Ariadne is discovered by the weary traveler Bacchus, her misunderstanding of his identity (assuming him to be Hermes, the messenger of death) adds torment to her impending fate. The juxtaposition of what lies before her, true and lasting new love with Bacchus, and the misunderstanding of his identity prove her love story to be bittersweet.

In contrast to these points, Zerbinetta's art form is coarse comedy. Her craft requires only knowledge of the vernacular and an ability to improvise, skills less respected than the study of an esteemed art form such as opera. Her humanity (highlighted by her interactions with the Composer) is a direct contrast to Ariadne's other-worldly status. Ariadne is a unique woman, considered one in a million by the Composer. Zerbinetta represents a stereotype, a bawdy character who falls in love easily and constantly. Her love is not complex and bittersweet, but simple and superficial.

Additional contrast is found between the two characters in the subject matter presented by their coordinating performers. While Zerbinetta and her *commedia* colleagues sing of flirtation and flightiness through many continual new loves, the *opera seria* characters Ariadne and Bacchus sing of fidelity and transformation through one, continually new love. The common nature of the *opera buffa* theme and characters is far removed from the sacred nature of the *opera seria* theme and its characters.

CHAPTER VI

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS AND SUGGESTED PREPARATORY MATERIAL

The three demanding ensemble and solo singing requirements in the middle of the Opera, their consecutive order (without rest for the singer), and their great technical requirements result in the most challenging difficulties of the role. Thus, cleverly-paced singing, in addition to a physical knowledge of the technique required, should guide the singer. For this reason, preparation of major technical aspects of the role (agility, stamina, and extremes of range) is essential.

Agility

While the recitative throughout the opera is consistent with Zerbinetta's overall musical style, the soprano's identifying characteristics are most fully expressed through her aria and ensemble singing within the Opera. There, Strauss uses agility to express Zerbinetta's laughter, quick wit, and sharp tongue. Agility is an integral part of the soprano's character. The difficult rhythmic and melodic elements of the role require the ability to sing with precision and clarity. Zerbinetta's arpeggiated, staccato phrases; quick, melismatic passages; and cadenzas full of triplets, trills and fast rhythms prove that agility is a main ingredient to this role. (These items are discussed in detail under "Musical Elements Used to Present Zerbinetta" in Chapter Three.) "Ich wollt ein Sträusslein binden" (Op. 68, No. 2) is an appropriate piece for the preparation of the

agility factors found in Zerbinetta's singing. The opening phrases employ agility and triplets in ascending and descending arpeggiation that recur throughout the piece.

Stamina

Zerbinetta's twelve-minute monologue, "Grossmächtige Princessin," is comprised of a *recitativo secco/accompagnato*, an aria in two parts, and a rondo with variations. It is preceded by a five-minute ensemble and followed by an eight-minute quintet. This amounts to roughly twenty-five minutes of demanding singing and comprises the climax of the role. In addition to the amount of time spent onstage during this appearance, what is most impressive is the difficulty of the material. Within the three pieces there are two significant cadenzas, nineteen trills, and a considerably high tessitura, including over forty A5's, numerous B-flat 5's, B-natural 5's, eight C6's, one D-flat 6, and one trilled, D6. Wise use of breath, an exacting expenditure of the voice, and comfort with a tessitura that consistently reaches above the staff are requirements not easily filled for the artist singing Zerbinetta.

In addition to successive, demanding singing requirements, phrasing within the monologue can tax the singer's limits of stamina if not sung wisely. The two cadenzas in Zerbinetta's monologue and the extended melismatic passage at the end of the rondo are examples of long, demanding phrases written for Zerbinetta. Strauss's "Wiegenlied," (Opus 41, No. 1) requires exceptional breath capacity in order to execute its lengthy phrases. Study of this lied aids the Zerbinetta singer in preparation for lengthy phrasing within the opera. Further preparation can be completed through the examination of

Strauss's "O süßer Mai." This lied includes long phrasing and the higher, demanding tessitura more closely aligned with Zerbinetta's music. The song repeatedly revisits A5 (similar to Zerbinetta's music) and has a tessitura that lies between A4 and A5.

Extremes of Range

An excellent example of Zerbinetta's extremes of range is found in her recitative in response to the Prima Donna. The comedienne sings, "so ist es doppelt schwer" (so it is doubly difficult) and navigates from A5 to E4 within two quick beats. The displaced E4 makes this phrase difficult. Instead of writing a descending major second on the syllables "es doppelt" (giving the latter word two E5's), Strauss displaced the first syllable to the octave below, creating a disjunctive melodic line with large leaps (ex. 28).⁵³ A second example of extreme range lies in her aria as Zerbinetta laughs through staccato notes. The melody traverses two octaves from C6 to C4 in three quick beats (ex. 29).

Example 28. Extreme Range: Disjunct Melodic Line



⁵³ Oxford Music confirms that a lively, disjunct vocal line was a trait of *intermezzos*.
www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.uncg.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/O002509?q=intermezzo&search=quick&pos=4&_start=1#firsthit Accessed August 8, 2016.

Example 29. Extreme Range: Two Octaves



Another example of extreme range appears twice in the monologue. An E6 is sung once at the end of the aria's cadenza and again during the rondo. The former is approached through a quick, staccato arpeggiation (ex. 30) while the latter is attained through a languid stretch of the *tranquillo* tempo marking (ex. 31).⁵⁴

Example 30. Extreme Range: Cadenza



Example 31. Extreme Range: E6



The cadenzas at the end of the aria and after the rondo (see ex. 15, p. 29 and ex. 16, p. 30) are excellent examples of all three technical aspects. Agility is required in order to navigate quick, staccato passages and large leaps that bring the voice to extremes

⁵⁴ Though it is not marked in the score, common understanding of Straussian style uses a *colla voce* approach to the E6 in this phrase.

of range. By the time the first cadenza occurs, two-thirds of the difficult monologue have already been sung. The second cadenza comes after the completion of the monologue and immediately before the quintet (“Eine Störrische zu trösten”). The placement of these cadenzas is a key reminder that pacing and stamina are vital requirements for this role.

Few Strauss lieder exhibit extremes of range similar to Zerbinetta’s music. “Für funfzehn Pfennige” is one in which the range extends from B3 to B5. Not only does the song include notes at each end of the voice, but it does so in quick succession. Twice it presents an interval from B-flat 5 to C-sharp 4, requiring almost a full two-octave descent. Other songs with wide ranges include “Kling” (Op. 48, No. 3), which extends on the top to C5, and “Amor” (Op. 68, No. 5), which has a two-octave range from D4 to D6.

Indeed, Strauss’s “Amor” is an appropriate piece for the preparation of all three major technical elements required in Zerbinetta’s music. In addition to using the triplets so aptly associated with the soprano, the lied integrates them into neighboring tones, arpeggiations, and diatonic movement. Long phrases contain trills, melismatic and chromatic passages, and extremes of range in close proximity. (Further Strauss lieder and vocal exercises appropriate for preparation of the role of Zerbinetta are included in Appendix C, titled, “Strauss Lieder Appropriate for Preparation for the Role of Zerbinetta.” Appendix D, titled “Appropriate Preparation Exercises for the Role of Zerbinetta,” references vocal exercises that prepare the voice for the three ever-present elements of agility, stamina and extremes of range. Included are exercises that work

diatonicism, chromaticism, triplets, trills, wide intervallic leaps, turns, roulades, legato, and arpeggiation.)

CHAPTER VII

RECORDING REVIEWS: ZERBINETTA'S MONOLOGUE

A significant number of recordings exist of the 1916 version of *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Still more recordings exist of Zerbinetta's famous monologue. Thus, it is simple to compare different performers and evaluate results of their performances. While a performer should not base an interpretation on another performer's recording, listening to esteemed performances is certainly helpful when considering or studying a role. The following discussion compares recordings of the monologue, as it is the defining piece for Zerbinetta.

The subsequent paragraphs discuss four recordings of Zerbinetta's monologue. The recordings are categorized by conductor and singer. They include the following pairs: Herbert von Karajan and Rita Streich, Mario Bernhardt and Tracy Dahl, Kurt Masur and Edita Gruberova, and Kent Nagano and Sumi Jo. The dates of the recordings range from 1954 to 2000. The references to page numbers refer to the piano-vocal score.

The Karajan and Streich pairing is the earliest recording (1954) considered here.⁵⁵ One of the most impressive observations in Streich's performance is the sense of space and time. Tempos within the monologue can often feel rushed in some performances but

⁵⁵ Richard Strauss, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Herbert von Karajan, conductor, Rita Streich, Zerbinetta, Philharmonia Orchestra, EMI 7243 5 67 156 2-2 (CD [digitally mastered from 1954 analog recording]), 2005, disc 2, track 3.

Streich's interpretation provides a leisurely ambiance. The singer's pacing is also notable. At no point in the monologue does the listener worry about Streich taxing her voice in order to complete technical requirements. It is clear that her instrument is capable of the sprightly agility and detailed coloratura within the work. Streich exhibits cleanly articulated German diction. She sings through hummed consonants and stays committed to each vowel in melismatic passages. Her coloratura is excellently sung – the C Major arpeggio on the word *schlecht* is technically sound without losing its musicality.

The seasoned *Ariadne auf Naxos* listener may hold high hopes for competent negotiation of what is one of the most difficult phrases in the aria. This occurs in the rondo (three measures before rehearsal 123, p. 160 of the piano-vocal score), on the first appearance of the words, “hingegeben, war ich stumm” (surrendered, I was mute). Large intervallic leaps provide (with their top and bottom notes) simultaneously descending and ascending lines towards a D5. This phrase is often approximated and Streich's interpretation, while a bit labored, is precise.

Streich is able to crescendo on a D6 and does not rush the arpeggiated sixteenths at rehearsal 127 (p. 162). The listener can even hear accents on the *poco ritenuo* measure before the *a tempo* (at four measures before rehearsal 129, p. 163). Out of the four recordings discussed here, Streich is the only singer to accomplish such precision among notes and accents.

While there are many positive attributes in regard to clarity and precision, Streich engages in a few questionable practices. Added shadow vowels appear before *Gefühle* (in the example at the end of this paragraph) and *dann* (in the aria). Additionally, some

performance practices have changed. Streich's rolled final [r]'s (for example on *ungeheuer*) were appropriate when she recorded them but are no longer current practice. Unnecessary breaths include the phrase, "schon einer neuen verstohlenen Liebe, schweifendes fresches Gefühle sich ein" (already a new furtive love roving naughty feelings to a). While the phrase begs a breath somewhere in the middle (and the comma provides guidance), Streich's breath pattern is as follows: "...schon einer neuen ^ verstohlenen Liebe, ^ schweifendes freches ^ Gefühle sich ein."

Streich displays excellent negotiation of the written-in ornamentation that decorates each lover's name at the beginning of the aria (rehearsal 118, p. 156). Yet, she continues with an uneven descent on the word *Launen* (laughing), singing dotted sixteenth-notes and thirty-second notes instead of even sixteenth-notes as written. Streich could have taken more time with the decoration of the word *Staunen* (four measures before rehearsal 119, p. 156). The last two measures of the word are sung over a chord in the orchestra and presents a clear opportunity to shape phrasing and present character. Many sopranos choose to do so in this moment; Streich does not.

Perhaps due to pedagogical preferences of the fifties, Streich's timbre is the thinnest in comparison to the three later recordings in this discussion. Current pedagogical penchant favors a richer, fuller sound. Additionally, Streich's vibrato is more present, indeed faster than contemporary partiality for soprano vibrato allows. Her voice is precise and a bit precious, perhaps withheld.

One particularly curious observation of Streich's performance is her tendency to detach notes above the staff from their phrases. She does so on the words *selber*

(himself, a D6 six measures after rehearsal 119, p. 157), *Gott* (god, a B-flat 6 the second measure after rehearsal 123, p. 160), and [a] (a D6, three measures after rehearsal 127, p. 162). Enough recordings exist for the listener to conclude that this is not a common practice and is unnecessary for performance.

Lastly, there are a handful of wrong notes in Ms. Streich's recording. These incorrect notes do not occur during the most difficult phrases, which begs the question of whether Streich was aware of them. The recording displays Streich's effortful performance. Considering the technical complexity of the role, it is a respectable example of technique from the 1950's period. Still, future recordings include fewer wrong notes.

As this recording was originally on vinyl, it has been remastered but the sound suffers. The first third of the monologue is presented in muted tones. At the *allegretto mosso*, eight bars before rehearsal 109 (p. 151), the sound improves as the voice is brought out of the orchestral texture and balance becomes better. Before this point, the texture is a bit monotonous, lacking character. In contrast, Streich's performance of the last words of the aria are imbued with much emotion. They leave the listener wishing Streich had applied this measure of emotion to the rest of the monologue. Ultimately, this recording is helpful to the new singer of Zerbinetta for its clarity and precision; however, it cannot be said to represent the best of Streich's voice.

Tracy Dahl recorded a version of the monologue along with Mario Bernardi conducting in 1992.⁵⁶ Her voice is on the smaller end of the spectrum of those who interpret Zerbinetta's monologue. Dahl's instrument sparkles in its lightness and her high notes are particularly impressive. Her voice is obviously well suited to the agility and extreme range required by the piece; yet her technique suffers as early as within the *recitativo accompagnato*. The audible breaths and inherent scooping are distracting. An unprepared approach to the phrase beginning on a B-flat 6 on the words, “*die es nicht...*” (which does not; found on the anacrusis to five measures after rehearsal 104, p. 148) leaves the listener worried about pacing for Dahl.

Truly, the place where Dahl excels is in the coloratura. The beginning of the aria (*allegro scherzando*) heralds the arrival of the integrated ornamentation. Dahl tosses off masterful negotiation of the coloratura as each phrase rises effervescently to the top. Often muddled by many a singer, the descending phrases on “*Launen*” and, “*Müssen*” (must; two and four measures after rehearsal 118, p. 156) ring clear. Dahl takes the opportunity to emote on the ornamented phrase on “*Staunen*” where Streich did not (four bars before rehearsal 119, p. 156). Her legato [a] on the ascending scales before the aria's cadenza are interrupted by only a few [h]'s. The cadenza is not simply a display of competency, but a teasing flirtation with her onstage colleagues as her impeccable trills and staccato E6 are sung with perfect ease. Dahl's interpretation of the famously difficult

⁵⁶ Richard Strauss, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Mario Bernardi, conductor, Tracy Dahl, Zerbinetta, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, CBC Records CBC SMCD-5125 (CD), 2000, track 7.

phrase “*hingegeben war ich stumm*” (at three measures before rehearsal 123, p. 160) is disappointingly inaccurate, presenting approximated pitches.

At *sehr lebhaft* (rehearsal 123), the vocalism is truly enjoyable. While Dahl’s trills are not as impressive here as other places within the monologue, the musicality and cleanliness of the coloratura are once again the soprano’s strength. Also, the D6 of the final, coloratura cadenza (three measures after rehearsal 127, p. 162) is a bit thin. The arpeggiated phrasing that follows is unstable as Dahl is unable to seamlessly transition between registers; however, her final trills are presented as impressive as the first and the last D6 is fuller than any previous attempts.

Due to such difficulty within the monologue and the size of this singer’s voice, there is concern that this vehicle taxes Dahl’s instrument to the furthest element possible. She sings excellently to the point of her capacity. It is clear that Dahl is a wise singer and has planned and paced herself, but due to her small voice, there are times when she struggles to stay above the orchestra in the lower parts of her voice. Despite the technical difficulty and inconsistencies, Dahl’s coloratura is absolutely worth the time spent listening to this recording.

The Kurt Masur and Edita Gruberova pairing from the 1988 recording of the full opera is deserving of much respect.⁵⁷ Compared with Dahl and Streich, Gruberova is just the mix of *chiaroscuro* balance that is missing from each voice. The monologue is fully integrated into her voice and body, as evidenced by fewer breaths in the recitative section than either of the previous sopranos. An example of this is demonstrated through

⁵⁷ Richard Strauss, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Kurt Masur, conductor, Edita Gruberova, Zerbinetta, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Philips 422 084-2 (CD), 2013, track 14.

completion of the phrase on “*Staunen*” (four measures before rehearsal 119, p. 156) with no breath. While there is some scooping in her interpretation, it is clear that every scoop is purposefully communicative.

It is apparent that Ms. Gruberova has thoroughly planned her technical expenditures and meticulously paced herself throughout the monologue. Indeed, Gruberova handles the difficulty of the role with ease. Her trills are splendid and spinning, even decorated by a *messa di voce* at one point. The staccati at the end of the first cadenza are precision perfect. The octave and a third ascent on the words “*dass ein herz*” (that a heart) at rehearsal 119 is used as a regrouping point with the conductor and orchestra. This observance of the *cesura* provides clarity in the midst of the long structure of the monologue. The detail is one of many instances that makes Gruberova’s performance markedly different from the performances of other singers.

Gruberova can do little wrong in this role. Still, there are a few extremely minor flaws that can be identified. The clarity of the lovers’ names at the beginning of the aria is so precise that *Cavicchio*’s name stands out with its muddled texture. Two sentences later the word, “...*immer...*” (the anacrusis to the fourth measure after rehearsal 118, p. 156) is sharp. One can hear [h]’s inserted in the ascent of the words *selber* at the ascending diatonic octaves, usually not difficult, and *wangen* (two measures before rehearsal 122, p. 159). These technical issues are completely overlooked in return for the precision Gruberova provides throughout the rest of the monologue. She is the performer who sings the closest to what is written at the famously difficult “*Staunen*” passage.

Indeed, Gruberova still has performance capacity left by the time the rondo arrives. She sounds as if she could continue on, proving she has the stamina necessary for the role. The D6 of the cadential “ah” section is not only crescendoed but then trilled with no additional breath taken. Gruberova’s interpretation of the monologue brings the character to life.

In 1997 Sumi Jo and Kent Nagano completed an excellent recording of the 1912 version of the monologue.⁵⁸ Jo’s interpretation is included here due to her excellent technique and the overlap in music from the earlier to the later version. Her technical ability produces a poised presentation of the monologue. Her voice does not tire and is well-paced throughout the piece. The warmth and balance in her voice is appealing, presenting a balanced timbre from the top to the bottom register. Ms. Jo easily lives above the staff and excels in continual high notes and nimble coloratura. Where others before her have used [h]’s to navigate coloratura phrases, she does not. Her *lebhafter* tempo is faster than most sopranos’ interpretations.

A few small technical observations that must be noted include a lack of consonants, a tendency to change the vowel during melismatic passages, and a practice of separating high notes from within their phrases. The last observation seems to be a habit rather than a choice. Missing consonants are disappointing as each hummed [n] sound is an opportunity for character illustration. Examples of omitted [n]’s include the words

⁵⁸ Richard Strauss, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Kent Nagano, conductor, Sumi Jo, Zerbinetta, Erato – Parlophone, Naxos 5692547723 (CD), 2005, disc 2, tracks 1-5. Accessed 8/8 2016, <http://uncg.naxosmusiclibrary.com.libproxy.uncg.edu/catalogue/item.asp?cid=5099955986755>

“*gemeinen*”(where the second [n] is missing), “*Schweifendes*” (end), and “*sein*” (to be). Other absent consonants include the [ʃ] in the word “*freches*” (naughty) and the [b] in the word “*betörend*” (beguiling). Finally, some descending passages are not as clear as expected from Jo’s technical abilities. The famous “*Staunen*” phrase is suggested but not achieved.

Despite the technical issues, the added difficulty of the original 1912 version of the monologue earns Ms. Jo great respect.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

The material presented in this dissertation provides a starting point for the singer preparing the role of Zerbinetta. Details regarding the origin of the opera and it's plot synopsis are important to the process of character preparation. Beyond this point, the depth of character, musical, and dramatic information posed in the previous pages offers a foundation on which the singer may base her interpretation of character. Additionally, the recording reviews present a source for the singer's beginning listening studies.

If a soprano possesses the agility, stamina and extremes of range required by the role of Zerbinetta, she has the capacity to perform it. These three technical requirements necessitate attention to technique through the entire role. Preparation requires significant attention to technical and dramatic detail and forward thought of pacing. Moreover, knowledge of the historical aspects of the role and the character's relationships provide the singer with a comprehensive overview of Zerbinetta's complex nature. These items complete the full portrait of the soprano that the composer and librettist intended. Without them, Zerbinetta becomes the cold automaton that Hofmannsthal originally saw in her monologue. The singer who arms herself with material from these pages will come closer to the vibrant Zerbinetta of Strauss's and Hofmannsthal's vision.

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APPENDIX A

ROLE FACT SHEET

Voice Type: high soprano
Range: D4 to E6
Tessitura: F4 to B-flat 6
Voice Requirements: agility, stamina, extremes of range
Character Profile: *commedia dell'arte* stock figure

Brief Details of the Opera:

Zerbinetta is present in both the first act (Prologue) and second act (Opera). She is an improvisatory actress who leads a troupe of four male, *commedia* actors.

The Prologue presents her offstage personality. During it, she prepares for the performance (the Opera) by telling her troupe the storyline of the Opera and how they must insert themselves within the plot. In addition to interacting with her *commedia* colleagues, she also interacts with the Prima Donna (later Ariadne) and the Composer.

The Opera presents Zerbinetta's onstage personality. She interacts with her improvisatory colleagues and with the singers of the Opera during their performance. Zerbinetta and Ariadne have a tiff involving who gets the spotlight.

Singing Commitments:

Prologue:	brief recitatives duet with Composer	Ein Augenblick ist wenig
Opera:	brief recitatives Quintet Monologue Quintet (finale)	Es gilt ob Tanzen... Wie sie sich schwingen Grossmächtige Princessin Eine Störrische zu trösten

APPENDIX B
WELL-KNOWN PERFORMERS AND RECORDINGS

CD: 1916 version:

<u>Conductor</u>	<u>Orchestra</u>	<u>Zerbinetta</u>	<u>Date</u>
Clemens Krauss	Reichssenders Orchestra	Erna Berger	1935/1944
Karl Böhm	Orchestra der Wiener Staatsoper	Alda Noni	1944
Joseph Keilberth	Cologne West German Radio Symphony Orchestra	Rita Streich	1954
Herbert von Karajan	Philharmonia Orchestra	Rita Streich	1954
Karl Böhm	Vienna Philharmonic	Hilde Güder	1954
Erich Leinsdorf	Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra	Roberta Peters	1958
Rudolph Kempe	Staatskapelle Dresden	Sylvia Geszty	1969
George Solti	London Philharmonic Orchestra	Edita Gruberova	1978
James Levine	Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra	Kathleen Battle	1986
Kurt Masur	Gewandhausorchester Leipzig	Edita Gruberova	1988
Giuseppe Sinopoli	Staatskapelle Dresden	Natalie Dessay	2000

CD: 1912 version:*

<u>Conductor</u>	<u>Orchestra</u>	<u>Zerbinetta</u>	<u>Date</u>
Kent Nagano	Orchestre de l'opéra National de Lyon	Sumi Jo	1997
Richard Armstrong	Scottish Chamber Orchestra	Gillian Keith	2010 (Eng.)

DVD:

<u>Conductor</u>	<u>Orchestra</u>	<u>Zerbinetta</u>	<u>Date</u>
Erich Leinsdorf	Boston Symphony Orchestra	Beverly Sills	1969 (1912 vs)
Karl Böhm	Orchestra der Wiener Staatsoper	Edita Gruberova	1977-78
James Levine	Metropolitan Opera	Kathleen Battle	1988
James Levine	Metropolitan Opera	Natalie Dessay	2003
Christian Thielemann	Staatskapelle Dresden	Sophie Koch	2013
Vladimir Jurowski	London Philharmonic Orchestra	Laura Claycomb	2013

*These 1912 versions are included as there is musical overlap in the 1912 and 1916 versions of the opera and because the Zerbinetta singers are worth hearing.

APPENDIX C

STRAUSS LIEDER APPROPRIATE FOR PREPARATION OF THE ROLE OF ZERBINETTA

Cycles: *Vier letzte lieder*, Op. posth.
 Brentano lieder, Op. 68

Songs:	Seitdem dein Aug'	Op. 17, No. 1
	Ständchen	Op. 17, No. 2
	Barcarole	Op. 17, No. 6
	Wie sollten wir geheim sie halten	Op. 19, No. 4
	All mein Gedanken	Op. 21, No. 1
	Ruhe, meine Seele!	Op. 27, No. 1
	Cäcilie	Op. 27, No. 2
	Heimliche Aufforderung	Op. 27, No. 3
	Morgen!	Op. 27, No. 4
	Schlagenden Herzen	Op. 29, No. 2
	Für funfzehn Pfennige	Op. 36, No. 2
	Befreit	Op. 39, No. 4
	Wigenelied	Op. 41, No. 1
	Ich Schwebe	Op. 48, No. 2
	Kling	Op. 48, No. 3

APPENDIX D
APPROPRIATE PREPARATION EXERCISES
FOR THE ROLE OF ZERBINETTA

				Training Structure	Soprano of Singing Voices
	Marchesi	Vaccai	Panofka	Liebling	
diatonic work	4, 5	5			
chromatic work	7		22, 23	23, 24	3.24
triplets	10		5, 6	19, 20	3.19, 3.20
trills	18	11	17, 19	35a, b, & c	
wide intervallic leaps		4	24	25, 26, 29	
turns		10	16	28	
roulades		12	1	6, 12, 15, 16, 17, 27	
agility			3, 4, 18		3.1 – 3.22
legato/sostenuto			15		5.1 – 5.18
arpeggios			20, 21	8.1 – 8.17	9.1 – 9.7
				3.18, 3.21, 12.9	5.16, 9.7

APPENDIX E

OTHER APPROPRIATE OPERATIC REPERTOIRE FOR THE ZERBINETTA SINGER

<u>Composer</u>	<u>Aria</u>	<u>Character</u>	<u>Opera</u>
Britten	Be Kind and Courteous My heart leaps up with joy	Tytania Miss Wordsworth	Midsummer Night's Dream Albert Herring
Donizetti	Quel guardo il cavaliere Prendi, per me sei libero Chacun le sait Il faut partir Regnava nel silenzio Quando rapito in estasi... Il dolce suono	Norina Adina Marie Lucia	Don Pasquale L'elisir d'amore La fille du regiment Lucia di Lammermoor
Handel	Tornami a vagheggiar Da tempeste Piangerò la sorte mia Myself I shall adore Bel piacere e godere	Alcina Cleopatra Semele Agrippina	Alcina Giulio Cesare Semele Agrippina
Humperdinck	Ein Männlein steht im Walde Der kleine Taumann heiss'ich Dew Fairy Der kleine Sandmann bin ich Sandman	Gretel	Hansel und Gretel
Massenet	Ah! Douce enfant...pour en faire un tissue	La Fée	Cendrillon
Menotti	Du gai soleil Hello, hello	Sophie Lucy	Werther The Telephone
Mozart	Durch Zärtlichkeit und Schmeicheln Welche Wonne, welche Lust Der Hölle Rache O zittre nicht, mein lieber Sohn In uomini, in soldati Una donna a quindici anni	Blondchen Queen of the Night Despina Olympia	Die Entführung aus dem Serail Die Zauberflöte Così fan tutte Les Contes d'Hoffman
Offenbach	Les oiseaux dans la charmille		
Ravel	Fire Aria	Le Feu	L'Enfant et les sortileges
Rossini	Sventurata mi credea... Ma che serve!	Clorinda	La Cenerentola
Sondheim	En proie à la tristesse On the steps of the palace	Comtesse Adele Cinderella	Le Comte Ory Into the Woods
J. Strauss	Mein Herr Marquis	Adele	Die Fledermaus

R. Strauss	Die Wiener Herrn verstehen sich auf die Astronomie	Fiakermilli	Arabella
Thomas	A vos jeux, mes amis Je suis Titania	Ophélie Philine	Hamlet Mignon