Performance, Heterochrony, Historiography: The Wooster Group's 2007–2009 Production of Busenello/Cavalli's *La Didone* (1641) and Baroque Opera Representation

Mauro Calcagno, University of Pennsylvania[1]

DOI: 10.36950/sjm.42.1

Keywords: opera, performance studies, nonlinear time, dramaturgy, media, postdramatic theater

Abstract: *The Wooster Group's acclaimed production of Francesco Cavalli's* La Didone *challenged traditional Baroque opera representations by rejecting the typical dual-track approach of historically informed sonic philology and* Regietheater*'s modernized visual staging. Baroque productions on European and American stages have largely followed stylized practices that emphasize emotional and psychological realism, often aligning acting choices with contemporary interpretations of gender and emotional depth. In contrast, the Wooster Group introduced a heterochronic, nonlinear approach to the opera's dramaturgy, rooted in experimental postdramatic theater techniques. Using methods different from those in conventional opera, this groundbreaking production combined narrative elements with multimedia innovations, effectively decentering music's historical authority and rejecting strictly linear representations of time and history. Offering a fresh paradigm and foreshadowing the most avant-garde productions in today's operatic stages, the Wooster Group's* La Didone *bridges past and present by developing alternative temporal frameworks for engaging with historical materials.*

We aren't trying to represent culture.
We're performing it as an emerging art form
Bruce Odland[2]

Contemporary stagings of operas from the European period commonly referred to as 'Baroque' provide a notable case study for exploring how performers and creators employ temporal frames to highlight time's flexible and hybrid nature. In his recent *Opera in Performance*, Clemens Risi identifies three predominant approaches in contemporary performance practices of the operatic repertoire: the first, often labeled with the acronym HIP (Historically Informed Performance), demands fidelity to original works (*Werktreue*); the second, *Regietheater*, prevalent in German-speaking regions, preserves an opera's musical structure while radically reinterpreting its textual and visual elements; and the third, the "fragmentation" approach, creates hybrid forms by freely combining operatic fragments from different contexts, effectively reviving historical practices like *pasticcio* that waned with the rise of the concept of the musical work in the nineteenth century.[3] Regarding the first two approaches, Risi suggests that even 'historically informed' and reconstructionist performances should recognize opera's long experimental traditions rather than rigidly adhering to conventions. Therefore, a HIP perspective legitimizes rather than disproves *Regietheater* approaches that incorporate modern visual vocabulary and movement repertoires.[4]

1 mauroca@sas.upenn.edu

2 Tracy 2009: 12, a local magazine interview with the music director of The Wooster Group's *La Didone*. The article's subtitle reads: "The Wooster Group plays it straight but still gives Cavalli's Baroque epic a twist".

3 Risi 2021: 5–8.

4 Classifications of contemporary operatic stagings can be found in Schläder 2001; Levin 2009; and Mary Hunter 2014.

Mauro Calcagno: Performance, Heterochrony, Historiography: The Wooster Group's 2007–2009 Production of Busenello/Cavalli's La Didone *(1641) and Baroque Opera Representation, in: Schweizer Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft – Neue Folge 42 (2025), S. 13–38.*

Baroque operas present a distinct challenge within these performance approaches due to their historical discontinuity. Most of these works lack continuous performance traditions, appear infrequently on modern stages, and seem fundamentally foreign to contemporary audiences compared to standard repertoires, where audiences have established expectations and frames of reference. This unique reception context adds another layer of complexity to the directorial choices among HIP, *Regietheater*, and fragmentation approaches, as directors must not only interpret the work but also bridge a broader historical and aesthetic gap between the material and modern sensibilities, making Baroque opera both more vulnerable to and potentially more suitable for experimental approaches.[5]

For instance, a perceived contradiction between the sonic and visual dimensions becomes increasingly relevant when representing works from three or four centuries ago. Since Peter Sellars' radical productions of Handel operas in the 1980s — an example of American *Regietheater* — Euro-American audiences of Baroque operas have come to expect a certain degree of historically informed performance from the pit orchestra (John Butt refers to this expectation as 'HIPness').[6] For these works, the public generally assumes that the music is performed with philological accuracy using period instruments, stylistic appropriateness, and critical editions. However, the same expectation does not apply to the visual component, especially in *Regietheater* productions that update operas with modern sets and costumes.[7] In these productions, the contemporary *mise-en-scène* operates on a different 'track' than the sonic HIP component, resulting in a hybrid that Butt compares to postmodern 'double coding' in architecture.[8] A minority of 'reconstructionist' productions aims to recreate Baroque sets, costumes, makeup, and lighting (such as with candles), thereby expanding the HIP approach from the sonic to the visual, particularly when staged in a historical venue.[9]

In addition to presenting the aforementioned contradiction between the sonic and visual dimensions, contemporary *Regietheater* productions share with audiences a fundamental assumption about acting. Singers are not expected to adopt the highly stylized and anti-realistic gestures and movements typical of HIP or reconstructionist productions;[10] instead, they are expected to emotionally and psychologically connect with 'real life' characters in an almost Stanislavskian manner. As Suzanne Aspden notes regarding Handel's operas, "We … still want … to see Handel's characters as rounded psychological presentations in order to make his operas satisfying, understandable dramatic wholes, comparable to those of the nineteenth century".[11] Singers predominantly adhere to conventional acting practices that originated in the nineteenth century, with today's directors often encouraging them to achieve realistic and emotional effects similar to those in film or television productions, particularly in sexually charged scenes.[12]

Finally, in Baroque opera representations, audience expectations regarding singers' realistic acting and emotional identification with the portrayed characters often clash with the dramaturgies and ideological premises of the works themselves, creating a conflict between perceptions of contemporaneity and those of 'history'. Stage directors attempt to resolve this dilemma by creatively adapting their productions to contemporary tastes. Discussing two modern productions of *La Didone* — the *dramma mu-*

5 Fischer 2015.

6 See Butt 2002: 129. Musicological scholarship devoted to today's operatic stagings has been steadily expanding since Levin 2007 up to Risi 2021 and Havelková 2021, partly following up on Carolyn Abbate's pioneering call for a performance focus in Abbate 2004. For the specific issues raised by staging Baroque opera in our times, see Deshoulières 2000; Gess et al. 2008; Mary Hunter 2014; Kara 2018; Candiard and Gros de Gasquet 2019; Mounier-Vehier 2020; and Magnus T. Schneider and Wagner 2023.

7 Radical stagings in the tradition of *Regietheater* (director's theater) "aim to create new experiences and understandings of the operatic repertory through a process of defamiliarization – often involving visual elements that do not attempt to adhere to the composer or librettist's stage directions and/or intentions in a literal manner", Rothe 2019.

8 Butt 2002: 148–51.

9 See Sauter and Wiles 2014.

10 See T'Hooft 2008.

11 Aspden 2013: 12.

12 For singers' conventional acting in *Regietheater* productions, see Smart 2020: 159–161.

sicale by Giovan Francesco Busenello set to music by Francesco Cavalli and first performed in Venice in 1641 — Wendy Heller notes that both subvert Busenello's creative happy ending.[13] The librettist altered the queen's death (as narrated by Virgil and preserved in operas such as Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*) into her marriage to the previously rejected suitor, King Iarbas. However, both modern productions examined by Heller, using period instruments, portray Dido as "an unwilling participant in the *lieto fine*, who accepts her new husband with stoic resignation and despair rather than with the joy evident in Cavalli's music".[14] The gap between acting and music reflects the challenge of presenting the original happy ending. The directors of these productions — Clément Hervieu-Léger, a student of Patrice Chéreau rooted in the *Regietheater* tradition, and Carlo Majer — presume that audiences experiencing Dido's emotional journey following her abandonment by Aeneas would respond negatively to the inconsistency in the protagonist's rapid change of heart at the opera's conclusion. Most audiences would likely favor realistic portrayals of inner conflicts, mirroring contemporary notions of gender relationships. These ideas, however, contrast with those in seventeenth-century Venice, where, according to Heller, it was plausible that "Didone would have been obliged to celebrate her union with Iarba, even though it necessarily meant a loss of [her] autonomy".[15]

The three perceived contradictions mentioned above regarding Baroque opera representation — between the sonic and visual levels, the contemporary and "historic" acting styles, and today's plot standards compared to those of the past — highlight several historiographical implications involved in staging these works today. Directors' assumptions and audience expectations about theatrically representing the past bear historiographical implications, as operatic productions suggest a visual and sonic conception of history. Staged performances, in essence, fulfill the role of historiography.[16] By interpreting an opera from the past and bringing it to the stage, directors act like historians; their preparatory work, often supplemented by research conducted by dramaturgs (especially in North European and Latin-American theatres), often aligns with that of historical musicologists.[17]

By 'updating' the plots and using theatrical representation to convey their 'concepts', *Regietheater* directors assume that time reveals meanings and that history elucidates truths, thus implicitly subscribing to classic historiographical tenets such as *historia magistra vitae* or *veritas filia temporis*.[18] As a result, *Regietheater* productions often carry an implicit didactic aim. Equally pedagogical, and indeed stemming from extensive historical research, are reconstructionist productions that adopt HIP tenets in both the sonic and visual dimensions. Viewed in their shared relationship to history as *magistra vitae*, the hermeneutical approach used by *Regietheater* directors is similar to the historicist one employed, within the same productions, by accompanying instrumentalists who adhere to HIP tenets. This convergence of aims may be why they blend in postmodern 'double coding', according to Butt (as mentioned). For both HIP musicians and *Regietheater* directors, history appears as a continuous line spanning past and present, ranging from, at one pole, the sonic rendition of the past pursued by the conductor and the instrumentalists, to, at the other end, the visual representation of the present explored by stage directors and set designers. Singers bridge the two extremes through their bodies, costumes, and voices.

The stagings that Risi identifies as 'fragmented' (his third category) operate under various historiographical assumptions. The 2007–2009 production of *La Didone* by the experimental theater company The Wooster Group — the main focus of this article — employs a radically different approach to the

13 Heller 2017: 3.2 and 3.3. The two referenced video recordings of Francesco Cavalli's *La Didone* are Cavalli 2007 (stage director Carlo Majer) and Cavalli 2012 (stage director Clément Hervieu-Léger).
14 Heller 2017: 3.2.
15 Heller 2017: 3.3.
16 See Franko and Richards 2000, Renihan 2020 (especially chapters 1 and 3), and Kreuzer 2021.
17 See Mounier-Vehier 2020: 211–313; Blin 2018.
18 For *historia magistra vitae* ("history is life's teacher", after Cicero, *De Oratore*, II, 36) in modern historiography, see Koselleck 2004: 26–42 (chapter 2) and Hartog 2015: 72–77. For *veritas filia temporis* ("truth is the daughter of time"), Didi-Huberman 2000: 58.

past and its theatrical representation than *Regietheater* and HIP ones, overturning the assumptions, expectations, and historiographical implications mentioned earlier.[19] The fragmentation adopted by this group — more accurately described as a multiplication — does not demonstrate a 'pasticcio' attitude on the musical level. The production maintains certain principles common to both Historically Informed Performance and *Regietheater* approaches, such as stylistic vocal appropriateness and quasi-philological attention to preserving the integrity of the individual scenes in the original score. However, in tackling Cavalli's *La Didone*, The Wooster Group fundamentally reconfigures the relationships between the source texts (i.e., the score and the libretto) and the staged performance, as well as the connections between contemporary times and the Baroque period. In doing so, the Group implicitly proposes an alternative paradigm to traditional reconstructionist and *Regietheater* productions. I argue that the Group achieves this reconfiguration through strategies of reenactment and visual and sonic representation emerging from a heterochronic, non-linear understanding of the past. The Wooster Group's approach to history mirrors the traditional notion of a historian's work as *opus oratorium (rhetoricum) maxime*, rather than *historia magistra vitae* or *veritas filia temporum*.[20] History, that is, is viewed as rhetoric, oratory, and narration, thus a textual genre akin to literature, an approach recently championed by the late Hayden White.[21] Relatedly, the Wooster Group's multilayered view of history resonates with that adopted by critics of historicism such as Walter Benjamin and Reinhart Koselleck.[22]

Like most current operatic productions of Baroque works, the stagings of Cavalli's *Didone* by Hervieu-Léger and Majer, discussed by Heller, imply instead a linear view of time and history that places the performance's present in direct dialogue with the past, allowing it to 'speak' to, and even teach, audiences. This choice influences both their sonic and visual dimensions: music performance seeks to recover past practices through HIP techniques, while the visual aspect addresses the need of contemporary audiences to connect their own present with the perceived distant context of the represented work.

In the following sections, after providing a general survey of The Wooster Group and its production of Cavalli's opera ("Decentering Music in Early Opera"), I will focus on three passages from *La Didone*: scenes 4 and 9 in Act II (section "Film, Opera, Reenactment") and the *finale* ("Out of Joint: Time and Performance"). In the last section, I will return to the Hervieu-Léger production as representing a *Regietheater* approach to time and history. I claim that The Wooster Group differs in its approach in ways that overlap with practices and aesthetic premises termed today as 'postdramatic' which have been present since the 1970s on Euro-American theatre and performance stages, though in less pervasive ways in opera.[23]

Decentering Music in Early Opera

The Wooster Group (hereafter referred to as TWG or "the Group") is an avant-garde artist collective, directed by Elizabeth LeCompte, which has been active in New York City since 1975 and originated from the Performance Group, led by Richard Schechner. Described by Marvin Carlson as the "best-known experimental theater company of the postmodern era",[24] TWG rehearses and premieres its shows in the

19 The Wooster Group's website features the entire video of *La Didone* (serialised) for archival purposes; see (Bibliography) *The Wooster Group: August 21, 2017 - from the archives – LA DIDONE (2009) – serialized – part one* and Video Examples nos. 1–3 here.

20 "A branch of literature closer than any other to oratory (rhetoric)", Cicero, *De legibus*, I, 2, 5, as translated in Cicero 1928: 302–303.

21 E.g., White 1990; for the relationship between White's view on history and that by Cicero as *opus oratorium maxime*, see Woodman 1988: 197–198.

22 See, for instance, the XVIII thesis of the 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' in Benjamin 1968: 216 ("Historicism contents itself with establishing a causal connection between various moments in history") and chapter 6 of Koselleck 2004: 93–104.

23 A useful list of "postdramatic theatrical signs" is in Lehmann 2006: 82–106. Discussions of postdramatic approaches both in contemporary opera and performances of standard operatic repertoire are included in, among others, Levin 2007, 23–24; Novak 2015: 25; Hartung 2020: 42–70; and Risi 2021: 8, 45, 126.

24 Carlson 2003:15.

Performing Garage, a small venue in SoHo measuring roughly fifty by thirty-five feet and seating 150. Its salaried company members and organizational structure facilitate longer rehearsal periods than those of traditional theater and opera circuits.

TWG performances incorporate texts from various historical periods, including the Group's own past. These texts encompass traditional plays (by Shakespeare, Molière, Chekhov, Stein, Miller, Williams, O'Neill, Pinter, Brecht), autobiographical materials from TWG members, and media content ranging from novels to films, sound recordings, and archival footage, with no rigid distinctions between high and popular cultures.[25] However, texts are not merely re-presented on stage but serve as organizing principles of performance, often in simultaneous combinations, alongside a variety of media and technologies, in ways that deemphasize linear narratives and univocal meanings. In this context, 'performance' encompasses a broad spectrum of activities that engage, most often concurrently, with theater, dance, film, and other media. The past is not merely absorbed or actualized in the here and now of performance: its presentation is mediated, distanced, and framed through overlapping devices, media, and strategies, including the often-reenacted interactions between actors and sound/video technologies, the latter as both live feeds and recordings. As Bonnie Marranca observes, actors work like 'figures of speech' through a non-naturalistic acting style and a fluid relationship between themselves and the characters, as well as between their voices and bodies.[26] Stage elements, props, and costumes are often recycled from previous productions, the material components of the performance (such as cables) are exposed, and the stage space and sets are frequently organized symmetrically as architectural elements.[27]

Over the years, the Group's performance practices have established a foundation for experimentation in theaters worldwide, challenging audiences and critics while generating extensive scholarship.[28] For theater scholars, TWG's practices resonate with the principles of the historical avant-garde of the early twentieth century, the New York experimental avant-garde of the 1960s, and the 'postdramatic' styles of the past fifty years as discussed by Hans-Thies Lehmann.[29] For the music historian, these practices evoke striking parallels with characteristics of early Baroque musical theater, including: texts of departure viewed as fluid and non-prescriptive; emphasis on process rather than product, highlighting its artificiality; performers avoiding psychological and realistic portrayals by doubling roles or enhancing their physical presence; technologies integrated into the performance and interacting with bodies; and affects prioritized over representation.[30] In TWG's staging of Cavalli's *La Didone,* these practices produce a 'historicizing' effect that activates the audience's historical imagination in ways that diverge from productions that either attempt to reconstruct past practices (HIP or 'reconstructionist') or accentuate contemporary concerns as 'readable' in the texts of departure (*Regietheater*), both types implicitly accepting the past as recoverable through performance. This historicizing effect arises from heterochronic strategies that reconfigure the relationship between the operatic text and its performance, including Busenello's happy ending, which today's audiences and directors, as mentioned above, resist.

The main heterochronic strategy employed by TWG in *La Didone* involves the use of media. Cavalli's opera is performed simultaneously alongside a screening and a reenactment of Mario Bava's 1965 science-fiction film, *Planet of the Vampires,* which is itself an adaptation of a 1960 Italian novel (see Appen-

25 The TWG website (*The Wooster Group*) includes a self-history and a list of works.

26 Marranca 2003: 5.

27 On these aspects of TWG's productions, see Lehmann 2006: 168–69.

28 The extensive body of literature on TWG includes a large number of publications from Savran 1985 to Hunter 2021.

29 Postdramatic theater decenters dramatic texts, reflecting the New York theater culture of the 1960s and 70s, which influenced TWG. The collaboration between TWG and Richard Schechner in the Performance Group helped shape the academic discipline of Performance Studies in the U.S; see Karen Jürs-Munby, 'Introduction' to Lehmann 2006: 1–15.

30 See Marranca 2003: 6. Branislav Jakovljević discusses the three productions by TWG that have used seventeenth-century texts of departure, *La Didone*, *Hamlet*, and *To You, the Birdie!* (based on Racine's *Phèdre*). He observes resonances between *La Didone* and Baroque aesthetics and practices, such as the use of illusion, the "play with surfaces … from acting, to stage design, to their use of video and digital technologies", the "obscurity of signs and ambivalence of meanings", and the "policentrality of techniques, effects, and meanings", Jakovljevič 2010: 89–91.

dix).[31] Throughout the performance, the film is shown in its entirety on TV screens or heard while the reenactment occurs, either simultaneously with the opera or alternately by itself (actors mostly lip-sync the film dialogue). Excerpts from the opera are performed in conjunction with the film and/or its reenactment. The sound component also features the film soundtrack reworked and mixed with Cavalli's music.[32] The overall result is a highly calculated coordination between the live elements (opera and film reenactment) and the mediated component (the film).

The partial reenactment of the film requires that four TWG actors and four singers hired for the performance frequently exchange roles; thus, actors and singers not only double roles in the opera but also in the film (see casting in the Appendix). The multiple roles played by actors and singers across media create a 'historicizing effect', given that operas from the time of Cavalli featured extensive doubling, allowing for interchangeable roles between actors and singers.[33] Additionally, in TWG's *La Didone*, actors and singers replicate Baroque-style gestures (Fig. 1). However, in reenacting the film, they also imitate the gestures and physical motions of the sci-fi characters (in addition to their speech), highlighting their acting conventions. Both actors and singers mostly wear the astronaut space suits featured in the sci-fi film. However, when portraying the opera characters, elements such as head coverings are added (Fig. 2). In effect, viewers are exposed to two reenactments, one of the opera and one of the film, referencing two temporal frames: the early Baroque and the mid-twentieth century, respectively.

Figure 1: Scott Shepherd as Wess, with, in the background, Hai-Ting Chinn as Dido, Ari Fliakos as Mark, Judson Williams as Acate (on the floor). Photo by Antonia Belt.

31 The film *Planet of the Vampires* is available on widely distributed internet commercial platforms. In it, "two spaceships, the Argos and the Galliot, are investigating a mysterious signal emanating from the planet Aura. Suddenly the force of gravity increases like mad, and both ships plummet to the planet's surface. The Argos crew survives, but the crew of the Galliot is entirely wiped out and the corpses rise up as zombies, reanimated by the alien life forms of the planet. The aliens are desperate to escape their dying sun and are trying to steal a spaceship. A deadly battle ensues between the humans and zombies over the one remaining meteor rejector, an indispensable piece of spaceship hardware. Eventually the Galliot is blown to bits, and the Argos escapes with three survivors, not all of them human" (plot by TWG).

32 On the soundscape of *La Didone*, see Verstraete 2011.

33 Magnus Tessing Schneider, 2012.

Figure 2: Hai-Ting Chinn as Dido, Andrew Nolen as Iarbas. Photo by Paula Court.

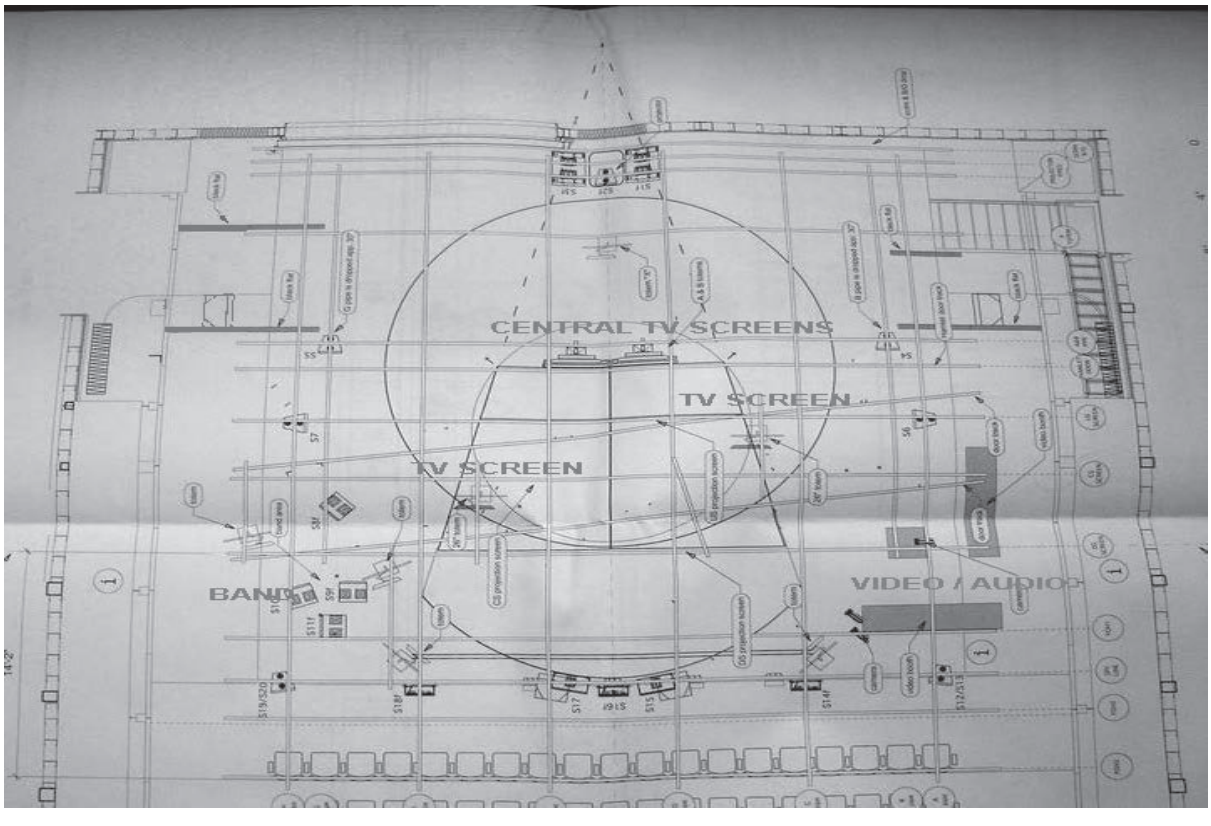


Figure 3: ground plan for the performances of La Didone *at REDCAT in Los Angeles, June 11–21, 2009 (courtesy The Wooster Group). Capitalized indications are the author's additions.*

The ground plan for *La Didone* (Fig. 3) displays a central perspective and symmetrical design.[34] A small band of musicians (stage right) and the video-and-sound artists (stage left) are positioned at the front sides of the stage, integrated into the performance space, spatially merging their respective technologies (actors and singers occasionally play instruments on stage). The small band features baroque guitar and theorbo, as well as ukulele, accordion, tambourine, electric guitar, and a synthesiser producing the sounds of a historical harpsichord. The 'historical' and the 'contemporary' dimensions coexist within the sound (both acoustic and electronic) and are not juxtaposed as a dichotomy between the aural and the visual, like in *Regietheater* productions where the pit and the stage operate on different 'tracks' (as mentioned above). The manipulated soundtrack of the movie provides an additional temporal layer to the soundscape.

Two main 42-inch TV screens are positioned side by side at center stage, flanked by two 26-inch screens on each side (Figs. 3 and 4). As previously mentioned, the screens display segments of the 1965 film, along with still images from it, abstract art mimicking the geometric sets (sometimes superimposed on the film), live feed, and, occasionally, clips from another movie (*Queen of Outer Space* by Edwards Bernds, 1958). The two adjacent central screens present mirror images. The arrangement of the large screens creates two primary performance areas for the actors and singers: one located center and downstage in front of the screens, and the other upstage, behind them (Figs. 4 and 5). All four screens intermittently show live feeds of the body parts positioned just behind them, thereby becoming 'transparent' and effectively blurring the boundary between the two performance spaces (Figs. 5 and 6). Given the limited stage space due to the screens' placement, as well as the band and AV personnel, the props and other set elements are kept minimal. Some items are recycled from previous TWG productions: a long table and a chair, both on wheels (Figs. 2, 4, and 6), a sliding panel of transparent glass (Fig. 2), and a metal staircase (Fig. 4). Three glass panels (Figs. 2 and 4) descend from above, with the middle one capable of extending to floor level; projections on these panels create abstract patterns (cogs, Mondrian- like designs) or visual ambiances (palm trees, Fig. 2). By referencing scenic elements of seventeenth- and eighteenth- century opera theaters (still visible today in historical venues such as Drottningholms Slottsteater in Stockholm), these panels have a historicizing effect, especially considering that the stage space is designed symmetrically and according to central perspective (Fig. 3).[35] The top of the front panel displays the film supertitles stage right, while simultaneously showing the libretto translation stage left (Fig. 4). When the film dialogue is inaudible, the supertitles continue, at times becoming autonomous elements of the performance, independent of any related sound or visuals.

The production skips Act I, set in Troy, from where Aeneas departs during the fire. In the remaining two acts, set in Carthage, nine of twenty-five scenes are omitted (see Table 1, center column). The show begins with scene 4 of Act II, corresponding to performance units I–IV (see boxed row in Table 1). It continues through scenes 5 and 7 (units V–VII), returns to scene 2 (units VIII–IX), and then resumes from scene 9 (unit X) until the end of the opera (unit XXVII), omitting five scenes along the way (scene 8 in Act II, and scenes 2, 5, 9, and 10 in Act III). While two-thirds of the opera are cut, the film runs continuously throughout the show from start to finish with virtually no cuts, whether it is reenacted on stage, shown on TV screens, heard as sound or dialogue, or in some combination of these modalities. The scenes of the opera, on the other hand, are not performed continuously; instead, the film is featured in seven segments of the performance without the opera (see the 'Inserts' in the center column of Table 1, starting with Insert 1 in the boxed row, which corresponds to performance unit III and scene 4 of the libretto).[36] During these segments, the reenactment of the film and its dialogue provisionally suspends the opera, as its music fades away and then re-emerges.

34 I thank Clay Hapaz, TWG archivist, for granting me access to the materials of *La Didone*.

35 Sauter and Wiles 2014.

36 The performance units I use in my analysis, including the 'inserts' featuring only verbal text, reflect the segmentation of Cavalli's score present in the prompt book for the TWG production (by Teresa Hartmann, courtesy of archivist Clay Hapaz). For the methodology of performance analysis, I draw from Balme 2008: 132–160.

Figure 4: Hai-Ting Chinn, Scott Shepherd, Ari Fliakos, Kate Valk (see Appendix for respective roles). Photo by Paula Court.

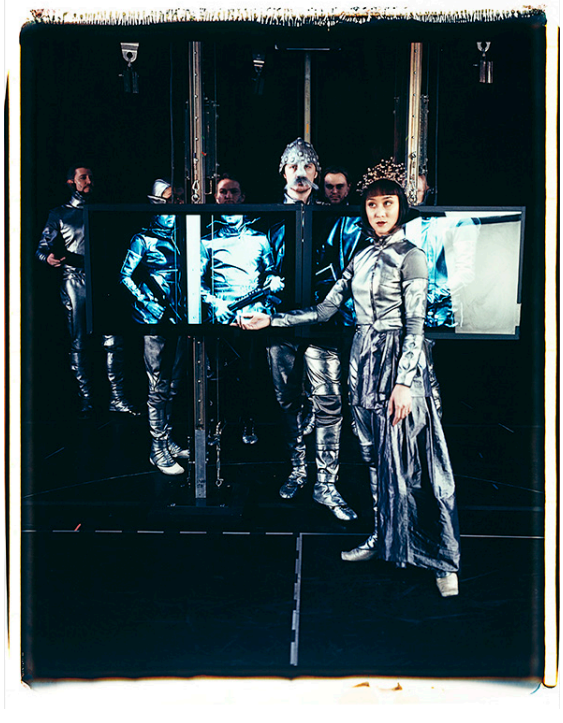


Figure 5 (R–L): Hai-Ting Chinn, Andrew Nolen, Judson Williams, Ari Fliakos, Kate Valk, John Young (see Appendix for respective roles). Photo by Antonia Belt.

Figure 6: Kamala Sankaram as Juno. In the background (L–R): Ari Fliakos, Judson Williams, Scott Shepherd. Photo by Antonia Belt.

Libretto 1641 premiere		The Wooster Group 2007 production	Libretto 1641 premiere	
Acts	*Scenes*	*Performance units* (Roman numerals)	*Plot summary*	*Subplots*
ACT I				
Troy	1–11	OMITTED	Aeneas escapes from burning Troy.	A
ACT II				
Court of Dido	1	OMITTED	Iarbas laments being rejected by Dido.	B
	2	VIII, IX=Insert 3 ***Production continues below, act II scene 9*** ↓	Dido continues to reject him.	B
	3	OMITTED	Premonition of Dido.	C
Shores of Carthago	4	***Production begins here*** I, II, III=Insert 1 (**Table 2** and **Video Example 1**), IV ↓	Juno orders Aeolus to sink the Trojan ships.	A
	5	V, VI=Insert 2 ↓	But they are saved by Neptune.	A
	6	OMITTED	Venus dresses Love as Ascanius.	A
	7	VII ***Production continues above, act II scene 2*** ↑	Aeneas rejoices with Acate for having made it to the shore.	A
	8	OMITTED	Anchises captured, Aeneas sends Ilioneus to Dido.	A
Court of Dido	9	X (**Table 3** and **Video Examples 2a** and **2b**) ↓	Ilioneus welcome by Dido. Love/Ascanius drives an arrow into Dido's breast.	C
	10	XI ↓	Dido falls in love with Aeneas.	C
	11	OMITTED	Court ladies excited.	B
	12	XII ↓	Iarbas jealous and resented.	B
	13	XII (continued) ↓	Iarbas's madness. An old man.	B
ACT III				
Court of Dido	1	XIII, XIV=Insert 4, XV ↓	Dido fears offending Sicheus. Anna consoles Dido.	C
	2	OMITTED	Intermezzo: ladies.	B
	3	XVI ↓	Boar hunting.	C
	4	XVII, XVIII=Insert 4a ↓	Jove sends Mercurius to Aeneas.	C
	5	OMITTED	Mercurius make Aeneas leave.	C
	6	XIX, XX=Insert 5 ↓	Aeneas is about to to leave.	C
	7	XXI, XXII=Insert 6, XXIII ↓	Conflict with Dido.	C
	8	XXIV ↓	Curse of the shadow of Sicheus.	C
	9	OMITTED	Intermezzo: Ladies.	B
	10	OMITTED	Mercurius, Iarbas.	B
	11	XXV, XXVI=Insert 7 ↓	Dido attempts suicide.	C
	12 (*ultima*)	XXVII (**Video Example 3**)	Iarbas attempts suicide. Both are saved. Happiness.	B

Table 1: Overview of The Wooster Group's La Didone *production (premiered 2007) as compared to G. F. Busenello's libretto for F. Cavalli's opera (premiered 1641). Libretto subplots in the right-hand column refer to: A = actions related to Troy; B = love of Iarbas for Dido; and C = tragic love of Dido for Aeneas.*

Despite the cuts — unsurprising in Baroque opera productions both today and during that era — the libretto scene remains the fundamental dramaturgical unit around which the performance is organized. The integrity of the individual scenes is generally preserved, with few or no cuts within them. The rearrangement of the scenes aligns with the progression of the three subplots unfolding in Acts II and III of Busenello's libretto (see the right-hand column in Table 1): the episodes related to the action in Troy, those showcasing Iarbas's love for Dido (who first rejects and then accepts it), and the tragic love of Dido for Aeneas (respectively, subplots A, B, and C). Regarding TWG's approach to Busenello's *La Didone*, the program distributed at the performances includes the following excerpt translated from the preface of the original Italian libretto:

> … because according to good doctrine it is permissible for poets not only to alter fictional stories but even history, Dido takes Iarbas for her husband … He who writes satisfies his own fancy … It is not necessary here

> to remind people of understanding how the best poets represented things in their own way: books are open, and learning is not a stranger in this world.[37]

By referencing Busenello's anti-Aristotelian vision of the role of history and the use of pre-existing materials, the Group emphasizes its critical perspective on linear narratives and its framing of, as well as distancing from, 'texts'. The resulting freedom is one reason why the Group's performances have been described as 'postdramatic'.[38] However, the Group's rigorous interpretation of Busenello's libretto and Cavalli's music demonstrates that this approach does not compromise a historically informed perspective on the source texts.[39] This balance between freedom and fidelity (*Werktreue*) challenges the categories used to discuss contemporary opera productions, which are labeled as either historically informed or in the tradition of *Regietheater* (see above). Furthermore, the 'fragmented' category (as described by Risi) does not apply here either, since *La Didone* stages a single opera, even though its media heterogeneity multiplies the texts being employed.

TWG adopts a similar approach in *Hamlet* (2007–2012), the production that immediately preceded *La Didone*. It utilized John Gielgud's 1964 filmed Broadway production (featuring Richard Burton) as its primary medium 'track' reenacted by TWG's actors on stage. The film is reenacted on stage similarly to *Planet of the Vampires* in *La Didone,* but is much more heavily edited both on a small and large scale, with its timing disrupted by frequent cuts and fast-forwards. In contrast, *Planet* provides a more consistent and continuous medium 'track': against this layer, the timing of the opera is measured. In both *Hamlet* and *La Didone*, TWG' s multi-layered approach conveys the notion that history is not merely a tangible and recoverable reality. In *La Didone*, for example, the musicians' wide-ranging approach to the score permits extreme freedom in instrumentation (ukulele, electric guitar, accordion) while upholding accepted (HIP) conventions of basso continuo, ornamentation, and proper stylistic vocal delivery.

The same approach allows the singers to reenact so-called Baroque gestures while historicizing them as the illusory reconstructions that they are. These stylized gestures are made by singers in space suits and are intermingled with those of the sci-fi characters in the film, which are at times melodramatic (but often equally stylized). The actors or singers who reenact the film wear earbuds transmitting the film dialogues to better replicate them, while they watch additional TV screens unseen by the audience to imitate gestures and movements. This quasi-philological effort to accurately reenact the film is one of the strategies activating historicizing effects — a time arrow pointing to the 1960s rather than, in the case of the opera, the 1640s.

On a larger scale, the juxtaposition of film and opera — two parallel tracks — operates under the same mirroring yet inevitably asynchronous reenactment logic. The film provides time as *Chronos* — objective, sequential time — onto which Cavalli's music is mapped. The entire performance lasts, like most of TWG's shows, a little over an hour and a half, a few minutes longer than the film, while the opera, as mentioned, is abbreviated since it would otherwise extend beyond three hours. TWG's *La Didone* effectively reinterprets and reverses the traditional argument that operatic music serves as a strong textual block, a rigid 'track' dictating the timing of the performance to the rest of the production, in contrast to spoken theater where time is dictated by speech, under the control of the stage director and actors. In opera, it is the music director who, along with the singers, controls the time of the performance, while the stage director can only adapt the visual components accordingly. In TWG's *La Didone*, however, it is the film — the predominantly visual component — that dictates time to the other media, becoming as binding as a score, although when music is present, it too intermittently functions as a framing device.[40] When the opera and the film run simultaneously, the challenge becomes their synchronization, a task

37 Busenello 1656: 3–4 (*Argomento*).
38 Lehmann 2006.
39 The score of Cavalli's *La Didone* is not available in a modern edition, thus TWG based its performance on a transcription of the manuscript preserved in Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, It.IV.355 (=9879).
40 Jakovljević 2010: 108 claims that the film in TWG's *Hamlet* works like a "moving choreographic score".

that TWG accomplishes with virtuoso precision, resulting in uncanny intermedial and intertextual resonances between the two media and their narratives.[41]

The Group's reinterpretation of the hierarchy among media in opera production is achieved through rearranging the opera scenes into small 'blocks' of musical time set against the continuous duration of the film as the dominant textual framework. By decentering music through film, Cavalli's opera emerges even more as that "literary theatre recited musically" which the genre historically represented.[42] This is especially true since in TWG's production the opera's verbal component is intertextually emphasized by its simultaneous interaction with the audible film dialogue and the running, concurrent supertitles of both film and opera. Hearing the film dialogue alongside Cavalli's arias and recitatives indirectly reminds audiences of the roots of a genre that aimed to "imitate with song those who speak".[43]

Film, Opera, Reenactment

TWG's La Didone employs scene 4 of Act II from Cavalli's opera as a Prologue (see Table 1, boxed row: Act II scene 4, corresponding to performance units I–IV). This approach is historically appropriate as it features a supernatural character, the goddess Juno (singer Kamala Sankaram). As the film's opening soundtrack begins, Juno enters from off right, standing on a wheeled chair, initiating her recitative "The ashes of Troy" ("Le ceneri troiane") (see Table 2 and Video Ex. 1). Her right-arm gestures (while her left hand holds a microphone) are performed by an actor in an astronaut suit, hidden behind her, pushing the chair (see Fig. 6). This entrance not only highlights fluid characterization, inaugurating the mixed film/opera aspect of the production, but also references past TWG productions since 1975, where wheeled chairs made an appearance on stage. Scholars such as Carlson have discussed how TWG's frequent recycling of objects and costumes, along with the recurring appearance of the company's actors, creates a haunting, ghostly effect that is essential to theater as a whole.[44] In the broader context of TWG's poetics of temporality, this recycling evokes the dimension of memory, recalling the company's past and engaging in a dialogue with the historical moments represented, in this case those of the film and the opera.

When Juno starts singing, while the film soundtrack is heard in the background, a constellation of simultaneous temporal indices, like time arrows, coalesces into a single visual and acoustical image: (→1975–) as the time encompassing the TWG's productions using reused objects; (→1964–) as the time since the sci-fi movie was released; and (→1641–) as the time of the opera's premiere. Since sci-fi is, by definition, a projection into the future, the past stretches across the present. In addition, as Branislav Jakovljevič observes of TWG's reenactment techniques in *La Didone*, "the synchronization of actor's body and screen is replaced by the co-temporalization of two radically different times: the mythical past and the fantastic future. Dido — Jakovljevič concludes (but this can also be applied to Juno) — remains suspended in a pluperfect of sorts".[45] Juno's rage ("My rage … will never be quenched … until my great vengeance has surpassed the original offence",[46] see Video Ex. 1 at 00:16) emerges from nothing, appearing not as a realistic, internal emotion externalized by the singer/character, but as an affect, an expression originating from outside, reminiscent of Baroque *Affektenlehre*.[47]

Video Example 1: The Wooster Group's La Didone*: performance units I–III corresponding to the beginning of Act II scene 4 in Table 1 (boxed row). See Table 2 for text. https://thewoostergroup.org/blog/2017/08/21/from-the-archives-la-didone-2009-serialized-part-one or https://vimeo.com/230218733*

41 I use 'intermediality' in the sense of "media combination" according to Rajewsky, 2005: 51–52. The connections between opera and film in terms of narrative structure are, instead, 'intertextual' when considering the two media as macro texts.
42 Strohm 2001.
43 "Imitar col canto chi parla" is one of the goals listed by Jacopo Peri in his Preface of the score of *Euridice* (1600).
44 Carlson 2003: 15.
45 Jakovljevič 2010: 117.
46 Lines 4–8 in Table 2.
47 For a discussion of affect in Baroque opera in relation to contemporary productions, see Risi 2013.

Planet of the Vampires: Mark, Burt, Wess, Sanya	Busenello, *La Didone*, libretto: II, 4 (Giunone) and I, 4 (Cassandra)	
[sounds from movie]		
	[Giunone:]	
	Le ceneri troiane	1
	non soddisfano ancora	
	al mio giusto disdegno.	
	L'ira, benché gioisca	
	nel bere ogn'or dell'offensore il sangue,	5
	non s'appaga però, finché non vede	
	nel mezzo a strage agl'occhi altrui palese	
	l'alta vendetta sormontar l'offese.	
	Io del re dell'Olimpo	
	venerata consorte	10
	fui da Paride in Ida	
	disprezzata, e posposta a Citerea?	
	Ben vendicate in parte	
	ho le passate offese, e staran l'ossa	
	degl'estinti troiani	15
	e nude, e insepolte	
	a far tacita fede ai dì venturi,	
	che contro i numi irati	
	i regni, e i regnator non son sicuri.	
	Prodigioso volo	20
	porta l'armata de' troiani in modo	
[Mark, Burt, Wess, Sanya enter]	che l'occhio non la segue,	
	il pensier non la giunge,	
	effetto portentoso	
	di propizia Fortuna.	25
	[spoken:]	
	Ma voglio che sommerso Enea rimanga.	
	. . . . .	
	[Cassandra (off stage):]	
	[L'alma fiacca svanì]	1*
	la vita ohimè spirò,	
	Corebo, o dio morì,	
	e sola mi lasciò,	
	per sposa ei mi voleva, e io qui piango	5*
	prima che sposa, vedova rimango.	
	La vita così va,	
[Mark:] Are you able to see anything at all, Burt?	anco mio padre il re	
[Burt] Nothing at all, Captain. Only a surface of clouds.	nel fin di grave età	
This planet seems to be made of fog. Not even	regno, e vita perdé.	10*
infrared rays get through.	[continues]	

Table 2: The Wooster Group's La Didone*: texts of film and opera at performance units I–III corresponding to the beginning of Act II scene 4 in Table 1 (boxed row). See Video Example 1.*[48]

The suspension of time's linear progress is also aural. The sound of Cavalli's music emerges from the film's soundtrack, such blurring inaugurating the two-fold relationship of cooperation and antagonism between the two media, which originate in different times and are perceived as such. On the visual level, the film's opening titles are absent, but its initial atmosphere (the spaceship traversing space before

48 English translation of libretto text, from the supertitles of The Wooster Group's *La Didone*:

II, 4: Juno: [1] The ashes of Troy / have not yet satisfied / my righteous anger. / My rage happy as it is / [5] drinking the blood of my offenders hour after hour / will never be quenched, until the carnage / proves to all eyes watching / that my great vengeance has surpassed the original offense. / I, revered consort / [10] of the King of Olympus, / was rejected by Paris on Mt. Ida / in favor of Venus? / It's true I've avenged / in part the offenses past, and the bones / [15] of the deceased Trojans, / naked and unburied, / will be a silent promise to future men / that against the wrath of gods / kingdoms and kings are not safe. / [20] But now an unnatural wind / is carrying the Trojan fleet so fast / that no eye can follow it, / thought cannot reach it, / a miracle wrought / by propitious Fortune. / [spoken] But I want Aeneas to stay underwater.

From I, 4: Cassandra [off stage]: [[1*] The wary soul passed away,] / his life expired, / Oh God, Corebo died / and left me alone. / [5*] He wanted me for his wife, and now I weep, / a widow who never was wife. / So life goes, / even my father the king, / at the end of his heavy days / [10*] lost his Kingdom and his life.

landing on Aura) is suggested on the two lateral TV screens, enhanced by the darkness from which Juno appears as a ghost. After the line "But now an unnatural wind", starting a new section in Juno's recitative (Table 2: line 20; Video Ex. 1: 01:09), the soundtrack fully returns as the film begins playing on the two central screens. The first reenactment of the film on stage now commences (Table 1, boxed row: performance unit III = Insert 1). As the actors enter from stage left to reenact the film, Juno gradually exits stage right, and she speaks her last line of recitative ("But I want Aeneas to stay underwater")[49] rather than singing it, amplified and marked by rage.

In the film reenactments of *La Didone*, two bodies function in quasi-sync: those on stage and those in the film, mirroring each other but with the split-second gap that live bodies take, before or after the moving image, to reenact the mediated ones. The coexistence of bodies and technology, of the live and the mediated, challenges traditional notions of time and presence, allowing for the simultaneity of the 'here and now' of performance and its negation in the preexisting medium of film (which possesses its own temporality that cannot be manipulated).[50]

As Rebecca Schneider highlights, reenactments explore "the warp and draw of one time into another time — the *theatricality* of time".[51] Schneider discusses Civil War reenactments but also TWG's *Poor Theater*, a 2004 production in which actors reenact segments of a documentary film of Jerzy Grotowski's 1962 theater piece *Akropolis*. The 'caesura' between bodies on stage and those shown on the TV screen is both spatial and temporal. In preparatory sketches for the Group's 1998 *House/Lights*, based on Gertrude Stein's 1938 *Dr. Faustus Lights the Lights* and the 1964 film *Olga's House of Shame*, director Elizabeth LeCompte quotes Stein's notion of 'syncopated time' ("Your emotion is either behind or ahead of the play at which you are looking") and observes: "[TWG's] performers watch video and react to moves — always a little behind the move or anticipating the coming move."[52] Since movement synchronization or exact mirroring is, like precise translation, impossible, the interval that reenactment opens up enables, according to Schneider, a "leak of affective engagement between the then and the now".[53]

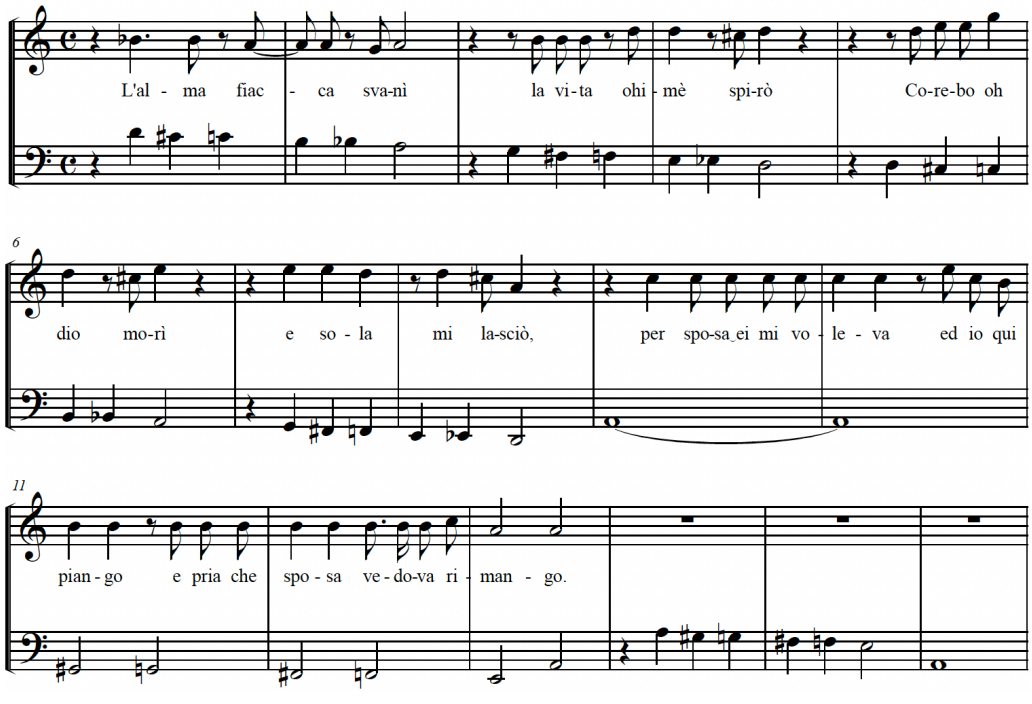
Reenactment, however, is only part of a wider chain of Derridean repetitions and citations (of movements, costumes, objects) by which TWG performances relate to the past. In *La Didone* this chain extends to sound and sound design. As already mentioned, the production skips Act I of the Cavalli opera, set in Troy, which includes Cassandra's lament for the death of Coroebus, set by Cavalli to a descending chromatic scale in *ostinato*, "L'alma fiacca svanì" ("The weary soul passed away"). When Juno exits after her recitative and the film's reenactment has begun, this aria from the previous Act is heard from off stage, starting with its second line (Musical Ex. 1, measure 3; Video Ex. 1: 01:40).[54] A ghost, a specter, is heard. The lament becomes an auditory trace, blurring with the soundscape originating from the film. Barely audible, Cassandra's voice is disembodied and technologically mediated, her lament transformed into the stuff of memory, as "the space in which a thing happens for the second time".[55]

Performance, technology, and memory are inextricably intertwined, evoking a resistance to chronological time and presence. The lament is not embedded in the production as a continuum of the present and past, as if the aria were merely a learned reference to the previous act of the opera (which indeed was omitted); nor is the musical excerpt simply commenting on the film reenacted by the Group's ac-

49 Line 26 in Table 2.
50 For the relationship between the live and the mediated in TWG, see Causey 2006: 39.
51 Schneider 2011: 6.
52 See Elizabeth LeCompte's 1996 journal entries for the rehearsals of *House/Lights* reproduced in Quick 2007: 170.
53 Schneider 2011: 112.
54 "… la vita ohimé spirò", see Table 2: line 2*.
55 Paul Auster as cited by David Savran's discussion of TWG in Savran 2005b: 16.

tors (to which it has no discernible relation). Meaning is created by the spectators, who can interpret the constellation formed by the sound of a seventeenth-century lament and the reenactment of a twentieth-century film for themselves.[56]

After being suspended to make way for the film's reenactment, Juno's expressive recitative resumes as the goddess returns stage right, singing the line she had previously only spoken ("But I want Aeneas to stay underwater"). She then continues to the end of the scene (not shown in Video Ex. 1). At this point, however, the opera and the film have begun to coexist — the spaceship Argo is landing on the planet Aura — and the respective timelines of the two media, which were initially presented independently (except for the audible interference of the lament during the film), are now fully interwoven. The opera scenes will be interrupted, within or between them, only by the 'inserts' that allow the film's reenactment to co-opt and suspend the opera's performance.



Musical Example: Francesco Cavalli, setting of the first strophe of Cassandra's aria "L'alma fiacca svanì", from La Didone*, Act I, scene 4. Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, It.IV.355 (=9879), 23r. See Table 2, lines 1*-6*, for text and translation, and Video Example 1: 01:40 (starting from m. 3).*

56 The challenge for audiences to grasp the various layers of TWG's productions is a recurring theme in critics' reviews, including those for *La Didone*. For example, Brantley 2009: "This production splits your attention into so many fragments that even the most accomplished multitasker won't be able to take it all in". Müller-Schöll 2008: 42 notes that many audience members at the Brussels premiere of *La Didone* expressed feelings of "excessive demands" and "overloading". Peter Sellars, in the foreword to Savran 1985 (xv), observes that "because [in TWG's productions] there is so much detail, too much certainly to be taken in during a single performance, each viewer's experience of the work is quite different".

Planet of the Vampires (at 25’ 32”): Mark, Wess, Sanya, Eldon	*La Didone*, II, 9, libretto: Didone, Ascanio (Amore), Ilioneo	
[*In the spaceship Galliott*] [M] Shh! Listen		
	[A] Piovan le sfere	1
	su questa reggia	
[W] It’s coming from the generator room.	nembi di grazie, e ’l ciel sia sempre vago	
	di prosperar, di sublimar Cartago	
	[Instrumental ritornello]	
	Bella Regina	5
	per ringraziarti	
[M] Turrell.	figurati vedere a tutte l’hore	
[S] And Salas, Mark.	su le mie labra l’obbligato core	
[W] The meteor rejector is out of commission. It can’t be repaired either. The Galliott won’t fly again.	[Ritornello]	
	L’etade mia	
	picciole offerte	10
[M] Neither will her crew.	per contrapporre a beneficio tanto	
	un ossequio bambin ti bacia il manto.	
	[Ritornello]	
[M] What can we do about this bulkhead? We’ve got to get through. [E] I’ll take care of it Mark. I’ll get the cutting torch from the Argos. [M] No, you’d never make it alone. No, we’ll bury Derek and the others, and then we’ll leave you on guard, Eldon. We’ll go for the cutting torch and I promise you we’ll get back just as fast as we can.	[D] E chi sei tu bellissimo fanciullo	
	ch’in età pargoletta	
	hai sensi così adulti?	15
	[I] Questi è del grand’Enea	
	Ascanio unico figlio.	
	[D] Amico, errasti e m’offendesti; dirmi	
	dovevi tu dal bel principio, quale	
	fosse questo fanciullo	20
	onde honorato avessi	
[*By the graves: Sanya groaning and sobbing*]	lui con altre accoglienze, e in altri amplessi.	
[M] Easy, Sanya, easy. I know how you feel, but don’t go into pieces now. Just be thankful we were spared. Come on we’ve got to keep moving. We’ll get back as fast as we can, Elden. Keep a sharp watch.	Ma si emendi ogni error: siedimi in grembo,	
	figlio di un Semideo.	
	Ecco, io bacio le gote	25
	della Diva di Cipro al bel Nepote	
	[A] Regina, ecco mio Padre,	
	che viene ad inchinarsi	
	alla tua Maestade.	
	Miralo un poco, e dimmi,	30
	non ha torto il destino	
	a farlo andar ramingo, e pellegrino?	
	[D] Ohimé, che aspetto luminoso e grande!	
	Che movimento - che guardar - che ciglio!	
[The living dead:] Eldon . . . Eldon . . . Eldon . . .	Ben d’una Dea si vede esser lui figlio!	35

Table 3[57]*: The Wooster Group’s* La Didone*: texts of film and opera at performance unit X corresponding to act II scene 9 in Table 1. See Video Examples 2a and 2b.*

57 English translation of libretto text, from the supertitles of The Wooster Group’s *La Didone*:
[Ascanius/Love] [1] Let the Spheres rain / over this kingdom, / clouds of grace, and let heaven be forever ready / to enrich and exalt Carthage / [Ritornello] / [5] Beautiful Queen, / as thanks to you, / imagine that you see at all times / on my lips my indebted heart / [Ritornello] / My youth / [10] can only offer small compensation / for so much beneficence. / A respectful child kisses your mantle / [Ritornello] / [Dido] And who are you, beautiful little boy, / who at a child’s age / [15] has such grown-up sense? / [Ilioneus] This is Ascanius, / the great Aeneas’s only son. / [D] Friend, you’ve made an error, you’ve done me wrong; you should have told me / from the very beginning who / [20] this little boy was, / so that I might have honored him / with a different reception, and a different embrace. / But let every error be emended: sit in my lap, / son of a demigod. / [25] Behold, I kiss the cheeks / of the fair grandchild of the goddess of Cyprus. / [A/L] Queen, here comes my father / to kneel down / before your Majesty. / [30] Look at him for a moment, and tell me, / is fate not mistaken / to make him go wandering, a pilgrim? / [D] Oh, what a radiant aspect, and grand! / What movement - what glances - what eyelashes! / [35] It’s quite obvious that he’s the son of a goddess!

The Group's performance of scene 9 of Act 2 (Table 1: performance unit X; see Table 3 and Video Ex. 2a) demonstrates the temporal multiplicity — or heterochrony[58] — that arises from fluidly interweaving the two distinct 'tracks' of the acted opera and the reenacted film, even though the latter is visually absent in this instance. Although the film is reenacted downstage behind the TV screens and its dialogue is audible as the opera unfolds, no movie is displayed, only palm-tree leaves used for ambiance. Ascanius (Cupid in disguise) visits Dido, who is lovestruck and has her first, fatal encounter with Aeneas. In the parallel moment of the movie (see Video Ex. 2b), the crew members of the Argos, after landing on the planet Aura, discover that some of their colleagues have been killed; they bury them outside but leave one of their members, Eldon, to guard the spaceship, where he hears the voices of the dead aliens calling him.

In this segment of *La Didone*, actor Ari Fliakos portrays Ascanius, whose part however, is sung by soprano Kamala Sankaram (who had played Juno), with voice and body separate.[59] Fliakos and Sankaram enter from stage right accompanied by soprano Hai-Ting Chinn (Dido), who sits on a wheeled chair. Behind her, countertenor/bass Andrew Nolan (the ambassador Ilioneus) is seated on a similar wheeled table. Fliakos and Sankaram are followed by actor Scott Shepherd, who temporarily joins the continuo group by playing the ukulele (holding the instrument as the film characters hold their guns). Meanwhile, in a dark area behind the lateral screen upstage right, the film is reenacted. The audience can follow both narratives (film and opera) through the supertitles and can hear, simultaneously with Ascanius's song, the voices of Mark, Wess, Sanya, and Eldon, as well as the film's soundtrack. The soundtrack is audible, for example, at the moment of the discovery of two dead astronauts' bodies, Turrell and Salas (Video Exx. 2a and 2b, both at 00:19). In the film dialogues occurring upstage, tenor John Young portrays Eldon (played by actor Mario Morales in the original movie), but then Eldon transforms into Aeneas, returning downstage left to meet Dido (Video Ex. 2a from 02:40).

Video Example 2a: The Wooster Group's La Didone*: performance unit X corresponding to Act II scene 9 in Table 1. See Table 3 for text, and Video Example 2b for corresponding segment of film* Planet of the Vampires*.* *https://thewoostergroup.org/blog/2017/09/05/from-the-archives-la-didone-2009-serialized-part-six/ or https://player.vimeo.com/video/232542630*

Video Example 2b: Planet of the Vampires *at 00:25:32 corresponding to performance unit X and to act II scene 9 in Table 1. See Table 3 for text, and Video Example 2a for corresponding segment of The Wooster Group's* La Didone*.* *https://watch.plex.tv/movie/planet-of-the-vampires*

During the gradual reunion of Dido with Eldon/Aeneas, the queen's affect of joy emerges primarily as a liminal, indeterminate *locus* between the two media of opera and film, and only secondarily as the typically prominent element of Baroque opera.[60] Additionally, through the adoption of heterochronic strategies that tap into theater's traditional ghost-like qualities, TWG's performance undermines and transcends dichotomies such as those between presence and absence, embodiment and disembodiment, language and voice, the live and the mediated, actor and character, and past and present. In doing so, the performance hints at the boundary-crossing quality that is quintessential to opera as a genre. If performance always occurs in the present, it can simultaneously create a sense of the past. In watching queen Dido in a 1641 opera mixed with a 1965 film, we become aware that a historical character who

58 For the notion of heterochrony, as derived from that of heterotopy by Michel Foucault, see Rancière 2012.
59 On voice's disembodiment in this passage of *La Didone*, see Verstraete 2011: 93.
60 In discussing Dido's falling in love in this scene of *La Didone*, Müller-Schöll identifies analogies between the portrayal of the queen as lacking psychological depth and inwardness on the one hand, and the Baroque notion of 'surface' on the other, see Müller-Schöll 2008: 41.

has traversed media narratives for two thousand years has now fallen in love — wearing an astronaut suit.

Out of Joint: Time and Performance

The temporal strategies highlighted above both contradict and affirm chronological time, the measured time that inexorably marches on.[61] At specific junctures of the performance and at various levels — bodies, technology, objects — the creation of multiple times that are 'out of joint' or 'syncopated' complicates and intensifies the relationships between the opera performance and the chronological forward motion provided by the unfolding of the film, whether reenacted or not. It is as if the opera ghosted the film, although real and virtual dimensions are inverted. The film's plot features ghosts (living dead bodies), and so does Cavalli's opera. At the beginning of Act III, Dido's ex-husband, Sicheus, haunts the queen in a dream, berating her for her dalliance with Aeneas and condemning her to death. In TWG's *La Didone,* the ghost of Sicheus is initially heard as pure sound originating off stage, Cavalli's original solo line transformed into a polyphonic one.[62] The ghost then appears, impersonated by actor Ari Fliakos, addressing a frightened Hai-Ting Chinn as Dido. While the supertitles of both film and opera continue running and their sounds are heard, Fliakos quickly transforms into the character of one of the astronauts in the film, struggling fiercely on the floor with Chinn. She, in the meantime, has turned into Tiona, reenacting the film. Dido's emotional struggle has thus morphed into Tiona's physical one. In this 'spectral' context, reminiscent of Derrida's 'hauntology', there appears to be no past and no reality to grasp: all that remains is narrative — i.e., history as *opus oratorium (rhetoricum) maxime*.[63]

As philosopher Giorgio Agamben highlights, "every conception of history is invariably accompanied by a certain experience of time that is implicit to it, conditions it, and thereby must be elucidated".[64] In *Performing History*, theater historian Freddie Rokem discusses the relationship among history, performance, and narrative by invoking Aristotle's idea that the work of poets relates to that of historians, since "most of our poets use the methods of the historian".[65] Poets are free to make "selections from the seemingly unrelated events … emphasizing their significance in relation to each other". As Rokem concludes by referencing Hayden White's historiographical methodology, "any process of telling or writing a version of what has happened is a form of performing history and of resurrecting that past".[66] However, as TWG's director LeCompte stated about *Sakonnet Point* (from 1975, but her statement can be extended to the Group's subsequent works), "the piece isn't about the past, it's really about us [i.e., TWG] thinking about the past".[67] Within TWG's poetics of memory and temporality, the reality that most cogently relates past, present, and future is death. An important feature of some TWG productions is to bring back, via video, the deceased members of the company in interaction with living actors.[68] In comparison to death, which is inevitably bound to chronological time, other temporal endpoints are provisional and can thus be resisted, suspended, or refused.

This poetics of death influences how TWG navigates the challenging denouement of *La Didone*. As both the opera and the film reach closure, the happy end of the former, as discussed above, becomes problematic, especially when contrasted with the not-so-happy end of the latter. In the final scene of Cavalli's opera (Table 1: Act III scene 12, performance unit XXVII), Iarbas saves Dido from suicide, and

61 For an extensive discussion of temporality in performance studies, incorporating Walter Benjamin's and Giorgio Agamben's philosophical views, see Wickstrom 2018. For the out-of-jointness of time and performance in opera, see Renihan 2020: 128–130. For time and performance in Italian opera, see Dahlhaus 2003: 107–113.
62 Act III, scene 8, corresponding to performance unit XXIV (Table 1).
63 Derrida 1994: 10 and 20–25 discussing "the time is out of joint."
64 Agamben 1993: 99.
65 Rokem 2002: 10.
66 Rokem 2002: 10.
67 LeCompte as quoted in Vanden Heuvel 2007: 340.
68 For this feature of TWG's productions, see Carlson 2003: 169–70.

the characters conclude the work by singing an extensive, joyful love duet (Video Ex. 3: 05:25, "Cupid, your laws are too obscure and profound"). In the film, Wess, Mark, and Sanya manage to leave planet Aura in the spaceship, but Wess discovers that his companions are possessed by aliens, prompting him to sabotage the spaceship's meteor rejector. Despite irreparably damaging it, he is electrocuted and collapses to the floor (reenactment at 04:25); Mark and Sanya alter the course of the spaceship to land on nearby planet Earth — right in New York City, year 1965.

Video Example 3: The Wooster Group's La Didone*: final segment of performance unit XXVII corresponding to Act III scene 12 (*ultima*) in Table 1. https://thewoostergroup.org/blog/2017/10/09/from-the-archives-la-didone-2009-serialized-part-sixteen/ or https://player.vimeo.com/video/237348273*

For the simultaneous denouements of both opera and film, all actors and singers gradually converge on stage. The movie and its reenactment, however, end before the opera concludes, as Wess's dead body remains on the stage floor (05:36–06:01). Dido and Iarba continue the joyful duet and join Mark and Sanya downstage, all facing the audience. The affect 'joy' in Cavalli's duet takes over as the film characters unite with the previously staged narratives, but also create a sense of discontinuity. After the stage goes dark, the past becomes immediately available to spectators as a flash, to be re-experienced as a memory, much like all past performances.

Once again in *La Didone*, TWG's heterochronic strategy results in a 'refusal of time', to borrow from the title of a 2012 multimedia installation by William Kentridge at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Kentridge's work juxtaposes different temporalities by situating a dynamic "breathing machine" – an "organ-like automaton with pumping bellows" – in the middle of a dark room, with its walls animated by five-channel video projections.[69] They cycle for about thirty minutes and combine various materials, including: ticking metronomes and archival material and found footage related to Africa's violent history, Kentridge's own stop-motion animated films, which often erase as well as add lines and form to his drawings, and finally, a video excerpt by modern choreographer and dancer Dada Masilio, which however is displayed in reverse motion.[70] Media scholar Christel Stalpaert discusses the heterochrony of Kentridge's *The Refusal of Time* by identifying four types of represented time: time as Chronos, that is, measured time, as in the metronomes and the pumping machine; the related time as 'protocol', as in calendars, time zones and travel system schedules, which are thematized in the installation's videos; time as Aeon, that is, time intended as duration, emerging, for example, in the reversed dance by Masilio; and finally, the related time as Kairos, usually understood as a proper or opportune time for action. Stalpaert invokes Agamben's view of Kairos as being implied "in every representation we make of time", and yet not being "entirely consumed by representation".[71]

For Agamben, Kairos represents the non-linear time that coexists with Chronos, the linear Aristotelian time understood as a succession of 'instants'. However, Chronos can include within itself the "seeds of its undoing", since Kairos is, by definition, out of sync.[72] Chronological time is the time *in which* we are inevitably situated, in contrast to the time *that* we truly are — the time that we construct, feel, and experience. Agamben refers to this kairological time. In discussing Agamben and relating Kairos to performance art, Marquard Smith defines Kairos as "a qualitative account of… a moment of time lapse, a moment of indeterminate time, an intervention in time … interruptions, for example, through editing, repetition … slowness, constraint … layering … casting and recasting".[73] This concept also applies to TWG's *La Didone*, which can be seen as an installation opera. It is fitting that Stalpaert concludes that in *The Refusal of Time,* Kentridge "does not

69 See the description at https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/499717, which includes details and images.
70 Stalpaert 2018.
71 Agamben 2005: 67.
72 Agamben 2005: 68–69. Agamben's discussion of Kairos and Chronos (pp. 59–87) is commented upon by Wickstrom 2018: 19 and 117–121 and Marquand Smith in Smith 2015: 20.
73 Smith 2015: 19.

reconstruct the past in the present. Instead, he tests the archive of the past in the present … in order to inaugurate particular collisions in a kairological revolution".[74] These "collisions" characterize the heterochronic strategies employed in *La Didone*.

Conclusion: Heterochronic Strategies

Kairological works like *La Didone* or *The Refusal of Time* offer a sense of the past emerging intermittently from the 'now' of performance. This past cannot simply be reconstructed as such, since it is not readable as a "precise, infinite, quantified *continuum*",[75] or as a single point located on a timeline from which it can be retrieved, resumed, or excavated. As mentioned above, *Regietheater* and reconstructionist types of productions of Baroque operas adopt shared historiographical strategies that are comparable to hermeneutic and historicist approaches, which imply linear time and a corresponding idea of a recoverable past.

The treatment of the *finale* in Clément Hervieu-Léger's production discussed at the start of this article reinforces the plot's linear aspect and its perceived temporal implications. Despite the happy ending, the staging tragically displays Dido's hands and body stained red from the blood of a dead deer, which had already been lying on stage during Act I, that is, during the earlier chronological episodes taking place in Troy.[76] This temporal connection allows the performance to allude to the negative effects that historical events, such as the fall of Troy, have on subsequent ones occurring in Carthage. Although at that point in the narrative, as Iarba marries Dido during Cavalli's joyous duet, these events have radically changed, in reality (or so we are told) they have not: death always prevails in history (*historia magistra vitae*). The director interprets Busenello's dramaturgy in a linear, classicistic, neo-Aristotelian manner, despite the librettist's own fundamentally non-linear, Baroque, and anti-Aristotelian vision of history mentioned in the *Didone* libretto preface discussed above. The fidelity to the text (*Werktreue*) that William Christie evokes in the pit *via* his musical interpretation is not marked at a visual or dramaturgical level.

In contrast to such a representational approach, the Group's overall narrative strategy in *La Didone* engages spectator memories by implying non-linear time both within the performance and in relation to its past, including the source texts (film and opera). Throughout *La Didone*, this strategy operates on a smaller scale by exploring the intervals and gaps between and within spaces, objects, media, actors, and characters, all fluidly reconceived. On a larger scale, the strategy juxtaposes the measured time of the film with the malleable time of the opera in a virtuosic montage, allowing chronological time to contrast with kairological time while simultaneously encompassing it. In both instances, heterochronic strategies create syncopated overlaps and uncanny correspondences, through which agents and media are intermittently in and out of sync.

This heterochronic strategy, as we recall, was inaugurated at the beginning of TWG's *La Didone* by Cassandra's lament for the death of Coroebus "L'alma fiacca svanì", which sonically emerges from nowhere as a ghostly, acousmatic presence. This lament from the initial act staged in Troy (I, 7) is lifted and inserted into a passage of Act II staged in Carthage, which, however, is paused to temporarily leave room for the reenactment of the film. Through an asynchronous theatrical performance, we recognize that kairological and chronological times are out of joint.

Intermedial strategies that disrupt the continuity of dramatic time by creating multitemporal layers are currently shared by several theater directors and choreographers (e. g., William Kentridge, Robert Wilson,

74 Stalpaert 2018: 394. On Kentridge's *Refusal of Time*, see Wickstrom 2018: 135–54.
75 Agamben 1993: 101–102.
76 A picture of Dido and the dead deer in this *finale* is used as the DVD cover.

Romeo Castellucci, William Forsythe, and others) whose works have populated European and American stages since the 1970s — works that Lehmann terms "postdramatic".[77] TWG's productions, as mentioned, engage with postdramatic theater in multiple ways: from the relationship between the performance and the source texts, to the use of technology, to the non-naturalistic acting style and the sheer density of simultaneous performance layers.[78] The Group's use of heterochronic strategies in *La Didone* within the context of opera suggests innovative approaches for a genre that, at its beginnings in the early Baroque, was acutely aware of its new temporal dimension in a relationship of both continuity and discontinuity with the past (not unlike film four centuries later).[79] By observing and simultaneously rejecting time as Chronos, TWG's adoption of heterochronic strategies in *La Didone* questions linear time in both history and performance. This critical move, as discussed regarding the disjunct double *denouements* of opera and film, also defies defined closures. When the audience is abruptly left in the dark at the *finale*, the show refuses to end: memories are activated, and the performance continues in the mind's eye and ear. By pushing the limits of the source texts, TWG projects the performance's presentness toward its future reiterations. Indeed, the adoption of various heterochronic strategies in *La Didone* enabled a twenty-first-century New York theater company to perform a 1641 Italian opera and reenact a 1965 Italian film not by representing "culture" (see epigraph) but by "performing it as an emerging art form", effectively propelling seemingly distant cultural artifacts into future times and spaces.

Appendix

***Details about The Wooster Group's* La Didone.**

World premiere: Kaai Theater, Brussels, Belgium, May 19–24, 2007; United States premiere: New York, St. Ann's Warehouse, March 17–April 26, 2009. Director: Elizabeth LeCompte; assistant director and Baroque gesture coach: Jennifer Griesbach; set: LeCompte, Ruud van den Akker; lighting: Jennifer Tipton; costumes: Antonia Belt; sound: Matt Schloss and Omar Zubair; video: Zbigniew Bzymek, Joby Emmons, Andrew Schneider.

La Didone. Opera by Giovan Francesco Busenello and Francesco Cavalli (1641).
Musical direction: Bruce Odland; musicians: Harvey Valdes (electric guitar), David Walker (theorbo), Hank Heijink (Baroque guitar), Jennifer Griesbach (keyboard) [additional performers below].

Planet of the Vampires (*Terrore nello spazio*). Film directed by Mario Bava (1965) based on the novel *Una notte di 21 ore* by R. Petriniero (1960); screenplay: Bava, Alberto Bevilacqua, Callisto Cosulich, Antonio Roman, and Rafael J. Salvia (English version: Louis M. Heyward, Ib Melchior); producer: Fulvio Lucisano. Music: Gino Marinuzzi Jr.

77 On the "disintegration of time as a continuum" emerging from modernity and continuing in postdramatic theater see the chapter "Time" in Lehmann 2006: 153–62, at 155. The English translation, however, abridges the corresponding chapter in the original German edition, which includes reflections on memory, anticipation, and performance, see Lehmann 1999: 309–59, esp. 348–49.

78 See Hartung 2020, 54–55 and 140–142.

79 See Pirrotta, 1982 and Rosand 1991: 47–51. Analogies such as those discussed here between the post-dramatic temporal techniques used by TWG on the one hand and those present in Baroque works (as pre-dramatic) on the other, are traditionally examined within the conceptual domains of the Neo-Baroque, modernism, and postmodernism. See Lyons 2019 and Cermatori 2021.

La Didone: actors/singers	Opera characters	Film characters	Film actors
Ari Fliakos (actor)	Cupid, ghost of Sichaeus, shadow of Aeneas	Capt. Mark Markary	Barry Sullivan
Kate Valk (actor)	Old man, guard, shadow of Dido	Sanya	Norma Bengell
Scott Shepherd (actor and ukulele)	Boar, shadow of Iarbas	Wess	Ángel Aranda
Hai-Ting Chinn (mezzosoprano)	Dido	Tiona	Evi Marandi
Judson Williams (actor, doubling as singer)	Acate	Brad/Mud	Stelio Candelli
Judson Williams		Burt/Garr	Franco Andrei
Judson Williams		Dr. Karan	Fernando Villena
John Young (tenor)	Aeneas, ghost chorus	Eldon	Mario Morales
		Carter/Dervy	Ivan Rassimov
Andrew Nolen (bass/ baritone, countertenor)	Neptune, Iarbas, Ilioneus, Jove, ghost chorus	Keir	Federico Boido
		Toby Markary/Wan	Alberto Cevenini
Kamala Sankaram (soprano, accordion, tamburine)	Juno, Mercury, Anna, voice of Cupid		

Mauro Calcagno teaches Historical Musicology at the University of Pennsylvania. He received his Ph.D. from Yale University and previously taught at Harvard and Stony Brook University. His research focuses on opera and performance studies, early modern music, and digital humanities. His publications include *From Madrigal to Opera: Monteverdi's Staging of the Self* (University of California Press) and the forthcoming critical edition of Francesco Cavalli's *Eliogabalo* (Bärenreiter). He co-directs the Marenzio Online Digital Edition and has led workshops for singers and instrumentalists on Baroque opera at the Juilliard School of Music and the *Centre de musique baroque* in Versailles.

Bibliography

Videorecordings

Cavalli 2007: Francesco Cavalli's *La Didone*: stage director Carlo Majer (with Facoltà di Design e Arti IUAV), music director Fabio Biondi, filmed in Venice at the Teatro Malibran in 2006, DVD Dynamic, 2007

Cavalli 2012: stage director Clément Hervieu-Léger, music director William Christie, filmed in Caen at the Théâtre de Caen in 2011 for broadcast by France Télévisions, DVD Opus Arte, 2012.

Other Sources

Abbate, Carolyn (2004): "Music—drastic or gnostic?", in *Critical Inquiry* 30, 505–536.

Agamben, Giorgio (1993): *Infancy and History: The Destruction of Experience*, New York: Verso.

Agamben, Giorgio (2005): *The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Aspden, Suzanne (2013): *The Rival Sirens: Performance and Identity on Handel's Operatic Stage*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Balme, Christopher B. (2008): *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Studies*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Benjamin, Walter (1968): *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, New York: Schocken Books.

Blanga-Gubbay, Daniel and Kwakkenbos, Lars (eds.) (2015): *The Time We Share: Reflecting on and through Performing Arts: One Introduction, Three Acts, and Two Intermezzos*, Brussels: Mercatorfonds.

Blin, Gilbert R. (2018): *The reflections of memory: an account of a cognitive approach to historically informed staging* (Doctoral Thesis), Universiteit Leiden, Leiden.

Brantley, Ben: "Lost in Space With Dido and Aeneas", in *The New York Times*, 05.04.2009.

Busenello, Giovan Francesco (1656): *La Didone … Opera rappresentata in musica nel Teatro di San Casciano nell'Anno 1641*, Venice: Andrea Giuliani.

Butt, John (2002): *Playing with History: The Historical Approach to Musical Performance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Candiard, Céline and Gros de Gasquet, Julia (eds.) (2019): *Scènes baroques d'aujourd'hui. La mise en scène baroque dans le paysage culturel contemporain*, Lyon: Presses Universitaire de Lyon.

Carlson, Marvin A. (2003): *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Causey, Matthew (2006): *Theatre and Performance in Digital Culture: From Simulation to Embeddedness*, London and New York: Routledge.

Cermatori, Joseph (2021): *Baroque Modernity: An Aesthetics of Theater*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Cicero (1928): *On the Republic. On the Laws*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Dahlhaus, Carl (2003): "The Dramaturgy of Italian Opera", in *Opera in Theory and Practice, Image and Myth*, ed. by Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli (*The History of Italian Opera*, Vol. 6), Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 73–146.

Derrida, Jacques (1994): *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, London: Routledge.

Deshoulières, Christophe (2000): *L'opéra baroque et la scène moderne: essai de synthèse dramaturgique*, Paris: Fayard.

Didi-Huberman, Georges (2000): *Devant le temps: histoire de l'art et anachronisme des images*, Paris: Editions de Minuit.

Fischer, Christine (2015): "Baroque Opera, Historical Information, and Business; or, How a Nerd Became a Hipster", in *The Business of Opera*, ed. by Anna Belina-Johnson and Derek B. Scott, Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 31–49.

Franko, Mark and Richards, Annette (2000): "Actualizing Absence: The Pastness of Performance", in *Acting on the Past: Historical Performance Across the Disciplines*, ed. by Mark Franko and Annette Richards, Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1–9.

Gess, Nicola, Hartmann, Tina, and Sollich, Robert (2008): *Barocktheater heute: Wiederentdeckungen zwischen Wissenschaft und Bühne [Symposium, Juni 2007]*, Bielefeld: Transcript.

Hartog, François (2015): *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Hartung, Ulrike (2020): *Postdramatisches Musiktheater*, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann.

Havelková, Tereza (2021): *Opera as Hypermedium: Meaning-making, Immediacy, and the Politics of Perception*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Heller, Wendy (2017): "Pleasurable Passions on the Modern Stage: Cavalli on Video", in *Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music* 23/1, https://sscm-jscm.org/jscm-issues/volume-23-no-1/heller-pleasurable-passions/ [21.03.2025]

Hunter, Lindsay Brandon (2021): *Playing Real: Mimesis, Media, and Mischief*, Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press.

Hunter, Mary (2014): "Historically Informed Performance", in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. by Helen Greenwald, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 606–626.

Jakovljević, Branislav (2010): "Wooster Baroque", in *TDR: The Drama Review* 54/3, 87–122.

Kara, Ewa (2018): "Baroque Theatricality Reinvented: Contemporary Design for Baroque Opera", in *Theatre and Performance Design* 4/3, 222–241.

Koselleck, Reinhart (2004): *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Kreuzer, Gundula (2021): "Butterflies on Sweet Land? Reflections on Opera at the Edges of History", in *Representations* 154, 69–86.

Lehmann, Hans-Thies (1999): *Postdramatisches Theater*, Frankfurt am Main: Verlag der Autoren.

Lehmann, Hans-Thies (2006): *Postdramatic Theatre*, New York: Routledge.

Levin, David J. (2007): *Unsettling Opera: Staging Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, and Zemlinsky*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Levin, David J. (2009): "Introduction: Issues and Trends in Contemporary Opera Production", in *The Grove Book of Operas* (2nd ed.), ed. by Stanley Sadie and Laura Macy, Oxford: Oxford University Press, xi–xxiii.

Lyons, John D. (2019): "Introduction: The Crisis of the Baroque", in *The Oxford Handbook of the Baroque*, ed. by John D. Lyons, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1–23.

Marranca, Bonnie (2003): "The Wooster Group: A Dictionary of Ideas", in *PAJ: A Journal of Performance & Art* 25, 1–13.

Mounier-Vehier, Caroline (2020): *La scène lyrique baroque au XXIe siècle. Pratiques d'atelier et (re)création contemporaine* (Doctoral Thesis), Paris 3: École doctorale Arts et médias, Paris.

Müller-Schöll, Nikolaus (2008): "Die barocke Geste der Performance. Überlegungen zu *La Didone*, einer Musiktheaterperformance der Wooster Group", in *Barocktheater heute: Wiederentdeckungen zwischen Wissenschaft und Bühne [Symposium, Juni 2007],* ed. by Nicola Gess, Tina Hartmann, and Robert Sollich. Bielefeld: Transcript, 35–44.

Novak, Jelena (2015): *Postopera: Reinventing the Voice-Body*, Farnham: Ashgate.

Pirrotta, Nino (1982): "Temporal Perspective and Music", in *Music and Theatre from Poliziano to Monteverdi*, ed. by Nino Pirrotta and Elena Povoledo, Cambridge, UK ; Cambridge University Press, 120–172.

Planet of the Vampires, film: https://watch.plex.tv/movie/planet-of-the-vampires (21.03.2025)

Quick, Andrew (ed.) (2007): *The Wooster Group Workbook*, New York: Routledge.

Rajewsky, Irina O. (2005): "Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality", in *Intermédialités: Histoire et théorie des Arts, des lettres et des techniques* 6, 43–64.

Rancière, Jacques (2012): "In What Time Do We Live?", in *The State of Things*, ed. by Marta Kuzma, London and Oslo: Office for Contemporary Art Norway, 10–38.

Renihan, Colleen (2020): *The Operatic Archive: American Opera as History*, New York: Routledge.

Risi, Clemens (2013): "Performing Affect in Seventeenth-Century Opera: Process, Reception, Transgression", in *The Legacy of Opera: Reading Music Theatre as Experience and Performance*, ed. by Dominic Symonds, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 79–101.

Risi, Clemens (2021): *Opera in Performance: Analyzing the Performative Dimension of Opera Productions*, New York: Routledge.

Rokem, Freddie (2002): *Performing History: Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press.

Rosand, Ellen (1991): *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice: The Creation of a Genre*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Rothe, Alexander K. (2019): Art. "Regieoper", in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, https://doi.org/10.1093/omo/9781561592630.013.90000315418.

Sauter, Willmar and Wiles, David (2014): *The Theatre of Drottningholm, Then and Now: Performance between the 18th and 21st Centuries*, Stockholm: Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis.

Savran, David (1985): *Breaking the Rules: The Wooster Group*, New York: Theatre Communications Group.

Savran, David (2005): "The Death of the Avantgarde", in *TDR: The Drama Review* 49, 10–42.

Schläder, Jürgen (2001): "Strategien der Opern-Bilder: Überlegungen zur Typologie der Klassikerinszenierungen im musikalischen Theater", *Ästhetik der Inszenierung: Dimensionen eines künstlerischen, kulturellen und gesellschaftlichen Phänomens*, ed. by Jörg Zimmermann and Josef Früchtl, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 183–197.

Schneider, Magnus and Wagner, Meike (eds.) (2023). *Performing the Eighteenth Century: Theatrical Discourses, Practices, and Artefacts*, Stockholm: Stockholm University Press.

Schneider, Magnus Tessing (2012): "Seeing the Empress Again: On Doubling in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*", in *Cambridge Opera Journal* 24, 249–291.

Schneider, Rebecca (2011): *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment*, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Smart, Mary Ann (2020): "Radical Staging and the Habitus of the Singer", in *Investigating Musical Performance: Theoretical Models and Intersections*, ed. by Gianmario Borio, Giovanni Giuriati, Alessandro Cecchi, and Marco Lutzu, London: Routledge, 158–170.

Smith, Marquand (2015): "How to Construct a Time Machine", in *How to Construct a Time Machine*, ed. by Marquand Smith, Milton Keynes: MK Gallery, 5–21.

Stalpaert, Christel (2018): "Reenacting Modernist Time: William Kentridge's The Refusal of Time", in *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and Reenactment*, ed. by Mark Franko, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 375–96.

Strohm, Reinhard (2001): Art. "Opera IV.1: The 18th-century. Views of 18th-century opera", in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi-org.proxy.library.upenn.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.40726.

The Wooster Group (2007): "Program Note. Hamlet", in *Playbill* 123/10), 6.

The Wooster Group: http://www.thewoostergroup.org (21.03.2025).

The Wooster Group: August 21, 2017 - from the archives – LA DIDONE (2009) – serialized – part one: https://thewoostergroup.org/blog/2017/08/21/from-the-archives-la-didone-2009-serialized-part-one/ (21.03.2025).

The Wooster Group, from the archives - LA DIDONE (2009) - serialized - part one: https://vimeo.com/230218733 (21.03.2025).

T'Hooft, Sigrid (2008): "The Art and Purpose of Baroque gesture", in *Barocktheater heute: Wiederentdeckungen zwischen Wissenschaft und Bühne [Symposium, Juni 2007],* ed. by Nicola Gess, Tina Hartmann, and Robert Sollich. Bielefeld: Transcript, 23–27.

Tracy, Ryan (2009): "Where No Opera Has Gone Before", in *City Arts NYC, New York's Review of Culture*, 12.03.2009, 12.

Vanden Heuvel, Mike (2007): "*A Different Kind of Pomo*: The Performance Group and the Mixed Legacy of Authentic Performance", in *Restaging the Sixties: Radical Theaters and Their Legacies*, ed. by James M. Harding and Cindy Rosenthal, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 332–352.

Verstraete, Pieter (2011): "Radical Vocality, Auditory Distress and Disembodied Voice: The Resolution of the Voice-body in The Wooster Group's *La Didone*", in *Theatre Noise: The Sound of Performance*, ed. by David Roesner and Lynne Kendrick, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 82–96.

White, Hayden V. (1990): *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Wickstrom, Maurya (2018): *Fiery Temporalities in Theatre and Performance: The Initiation of History*, London and New York: Methuen Drama.

Woodman, Anthony J. (1988): *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography: Four studies*. London: Croom Helm.