

ARTICLES

OPERATIC PRISONS: CARCERALITY ON THE STAGE AND IN MUSIC¹

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In the context of the publication of the 2019 monograph *Metaphors of Confinement: The Prison in Fact, Fiction, and Fantasy* (Fludernik), British prison drama has received extensive attention. *Metaphors of Confinement* includes discussions of plays with prison settings, ranging from George Chapman's collaboration with Ben Jonson and John Marston, *Eastward Ho* (1605), and John Cook's Greene's *Tu Quoque; or, The City Gallant* (1614), via John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), to Susan Glaspell's *The Inheritors* (1921), Brendan Behan's *The Quare Fellow* (1954), and Edward Bond's *Olly's Prison* (1993).² It also analyzes plays that use metaphorical images of confinement, such as Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (c. 1602); Thomas Middleton's *Women Beware Women* (wr. 1612-27), John Dryden's *All for Love; or, The World Well Lost* (1677), and drama that combines prison settings with metaphorical carcerality. Its examination of Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, focusing on its literary aspects, pointed out a lacuna in literary studies of the prison, namely the (to our knowledge) total absence of a discussion of operas with prison settings. This realization led to the cooperation between a literary scholar in English studies—and, alas, musical analphabet—and a scholar in German studies with a training in musicology, which gave rise to this article.

This article traces two lines of development in the dramatic and musical representation of carceral settings in the tradition of European opera. On the one hand, the tradition that runs from the Italian operas of the seventeenth century to what is called the romantic "opera of liberation" (*Befreiungsoper*), could be argued to reflect tragedy

on the operatic stage, in which political issues dominate the plot, and the characters' heroism, and villainy, provides focal thematic material. This article discusses three major instances of this genre: Beethoven's *Fidelio* (1814), Puccini's *Tosca* (1900), and Luigi Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero* (1949). On the other hand, a counter-tradition reacts to the seriousness of operas, including the *Befreiungsoper*, and parodies its bathetic excesses with satirical inversion, as the villains become the heroes. Here we provide a bracket for the first tradition by beginning with John Gay's *Beggar's Opera* and closing with an appreciation of Bertolt Brecht's 1928 masterpiece, the *Dreigroschenoper* (*Threepenny Opera*). This selection of works naturally does not allow us to study even the most important operas in these two lines of tradition. Thus, we will have to forgo a consideration of Verdi's *Il Trovatore* (*The Troubador*, 1853) for the genre of the tragic prison opera and of Richard Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* (*The Bat*, 1874) for its parodic counterfoil. Our specific focuses in this study are the dramatic and musical peculiarities of the prison opera. Therefore, this article concentrates mainly on *The Beggar's Opera* and *Fidelio*, since these two works are prototypical and exemplary of the two traditions discussed here. Both of these works emerged in opposition to the popular and highly lucrative business of opera performances at their time, but still achieved immediate success, continuing popularity, and critical esteem.

THE ITALIAN TRADITION AND GAY'S PARODIC RESPONSE

In his *Beggar's Opera* of 1728, John Gay was the first to introduce into the genre of the opera a setting in a contemporary prison, in parallel with Jonathan Swift's idea to write a "Newgate pastoral."³ There was, in fact, an earlier play set in Newgate, namely Christopher Bullock's *Woman's Revenge; or, A Match in Newgate* (1715); and seventeenth-century Italian operas had extensively incorporated prison scenes. Gay's parody of the prison opera, therefore, consisted not merely in choosing protagonists among thieves and highwaymen and, as we shall see, inverting the moral outlook of the respectable and the criminal classes; it also substituted the classical and mythical settings of the heroic drama that subtended the plots of the seventeenth-century prison opera with a domestic setting in London.

Prison scenes as such, as in the romance plots on which they were based, were common in early operas (Loughrey and Treadwell 11). Gay is said to have parodied Attilio Ariosti's opera *Coriolanus* (1723),⁴ but there are other contemporary prison operas that could have been targets of his satire, such as Handel's *Floridante* (1721) and *Tamerlano* (1724), both of which include prison scenes. Robin Evans (82) notes Daniel Marot's 1702 opera *Prison d'Amadis*, of whose vault-like dungeon setting he provides a plate. Carceral settings in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century operas can be traced back to the textual sources of their libretti, many of which feature imprisoned heroes: the epics of Ludovico Ariosto (1474-1533) and Torquato Tasso (1544-95), the pastoral poetry of Tasso and Giovanni Battista Guarini (1624-83), and the tradi-

tions of idylls and eclogues (the Orpheus story).⁵

Gay's ballad opera⁶ can be situated as a turning point in the tradition of the opera. In the contemporary baroque prison operas, the emotionally disquieting and sad prison scenes or tragic dénouements had to be lightened by the operatic strategy of *fine lieto*, the happy ending, usually produced by a *deus ex machina* who appeared from the skies to liberate the hero/ine. As we will see later, Beethoven hearkens back to this model: in *Fidelio*, the happy ending is brought about by a lucky coincidence, the arrival of the minister, signalled by a trumpet, thereby invoking the *deus ex machina* strategy of the baroque opera. The liberation of the hero from prison represented the enactment of divine justice. Moreover, rescuing the hero when he was about to be turned off on the gallows teased the audience by means of suspense and engaged their attention. The pervasiveness of this ploy also resulted in the spectators' placid expectation of the eventual happy ending; they could relax despite the apparent downhill curve of the hero's life. From this perspective, Gay's opera mimics the operatic ending, at the same time ironically using a beggar rather than a god to achieve it, thus offsetting the pathetic effects of the opera in his parodic comedy.

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The romantic and postromantic opera, on the other hand, radically undermines the social message of the baroque opera since it decries the social injustices that have resulted in the hero's incarceration and fails to see divine justice as the only possible recourse against human incompetence and cruelty. Beethoven, Verdi, and Puccini therefore return to the pathetic scenarios of the baroque opera with their mostly classical plots, but instead of undermining the seriousness of the social and political threat and allowing the hero's suffering to slide into bathos, as does Gay on the model of the *opera buffa*, they enhance the emotional impact on the audience, who are not given any respite from their feelings of sympathetic horror. In other words, the romantic liberation opera, like the Gothic novel, pursues an aesthetics of the sublime.

Gay's venture is notable for several reasons. First, it extends the genre of operatic literature to create a contemporary mock-pastoral subgenre. Gay breaks with the shepherd-and-fairy-dominated pastoral plots of seventeenth-century opera and also with the heroic drama remodelled as musical sensationalism along the lines of Thomas Southerne (1660-1746); both of these paradigms placed the action in a world of myth, fantasy, or remote romance (cf. Loughrey and Treadwell 7-12).⁷ *The Beggar's Opera*, therefore, is an effort in the mock-heroic mode, using (in part) the vocabulary of "high" romance and pastoral to render a contemporary "low" subject.

Second, Gay rewrites the Newgate scenario—familiar from seventeenth-century Character literature, from the criminal (auto)biography, and from Defoe's *Moll Flanders*—in a comic mode (see Bronson). Like Fielding's later recasting of Jonathan Wild, the historical figure on whom Peachum is based, Gay's Macheath is a rather contemptible ladies' man who lacks the qualities of the vice in the medieval morality plays. In fact, Macheath turns out to be a victim of Peachum and Lockit, members of the penal system who emerge as more corrupt and unscrupulous than the thieves and

highwaymen they prosecute and punish. The world at large is presented as equally immoral as the carceral realm of crime and moral delinquency. As Wolfgang Zach notes, the play, despite its exorbitant popularity, also elicited much contemporary criticism for its supposed failure to abide by the conventions of poetic justice (see also Böker, *Adaptations* 44-45).⁸ Zach's account demonstrates that Gay's opera was perceived as politically dangerous; John Richardson even considers it a form of "resistance."

274 Third, Gay's extravaganza can be read in the tradition of the metadramatic farce,⁹ a genre that started with Buckingham's *The Rehearsal* (1672) and continued via Shadwell's *The Virtuoso* (1676) to Fielding's drama of the 1730s, for example in *The Author's Farce* (1730) or *The Tragedy of Tragedies* (1733).¹⁰ Gay gives a radical twist to this tradition by having one of the metadramatic frame characters, the player, persuade the author, i.e. the eponymous beggar, to reprieve Macheath. At the same time, Gay's musical comedy is an instance of the sentimental drama tradition, though one that inverts the moral framework of the sentimental comedy. In fact, one could even regard it as a parody of the do-goodism typical of that genre, as for instance in Sir Richard Steele's *The Conscious Lovers* (1722). The prison scenes, as the beggar notes in the introduction to the play, are "charmingly pathetick" (Gay, ed. Gladfelder 3), and in this sense Gay's farce corresponds to the sentimental tradition of tear-jerking melodrama. It would later influence George Lillo's sentimental tragedy about George Barnwell, *The London Merchant* (1731), in which Barnwell sincerely and pathetically repents the murder of his uncle. In Gay, the spirit of sentimental comedy is, however, upended by the use of characters who are the very opposite of virtuous, who vie with one another in treachery and deceit. In the sentimental comedy, the good characters remain virtuous despite all temptations and are eventually rescued from the wiles of the evil characters. In Gay's play there are only crooks, but some of these are worse than others. The victim of intrigue, Macheath, survives, though with a twist: the happy ending of marriage for Macheath is a metaphorical noose. By escaping hanging and getting married instead, he has moved from the fire into the frying pan.¹¹

The text's dominant parodic element is equally foregrounded in the music of *The Beggar's Opera*. As Calhoun Winton points out, Gay had been "writing ballads for stage performance" and some of these were indeed put on, among them the 1724 "Newgate Garland" for the pantomime *Harlequin Jack Sheppard* (*Beggar's Opera* 129). In the pantomime, Jack Sheppard is betrayed by his companions, a plot element that recurs in Macheath's story in the later play.¹² Gay's musical comedy, unlike the operas of his day, was supposed to be cheap, requiring not expensive musical stars but competent native actors able to deliver ballads rather than arias. In this respect, Gay already anticipates the concept of non-professional performance in Brecht's *Threepenny Opera*.

The songs of *The Beggar's Opera* are almost by definition parodic, since most of them use well-known tunes, whether from popular ballads such as "An Old Woman Clothed in Gray" or from other familiar sources. Thus, Macheath and his gang leave

the tavern “to a march from Handel’s *Rinaldo*” (Winton, *Beggar’s Opera* 131), a song already known as a tune for “Let the waiter bring clean glasses” (Gilman 551). Gay, moreover, burlesques the opera as a genre:

[T]he paired heroines; the happy ending; even, as the Beggar observes, the similes ‘that are all in your celebrated Operas: The Swallow, the Moth, the Bee, the Ship, the Flower, &c.’ They are all here: Polly in Act 2 sings of her plight, ‘Thus when the Swallow, seeking Prey’. Lucy in Act 3 intones, ‘I’m like a Skiff on the Ocean tost’. And so on, or as the Beggar put it, ‘&c.’ (Winton, *Beggar’s Opera* 133)

The composer Johann Christoph Pepusch (1667-1752) delivers a trenchant satire of the *opera seria*, which he knew very well from his work on Handel’s *Rinaldo* and *Acis and Galatea*.¹³ Starting with the overture, he uses sixty-nine different tunes from familiar songs, which he underlays with a *basso continuo*, thus supplying bassline and chord progression.¹⁴ He also uses well-known melodies from John Baret (1676-1719), Jeremiah Clarke (1670-1707), John Eccles (1668-1735), and Henry Purcell (1659-95), ironizing the work of these composers and providing a caricature of the operatic genre in its Italian incarnations (see Cook). *The Beggar’s Opera* even ended up ruining Handel’s hitherto enormous success on the opera stage.

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As Loughrey and Treadwell explain in their introduction to the Penguin Classics edition of the piece, Gay’s ballad opera parodied contemporary show business by echoing in his libretto the rivalry between the opera singers Faustina Bordoni and Francesca Cuzzoni; in Handel’s *Alessandro* (1726) these prima donnas portrayed women who vied for the love of Alexander the Great, represented by the castrato Senesino, and even came to blows in a performance of Giovanni Battista Bononcini’s *Astyanax* in 1727 (10). The trio of Macheath, Polly, and Lucy (Air lxviii) burlesque this love triangle in Handel’s *Alessandro* and remind the viewers of the composer’s attempt to mediate between Faustina and Cuzzoni (Winton, *John Gay* 125).

Having concentrated on Gay’s burlesquing of the opera—naturally so, since this is an article on operatic prisons—we hasten to point out that Pepusch’s music can reasonably be argued to have been written in the tradition of an already existing genre, that of the ballad-opera (Gilman; McIntosh). Gay’s and Pepusch’s choice of that genre is significant since the ballad is a politically charged form, which, besides traditional love songs and songs of war, included a considerable segment of broadside ballads. *The Beggar’s Opera*’s use of the ballad can therefore be interpreted as a sign of a “savor of the street” (Newman 280). The ballads Gay and Pepusch inserted into the work come from song collections such as “Thomas Durfey’s Pills to Purge Melancholy and John Playford’s Dancing Master” (Gilman 551). Gilman also points to the tradition of the “semi-opera” (550) as an influence on Gay. The parodies of *The Beggar’s Opera* therefore go beyond an exclusive persiflage of contemporary opera. In fact, the literary model of the mock-heroic is constitutive of the text: Macheath is a mock-epic hero; his failures are underlined mock-heroically as early as Jenny’s song “All in a Misty Morning” (Air xxiii), in which Macheath is compared to a cock surveying his hens.

Gay's ballad opera owes its success to the strategies of parody and travesty that are deployed both in the music and in the libretto. Ironies, whether moral or musical, are prevalent in the play. On the one hand, the crooks share a code of "honour" that obliges them to steal and kill and cheat one another; yet, at the same time, they require partners in crime to be "honest," and keep referring to their "honour" in the normative sense of the word. Thus, Peachum approves of Polly "toying and trifling with" Macheath as a "Customer in the way of Business, or to get out a Secret, or so" (I.vii. 2013: 13), but threatens to kill her if she has "play'd the fool and [...] married," calling her a "Hussy" for being what we would regard as 'honest' in love. On the other hand, Polly's friend Filch is exhorted to tell the truth ("Don't tell me a Lye; for you know I hate a Lyar"; I.vi. 12) by Mrs. Peachum, who fears for the "honour of our family" in the criminal milieu, and Filch then says he is constrained by a promise to Polly not to tell and "would not willingly forfeit [his] own Honour by betraying any body" (I.vi. 12), though she immediately goes on to do so. Mrs. Peachum's honour is focused on money;¹⁵ from her perspective, Polly's choice of love rather than "Honour or Money" (I.viii. 15) is seen as bad breeding ("I thought the Girl had been better bred"; I.viii. 15), as "Folly" (I.viii. 15), licentiousness ("Hussy"; "Slut"; I.viii. 16), "Frailty" (16, 17) and as a "Blemish" on the family honour (I.ix. 17).

Hilariously, Polly's alleged immorality is attributed to the same causes as illicit love in the sentimental comedy: "Those cursed Play-books she reads have been her Ruin" (I.x. 20). The system of patriarchal disciplining of daughters' sexuality remains the same; what is inverted is its moral purpose, which replaces the preservation of virginity with the overall "virtue" of economic acquisition. This inversion of ethical norms undermines the setup of the sentimental comedy, in which parental duty and family honour are paramount concerns, and money and love must bow to the dictates of these virtues. Like Polly and Lucy, who naively allow themselves to be cheated by Macheath, Macheath himself is also gullible since he believes in a code of honour among thieves (III.iv. 52), and is promptly betrayed by his business companions and whores. Ironically, his protestation of love to Lucy—"Till then [when he will be rescued] my Heart is thy Prisoner" (II.xv. 47)—is a prediction that will come true when Macheath ends up in marital prison body and soul: "[...] I take Polly for mine [i.e. my partner]. —<To POLLY> And for Life, you Slut,—for we were really marry'd" (III.xvii. 69).

The theme of betrayal is represented not only in the plot and dialogue but also in the music. As Winton points out, the broadside ballad tune "The Broom" (Air xviii) is used for the scene of Macheath's parting from Polly in Act I, scene xiii, and implicitly foreshadows her betrayal, since the ballad concerned the "lament of a milkmaid who has been betrayed by her lover" (*John Gay* 112-13; *Beggar's Opera* 134). The scenes in Newgate (III.vii-viii) in which Lucy visits Macheath and tries to poison Polly constitute the apogee of the mock-heroic and the mock-sentimental. After having declared her intention of killing Polly for jealousy even at the risk of detection—"But say, I were to be hang'd—I never could be hang'd for any thing that would give me greater

Comfort, than the poisoning that Slut” (III.vii. 58)—Lucy makes Polly welcome in the most refined language of society ladies, thus hinting that women in good society are just as false and unscrupulous as Polly and Lucy:

LUCY. But, Miss Polly—in the way of Friendship, will you give me leave to propose a Glass of Cordial to you? [...]

POLLY. I am sorry, Madam, my Health will not allow me to accept of your Offer. (III. viii. 59)

Polly and Lucy call one another “Slut” and “Strumpet” in their asides (59-61), employing the very terms of opprobrium that their parents directed at them. They keep playing friends as did Peachum and Lockit, accusing each other of hypocrisy: “LUCY [*Aside*]. I shall now soon be even with the hypocritical Strumpet” (60).

Though the opera represents prison scenes only towards the end of the play, the thieves, highwaymen, and prostitutes who are the major characters implicitly introduce the location of the carceral counterworld or heterotopia from the beginning. These characters are continuously threatened by arrest, imprisonment, and execution, and the ballads in their turn keep hinting at (metaphorical) confinement. Yet when we do finally confront the prison scenario, it is presented in a parodic manner. Scene xiii, set in the condemned hold, features Macheath singing one aria after the other, to the tunes of “Happy Groves,” the “Chevy Chase,” and “Greensleeves,” among others. He not only “parodies the operatic recitative modulating into aria” (Loughrey and Treadwell 116, n. 56), but also satirizes the valorous behaviour of heroes before their execution: instead of displaying a firm resolution in the face of impending death, he gets drunk to confront the emergency. Thematically, the Chevy Chase ballad is an appropriate intertext since in that ballad the hunting party turns into a bloody battle, yet the heroic overtones of the ballad are undercut by Macheath’s cowardly attempt to avoid his confrontation with death. “Oh! Happy Groves” from John Vanbrugh’s 1700 comedy *The Pilgrim* is transformed textually into “O cruel, cruel, cruel Case! / Must I suffer this Disgrace?” (III.xiii. 65). The original song text likewise ended with disappointment, as “Corinna perjur’d proves, and forsakes the shady Groves” (see Gladfelder 174).¹⁶ Air lxvii, to the tune of “Greensleeves,” whose original text conveys a story of a lover’s betrayal by her lover, foreshadows Macheath’s cheating on the women who love him, but also indicates that politics uses similar strategies to amatory deception (cf. Newman 275).

Strategies of foreshadowing and contradiction are pervasive. Thus, the broadside ballad “O the Broom” (Air xviii) featuring a betrayed milkmaid foreshadows Polly’s betrayal by Macheath (Winton, *Beggar’s Opera* 134), but also converts the romantic relationship into a matter of acquisition and property, equating love with money and mastery. Inversions are extremely frequent. As Swaen already demonstrates, Air ii (“The Bonny Gray-Ey’d Morn”) substitutes the seduction of women by men by the alluring snares that women set for men. While the original text of Air iv (“Why Is Your Faithful Slave Disdain’d?”) is about unrequited love, Gay’s text focuses on the

story of a fallen woman. *Air v* (“Of All the Simple Things We Do”) in its original version laments the prison that is marriage, while Gay’s rewrite celebrates the money gained by prostituting one’s wife. “Over the Hills and Far Away” (*Air xvi*), a tune already used in Farquhar’s *The Recruiting Officer* as a recruiting song, conveys a fantasy of “domestic bliss,” whereas in the play the recruits were enticed to sign up in the hope of escaping their wives (Donaldson 172).

278 Macheath ends his soliloquy by reiterating Peachum’s opening acknowledgement of vice being a general human quality equally found among the rich and the poor, noting that if bribes did not exist, rich men “like us were to swing” (*Air lxvi*; III.xiii. 66). He laments the immorality of the times (“’Tis a plain Proof that the World is all alike, and that even our Gang can no more trust one another than other People,” III.xiv. 67) and appeals to his friends to bring Peachum and Lockit, whom he calls “Villains” and “infamous Scoundrels” (III.xiv. 67), to the gallows. Yet, from the law-abiding spectator’s point of view, Peachum and Lockit are ostensibly acting as good citizens when ensuring a highwayman’s and thief’s just punishment. Macheath’s remarks underline the fact that the ballad opera’s parody reflects an ethical relativism: depending on where you are in society, the same behaviour will be judged either as moral or immoral; the same person, as a villain or a model of probity. Within the counterworld of the criminal classes, moreover, standard morality persists unchanged; only the application of the conventional vocabulary is inverted as the same opprobrious epithets are redeployed. The people who usually find themselves vilified by the respectable public now get to cast aspersions on their social betters as well as maligning and besmirching one another, using the same lexicon of honour as opposed to vice.

The lesson that the beggar had hoped to teach in his opera was that the poor as much as the rich will be hanged or transported (III.xvi. 69), possibly alluding to the punishments of Peachum and Lockit in parallel to Macheath. However, this salubrious moral is not only undermined by Macheath’s reprieve and the final dance of the prisoners—an anticipation of Beethoven’s opera—but also by Macheath’s marriage to Polly. This move restores Macheath to the morality of the sentimental drama, even though in the end it is love (on Polly’s part) and undeserved happiness that win out instead of duty and honour as on the sentimental stage. The ending is clearly contrived: “you must allow, that in this kind of Drama, ’tis no matter how absurdly things are brought about” (69)—another jibe at operatic plots. Thus, the problem of Macheath’s five other women remains unsolved. In this lively play of immorality, the eighteenth-century underworld of crime and its companion counterworld of Newgate triumph; the law and normative society seem to serve as limits to the life on stage, just as life after death frames this world. By setting all his scenes in prison or in the criminal underworld, Gay endorses the view that Newgate is the world, or as much of it as we get to see in the theatre. In its prevalent immorality, the world is like a prison, yet the prison also represents the world at large. In terms of cognitive metaphor theory, world is prison / prison is world.

So far, we have discussed *The Beggar's Opera* almost exclusively as a ballad opera and a literary text without considering the staging. The staging is, however, a crucial element, and the sensation of *The Beggar's Opera* was partly due to its impressive set which resembled the dungeon scenario of the baroque opera more than Newgate prison. Thanks to Hogarth's prints we have extensive information about the production.¹⁷ From Hogarth's prints and paintings (see Figure 1) we can see that the setting echoes the grand opera finale usually set in a palace or hall. The gestures of the singers, too, follow the tradition of heroic drama. We could, therefore, argue that the staging of *The Beggar's Opera* repeats the mock-heroic gestures of the text by using the grand style of serious opera—after all, the operatic sources are, precisely, heroic plays such as *Alessandro*—to depict low-class protagonists and locations. The production should, therefore, be read as equally ironic as the style of the text, veering from the realistic in the more intimate scenarios of Peachum's house or the pub, to the spectacularly melodramatic in the grand finale.

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Figure 1. William Hogarth, Painting based on Act III, scene xi of *The Beggar's Opera*, ca. 1728 (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Beggar's_Opera).

THE TRADITION OF THE LIBERATION OPERA

This section discusses the liberation opera with its prison scenarios, and the follow-

ing section, “by a commodius vicus of recirculation,” returns to the parodic mode in the *Threepenny Opera*.

Prison operas can be argued to evoke a particular fascination due to their carceral settings and the emotional effects of those settings on the audience. The enclosure of carceral space as represented on the stage contrasts with the diversions offered by the music in terms of a succession of arias, ensemble scenes, or choir or ballet interpolations. For the carceral setting, the usually grand operatic space is often narrowed down to mirror the constrictedness of a prison cell, dungeon, dark tower, or cistern. The singers are therefore transferred into a space behind bars or into the depths of architectural ensembles or underground vaults. The protagonists in their prison seem to be excluded from the action staged in non-carceral scenes; their confinement is broken when they are liberated and rejoin the other singers.

Prison scenes from the Romantic period onwards achieve strong emotional effects. By definition, the jailer is the villain; thus, the dichotomy between prison guards and their victims is reproduced musically in the emotional empathy for the confined and in the distancing from, and condemnation of, the powers that incarcerate. **280** Moreover, the physical locking-away of the hero or heroine evokes an important tension between suspense and sympathy, since the liberation of the protagonist is ardently desired and speculatively enacted in imagination before it occurs on stage.

Creating prison scenes thus offers a wide range of artistic possibilities and challenges to the composer, the script writers, the singers or actors, and, of course, the director of the *mise-en-scène*. In terms of the music, the composer may decide to employ specific tonalities, keys, and tone colours to designate the different spaces of the action, devoting a particular key or tonality to the carceral; or he/she may choose a specific key for the victim(s) and another for their opponents. For instance, C-minor tonality is used in Handel’s opera *Rodelinda* (1725) to portray the despairing King Bertarido in his dungeon, and in Mozart’s works to accompany uncanny and threatening situations. The C-minor key appropriately warns Handel’s audience that Rodelinda will discover what she believes to be her husband Bertarido’s blood, though it is actually that of his loyal servant Unulfo, who has been mistaken for Bertarido and was injured in the attempt on his life. This handling of the prison scene stands in the tradition of employing special tonal effects for scenes set in the *sottoterraneo*: the underworld or underground. In *Orfeo*, for instance, Monteverdi uses different voice types and a combination of deep cornetti and polyphonic instruments. The moment of liberation also calls for a particular set of chords or tone colours. Different musical traditions and innovative modifications of these come into play.

Among the many romantic and postromantic operas with important prison scenes, three receive pride of place in this discussion. All of them are much less realistic than Gay’s musical comedy, all are tragic in tone, and all use the dungeon scenario of the revolutionary imaginary, linking the prison cell with tyranny and political imprisonment. The first of these operas, Ludwig van Beethoven’s *Fidelio* (first performances 1805, 1806, 1814), is set in a prison and climaxes in a dungeon scene of a

prison within the prison. Giacomo Puccini's *Tosca* (1900), by contrast, has one crucial dungeon scene towards its end, set in the Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome. Finally, Luigi Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero* (1949) is a modern opera that replays a Gothic scenario from Villiers de L'Isle-Adam (and Maturin) and reflects in its Inquisition plot the author's suffering under National Socialism.

Both Beethoven's *Fidelio* and Puccini's *Tosca* are stories of revolutionary enthusiasm. In the case of *Fidelio*, the setting is Seville in the late 1700s, and the *ancien régime* tyranny depicted in it is represented by one corrupt minister, Don Fernando, who wants to get rid of Florestan for discovering his machinations and threatening to expose them. Puccini's opera, on the other hand, is set in Italy in 1800 during the fight for freedom from Hapsburg occupation. Both plots are therefore intimately linked to the spirit of the French Revolution (liberty, equality) and deploy the clichés of *ancien régime* cruelty.

Although in *Tosca* only the final Act III is actually set in the Castel Sant'Angelo, the prison as theme is omnipresent in the libretto. The first Act opens with Angelotti, who has escaped from prison, seeking refuge with the painter Cavaradossi in the church Sant'Andrea della Valle. The church also contains a crypt for the family of Attavanti, in which he hides. Later, he seeks refuge in the well of Cavaradossi's house. Although this is not explicitly specified in the stage directions of Victorien Sardou's libretto, a staging of the opera could emphasize the prison-like enclosure of the crypt and even of the church as epitomizing tyranny. Act II, likewise, retains an allusion to the penal system, since Scarpia's office, the setting of Act II, has an adjoining interrogation room in which Cavaradossi is being tortured while Tosca talks with the chief of police. The prison scenes of Act III, which include the last meeting of Cavaradossi and Tosca, and his execution in the square, highlight heroic self-sacrifice for a noble political cause and do not primarily thematize the experience of imprisonment but also glorify the love between Tosca and Cavaradossi. The opera therefore has a prison setting, which may be emphasized visually in a production of the opera, but the carceral space serves as a symbol of tyranny and is not considered in its own right.

Beethoven's *Fidelio*, by contrast, centrally focuses on the prison setting. The work relies on a script that echoes Philippe Rameau's *Dardanus* (1739/1744) and Georg Friedrich Handel's *Rodelinda* (1725). The names Florestan and Leonore parallel those used by André Ernest Modeste Grétry and Luigi Cherubini—respectively, Floreski in *Richard Coeur de Lion* (1794) and Lodoïska in *Lodoïska* (1791)—though Cherubini's Dourlinski is renamed Pizarro. Beethoven's opera clearly belongs to the tradition of the rescue or liberation opera (*Befreiungsoper*). In *Rodelinda*, Bertarido has been exiled by the Langobardian usurper Grimoaldo, whereas in *Fidelio* it is Pizarro who tries to prevent Florestan from revealing his abuses of power. In *Rodelinda*, *Lodoïska*, and *Fidelio*, the female protagonists rescue their husbands from the dungeon. Leonore dresses up as the male *Fidelio* to get access to her husband, her subterfuge allowing her to avoid the fate of the Countess Lodoïska in Cherubini's *Lodoïska*, who while attempting to liberate her husband, Count Floreski, is raped by the two vil-

lains Grimoaldo and Altamoras. Leonore and Lodoïska therefore both epitomize the strong, heroic woman, representing a prototype for many more heroines in nineteenth- and twentieth-century opera.

Beethoven's *Fidelio* is particularly pertinent to this discussion because of its extensive prison setting, which figures prominently both in the stage directions and the dialogue. The protagonists of the libretto are all functionaries of the Spanish penal system: the jailer Rocco, the turnkey Jaquino who is in love with Rocco's daughter Marzelline, and the prison governor Don Pizarro. Then there are the prisoners in their cells. At the request of Leonore (*Fidelio*) and Marzelline, Rocco allows the inmates to roam in the garden of the prison, enjoying the good weather, but has to lock them up again on Pizarro's commands. The prisoners sing a chorus aria: "O welche Lust, in freier Luft / Den Atem leicht zu heben! / Nur hier, nur hier ist Leben, / Der Kerker eine Gruft" (56-57).¹⁸ Moreover, the scenario of the prison in the opera is visually hybridized as both a prison and a garden with a story of love and wooing, as Marzelline woos *Fidelio*, who plays the role of her fiancé in order to get access to Florestan. These seeds of humanity and emotion spread to the prisoners, and Don Fernando's opportune arrival in the last act introduces an even stronger influx of humanitarianism. In this manner, the prison is visually and emotionally destroyed, and, with Florestan resurrected from the dead, the happy ending seems to abolish penal cruelty entirely, except for Pizarro's much-deserved punishment.

In Act II, the prison theme receives further intensification when we enter the cell of Florestan, the tomb-like prison within the prison. The opening section, #11, *Grave*, echoes the tonalities of Handel's *Rodelinda* and evokes effects of Gothic horror by employing chord sequences and an alternation of piano and forte passages with impressive crescendos produced by resorting to the full range of brass instruments. The accompanying technique of tempo changes demonstrates Beethoven's expertise in the use of all the current technical innovations. Beethoven here combines Handel's original synthesis between the Italian opera and the German *Singspiel* with the grand gestures of the rescue opera, as for instance in Leonore's first great aria (#9), "die Liebe wird's erreichen" ("Through Love I Shall Still Reach It"; 22). From this perspective one can argue that all earlier developments of the rescue opera culminate in *Fidelio*.

Florestan, starved nearly to death and weak from illness, frozen in the cold subterranean vaults of his dungeon (63),¹⁹ is first presented in a soliloquy in which he laments the darkness and silence of his abode and the fact that there is no living being near him (62). In Florestan's opening sigh, which is accompanied by the contrapunctual oboe—as in Beethoven's French models such as Rameau's *Dardanus*—Beethoven introduces the impressive recitative "Gott! Welch Dunkel hier! O grauenvolle Stille" (Text 62)²⁰ into Florestan's aria #11 in C-minor (Vocal Score *F* 84-88, Introduction and Aria). In this aria, Florestan resigns himself to his chains and even death; he has done his duty in speaking the truth, and must now pay for it as God wills. The hero here serves as a role model for the audience's attitude towards death (Hutcheon

and Hutcheon). Florestan's nostalgic reminiscences of his youthful days of spring in "Frühlingstage" (27), rendered in a song-like *Adagio cantabile*, emerge from the dark atmosphere of the C-minor oboe voice representing the surrounding gloom, culminating in a *Poco Allegro* F-major tune which forms a movement towards light and hope. Florestan hallucinates the presence of an angel fashioned like Leonore, who appears "in rosigem Duft" (27),²¹ and provides him with "tröstend zur Seite stellt" (27).²² The Leonore-like angel will lead Florestan to the light and "ins himmlische Reich" (27).²³ In its rhythmic-agogic quality, Florestan's fevered dream relies on a symbiosis between the notes of the oboe and the tenor voice. Beethoven does not hesitate to use nearly unsingable high notes, which the oboe artfully accompanies, anticipates, imitates, and finally obliterates. The scene concludes with a gradual diminuendo of the orchestra's pianissimo, iconically reflecting Florestan's utter exhaustion as he sinks to the floor of his dungeon.

As connoisseurs of the opera tradition realize, in this scene Beethoven is echoing Jean-Philippe Rameau's *Dardanus* (1739/1744), whose dungeon scene likewise has a soliloquy for the leading tenor. The composer also characterizes this aria as a *Grave* in F-minor with the indication "*lieux funestes*," or "gloomy and fateful settings." Rameau's tenor voice is accompanied by a contrapunctual bassoon, rather than Beethoven's oboe. However, these similarities do not extend to the template of the aria, since Rameau used a strict *da capo* form, while Beethoven structured his aria in a much freer mould and gave a more extensive role to the orchestra.

While Florestan is unconscious, Fidelio/Leonore and Rocco arrive and dig his grave. Leonore pities the unknown prisoner and decides to free him from his chains even if he is not Florestan. Florestan wakes and asks Rocco for the name of the governor, in whom he recognizes his enemy. He requests that he send a message to his wife. Meanwhile, Leonore, who has fainted on identifying the prisoner as her husband, rallies and gives Florestan—who does not know who she is—something to drink and eat. When Pizarro enters (II.iii.), Leonore hinders him from killing Florestan and reveals herself as his wife. Leonore's central position in the plot is underlined by the dramatically heightened ensemble scene (#14, the quartet "Er sterbe!") which also deserves extensive musicological analysis, especially because of its citation by Richard Wagner in his *Tannhäuser*:

PIZARRO. Er sterbe!—
 Doch er soll erst wissen,
 Wer ihm sein stolzes Herz zerfleischt.
 Der Rache Dunkel sei zerrissen,
 Sieh' her! Du hast mich nicht getäuscht!
 Pizarro, den du stürzen wolltest,
 Pizarro, den du fürchten solltest,
 Steht nun als Rächer hier.
 FLORESTAN. Ein Mörder steht vor mir!
 PIZARRO. Noch einmal ruf ich dir,
 Was du getan, zurück;

Nur noch ein Augenblick
 Und dieser Dolch—
 LEONORE. Zurück!
 FLORESTAN. O Gott!
 ROCCO. Was soll?
 LEONORE. Durchbohren
 Musst du erst diese Brust;
 Der Tod sei dir geschworen
 Für deine Mörderlust.
 PIZARRO. Wahnsinniger!
 ROCCO. Halt ein!
 PIZARRO. Er soll bestraft sein!
 LEONORE. Töt' erst sein Weib!
 (Csampai and Holland 41; No, 14, quartet; *F* 103-06 [vocal score])²⁴

and in the final apotheosis of the opera (#16, the finale, “Wer Ein Solches Weib Errungen”).²⁵

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In the meantime, the minister Don Fernando has arrived at the prison (II.vii.) and is welcomed as a godsend by the prisoners: for them, he is the representative of justice and mercy who appears at the door leading to their grave (“vor unsres Grabes Tor erscheint”; 74). Don Fernando gives a speech, representing his king, and informs them that the government is not composed of tyrants; on the contrary, they regard the prisoners as human beings, as brothers (“Es sucht der Bruder seine Brüder”; 74). In the final scene (II.xviii.) Leonore and Don Florestan are recognized by Don Fernando, Pizarro is carried off to justice to the approval of the prisoners’ chorus, and Don Fernando asks Rocco to deliver Florestan from his chains: “Du schloßest auf des Edlen Grab, / Jetzt nimm ihm seine Ketten ab” (75).²⁶

By locating the responsibility for Florestan’s iniquitous incarceration with the corrupt Don Pizarro, whose villainy is clearly documented in his assassination attempt on Florestan, Beethoven and/or Treitschke, who revised the third version of 1814, are able to convey the revolutionary cry for liberty and justice against tyranny without implicating the authority of the king, whose representative, Don Fernando, appears as an angel of justice and mercy. In this manner, the opera was no longer politically dangerous. Moreover, focusing on Leonore as the courageous woman who finds Don Florestan at the last minute additionally seems to shift the plot into a love story framework, from which the King of Spain is doubly removed.

Despite this strategy, the opera has a notable revolutionary basis in its imagery. In its representation of the prison as a grave or tomb and of Florestan’s incarceration as burial in a dungeon, it invokes the familiar clichés of 1790s revolutionary discourse. Moreover, both the chorus and Don Fernando articulate a belief in humanity, equality (“Brüder unter Brüdern”), and liberty that echoes the discourse of the French Revolution. Where the opera invents new facets of the representation of prisons on stage is in the chorus and in the visualization of freedom and imprisonment. The chorus makes it possible to present the prisoners as a group and to articulate their

viewpoint. At the same time, the prisoners are treated as human beings by Rocco and are even allowed out into the sunlight. We do not, therefore, have the common pattern of innocent Florestan as martyr to tyranny in contrast with prisoners who deserve their fate, but a general discourse against imprisonment or in favour of liberty.

Beethoven's more immediate models for this ending of the opera were the revolutionary liberation operas of André-Ernesto Modeste Grétry and, especially, Luigi Cherubini; another important example was Pierre Alexandre Monsigny's *Le Déserteur* (1769). Monsigny was the first to compose a comic final rescue scenario which adopts elements of the *opera buffa* with its typically extended closure scenes that conjoin all the characters in a final comic round dance. At the same time, Monsigny referenced the *opéra lyrique* with its grand tableau of orchestra and singing voices. Grétry, Cherubini, and Beethoven not only adopted these features, but additionally made the technique of the memory motif into a central constituent of their liberation operas. Starting out from an instrumental kernel, this memory motif develops its own history in nineteenth-century opera by offering to generations of composers after Richard Wagner the technique of leitmotif associated with his name. In *Richard Coeur de Lion* (1784-85), Grétry has the *chanson* of the incarcerated Richard Lionheart reappear repeatedly, thus converting it into a reminder of the king's imprisonment. In the sensational rescue action, Grétry expands the orchestral spectrum into a veritable battle music by using drumrolls on- and off-stage. In the final scene, the liberation of Richard is celebrated by means of a triumphal march reminiscent of *Aida*, flanked by choral cheering and a hymn of rejoicing with a clarion call of jubilation (vocal score, "Tombe (auf dem Theater)"; *F* 108), picking up on the theme of the *chanson* employed as a memory motif. Cherubini, in his turn, escalates the development of the final liberation scene in *Lodoïska* (1791) when he accompanies Floreski's rescue of his wife Lodoïska from the villain Dourlinski with a veritable battle symphony (*symphonie guerrière*) that combines scenic, verbal, and pantomimic elements within a *Gesamtkunstwerk* (Fischer, *Harnoncourt* 28). One can therefore view Beethoven's finale of *Fidelio* as a culmination of the musical semantics geared towards an explicitly humanist vision in the context of Enlightenment optimism.

In the later prison music of Wagner, Verdi, and Puccini, rescue attempts tend to end tragically and reflect a more realistic and pessimistic attitude towards political injustice and its pervasive powers. In these later operas, the heroines remain martyrs to the cause of their husbands, even sacrificing themselves for their husbands' benefit, dying in order to save their beloved, as does Leonora in Verdi's *Il Trovatore* (1853). *Il Trovatore*, Puccini's *Tosca*, and Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero* are all historical dramas: Verdi's is set in fifteenth-century Spain, Puccini's in nineteenth-century Italy, and Dallapiccola's deals with the Spanish Inquisition in the sixteenth century. In these musical *chefs-d'oeuvre*, nihilism, even fatalism, is pervasive. One can, moreover, note the use of new forms of sophisticated spatial aesthetics. The high tower or deep dungeon provides a background for the dramatic action in the foreground, and in the *mise-en-scène* these two spaces or areas of the stage are both linked and

separated. This is true even of Strauss's opera *Salomé* (Schreiber 246-56): Jochanaan's prison tomb of the subterranean cistern is the background from which he emerges to the front of the stage when confronting the eponymous heroine.

286 Puccini's *Tosca* (1900) could be regarded as a political thriller, or what Ulrich Schreiber calls "Ein schäbiger Schocker" ("a dingy thriller"; 355-57). The suspense generated by the opera's plot is due in no small part to the character constellation that brings into conflict the star singer Tosca; her lover, the cavaliere, republican, and painter Cavaradossi; and Baron Scarpia, Rome's *chef de police*, who is a master of intrigue and an unscrupulous, brutal, and perfidious man who abuses his power to the hilt. Scarpia's surveillance extends from Angelotti, the democrat and alleged spy on the run whom Cavaradossi is hiding, to Cavaradossi himself. In the sequel, both Cavaradossi and Tosca find themselves in the clutches of Scarpia, who has discerned the weakness in the love relationship between the two artists: both lovers are unable to distinguish between reality and play or illusion, between being and seeming, brutal political reality and the theatre of emotions. Cavaradossi pretends that he has not had a love affair with the Countess Attavanti, whom he has been using as a model for his altar piece painting of Maria Magdalene. Tosca is jealous because she recognizes the model of the painting. Scarpia's manipulation of Tosca, which will result in her betrayal of Angelotti's hiding place in Act II, is already evident in Act I. His fantasies of violence and sexual gratification emerge during, and in counterpoint to, the *Te Deum* sung to celebrate the Austrians' interim victory over Napoleon at Marengo. Scarpia's blasphemies are underlined by the music, which overwhelms the audience with the contrast between Scarpia's iniquity and the religious setting with its praise of God in the *Te Deum*.

In Act II, Scarpia's machinations culminate in his blackmailing of Tosca, who betrays Angelotti's hiding place to rescue Cavaradossi from further torture. Since her lover spontaneously declares himself an admirer of Napoleon when the message of Napoleon's ultimate defeat of the Austrians at Marengo is announced, Scarpia is able to continue his blackmailing of Tosca by agreeing to save Cavaradossi if she yields to him [Scarpia]. Tosca kills Scarpia, but in Act III, she finds out that he has also cheated her: Cavaradossi's mock execution turns out to be real, and she escapes the same fate by committing suicide.

This reversal is marked clearly in the staging of the opera. At the end of Act II, Tosca sets candles beside the murdered Scarpia and puts a crucifix on his breast. Visually, Tosca seems to have conquered the monster. However, the music warns us that this victory is illusory. The leitmotif of the drumroll in the distance, mentioned only in the vocal score (Gurgel 227) conjoined with the woodwinds suggests that Scarpia's institution, the police, and the Austrian totalitarian state will continue to thrive. This eventual victory of the forces opposing liberty is hinted at even in the very opening of the opera, as the Scarpia motif occurs as early as the overture.

The third Act, set in the Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome, is dominated by Cavaradossi's tenor voice, as Puccini here intensifies and condenses the compositional strategies

of the opera. Tosca's hopeful encounter with her lover, in which she envisages their future happiness ("celesti sfere"; *Overture* 108), is counterpointed by the Scarpia leitmotif of the drumroll in the courtyard (Gurgel 227). Tosca is again unable to distinguish between appearance and reality. Cavaradossi, on the other hand, is suspicious of Scarpia's paper promising escape; he cannot believe that this monster has for the first time ever shown mercy ("Scarpia! Scarpia che cede! La prima sua grazia è questa"; 106; *Overture* 144-45). These doubts are verified by the subsequent execution scene, on both the plot and musical levels: the soldiers' parade, accompanied by drumrolls and genuine volleys of gunfire, exposes the fatal and terrible reality of the painter's execution. Tosca's signal to Cavaradossi to pretend being struck by the bullets is part of her theatrical performance, as seen in her *parlando*²⁷ "Là! Muori!" (Giacosa and Illica 112; *Overture* 154-55) with her admiring praise of her lover's stage abilities: "Ecco un artista!", even addressing the audience to tell them how well he is playing his role (Gurgel 229). It is only after running to him to help him up that she discovers the gruesome fact of his death and recognizes Scarpia's perfidious betrayal of her. Puccini's sophisticated deployment of the leitmotif achieves its apogee in the opera's final drumroll that suggests the survival of Scarpia's inhuman political system.

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Luigi Dallapiccola's short opera *Il Prigioniero* (*The Prisoner*, 1944-48) is a more recent example of the prison opera in the tradition of the liberation opera. In 1944, Dallapiccola was writing his first sketches for the opera in a remote villa in Fiesole. The libretto is based on the tale "La torture par l'espérance" ("Torture by Hope") from the collection *Nouveaux contes cruels* by the French writer Auguste Villiers de l'Isle-Adam (1838-89), the author of one of Impressionism's most celebrated plays, *Axël* (published posthumously in 1890). The text also uses motifs from Charles de Coster's novel *La Légende d'Ulenspiegel et de Lamme Goedzak* (1867), Victor Hugo's poem "La rose de l'infante" (1859), and Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820). Dallapiccola chose a story set in the dungeons of the Inquisition in Saragossa during the Hapsburg Empire's rule over Spain.

Like Beethoven's *Fidelio*, Dallapiccola's opera is set entirely in prison. Such a choice of setting is rare even for plays. In contrast to *Fidelio*, which has an unconvincingly happy ending, *The Prisoner* thematizes unrelieved hopelessness and despair. Although both libretti's settings refer to the stereotypical dungeon of revolutionary provenance, the quality of imprisonment depicted in *The Prisoner* is more modern. This effect is achieved primarily by the absence from the libretto of a noticeable plot, by the barrenness of the setting, and by the pervasive darkness on stage. The prison is thus not merely a real dungeon but also a *lieu de mémoire*, a psychological state of carceral confinement.

This one-act opera, characterized as "un prologo e un atto" (1), presents a challenge to every director. Its emphasis is on the thoughts of the protagonist and not on the action. In the Prologue, the mother narrates her nightmare of King Philip of Spain transforming himself into the figure of Death; Dallapiccola here takes up

elements from the prison scene in Act IV of Verdi's *Don Carlo* (1892). This is followed by the mother's visit to her son in the cell, described as a "horrible" dungeon: "Un' orribile cella nei sotteranei dell' Official di Saragozza" (*Il Prigioniero* 28).²⁸ Even in this opening scene, the prisoner has already given up all hope; having survived terrible torture, he is looking forward to the release from pain promised by death. The protagonist, musically signalled by the bass-baritone voice, is barely aware of the mother's presence in his cell: she appears to him as ("una figura, un'ombra, uno spetto" (*Il Prigioniero* 26).²⁹

288 There are several scenes that follow one another in the vocal score. The opening scene with the mother is a prologue, followed by a choral *intermezzo* at measure 130, 16 in the vocal score (*Il Prigioniero: Un Prologo e un Atto* 7-19), dedicated to the praise of *misericordia*, mercy. A first twelve-tone sequence entitled "Prayer" develops from the three initial accords of the play, depicting the loneliness of the entirely disheartened anonymous prisoner. The son tells the mother of his renewed hopes since the jailer has addressed him as "fratello" ("brother") in what he calls his "dulcissima parola," his "sweetest words." The prayer invokes memories of his childhood (*Il Prigioniero: Un Prologo e un Atto* 26), feelings of security, and ("mi ridiede il senso della luce" (*Il Prigioniero* 29).³⁰

In the next scene, the prisoner is at first again lonely, but then the jailer, with his seductive tenor voice, reappears and again diabolically addresses the prisoner as "fratello." The jailer's tonality shifts from major to minor, characterizing his role as one of ambivalence and anticipating the deceit he is enacting. The jailer tells the prisoner that the fight for liberty in the Netherlands has prospered, and that King Philip will soon be defeated. The prisoner becomes ecstatic with hope. The terrible condition of incarceration is signalled by the minor tonality, the hope for freedom by the major, but the shift to major also signals the jailer's hypocrisy and deception of the prisoner, thus acquiring a secondary connotation of hopelessness for the audience. The "fratello" motif is first used by the prisoner, but now the guard also employs it, clearly in hypocritical manner. The combination of the compositional techniques of twelve-tone music with traditional harmonic sequences reflects the ambiguity of the fratello motif in an exemplary manner. Dallapiccola thus attempts a "Koexistenz' von Dodekaphonischem und Tonalem" (Kämper 12),³¹ a strategy typical of composers in the 1950s. Dallapiccola's dazzling handling of the instrumentation achieves a perfect representation of the jailer's perfidious lying and of the spiralling visions of hope he incites in the prisoner: the prisoner seems to hear the Ghent bell of freedom, the "Roeland"; songs of jubilation burst on his ears; he perceives life and freedom approaching him, and feels he is closer to the stars (Nonnenmann 85-117).

The duplicity of the jailer is also mirrored in the ambivalence of the musical notations. The twelve-tone sequences of hope and freedom expose their leitmotif-ish ambivalence at the conclusion of the opera, when the prisoner, engulfed by hope, runs directly into the arms of the inquisitor. Here the music returns to the Ghent bell at the very climax of the plot: the appearance of the scaffolds, already in full

flame, on which the prisoners are about to be killed. In parallel with this inversion of the freedom bell's positive function, the motif of the starry sky, originally a *musica coelestis* echoing Mahler's version of Goethe's *Faust, Part II* in his eighth symphony, now reappears as the prisoner is led to his final torture: death by fire.

To return to the earlier plot, through a door left open by the warder, the prisoner escapes through an underground corridor. The underground tunnel is experienced by the fleeing prisoner as a hell of anxiety; it also visually functions as a vaginal channel leading to birth, i.e. emergence into freedom. The escape is accompanied by nearly unbearable moments of suspense, for instance when the prisoner believes he is about to be detected by passing monks. The escape sequence thematizes despair battling with hope as the prisoner creeps towards the portal to freedom. The corridor is like a tomb: "Buio. Silenzio. Come fra le tombe" (37).³² The darkness swallows him up. In the final scene, the prisoner emerges into a garden dominated by a huge cedar tree. He is enchanted with nature; as he spreads out his arms in exhilaration and relief to have escaped, or as the stage directions say, "in un impeto di amore per tutta l'umanità" (41),³³ he is caught in the embrace of the Inquisitor-Jailer, who, like a child, takes him by the hand and leads him to the fires of the stakes lighted in the background for which he is destined. The prisoner realizes that hope was the final torture to which he has been subjected:

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(Il Prigioniero, riconoscendo la voce del Carceriere, emette un suono inarticolato e resta soffocato dallo spavento.)

IL GRANDE INQUISITORE *(con l'accento della più sincera pietà e tenendo sempre abbracciato il Prigioniero)*. Alla vigilia della tua salvezza perché mai ci volevi abbandonare? *(Apre le braccia. Il Prigioniero, dopo una lunga pausa, come colpito da improvvisa rivelazione, muove rapidamente verso il proscenio.)*

IL PRIGIONIERO. S'è fatta luce! Vedo! Vedo!

La speranza ... l'ultima tortura ...

Di quante mai sofferte, la più atroce ...

(Dal fondo della scena s'alza un bagliore: Il Prigioniero si volge inorridito.) Il rogo! Ah! Ah!
Ah! Ah! *(Il Prigioniero 42)*³⁴

As the prisoner shrinks away from the stake prepared for him, his cry for liberty dwindles to a whisper and eventually, as he is led to his death, a questioning lisp rises from his lips: "[quasi incosciente; sussurrato. Ma questa volta con tono nettamente interrogativo.] La libertà?" (43).³⁵

Musically speaking, the cruel deception enacted by the Inquisition and the resulting emotional devastation of the prisoner are marked by sharp musical contrasts and the juxtaposition of twelve-tone music with conventional harmonies. Succeeding the prisoner's *Alleluja*, marked in the score by *ff* and *fff* (*fortissimo* and *forte-fortissimo*), the Grand Inquisitor's voice sets in with a B minor accord of the clarinets, reverting to the jailer's *fratello* motif. The "suavissimo" recitation by the clarinets marks the seductive sweetness of the system's deceitfulness, which camouflages the prisoner's inescapable death sentence under a hypocritical claim to mercy and Christian love.

Paradoxically, the Inquisition deploys its cruel instruments in the sweetest and most peaceful tones, “dolcissime, pianissimo” (42), while the drum beats of the freedom bell are loud and deafening.

The opera’s haunting, Poe-like scenario aptly catches the claustrophobic atmosphere of the prison and mirrors the prisoner’s lack of options. The setting is a *paysage psychologisé*, an externalization of the prisoner’s psychology. Prison space in this opera dominates, and it empathetically transports the viewer and listener into the experience of incarceration. The discourse of hope, so prominent in *Fidelio*, here turns out to be a trap, another turn of the screw. Entombment is the *conditio humana* that the protagonist seems to share with the audience in the darkness that covers the stage and the auditorium like a pall. The weight of the anguish pressing down on the prisoner communicates itself to the audience in the reluctant progression of time which, like the corridor leading to the garden portal, seems interminable. The horror of hopelessness is superseded by the final horror of the scaffold, the darkness to be replaced by the blazing fire that will incinerate body and soul. The opera thus thematizes the prison-as-tomb and prison-as-world/world-as-prison topoi, and these can be visually underscored in productions by emphasizing the claustrophobic atmosphere of the stage set, the darkness of the stage, and so on. In this sense, the libretto is even more suited to the filmic medium.

The music thus underlines the fact that no escape is possible from the inhumanities and brutalities of the political situation, which is implicitly that of the Second World War and National Socialism. The prisoner’s final rhetorical question, “La libertà?” (43), exposes the horrendous perfidy of the ruling regime; Dallapiccola’s dramaturgy of the contrast between major and minor, twelve-tone series and tonality/pentatonics, or enharmonic changes likewise marks an endpoint in the development of liberation opera from a musicological perspective. At the same time, the fundamental disillusionment with political power kills off the whole tradition of liberation opera at one stroke. Dallapiccola deconstructs the expectation of a better, more humane future born during the French Revolution; yet his opera remains resolutely in the tragic mould rather than taking the alternative road towards parody, persiflage, and satire chosen by John Gay and Bertolt Brecht.

THREEPENNY SATIRE

We would like to end our discussion by returning to that alternative tradition and to travesty and farce, thus providing a link to our opening example, Gay’s *Beggar’s Opera*. This section concentrates on Kurt Weill’s and Bertolt Brecht’s *Threepenny Opera* (1928), a persiflage of *The Beggar’s Opera* in an updated musical mode of popular genres such as the song, march, boogie, and ragtime, all imported from the New World (see Böker, *Adaptations*; Brinkmann and Megnet 25-42; Greene). Though it burlesques operatic structure, this work can no longer resort to a series of parodic

opera arias in the ballad form as produced by Gay and Pepusch; new dramaturgical and musical forms had to be found. Though the plot of the *Threepenny Opera* follows Gay's model, the musical and vocal presentation is unexpectedly innovative. We can, therefore, argue that the opera not only deconstructs but also revises the old tradition of the opera of liberation. Instead of the high style of tragic opera, we encounter a fresh and cheeky mixture of diverse styles that invoke the boldfaced morality of the gangsters and beggars of the fictional world. A marriage takes place in a horse stable; the conversation of the marriage guests is less than civilized; and the moral quality of most protagonists is the very opposite of noble and heroic. As in Gay's model, Mackie Messer (Mack the Knife) and the King of Beggars, Peachum, are unscrupulous villains who exploit the poor, realize hefty profits, and are willing to sell their own grandmothers for personal gain. After the corruption engendered by the capital amassed by these criminals sends Mackie to prison and he is about to lose his life on the gibbet, the gang saves him from hanging, as the audience has been expecting from the beginning, in a semi-realistic substitution of the *deus ex machina* tradition.

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The Threepenny Opera came into being when Elisabeth Hauptmann produced a new translation of Gay's piece in 1927-28 and offered the text to Brecht.³⁶ Brecht was mainly concerned with the effects of opera and music on society and with their social function, and was convinced that the *Beggar's Opera* would help him define these issues more clearly. The figure of Jonathan Peachum exerted a particular fascination on him, especially his strategy of dressing up healthy have-nots as cripples in order to extract alms from the pitying haves. Peachum lives his life in the mode of "self-defence": "ich befinde mich auf der Welt in Notwehr" (Brecht, *GBA* 2. 488). He has only one competitor, Macheath, the good-looking Prince Charming of the underworld who is the idol of all women. Since Macheath has eloped with Peachum's daughter Polly, Peachum wants to revenge himself on him by ensuring he will hang.

It was at the beginning of 1928 that Brecht started on the first drafts of scenes for his rewriting of the *Beggar's Opera*, which he originally titled *Die Luden-Oper* (*The Pimp Opera*). However, it was his cooperation with composer Kurt Weill that provided the crucial ideas for the final version of the work. The first performance of the *Threepenny Opera* at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm in Berlin at the end of August 1928 was a resounding success. Later in 1928, the work became available in two published versions, the libretto of the opera based on the performance and the piano version of the music published by the Universal Edition in Vienna. The lyrics of the songs were also published in a separate edition. The piece underwent extensive revisions until the 1931 edition, which has a greatly extended final scene.³⁷ Brecht's and Weill's success attracted even 'serious' critical attention to the work: Theodor W. Adorno compared Weill's music to that of Igor Stravinsky, who himself worked in the same tradition with *The Rake's Progress* (see Csampai and Holland), praising Weill's modernity and distinctiveness ("Zur Musik").

The conception and creation of the *Threepenny Opera* demonstrates two aspects in which this collaborative work set up innovative forms of opera composition. In

the wake of the operas of Richard Wagner, the bourgeois public of the time was used to attending the opera as a kind of substitute religious experience with patriotic overtones. Brecht, by contrast, saw the opera as *Gebrauchskunst*, art available to all classes and without claims to sublime aesthetic status. The collaborative nature of the *Threepenny Opera* in itself already signalled a departure from contemporary practices in the music world. Instead of the ruling notion of a play or opera as a unified opus produced by a single auteur, with a conclusively-shaped output that would remain a definitive version for all time, Brecht proposed to set up collective forms of production, with improvisation and variation constitutive elements of the process. Brecht's creation of the *Threepenny Opera* can therefore be seen as a programmatic statement for the development of a new form of music for the stage in the shape of the *Song-Spiel*, or "song-opera," to invent a term in parallel with the "ballad-opera."

292 From this perspective, we can see Brecht's and Weill's revision of the *Beggar's Opera* as a strategic bricolage that juxtaposes diverse textual and musical elements that can be shifted and reshifted, resulting in new mixtures of style that employ the expressive forms of film (Buster Keaton, Charlie Chaplin, Karl Valentin), jazz, dance music, *cantastoria* (*Bänkelsang*), and the cabaret. The song lyrics match this collage of different styles; they are intrinsically parodic, breezy, and bawdy. As in Gay's use of ballad texts, the contrast and contradiction between the spoken texts and the songs result in a distancing of the action and undermine the formal unity of music and text. Kurt Weill's music parallels these textual strategies by producing for the actors and singers what one might call a *gestische Musik* or "music of gestures," a term familiar from Wagner criticism (see Eggers and Müller-Lindenberg). Additionally, the songs and the texts were meant to be performed by lay people. Kurt Weill's music therefore advances to a decisive element in Brecht's form of drama with its epic distancing, designed to compel the audience to take a critical stance towards the performance (Weisstien 266-99). By these means Brecht and those around him succeeded in creating a counter-model to the traditional opera form, a new genre of musical theatre (*Andraschke*), a kind of anti-opera: "Was die *Dreigroschenoper* betrifft, so ist sie —wenn nichts anderes—eher ein Versuch, der völligen Verblödung der Oper entgegenzuwirken" (Brecht, *Schriften* 24, 57).³⁸ In retrospect, it must be acknowledged that Brecht overstated the importance of the *Threepenny Opera* for the development of his later doctrine of epic theatre. Brecht's and Weill's success with their "anti-opera" can also be explained by its updating of an already popular model, in the same way that Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story* (1957) infused *Romeo and Juliet* with new life. Interestingly, Brecht's and Weill's strategies of innovation coincided with a renaissance of the baroque opera in Göttingen, especially the work of Handel. *The Threepenny Opera*, like Gay's original, therefore reacted against Handel as a prominent competitor and foil for their parodic masterpieces.³⁹

From the beginning of the opera, the many disruptions, defamiliarizations, and gestural elements in the text are directed at the audience: "Sie werden heute Abend eine Oper für Bettler sehen. Weil diese Oper so prunkvoll gedacht ist, wie nur Bettler

sie erträumen, und weil sie doch so billig sein sollte, dass Bettler sie bezahlen können, heißt sie *Dreigroschenoper*” (Weill, “Komposition” 38).⁴⁰ The general public, too, even in performances at important opera houses and in the new media, has continued to delight in this small masterwork in progress, especially appreciating the key songs such as the ballad of Mack the Knife (Prelude), the cannon song (Act I), or the song of Pirate Jenny sung by Polly Peachum (Act I). With their cheeky character and their cynical attitude, these musical hits manage to echo to perfection the 1920s’ craving for entertainment and people’s inordinate addiction to pleasure and amusement.

Some of the same factors apply to the importance of the prison in Brecht’s opera as to Gay’s *Beggar’s Opera*. Here, too, the setting among the crooks of the criminal underworld introduces the prison as a site that is implicitly conjoined with the protagonists’ sphere of life. In contrast to Gay’s piece, Peachum and Lockit, companions in crime in *The Beggar’s Opera*, are replaced by Peachum and Tiger Brown, the chief of police—a position that did not exist in the eighteenth century—and they are antagonists rather than fellow crooks, since Tiger Brown is an old pal of Macheath/Mack the Knife. As in the *Beggar’s Opera*, some of the scenes are set in prison. Thus, the fettered Macheath is conducted into the condemned hold by the constables (481). The “Ruf aus der Gruft” (“Call from the Grave”) aria underlines the dungeon scenario as a comic and inappropriate label for Macheath’s cell, at least from a contemporary 1920s’ perspective. For his public execution, Mack the Knife is being taken out of his cage (“Käfig”; 482):

Songbeleuchtung: goldenes Licht. Die Orgel wird illuminiert. Auf einer Stange kommen von oben drei Lampen herunter, und auf den Tafeln steht:

BALLADE, IN DER MACHEATH JEDERMANN ABBITTE LEISTET. (482)⁴¹

The comment that one must not make people wait, “Man kann die Leute nicht warten lassen” (482), metadramatically addresses the actual audience of the opera and opens up a parallel between the fictional crowd watching the execution and the actual public in the opera house. This strategy therefore echoes by metadramatic means the mirroring between the gangster milieu and respectable bourgeois society that is also a feature of *The Beggar’s Opera*.

Another manifest parallelism emerges in the ending of the *Threepenny Opera*. In the execution scene, which is emphasized in the performance by focusing the lights on Mack’s “Walk to the Gallows” and on the organ, Mack the Knife stands “oben auf dem Galgen” (484).⁴² The dramatic illusion of the staged plot is destroyed by Peachum, who announces that in his opera, mercy will prevail over justice, thus echoing the beggar in Gay’s ballad opera. In the third version of the opera’s ending “Drittes Dreigroschen-Finale” (485), Peachum announces that the Queen will “reitender Bote” (Kesting)⁴³ to reprieve Macheath. Tiger Brown appears on horseback, but to make matters even more ridiculous, he does not merely carry a reprieve but the news that the Queen has awarded Macheath a title, a castle, and a pension. As the final chorus in the grand finale opines, displaying their resignation at the world’s

injustices, it is necessary to show mercy: “Darum sollte man das Unrecht nicht zu sehr verfolgen” (486),⁴⁴ since such reprieves by riding messengers happen very rarely, and do so only when those oppressed by the authorities have kicked back against the powers that be: “kommen sehr selten, wenn die Getretenen widergetreten haben” (486). This undermining of the cliché of rescue at the last minute serves to produce the maximal distance between the audience and the characters on stage, a distance required in the framework of Brecht’s theory of *Verfremdung* (“alienation” or “defamiliarization”) for the epic theatre.

294 Though they are depicted in performance, the prison, the cage, and the gibbet are parodied as instruments of the state and that their reality and deterrent effects are reduced to absurdity. As does the *Beggar’s Opera*, Brecht and Weill’s *Threepenny Opera* mixes musical styles, juxtaposes speech and song, and uses the duplicity of the criminal setting as an implicit attack on politics, society, and prevailing morality. Brecht’s and Weill’s opera breaks the mimetic illusion more thoroughly than do Gay and Pepusch, thanks to metadramatic and metafictional devices such as “titles” and “tables” held up by the actors and introduced between the dialogue and the songs, a contrivance reminiscent of silent film intertitles, and by the radical mixing of styles apparent in the “*Songbeleuchtung*” (song illumination), the cinema-like passages and, more generally, in the ironies of the text and the musical persiflages.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The prison is represented on the operatic stage in a development from serious baroque operas to the tragic liberation operas of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It also has satirical and pseudorealistic manifestations in the eighteenth century and at the turn of the twentieth century, in which a more comic mode prevails, and which is conceived socially and morally in contrast to, and in competition with, the dominant forms of Western opera. In these satirical rewritings, the baroque opera and its later reincarnation in the liberation opera do not simply disappear; they are deconstructed, ridiculed, and persiflaged, yet the shape of the traditional opera form persists as a structural element that satiric revisions have sought to preserve.

Since dungeon scenes had already flourished in seventeenth-century operas, the rise of the liberation opera can be seen as a development in which the political crises of the late eighteenth century reshaped that formerly highly artificial genre, updating it to a topical form. From that perspective, Gay could be regarded as a precursor of the critique of the Baroque opera, a critique he initiated in his satire by using mock-heroic tonality. His carnivalesque criticism of the powers that be can be said to have opened the way to a serious, enlightened rebellion against tyranny, a stance that re-emerges with Dallapiccola after the horrors of National Socialism.

At the same time, the parodic versions of carcerality in Gay and Brecht coincide with the rise of the bourgeoisie in England and the rise of the working classes in

Germany, respectively. Both demographic developments make possible a satirical disparagement and vilification of the upper classes and a raising of society's moral conscience. Moreover, *The Threepenny Opera* and Gay's ballad opera, documenting the rise to power of social strata below the nobility, demonstrate how individuals from these classes end up being corrupted by their social ascent. The troubling message conveyed in these plots is the insight that the villainy formerly attributed to classical potentates—and later, in the liberation opera, the representatives of the *ancien régime*—exists in equal measure and more widely among the *hoi polloi*. From that satiric, yet ultimately very seriously moral, perspective, the prison becomes a (metaphorical) reality for citizens of all stripes and a material reality for those unlucky enough to fall foul of the crooks' power politics. This democratization of evil is further underscored by the popularization of musical genre in both Gay's and Brecht's operas.

Whereas the liberation opera, like the baroque opera and its model, the heroic drama, focused on the victims of (immoral and unscrupulous) power, the truly disquieting quality of the parodic mode lies in the inversion of the victim and perpetrator roles and in their levelling. The prison opera thus differs from the bulk of prison novels and prison plays, or plays and novels with prison settings, since these overwhelmingly focus on the suffering of the incarcerated, sometimes even when their imprisonment is merited from a legal point of view (see Alber; Fludernik; Grass). Drama and fiction lack a comparable ironic tradition, though a very few individual texts in the satirical mode no doubt exist.⁴⁵ When the powers that be are accused of injustice, this usually happens in the mode of political denunciation and displays tragic overtones. Analyzing the prison opera therefore provides an unanticipated comparative perspective of the representations and functions of prison in the imitative arts.

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NOTES

1. We are extremely grateful to Prof. Dr. Walter Bernhart (Graz) for his help in translating musicological terminology.
2. Other plays discussed in detail include Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1603); John Galsworthy's *Justice* (1910) and *The Silver Box* (1906); Susan Glaspell's *The Verge* (1921); Marsha Norman's *Getting Out* (1978); Howard Barker's *Scenes from an Execution* (1984); and Wole Soyinka's *From Zia, with Love* (1992). We can, of course, also mention Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* (1623) and much of Samuel Beckett's drama, as well as Athol Fugard's *The Island* (1973).
3. See Loughrey and Treadwell 24; letter of Swift to Gay, 30 August 1716. See also McIntosh (416-17), who emphasizes that no direct link should be established between Swift's idea and Gay's opera. The edition used is that edited by Hal Gladfelder in 2013 for Oxford University Press, though Loughrey and Treadwell's earlier edition for Penguin has also been consulted; also see Kronenberger and Goberman's 1961 facsimile edition. Please note that some of the discussion of the literary aspects of *The Beggar's Opera* may be, despite revisions, identical to passages from the section on Gay in Chapter One of *Metaphors of Confinement* (Fludernik 85-89).

4. Gilman argues that Gay parodied Handel's *Floridante*, particularly the prison scene and the parting of the lovers, as well as his *Alessandro* with its love triangle (557). However, as Lewis (238) points out, there are numerous parallels to the Restoration heroic drama as well.
5. Opera was born in the seventeenth century. Claudio Monteverdi is considered the first opera composer, beginning with *La favola d'Orfeo* (*The Fable of Orpheus*, 1607). After that, fables and Greek myths provided plots for many early operas. The first opera house was inaugurated in Venice in 1637. For a brief summary of the history of opera, see Weinstock.
6. A ballad opera consists of a mixture of songs and dialogue, with the songs derived from folk music and from melodies of contemporary operas (see Barlow; Gagey; Jacobshagen and Schmierer 52-53; Rubsamén). Winton cites Donald Grout's comment that the "ballad opera appeared as a vigorous but solitary gesture of revolt against foreign musical domination" (*John Gay* 112).
7. Winton argues against seeing *The Beggar's Opera* as a "satire on Italian opera," a view that "must be rejected or severely qualified" (*John Gay* 121), pointing out how much Gay learned from Handel.
8. According to Zach, Gay's sequel, *Polly*, was meant to counter that criticism. He also observes that the bowdlerized version of *The Beggar's Opera* of 1777-78 was not appreciated by the audience (299). The political element emerged also from readings of the play as an allegory for the Walpole government.
- 296** 9. Anticipations of this genre can be found in Elizabethan drama, for instance in Robert Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*.
10. Cf. Lewis, who considers that tradition distinct from the burlesque of Gay.
11. On the parallel between being caught in the snare of the law and the snares of marriage, see Schotland (935).
12. As Newman points out, Gay's earlier *The What D'ye Call It* (1715) also uses songs and even has a scene with a reprieve from death (277). The pantomime also included criminal argot, a feature not reproduced in *The Beggar's Opera* (Newman 277).
13. On Pepusch, see Williams.
14. See the full score (Gay ed. Kronenberger and Goberman): London 1728 (for the song tunes), 21728 (with the four-part score of the overture), 31728 (with figured bass [Generalbass] and the score of the overture). Schulz discusses the songs in full.
15. "MRS. PEACHUM. I am very sensible, Husband, that Captain Macheath is worth Money, but I am in doubt whether he hath not two or three Wives already, and then if he should dye in a Session or two, Polly's Dower would come into Dispute" (I.ix. 18). Compare Lockit's offer to Lucy to forgive her if she has gained much wealth by letting Macheath escape (III.i. 48).
16. On the original texts of the various songs used for the airs, see especially Swaen, who quotes much more text than does Halfelder.
17. On the background of the staging and the success of the opera in Lincoln's Inn Fields, see Winton (*John Gay* 94-99). See also Böker ("Kontexte").
18. "Oh what joy, in the open air / Freely to breathe again! / Up here alone is life! / The dungeon is a grave."
19. See "LEONORE (halblaut) Wie kalt es ist in diesem unterirdischen Gewölbe" (Csampai and Holland 63); "How cold it is in this underground vault". Compare No. 12 (melodrama and duet) in the vocal score (F 89-94).
20. "God! What darkness this! What terrifying silence!"
21. "fragrant like a rose."
22. "sweet solace."

23. “kingdom of God.”
24. PIZARRO. He dies—But first he shall be told
 Who'll tear to pieces his proud heart.
 The dark veil of revenge be torn.
 Look here! Deceive me you could not!
 Pizarro, whom you hoped to bring to fall,
 Pizarro, whom you ought to fear,
 As avenger he faces you.
 FLORESTAN. A murderer faces me!
 PIZARRO. Once more you shall recall
 What you have done to me;
 Only one short moment
 And this steel—
 LEONORA. Stand back!
 FLORESTAN. Oh God!
 ROCCO. What's up?
 LEONORA. Pierce
 You must first my heart;
 Death I have sworn to you
 For your murderous mind.
 PIZARRO. Madman!
 ROCCO. Stop it!
 PIZARRO. Punished he shall be!
 LEONORA. Kill first his wife!

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The English translation of this and the following passages from *Fidelio* comes from opera-guide.ch.

25. CHOR. Wer ein holdes Weib errungen, / Stimm' in unsern Jubel ein! / Nie wird es zu hoch besungen,
 / Retterin des Gatten sein.
 LEONORE. Liebend sei es hoch besungen: / Florestan ist wieder mein!
 ALLE. Nie wird es zu hoch besungen, / Retterin des Gatten sein. (51)

English translation:

- CHORUS. Who calls a faithful wife his own, / Join in our song of joy! / Never be it praised too highly
 / Your husband's saviour to become.
 LEONORA. Lovingly I sing with joy: / Florestan is mine again!
 ALL. Never be it praised too highly / Your husband's saviour to become.
26. “You unlocked this brave man's grave / Now take his chains off him.” See the vocal score Nr. 16
 (Finale) (F 128).

27. This is not recitative in the traditional form, but “Muori!” (meaning “Die!”) is in fact written without
 musical notation, hence spoken, and followed by “con ferocia: muori dannato!” (“Yes, you must
 die!”), including musical notes. See the vocal score (Gurgel 224).

28. “a horrible cell in the dungeon of the official in Saragossa” [sic].

29. “a figure, a shadow, or a spectre.”

30. “reawaken[s] [his] sense of what the light is.”

31. “symbiosis of diatonics and dodecaphony.”

32. “Darkness. Silence. As within a tomb.”

33. “in a gesture of love for all humankind.”

34. (*The Prisoner, recognizing the voice of the Jailer, utters an inarticulated sound, shocked with fear.*)
 THE GRAND INQUISITOR (*with a tone of most sincere compassion, still holding the Prisoner fast.*)
 Upon the threshold of your salvation

why should you be ungrateful and want to leave us?

(*He opens his arms. The Prisoner, after a long pause, moves rapidly, as if struck by a sudden realization, towards the proscenium.*)

THE PRISONER. Ah, how the light dawns! Now I see! Now I see!

It is hoping ... which is the final torture ...

Of all that I have suffered, the most dreadful ...

(*A ruddy light begins to flicker from the rear of the scene; the Prisoner turns, horrified.*)

The stake! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! (*Il Prigioniero* 42)

35. "Freedom?" Interestingly, this ending is different from the short story. The prisoner first delights in nature, as in the opera, picturing himself escaping through the mountains:
 "La porte s'était ouverte sur des jardins, sous une nuit d'étoiles! sur le printemps, la liberté, la vie! Cela donnait sur la campagne prochaine, se prolongeant vers les sierras dont les sinueuses lignes bleues se profilaient sur l'horizon;—là, c'était le salut!—Oh! s'enfuir! Il courrait toute la nuit sous ces bois de citronniers dont les parfums lui arrivaient. Une fois dans les montagnes, il serait sauvé!" (Villiers, "La torture" 365).
 English translation:
 "The door opened upon gardens, under a night of stars – upon spring, liberty, life! The gardens gave access to the neighbouring country that stretched away to the sierras, whose sinuous white lines stood out in the profile on the horizon. There lay liberty! Oh, to fly! He would run all night under those woods of citrons, whose perfume intoxicated him. Once among the mountains, he would be saved." ("A Torture").
 However, in the story, the focalization then shifts back to the inquisitor.
36. On Hauptmann's involvement in the writing of the *Threepenny Opera*, see Parker (244-46) and Kebir.
37. The edition used here is "*Die Dreigroschenoper*" in *Gesammelte Werke in 20 Bd.: Stücke 2*. (1977).
38. "As for the *Threepenny Opera*, it is an attempt to counteract the utter cretinism induced by the opera."
39. For a general appreciation of the opera, see Kopf.
40. "Tonight you will see an opera for beggars. Since this opera has been conceived as being as grandiose in the way only beggars could imagine it, and because it should also be cheap enough for beggars to attend, it is called the *Threepenny-Opera*."
41. "Song illumination: a golden light. The organ is lit up. Three lights come down on a bar from above, and on a board is written: THE I-FOR-ONE SONG" (Bentley 13).
42. "on top of the gibbet box."
43. "send a messenger on horseback."
44. "Therefore one should not prosecute crime too thoroughly."
45. Such examples include the comical use of prison metaphor in Charles Johnson's *Middle Passage* (1990; cf. Fludernik 268-70), and Ken Saro-Wiwa's burlesque portrait of Nigeria as a prison and the prison as an epitome of Nigeria in *Prisoners of Jebs* (1988) and *Pita Dumbrok's Prison* (1991).

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