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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
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AN ARABIAN NIGHT
A ONE-ACT CHAMBER OPERA

A DOCUMENT
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

By
BRYAN STANLEY
Norman, Oklahoma
2002
AN ARABIAN NIGHT
A ONE-ACT CHAMBER OPERA

A Document APPROVED FOR THE
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

The project is comprised of two parts: a full score of a one-act comic opera entitled *An Arabian Night*, based on an original libretto; and a supporting written document entailing analytical and dramatic concerns of the work. The opera is scored for approximately eighteen singers and chamber orchestra, including four violins, two violas, two cellos, one double bass, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, two horns, harp, and percussion. Performance length is approximately sixty minutes, and the act is comprised of six scenes and a prologue. The opera is loosely based on a story collected by Thomas F. Burton, an English historian, entitled *Supplemental Tales to the One-Thousand and One Arabian Nights: Prince Ahmad and the Fairy Peri-Banu.*

This opera is designed for professional opera companies and college opera programs. The conventional treatment of the genre will allow the possibility of preparation and performance within a production period of two to four months. Though challenging, the score does not demand unusual or unconventional vocal techniques so as to not require inordinate preparation time for the performers. One exception is the throaty drone in Scene Three, comically intoned by strolling Tibetan

---

1 Burton, Richard F. *Supplemental Nights to the Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night.* (London: By the Burton Club, 1900), 4:419-487, 600-616.
monks. The opera contains a plethora of roles, as is often the stipulation for any opera to be performed in a collegiate opera program.

Changes in stage scenery are intended to be efficient for ease of performance. The music is continuous, allowing smooth musical transitions from one scene to another. The set can be minimal, but if stage design is more elaborate, an optional repeat is supplied for the orchestral interlude between Scenes Five and Six to allow for a longer scene change.

Analytical Commentary of the Score

The first portion of the commentary examines the overall shape of the score. Afterwards, several specific areas in the opera are discussed, citing salient points pertaining to formal structure, analytical details, and other practical concerns as they relate to the drama and to an effective performance of the work. Choices of specific areas examined in this study were based upon the following criteria. The selected sections are arias or ensemble pieces, or the sections occur at a critical moment in the drama. Some of the discussion does include overviews of entire scenes. Several analytical charts are supplied to enhance and supplement information on each given musical section. Appendix A supplies several important motives in the score.
CHAPTER TWO
SYNOPSIS OF LIBRETTO

The plot of the fantasy tale is simplistic and contains a convenient and sweeping happy resolution of the plot, thus making the story especially accessible to a younger audience. Aside from a professional or collegiate production, the story and a piano reduction of the score, with possible abridgements, offer possibilities for an opera community outreach program.

The casting of voice types is listed in the following table.

Table 1. The cast and voice types in An Arabian Night.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Voice Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Sultan</td>
<td>Baritone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheherazade</td>
<td>Mezzo-soprano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The King of Bangladesh</td>
<td>Bass-baritone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess Strahl eines späten Mittwochnachmittags, his half-German ward</td>
<td>Lyric soprano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nanny, the princess’s attendant</td>
<td>Mezzo-soprano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Husayn</td>
<td>Baritone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Ali</td>
<td>Baritone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Ahmad</td>
<td>Tenor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Vizier, assistant to the King</td>
<td>Tenor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Judge</td>
<td>Speaking role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairy Peri-Banu</td>
<td>Coloratura soprano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tibetan shopkeeper</td>
<td>Tenor (or soprano)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burmese Merchant</td>
<td>Baritone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four harem girls ( four women in Baghdad)</td>
<td>Three sopranos &amp; a mezzo-soprano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other street criers and court attendants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Prologue**

In the bedroom of an Indian palace the Sultan beckons his legendary heiress to recite another one of her tales. As Sheherazade begins her story in an aria, the audience is drawn to the mainstage where her story unfolds.

**Scene One**

Sheherazade's tale is set in a royal palace in Bangladesh. Despite the harem girls' protests, the King of Bangladesh calls upon his half-German ward, Princess Strahl, to sing to the court. After the princess relates a short, fanciful tale, the King ponders to which of his three love-struck royal sons he should grant marriage to the princess. At the Vizier's recommendation, they try an archery competition to determine a winner. Prince Husayn and Prince Ahmad tie when their arrows fly the same distance, and Ali's arrow disappears, thanks to the magical mischief of Fairy Peri-Banu, who secretly has her eyes set on Prince Husayn. Nobody seems to understand that Princess Strahl desires Ahmad; the resourceful Vizier suggests another contest. He suggests that the three sons depart separately to foreign lands and bring back the rarest wonder for their King. The court breaks off, and the princes agree that when they return from their quests, they will rejoin at a fork in the road still some distance away from the palace.
Scene Two

As Sheherazade continues to spin her tale, the scene changes to a Baghdad street market. Prince Husayn wanders into a throng of vendors. He purchases (from an attractive lady merchant) a flying, magic carpet. Unbeknownst to him, it was Fairy Peri-Banu who sold him the carpet. The prince falls in love with her and promises to return to Baghdad.

Scene Three

Prince Ali goes to a Tibetan marketplace and finds his arrow stuck in a shopkeeper’s gilded apple. The apple can magically cure any disease with a whiff of its scent. Prince Ali is skeptical at first, so the Tibetan merchant offers to bill him later.

Scene Four

From a corner of the stage, the audience sees Ahmad excitedly admiring his newly purchased magic telescope, sold to him by a Burmese Merchant.

Scene Five

The brothers reunite at a chosen fork in the road to display their treasures. Prince Ali tries Ahmad’s telescope. Looking hundreds of miles away, he sees the princess on her deathbed. The distraught trio devise a plan and race home on Husayn’s flying carpet.
Scene Six

In a bedchamber, the royal Nanny and King fret over the sick princess. The princes return, and Ali revives the princess with his golden apple. The princes present their gifts, and the King awards Ali the bride, but not without a degree of uncertainty. An uproar ensues, and the magic fairy swoops in. She chastises Husayn for his tardiness, and punishes him with a marriage proposal. Husayn is only delighted. The Tibetan shopkeeper also appears and demands Ali's hand in marriage to his attractive daughter as payment for the potent apple. Prince Ahmad is left to marry Princess Strahl, and the two of them sing in bliss. General rejoicing concludes the opera.
CHAPTER THREE

ANALYTICAL REMARKS

The one-act opera is organized into a prologue and six scenes with a performance time of approximately sixty minutes. Interspersed are two intermezzi, one located between Scenes One and Two and the other at the bisection of Scene Six. An orchestral interlude follows Scene Five. Each intermezzo revisits the scenario between the Sultan and Sheherazade that first takes place in the Prologue. The recurrence of these two characters helps to unify the score and their continual dialogue reminds the audience that the mainstage action is a pictorial representation of Sheherazade’s narrative.

Fig. 1. Relative durations of the scenes in An Arabian Night, including tonalities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prologue</th>
<th>Intermezzo 1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6-part 1</th>
<th>6-part 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G#-D^b</td>
<td>D^b-D-G^b-D^b</td>
<td>A-a-G-G^b-a</td>
<td>D^b-E^b</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C^b-D-C^b</td>
<td>F^b-E</td>
<td>G^b-B^b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A= Prologue  I= Intermezzo  *Climax of the score

0 min. → 20 ← 40 → 60

Scene four, set in Burma, has the brevity of the intermezzi and serves to move the dramatic pacing between Scenes Three and Five. Scenes One and Six, the longest and most complex scenes in the score, are set in the royal palace in Bangladesh.

7
The opera features frequent modulation, chromaticism, and fields of implicit tonality. (Traditional roman numerals are used to cite these implied tonalities in the further illustrations.) Frequent harmonic modulations occur in support of the action on stage. For example, a Wagnerian bit of harmonic twist underscores the excitement brewing for the princes’ upcoming treasure hunt, realized with a deceptive shift from B-flat major to B major (see figure 2). In sharp contrast, the opening measures of Scene Three feature static harmonic motion in a repetitive triadic figure designed to conjure exoticism in the Tibetan scene. See pages 181-184 in Appendix B.

Fig. 2. Harmonic modulation, Scene One, mm. 416-418.
Such as the opening of Scene Three, the score contains a number of tonal oases, short episodes written in a clear-cut tonality. The presence of these various oases within a greater, chromatic environment lends a tonal collage effect that underscores the fantastical nature of the story. D-flat and G-flat are the most commonly recurring tonalities, thereby supplying tonal cohesion to the score. Tonal oases often feature an aria or ensemble piece marked by traditional cadences and important secondary keys, (thus making a concert performance of the excerpt manageable). Often, a tonal oasis can be found at a moment of dramatic respite. For instance, in Scene One, after the harem girls complain incessantly, Princess Strahl’s sprightly aria in D-flat major settles the court. The first and second strophes end with an authentic cadence and feature motion toward and away from the subdominant.

Ahmad’s aria and half of the octet are also set in D-flat. These pieces will be further discussed. Figure three lists several tonal oases in the score.

Fig. 3. Pieces as tonal oases in An Arabian Night and their keys, and the dramatic event which is underscored.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Musical section</th>
<th>Location in score</th>
<th>Tonal center(s)</th>
<th>Important cadences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sheherazade’s aria</td>
<td>No. 3</td>
<td>C-sharp/D-flat and B pedal tones</td>
<td>polytonal material, open-ended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess Strahl’s aria</td>
<td>No. 8</td>
<td>D-flat and F</td>
<td>No. 9 and m. 210-217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octet</td>
<td>No. 19</td>
<td>D-flat and G-sharp</td>
<td>m. 399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princes’ Scene I trio</td>
<td>No. 24</td>
<td>G-flat</td>
<td>m. 455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmad’s aria</td>
<td>m. 757</td>
<td>D-flat and E-flat</td>
<td>m. 788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love duet, Ahmad and</td>
<td>No. 64</td>
<td>G-flat</td>
<td>m. 1148-1149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final chorus</td>
<td>No. 65</td>
<td>B-flat</td>
<td>Last measures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The tonalities cited in figure 3 comprise a pentatonic pitch set. Interestingly, the essential Tibetan merchant, who sells Ali the golden magic apple, possesses a pentatonic theme (see figure 4). The key of D-flat is especially emphasized, a tonality associated with the princes' romantic destinies. B-flat is used as a framing device in the opera, as the tonality of the final ensemble, the same initial bass note that starts Scene One, and the same added harmonic tone in the first measures of the opera.

Fig. 4. Pentatonicism in the Tibetan Merchant's music, Scene Three, mm. 637-644.
The tonal oases also have a greater dramatic purpose in the opera. In many moments of tonal clarity, an underlying moral theme in the opera surfaces: love in its various forms, fraternal, brotherly, and romantic, ultimately insures the good fortune of the opera’s protagonists. This phenomenon is best exemplified by the common key and melodic fragments shared between the brothers’ Scene One trio (No. 24), and Princess Strahl and Ahmad’s concluding love duet in Scene Six (No. 64).

The Treatment of Text

The sung word is usually treated more lyrically in the more poetic portions of the libretto. Most parts of the libretto resemble regular prose or dialogue, and they are set in a more declamatory vocal style. In some instances, the text is treated in a recitative-like style, where the text is sung in a rhythm emulating natural speech. Figure 5 shows the recitative style as sung by Sheherazade at the end of her aria.

Fig. 5. Sheherazade’s aria, recitative style, mm. 77-79.

In many instances, the orchestra engages in word painting. In the Prologue, circular, contrapuntal figuration in the orchestra illustrates the Sultan’s “lazy smoke rings” (see figure 6). The theme that begins the opera is worked into this counterpoint. Sometimes melismatic vocal lines emphasize the text. In figure 7,
Husayn and the Fairy sing the word “flying” on a melisma, thereby capturing the wonder and excitement of their magic carpet.

**Fig. 6. Word painting in the orchestra, Prologue, mm. 40-43.**

![Musical notation](image)

The vocal treatment of the text helps to reinforce mood, dramatic pacing, and specific musical effects in the score. These various treatments of the text reflect the fluctuating dramatic dynamics of the libretto.
Princess Strahl’s Aria

Princess Strahl’s aria is an entertaining narrative for the court. The aria is accompanied by a frothy orchestral accompaniment scored for high muted strings, harp, and running filigree in the wind parts. In casting her character, the singer should be an ingénue, vivacious and petite to best match the Princess’s musicality.

The princess’s narrative foreshadows and parallels the opera’s plot. Her imaginary subject, Princess Periz, must choose, like Princess Strahl, a husband from three suitors. In her story, Princess Strahl describes how these three suitors must journey to foreign countries to find a rare gift. She sings of the “poet” who wins Periz’s hand, implying her preference for Ahmad, the most poetic of the three brothers. At every reference to the poet, the music shifts from a metric feel of three into a feel of one, as if her thoughts of him increase her heartbeat. Her aria supplies symbolic opportunities for clever staging as she sings, gestures, and interacts with her courtly audience.

Through the aria’s tonal allusions, the princess’s story reveals several other connections to the opera’s plot. Strophes one and two start in the subdominant, G-flat, the same key of the Scene Six love duet that the princess and Ahmad blissfully sing. Also, the direct modulations into F Major reflect the whimsy of Strahl’s story telling.

The princess’ aria contains three strophes and a diversionary, developmental midsection. Strophes one and two are each eighteen measures long. The beginning of the third strophe is truncated, dovetailing directly out of a short, developmental section that precedes it. The remainder of the third and last strophe is extended to
Figure 8. Princess Strahl's aria, strophic design, Scene One, mm. 127-217.

A1       A2       B       A3

D$: IV............ F$: IV-I-D$: IV-I etc.

Allegretto

no. 6  9  10  11  12

m. 127 132 137 143 150 156 167 174 189 195 201 213 217

Intro. 1st strophe  Intro  2nd strophe  Dev. section  3rd strophe (extended) harem girls (from offstage)

c#: I-i-VII
e:V
F$: IV----Db  iii------I

deceptive

cadence

(cropped)
emphasize the moral of her tale (see figure 8). At the end of each strophe, such as at No. 9, a passing augmented triad (F-A/Bbb-Db) forecasts the harmonic color used at the magic fairy's entrance (No. 16). The princess's closing vocal flourish is similar to the fairy's upcoming melismatic passages, thereby hinting at the fairy's future importance to the plot. The descending, dotted melodic motive, first present in measure 137, frequently recurs in other places in the opera. Musical material from Princess Strahl's aria also reappears in the last scene during the triumphal hailing of the fairy and her newly betrothed, Prince Husayn. The reuse of the Princess's music in Scene Six signals that the events forecasted in her aria are coming to fruition.

The Role of the Vizier in Scene One

The Vizier is a dramatic catalyst in Scene One, for the King always depends on the Vizier's resourcefulness and ideas to determine the princes' course. After the Vizier's motive makes an initial appearance alongside the King's motive in the scene's opening, the Vizier's motive reoccurs in three different musical transformations as the scene progresses (see figure 9).

The Vizier's first piece of advice to the King is to conduct an archery competition for the princes. As the Vizier gives his instructions, his motive receives its first musical transformation where the cello and violin "haughtily" play a simple, two-voice allemande (m. 245). In the motive's second musical transformation, when the competition goes awry (when Ali's arrow is lost), the Vizier interjects to police the situation (m. 341). His music upsets the fairly regular metric pattern, and the orchestra is infused with renewed counterpoint and chromaticism that reworks his
Figure 9. The Vizier's music in Scene One, mm. 245-412.

THE ARROW CONTEST

Vizier instructs the princes

TRANSFORMATION #1

Interpolated arietta for airy's 1st entry. Stage action is frozen.

Contest resumes

Vizier & his rules.

TRAN. #2

OCTET

Vizier's new idea

TRANSFORMATION #3

Vizier

Haughtily Presto

Presto Slow Andantino Agitato Moderato

no. 13b 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22

m. 245 271 292 320 341 356 400 412

D G am (whole-tone) am G D♭ g♯m D
motive in diminution. This transformation of his motive underscores the Vizier's
tendency for the verbose and didactic. The listener can hear the wheels of the
Vizier's mind at work. After the octet ends in a flourish without an answer from the
King, the Vizier's motive receives its third transformation (m. 400). His music is still
contrapuntal, but more diatonic, lyric, and sweeping. The Vizier devises a new and
brilliant strategy and implores the King to send the princes on a long journey. He
punctuates his idea by singing a high B, marking the climax of Scene One, because
this cadence with the B releases the tension and puzzlement experienced by all on
stage. The high B signals a plan that will work for the princes.

The vocal demands placed on the Vizier underscore his dramatic significance
in Scene One. The role of Vizier requires a particularly strong character tenor, with
less of the lyric qualities needed for the role of Prince Ahmad.

The Octet

The dramatic purpose of the octet is to reveal in larger dimension the conflicts
brewing amongst the various characters, and to express with resonance the greater
dramatic problem, that is, how to properly broker a groom for Princess Strahl. When
everyone is singing, the octet dramatically organizes the ensemble into two opposing
forces. The lyrically expressed desires for love and tranquility, as wished by the
Princess, the Nanny, and the Fairy, are juxtaposed with the tussle of the vying Princes
and the frustrated Vizier. The textural dimension of the ensemble writing represents
the characters' conflicts. The long, lyric lines first sung by Princess Strahl and
Ahmad, and later sung by all the women in homophonic style, contrast with the men’s concurrent, short, angular declamations.

The octet is comprised of two broad sections, *Andantino* and *agitato*. The octet begins with the courtiers wandering about glumly for the lack of an archery winner. The orchestra’s lilting dotted rhythm would seem inappropriate with the despondent mood, but the musical choice allows the audience to crack a smile at the characters’ quandary. Dramatic drive is slowed to give the audience a view through the eyes of Fairy Peri-Banu, as she gets to witness everyone’s reaction to the sudden turn of events she had instigated.

The first half of the octet resembles a nineteenth-century cavatina in the *bel canto* style. The latter half possesses an agitated tempo like a *cabaletta*, and contains stratified vocal part writing and a bass line accompaniment that outlines harmonic ideas first presented in the ‘missing arrow’ music (No. 18). This choice of bass material underscores the fact that it was the tampered archery competition that has precipitated the current quandary. The forward direction of the octet is made possible, in part, by the long-range crescendo and gradual, textural accumulation of vocal parts, all of which conclude on an open-ended climactic cadence in measure 399 (see figure 10). By bisecting the octet as such, the octet’s drama is organized into two phases; inward thought and reflection, followed by action and dispute amongst the characters.

The vocal writing is grouped in the same way the characters are placed on stage. Princess Strahl stands with the Nanny; the Vizier stands near them. Husayn, Ali and Ahmad stand together. The befuddled king is set apart from the group, and
Figure 10. The octet: dynamics, tonalities and graph of the eight overlapping vocal parts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fairy</th>
<th>Pr. Strahl</th>
<th>Nanny</th>
<th>Ahmad</th>
<th>Vizier</th>
<th>Husayn</th>
<th>Ali</th>
<th>King</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ m_p \quad \langle m_f \rangle \quad m_f \quad m_p \quad f \quad f f \]

Andantino
\[ n. \ 19 \quad m. \ 356 \quad 368 \quad 372 \quad 382 \quad 388 \quad 390 \quad 396 \quad 397 \]

Li' stesso tempo
\[ g^\# : \text{N} \quad \text{iv N} \quad \text{I III N III V/iv iv Vii/V V i} \]
the Fairy looks on from her hiding spot on stage. At the end of the octet, the dramatic tension is only halfway resolved. (The resounding cadence to E-flat is immediately undone by an angular, chromatic twist into A-flat minor.) Shortly after the octet, the brothers are satisfied when the final method of competition is determined. However, the greater issue of who is to marry remains completely unresolved, and Ahmad’s and the Princess’s personal desires remain unquenched.

Scene Two: Prince Husayn and the Fairy Peri-Banu

Scene Two is comprised of a compact sonata-allegro form and a duettino. However, the tonic-dominant polarity of keys typical of a traditional sonata is replaced with semi-tonal and stepwise polarity. Long pedal points establish the tonality for each theme. The harmonic color of Scene Two is imbued with bitonal suggestions, as the opening oboe melody suggests a quasi-C major melody over a D-flat harmony. Many whole-tone patterns as well are present, indicative of the Fairy’s presence on stage. The scene is rhythmically driven by an accelerating broken tetrachord ostinato that leads the listener from the first intermezzo into Scene Two. The oboe carries the first theme, a syncopated, locrian melody illustrative of the hubbub in the streets of Baghdad (see figure 11). By transposing this melodic strand a half-step, all of the important tonal centers of the sonata and duettino are revealed (see also figure 12). The tempo and general animated character of the sonata-allegro also pictorialize the energetic flirtation that lies just underneath the surface between Prince Husayn and Fairy Peri-Banu.
The four sheiks introduce the short second theme made of oscillating minor triads in the harp, derivative of the tritone component of the fairy's whole-tone scale. In addition, the harem girls' motive that first appeared in Scene One is an important subsidiary theme of the sonata (m. 514). The lustful frenzy of the harem girls is translated into the fairy's flirtatious nature by a literal reappearance of this motive.

The sonata section is designed to complement the duettino, which acts like a coda to the sonata-allegro. In the recapitulation, when the fairy charms Husayn with her whole-tone magic, "Let me see your eyes," the duet theme is pre-echoed by the violins sul ponticello. Unlike the traditional sonata structure, the recapitulation does not lie in the original tonal level, D-flat, but rather, lies in the upcoming key of the duettino, E.

The duettino theme has a melodic shape similar to the princes' trio melody that closed Scene One. This thematic resemblance parallels the princes' brotherhood with the warm, romantic union of Prince Husayn and Fairy Peri-Banu. Both musical sections are tonal oases, and the parallel connection drawn between the
Figure 12. Formal design of Scene Two: a sonata-allegro form and binary *duettino*, mm. 478-586.
two further shows the underlying moral theme of love that continually surfaces in the opera.

**Scene Five: Ahmad’s Aria**

Scene Five is filled with a wide range of emotion. The brothers’ despair for the ailing princess, at No. 45, contrasts with the lyric euphoria of Ahmad’s exuberant high B-flat, in measure 787 of his aria. Ahmad, the poetic prince, sings the aria when the brothers meet at a fork in the road. His music possesses the most languid gesture and sustained line of the opera, and his aria stands as the lyric highpoint of the score. Ahmad’s musical sincerity intends to convince the audience of the romantic fortune he deserves. At Number 41, Ahmad reveals his telescope, Husayn and Ali ridicule Ahmad, and the arpeggiated ‘apple’ motive in the orchestra harkens back to Ali’s encounter in Scene Three. The orchestra is musically informing the audience of Ali’s golden apple still hidden in his bag (see figure 13).

Ahmad’s deep feelings for Princess Strahl are reflected in the aria’s warm, tonal landscape. The tonal centers of the aria form a whole-tone aggregate (D^b-E^b-F-G-A-B), a musical ingredient also associated with the fairy’s magic and her flying carpet. Figure 13 illustrates the vocal range of the tenor aria and summarizes its melodic shape from phrase to phrase. Ahmad’s first phrases accompany the orchestra’s theme (No. 42). When the aria modulates to A major, both the voice and orchestra have sweeping phrases in unison. The melodic apex at the word “ecstasy” is carefully prepared by a long harmonic progression in measures 778-782. The voice and orchestra rejoin again with the melody, a melody that was forecasted in similar
Figure 13. Prince Ahmad’s aria and the remainder of Scene Five, mm.748-828.

Vocal contour of aria

Gradual chromatic descent of 3rds

emotion of scene

high point

most despair
lyric utterances by other characters in Scene One (No. 7 and No. 23). The reappearance of the melody indicates Ahmad’s romantic destiny.

The drama escalates at measure 790 when Ali spots the ailing princess through Ahmad’s magic telescope. He follows his exclamations of horror with a lachrymose melody, bringing much contrast of musical motion to the scene. At Number 46, the mood turns abruptly. Ali wields his magic apple in hope, crying “Wait! I can save her!” The end of the scene is crowned with a vigorous orchestral interlude where several instruments vigorously play the arrow motive, marking the musical climax of the opera. The orchestra propels Scene Five directly into Scene Six.

The Princess’s Rescue in Scene Six

The beginning of Scene Six presents the darkest moment of an otherwise happy story. An eerie bitonal cadence is played twice to set the mood. An insistent syncopated figure in the accompaniment, a clashing A and B-flat (the same clash heard in the preceding cadences) heightens the nervous tension and anxiety over the dying princess. The syncopated figure obscures the duet’s tonality. In measure 857, a new syncopated figure in the orchestra emulates the Princess’s shallow, tentative breaths.

At measure 862, the tonality crystallizes as the King and Nanny recall the Princess’s moments at court. Once again, the key of G-flat is associated with characters’ loving thoughts. Soon after, their despair returns at the words “do not die.” The A/B-flat semitone reasserts itself (mm. 873-875).
Figure 14. The beginning of Scene Six to Princess Strahl's rescue, mm. 848-903.

*Weak tonal references above pedal point*
The King and Nanny duet and melodramatic rescue contain several tonal surprises. The duet ends unpredictably on an unsettling open fifth and added sixth (m. 483) that impresses upon the listener the gravity of the situation. A horn fanfare heralds the princes' return, jutting the tonality up a semitone. A long tremolo and open-ended augmented triad in the orchestra accompany the rescue on stage. The harmonic suspense finally eases into E major when the Princess sniffs the magic apple. The harmonic color refreshes the morbid air upon the Princess's miraculous recovery.

The King's Decision

The princes' presentation of gifts to the King is musically enriched with a tapestry of recalled themes and motives. At measure 910, the octet's music reappears draped with musical fragments from Tibet, the fork, and the arrow contest. At No. 53, the long C-sharp pedal returns, and the members of the court pause and stare expectantly at the King, who must pick the winning groom. The princes sing fragments of their brotherly Scene One trio, an ironic musical choice considering the intense competitiveness of the moment. The princes, in an effort to appease the King, feign brotherly harmony. Their hope and anxiousness is reflected by a series of modulatory phrases placed over the C-sharp pedal. The King awkwardly contemplates his momentous decision as the first violin bows its version of the princes' trio (No. 53). When the King chooses Ali, the harmony rests in C, and Ali's elated motive bubbles in the low string pizzicato (m. 965). However, his decision,
accompanied by an abrupt chromatic shift and new meter, shatters any hope of resolution. The ensuing vocal ensemble is full of cross-rhythms and dramatic instability as the music ascends sequentially by half-steps. Woodwind chirps, horn calls, and string arpeggiations alternatively bowed and slurred accompany. The Fairy's timely return, accompanied by surprise resolutions in F major and E-flat major, arrests the frenzy.

After the Fairy and Tibetan merchant establish their marital affairs with Husayn and Ali, Ahmad is conveniently left to marry Princess Strahl. Their brief duet consummates their betrothal and the opera's plot. The duet is another musical reprise of the princes' trio, but this time, brotherly love is transposed into romantic love, a tonal oasis set in G-flat major. Measure 1157 contains the most vivid of authentic cadences in the opera in preparation for the choral finale.

The Orchestration

In the interest of production cost and performance space, the chamber opera employs just sixteen players. With available resources, the number of string players can be expanded. An Arabian Night can be performed on a full stage or in a studio theater. The score requires a minimum of seven string players, including four violinists for the divisi sections. There is one player each for flute/piccolo, clarinet, oboe, bassoon, and horns. The additional horn was chosen to add dynamic power, range, and richer harmonic texture in the orchestration. The harp is utilized to fill in texture, and is useful in rendering some passages of pianistic genesis. The percussionist is given an arsenal of smaller instruments in the interest of limited
studio space, and sometimes the percussionist must switch quickly between instruments.

Table 2. Instrumentation of An Arabian Night.

- 1 flute/piccolo
- 1 oboe
- 1 clarinet in B♭
- 1 bassoon
- 2 horns in F

Harp

Percussion:
- Suspended cymbal
- Crash cymbals
- Splash cymbal
- Finger cymbals
- Floor tom
- 3 Bongos
- Snare drum
- Tam-tam
- Gongs (various sizes)
- Bell tree
- Wind chimes
- Claves
- Slap boards
- Triangle
- Glockenspiel
- Metal rod, drumsticks, brushes, mallets, etc.

Strings

Balance between the stage and orchestra becomes especially sensitive in the context of a studio theater. Monitoring the horns’ range is key to handling the problem. In some fleeting instances of climax, the orchestra musically overtakes the singers. The listener hears both ends of the orchestra’s dynamic spectrum at the
princess's entrance. A cymbal crash, *fortissimo* tremolos in the strings, and octave horns herald the Vizier's announcement (m. 109). Soon after, when Princess Strahl steps from her carriage, the orchestration thins to muted strings, muted horn, flute and high harp that delicately color the moment (m. 118-121).

The solo instruments are not treated as character specific. While a particular motive is associated with a particular character, several different instruments may play that motive. At the beginning of Scene One the King's dotted, chromatic motive is exchanged between the violins and winds to better reflect the buzzing atmosphere of the court. Husayn's five-note motive makes appearances in the flute, violins, and oboe.

The orchestration is designed for the performance quality of a professional group or an exceptionally proficient graduate ensemble. While the style of orchestration is fairly conservative, there are dexterous demands placed on the players. The running thirty-second notes in the orchestral interlude present ensemble challenges. Other challenging rapid passages include the arpeggios in clarinet and oboe, mm. 1111-1112, and the chromatically descending passage work in winds and strings at measure 1115. At No. 48, the horns require good tonguing and range in their fanfare. In Scene Two, the cellist needs a good pizzicato technique, and the oboist must be able to carry well in his/her extended solo. The harp player has a significant cadenza at No. 16 to support the mystical entrance of the Fairy.

The opera possesses idiomatic challenges for instrumentalists and singers alike, and a number of arias and ensembles. The one-act score, with its large cast of
male and female roles, offers a light, fantastical story for prospective directors in search of a new chamber opera.
APPENDIX A

TABLE OF IMPORTANT MOTIVES IN AN ARABIAN NIGHT

Flying arrow motive 1

Flying arrow motive 2

Fairy's motive

King's motive

Harem girls' motive 1

Harem girls' motive 2

Vizier's motive

Ahmad's motive

Princess Strahl's motive 1

Princess Strahl's motive 2

Husayn's motive

Ali's motive

Love motive

Magic apple motive

Tibetan merchant motive

Fairy magic motive

Flying carpet motive
APPENDIX B

FULL SCORE

**Cast**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Sultan</td>
<td>Baritone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheherazade</td>
<td>Mezzo-soprano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The King of Bangladesh</td>
<td>Bass-baritone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess Strahl eines späten Mittwochnachmittags, his half-German ward</td>
<td>Lyric soprano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nanny, the princess’s attendant</td>
<td>Mezzo-soprano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Husayn</td>
<td>Baritone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Ali</td>
<td>Baritone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Ahmad</td>
<td>Tenor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Vizier, assistant to the King</td>
<td>Tenor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Judge</td>
<td>Speaking role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairy Peri-Banu</td>
<td>Coloratura soprano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tibetan shopkeeper</td>
<td>Tenor (or soprano)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burmese Merchant</td>
<td>Baritone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four harem girls (four women in Baghdad)</td>
<td>Three sopranos &amp; a mezzo-soprano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other street criers and court attendants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instrumentation

1 flute/piccolo
1 oboe
1 clarinet in B♭
1 bassoon
2 horns in F

Harp

Percussion:
  Suspended cymbal
  Crash cymbals
  Splash cymbal
  Finger cymbals
  Floor tom
  3 Bongos
  Snare drum
  Tam-tam
  Gongs (various sizes)
  Bell tree
  Wind chimes
  Claves
  Slap boards
  Triangle
  Glockenspiel
  Metal rod, drumsticks, brushes, mallets, etc.

2 1st violins
2 2nd violins
2 violas
2 violoncellos
Double bass
AN ARABIAN NIGHT
a chamber opera in one act

Words and music by Bryan Stanley

Prelude

Allegretto

Flute
Oboe
Clarinet (Bb)
Baritone
Horn 1 in F
Horn 2 in F
Percussion
Harp
1st Violins
2nd Violins
Violas
Violoncello
Cello
PROLOGUE: CURTAIN

Largando \( \approx \frac{3}{4} \)

It is morning on the Sultan's bedchamber.
He awakes to hear amongst one of Sherezade's tales.

Now my
Ob.
Bn.
Ha.1
Hn.2
Pete.
Hfl.
Sh.
Su.

She-her-e-zade.

spin your yam as...
smoke my favorite pipe and the lazy smoke rings rise in the morning
My lord and master...

"rit."

"a tempo"

Fl.
Ob.
Bb Cl.
Bsn.
Hn. 1
Hn. 2
Perc.

My lord and mas-ter...
In times long ago there was a great king who be-
More-over, he had a half-German ward named Princess Strahl...
meaning. 'Light of a Late Wednesday Afternoon.' She was the
left his only child under his charge

dughter of the king's closest friend, who dying early... The

col canto

a tempo
king saw that she be taught to read and to write, to weave and embroider, and so
One day, the king assembled his court:
"My sweet mist - ress-es, my sons. Ah - mad, Al - i, Hus - ayy!!"
Scene One

Our scene is set in the main stage where a splendid palace room in Bangladesh is set. The song is being performed by four or morearem girls. There is a betalike dance, the theme process and the Viceroy and other court elements.
Today is a special occasion! Vizier!
Yes, your majesty! Bring Princess Vln, I Vln,2 Vio.

King

Vln,1

Haughtily
Srahl.

my Princess Srahl!
Her
The Viceroy rides off.

Harem Girls

time has come . . . at court!

Sul-tan! Dear Sul-tan! We're

Piu allegro

accel.

div. détaché
She doesn't keep her hair in like we your steamy harem.
Harem Girl 2

Oh! Let me sing to these royal lovers.

Why is it always her?
Let me— Let me sing. I bring experience from the gutter!
And me! And me! And me! Dear Sultan. Dear Sultan, we're rather in...
Dear Sunian, Dear Sunutau - we're in the same boat! She doesn't keep her hair in the same way we do.

Dear Sultan, Dear Sultan, we're rather introverted!
Dear ladies, now ladies. Back off now!
The piano is set down. The curtain rises and she is escorted with the dances. There is an accent on the entrance.
Won't my sweet plum entertain us with your
had for men her choice of three.

rich one from
a third who spoke most frequently.
scape word.

shore-lines. "Re-turn with the most lavish find!" The first two brought wondrous pearls a -
bountiful in number, and stuffed them in a golden cucumber, whilst the
No jewel buried in foreign sand.
nor silks or cloths from weal-thy lands could woo her young and
cheerful heart, though two had nobly done their part. had done their part, though two had
cal canco a tempo

cal canco a tempo

Twas the third one who won her hand, was the young poet who won her hand. No
price-less magical gem did tempe. on-ly a star-filled dream he had dream-a
Oh Bo.

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

SHAKER

Vte. I

Vte. 2

Vc.

Cb.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

Ch.

"star-filled dream he had dreamt! A star-ry dream, a star-ry dream, a star-ry"
A star-filled dream he had... he had...
Ha.1 Harem Girls

Harem Girls

P.Su. dreams!

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

Cb.

Dear Sul-tan! Dear Sul-tan, dear Sul-tan, we're rather in-sol-ted!
I am so proud of you. Your late, brave father would have
been very proud! Sons, I know that each of you wishes to marry Princess
Allegro

However, I can only grant this wish to one. Father!
oldest and the tallest, I'm most qualified to care for your change!
Oh put a Portuguese cork in it, brother! In soul!
Haughtily

deed! Why, bought a
Your majesty. It appears we need to hold a compensation in order to dec-

Haughtily
Did you a y  a wtieel bar^rows race? Let it be ar-rows! Let it be ar-rows! Did you say a wheel bar-rows race?
No!! I'm suggesting long distance archery!

Of course, long distance
Stand by this mark-er and fire your best ar-row. The wheel bar-rows!
a poco più lento, ma non troppo

longest story wins the contest and the girl
'Tis fair, Vizier. Our fraternal riv-ally shall be washed away by the pur-i-ty of sport! Amurath and themarch! Let the
"A distance of two-hundred and thirty-seven cubits, sure!"

Field Judge: Nice shot! That's it play!
Field Judge

Two hundred and thirty-seven cases! It's a lie!

Rem. - ar-kab-le! A-a, now's your chance to.
break the tie, and undo the shackles of bachel- or-hood!
No one sees me... I, the malicious Fairy
"mag - ic trick with a sprin - ble of this mag - ic cor - i -
Presto

I rather like that Prince Hu says!

She finds a healing place and lasts on.
Field Judge

It's gone!

What a shot! Clear over the horizon.
That has to be the longest one! It does not matter, we all can see it was the superior one!
The rules! The book says, "if the said arrow cannot be retrieved..."
slain! How devoid am I of any idea.
Più con moto

Sons, with my gold, go ye to distant lands, but each his sep'rate way—

And

Più con moto
he returns and so honors me with the rarest of the rare shall marry my
Princess Sirafil, but how long will he be gone? King, Do as I command.
this fair and equal task! Come child.
The long night has passed, all amuse, followed by a processional into the hall and the king of the court.
The time process and consecrated ships has just finished.
friends...
Andantino 1\textperthousand\textperthousand

Come, let us go by his royal command. I know of a fork where

148
And when we are done, we'll reuse at this fork.
We shall de-part at the

We will still be broth-ers, and we ob-
ey our fath-er's word!
first light of dawn! 
All  
Till the 

Beat back to each oth - er!  
See you on the mor - row!
Poco meno

Good-night, Ali!

Till the fork... Till the fork.

Good-night, Ahmad!
end of scene 1
B & d.

My kiiic.if itplea—

At dawn they bade each oih-cr

Batdien

ofoutdime pria<ts?

m

155
Scene Two

[Music notation]

[Text]

157
Cut thee some chat-ney?

Car-ry cures sour-vey!
Cut thee some chutney?
Curry cures scurvy!
chic sheiks!  

Ah!  

How often I've heard of the
Hey mer-cham. do you fall
Fairy Pearl Sonata

(Now is time to act out my part)

jewelry?
take me for a fool? It is just an ugly mat...
"Can I take your word?"

"narrow - 2 of an eye.

Henry

Real - ly?

169
Let me see your eyes!
Ah! You rather
do you're - queebere?
31 Relaxed \( \frac{\pi}{3} \)

Music notation page with musical staff lines and notes.
hopes... so win a bride. Tell me your name... fair one... We could fly so my...
My name is Per-i Ban-u
I'd love to fly

hail!

I'd love to fly
away with you! Promise that you will wait while I ask for my father's say.
Scene Three

Con piu moto

Fl.

Ob.

Bb Cl.

Bb.

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Perc.

Harp

Vla. 1

Vla. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Va.

Concertante

I am truly jaded from this journey.

Jas-mine, jade and jasper ware!
Monks

Tibetan Monks
Hoch himmel Him-a-lay-as! This is where our half-German princess was orphaned.
Are there not any secular shops in these hallowed halls?
Met - chase! I can prove that's my arrow by the royal emblem.
Men - on its shaft!

Men - on - y house cat run past...
I'll re-turn your ar-row if you'll prop-er-ly com-pen-sate me... for my dam-aged ap-ple!
Easily enough! Here's three coins!
AllegrcKas before)

"Quae more precious than that! Try thy thousands and gold pieces!"

Allegrceto(as before)
Look toward the Tibetan highlands whence this apple was pro-

I don't think so!
...drink from holly fountains of clean glacial waters. With its scent it can...
nature, looks and charm!

All this e-lis-ar in one... lous-y ap-ple? Those are mel-o-dious words, but
You may be true to your arrow, as I am true— to my apple!

how can I believe you?

Fair e-
nough! Your prom-is-es are worth an-y price"
daughters shall be my daughter's wedding ring! Oy!

me and... my princess! Greatest gift for... my... long! And my brothers would agree...
O b.
H t t l
Ha.2
So w t o t h e
tis die gr€aat • est gift diey'Ve ev • er seen!
To the fork! To the fork!
Now to the fork!

Fl.
Ob.
B-Cl.
Bb.
Hn. 1
Hn. 2
Perc.
Hep.

Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vcl.
Ch.

201
Scene Four

Flute

Oboe

B.C. Clarinet

Bassoon

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Cello

A brief scene in Dorian, where Almaviva has just purchased a magic interlude from a Dorian sorcerer.
A telescope. It's a telescope. A treasure most worthy.
- of your king! You can see as far as the bal-con can.
Come see what I par-chased from an old Bur-mese mer-chant.

And you, Ah-mad?

And you, Ah-mad?
It reminds me of a cosmoclimex I had, one that I will always cherish.

Does it now?
Lento, c.s.w.

Beautiful Princess Sarah and I were cradled in a vivid sea of grass... when the planet rose...
The notation on the page appears to be musical, with various instruments and notes written in a standard musical notation format. The bottom of the page shows a page number "220."
Could I see your magic ivory tube? I wonder if I can find Princess Snuggs.
Ali's face is changing color!

Look, he's moaning.

He's

Ali's face is changing color!

Look, he's moaning.

He's
Ah, what makes you suffer? Brother, tell us what is
His willing, tears gush from his eyes! Ah, what makes you suffer? Brother, tell us what is
Please tell us what is wrong.

I saw our young princess lying on her bed.
Oh, don't tell her everything. Are you sure? She gasps her last breath... and every one is in bed...
Then our quest has been all in vain?

Wait! I can...
save her! Be - hold... my mag - ic apple! The scent of this fruit can cure a - ny
But we're too far a way to save her in time. Even with the strongest potion, there are...
But my car-pet shall car-y-er to her bed-side!
Sit with
To the palace! To the palace! Great carpet, fly!

To the palace! To the palace! Great carpet, fly!

To the palace! To the palace! Great carpet, fly!

The process is done over the carpet and fly... Great carpet, fly!

The process is done over the carpet and fly... Great carpet, fly!

The process is done over the carpet and fly... Great carpet, fly!

The process is done over the carpet and fly... Great carpet, fly!

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The process is done over the carpet and fly... Great carpet, fly!

The process is done over the carpet and fly... Great carpet, fly!

The process is done over the carpet and fly... Great carpet, fly!
Interlude
Scene Six
How is she?  None of these med-i-cines are work-ing.  What are we to do?
When your father was near death, I stood by his bed. He
If he could have seen her at her first day in court,
asked me... to come near and whisper through his ear...
My dear friend, my dearest child, this is how I want to watch over you as best I knew how to. My precious child, this is the love and care I have for you.
You may die! And with a sigh you may die! You may die!
Oh princess darling, please do not die.

Oh princess darling, please do not die... don't die!
Princess Strahl

what is the time?

Nanny

He has cured you with his magic apple! Oh, Ah.
Oh! Thank you, A-li!

I dreamed that...

Princess Strahl
He has arrived! My story will have to wait another day.
And a hundred others I say!
Your story has gripped my imagination.

My sweet She-her-e-
There's a land shall end! Now, what of the prin-cess?
Scene Six (Cont.)

Moderato

Back to the entrance, where the doors had been

Princess Strahbl
Kerest Girls

Knock on the door. Vicer... Hail... Vicer, the door!

The Moor scurries off as he الوه a

Hail... Vicer, the door!
apple proved to be miraculous!
As promised.
My payment...
The situation seems to be settled.

The prince...
Don't they make a lovely couple?

Your daughter? But L...
Well, well! I could not... Well hello there!
I guess that sets it! With two of my ideas all ready - well, almost
married, that leaves you, Ahmad, to marry my beautiful Princess.
Princess Brindal

May 9. 9:34

Ahmed

Missed love in search of art's beauty. Women... one heart

long? my mag... spying tubes... brought nearer to you.
life together with you. Happiest of days will be our wedding day.

We give thanks to the
Who watch in the starry night sky above!
gold of love, who watch in the starry night sky above!
Ah such happiest of moments, happiest of faces!
Now let us cele-brate!
BIBLIOGRAPHY


