November 1976.

33. Even the BBC now has a glossy monthly (packaged with a CD)—*BBC Music Magazine.* The first editorial (September 1992) pointedly drew attention to "Shopfront and Diversions, which will keep you abreast of new products, music education, jobs and so on" (5). The commercial radio station "Classic FM," also appearing in September 1992, applies British light-music disc-jockey presentation (brash chat, mispronounced foreign words) to classical music in a manner still uncommon in the United States, where announcers' affected voices and precious pronunciations underline the up-market snob appeal of the commodity.

34. Neil Bartlett, *Who Was That Man: A Present for Mr Oscar Wilde* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1988), 149.

3

SAPPHONICS

Elizabeth Wood

> I hear the high mezzo voice of the Enigma. Because it is the Enigma: it doesn't explain itself, it makes itself heard.[1]
>
> —Hélène Cixous, *Tancredi Continues*

THE SINGING VOICE as a musical instrument is inexactly understood because its mechanism of production is invisible. Voice is vibration: an exhaled stream of air passes from lungs to larynx, where it opens muscles like valves that regulate it, resist its escape and, vibrating, produce sound; to resonating cavities of the upper body and head; and to the pharynx, where sound and tone quality is shaped, pitched, projected—"placed" by mouth, tongue, palate, lips.[2]

Sapphonics, this rubric I devised, has overtones and resonances in and beyond voice production and hidden vestibules of the body. I mean to use it as a mode of articulation, a way of describing a space of lesbian possibility, for a range of erotic and emotional relationships among women who sing and women who listen. As an opera lover who is not a trained singer, I stage an imaginary intimacy between voices: theirs singing, being heard; mine listening and, with other listeners writing, being read. Like the writers who read Sappho of Lesbos as poetic precursor of modern lesbian identity, my act of naming claims Sappho the singer for a "lesbian continuum" of listening that itself engendered Sapphonic performances and Sapphonic operas.[3] My sonic outing traces the history and biography of a lesbian music that, like other "fictions of Sappho," is an intertextual legend in fragments: lost,

unnamed, buried in opera's Orphic origins and traditions.[4]

I also call Sapphonic a particular voice that thrills and excites me. If this trained female singing voice I speak of, an embodied and acoustic instrument, is no longer audible as material sound, it is visible and resonant as presence in historical contexts and imaginary representations that once shaped and projected it: in performance records and auto/biographies of singers with this voice; narrative traditions of opera and the female voice as these are represented by women writers; opera and voice traditions as these are shaped by women composers and singers. I speak of this voice metaphorically: as vessel of self-expression and identity, channel for a fluid stream that "speaks" for desire in living human form, a lure that arouses listening desires.

I call this voice Sapphonic for its resonance in sonic space as lesbian difference and desire. Its sound is characteristically powerful and problematic, defiant and defective. Its flexible negotiation and integration of an exceptional range of registers crosses boundaries among different voice types and their representations to challenge polarities of both gender and sexuality as these are socially—and vocally—constructed. Its refusal of categories and the transgressive risks it takes act seductively on a lesbian listener for whom the singer serves as messenger, her voice as vessel, of desire.[5]

Si tu veux que je reste auprès de toi
Disperse moins ta voix,
Prends le diapason
De l'intime durée.

("If you want me to stay with you,
Do not disperse your voice,
Pitch it
To the intimate moments.")[6]

—Natalie Barney

My preface is an anecdote from the lesbian life of Natalie Barney (1877–1972). In Paris-Lesbos in the early 1900s, Barney lost her lover, writer Renée Vivien, to the Baroness Hélène van Zylen de Nyevelt. In an attempt to win Vivien back, the Amazon of Letters sent a vocal emissary to avenue du Bois, where the baroness lived, to serenade Vivien. The Leporello who voiced Giovanni-

Barney's desire was her friend the opera diva and reigning "Carmen," Emma Calvé (1858–1942). Calvé's serenade began with the celebrated lament "J'ai perdu mon Euridice" from Gluck's opera *Orfeo ed Euridice.*

Gluck's Orfeo was originally sung in 1764 (in Italian) by a castrato, a decade later (in French) by a tenor. For the opera's revival at the Théâtre Lyrique in 1859, Berlioz transposed Orfeo's tenor part down from F major to C for the voice of Pauline Viardot-Garcia (1821–1910). Berlioz's description then of Viardot's performance in "virile antique costume," weeping by the side of her dead lover, conveys messages a Barney *abbandonata* meant her unseen lover to hear:

> Madame Viardot makes of [the lament] one of the prodigies of expressions...delivered in three different ways: firstly, with a contained grief and in slow movement; then in sotto voce, pianissimo, and with a trembling voice choked by a flood of tears; finally, after the second adagio...with a more animated movement...throwing herself, mad with despair...with bitter cries and sobs of a distracted grief.[7]

Initially, it seems, Barney's Orphic emissary failed her. Only when Calvé sang Carmen again did windows open and Vivien appear to a waiting Barney on the street below.[8] In the opera, Orfeo's lament serves as epilogue to a reunion and rescue that also failed. It inscribes Orfeo's suffering and loss. But given the private context of Calvé's performance the lament succeeded: as epilogue to a contested, but only temporarily interrupted, love affair; prelude to renewed seduction; and ironic warning to every woman involved. In the opera, Orfeo had been prohibited both from looking at the beloved and from explaining to her why he was required to exert such "unnatural" control over what he so "naturally" desired. Orfeo may not see the thing he wants or he will lose it. As metaphor, as myth, the opera's conventional meaning is both emphasized and subverted by the lesbian context a travesty Orfeo represents: her embodiment of a desire between women that society and culture prohibit and silence, her longing for what women may not have, makes visible the experience of lesbian invisibility as it gives voice to forbidden desire.

Both the female Orpheus and her lesbian listener divine difference. Pauline Viardot's daughter, the composer Louise Héritte-Viardot, recalls: "My mother had been much worried about the opera, for she did not know how to treat the part. She had thought out all the details most carefully, had studied the classic sources and had sketched her whole costume herself. But Orpheus *the man* had been as a sealed book to her until [during the dress rehearsal] her hour of inspiration came." Because the singer's daughter finds

Orpheus *the woman* "difficult to speak of," she produces two unnamed listeners as evidence and mute witnesses to its Sapphonic effect. One, "a young girl, fell in love with Orpheus. She grew thin and pale, and her mother in despair resolved to ask my mother's help" to "cure" her. The two mothers conspired to disillusion the girl. "Trembling with excitement at the prospect of seeing her beloved," she met instead a monstrous reversal, a fake: Viardot's siren Orpheus disguised as harpy "in dressing-gown, unkempt hair, cross, irritable, thoroughly disagreeable." The other, a widowed goldworker who lived with her sister, had anonymously left flowers in Viardot's dressing room during every performance, having "spent most of her earnings on flowers and theatre tickets, as to see and hear Orpheus was her idea of bliss." When Viardot discovered this admirer's identity, she embraced and visited her: the diva and her fan became lifelong friends.[9]

While in modern opera practice the substitution of female mezzo or contralto for castrato voice is well established, some men still find the female Orpheus unsettling and inauthentic. John Eliot Gardiner deplores the habit as "alien, fudged, distorted." For Tom Hammond, "the deep maternal contralto...cannot approach dramatic conviction. A woman's voice inevitably deploys entirely extraneous and disturbing sexual overtones which are not only inappropriate to the personality of Orfeo but...do little to conjure up the elegiac and other-worldly character of the castrato voice."[10] Their reactions suggest it is the sound as much as spectacle of desire in the body of the female Orpheus that disturbs because it sends the wrong message. How did Viardot or Calvé sound?

Contemporary reports suggest a big, strong voice with an exceptional 3- to-3½ octave range from G below C to the high F of the Queen of the Night.[11] Whether defined as dramatic soprano or coloratura mezzo, I call Sapphonic this type of voice that refuses standard categories and is today considered a rare phenomenon.[12] Its flexibility, versatility, and power cross over and integrate the physical (and psychological?) boundaries of sites that produce vocal pitch and tone and are commonly distinguished in the female voice as head (soprano), middle (mezzo), and chest (contralto) registers.

In the contralto register, Viardot's lower octave and Calvé's "voix de poitrine" could produce a powerful "masculine" sound, or what Paul Robinson calls in Verdi's mezzo roles a "baritonal fierceness": "It would be a mistake to call them mannish, but they are indelicate in the extreme."[13] In defiant political roles such as Lady Macbeth, Verdi exploits in the female chest voice its paradoxical effects of sexual ambiguity, overpowering vocal authority, and potential for violence.[14]

As this voice makes its sudden ascent from chest to head register, its break through sonic and anatomical boundaries is technically hazardous. "The peculiar quality of Madame Viardot's voice—its unevenness, its occasional harshness and feebleness, consistent with tones of the gentlest sweetness," suggested to Henry Chorley "that nature had given her a rebel to subdue, not a vassal to command. From the first she chose to possess certain upper notes which must needs be fabricated, and which never could be produced without the appearance of effort."[15] Calvé's octave ascent to a high pianissimo D flat, which reached and sustained a floating tessitura for an extraordinary duration, produced what Desmond Shawe-Taylor describes as "certain curious notes—strange, sexless, superhuman, uncanny."[16] Calvé called this her "fourth" voice and claimed that a castrato singer in Rome's Sistine Chapel choir, Domenico Mustafa (1829–1912), taught her how to produce it—a fascinating historical moment of transvestic vocal exchange between differently sexed and gendered bodies: a literally unsexed "fourth" voice for a "third" sex.[17]

The high head or fourth voice "fabricated" by Viardot and Calvé is "false" (falsetto): an artificial or "unnatural" sound, signifying to some the uncannily queer lost sound of a castrato or male falsetto, to others a "sexless" boy chorister. Where the castrato had a comparable three-octave range to Viardot and Calvé (an octave higher than the baritone), the falsettist must extend the upper register to take on boy alto or soprano roles. Both male and female falsetto, using Viardot's technique of "covered tone" or *sotto voce* (literally "under the voice"), suppress head and chest resonance to produce a clear, light, high sound. This fourth voice, says Isaac Nathan, a nineteenth-century music theorist and composer, is a "species of ventriloquism," "an inward and suppressed quality of tone, that conveys the illusion of being heard at a distance."[18]

Castrato and falsetto have been theorized mostly in terms of male voice and male desire.[19] Wayne Koestenbaum, who cites Nathan, proceeds brilliantly to connect theories of production in voice manuals with the discourse of homosexuality.[20] He suggests the so-called "unnatural" male falsetto (especially in its ornamental trill, vibrato, and tremolo), which sounds outside a "normal" range and requires long discipline, work, and training to produce, is "part of the history of effeminacy," a fourth voice "for a fourth sex, not properly housed in the body."[21]

Is singing itself "natural"? asks Koestenbaum. Are vocal registers "a fact of nature," or constructed categories of gender and sexuality? Whether "register represents a zone of opportunity or of prohibition, register-theory expresses two central dualities: true versus false, and male versus female. It is only loosely accurate to say that manuals privilege chest production as male and true, and dismiss head production as female and false," but register-theory "gives most

weight to the difference between natural and unnatural," a duality that reflects, even foreshadows, he thinks, distinctions between hetero- and homosexuality.

Voice theories of the falsetto as a defective and degenerate "break" with "natural" singing are linked to medical theories of sexual perversion. As Sander Gilman remarks on "vocal stigmata": "The change of voice signaled the masculinization of the male; its absence signaled the breaking of the voice, the male's inability to assume any but a 'perverted' sexual identity."[22] Gilman notes that clinical case studies of men in the 1890s by sexologist Richard Krafft-Ebing, among others, that "regularly record the nature of the patient's voice," considered the high breaking voice a standard sign of homosexuality. More recently another medical expert, John Money, finds in the fabricated voice a defining characteristic of transsexualism: the female-to-male transsexual modulates intonation and pitch in the voice "to be more baritonal and mannish"; the male-to-female transsexual "to a feminine-sounding husky falsetto."[23]

Koestenbaum suggests the "break" between registers "(called Il Ponticello, the little bridge) is the place *within* one voice where the split between male and female occurs, and that failure to disguise this gendered break is, like falsetto, fatal to the art of 'natural' voice production."[24] Calvé and Viardot valued the break—a place of risk, of break-down, which training usually seeks to disguise or erase—as an asset.[25] So did admirers: Turgenev prized Viardot's "defective" voice for its mental as well as technical risks over "a beautiful but stupid one, a voice in which beauty is only superficial."[26] The extreme range in one female voice from richly dark deep chest tones to piercingly clear high falsetto, and its defective break at crossing register borders, produces an effect I call sonic cross-dressing: a merging rather than splitting of "butch" authority and "femme" ambiguity, an acceptance and integration of male and female.[27]

This border-crossing voice I call Sapphonic is a transvestic enigma, belonging to neither male nor female as constructed—a synthesis, not a split. Having this voice entails risk, but not a necessary loss: it can be *both* butch and femme, *both* male and female.[28] Its challenge is to the polarities of both gender and sexuality as these have been socially constructed and as stable, unchallengeable binary symmetry, for it suggests that both gender and sexuality are transferable. In acoustic effect, its combination of different registers refuses vocal categories and natural/unnatural polarities, and confounds simplistic messages about female desire (and relationships among female desire, class, age, sexual status, and identity) in music's texts and opera's roles conventionally assigned to specific female voice-types. For listeners, the Sapphonic voice is a destabilizing agent of fantasy and desire. The

woman with this voice, this capacity to embody and traverse a range of sonic possibilities and overflow sonic boundaries, may vocalize inadmissible sexualities and a thrilling readiness to go beyond so-called natural limits, an erotics of risk and defiance, a desire for desire itself.

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I base these observations, first, on a narrative tradition of opera and the female singing voice as these are represented by women writers in musical fictions set in European opera's so-called "Golden Age" in America, 1890 to 1915. Three of the four novels I discuss have as their central character an opera diva modeled on Olive Fremstad (1868–1951), a singer who fascinated these writers much as Viardot inspired the fiction and friendship of George Sand and George Eliot.[29] Since Sand began *Consuelo*, these writers' fictional model, with Viardot's voice, I begin with the sound of Fremstad.[30]

At the outset of her career Fremstad, a Swedish-born Minnesota immigrant, was a "deep-throated, velvet" and "luscious" contralto.[31] But like Viardot and Calvé, Fremstad resisted conventional female vocal, cultural, and sexual categories. Determined to sing Wagner's athletic Viking soprano roles to which she was physically and temperamentally suited, she went to Berlin in 1893 to study with the renowned singer and voice teacher Lilli Lehmann. By effort of will and intellect, and as Viardot, Calvé, and Lehmann herself had done, Fremstad worked her range upward tone by tone to fabricate a different, or what she called a "long," voice: "I do not sing contralto or soprano," she told writer Willa Cather. "I sing Isolde [or Carmen, Brünnhilde, Kundry, Salome]. What voice is necessary for the part I undertake, I will produce."[32] The big, defiant voice she produced was for Carl Van Vechten problematic; he called it a "refractory...not altogether tractable organ" that, like Viardot's, risked hoarse or husky intonation as it broke into head register.[33] Cather, a lesbian, heard it differently: for her its powerful range and mysterious breaking quality were magnetic and thrilling. Paradoxically, the "unnatural" voice communicates to a Sapphonic listener an effect of "wholeness and wellbeing."[34]

Fremstad gives voice to Margarethe Styr in Gertrude Atherton's *Tower of Ivory*; Thea Kronberg in Cather's *The Song of the Lark*; and Lena Geyer, actually a composite of Fremstad and singer Alma Gluck, in Marcia Davenport's *Of Lena Geyer*.[35] In Fremstad's wake, each fictional singer studies opera and voice in Berlin with Lehmann, "the greatest Norma, Fidelio, and Isolde" of her time (Davenport: 69). Each becomes successful and

famous, the professional peer of turn-of-the-century divas on Maurice Grau's spectacular payroll at the New York Metropolitan Opera House.[36]

These writers represent the enormous range and flexibility in Fremstad's voice as enigmatic, border-crossing sexual allure. Styr, a Wagnerian mezzo, could sing "with the sexless, silvery sweetness of a boy chorister, which made the tremendous volume of her voice and its noble quality the more remarkable by contrast...[as it] emphasized the sensuousness of the music, and eliminated the richness from her voice" (Atherton: 411). Kronberg's voice "was as flexible as her body, equal to any demand, capable of every nuance...[it] was vitality; a lightness in the body, and a driving power in the blood" (Cather: 572, 381). Geyer was a powerful soprano with "a contralto range in her chest voice....Critics used to go wild looking for terms in which to describe it," writes Davenport. "It was pure earth, female, sex if you want to call it that. You might say that where her high tones were enchanting to the imagination, her low ones warmed the body like an embrace" (Davenport: 55).

To produce and perfect the voice they want and know they can have, in the "Künstlerroman" tradition of lesbian novels of formation, each singer must first conceal and remake an obscure or troubled past to reinvent herself as strong and independent.[37] Styr was Margaret Hill, a prostitute; Geyer a poor peasant born in Czechoslovakia; Kronberg a midwestern child of provincial Scandinavian immigrants.[38] Despite public fame, each remains a social outsider whose personal life is "kept shut up in the closet" (Cather: vi).[39] Her few male friends are safely married or professional musicians who seem to be gay.[40] The singer's most intense intellectual and emotional attachments seem to be with the "strange women" she voices onstage (Atherton: 38).

Men experience the voice as exclusion, an acoustic barrier between the singer and men who desire her. In *Song of the Lark*, when Thea returns to New York from Berlin her old friend Doctor Archie is paralysed by his sense of "dread and disappointment when she begins to sing: she was not there—for him....What he felt was admiration and estrangement" (Cather: 499–500).[41] In *Tower of Ivory*, men find Styr "an ivory fortress....Majestic, frozen....Not a man can boast that he has been received by her alone. I believe she hates men—but mortally!" (Atherton: 18, 21). Rejecting personal love, Styr seeks only "to give intense reality to impossible romance." As she becomes her roles, "her artistic imagination on fire," an avenging female desire ignites her art: "Passion is the stimulant, the drink, the food, the fertilizer for art," cries Styr. "Nurse this! Nurse this!...Let the passions of all womankind tear my heart as they tore Isolde's when they transformed her into a fate and the avenger of her sex" (Atherton: 95, 110, 281).

Lena Geyer is "suspicious and harsh" toward men whom she rejects (Davenport: 213). Her one intimate relationship is with a shy, devoted fan, Elsie deHaven, who in 1907 becomes Lena's live-in and touring companion, beloved confidante, and "invisible necessity" (216). As the fictional Elsie observes, "the world has since said many cruel things about this strange, almost passionate friendship" (208) that, in terms of its model, the intimate relationship between Fremstad ("Livan") and her biographer Mary Cushing ("Tinka"), has kept "invisible" its lesbian "necessity."[42]

If men feel estranged from the Sapphonic voice, young women who hear it are sexually aroused. On first hearing Geyer, Elsie records "how the pulse in my throat choked me. I sat letting it rush through me like electricity, completely unconscious of ever having lived before. It was exactly like the unlocking of a prison door. The voice poured into me, and from that moment it became the only thing I cared to live for....All the barriers built up by convention and habit seemed to shrivel, and I felt in those few moments a free and purposeful individual. I did not even know I was repressed, or inarticulate, yet once I felt freed, I knew that I had never lived before....The sound of her voice stayed with me, and became a physical sensation, almost like a taste, that one can recall at will" (Davenport: 225–7).

"Singing is a stream," Lilli Lehmann told singing pupils.[43] The liquid lure of Geyer's voice, its "power to conquer" and liberate, becomes for Elsie an erotic obsession: she must follow this voice no matter where and what it sings.[44] Elsie's orgasmic sensation suggests lesbian fetishism: the powerful female singing throat as phallus, its sonic stream seminal, her own throat a thirsting orifice: "The same physical thrill was there, that thing that gripped me and made something inside me leap into my ears and throat....The sensation I had was like fresh water pouring into the throat of someone nearly dead of thirst" (Davenport: 232–3).[45] Elsie acts as receptor and mediating narrator between subject and reader, singer and listener, of an erotics of same-sex desire.[46]

For Cather, too, the singing voice is vessel for a fluid stream that gushes from, and overflows, her metaphor for art as a sheath or mold that imprisons for a moment desire for life itself (Cather: 367). The voice of Cather's Thea Kronberg is a Sapphonically performative "second self": a hidden, secret, desiring self embodied in both the singer and listener who share the voice.[47] "What if one's second self could somehow speak to all these second selves in the people who cared, believed in her? It was to music, more than to anything else, that these hidden things in people responded" (273). Thea's voice teachers know that "passion" is key to her elusive and seductive vocal power (570), but in adolescence she keeps hidden even from herself the knowledge that she possesses such a voice: "It was as if she had an

appointment to meet the rest of herself, sometime, somewhere" (272). Thea "meets" her second self and acknowledges eros in the voice that emerges in the "Panther Canyon" episode (367–400). Alone in a forest, sheltered in a high cliff cave, she begins to throw stones across the deep canyon, a metaphor for projecting the voice in time as well as space, for the projectiles, she learns, are broken bits of ancient clay water vessels made by Southwest Navajo women. Like the poet Sappho's textual fragments, these represent the memory of female desire and matriarchal myth, the clay vessel Cather's metaphor for the female voice as "shaping receptacle" that "speaks for desire in living human form."[48]

The Sapphonic voice as "an act of remembering" female desire (Cather: 373) is acoustically and metaphorically located and projected by Cather and Atherton in powerful female sites. These may appear to replicate man-made romantic opera's settings for the sexually powerful phallocentric woman who invites male desire (and for Fremstad's Wagnerian roles as warrior-goddess, huntress, siren-witch), but men are missing here, or are, at best, mere observers. It is matriarchal memory in Cather's forest, cave, and water vessel that awakens Thea's desire. A dark, impenetrable forest (in the opening chapter of *Tower of Ivory*) conceals Margarethe Styr from the male gaze, protecting her from men who can hear but who are themselves unseen. Here Styr, like Fremstad the Wagnerian diva of the Munich Opera House, may sing not for men but for herself alone.[49]

In these narratives of the solo singing voice as female desire and intertextual channel of mimetic desire—a desire fostered by desire among the woman who sings, her fictional listener, the woman who writes, her fiction reader—lesbianism is "the thing not named," as Sharon O'Brien observes of Cather herself.[50] A greater challenge to patriarchal stories in the cultural context of turn-of-the-century opera in Europe is the novel *As Music and Splendour* by Irish writer Kate O'Brien, which shows Sapphonics at work in two voices and *within* an openly acknowledged lesbian relationship between lovers who are both also opera singers.[51]

While I have been speaking of Sapphonics as integration of sameness and difference in one solo and undivided voice, what happens when there are two? Women's paired like-voices produce a bivocal Sapphonic effect especially, but not only, in travesty/transvestic duets formerly sung by castrati. (By "bivocal" I mean having two like-voices that inhabit like-bodies that together produce bisexual illusion: the sonic effect of having both sexes in one.) The castrato, argues musicologist Joke Dame, voiced sexual difference in going against the grain of a dominant oppositional male-female pairing.[52] Modern substitution of male tenor and female soprano in duets for castrati cannot match the

interchange and interweaving of body, timbre, and pitch paired castrati produced, because their registers are too far apart. When we exchange two female like-voices for castrati configurations, and their "two equal voices rub up against each other, pressing into dissonances that achingly resolve only into yet other knots," we experience female desire differently.[53] If the castrato, the borderline man, subverts desire for symmetrical binary difference, two paired castrati reinstate desire for symmetrical bivocal sameness. If the travesty female, the borderline woman, voices female desire as Sapphonic transgression, two paired women in symmetrical bivocal sameness voice Sapphonic desire as lesbian difference: a doubly subversive symmetry in redoubled vocal drag.[54]

Kate O'Brien's explicit lesbian voices are neither competitive with one another nor separable from roles they share, both those in her plot and those they sing. *As Music and Splendour* tracks two vocal paths that meet and bond in travesty duets, endure tests in travesty lament, are avenged and reunited "as one" in warrior-goddess roles, and part only as two solo careers demand. O'Brien represents lesbian desire as equal, mutual, like-voiced, in three distinctive musical contexts: Bellini's opera *Norma* and the travesty laments and duets of Gluck's opera *Orfeo* and Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater.*

When Clare Halvey and Luisa Carriãga meet as students in a Paris convent singing school, Luisa is a "natural" mezzo who "always...has been attracted to women—and afraid of that attraction" (O'Brien: 293), but Clare's voice and sexuality are in mysterious "armoured" contest: her voice "a vessel, a battlefield, a pausing place for argument between spirit and flesh, union or divorce" (13). After they become lovers, Clare's voice changes. Men now find it "unusual...a bit too cold, perhaps? It's like a boy's voice...she sang like a castrato" (248). Refusing opera's conventional mad/bad "feminine" roles as inauthentic "lunatic" excess (212), Clare casts herself in "grave, or tragic, or royal" roles "disguised as a boy or man" (240). Although each is loved by a man, the lovers are separated by neither male desire nor lesbian stigma, but their profession as singers. "As your life is, so is hers commanded by her singing voice" (293), and to love a singer is to share that voice: O'Brien leaves open the possibility that lesbian voices reunite.

As Music and Splendour represents the travesty Orfeo as lesbian continuum. As Calvé was a vocal stand-in for Natalie Barney, Viardot, "master in her art" (79), is both vocal model and travesty tradition for Luisa and Clare. At La Scala, where Clare hears a long-lost Luisa as Orfeo singing Viardot's own cadenzas, she moves toward the voice, shocked by its beauty, to embrace her.[55] When Clare is invited to sing Euridice to Luisa's Orfeo, they become lovers for whom the opera *Orfeo* represents a transcending mask between

private revelation of forbidden desire and its necessary public concealment: "The disguise of myth in which they stood [hand in hand] was their mutual reality, their one true dress wherein they recognized each other, and were free of that full recognition and could sing it as if their very singing was a kind of Greek, immortal light, not singing at all" (113).

In this novel's travesty context, the lament, a female song tradition, voices lesbian loss and suffering. When Tom, a composer in love with Clare, and Iago Duarte, Clare's voice teacher who loves Luisa, intervene to oppose their relationship, the embattled lovers sing Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, a sequence of instrumentally accompanied vocal solos and duets on a medieval mourning text that Pergolesi scored in 1736 for paired castrati. As Philip Brett observes, the *Stabat Mater* is "a musical paraliturgical version of the Pietà, the true representation in Christianity of castration and its complexes."[56] Its performance represents for Clare and Luisa a "public ordeal" to be shared and endured after "private shame"(299), but their interwoven voices, in sustained and ornamented counterpoint above slowly ascending harmonic steps and throbbing pulse, effect in grief a kind of ecstatic victory.

As metaphor for female resistance to male desire, Kate O'Brien and Cather each position in their narratives a major opera aria (one central to the repertories of Viardot, Calvé, and Fremstad) from Bellini's *Norma*. In the "Casta Diva," the Druid warrior-priestess prays to the moon goddess for peace between Romans and Gauls only to discover that Pollione, her Roman lover, has been unfaithful. O'Brien places the "Casta Diva" at a decisive crossroad for the lovers, reunited once again at La Scala, the site of their first travesty *Orfeo*. Luisa listens in tears to Clare sing the "Casta Diva," her "breast and brain lighted within by the fire-clear singing" (244), but while they are afraid that the men who desire them will divide them, this aria anticipates lesbian renewal and bonding. It also marks a defining scene in Cather's novella, *My Mortal Enemy*.[57] Richard Giannone interprets Cather's use of the "Casta Diva" as a metaphor for Myra Driscoll's personality, division of loyalties, decision, and fate: the story and opera "both treat a heroine's reconciliation of the opposing obligations of sacred and profane love."[58] An alternative reading suggests the "Casta Diva" may encode an unacknowledged lesbian bond in narrator Nellie Birdseye's passion for Myra. For, in the opera, where the aria represents division (man between women), it precedes the like-voice duet for Norma and Adalgisa, "Mira, O Norma" in act 3, scene 1, that represents synthesis and symmetry (between two women): the breaking point at which these former rivals become confidantes who renounce men and vow lasting friendship:

> I shall be your friend and companion
> The world is wide enough to shelter us both
> I shall look destiny steadily in the face
> While I can feel your heart beating close to mine.

Kate O'Brien's adaptation of Orphic myth differs markedly from Cather's in *The Song of the Lark*, but in both narratives lesbian desire recognizes in the disguise of opera its "one true dress" and "reality." O'Brien ends her novel with Clare's physical and sonic separation from Luisa, her lover and "second self." In the vocal and travesty tradition flowing from Viardot, Calvé, and Fremstad, Gluck's opera *Alceste* inscribes that loss: "She would sing the cold high story for herself, and for one who could not hear" (O'Brien: 328). Thea Kronberg, however, sings her opera story for a "second self" who could and did hear: her living vocal model, Olive Fremstad.

When Cather first met and interviewed this notoriously private and reclusive singer before she began the novel and they became close friends, Cather reassuringly allowed that "the opera glass will never betray any of Madame Fremstad's secrets."[59] Making Thea's story a composite of her own youth in Red Cloud, Nebraska, and Fremstad's in Minnesota, Cather devised a bivocal counterpoint between writer and subject that "does not simply describe an opera or its effects but creates an imaginary opera."[60] Paradoxically, the disguise of opera as it intrudes on fiction may reveal a private reality both this writer and this singer, the writer's opera-singing subject, concealed in public and from their public. In effect, the cross-dressing "William Cather, Junior," who dared not openly name herself or her relationships lesbian, voiced *her* Orphic myth as *Fremstad's* Sapphonic code.[61]

Thea's first music teacher is Professor Wunsch, a tragic figure whose name means desire, but whose desire falls short of the discipline music demands. A failure professionally, Wunsch gives Thea what she emotionally needs: his score of Gluck's *Orfeo* and his memory of Viardot's voice in "the most beautiful opera ever made" (Cather: 89). Orfeo's lament is Wunsch's sad adieu to music, Thea's awakening desire in and for music. "When Wunsch plays, and Thea sings of a life without the thing one needs most, the reader is invited to participate aurally at the moment when two talents, following separate paths on the Orphic landscape, intersect."[62] Thea's voice, I think, invites the reader to participate aurally in the landscape of lesbian operatic life and listening.

~

Olive Fremstad, the living voice of literary narratives that create imaginary operas, participated like the fictional singers Clare and Luisa in operatic narratives that create Sapphonic space. In opera, Viardot, Calvé, and

Fremstad voiced travesty and transgressive female roles. What if Sapphonic voices belong to lesbian bodies? Does the question of lesbian biography matter only to lesbians who trace traditions?

I mean next to "hear" Sapphonics in opera and social contexts: turn-of-the-century opera roles that venture into unconventional sexualities, and a lesbian artistic milieu centered on Paris.

> Facts don't exist. The sole truth lies in a tone of voice.[63]
>
> —Ned Rorem, *The Later Diaries of Ned Rorem*

In a biographical tradition of the female celebrity, especially the opera diva, that stresses marriage and maternity as much as gossip about scandalous heterosexual liaisons, an absence of data may imply sexual nonconformity or difference. Lacking information, or refusing to name evidence at hand, biographers regard the private lives of Calvé and Fremstad as "elusive." Calvé apparently never married. A close friend of Colette, obviously known to the Paris-Lesbos circle of Barney and Vivien, she plays no part in their biographies, nor they in hers. Fremstad is shown to have married in 1906 and separated soon afterward; a second marriage in 1916 to a much younger man lasted six weeks and was apparently not consummated. Between "marriages," Fremstad lived with Mary Cushing, her "buffer" and secretary-companion, closet code words for a lesbian partner. Nothing at all is told of Fremstad in later life except that she was "difficult" and reclusive. Unacknowledged butch-femme implications in Cushing's blithe account of her relationship with Fremsted seem obvious to a lesbian reader today. Cather, too, had been immediately and powerfully attracted on first hearing, then meeting Fremstad—and Fremstad unusually accessible and attentive—as they embarked on an intense, enduring friendship. No biographer of Cather or Fremstad has named that lesbian.

Significant in these Sapphonic intertexts, although not my main focus here, is the voice of Fremstad's contemporary, Mary Garden (1874–1967).[64] What did Garden, who never married, mean in saying "I never really loved anybody. I had a fondness for men, yes, but very little passion and no need"?[65] What does it mean that Fremstad and Calvé "may have belonged, like Garden, to those who live in the parts they play"?[66] What can we learn of the Sapphonic landscape from roles these singers "lived" in public?

In both standard and new repertory, Calvé, Fremstad, and Garden built careers as actor-singers on powerful, seductive interpretations of transgressive heroines and travesty "breeches" roles. Each defied stage convention in her uses of dramatic realism, revealing costume, and often scandalous publicity.

Garden's repertory was especially sexually adventurous: as Chrysis in Camille Erlanger's *Aphrodite* (1906), an opera with two lesbian roles and based on the novel by Pierre Louÿs; as the cross-dressed Egyptian queen of Massenet's *Cléopâtre* (1914) who, disguised as a boy, visits a brothel and makes love to another boy. Famed for her overtly sexual Mélisande, Thaïs, and Salome, Garden also sang Mozart's travesty Cherubino and Massenet's travesty title role as *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame*, a tenor part as a fifteen-year-old boy for which she produced a light, pure, high voice.[67]

Calvé's most notable roles were the travesty Cherubino, Salome's mother Hérodias in *Hérodiade* (Massenet's version of Salome), Salome herself, and Carmen.[68] A "volcanic" stage personality, Calvé's Carmen was admired by George Bernard Shaw for its "power of seduction," display of "naked animality," and passionate method acting. Shaw found her interpretation neither romantic, noble, nor sentimental, but intense, truthful, brave, temperamental, and direct. Her death scene was "horribly real."[69] Calvé had studied genuine gypsy dance to prepare for Bizet's fake ones, just as Fremstad visited a morgue to practise handling a severed head for her role as Strauss's Salome.

Listeners who thought Fremstad's "an introverted art" were astounded at her Kundry in *Parsifal* for its wild physical ferocity and "dangerous" seductiveness. Her "lascivious" Salome so outraged New York society ladies that it was withdrawn after one performance.[70] Lesbians saw this diva as Amazon warrior. On holiday with Fremstad in her Bridgeport, Maine, summer house and watching the singer catch and clean fish, swim, row, tramp, chop wood, Cather felt she was "living with the wife of the dying gladiator in her prime in deep German forests," while Cushing saw "an athletic young Goddess. With her fine legs and lean haunches [she] would have made a handsome boy."[71] In Munich early in her career, Fremstad played travesty roles; wearing breeches, her Carmen (Munich, 1902) was a seductive "masculine" woman who made "no physical approach" to Don José. At forty-three, she was still drawn to youthful woman-as-boy cross-dressed roles: in 1911, after seeing the premier in Vienna of *Der Rosenkavalier*, it was Octavian, not the Countess, she wanted to sing.[72]

These singers were especially known for their title roles in *Carmen* (1875) and *Salome* (1905), axes of a repertory of late nineteenth-century French opéras comiques that are named for their transgressive heroines. Created by Massenet, Delibes, Charpentier, Chabrier, and others, these include *Lakmé*

(1883), *Manon* (1884), *Gwendoline* (1886), *Thaïs* (1894), *Louise* (1900), *Hérodiade* (1904), *Aphrodite* (1906), *Thérèse* (1907), and *Cléopâtre* (1914).[73] Two, named for Sappho and now little known, convey a sense of the way a fictional tradition has been kept alive and shaped both by male fantasies of Sappho's voice as political defiance, sexual excess, and risk, and—even more buried and unnamed—by female singers and listeners who heard that voice Sapphonically.[74]

Emile Augier derived the libretto for Gounod's first opera, *Sapho* (1851), from Théophile Gautier's novel, *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835). While musically Gounod was influenced by Gluck's operas, his heroine is no tragic Lesbian of Mytilene playing her lyre alongside Gluck's travesty Orfeo or Alceste. Nor is she the cross-dressed seducer of Gautier's fiction with both a male and a female lover. Gounod's Sappho is a thoroughly bourgeois hetrosexual fiction: the scandalous schoolmistress doomed to suicidal despair when she sacrifices her love of Phaon the boatman for a greater political cause; who identifies with the myth of Hero and Leander before hurtling off a cliff to drown.

Henri Cain and Artur Bernede based their libretto for Massenet's *Sapho* (1897) on the novel by Alphonse Daudet (1884). Daudet's contemporary temptress and whore is in Massenet's opera the bohemian prostitute Fanny Legrand, a commodified artists' model for a statue titled "Sapho." When a chaste country lad, Jean Gaussin, falls in love with her, she tries to remake herself as the virtuous Sappho with fantasies of married love until a former lover, La Borderie (sic), and the sexual subculture Fanny has spurned, disclose to Jean her true identity. Fanny is doomed to lose Jean and return to her old ways.

Both operas are an exciting trove of Sapphonic intertextualities. Gounod created the role of Sappho specifically for the voice of Viardot.[75] Massenet's Fanny was written for Calvé, for which she used her fourth voice.[76] Before the premier at the Paris Opéra Comique on 27 November 1897, Calvé studied the role with novelist Daudet, whose son Lucien and his lovers Proust and Cocteau were among her friends. Before the opera disappeared from the repertory, Garden sang Fanny for the Manhattan Opera House production in New York on 17 November 1909. Fanny Legrand, I believe, may be a composite portrait of two lesbians: Clotilde Legrand ("Cloton"), the model for Proust's fictional Madame Leroi and onetime lover of Barney's lover, the artist Romaine Brooks; and the singer Georgette Leblanc, who recorded scenes from this opera accompanied by Massenet. Leblanc, a feminist and lesbian, and onetime mistress of Maurice Maeterlinck, was vocal and dramatic model for *Ariane et Barbe Bleue* (1907), Maeterlinck's opéra comique composed by Paul Dukas.[77]

However these operas when first performed may have been received by lesbian listeners, the novels of Gautier and Daudet "gripped the imagination" of opera-loving Cather in her cross-dressing "bohemian" phase as a journalist in the 1890s. Daudet's *Sappho*, a "cult item" among Cather's select circle of friends in Lincoln, Nebraska, confused as much as it confirmed her lesbian identity. It "involves shades and semitones and complex motives, the struggling birth of things and burnt-out ghosts of things," Cather wrote, "that it baffles psychology to name."[78] Sharon O'Brien, discussing Cather's review of a song recital by contralto Clara Butt, whose "The Enchantress" was "Circe-like" and "unnatural," suggests that what Cather may have thought she heard Butt envoice was the familiar "femme fatale" of French Sapphic fictions: an enticing but deadly and degenerate lesbian as viewed through male eyes. The envoicing in French Sapphic opera and song of a female desire at erotic odds with the voice in Sappho's poetry may baffle the lesbian listener—unless, that is, the singer (a Viardot, Calvé, Garden, or Marilyn Horne) queers the text.

The *statue* of Sappho in Massenet's opera (as much as the portrait of Sand that Cather enshrined in her room) is a recognizably transvestic emblem with a queer sense of history. Daudet derived for his novel the stone image of the woman cross-dressed as a man to seduce another woman from Gautier's poetic transposition in his novel of the Sapphic statue in an earlier novel, *Fragoletta* (1829) by Henri Latouche. In Gautier's poem, the (presumably male) narrator who gazes at the statue wonders "Is it a young man? Is it a woman?" The Enigma doesn't explain itself. It makes itself heard as the Sapphonic *voice* the poem's title encodes. That is: "Contralto."[79]

French opéras comiques are a promising source for lesbian and feminist study of narratives based on contemporary novels and plays, and contextualized by political, religious, social, and psychological realism, that vocalize the powerful female Other as a threat to patriarchal order.[80] Arguably the most controversial of these are Bizet's *Carmen*, based on Prosper Mérimée's Spanish gypsy tale, and Strauss's *Salome*, Oscar Wilde's pseudobiblical and Oriental drama. Carmen and Salome represent renegade figures of unbridled sexual passion: gypsy and Jew as the exotic, feminized, non-Western Other, the object of the male gaze whose return of the gaze with teasing defiance, scorn, or indifference enhances her allure for male desire.[81]

Carmen, chronologically the first, is important to my argument on several counts. First, *Carmen* marks a Sapphonic shift in power and gender in opera, a takeover by the female body and the female voice made inevitable by the disappearance of the castrato, when the vocal dominance of the high coloratura soprano of bel canto singing is displaced by the dramatic mezzo

of contemporary verismo.

Like Bellini's Norma and Adalgisa, the role of Carmen was created for the strong but flexible middle register of the dramatic soprano, a compass similarly required in the lighter textured female travesty roles of Cherubino, Octavian, Bellini's Romeo, Orlovsky in *Die Fledermaus*, Siebel in Gounod's *Faust*, and the Composer in *Adriadne auf Naxos*, but also exploited in heavier mezzo roles that call for great agility and power: the travesty Leonore in *Fidelio*, Saint-Saëns's Dalila, Puccini's Minnie, the barkeeping pioneer in *La Fanciulla del West*, and the explicitly lesbian role of Countess Geschwitz in Berg's *Lulu*. Vocally, however, only Carmen, Dalila, and Gluck's Orfeo are truly dominant roles in the sense that they are not required to compete with big powerful sopranos placed above them.

Female sexuality and desire in *Carmen* may only seem to fit conventions of gender-appropriate behavior that punish risk-takers and nonconformists. Micaëla, the "feminine" (and soprano) mediator, bears both maternal and patriarchal messages in the mother's letter, money, and kiss; Carmen, "messagère" of promiscuity, is the envoy of death. But Carmen is a resisting or "dissonant Other," notes Susan McClary, whose voice, "marked by chromatic excess," is more powerful and alluring than the men she dominates.[82] Her "object of desire is desire itself," says Nelly Furman.[83] Her voice is heard Sapphonically as defiant rupture and escape from patriarchal order. But, opera tradition insists, runaway female desire, Carmen's "rebel bird," must be captured, caged, crushed. While her voice may be dominant, the central role in the *narrative*, McClary reminds us, is not Carmen, but Don José: his story and fantasy "organizes the narrative" and ensures that the threat of female desire is contained.[84]

Second, *Carmen's* representation both of female desire as dominant and defiant, and of the cultural oppression of the sexual outsider, is *the* vocal and dramatic model for the operas of the lesbian composer Ethel Smyth (1858–1944), who, I believe, heard *Carmen* Sapphonically.

Smyth first heard *Carmen* performed in 1883 when she was a composition student in Leipzig and bought the full score to study. It became her favorite opera, perhaps for reasons that attracted her gay friend Tchaikovsky, who admired its "easy naturalism" in characters "whose feelings and experience I shared and understood."[85] The opera's theme of social and cultural oppression of an illegal, clandestine outsider who refuses fixed conventions of sexuality and gender and resists oppression resonates with gay and lesbian experience.[86] "As a Gypsy, there is no fixed place for Carmen," observes Catherine Clément. "At the moment of her death, [she] represents the one and only freedom to choose, decision, provocation. She is the image, foreseen and doomed, of a woman who refuses masculine yokes and who must pay for it with her life."[87]

That image of a feminist revolutionary who wants to be free of male desire, and free to love whomever she desires, came to be for Smyth, as, I believe, for Calvé and Fremstad, a Sapphonic figure and voice of rebellion and emancipation.

Smyth created the literary as well as musical narratives of her operas. She first conceived the story and characters, plotted the scenario from which she and her friend Harry Brewster collaboratively drafted a libretto, then reshaped the text as she composed to fit first her short vocal score, then the full orchestral score underlaid with dialogue, production notes, and cued performance directions. Moreover, Smyth shaped both sound and story to suit her own voice.

Her songs and opera parts for female voice fall predominantly in her own midmezzo range. Hers was not a professionally trained singing voice. "Real" singers thought her voice production "all wrong," she stated, but her main concern was to "make a pleasant noise, and to manage that every word should go straight home to my listeners—not a difficult thing to accomplish, if you mean what you say and *accompany yourself*."[88] In fact, she found her voice a great asset, using it to striking effect in making her music known to those who might produce it. To give the dramatic sense of a complete opera, she sang all the parts, including orchestral effects, to her own keyboard accompaniment.

Into her voice Smyth poured all the force and magnetism of her personality and musicianship. "The rare and exquisite quality and delicacy of her voice: the strange thrill and wail, the distinctive and distinct clear utterance...and the whirlwind of passion and feeling she evoked" seems to have fascinated friends, lovers, and professional musicians alike.[89] Some found her singing enigmatic, "the spirit of her strange, wild, suffering, striving heart, whose secrets none could fathom."[90] Others, for whom Smyth's secrets were an open book, heard not one voice but many: the contrapuntal sounds of "her true self...more startlingly revealed in her singing" than in her conversation or correspondence.[91]

In her songs, Smyth created Sapphonic space for the female singer-lover to voice lesbian desire. She admitted to using her own singing voice to "bribe" or lure women she loved with her music, and to addressing her beloved in the travesty voice of a lovesick pageboy.[92] Her music challenges an untrained voice, for it requires great strength and agility; even trained

singers have complained of its technical risks. Productions of her first three operas were mostly under-rehearsed, poorly conceived, and ill-cast, factors which led Smyth to conduct her own work. In old age, in her memoir, she noted in all her theater experience only one triumph that gave her satisfaction: the Covent Garden premier of her second opera, *Der Wald*, in 1902, her London debut as an opera composer. Fremstad sang Iolanthe, Smyth's mezzo heroine, in her own London debut season.[93]

Der Wald was produced the following year at the New York Metropolitan Opera without Fremstad and with less success, the first, and, to this day, only opera by a woman composer produced there. Then in 1905 Calvé announced, "I *must* create the part of Thirza," the leading mezzo role in Smyth's new opera *Les Naufrageurs*, for a Covent Garden premier under André Messager and at Monte Carlo.[94] As plans for a production in French faltered, Calvé announced her retirement. The opera was translated into English as *The Wreckers* but first performed in Leipzig in 1906 as *Strandrecht.* Had Calvé intended Thirza to be her opera swan-song?

These events seem more mysterious to me than coincidental. My question is: what induced these internationally renowned divas at the peak of their careers to want to premier untried operas by a little-known composer—what is more, an English composer, a woman, a lesbian—when much new music, especially opera, failed professionally or was never performed? Consideration of fame or fortune seems irrelevant. Was it the quality or originality of the work? The composer's persistence? A personal connection?

I want to explore two possibilities. First, that these singers may have belonged as Smyth did to a homosocial and homosexual community of artists who performed one another's work. Second, that Calvé and Fremstad may have responded to Smyth's work as they had to *Carmen* and contemporary operas that broke with gendered conventions of women's social, sexual, and vocal categories, only more so. For here was a new woman-shaped and women-centered opera especially suited to their voices and a Sapphonic tradition of female difference and desire.

Smyth has a pivotal role in both that tradition and community. As a promising young music student of twenty-two, engaged in her first lesbian relationship, she had met through personal friendship with Clara Schumann the "master," Viardot. Twenty years later, if not at Covent Garden then through their mutual friend the Wagnerian diva and mezzo Anna von Mildenburg, Smyth met Fremstad. She was almost certainly introduced to Calvé by the Princess de Polignac (1865–1943), with whom Smyth was disastrously in love. The princess was behind the plan to have Messager produce *Les Naufrageurs* with Calvé in Monte Carlo or at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels, the venue for new French opera.[95]

The princess is central to my questions because she was central to a well-financed urban artistic community, a homosexual subculture in Paris that included expatriate Anglo-Americans, whose members actively promoted and performed one another's work. Born Winnaretta (Winnie) Singer, an American heiress, the princess was herself a cultivated pianist and painter, a lesbian married to a gay French composer, Prince Edmond de Polignac, whose niece Armande was also a composer. Their grand salon on rue Henri Martin, where mirrored windows reflected black and gold ceiling murals painted by Jose-Maria Sert of naked and reclining "Sapphic creatures voluptuously disporting themselves with monkeys and bacchic masks,"[96] was the *belle époque* scene of frequent concerts of both classical and new music generously commissioned or subsidized by the Polignacs from Fauré, Satie, Ravel, Debussy, Albeniz, Manuel de Falla, Reynaldo Hahn, Poulenc, Kurt Weill, and Stravinsky.[97]

In the 1890s, Oscar Wilde was a personal friend. Proust, his lover Lucien Daudet, Valéry, and Cocteau frequented the salon. So did artists, including Picasso, Juan Gris, Romaine Brooks (one of the princess's lovers) and John Singer Sargent, and dancers and musicians such as Ida Rubinstein, Wanda Landowska, Diaghilev, and members of the Ballet Russe. Isadora Duncan, onetime lover of Winnie's brother Paris Singer, danced for them in 1900. Lesbians in Winnie's inner circle included her lovers Olga de Meyer and Violet Trefusis, and writers Anna de Noailles, Augustine Bulteau, Vernon Lee, and Radclyffe Hall. Calvé certainly, Fremstad possibly, were part of this community, together with Smyth.

> There can never be a question of competing with men but an everlasting one of creating something different...something yet unvoiced [that] lies at the bottom of the sea, where we are at home.[98]
>
> —Ethel Smyth

During the decade 1896 to 1905 when Smyth composed *Der Wald* and *Les Naufrageurs*, what experiences, sounds, and stories that she heard or read may have suggested ways to express her vision of a "yet unvoiced" oceanic space of Sapphonic creativity and desire?

The subject of homosexuality and Sapphism continued to fascinate Smyth long after she came out to Brewster in correspondence in the early 1890s, and forms a continuous leitmotif in her conversations and correspondence with women. To friends in 1899 while "obsessed with *Der Wald*," she recited

by heart the erotic Sapphic verses of Swinburne's *In Anactoria*. In 1902, as she planned *Les Naufrageurs*, she was absorbed simultaneously in Swinburne's passion for the sea in *Songs of the Springtides* (1880) and in an Italian criminology text that discussed "il terzo sesso" as a "perversion of the maternal instinct" in "old maids" devoted like herself "to dogs and politics."[99]

Smyth's memoirs illustrate not only her access and acceptance into aristocratic circles that sponsored her music but, more indirectly, her own proximity as a musician (and that of many of her upperclass friends and sponsors) to homosexual subcultures. In 1902, shortly before she joined the Polignacs' inner sanctum, and while awaiting in Berlin the premier of *Der Wald* as a guest of the German chancellor, Prince Bernhard von Bülow, and his wife, she twice met and dined with Kaiser Wilhelm II, and sang for his all-male company "banal songs" composed by Count Phillip Eulenberg, who accompanied her on the piano. No other women were present: "I suspect Madame [von] Bülow proposed me as a sort of man," Smyth said.[100] Within five years, both von Bülow and Eulenberg were subject to court trials in what became known as the Eulenberg Affair, a "stunning" scandal "in the history of the Second Reich...which turned upon the alleged homosexuality of the chancellor and of two distinguished members of the entourage of Kaiser Wilhelm II" (including the amateur composer Eulenberg), and which produced, according to James Steakley, the "same sort of 'ritual of public condemnation' that the Oscar Wilde trial had been for Victorian England in 1895."[101]

Another of the Kaiser's intimates, the Greek scholar Count Ulrich Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, who dined with Smyth after the Berlin performance of *Der Wald*, gave her a "new Sapphic fragment" he had translated, adding "that he considered Sappho the most maligned of women; that she really was a sort of high-school mistress, and that the famous 'passions' were simply cases of harmless response to the Schwärmerei of her pupils!" Smyth was otherwise convinced: "I dismissed this depressing view of 'burning Sappho' from my mind!"[102]

The historical fate met by Sappho and creative women troubled Smyth as she composed *Der Wald*. In April 1900, after the fiasco of her first opera *Fantasio*, her visit in Paris to the Irish-born composer Augusta Holmès (1847–1903) depressed her for its reminder of the obscurity to which the work of women composers, especially opera, was consigned.[103] The music of Holmès, like her own, evinced "by turns a charming tenderness, ardent passion, and masculine spirit."[104] Both women worked independently of the musical establishment; both wrote their own librettos. All of Holmès's operas (*Astarté*, *Lancelot du Lac*, and *Héro et Léandre*) were unperformed and

unknown with the exception of *La montagne noire* (in four acts), produced at the Paris Opéra in February 1895. Smyth's efforts after their meeting to organize English performances for Holmès failed.[105] "I feel I must fight for *Der Wald* also," Smyth wrote, "because I want women to turn their minds to big and difficult jobs; not just to go on hugging the shore, afraid to put out to sea...[I]n my way I am an explorer who believes supremely in the advantages of this bit of pioneering."[106]

In Weimar in 1898, shortly before Smyth began the score of *Der Wald*, and while awaiting the premier of her first opera, *Fantasio*, she heard for the first time a performance of Gluck's *Orfeo* which marked "a milestone in my musical life": "I do not think I ever sobbed so unmanageably in public as then."[107]

Although her first three operas derive their motivic, structural, and instrumental techniques from German opera, especially Wagner, Smyth never wholly succumbed, as so many contemporary composers had, to Wagner's rapture with mystical eroticism.[108] Her music counterbalances a German romantic influence with the rugged dance rhythms and robust folksong melodies of her native English music and a French musical tradition of order, clarity, and (in opera) antisentimental realism. Her personal score collection contained operas by Bizet, Massenet, Berlioz, and Gounod alongside Mozart, Beethoven, and Wagner, and song collections by Fauré and Duparc as well as the German Lieder repertory.[109] Smyth shared an affinity with French culture and music, acquired in childhood from her Paris-born mother, with Harry Brewster and Vernon Lee, both born in Paris of part French parentage. In turn, Debussy and Fauré, whom she met through Winnie Polignac, admired both *The Wreckers* and her songs on French texts whose performance in Paris in 1908 Fauré helped organize.[110]

Smyth "wrangled" over Brewster's story idea for *Der Wald* on bicycle tours with him in Wales in 1895 and northern Italy in 1896. His scenario described

> a short and tragic story of passion, framed in the tranquility and everlastingness of Nature represented by the Forest and its Spirits. These Spirits or elemental forces are seen engaged in ritual observances. Unshackled by Time, they sing their own eternity, and the brevity of things human. A peasant girl, Röschen, is engaged to a young woodcutter, Heinrich. Iolanthe's horn is heard: merriment vanishes; terror-stricken the peasants fly. The lovers invoke the protection of the forest. Iolanthe is a woman of cruel instincts and unbridled passions, supposed to be a witch and dreaded with superstitious fear. She has complete sway over Rudolf, the liege lord of the country, whom she despises as a weakling. Struck by Heinrich's good looks she tries to detach him from his bride and make him enter into her service. Complaints and reproaches from Count Rudolf; anger and defiance on her

> part. Her fascinations fail, however, to prevail over Heinrich's love for Röschen. He rejects [Iolanthe] and prefers love, which is deathless and mighty, to life which is weak and brief. Iolanthe gives the order and he is slain. The Spirits of the Wood take up their ritual.[111]

The score, begun in 1899, was completed in October 1902. The Berlin production (five performances) was a nightmare: while it was still in rehearsal the director collapsed and died, orchestral players rebelled at the changes and delays, and on the first night at the curtain a hostile claque booed and catcalled. Support gathered on subsequent evenings. Three months later, Fremstad and a "splendid cast" at Covent Garden gave Smyth "my only real blazing theatre triumph. I more or less trained all the principals myself, and of course the chorus."[112] Innovations by the producer, Francis Neilson, dispensed with footlights and proscenium lights throughout the drama. Neilson found the opera "strange and beautiful," and critic J. A. Fuller Maitland admired "a work of highly romantic character...by one who had mastered not only all the secrets of stage effect, but who understood how to make her climaxes impressive, and how to differentiate her characters."[113]

To a widowed female friend who objected that the opera made "illicit love-making" too "melodious and positive," Smyth defended: "[I]n fact...a highly moral little tale: a short poignant tragedy—an episode—the real story being the eternal march of Nature that enwraps human destiny and reeks nothing of the joys and sorrows of mortals, [not that] Iolanthe falls in love with the hero and has him killed because he would not meet her views."[114] But Iolanthe dominates the story. A younger friend, Maggie Ponsonby, amused Smyth by remarking that her heroine was "the type of woman who is all pearl necklace, bosoms, and rampant desires," but Maggie's mother heard Iolanthe's voice Sapphonically. Lady Mary Ponsonby, one of Smyth's great passions, told her that the opera, "from beginning to end, made me feel as I do when you are singing."[115]

The reviewer for *The New York Times* praised its performance at the Metropolitan Opera House on 11 March 1903, with the gendered term critics reserved for uppity women who risked the larger symphonic and opera forms: "The opera sounds the note of sincerity and resolute endeavor. [Smyth] uses the vocal and orchestral resources with masculine energy, and is not afraid of employing the most drastic means of modern expression."[116]

Even before her voyage to America, Smyth formed the idea for her third opera during a visit to Cornwall in October 1902, where she heard old-timers' strange tales of an intolerant, hypocritical religious community that once plundered passing ships after luring them on the rocks with false lights. She lay "on the cliffs, listening to the boom of the great Atlantic waves against those cruel rocks, and the wild treble cries of the seagulls."[117] In her memoir, she asks rhetorically: "Did I pick up down there a legend of two lovers who, by kindling secret beacons, endeavoured to counteract the savage policy of the community; the woman impelled by humanity, and perhaps hoping that her action might palliate her unfaithfulness to her husband, her lover because for her sake he was ready to take any risk; how they were caught in the act by the Wreckers' committee—a sort of secret court which was the sole authority they recognized—and condemned to die in one of those sea-invaded caverns?[118] Or did this story come to me in my sleep? I cannot say."[119] Could not? Would not? Was Smyth disingenuous?

During the Covent Garden season of *Der Wald*, and shortly before Smyth's Cornish journey, her friend Vernon Lee stayed with her. The first rough draft of the new libretto, *Les Naufrageurs* (hereafter *The Wreckers*) was finished in November, and Smyth began the score in the spring of 1903 on her return from New York.[120] Lee again visited her in England. At the time, Smyth was infatuated with Winnie Polignac, Lee with Augustine Bulteau, to whom Lee dedicated her newly published novel, *Penelope Brandling: A Tale of the Welsh Coast in the Eighteenth Century.*[121]

The story, setting, period, and heroine of Lee's novel are strikingly similar to Smyth's subsequent opera. A drunken, disgusting family of murderous wreckers lures ships to the Welsh shore and plunders them. A newly married couple, Sir Eustace and Penelope Brandling, returns from abroad to claim from the wreckers, his kin, the estate of St. Salvat as its rightful heirs. His wicked, lecherous uncle, Hubert, a preacher, having killed Eustace's older brother, conspires to imprison and poison husband and wife when they discover the wreckers' crimes. With Penelope's help, Eustace blows up the entire estate to obliterate all trace of the community, but both must then return to exile, where Penelope records this story in her diary for her grandchildren to read after her death.

Smyth has never mentioned Lee's novel. If she read it while composing her opera (I must assume she did), she would find in Penelope a model of Sapphonic courage and resistance. In Hubert's words, she is "a virago...a warlike lady" and "woman of spirit" (Lee: 174–5). Undeterred by what she considers weakness and paralysis of will in her husband, Penelope tackles Hubert alone: "I take it upon myself to judge and put you to death as a wrecker and a murderer," she says, and shoots him dead

Nor did Smyth acknowledge any musical influence on *The Wreckers* but the sounds of waves, wind, and seagulls. Jane Bernstein has traced Wagnerian influences in both operas: the forest setting and theme of salvation through death in *Der Wald*, and in *The Wreckers* her use of ballad-aria form and a

close resemblance between the principal motif of her overture and the opening phrase in Wagner's overture to *Der fliegende Holländer*. Bernstein also finds that Smyth's "evocation of the sea and characterization of an isolated sea town" are "typical of an English opera" and, in turn, influenced Britten's opera *Peter Grimes* (1945).[122]

I suggest *Carmen* as the major vocal and dramatic influence on Smyth's representation of Iolanthe and Thirza, although Smyth both adapts and subverts that model. In *The Wreckers*, Thirza takes central position: the story is hers. Where Carmen joins an oppressed band of gypsy smugglers who are themselves outsiders, Thirza, who is twenty-two years old, is initially part of the dominant group of superstitious Cornish wreckers by virtue of her marriage to its leader and pastor, the fifty-five-year-old Pascoe. She is in love with Mark, a young fisherman who sets himself outside the community by lighting beacons to warn off the ships. For her adultery and betrayal, Thirza is doubly (sexually, socially) an outsider who must violently be cast out. Having wrecked the wreckers' livelihood, the lovers are judged and condemned to drown in a cave that floods at high tide. As the community denounces her as "a vile priestess of dark evil," a "foreign" and "polluting" witch and whore, Thirza scornfully refuses to repent. Like Carmen, she curses, threatens, laughs in their faces. As death nears, she sings an exultant bridal song, her anticipated bliss first echoed, then inundated, by the wild rhythms of waves, wind, and sea, and the dark cave that is womb and tomb of her desire lit suddenly by sunlight streaming through its roof.

"To love is to die and newly-awaken," sings Thirza, and to make sense of her rapturous spiritual and sexual communion with death depends on how we read opera's "irrational romantic marriage between the erotic and the deathly" when voiced by a Sapphonic heroine.[123] And, indeed, on how Smyth read it. Marriage to death for Smyth's Thirza, as for Carmen, is not, like death in marriage, a necessary or arbitrary fate imposed by men, but a chosen act of feminist defiance. Like Carmen, Thirza is no passive sacrificial victim. She chooses her own death before others decide it for her. In an ecstasy of self-knowledge, death inscribes, then sets free, her sexuality.

Who or what is Thirza? Her name is associated with feminine discord, death, and the fetishized phallus.[124] She is a transvestic figure. Marjorie Garber discusses Byron's lament "To Thyrza" as "an act of poetic transsexualization in elegiac verses."[125] Hearing the echo of Thyrza's voice ("All that once was harmony/Is worse than discord to my heart"), the poet laments the death of John Edlestone, a choirboy when they met in Cambridge, and compares their homoerotic relationship to that of the biblical Jonathan and David. Smyth, too, *names* in her heroine an association with same-sex desire, not within the opera plot but to signify her own transvestic relationship to her "character"—an act of self-travesty that simultaneously travesties opera conventions of sexual disguise, ambiguity, and desire in powerful female roles. When deliciously unselfconscious, Smyth can be pure camp: as she completed the music to act 2 she sent off a telegram to Brewster that read, "Safely delivered of fine female child name Thirza Rampagia Smyth."[126]

Thirza is a strong dramatic mezzo. In duets with her lover her voice is generally pitched lower, as if to support his youthful tenor. Mark's similar vocal range does not exploit its full tenor possibilities, suggesting his immaturity or, since they are not yet lovers, dependence on the stronger woman. In Mark's first ballad-aria, for which he impersonates the voice of a lovesick woman, the minor-mode folksong melody and his gesture of flinging a flower in Thirza's window is camp Carmen. In her desire and vocal dominance, Thirza acts as Carmen's "rebel bird" when, fleeing marital authority, she tells Pascoe his "cage is empty" (act 2).

Another direct but inverted link with *Carmen* is provided in the "feminine" role and soprano voice of nineteen-year-old Avis, who, unlike the "good" Micaëla in *Carmen*, is destructive, jealous, manipulative, deceitful. She has believed herself loved by Mark, who underestimates and trivializes her desire for him. In a variety of revengeful postures, Avis first fights for Mark, then takes a younger rival (Jack, aged fifteen) and wrongly betrays Pascoe before finally denouncing Thirza. In act 1, her song "The Rat" is a violent adaptation of Carmen's *Chanson Bohème*, "Les tringles des sistres tin-taient," which begins act 3 in *Carmen*, with identical rhythm, tonality, and melodic phrases. Her taunt, "Scarce a man but has loved her—guard what's yours lest you lose it; take care lest you lose her," evokes Carmen's ironic habañera: "Love comes, it goes, and then returns; You think you hold it fast, it flees; You think you're free, it holds you fast."[127]

In act 1 of *The Wreckers*, a same-voice bivocal love scene between Avis and young Jack produces a Sapphonic effect because Jack is voiced by a mezzo-soprano. The two pairs of lovers (Thirza/Mark, Avis/Jack) have a different vocal effect from male-female couplings in traditional opera ensembles: their matched registers suggest mutual rather than disparate partnerships. Smyth's general tessitura is low-voiced—two tenor, two bass, one baritone, one soprano, two mezzo voices—an arrangement quite unlike the high female-dominated tessitura and texture in contemporary operas by Puccini and Strauss, for example, that represent the high voice as feminine dementia, hysteria, and excess. Smyth's Sapphonic voices, like her own, are unsentimental, powerful, and defiant in expressions of desire.

Iolanthe has that voice in *Der Wald*. She is proud, active, forceful, lust ful. Smyth's description of her as "beautiful but terrible" recalls Micaëla's "elle est dangereuse, elle est belle" of Carmen in act 3, and Carmen's

self-representation as "Never will Carmen give in; Free she was born, free she will die." The imperious huntress Iolanthe has something of Carmen's predatory carnal voluptuousness. Having tried to seduce Heinrich, she takes her revenge when he prefers Röschen and refuses to follow and serve her. Iolanthe orders her hunstmen to stab him, and poor innocent Röschen dies of grief. Like *The Wreckers*, *Der Wald* is a contest over female power, but Iolanthe is neither betrayed, as Thirza is, by a jealous female rival, nor, like Carmen, killed by the male victim of her desire. It is the weak who perish, not the woman men fear as a witch "who blights our maids, our youths with her devouring lust" (vocal score: 38). Leaving behind a trail of human destruction, with desire intact, if not humanly gratified, Iolanthe rides back into the forest whose eternal maternal spirits have protected and nourished her. Her mezzo voice of considerable dramatic power represents a conquering and unconquerable force of female desire.

Shortly before Smyth began *The Wreckers*, she visited a village in Calabria to observe a woman dance "seductively and with supreme rhythm" the rapid, accelerating measures of the tarantella, a Southern Italian folk dance. The frenzied dance that ends Smyth's first act is as emphatic and reckless as any in *Carmen*. Her dark cliff setting for *The Wreckers* is the same wild, perilous scene of *Carmen's* act 3. Caves; forests; rocky, barren shores in Smyth's operas may represent "the outlaw world of passion" that Nietzsche characterized in *Carmen* as contested sites of "mortal hatred" in the "war of the sexes" or, rather, according to Nelly Furman, a contest between polarities within each gender, between contradictory desires.[128] For Smyth's operas, as for the novels of Cather, Atherton, and Davenport, I prefer to think of these as Sapphonic sites of female power. Where convention may find a Don José, Pascoe, and Heinrich a male victim, each the cruel dupe of a woman who uses sex to entice and debase him, I hear a Carmen, Thirza, Iolanthe as a revolutionary feminist figure, each the Sapphonic voice of a woman's sexual rebellion and emancipation. No wonder a Fremstad, a Calvé, wanted to sing them.

Amour, amour, tu es l'éclair
Qui bondit comme un cris de joie.

Smyth was ill, sick with unrequited passion for Winnie Polignac, when she set these words to music for Thirza's first aria in *The Wreckers*.[129] Passion helped her to work, she said.[130] She thought this "one of the best things" she had done, except perhaps the orchestral prelude to act 2, "On the Cliffs of Cornwall," which she dedicated to Winnie.[131] But her joy in the opera was diminished by disastrous productions and a terrible press in Leipzig and Prague, and eclipsed by Brewster's death of cancer a few days after the London concert premier of acts 1 and 2. That performance, however, marks a further link in the Sapphonic continuum: Thirza was sung by the mezzo Blanche Marchesi, daughter of Matilde Marchesi who had trained Calvé.[132]

The Wreckers has never received the production, cast, and critical attention it deserves, although musicians agree it is Smyth's greatest achievement. Thomas Beecham, who conducted the first production in London on June 22, 1909, found it "one of the three or four English operas of real musical merit and vitality."[133] Bruno Walter, who met Smyth "carrying under her arm the score of her opera, clad in a nondescript baggy dress" when she called on Mahler in Vienna and sang all the vocal parts for Walter, conducted both the overture in 1909 and the full opera at Covent Garden in 1910. To Walter she was "a true composer...remarkable for the consuming fire of her soul."[134] Twenty years later he told how "I still feel the fascination of the scene of Thirza and Mark, the smell of the sea in your music to the final scene...the great passion in the musical language of your work."[135] Both men agreed the opera demands full professional treatment, skilled musicians, and gifted singers to do it justice. Smyth's Thirza still awaits her Calvé.

To find and fit her own creative and singing voice, Smyth took what was musically available to her both from a vocal tradition of a strong, flexible, wide-ranging, and risk-taking female voice, and from an opera tradition in which that voice represents unconventional, but powerful and seductive roles, images, and sites. Perhaps she also drew upon her experience as a lesbian, which told her there were musicians and listeners who would hear that voice as Sapphonic memory and desire. If that knowledge was largely hidden, shared only by a few singers, writers, and musical friends, Smyth could still be true to lesbian experience, yet use musical tradition and operatic convention as a way publicly to express her theme of the social and cultural oppression of homosexual desire and difference, and her lesbian vision of desire as "something yet unvoiced [that] lies at the bottom of the sea, where we are at home."[136]

Notes

Earlier parts of this essay were read at conferences in July 1991 on Feminist Theory and Music (University of Minnesota) and Music and Gender (King's College, University of London), and to my colleagues in the women's biography seminar at the New York University Institute for the Humanities, the Women's History Colloquium of Sarah Lawrence College, and the Gay and Lesbian Study Group at Columbia University. I thank these listeners and organizers, especially Lydia Hamessley, Sophie Watson, Nicola LeFanu, and Patrick Horrigan, for their Sapphonic responses. The voices of friends, especially Philip Brett, Suzanne G. Cusick, Joke Dame, Lawrence D. Mass, Susan McClary, and Suzanne Raitt, have inspired my own. I am particularly grateful to Wayne Koestenbaum, Sharon O'Brien, and Kate Stimpson for their own work, as well as generous suggestions and enthusiasm for mine.

1. Hélène Cixous, "Tancredi Continues" (1983), trans. and reprinted in *"Coming to Writing" and Other Essays*, ed. Deborah Jenson, with introductory essay by Susan Rubin Suleiman (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 79.
2. "Voice" and "singing" in Don Randel, ed., *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986): 926–7, 749–50.
3. "Lesbian continuum" is Adrienne Rich's term (1980) "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" in *Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose 1979–1985* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1986), 23–75. Susan Gubar discusses women "coming to writing" through identification with Sappho in "Sapphistries," *Signs* 10, no. 1 (Autumn 1984): 43–62.
4. A Sappho poem warns, "If you are squeamish,/ Don't prod the beach rubble," but legend has it that after the Maenads dismembered Orpheus to avenge the Sirens whose vocal power and knowledge he had named his own, it was on Lesbos that his severed head, still singing, washed ashore. *Sappho; A New Translation* by Mary Barnard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), 84. Joan de Jean raises mid-nineteenth-century French discussions of "Orphic life" (pederasty and "masculine loves") and Sappho as the female Orpheus in *Fictions of Sappho 1546–1937* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 220, 270.
5. Lesbian opera-loving readers of my essay say it voices what they have always only known intuitively. Trained singers ask: "How did you know? I *am* that voice!" Although I focus here on the trained opera voice, queer studies of pop vocalists also show Sapphonics at work: see Patricia Juliana Smith, "'You Don't Have to Say You Love Me': Dusty Springfield as White Soul Sister, Female Drag Queen, and Lesbian Diva," paper read at the fifth annual Lesbian and Gay Studies Conference, Rutgers University (November 1991), and Martha Mockus on k. d. lang in this volume.
6. "Un panier de framboises" in *HOW(ever)* 5/2 (January 1989): 3–5. Where Patrice Titterington translates "disperse moins" as lowering the voice, I understand dispersal as a breaking up and scattering about in particles.
7. Hector Berlioz, *Gluck and His Operas, with an account of their Relation to Musical Art (1915)* trans. Edwin Evans (reprint Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973), 19–20, 14–15. Viardot reports how she "discovered three good ways of delivering the motif. The first time, sorrowful amazement, almost motionless. The second, choked with tears (the applause lasted two minutes, and they wanted an encore!!!), the third time, outbursts of despair. My poor Euridice remarked, as she arose, 'Mph! I thought that would last forever!'" in "Pauline Viardot-Garcia to Julius Rietz (Letters of Friendship)," trans. Theodore Baker, *Music Quarterly* 2 (1916): 44–6.

8. Jean Chalon, *Portrait of a Seductress: The World of Natalie Barney*, trans. Carol Burko (New York: Crown, 1979), 76–7, 89.
9. Louise Héritte-Viardot, *Memories and Adventures*, trans. E. S. Buchheim (1913), (reprint New York: Da Capo Press, 1978), 102–105 (emphasis mine).
10. John Eliot Gardiner, "Hands Off 'Orfeo!'" and Tom Hammond, "'Orphée et Euridice': Gluck's final solution" and "A note on the aria di bravura 'L'espoir renaît dans mon âme'" in Patricia Howard, ed., *C. W. von Gluck: Orfeo*, Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 112–18, 105–11.
11. Both Viardot (who sang both soprano and contralto roles in the same production of *Robert le Diable*) and her sister Maria Malibran (1803–1836) had this huge range. Nellie Melba, with a similar range, like Calvé was trained by Matilde Marchesi in vocal methods originated by Viardot's father Manuel Garcia and brother Manuel, the most famous voice technicians in Europe in the nineteenth century: Henry Pleasants, *The Great Singers from the Dawn of Opera to Our Own Time* (London: Gollancz, 1967), 85. The younger Manuel Garcia, inventor of Laryngoscopy, considered that voice register is produced "solely by the difference in the tension and the vibration of the vocal chords," not in the chest or throat. The other parts of the larynx influence only timbre: Appendix I in Louise Héritte-Viardot, *Memories and Adventures*, 257.
12. Just how rare is it? Bernard Holland's recent review of the voice of Cecilia Bartoli echoes reports of Viardot and Calvé: "an important and rarely found phenomenon, an authentic coloratura mezzo-soprano darkly beautiful in sound, and able...to negotiate the vocal hazards of Mozart and Rossini arias." Bartoli's Sapphonics "turned her audience into quivering jelly. Nothing seems merely technical or calculated, though technique and calculation are behind a lot of what she does," *The New York Times* (22 August, 1992): C2.
13. Paul Robinson, *Opera and Ideas: From Mozart to Strauss* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 174–77.
14. Effects also exploited by black American lesbian blues singers Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, and cross-dresser Gladys Bentley in Harlem in the 1920s.
15. Henry Chorley, *Thirty Years' Musical Recollections* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1862), quoted in Rupert Christiansen, *Prima Donna: A History* (New York: Viking, 1984), 79, 81.
16. Shawe-Taylor thought Calvé's chest voice by comparison "luscious, dark, seductive, honeyed." Desmond Shawe-Taylor, "Emma Calvé, 1858–1942," in *Opera* 6 (1955), 220–23, reprinted, Harold Rosenthal, ed. *The Opera Bedside Book* (London: Gollancz, 1965), 63–68.
17. Her fourth voice is heard on *Emma Calvé: Diva de la Belle Epoque* in songs by Gounod and an excerpt from *Carmen* recorded 1908, reissued by Fondation France Telecom (1990): MM–30365. Calvé's memoirs are excerpted in Georges Giraud, ed., *Emma Calvé*, (Paris: Millau, 1983). Sarah Vaughan, an American popular vocalist with the same range, also acquired a head voice falsetto.
18. Isaac Nathan, *An essay on the History and Theory of Music, and on the Qualities, Capabilities and Management of the Human Voice* (London: Whittaker, 1823), 63. The term "musico" for the castrato was sometimes applied to a mezzo-soprano who specialized in male roles: on these voice types, see Christiansen, *Prima Donna*, 85, 358.
19. Earlier gay studies of diva worship among opera queens, and camp impersonations (vocal voguings?) of vocal and sexual excess in the high female coloratura of bel canto singing, include Wayne Koestenbaum, "I Could Go On Singing: Diva Vocal Crisis," paper read at the fourth annual Lesbian and Gay Studies Conference, Harvard University (October

1990), and Lawrence D. Mass, "Homosexuality and Music II: A Conversation with George Heymont," in *Homosexuality as Behaviour and Identity: Dialogues of the Sexual Revolution*, vol. 2 (New York: Haworth Press, 1990), 55–77. Koestenbaum's new, brilliant book on queer listening is *The Queen's Throat: Opera, Homosexuality, and the Mystery of Desire* (New York: Poseidon Press, 1993).

20. Wayne Koestenbaum, "The Queen's Throat: (Homo)sexuality and the Art of Singing," in Diana Fuss, ed., *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 205–34, reprinted in *The Queen's Throat*, 154–75.
21. The terms of a late nineteenth-century medicoscientific discourse that categorized the lesbian as neither male nor female but an ambiguously androgynous and immature "third" sex are applied in voice manuals to the castrato and prepubescent boy chorister, respectively.
22. Gilman links this voice to anti-Semitism as well: as the supposed speech of Jews, the breaking voice set Jews apart as separate and strange: Sander L. Gilman, "Strauss and the Pervert," in Arthur Groos and Roger Parker, eds., *Reading Opera*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 322–23, n.45.
23. Money, as quoted by Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross Dressing & Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 106. Also see Michel Poizat, *The Angel's Cry: Beyond the Pleasure Principle in Opera* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992).
24. Koestenbaum, "The Queen's Throat," 220.
25. cf. Maria Callas, who did not value it; who, after radical reconstruction of body and image, broke down and lost her voice. Koestenbaum, "The Callas Cult," in *The Queen's Throat*, 134–53.
26. Quoted as preface to Carl Van Vechten, *Interpretations* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1920) (my translation), first published as *Interpreters and Interpretations* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1912).
27. The Sapphonic voice is thus a metaphor for the inclusive role-playing entity proposed by Sue-Ellen Case, "Toward a Butch-Femme Aesthetic," in Lynda Hart ed., *Making a Spectacle: Essays on Contemporary Women's Theatre* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1989), 282–99.
28. "I no longer know whether my 'they' is masculine or feminine," says Cixous. "Listen. I say Tancredi, I'm not saying a woman; I could, but nothing is that simple. Listen: Rossini doesn't say that the hero, in order to be Tancredi, must be haunted by a woman's voice. He performs it." Cixous, "*Coming to Writing*," 80.
29. Rebecca Pope suggests Viardot's portrayal of Gluck's Orfeo inspired Eliot's verse drama, *Armgart* (1871), ironically a story of a great opera singer who refuses to abandon her career to marriage but loses her voice. See "The Diva Doesn't Die: George Eliot's *Armgart*," in Leslie C. Dunn and Nancy A. Jones, eds., *Embodied Voices: Female Vocality in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming), and Susan Rutherford, "The Voice of Freedom: Images of the Prima Donna," in Vivien Gardner and Susan Rutherford, eds., *The New Woman and Her Sisters: Feminism and Theatre 1850–1914* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992): 95–114.
30. George Sand, *Consuelo: A Romance of Venice* (1842, reprinted New York: Da Capo Press, 1979). Sand and Viardot were close friends, possibly lovers: Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love between Women from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: William Morrow, 1981), 457, n7.
31. Mary Watkins Cushing, *The Rainbow Bridge* (1954, reprinted New York: Arno Press, 1977), 13, and Van Vechten, *Interpretations*, 16.

32. Sharon O'Brien, *Willa Cather: The Emerging Voice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 447. Lehmann's voice, travesty roles, and relationship with Fremstad also belong to Sapphonic legend. Ever disingenuous, Cushing repeats a rumor that the crisis that broke their relationship was Fremstad's "alleged romance" with Lehmann's husband, but insists there were no male lovers, "no scandals," in Fremstad's closet; Cushing, *The Rainbow Bridge*, 179.
33. Van Vechten, *Interpretations*, 11, 16.
34. Cather, *The Song of the Lark* (1915, reprint Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943), 236. Given Cather's ambivalence about her lesbian identity and "feminine friendships," and her identification of creativity with masculinity and her deviancy as male, her ideas on the female singing voice as a "natural," unsocialized force, rooted in the body, not dependent on a man, are problematic. Sharon O'Brien directs me to Cather's letters in the 1890s to Louise Pound, where she uses a "natural/unnatural" polarity in terms of voice, and see O'Brien, *Willa Cather*, 131, 134; and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Across Gender, Across Sexuality: Willa Cather and Others," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 88, no. 1 (Winter 1989): 53–72.
35. Soprano Alma Gluck (1884–1938), who appeared with Fremstad at the New York Metropolitan Opera House from 1909 to 1912, was Davenport's mother; see Barry Paris, "Unconquerable Marcia Davenport," Profiles, *The New Yorker* (22 April 1991): 42–88; Gertrude Atherton, *Tower of Ivory: A Novel* (New York: Hurst, 1910); Cather, *The Song of the Lark*, preface and revisions by Cather, 16 July 1932; and Marcia Davenport, *Of Lena Geyer* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936). Subsequent quotations are to these editions.
36. For added realism, a fictional Toscanini conducts Geyer's New York debut, a Mahler those of Kronberg and Styr. Grau's divas included Lehmann, Calvé, Nordica, Eames, Farrar, Melba, Tetrazzini, and Fremstad, who in 1905 was one of the Met's highest-paid singers, earning $1382 per single performance, at ten per month, when the average monthly income for a New York family was $850; Christiansen, *Prima Donna*, 184–8.
37. "Künstlerroman" as a novel of formation depicting the awakening and growth of a lesbian artist is discussed in Bonnie Zimmerman, "Amazon Expedition: The Lesbian Self," in *The Safe Sea of Women: Lesbian Fiction 1969–1989* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990), 33–75.
38. Fremstad was adopted by a Swedish couple who migrated to St. Paul, Minnesota when she was twelve: see William Moran's brief biography concluding Cushing's *The Rainbow Bridge*.
39. In her preface to the revised edition of *The Song of the Lark*, Cather says Kronberg's story is the reverse of Oscar Wilde's *The Portrait of Dorian Grey*: "the harassed, susceptible human creature comes and goes, subject to colds, brokers, dressmakers, managers. But the free creature, who retains her youth and beauty and warm imagination, is kept shut up in the closet, along with the scores and wigs" (vi).
40. In lesbian fiction, gay artists who mediate between lesbian lovers and represent sexual experience but not a sexual threat include Jeremy Brockett in Radclyffe Hall, *The Well of Loneliness*, and Matthew O'Connor in Djuna Barnes, *Nightwood*. But as in many lesbian fictions, Davenport suppresses lesbian meaning in her novel by ending with a marriage of convenience between Geyer and an aged, widowed friend.
41. In a remarkable metaphor that turns the male gaze on itself, and inverts hunter into hunted/haunted, Archie calls this an attack of "buck-fever" comparable to elk hunting: "when a man's mind is so full of shooting that he forgets the gun in his hand and is

paralyzed when the target stares back at him" (Cather, *Song of the Lark*, 498–99).

42. Cushing describes a seven-year relationship with Fremstad as her companion, colleague, buffer, and junior partner as one of enchantment and willing enslavement; Cushing, *The Rainbow Bridge*, 69, 86, 111, 120.

43. Lilli Lehmann, *How to Sing*, trans. Richard Aldrich (1902, reprinted New York: Macmillan, 1960).

44. The quotation is by Willa Cather in James Woodress, *Willa Cather: A Literary Life* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 257.

45. Marjorie Garber discusses fetishism as "foundational to theater itself" and made possible in a theatrical space, in "Fetish Envy," chapter 5, *Vested Interests*, 118–27. See also Teresa de Lauretis, "Perverse Desire: The Lure of the Mannish Lesbian," in *Australian Feminist Studies* 13 (Autumn 1991): 15–26; and Elizabeth Grosz, "Lesbian Fetishism?" in *differences; A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 3/2 (Summer 1991): 39–54.

46. In a similar argument, Sharon O'Brien considers narrator Nellie Birdseye's "acknowledged and unacknowledged investment in the subject is the story itself" in Cather's *My Mortal Enemy*; quoted in Richard Giannone, *Music in Willa Cather's Fiction* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968): 310.

47. For Cather, a woman's voice is an instrument or a medium of feeling and idea that communicates directly between creator and receiver: Giannone, *Music in Willa Cather's Fiction*, 7–8, 10.

48. Giannone, *Music in Willa Cather's Fiction*, 243, and see O'Brien, *Willa Cather*, 136.

49. Only when a young married man's desire threatens her career does an undefended Styr/Brünnhilde stage the death of desire by self-immolation. In a private midnight performance of *Götterdämmerung* staged for King Ludwig, Wagner's queer patron and Styr's never-seen admirer, she deliberately rides to her death in the blazing funeral pyre.

50. O'Brien's title is derived from Cather's idea that music (a "text without words") enters a realm beyond language to convey to a listener "the thing not named," in Willa Cather, *Not Under Forty* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1936), 50; see O'Brien "'The Thing Not Named': Willa Cather as a Lesbian Writer," in Estelle B. Freedman, Barbara C. Gelpi, Susan L. Johnson, Kathleen M. Weston, eds., *The Lesbian Issue: Essays from Signs*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 67–90. Gertrude Atherton, notable for her depictions of female sexual desire, suggests lesbian possibilities in the relationship between two women in *Perch of the Devil* (New York: Stokes, 1914); see Emily Wortis Leider, *California's Daughter: Gertrude Atherton and Her Times* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

51. Kate O'Brien, *As Music and Splendour: A Novel* (London: Heinemann, 1958).

52. Joke Dame, "Unveiled Voices: Sexual Difference and the Castrato," in this volume.

53. Susan McClary's delicious queer phrase in *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 37. Philip Brett suggests the countertenor as a substitute for castrato can also be figured into the equation. Listeners might compare the fit: countertenor duets by Alfred Deller and John Whitworth in Purcell's ode, *Come All Ye Sons of Art* (1694; recorded L'Oiseau-Lyre 1958) or Catherine Gayer, soprano, and Brigitte Fassbënder, contralto, in *Il giardino di Amore* (ca. 1700; recorded DGG 1964), a serenade for two castrati by Alessandro Scarlatti and the vocal model for a duet between a fictional castrato (the hero Tonio in the soprano role of Adonis) and female contralto (the Contessa as Venus) in the living presence of Caffarelli (1710–1783), the most famous of all great castratos whom Bartolo refers to in the Lesson scene of Rossini's opera *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. The fiction is by Ann Rice, *Cry to Heaven* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982, reprint New York: Ballantine, 1991), see Afterword, 534. Rice consulted historical records, vocal methods, and medical experts; this portion of her novel was actually written to Scarlatti's music. Rice represents the "man playing a woman" as an illusion, "a complete lie" (370), a "defiance, knowing what others couldn't possibly know" (372–3), and erotic appropriation of the female voice: "It was as if he wanted the Contessa's voice, and she knew it. His voice was seducing her voice, not merely for its answers but for that moment when the two would come together in one song" (311).

54. A vocal *and* visual drag, for example, by Arsace in Rossini's opera *Semiramide*, a solo female travesty voice of the female-as-man, the lost and found son who is in love with his/her mother. Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* and Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro* voice redoubled vocal drag as the female-as-man who cross-dresses as a woman who desires a woman.

55. Viardot's handwritten cadenza to the aria "L'espoir renaît dans mon âme" is reproduced in Howard, *C. W. von Gluck*, 95.

56. Conversation with Philip Brett. For a challenging discussion of castration and the "sonorous envelope of the maternal voice" in her reading of Julia Kristeva's texts "Stabat Mater" and "Motherhood According to Giovanni Bellini," see Kaja Silverman, (4) "The Fantasy of the Maternal Voice: Female Subjectivity and the Negative Oedipus Complex" in *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), 101–40.

57. Willa Cather, *My Mortal Enemy* (1926, reprint New York: Vintage Classics, 1990).

58. Giannone, *Music in Willa Cather's Fiction*, 180.

59. Cather's article in *McClure's Magazine* as quoted in Christiansen, *Prima Donna*, 186.

60. Herbert Lindenburger, *Opera, the Extravagant Art* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 191.

61. Fremstad "loved" the novel, according to Edith Lewis, the woman who lived with Cather for forty years. See Edith Lewis, *Willa Cather Living: A Personal Record* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), 92.

62. Giannone: *Music in Willa Cather's Fiction*, 89.

63. Ned Rorem, on the inadvisability of trying to make connections between homosexuality and music, in *The Later Diaries of Ned Rorem, 1961–1972* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1983), 433.

64. Mary Garden and Geraldine Farrar (another Sapphonic figure) together provide the composite portrait of Kitty Ayrshire in two stories by Willa Cather: "Scandal" and "The Gold Slipper." Diva Lillian Nordica inspired Cather's story "The Diamond Mine." While in lesbian contexts Garden is for me a Sapphonic figure, Wayne Koestenbaum tells me in conversation that she is equally the "quintessential diva adored by gay men, especially in camp contexts," a convergence in queer listening that would make a fascinating study. Farrar, who also studied voice with Lilli Lehmann, had an "appeal always as potent to girls as it was to men." Claques of besotted teenage girls "who screamed and waved flags at the stage door on Farrar nights were christened the Gerryflappers," see Christiansen, *Prima Donna*, 191–92, and Farrar's autobiography, *Such Sweet Compulsion* (New York: Greystone Press, 1938), 133, 216.

65. Mary Garden and Louis Biancolli, *Mary Garden's Story* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1951), 272, and Christiansen, *Prima Donna*, 277.

66. Pleasants, *The Great Singers*, 308.

67. Van Vechten, *Interpretations*, 72, 196, and Pleasants, *The Great Singers*, 312. Garden's voice in excerpts from *Thaïs* and *Le Jongleur* (recorded 1911–1912), and as Mélisande to Debussy's piano accompaniment, is heard on OASI Historical Recordings CD 7001.

68. Pleasants, *The Great Singers*, 358, and see Emma Calvé, *My Life*, trans. Rosamond Gilder (New York: D. Appleton, 1922).

69. Shaw, quoted by Pleasants, *The Great Singers*, 308, 303–7 and see Christiansen, *Prima Donna*, 272–4.

70. *Salome* was not again produced at the New York Metropolitan Opera until 1933. In 1907 Mary Garden also caused a sensation as Salome, performing her own dances at Oscar Hammerstein's rival Manhattan Opera House; Christiansen, *The Great Singers*, 186, 188.

71. Cather, quoted in Woodress, *Willa Cather*, 258; and see Cushing, *The Rainbow Bridge*, 56.

72. Cushing, *The Rainbow Bridge*, 54; see also Francis Neilson, *My Life in Two Worlds*, vol. 1 (1867–1915) (Appleton, Wis.: C. C. Nelson, 1952), 207–14.

73. Offenbach's contemporary satiric parodies of opéra comique include *Orfée aux enfers* (1858).

74. The following paragraphs are excerpted from "Vocal (S)exchange," my study in progress, where I also discuss the opera *Sappho* (1960) by Peggy Glanville-Hicks, who derived her libretto from the verse play by Lawrence Durrell (1950), the only opera on Sappho I have found composed by a lesbian. For a discussion of the Gautier and Daudet Sapphic fictions, see de Jean, *Fictions of Sappho*, 259–65.

75. Viardot's creation of powerful political roles as Norma, Valentine (*Les Huguenots*), and Fidès (*Le Prophète*) and travesty roles as Alceste and Leonore (Fidelio) also inspired Saint-Säens's creation of mezzo-voiced Dalila. In 1872, five years before *Samson et Dalila* premiered, Viardot sang Dalila for the composer in a private audition. Marilyn Horne records two arias from Gounod's *Sapho* on Editions Costallat (1985): MCE 75170.

76. Calvé recorded Fanny's aria, "Viens, m'ami," in 1919, reissued on Fondation Telcom CD: MN 30365.

77. See Austin B. Caswell, "*Ariane et Barbe Bleue*: A Feminist Opera?" paper given at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society, Baltimore (November 1988). Terry Castle discusses Leblanc's lesbian *ménage* in her essay, "In Praise of Brigitte Fassbaender (A Musical Emanation)," forthcoming in *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). I am grateful to Terry for her dazzling discussion of "Sapphic diva-worship" and "homovocality."

78. William M. Curtin, ed., *The World and the Parish: Willa Cather's Articles and Reviews, 1893–1902*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970) and quoted in Sharon O'Brien, *Willa Cather*, 136.

79. Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men*, 254, 263.

80. The vast repertory of operas set in foreign landscapes, cultures, and societies, along with issues of gender, race, class, and sexuality these operas raise, is an enticing field of inquiry for lesbian and feminist musicologists. See Marjorie Garber's chapter, "The Chic of Araby," a compelling discussion of the erotics of Western cultural appropriation of the Eastern Other and of cultural fantasies such as Wilde's *Salome* played out "in cross-dressing as well as in homo- and bisexual relations between East and West, European and Arab," that develop as Westerners "look East" for "role models and deliberate cultural masquerade" to a "place of liminality and change," a "site of transvestism as escape and rupture," in Garber, *Vested Interests*: 304–52. Also see Ralph P. Locke, "Constructing the Oriental 'Other': Saint-Säens's *Samson et Dalila*" in *Cambridge Opera Journal* 3, no. 3: 261–302.

81. "Foreigners are necessary to assume the strangeness of a woman who is not really a woman," Catherine Clément says of the opera diva with the strange name (Callas, Caballe, Sontag, Malibran), the opera heroine (Carmen, Isolde, Butterfly) who is a foreigner even in her own "country," and the foreign language of opera itself. While Clément considers racism, imperialism, and patriarchal power in *Carmen*, it is ironic she ignores the huge influence on French operas, her own language and culture, of the feminist figure of Carmen: *Opera: Or the Undoing of Woman* (1979), trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1988), 30, 58–59, 48–53.

82. McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 57.

83. Nelly Furman, "The Languages of Love in *Carmen*," in Arthur Groos and Roger Parker, eds., *Reading Opera* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 176.

84. McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 58, 66.

85. Tchaikovsky, as quoted in Hamish Swanston, *In Defence of Opera* (London and New York: Penguin, 1978), 270.

86. Mérimée, childhood tutor of the Empress Eugénie, learned the story of Carmen from her Spanish mother. The empress was Smyth's friend, neighbor, and sponsor of her work, and possibly discussed with Smyth political and sexual overtones in the opera concerning the Second French Empire whose fall in 1870 brought about her exile in England. Among the Empress's many homosexual friends was the writer Lucien Daudet, Proust's lover and the son of Alphonse Daudet whose *Sapho* (1884) inspired Massenet's opera.

87. Clément, *Opera*, 48.

88. Ethel Smyth, *As Time Went On...* (London: Longman's, Green and Co., 1936), 129.

89. Maurice Baring, *The Puppet-Show of Memory* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1922), 139–40. Sargent's charcoal sketch of Smyth singing (the National Portrait Gallery, London) is discussed by Suzanne Raitt in "The Singers of Sargent: Mabel Batten, Elsie Swinton, Ethel Smyth," paper read at the conference on Music and Gender, King's College, University of London, in July 1991.

90. Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, quoted in Christopher St. John, *Ethel Smyth: A Biography* (London: Longmans, 1959), 153.

91. St. John, *Ethel Smyth*, 78.

92. Smyth claimed that effect on Lady Mary Ponsonby, in *As Time Went On...*, 83–108. Her transvestic voice appears not only in her romantic lieder (op. 1 and 2) but also in large forms, e.g., the cantata *The Song of Love* (op. 8, 1888) for solo soprano and tenor, chorus, and orchestra, for which she created a text from the biblical Song of Songs that describes specifically female beauty, never male. For my study of Smyth's lesbian representations in music and memoir, see "Lesbian Fugue: Ethel Smyth's Contrapuntal Arts," in Ruth A. Solie, ed., *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 164–83.

93. *Der Wald* was first performed in Berlin on 9 April 1902, then in London at Covent Garden on 18 July 1902. Fremstad's first role in her London debut season was the mezzo Ortrud to Lillian Nordica's Elsa in Wagner's *Lohengrin*. At the time, Fremstad sang both mezzo and soprano roles (Fricka, Brangäne, Venus) in Wagner productions at Covent Garden, Munich, and the New York Metropolitan. Her New York debut in 1903 was Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*.

94. As reported by Smyth, *What Happened Next* (London: Longman's, Green & Co., 1940), 258. Calvé wrote Smyth (ca. 1906) suggesting contacts presumably to translate the opera libretto from French to German: undated manuscript in McMaster University Library, Hamilton, Ontario.

95. Smyth first met Messager in 1900; she reports he was most impressed with *Der Wald* in Smyth, *What Happened Next*. 174.

96. Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale, *Misia: The Life of Misia Sert* (New York: William Morrow, 1981), 243.

97. Michael de Cossart, *The Food of Love: Princesse Edmond de Polignac (1865–1943) and Her Salon* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978).

98. Ethel M. Smyth, *Female Pipings in Eden* (London: Peter Davies, 1934), 53–56.

99. Smyth, *What Happened Next*, 126, 121. The Italian text was Guglielmo Ferrero and Cesare Lombrosa, *La Donna delinquente, la prostituta, e la donna normale*, published in English as *The Female Offender* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1895). On Swinburne's "In Anactoria" in *Poems and Ballads* (1866), in which Sappho complains to a fickle lover, see Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men*, 155, 459.

100. Ethel M. Smyth, *Streaks of Life*, (London: Longmans, Green, 1921), 209.

101. James D. Steakley, "Iconography of a Scandal; Political Cartoons and the Eulenburg Affair in Wilhelmine Germany," in Martin Bauml Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, Jr., eds., *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (New York: New American Library, 1989): 233–57.

102. Smyth, *What Happened Next*, 200. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff was antifeminist and his *Sappho und Simonides* (1913) promoted the fiction of a chaste Sappho "freed from the sin of lesbianism"; see de Jean, *Fictions of Sappho*, 207, 218–22, 307. In Paris, the celebration of Sappho by lesbian writers Natalie Barney and Renée Vivien as the poetic precursor of modern lesbian identity began at the time that Smyth's operas were first performed.

103. Smyth set Alfred de Musset's *Fantasio*, a play of transvestic rescue fantasies that encode his love affair with George Sand, as her second-choice libretto upon learning that Massenet had already begun an opera on *Thäis*, the courtesan who converts to Christianity in the historical novel by Anatole France. I discuss this further in my forthcoming study of Smyth.

104. The quotation is in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Eric Blom (London: MacMillan, 1954), Fifth edition, vol. 4: "Holmès, Augusta," 329.

105. Smyth, *What Happened Next*, 210.

106. Sargent's charcoal drawing of Smyth (1901) in the National Portrait Gallery shows her singing "desperately exciting songs by Schubert and August Holmès"; Smyth, *What Happened Next*, 174.

107. The production was in Mannheim in October 1898: Smyth, *What Happened Next*, 100, 104.

108. Smyth claimed "I never was, nor am I now, a Wagnerite in the extreme sense of the word" in *As Time Went On...*, 62.

109. Ethel M. Smyth, *Inventory of Music* (1937) in the British Library, Add. Ms. 49196.

110. Smyth, *Songs* (1907) for mezzo voice and chamber ensemble include Odelette (Régnier), La Danse (Régnier), Chrysilla (Régnier), and Ode Anacréontique (Leconte de Lisle).

111. "Argument" by Harry Brewster, *Der Wald*, Music-Drama with Prologue and Epilogue in One Act by E. M. Smyth (London/Mainz/Paris: Schott, 1902).

112. Smyth, *What Happened Next*, 204–205.

113. Neilson protested for many years that the opera's libretto, scenario, and lighting, were entirely his invention: see *My Life in Two Worlds*, 207–14.

114. Smyth, *What Happened Next*, 164.

115. Mary Ponsonby to Smyth as quoted in Smyth, *What Happened Next*, 204.

116. Richard Aldrich, "Operatic Novelty at the Season's End," *The New York Times*, 15 March 1903: 25, cols. 5–6.

117. She represents this experience in the orchestral prelude "On the Cliffs of Cornwall," to act 2 of the opera.

118. The underwater cave in act 2 that floods at high tide replicates one Smyth visited many years before in the Scilly Isles.

119. Smyth, *What Happened Next*, 234–35.

120. Smyth worked quickly. On 31 May 1904 she had completed act 2 and on 13 December 1905 the third act and final score of *Les Naufrageurs*.

121. Published 1903 by Fisher Unwin in London.

122. Jane A. Bernstein, "'Shout, Shout, Up with Your Song!' Dame Ethel Smyth and the Changing Role of the British Woman Composer," in Jane Bowers and Judith Tick, eds., *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150–1950*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 304–24. Bernstein notes that Donald Mitchell informed her that Britten did not know *The Wreckers* and the copy in the Britten-Pears library was a recent acquisition, a claim by Sir Peter Pears, as reported by Mitchell, I also have difficulty believing. The lesbian's opera, I suggest, may be the "beast" in Britten's closet. See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "The Beast in the Closet: James and the Writing of Homosexual Panic," in Ruth Bernard Yeazell, ed., *Sex, Politics, and Science in the Nineteenth-Century Novel: Selected Papers from the English Institute, 1983–84* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 148–86.

123. Peter Conrad, *Romantic Opera and Literary Form* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 66.

124. Thyrza is also title and central character in a realistic London novel by George Gissing (1891). A thyrsus, or spear, of Dionysus was wreathed in ivy or vine and topped with a pinecone. Byron's poems to Thyrza are in *The Poetical Works of Lord Byron*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1959) 63–64. I find it otherwise an odd choice of name for an opera heroine because it is hard to pronounce in both French and German. "Th" in Smyth's own name presented a problem, for instance, when Brahms pronounced it Schmeiss and made a dirty joke about flies.

125. Garber, *Vested Interests*, 317 and 418, n. 30.

126. Smyth, *What Happened Next*, 253.

127. Smyth reports that the Empress Eugénie loved to sing "The Rat" and thought it the best in her opera. It intrigues me to imagine that its title and musical references to *Carmen* may encode a private lesbian reference to two Parisian bars, the "Rat Mort" and "Tambourin," bohemian cafés during the Second Empire reign of the empress and still frequented by lesbians in the 1880s. Reference to these bars is made by Michael Wilson,

"Gender and Transgression in Bohemian Montmartre," in Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub, eds., *Bodyguards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 210.

128. Nietzsche as quoted by Furman, "The Languages of Love in *Carmen*," 170.
129. Vocal score, act 1: 68.
130. Smyth, *What Happened Next*, 253.
131. Smyth, *What Happened Next*, 267.
132. Blanche Marchesi published a memoir, *Singer's Pilgrimage* (1923; New York: Da Capo Press, 1978).
133. Sir Thomas Beecham, *A Mingled Chime: An Autobiography* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1943), 139.
134. Bruno Walter, *Theme and Variations; An Autobiography* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1947), 169–70.
135. Bruno Walter to Smyth from California, 25 December 1939, reproduced in St. John, *Ethel Smyth*, 283–84.
136. In 1928, more than twenty years after *The Wreckers*, Radclyffe Hall published *The Well of Loneliness*, Virginia Woolf *Orlando*, and Djuna Barnes *The Ladies Almanack*. It is tempting to imagine, had these stories been available to Smyth in 1902, the operas she might have composed on Hall's lesbian underworld and dangerous wartime battlefield where lesbians could be gallant, patriotic, heroic like men; Woolf's gleeful fantasy of cross-gendered and cross-dressed masquerade rescued and redeemed by marriage; or Barnes's satiric wigging of Natalie Barney's Paris-Lesbos menagerie. Hall's story *Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself* (written in 1926 but not published until 1934) bears some resemblance to *The Wreckers*. Miss Ogilvy, an outcast lesbian misfit trapped in her inborn sexual identity, finds in a cave, just above the waterline, ancient stones and fragments that produce in her transvestic fantasies of herself as Amazon and tribal warrior, a young man, with a girl. Like Thirza, and unlike Cather's Thea Kronberg, she is found dead in the cave the next day. Miss Ogilvy represents an oppressive, tragic lesbian stereotype that Ethel Smyth refused in life and probably had no wish to replicate in art. At the time she composed her operas, and long afterward, few alternative imaginary or realistic literary representations of lesbian identity and experience existed.

4

ON A LESBIAN RELATIONSHIP WITH MUSIC

A Serious Effort Not to Think Straight

Suzanne G. Cusick

HO GRANDISSIMA PAURA.

Ecco'l fatto.

E sarebbe più facile dire'l mio tutto in italiano, una lingua che da molto è stata diventata per me come una lingua materna; cioè, la lingua più-che-materna, la lingua nel quale io vivo la mia vita più interiore, nel quale parlo col'io che esiste a priori dell'io musicista, l'io americana, l'io donna, anzi l'io lesbica. Sarebbe più facile in questa lingua che non è la mia perche qui, in questa lingua, non c'è l'illusione della naturale, della lingua "materna" e nativa che in verità è (già e sempre) la lingua dei padri; qui, in questa lingua, parlo della mia verità più originaria, cioè la mia verità di essere fuori sistema, sempre riconoscente di essere fuori sistema, e di esserne riconoscente prima che ho mai saputo di essere musicista, ó donna, ó lesbica; di esserla già e sempre quando non sono nessun'altra che questa.

I have great fear (I am very afraid. And they are not quite the same).

To speak publicly and truly about my own musicality (as private a part of me as my "sexuality"—and frightening to speak of for that, but more frightening still because it is more completely a part of me than that which the world calls "sex," being also the fabric of my public life).

To speak *not* from what Luisa Muraro calls the state of "faked being" (l'essere finta), whence the verisimilitude and credibility of one's topos and thesis are more important than truth, and are guaranteed by both topos and thesis coming from what has already been said, what can be verified by footnote.[1]