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‘Dido’s Lament’, a Lament for our Dying Planet?

An inquiry into a modern reconfiguration of ‘Dido’s Lament’, exemplified through Annie Lennox’ performance.

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Abstract

'Dido's Lament' from the opera Dido and Aeneas (Henry Purcell, 1680s) has found its manifold ways through history. Still holding a massive popularity on the world's opera stages, it is also realized through several performers in various musical styles. Do such performances pose a 'threat' to the historical perspectives, or do they offer new ways of experiencing this music?

I look specifically into Annie Lennox' performance of 'Dido's Lament' with London City Voices. Recorded during the pandemic, it exemplifies an aspect of the crisis in music during the pandemic. Further, Annie Lennox herself relates the lament to our dying planet and thus to the global climate crisis. The objective is twofold, in that I seek to show the value of understanding the culture where the text and music originates, and to open up for re-configuration and appropriation where we seek a meaningful performance and experience in our current context. This is done in light of central issues concerning performance of historic music. This approach is both applicable for performers and in and educational setting for students and teachers in music education.

Founded in an embodied experiential approach, I will, through historic references, textual analysis, and analysis of this realisation by Annie Lennox , address the various 'crises' mentioned. From centring around Dido's tragic fate towards a beyond human tragedy concerning the planet's survival, we shift from an anthropocentric view towards a wider and embodied approach to this piece of music, opening new for possibilities and experiences for performers and audiences, which is also highly relevant in an educational setting.

Keywords: *Dido's Lament performance, embodiment, historically informed performance, interpretation, topomorphology*

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Introduction

Dido's Lament' from the opera *Dido and Aeneas* (Henry Purcell, 1680s) has found its manifold ways through history. Still holding a massive popularity on the world's opera stages, it is also realized through several performers in various musical styles. Do such performances pose a 'threat' to the historical perspectives, or do they offer new ways of experiencing this music?

As the title suggests, this article is an inquiry into a modern, contemporary reconfiguration of 'Dido's Lament', through the performance by Annie Lennox and London City Voices[2] . I investigate and ask: 'To what extent can it be meaningful to transform original musical compositions and performances into a framework which aims for a discussion of contemporary and critical issues to learn of the past?'. Through my inquiry I illustrate challenges, opportunities and dilemmas of such an approach.

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I begin by presenting the contemporary performance, pointing out some interesting aspects as a basis for analysis and interpretation. Further, I give a short introduction to the historical perspective of the opera and libretto, specifically in the aria. Then, I again focus on the contemporary performance by Annie Lennox and inquire into possibilities of interpretation and experience through approaches towards performance of historical music, leaning on embodiment perspectives (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999; Scott, 2018; Spatz, 2017) and historical empathy (Lévesque, 2008) rooted in performative musicology as introduced by Rolfhamre (2022).

I extend my inquiry by suggesting a possible pedagogical approach where I build on Frida Forsgren's 'Aesthetic and Pedagogical Approach to Re-Living History' (Forsgren, 2022) and Rolfhamre's pedagogical approach to HIP through performative musicology (Rolfhamre, 2022) to explore a more immersed and experiential take on working with history through the contemporary.

'Dido's Lament' –presentation and analysis of Annie Lennox' performance

The music video begins with 9 seconds of silence, a still picture with black background and the white text:

> When it comes to climate catastrophe, we are on the edge of abyss. I really believe we don't have much time left to make an effective change. We are looking at a civilization on the downwards side. This is the truth of this matter. It's staring us in the face and we are not paying any significant attention –continu-

2 This is the video that the analysis is based on: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3DFaIovZxc : Choral Performance with London City Voices, released 16. Des. 2020. In addition, there is an official music video focusing on nature images and environmental threats: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3yWda4RJoOI. Official music video, released 13. Nov. 2020

> ing on as if it doesn't exist. I see Dido's Lament as a lament for our dying planet."
>
> – Annie Lennox, December 2020

Then the screen fills up with squares with one person in each, headshot, dressed in black with white-hued backgrounds. Annie Lennox is in the centre square, she also wears black, but with white dots. She looks towards the side, not looking into the camera before she starts singing. The focus zooms in on her. Musically, we hear a piano, a b2, and the bass line from Purcell's composition is played on a piano with single notes, very simplistically. Visually we see various people in squares, focus shifting between different people and a varying number of people on the screen at once. First time she sings the verse, it is her voice alone with the base line played on piano. The film is swiping across the faces, all pale and with little colour when they do not sing, though not completely black and white. Then the piano plays chords with the bass line. The verse is repeated, this time with the sopranos in the chorus in octave unison with Lennox' voice.

The first time the 'chorus' 'Remember me' comes, she sings alone. There is an echo repeating the phrase, other faces are in focus when the echo comes. Next, the whole chorus is harmonized, 'Remember me' with all voices. This harmonization is an arrangement and cannot be found in Purcell's composition.

In the instrumental interlude, a harpsichord is introduced, playing an obligato, also not in Purcell's composition. The chorus then begins with harmonized 'oh, oh, oh'-vocals. Short, and precise with rhythmical patterns both on quarter notes, and female voices also on eighth-notes. The film is swiping all the various faces, many different faces are represented. All are in colour when they all sing. No one ever smiles throughout the video.

Then the verse is sung harmonized by the choir, with simple chords accompanying, and no polyphony. All voices are heard. Annie Lennox then sings alone again: 'Remember me', twice, with echo and the third time they all sing in harmony. Towards the end, the rhythmic 'oh, oh, oh' returns with intensity, then a weaker 'remember me' as the last vocal line. It ends in a b-minor chord. With the final chord, the screen is again black and white letters appear with 'In solidarity with GREENPEACE. Donate now at: www.greenpeace.org.uk/dido'.

The video and music are both insistent on simplicity throughout the performance. The focus is on the seriousness of the message, in this context: The climate crisis, and as Lennox states: 'we are on the edge of abyss [...] it is staring us in the face'. The singers all stare at us, insisting on the grave situation at hand. The voices all contribute with their unique sound. In this context, the human voices are central, the bodies producing the voices are in focus and the natural sound with very little instrumental accompaniment makes them stand out further. To me, it seems as though the voices do not represent the unique human aspect, but more nature itself. They speak for, with, and through nature. '[...] an understanding that nature is not inanimate and less than human, but animated and more than human' (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, p.566).

The echo in the phrase 'remember me' can be heard as an echo from the planet, as echo is a natural phenomenon; nature speaking back at us, representing communication and dialogue with our planet. The chorus is very important in representing plurality and shifting the focus from the subject, the performer, or artist, towards the message, the music, and nature itself. In my view, this performance does not have an anthropocentric focus, but instead lifts the perspective beyond the subjective artistry towards being a part of nature and the whole. Having an embodied understanding of this relationship, it results in an activist moral attitude towards society, the planet

and nature as a whole. Nature is a part of our being and in my view, this performance underlines this embodied relationship.

Historical perspective

In its original context, 'Dido's Lament' is the protagonist aria at the end of the opera *Dido and Aeneas* by Henry Purcell and Nahum Tate written in London in the 1680s. Its context is Queen Dido heartbroken and in despair. In the classic myth, Dido commits suicide, whereas in the opera libretto by Nahum Tate, she dies of grief (Harris, 2018). A common belief at the time, and an embodied realisation of emotion. It is even recognized in medical science today as 'broken heart syndrome'.

Delving into the lyrics of the aria, we see the recitative relating to the relation between Belinda, servant and close friend, and Dido. Looking into the structure of the text topomorphically (how words are structured and distributed architecturally throughout the text to emphasise e.g. meaning and message), we see that rhetoric is consciously embedded to underline and enforce the meaning in the text itself (Eriksen 2001).

Thy hand, Belinda, darkness shades me,

On thy Bosom let me rest,

More I wou'd but Death invades me.

Death is now a Welcom[sic] Guest,

When I am laid in Earth [may] my wrongs Create

No trouble in thy Breast

Remember me, but ah! Forget my Fate.

The rhetorical structure emphasizes references to Dido herself throughout the short text, she is the focal point throughout. There are synonyms as 'breast' and 'bosom' that are in a circular mirrored pattern. Repetitions of 'death' occur, beginning with death as an invasion, moving towards acceptance at the end. This is ordered in a chiastic centripetal structure, a symmetric, circular pattern. Synonyms for errors are related to problems and their consequences. Dido being at peace with her fate are the centripetal words, at the very middle structurally. 'Remember' and 'Forget' are clear antitheses, opposites. All these rhetorical devices are well-known structures emphasising the message and strengthening the emotional nerve of the aria. The last word, 'fate', is central throughout the plot of the opera and distributed evenly and at central points in the libretto. It is very fitting that this is Dido's very last word[3] (Nesmann-Aas, 2022a).

As these structures were common in texts at the time of the creation of the opera, it could more easily be recognised by the audience. However, the historic belief concerning rhetorical, topomorphic structuring of texts was that this also functions on a subliminal level, thus if we adhere to this possibility, it can support an intuitive translation of essential content being available also to an audience of today. Another point in 'translating' history is the meaning of the words themselves. Historically, 'my wrongs' do not only mean what Dido herself has done wrong, but it can also mean wrongs done against her (Schmalfeldt, 2001). Stepping aside from a more subjective focus, it is also relevant to note that the focus on wrongs could also be more related to not acting according to one's fate or will of the God(s). Knowing this adds layers to the interpretation of the text itself.

3 This short analysis is part of a larger analysis previously published in chapter 3 in the anthology by Rolfhamre, R., & Angelo, E. (2022). *Views on Early Music as Representation: Invitations, Congruity, Performance. I*n: Cappelen Damm Akademisk/NOASP (Nordic Open Access Scholarly Publishing).

Without providing a separate musical analysis of the aria, I simply note that these textual focal points are in line with the musical phrasing and accompaniment. 'Dido's Lament' in g minor is structured around a ground bass pattern and in addition it is one of very few vocal pieces with independent string accompaniment from this opera. The ground bass pattern is made up of a descending tetrachord but has distinctive features. the combination of a regular structure opposed by irregular features results in a more intricate musical structure. It builds a tension which supports the content of the words. The aria also has a lack of full tonic resolution in the sung melody and accompanied harmony, which is withheld until the end.

In terms of embodiment and metaphoric expressions in the text, I find it important to note the density of bodily, physical references linked to emotions in the short text. This is also referred to as immersive techniques, as found in second generation cognitive literary theory (Allan, 2020; Grethlein et al., 2020; Nesmann-Aas, 2022b)[4]. Without providing a full analysis of basic and complex metaphorical structures, as outlined by Lakoff and Johnson (1999, 2003), I will still point out some striking examples. 'Darkness shades me' is a metaphoric reference to the lack of light as something negative, depressive and invasive, darkness and shade takes away the ability to see clearly, and this is related to a similar emotional experience. Being invaded by death is similarly a metaphor for outside negative forces taking over the body. 'When I am laid in earth' reminds us of the physicality of burial and puts focus on the body itself. Creating 'trouble in thy breast' is again a very much embodied and physical experience of emotion, a visceral embodiment where the negative emotions are strongly felt in the chest region. These poetic and metaphorical descriptions of physical bodily

4 For those interested in more detail and an exemplification, I have previously published an article (in Norwegian) where I apply the framework of embodiment and immersive techniques on music and poetry by Grieg and Bjoernson. Nesmann-Aas, I. M. (2022b). «De tonende sekunder». Studia Musicologica Norvegica, 48(1), 3-17. https://doi.org/10.18261/smn.48.1.2 .

orientation in the world and visceral embodiment of emotion are a strong case for a common embodied understanding bridging the historical gap from the creation of the text in the 1680s and our present time. Emphasising the embodied experience in approaching and interpreting this aria can be an effective tool for both performers, teachers, students, and audiences in connecting with the material beyond academic, historical and musicological perspectives. I return to how this article relates to embodiment in more detail in a later section.

Analysing the music and lyrics and the interaction between these, is central to interpretation and performers generally do this as a part of studying, learning and performing a piece of music, from a more unconscious experiential level to a detailed analysis, spanning from Haseman to Hegel, as an example. Much can be said of interpreting the aria as part of an operatic performance, but I wish to look into more of what happens when the piece of music is reinterpreted by contemporary artists in other musical genres. Here we look specifically into Annie Lennox' performance of 'Dido's Lament' with London City Voices.

The Past in the Present, for a Better Future?

Beginning with the text in Lennox' performance, we see that the recitative is left out, leaving us only with the following lines:

> When I am laid in earth may my wrongs create
>
> No trouble in thy breast
>
> Remember me, but ah! Forget my fate.

The original rhetorical structure is altered, as part of the text is removed. However, we are left with central phrases that can be interpreted in their new context. The subjects 'I' and 'thy' referred to in Lennox' performance are clearly no longer Dido and

Belinda. As she states herself, it is a 'lament for our dying planet'. The subject phrase can perhaps be seen as all of us who lament the dying planet, we regret what humanity has done wrong towards our planet. But saying that these wrongs should cause 'no trouble in thy breast' is not exactly in line with the message. The performance is a call for action, as it encourages us to donate to Greenpeace. The central phrase 'remember me' is more in line with this activist attitude. In the phrase 'but, ah! Forget my fate', 'fate' can be seen as the tragic destruction of the planet and what has already been ruined. But we do not wish to forget it, and we still have time to make a change.

I see that the key to interpretation is to not take each phrase literally since they were written in a very different context. The sentiment of the piece of music and the sentiment of the lamenting words are very similar in many ways. The tragedy is stated as final just before it happens. Dido sings of her death, and then dies right after. The lament for our dying planet states the same seriousness of the situation. 'the abyss' is right here, if nothing is done, the planet will soon die. And this grave situation and grief is presented clearly. However, Lennox's interpretation also has a more activist attitude. We can make a change, it does not have to end in certain death shortly after the aria is sung, to phrase it metaphorically. Lennox' lament is both lamenting the grave situation and encouraging us to improve it. 'Our dying planet' in present continuous tense, is not dead yet. The text must be seen as a description of what might be if we do nothing. The planet will die, be 'laid in earth' and should be remembered for all the wonder and beauty, not its tragic fate. But since this is not how it must be, the poetry, in Lennox' interpretation, is encouraging a moral activist attitude. We remember, and we wish to preserve and save, not just lament its dying state. An important part of this reinterpretation of the text, is to focus on the echo, 'remember me', that Lennox has introduced. The planet speaking back towards us, we must remember. Such an imperative has a strong appeal to its receivers, and this is used by Annie Lennox as a call for action.

Moving on to the other aspects of the performance by Annie Lennox and London City Voices, it is clear that the overall expression is altered in many ways from its historic context. As Nina Eidsheim states:

> Musical genres are generally recognized within a few seconds, based on timbre: If the formal parameters of a genre are fulfilled but the timbral aspects are not, the status and intactness of the work in a particular instantiation –that is, the extent to which the work remains itself –are called into question (Eidsheim, 2015, loc.2883-2885).

Here, the issue of whether the work remains itself is called into question. Relating to the work concept is in itself a detailed musicological and philosophical debate. In order to be clear that the implications of the work concept (Goehr, 2007) are not the central issue, I will refer to the aria as a piece of music. However, the question remains. What is the essence of this particular piece of music, if any? If the melody and text remain, the formal parametres of the genre are somewhat the same and the timbral aspects change, is it still Dido's Lament'? This philosophical issue can be answered in many ways, but the basics of the case in question are that we recognize the melody and text immediately and many would agree: it moves us. Annie Lennox herself explicitly refers to Henry Purcell as the composer, so from her perspective, it is an interpretation and performance of his composition. When positioned in historical musicology, the historical itself has value. But when applying Rolfhhamre's concept of performative musicology, giving, among other central points, a rhetorical perspective of the past in the present (Rolfhamre, 2022), the historical aspects are to a larger degree seen through the complex lens of our present experience and the possibilities for the past in the present and future. Lennox' performance represents something new in the sense that the extent to which the work remains itself is called into question. This means that it is, to some degree, something new based on historical material, rather than just being 'historical music'. And the difference is relevant when

working within the field of Early Modern music and HIP, as the historical is the premise even though we recontextualise it and make it meaningful as an artistic expression and communication in our own time. However, staying with this question and its possible answers are not the most central aspect when exploring possibilities for reconfiguring historical material.

I would argue that the appreciation of historically informed performance, identifying something as historical, is a creation, and can never fully be a truthful recreation. As is generally agreed upon, as the shift in terminology from the earlier 'authentic performance' to 'historically informed performance' illustrates. To emphasize: 'The past acquires a second hybrid life which contaminates its first life' (Liakos and Bilalis, 2017, p.209). And as Locatelli (2015) states, there is an epistemological premise that myths themselves are texts that are always and already mediated. And furthermore, that these texts are relevant. She explains that re-visitations of historical material (myths) are meaningful in two ways: Obviously for the culture that creates them, but, once re-configured, also revealing of the appropriating culture's own values. This twofold perspective reveals the understanding of the culture where the text and music originates, and the re-configuration and appropriation where we seek a meaningful performance and experience in our current context.

Stepping on from the field of Early Modern or historically informed performance, HIP, towards a post-HIP (Friman, 2008) and music as experience, I state that we can enrich our understanding and experience through the historical, but it always involves a re-configuration when realising it in our own present context. And judging the limits of, and thus setting limitations on, this process is perhaps not the most interesting issue at hand. 'There are surely many ways in which pieces of music might interact with our ever-changing cultural context to bring forth new meanings, understandings and sensations, but only if we give up the idea of works as fixed and inviol-

able objects' (Butt, 2015, p.20). Here, I see that performative musicology again offers a particular space for expansion of our perspectives, as Rolfhamre explains:

> [...] performative musicology, as a distinct, dedicated focus, has something to offer, because it goes beyond the idea of understanding musical practice from an artefact-performance-reception view, to pronouncing its agential advocacy for change (or sometimes for resisting change). It is both a performative perspective for historical musicology, and a musicology that seeks to be performative, and as such, it is also inevitably ethically charged precisely because of its aspiring efficacy (Rolfhamre, 2022, p. 82).

This agential musicology seeks to move beyond set frames and advocates change, precisely in line with Lennox' activist interpretation, thus opening up for a change for the better in the future. Expanding from the approach in performative musicology towards the embodied approach, I explain here the basis of embodiment as I implement it in my writing.

Embodiment as Awareness and Empathy

My inquiry is partly based on an embodied approach, leaning on the embodied mind as it is explained and stated in Lakoff and Johnson's *Philosophy in the Flesh. The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (1999). Based on cognitive science, they state an empirical responsible philosophy based on the fact that everything we think and say and do depends on the workings of our embodied minds.

> The embodied mind is part of the living body and is dependent on the body for its existence. The properties of mind are not purely mental: they are shaped in crucial ways by the body and brain and how the body can function in everyday life. The embodied mind is thus very much of this world. Our flesh insep-

> arable from what Merleau-Ponty called "the flesh of the world" and what David Abram (E, Abram 1996) refers to as "the more-than-human world." Our body is intimately tied to what we walk on, sit on, touch, taste, smell, see, breathe, and move within. Our corporeality is part of the corporeality of the world (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, p. 565).

In the article *An Embodied Approach to Academic Writing?* published in EJPAE, Domogalla (2019) also refers to, among many others, Lakoff and Johnson, in outlining embodiment as a method in approaching both art and academic material. I find that her writing is in line with the understanding of an embodied approach where our senses form an embodied understanding, and it is inspiring to see it applied also in her research. In her book *Embodied Performance as Applied Research, Art and Pedagogy* (2018), Scott outlines a strong case for embodiment as making us more open, empathic and inclusive in our relations to others.

> I believed (and still do) that once we embrace our dependence on mortal bodies, our understanding's dependence on our embodied interactions with others, and the susceptibility of even deeply embedded meanings to be dismantled through our body-to-body interactions, we can become more aware, open, and empathetic to each other's experiences. Openness and empathy can compel us to resist fear and marginalization and fight for inclusivity and the valuing of one another (Scott, 2018, p. 3).

The importance of embodied awareness in both an artistic and pedagogical setting is emphasized throughout her book, written partly in a compelling auto-ethnographic style exemplifying the embodied awareness she presents. This empathic relation to one another, and in extension, our world, goes hand in hand with the contemporary message of 'Dido's Lament as a Lament for our Dying Planet'.

Lakoff and Johnson include extensive explanations on primary and complex metaphors, and how they are based on bodily mechanisms, previously presented in their former book *Metaphors We Live By* (1980, 2003). We think with and through metaphors that are constitutive for us. 'It has given us a way to know ourselves better, to see how our physical being –flesh, blood, and sinew, hormone, cell and synapse – and all things we encounter daily in the world make us who we are' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, p.568).

Our context and surroundings are then taken in through our bodily senses and we thus have an embodied understanding. 'The mind is not merely corporeal but also passionate, desiring, and social. It has a culture and cannot exist culture-free. It has a history, it has developed and grown, and it can grow further' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, p. 565).[5] This embodiment is foundational to how I approach experiencing music, both as performer and receiver, and as a pedagogical approach. The culture context is relevant in finding metaphors in the historic text and how they still make sense to us today. Embodiment is a common reference both then and now. Since these metaphors form our understanding, meaningful communication across time is possible, even though our embodied experience today is in many ways radically different from an embodied experience in the 1680s.

The Agency of 'Dido's Lament as a Lament for our Dying Planet'

Building on the premise of embodiment and the past seen through the present, then: In what other possible ways can we view and apply this new interpretation of 'Dido's Lament' performed by Annie Lennox?

5 More recent publications further supporting their research can for example be found with Johnson, M. (2015).

Recorded during the pandemic, this performance exemplifies an aspect of the crisis in music during this time. The video performance with London city voices recorded individually, presents the singers as alone, together. The visual production emphasises this, expressed through each singer in a separate square, similar to zoom or other digital video conferencing tools. Recognizable to us all, we can relate intuitively to the situation. The visual is embedded in this performance and expresses and supports the vocalization throughout the performance.

Further, Annie Lennox herself relates the lament to our dying planet and thus to the global climate crisis. This can be seen both as an interpretation of the lyrics and as a dedication of the performance of 'Dido's Lament'.

> [...] It is the most profoundly haunting and melancholic aria from the opera written by English composer Henry Purcell approximately 300 years ago, where heartbroken Dido prepares to commit suicide. It occurred to me there was a comparison to the destruction human beings have brought upon the Planet. When it comes to climate catastrophe, we are on the edge of abyss. I really believe we don't have much time left to make an effective change. We are looking at a civilization on the downwards side. This is the truth of this matter. It's staring us in the face and we are not paying any significant attention –continuing on as if it doesn't exist. I see Dido's Lament as a lament for our dying planet." – Annie Lennox (YouTube).[6]

Interpreting the lament in relation to the critical situation of our planet, engages a whole new perspective of association and interpretation. To me, a small fact such as the historic meaning of the word 'wrongs' can enrichen the understanding here. If the focus of the lament is no longer Dido herself, but our dying planet, I would say it is important to see the wrongs done towards the planet, as opposed to 'wrongs' our planet does (which would not make much sense). A small historic fact can thus add

6 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3yWda4RJoO I released 13. nov. 2020

to the understanding of a new interpretation and recontextualization of this piece of music. This strengthens my case that historical information and understanding is of great value, although it does not have to restrict our sense of interpretive possibilities.

Placing the focus on our planet is also a shift from an anthropocentric perspective towards a wider understanding of what we all are in relation to and what we can lament, so to speak. A reappropriation of such a famous aria into a lament for our dying planet, brings great force into the issue. I would argue that the intricate historical layering of 'Dido's Lament' adds both depth and layers to our understanding. The music itself is not just any music, it is a piece of music which has moved people for centuries, and thus carrying a certain 'weight' in itself. There is perhaps something forceful in the music itself, as Even Ruud states it: 'But we must also consider that music carries its own force—a sort of musical and emotional agency [...]' (Ruud, 2020, p.98). As we have all experienced, some pieces of music have more 'force' to engage and move. It seems that 'Dido's Lament' in this sense, is a forceful piece of music to many people. What this means for each individual is not the same, and even though I will argue that for me, the historical context, references and knowledge deepens my experience and understanding, I cannot say that another person without this background competence is not capable of a strong experience of this performance by Annie Lennox. At the subliminal, intuitive level, the musical and emotional agency in the piece of music has the force to move people. Music thus operates on several levels, as Eidsheim argues: [...] while we can meaningfully understand much music within the symbolic order, music continues to influence us within the presymbolic domain (Eidsheim, 2015, p. Loc.3405). Uniting these perspectives, this embodied experience is how our senses and minds receive and experience the music, and we can then add to and deepen this experience with our understanding. I believe that the experience can become richer with a deeper and broader reference.

Through the philosophy of the Embodied Mind (1999), we also see this perspective clearly:

> Lakoff and Johnson convincingly argued for a continuity between physical experiences and the system of thoughts, actions and values that we come to acquire/elaborate. From this premise, knowledge is not only separated from values and context, but it is fundamentally embodied. Knowledge exists by virtue of the fact that we are ourselves bodies, and through the body we experience both place and time. (Darling-Mcquistan et.al., 2019, p.2)

An embodied understanding of our reality is not necessarily an anthropocentric view of the world. Our bodies react before our awareness, being in a more direct communication with our surroundings[7]. This embodied interaction between music and ourselves is an important part of our experience with music. Emphasizing this experience can also relate us closer to the message that Lennox wishes us to take from her realisation of the lament. Being in contact with our planet as bodies, can tune us in to the fact that we are experiencing that relation through our senses, and give us a closer understanding of that relation. Being aware of the message that Annie Lennox states so clearly at the beginning of the performance, and then having an embodied experience of this performance, connects the two and can form an embodied knowledge in us. Davidson and Correia also connect the bodily experience to a meaningful musical performance, applying Deleuze and Guattari's term '*becoming*' to this experience:

7 'The full arguments for an embodied view of cognition are far too complex to rehearse here, and readers are encouraged to refer to eminent proponents such as Varela et al. (1991), Damasio (1994), Lakoff and Johnson (1999), to cite a few. However, it is worth mentioning a couple of further points in favour of the case. Evidence from psychology suggests that phenomenal consciousness (the bit we know about) may be but a small fraction of the total volume of cognitive activity in the subject. The work of Libet et al. (1983) suggests our awareness of our own will may lag someway (1/5 second or so) behind the decision made by our bodies to take an action (Pepperell 2005., p.38).'

> Thus, a *meaningful* musical performance is one grounded in its bodily origins. Historically informed 'constraints' are a means to stimulate the performer's imagination. For us, what is really decisive in musical authenticity is the gratifying and convincing 'becoming' experience that can take place[...]. Through bodily means the whole process of music can be enjoyed, communicated and developed. (Davidson and Correia, 2001, p.81)

Building on this research, I find that the historically informed can stimulate imagination and deepen both our experience and understanding, as Davidson and Correia argues, whereas the more subliminal level of bodily experience with music as a force with agency is the basic process of both performing and experiencing music. This position removes restrictions stemming from the need to define and categorise and opens up for new possibilities and experiences. Lakoff and Johnson also explain how spiritual experience, in a wide sense, is embodied. I find that their explanation is in line with the empathic care for our planet that Lennox states.

> The environment is not an "other" to us. It is not a collection of things that we encounter. Rather, it is part of our being. It is the locus of our existence and identity. We cannot and do not exist apart from it. [...] It is through empathic projection that we come to know our environment, understand how we are a part of it and how it is part of us. This is the bodily mechanism by which we can participate in nature, not just as hikers or climbers or swimmers, but as part of nature itself, part of a larger all-encompassing whole. A mindful embodied spirituality is thus an ecological spirituality (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, p. 566).

I also see this as a metaphor for how music and art, too, is a part of our being, rather than an 'other' to us. It is not merely something we encounter. We come to know it through empathic projection. And we should participate in it, not as performers, audience, analysers, or critics, but as part of music and art itself. The embodied approach argues both for an empathic relation to our environment and our planet, and

in extension, an empathic relation to music. It calls for action, as we experience being a part of the whole. I find that this connection between our engagement in music and the power music can have to initiate and awaken such engagement is artfully integrated in Annie Lennox' interpretation and performance of 'Dido's Lament'. Relating it to a 'Lament for Our Dying Planet' is a metaphor that we embody and accept through this experience.

> An embodied spirituality requires an aesthetic attitude to the world that is central to self-nurturance, to the nurturance of others, and to the nurturance of the world itself. Embodied spirituality requires an understanding that nature is not inanimate and less than human, but animated and more than human. It requires pleasure, joy in the bodily connection with earth and air, sea and sky, plants and animals –and the recognition that they are all more than human, more than any human beings could ever achieve. Embodied spirituality is more than spiritual experience. It is an ethical relationship to the physical world (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999. P. 566).

A Pedagogical Approach

In extension, this ethical relationship to others and to the physical world, can be a gentle guide in an educational setting. For both educators and students, an embodied approach with an empathic projection ensures a more ethical, safe and open setting for teaching and learning through encounters with history, music and art. It is highly practical, in the sense that it relates directly to the manner in which we all relate to our surroundings, both human and non-human. What it takes, first of all, is a commitment to an awareness of this and a responsibility towards the implications of this awareness. A practical approach can be to use this analysis of Annie Lennox' version of 'Dido's Lament' as a means to open up for an embodied experience and conversa-

tion about this experience and what possibilities that might be found in an embodied approach to historical material in relation to our present-day context.

Further, in performative musicology, HIP can be a pedagogical approach. This performativities focused perspective is contributing to a [...]'cumulative relationship between the individual contributions emphasising dynamic readings from more than one perspective, rather than determining and safekeeping one preferred ontology'(Rolfhamre, 2022, p. 82). Such a pedagogical approach to HIP, can in this context be to use Lennox' performance as a point of departure for understanding the past in the present in new and richer ways. As Rolfhamre explains, by looking beyond the separate spaces and agencies found in 'the score, sound, reception, meaning making, aestheticism, historicity, embodiment, etc.,' [we can gain] 'a richer understanding of cause and effect in broader temporal, situational, practical and social contexts, focusing directly on agency'(Rolfhamre, 2022, p. 82). As a pedagogical tool, I see that the foundation of an immersive, embodied approach to the material through the lens of performative musicology opens up for a focus on agency which, as stated, can liberate from remaining within a preferred ontology, thus providing an opening for a richer understanding.

In her chapter 'Re-Enacting Beat Art: An Aesthetic and Pedagogical Approach to Re-Living History', Frida Forsgren explains, as the title entails, how re-living history can be an aesthetic and pedagogical approach. 'The text proposes that this method may be applicable to early modern studies as a pedagogical method for presenting, enacting, re-enacting, living, re-living and fantasising a historical past'(Forsgren, 2022, p. 177). The method encourages a deeper embedded learning through arts-based pedagogy. The method '[...] uses an artistic way of thinking and working to enrich and expand the academic and historical. It does history through art'(Forsgren, 2022, p. 188). Further, she explains that by teaching the students to develop historical thinking, historical empathy, and historical consciousness the method can strengthen crit-

ical thinking and as stated, a deeper embedded learning. The outcome of this approach can ensure:

> [...] that we can not only refer to and talk about art intellectually, but also acquire a better sense of our being part of history and of history being part of us. In this sense, this method would also highlight the implications of protecting our European cultural heritage as an ongoing community activity, rather than simply not forgetting the great works of the past (Forsgren, 2022, p. 193).

As I see it, re-living history through arts-based pedagogy as outlined by Forsgren, goes well in line with my argument based in performative musicology and an embodied approach. Together, it provides both a practical method, and an ontological, philosophical and ethical approach to working with historic material towards a richer understanding of how possibilities in 'presenting, enacting, re-enacting, living, re-living and fantasising the historical past (Forsgren, 2022)' in the present.

Concluding Remarks

Rejecting Lennox' realisation of this historical piece of music on the grounds of it not being a historically informed performance, robs us of a meaningful musical experience. I believe that it can awaken an interest of historical music in people experiencing it and be applied as a possible point of departure for meeting the past in the present also as a pedagogical approach. The historic cannot survive without someone 'keeping it alive', performing it and believing in it as still meaningful. Working with historical texts, it is an important premise that the texts are understandable and possible to interpret. As Roy Eriksen and Peter Young emphasise in *Approaches to the text* (2014), historical texts communicate across time. 'That there should be a division between these [historical texts from different times in history] causing communication break-down and preventing knowledge transfer is ahistorical and a fabrication of

the biased mind' (Eriksen & Young, 2014, p.10). Through performative musicology and embodiment perspectives, this article offers a possible approach to communicating across time through a contemporary performance of historic material as case material.

The central issue is perhaps not to decide whether or not Annie Lennox' performance of 'Dido's Lament' is 'the same work' as the aria from Purcell's opera. It is still recognised as this piece of music, it echoes the past, but is a modern performance, a reinterpretation and reconfiguration of the piece written in the 1680s. It still has 'force' to move people today and to many, it does. As previously stated, once re-configured, the reconfiguration is also revealing of the appropriating culture's own values (Locatelli 2015). What this performance reveals, is our own culture and context's values and reality. The pandemic is embedded because of the recording situation and how the visual presentation is edited. The current situation of our planet comes to the fore through the focus it is given by the performer. This performance is truly a 'lament for our dying planet' and is interpreted accordingly. This piece of music, then, becomes an authentic and meaningful performance for many. Through an embodied experience we can connect with this historical piece of music, the other bodies in this musical situation and in extension, our whole planet, thus meeting the past in the present, hopefully for a better future.

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