SINGING MADNESS: THREE PERFORMATIVE ANALYSES OF THE "MAD SCENE" FROM *LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR*

by

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Abstract

This study describes three internationally recognised sopranos and their presentations of character psychology on stage, during their performances of the famous “mad scene” from Gaetano Donizetti’s opera *Lucia di Lammermoor*. These sopranos are Joan Sutherland, Mariella Devia, and Lisette Oropesa. I use Margaret Kartomi’s (2014) model of performativity to interpret the “madness” depicted by the three selected sopranos, as based on my interpretations of commercially released audio-visual recordings of their performances in the role of Lucia.

Through analysing these performances with the help of Kartomi’s performativity model (which focuses on persona, emotion-and intersubjectivity, and reception), my research determines – with speculative interpretation, and within the reasonable limits of standard psychiatric frameworks – which mental illnesses the sopranos can be understood to have portrayed in their interpretations of the role of Lucia.

The study’s goal is not to make an accurate mental health diagnosis of someone’s portrayal of a fictional character. (Considering the fact that one cannot make accurate mental health diagnoses for people who do not exist.) Rather, my focus is to discover which dramatic and possibly musical characteristics are utilised to perform this fictional character and give expressive content to her “madness”. The concept of “madness” and its psychological characterisation during performance thus becomes the framework from which to interpret and understand vocal and acting techniques related to opera in general and to bel canto more specifically.

My research findings are that the three performers use facial expressions, different aspects of using the voice through bel canto singing, and body movements as a way of expression. Bel canto characteristics include coloratura embellishments, fioritura, melismas, messa di voce, squillo and chiaroscuro.

The sopranos also show musical and dramatic elements in how they respond to the flute or glass harmonica during the ‘Mad Scene’ – which counts as the personae expressed by the performers. These personae are further applied in the emotional and intersubjectivity and the reception aspects of Kartomi’s performativity model.

In the emotional and intersubjectivity aspect, the chorus and other characters singing on stage are read as emphasising the reaction of society on the mentally

dysfunctional behaviour enacted by the sopranos. In the reception aspect, reviewers are used to filling in for audience members. I read their reactions as contributing factors in forming an understanding of the interpretations of the "mad scene" performed by the three sopranos.

My reading of the three interpretations of the "mad scene" goes further by subjectively interpreting how these sopranos approximate different states of mental collapse. These readings include approximations of psychosis such as mania, dissociative personality disorder, and paranoid schizophrenic behaviour. Always, though, these mental health behaviours are identified as approximations to better understand vocal and acting techniques.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

In this study, I consider the "mad scene" performances of three operatic sopranos in the opera *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835) by Gaetano Donizetti, in Act 3, Scene II. I have been fascinated by this section of the opera ever since I started training as a coloratura soprano twenty years ago.

The singing in this scene is extremely florid and ornamental and requires apt dramatic interpretative skills. The voice type or Fach[1] which is most often cast for this role is that of a coloratura soprano.

A coloratura soprano is a singer who can sing extremely fast musical passages with virtuosic agility in a high vocal register. The vocal and physical skills required to sing coloratura music are incredibly demanding, and coloraturas are often revered by audience members for their expert mastery of difficult passages. Coloratura music is known for excitement, expression, interesting content, and virtuosity in the singer. Coloratura sopranos can be further divided into lyric coloratura and dramatic coloratura, depending on the personality of the operatic character as well as the vocal colour of the singer (Klein, 2022). The singers who are cast for Lucia can be lyric or dramatic coloratura sopranos.

Another reason for undertaking this study was because of my keen interest in psychology as I had studied it for a combined period of four years in my undergraduate and postgraduate studies. My interest specifically rests on psychosis and how it manifests in the "mad scene". In subjectively "reading" the performances of the three sopranos, I will identify certain psychoses that I interpret as being approximated by the sopranos in their performances. Thus, I define and compare various suggested psychoses with the performances of the sopranos – specifically as a vehicle to interpret and understand how they use vocalisation and acting, and how the performance techniques they use in their psychological approximations of the character Lucia can be interpreted through audience reception.

[1] The *Fach* (pl. *Fächer*) system is a method of classifying singers, primarily opera singers, by the range, weight, and colour of their voices. If a singer signed a contract with a company to sing a certain Fach in the company, that singer would be responsible for singing all roles for the company that were designated for that Fach. For that reason, Fach is more specific than the voice part and can be a better way of classifying voices (Nina Scott-Stoddart, 2021).

The performative sense of “madness” evoked in this section of the opera is immersive and extends beyond its immediate execution by the soprano. In my investigation I uncover multiple possible meanings of this “madness” through a combined focus on the “mad scene”, its execution during performance, performance factors that can affect its interpretation, as well as the effects that the opera’s performers have on its audience members (Kartomi 2014).

1.2 Madness in Opera

Stephen Willier (2002) gives a timeline of similar mad scenes from seventeenth-century operas, such as Francesco Cavalli’s *L’Egisto* (1643), *Giasone* (1649), and *Pompeo magno (1666)*, and in Francesco Sacrati’s *La finta pazza (1641)*. In the eighteenth century, mad scenes are found in Handel’s *Ariodante* (1737*)* and *Orlando* (after *Ariosto,1733*). Two mad characters briefly appear as mad in Mozart’s *La finta giardiniera (1775)*. Mad scenes however became a popular operatic expressive tool in the early nineteenth century. Erfurth and Hoff (2000, 311) provide a list of some of the romantic period operas that include mad scenes. Vincenzo Bellini included them in *Il Pirata*, *La Sonnambula* and *I Puritani*. Gaetano Donizetti’s mad scenes are found in *Anna Bolena*, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Linda di Chamounix*. Giuseppe Verdi and Ambroise Thomas include mad scenes in *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* respectively, while two of Giacomo Meyerbeer’s operas, *L'Etoile du Nord* and *Dinorah*, include such scenes too.

Willier (2002) describes mad scenes as those “in which a character, usually the soprano heroine, displays traits of mental collapse, for example through amnesia, hallucination, irrational behaviour or sleepwalking”. He mentions that it supplies a creative vehicle for the display of a singer’s histrionic and vocal talents. To him, the “mad scene” of Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor* is regarded as the *locus classicus*[2] (Willier 1989, 20). Balsam (2017) describes a mad scene as follows: “In an opera, the ‘Mad Scene’ is designed as a vocally intense showcase of insanity” (Balsam, 2017).

[2] A passage considered to be the best known or most authoritative on a particular subject.

According to Erfurth and Hoff (2000, 312) most mad scenes from the bel canto[3] period, deal with the conflict between a surrounding setting, characterised by indifferent rationality. This can be seen where brute force, authority and aspiration specify the conduct of the protagonists, and in the psychological creation of a space where freedom and affection can develop. In many cases, the heroine of the opera (almost always a soprano) breaks down because of the conflict between these worlds, becomes mentally ill and escapes into a mysteriously removed "refuge" (Erfurth and Hoff 2000, 312).

The lyric coloratura soprano, Natalie Dessay, writes that "composers seem to be fascinated by what they think feminine hysteria to be" (Dessay 2009). She questions the idea of madness. In most cases, it is a puzzle she needs to unravel, as each character is portrayed in a unique form of madness. The romantic heroines are plagued by feelings of abandonment, betrayal, suffering and disappointed love, which can only completely find an outlet in a parallel world to that of reason. Dessay observes that their reality had become intolerable and that they escape into an imaginary, kindlier world where all is well. She concludes that, for her, the "descents into madness often seem like alternations between moments of intense suffering and the desire to be in another place" with better possibilities (Dessay 2009).

These ideas dovetail with those of Berger who writes that, "Madness isn't just something that happens in opera. Madness is what opera is about" (Berger, 2018). Berger goes further, linking the very idea of madness to opera's origins, by arguing that "opera was created in Italy to rediscover the spirit of the ancient Greek drama festivals, and those festivals were an attempt to refine the ecstatic but bloody, drug-and-wine-fuelled orgiastic rites of pre-civilized Greece. […] Opera fans know that the highest accolade you can pay a performance is not that it was "great," but that it was "demented"' (Berger, 2018).

Balsam (2017) reinforces these notions by stating that mad scenes have a long and rich history in the arts, starting with Greek tragedy and continuing in an unbroken thread to influence classic English literature. Eventually, mad scenes gained great popularity on the

[3] Bel canto, (Italian: "beautiful singing") style of operatic singing that originated in Italian singing of polyphonic (multipart) music and Italian courtly solo singing during the late 16th century and that was developed in Italian opera in the 17th, 18th, and early 19th centuries. Using a relatively small dynamic range, bel canto singing was based on an exact control of the intensity of vocal tone, a recognition of the distinction between the "diapason tone" (produced when the larynx is in a relatively low position) and the "flute tone" (*squillo*) (when the larynx is in a higher position), and a demand for vocal agility and clear articulation of notes and enunciation of words. https://www.britannica.com/art/bel-canto

operatic stage, reflecting a new appeal for melancholy, mental illness, and the workings of the inner self.

1.3 The Plot

Donizetti's opera *Lucia di Lammermoor* is based on the Walter Scott novel, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, with Salvatore Cammarano as the commissioned librettist (Christenson 2017, 17). The opera is "set in Scotland in a time of political uncertainty, at the end of the 16th century. The opera addresses themes of love, hatred, betrayal, sorrow, and, of course, madness" (Christenson 2017, 17).

Lady Lucia Ashton has fallen in love with Sir Edgardo of Ravenswood. There unfortunately exists a family feud between the Ashtons and the Ravenswoods. Lucia's brother, Enrico, is furious when he learns of the secret relationship between the two lovers. Enrico swears vengeance towards Edgardo. Before Edgardo leaves on a commission to France on diplomatic business, the lovers meet and make promises of faithfulness to each other. Enrico, however, manages to withhold letters of Edgardo to Lucia and she begins to think that he no longer loves her. Enrico then manages to coerce her into marrying Sir Arturo Bucklaw to protect their family from financial ruin.

At the wedding, as the marriage certificate is signed, Edgardo arrives. He accuses Lucia of deceit, and she collapses as he abruptly leaves the castle. The following scene is the famous "mad scene" in which Lucia murders her husband and performs a scene in bloodstained clothes, with the wedding party as onlookers, after which Lucia collapses in the arms of her maid, Alisa. Lucia's health deteriorates and she eventually dies. While Edgardo and Enrico are at a duel, they learn that Lucia has died. Edgardo can't stand the pain of losing her again and stabs himself to join her in the afterlife (Christenson 2017, 17).

As previously stated, Lucia's "mad scene" occurs in Act III's second scene. Lammermoor is the setting for the event, and the wedding guests have assembled to celebrate the marriage feast. When Raimondo Bidebent, a clergyman and good family friend of the Ashtons interrupts the festivities and tells everyone assembled that Lucia has slain her husband, the ambience abruptly shifts from joyousness to mournfulness and anger (Christenson 2017, 17).

When the chaplain Raimondo enters the wedding celebrations in Act III of the opera to deliver the news of Arturo's death, we are shown a pivotal moment that sets the tone for

the opera's final act. Ashbrook (1990, 76) states that the "tragic irony comes not from not showing the murder onstage, but from presenting Lucia in her blood-stained bridal gown, convinced that she is about to marry Edgardo." He goes on to remark that her coloratura flights are true representations of her fantasies, not abstract decorations. The distorted melodies in Lucia's "mad scene" are a result of her delusion that she is free to marry Edgardo; yet she manages to keep her melodies straight in her love duet in Act 1 (Ashbrook 1990, 76).

Ashbrook makes an important observation when he says that the text of the love duet "Verano at te sull'aure" (On the breeze will come to you my ardent sighs) becomes elevated from pathos and nostalgia to real tragedy as this melody is repeated, even though Lucia does not utter the words of the duet during her "mad scene" (Ashbrook 1990, 76).

Following on this brief plot discussion, which serves to better understand the dramatic material of the libretto, I also add a direct translation of the "mad scene":

"Il dolce suono", Lucia's aria from *Lucia di Lammermoor*

Il dolce suono mi colpi di sua voce!
The sweet sound, hits me, his voice!
Ah, quella voce m'e qui nel cor discesa!
Ah, that voice into my heart decends!
Edgardo! io ti son resa, Edgardo, mio!
Edgardo, I surrender to you
fuggita io son de tuoi nemici.
fled am I from your enemies.
Un gelo me serpeggia nel sen!
A chill creeps into my breast!
trema ogni fibra!
trembles every fiber!
vacilla il pie!
falters my foot!
Presso la fonte meco t'assidi al quanto!
Near the fountain next to me sit a while!
Ohime, sorge il tremendo fantasma e ne separa!
Alas! arises a tremendous phantom and separates us!

Qui ricovriamo, Edgardo, a pie dell'ara.

Here let us take refuge, by the foot of the altar.

Sparsa e di rose!

Strewn it with roses!

Un armonia celeste, di, non ascolti?

A harmony celestial, do you not hear?

Ah, l'inno suona di nozze!

Ah, the marriage hymn plays!

Il rito per noi s'appresta! Oh, me felice!

The ceremony for us draws near! Happiness!

Oh gioia che si sente, e non si dice!

Oh, joy that one feels and does not speak of!

Ardon gl'incensi!

The incense burns!

Splendon le sacre faci, splendon intorno!

Brilliant the sacred torches, shining all around!

Ecco il ministro!

Here is the minister!

Porgime la destra!

Give me your right hand!

Oh lieto giorno!

Oh, joyous day!

Al fin son tua, al fin sei mia,

At last, I am your, at last you are mine,

a me ti dona un Dio.

to me you have been given by God.

Ogni piacer piu grato,

Every pleasure is more grateful,

mi fia con te diviso

(it is) to me, with you, more sweet

Del ciel clemente un riso

From peaceful heaven a smile

la vita a noi sara.

life to us will be.

Spargi d'amaro pianto il mio terrestre velo,

Sprinkle with bitter tears my earthly remains,

mentre lassu nel cielo io preghero per te.

while in heaven above I pray for you.

Al giunger tuo soltanto fia bello

To join with you only then will be beautiful,

il ciel per me!

heaven, to me!

Translation by Ilya Speranza

Hosted by Aria Database

http://www.aria-database.com/translations/lucia03_il.txt

1.4 Outline of madness in *Lucia di Lammermoor*

Lucia's madness appears to start very early in the opera when she sees the ghost at the fountain in Act 1, Scene 1. This is the moment before she meets Edgardo in secret. The mermaiden's well or fountain is considered a fatal spot for the Ravenswood family. At this scene at the fountain, when singing the aria 'Regnava nel silenzio' (The night is deep and dark) to Alisa, she tells the story of Lord Ravenswood killing his lover at the fountain. In the original novel, Walter Scott uses the era's understanding of Scottish superstition, which is symbolised by the pivotal point of the curse of the Ravenswood family.

While she is singing to Alisa, Lucia starts to hear the flute or glass harmonica which receives its full meaning in Act 3 scene 2 (Scott 1819, 57 – 59). Donizetti uses the theme of the flute or glass harmonica to foreshadow Lucia's full descent into madness that comes to fruition during the "mad scene". One could see this as a first introduction of her descent into madness. We find a very vulnerable Lucia during this descent.

Regnava nel silenzio

The night, deep and dark,

alta la notte e bruna...

reigned in the silence...

Colpia la fonte un pallido

A pale ray from the gloomy moon

raggio di tetra luna...

shone on the fountain...

Quando un sommesso gemito

When a low sigh

fra l'aure udir si fe';

was heard throughout the air;

ed ecco au quel margin

and there on the fountain's edge

ah! L'ombra mostrarsi a me.

the shadow appeared to me!

Ah!

Ah!

Qual di chi parla,muoversi

Her lips moved

il labbro suo vedea,

as if speaking,

e con la mano esanime

and with her lifeless hand

chiamarmi a sè parea.

she seemed to call me.

Stette un momento immobile,

She stood there, motionless,

poi rattab dileguò.

then she suddenly disappeared.

E l'onda, pria sì limpida,

And the water, earlier so limpid,

di sangue rosseggiò.

became as red as the blood.

Translation by Ugo Berardi

Hosted by Aria Database

http://www.aria-database.com/search.php?individualAria=164

In a close study of the text of this aria, Lucia has her first remembrance of the ghost. This is a foreboding of what happened in the past with the murder at the fountain, and what is still to come in Lucia's future. Lucia remembers the night when the ghost of a woman killed at the fountain by Edgardo's ancestor appeared to her and warned her that her romance with Edgardo would end in blood (Synopsis: Aria Database.com). Her fragmentation in this section is apparent because she is the only one who sees the ghost.

Alisa, her servant, warns her about her relationship with Edgardo, but she refuses to listen. Lucia's secret meeting with Edgardo occurs, after which he leaves for France. Her ongoing fragmentation occurs when her brother Enrico and the chaplain Raimondo convince her to marry Arturo, as she is not aware that Edgardo wrote to her. They hid the love letters and presented her with a forged letter from Edgardo.

A significant moment occurs when she is forced to sign the wedding contract to Arturo during the sextet and Edgardo arrives on the scene and denounces her because, in his view, she has been unfaithful. At this point her breakdown becomes complete. The wedding is the next scene. The "mad scene" takes place in Act III Scene 2. There is a gap between Act II and Act III Scene 2, which allows performers to interpret the "mad scene" in any way they choose.

1.5 Opera excerpts

Below are the excerpts of the "mad scene" in *Lucia di Lammermoor* as performed by the three sopranos. I have selected the following YouTube clips in which I clearly could observe the details of the performances of the three sopranos. The clip for the first soprano runs from start to finish. With the second and third sopranos, I had to take various clips to focus on the details as observed in their performances.

Joan Sutherland

https://youtu.be/zVHLzFKA9NI

The YouTube recording is a selected excerpt of the "mad scene" from *Lucia di Lammermoor* as performed by Joan Sutherland in the 1982 Metropolitan Opera house production. The time indications mentioned will be used throughout Chapter 4 in the discussion of Sutherland's performance.

Mariella Devia

https://youtu.be/7NMVUXhzy9U

"Il dolce suono" (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) – Mariella Devia Part.1):

This is an excerpt of the first part of the "mad scene" as shown in the performance of *Lucia di Lammermoor* at La Scala in 1992. The time indications will be mentioned in the persona section of Chapter 5 in the discussion of Devia's performance.

https://youtu.be/iuObsp4OiCE

"Il dolce suono" (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) – Mariella Devia Part.2):

This is an excerpt of the second part of the "mad scene" as shown in the performance of Lucia di Lammermoor at La Scala in 1992. The time indications will be used in the emotion and intersubjectivity section of Chapter 5 in the discussion of Devia's performance.

Lisette Oropesa

https://youtu.be/VtUcTREkLFo

This is an excerpt of the "mad scene" as performed by Lisette Oropesa in the title role of Lucia, in the 2018 performance of *Lucia di Lammermoor* in the Teatro Rèal in Madrid. The time indications used will be mentioned in the persona section of Chapter 6 in the discussion of Oropesa's performance.

https://youtu.be/6De3Xjr7rBc

An excerpt of the first part of the "mad scene" as taken from the *Lucia di Lammermoor* performance at the Teatro Rèal in Madrid in 2018 with Lisette Oropesa in the title role. This part starts from when the chorus participates. The time indications are presented and taken from this excerpt.

https://youtu.be/iTh1LxFwefM

This is the full opera of *Lucia di Lammermoor* as recorded at the Teatro Rèal in Madrid in 2018 with Lisette Oropesa in the title role. The time indications used will be mentioned in the emotion and intersubjectivity section of Chapter 6 in the discussion of Oropesa's performance.

Appraisals of these three performances will be guided by Margaret Kartomi's research into performativity (2014). Kartomi describes the overarching goals of performativity[4] as "[referring] to all describable and analysable aspects of a performers' or group's

[4] I am aware of the wider meaning and application of performativity in other branches of study, but I would like to emphasize that I am devoting this study to the parameters set out by Kartomi.

competence or accomplishment while performing, including the sounds, movements and gestures that the artist(s) produce" (Kartomi, 2014, 190).

1.6 Problem statement

In a performative analysis of the "mad scene" from Lucia di Lammermoor, it is necessary to identify the relevant tools that could be embodied to develop an interpretation and understanding of the stated operatic text and performance.

1.7 Aims of the study.

By reading three specific performances of the "mad scene" from *Lucia di Lammermoor* using theories of performativity, the research aims to suggest (with reasonable speculation) possibilities of mental breakdown as approximated in each performance – specifically focusing on how music and drama are deployed to achieve such approximations.

1.8 Research question

What are the vocal and acting techniques used by three sopranos to represent Lucia's "madness" in the "mad scene" of the opera *Lucia di Lammermoor,* with specific reference to mental breakdown possibilities that are approximated?

1.9 Delimitations of the study

The study subjectively interprets approximations of "madness" by the three sopranos whose portrayals of Lucia are analysed and discussed. It thus does not aim to document and report on their own creative processes in constructing the role of Lucia. It focuses far more on subjective reception/receiving and interpretation (primarily my own, informed by in-depth literature study) and not as much on the artistic creator's (soprano's) choices in approximating madness.

1.10 Chapter outline

In the first chapter, I introduce the topic, the context of the research and my thesis outline. The second chapter is a literature review. The third chapter is dedicated to discussing the theoretical framework and research methodology applied to investigate my topic, viz. performativity studies, as described by Margaret Kartomi (2014, 189). Chapters four, five

and six are concerned with an analysis of the performances by the three sopranos that inform my research into Lucia's "mad scene". The concluding chapter highlights the most prominent themes and how they relate to a successful portrayal of the "mad scene" in *Lucia di Lammermoor.*

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

In commenting on the following scholars, I remark on the state of the scholarship on Lucia's "mad scene". The literature shows different aspects of madness, but also shows how Donizetti's own mental breakdown most likely influenced his portrayal of madness in the music. Scholars have written dissertations, parts of chapters in books and articles on the "mad scene" and, in the following section, I cross-read their findings and conclusions.

Opera: Desire, Disease, and Death (1999), a book by Hutcheon and Hutcheon, examines well-known operas in which love, sexual desire, illness, and death are intimately connected. This book has made possible previously unseen perspective on the operas themselves and the cultures in which they were produced. Its primary focus is on how operas depict illness and how illness is related to sexuality, gender, and desire. The authors look at the relationship between venereal disease and the moral failings or transgressions of masculine protagonists (as in Wagner's *Parsifal* and Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*), the recurring association between tuberculosis and feminine sexuality in opera (as in Verdi's *La Traviata* and Puccini's *La Boheme*), and the relationship between cholera and homosexual desire in Berg's *Lulu* and Britten's *Death in Venice*. A skilful segment examines how many operas have connected smoking to sexuality and rebellion. In the book's conclusion, comparisons between modern cultural and scientific depictions of AIDS and older operatic representations of disease are discussed.

Hutcheon and Hutcheon (1999) mention Lucia in *Lucia di Lammermoor* as a heroine in the race towards death. I find a correlation between their book and my own study, in which I look at the "mad scene" in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, which encapsulates Lucia's love for Edgardo and the madness that eventually ends in her death. In looking at how three different sopranos perform the "mad scene" and at how the respective opera choruses and audiences react to their performances, my study is similarly concerned with understanding sociocultural responses to performances (real or fictional) of madness.

In terms of gender, the performance of the Lucia "mad scene" touches on feminist theories in which I find similarities: Operatic madness in Lucia has not only been understood as a reflection of broader social issues, but as a more intimate portrait of Donizetti's own biography. It is tragic to note that Donizetti, who is renowned for his compositional prowess in creating some of opera's greatest scenes of psychosis, died in 1848, at the age of 51, psychotic and paralysed of untreated neurosyphilis (Peschel and Peschel 1992, 199). It is pertinent because of his apt way of delineating mental derangement with the mad scenes in his operas, which may be related to his own embodied experience of mental decline.

In their observations of Donizetti's neurosyphilis, Peschel and Peschel (1992) compared his operas *Anna Bolena* and *Lucia di Lammermoor* and found that he created two of the most powerful scenes of mental derangement in all of opera. They state that through his melodies and drama, "he allows us to see, hear and enter for a while into the tormented body and mind of a human being devastated by psychosis" (Peschel and Peschel 1992, 199). They argue (1992,199) that "in these masterworks he portrays the manner in which a person whose brain is malfunctioning may, at moments, exhibit searing bursts of insight, which neither endure, nor bring the person fully back to reality" (Peschel and Peschel 1992, 199). They further state that his "operas dramatize the discontinuity experienced by a person who is in the throes of psychosis" (Peschel and Peschel 1992, 199). They then make the deduction that this might be "because of his sensitivities and his own neurobiological illness" (Peschel and Peschel 1992, 199). It is suggested that he may have been particularly sensitive to "know, understand and translate into melody the disorganization, delirium and torment of severe mental illness" (Peschel and Peschel 1992, 199).

In her study of six selected coloratura soprano mad scenes from nineteenth-century opera, Charlotte Pipes (1990) notes that Donizetti, Bellini, Meyerbeer and Thomas all seem to grasp "the ability to manipulate their normal compositional style to abnormal personalities" (Pipes 1990, 118). For Pipes (1990), Donizetti stands out in his use of "extraordinary stylistic practices" such as his use of "vocal lines that feature coloratura passages and broken phrases" which are true to his compositional style (Pipes 1990, 118). Pipes (1990) observes that for *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Donizetti composed the broken phrases to possibly reflect Lucia's terrified "gasps when she imagines a ghost". She also

mentions that Donizetti employs an important practice of “assigning specific melodic material to the orchestra, which assists the performer in her portrayal” of the “mad scene”.

Pipes (1990) further makes mention of the glass harmonica, which to her reads as Lucia’s memories and leaves the audience with an indication of her state of mind. In conclusion, Pipes (1990) observes that although in these six mad scenes most of the plots, libretto and music indicate how insanity should be interpreted, the most important contribution to the success of the mad scene is the acting ability of the performer (Pipes 1990, 119).

It is noticeable that the above authors regard Donizetti as a superior composer of madness and mad scenes. My decision to research the “mad scene” of Lucia was based on the various ways in which the sopranos I analyse portray the part through using a wide range of mental illness-related aspects as their blank canvas, to mould their mad Lucia musically and dramatically.

In a mini dissertation on *Power in Madness*, Melissa Gerber (2016) conducts a critical investigation into the musical representation of female madness in the mad scenes of Donizetti’s Lucia from *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Thomas’s Ophélie from *Hamlet*. Her study argues that the characteristics that define female madness in music, namely gender and vocal excess, specifically contribute to the representation of madness as power. She argues that “elaborate coloratura vocal passages and scant orchestration are the two musical elements used by Donizetti and Thomas to assist in the depiction of female madness as power in the operatic mad scene” (Gerber 2016, iv). Her thesis establishes that “the extravagant vocal virtuosity displayed by the coloratura soprano casts the madwomen as powerful in the operatic mad scene” (Gerber 2016, iv).

Similarly, in my study I look at the virtuosity of Lucia’s “mad scene” by examining the depiction of certain forms of madness or insanity.

In an article for the *Cambridge Operatic Journal*, Mary Anne Smart (1992) speaks of “the silencing of Lucia” in Donizetti’s opera. She speaks of the florid coloratura singing that means an escape from order and repression for most of the mad heroines, but not entirely for Lucia. She is silenced by the plot, the frame of her and her voice overwhelmed by the orchestra; and her resistance crushed by the weight of the past, as past musical material is

repeated. Smart emphasises that the silencing is a reminder of Lucia's confrontation with the men in her life who compete to control her. She writes that the final silencing of Lucia is symbolically complete in the tolling of the bell, and that it is at last felt when Edgardo dies on stage in the final scene and is heard gloriously drowning any memory of Lucia's voice.

In my study of Lucia, I have found that the "mad scene" has had such a lasting effect on the listener that Lucia's memory can by no means be silenced. I discuss this in the reception part of the performative methodology that I employ for each singer. Aspects of past musical material are discussed as part of the analysis and are found to give the "mad scene" a stronger effect.

Durà-Vilà and Bentley (2009) make an illustrative case study of Benjamin Britten's opera *Peter Grimes*, in which they investigate the psychiatric disorders in opera. They argue how a skilful operatic composer uses a piece like *Peter Grimes* powerfully, which gives scholars the opportunity to examine the subjective human experience. They discuss opera briefly as a vehicle to express emotions. To give historical context and show the lengthy history of the connection between opera and madness, many operas are referenced. The backdrop and main character of Peter Grimes are then thoroughly examined, to show how opera can inspire empathy for people who are experiencing mental illness (Durà-Vilà & Bentley 2009, 106).

In their examination of Lucia, they contend that the nineteenth-century romantic opera is well recognised for its heroines in scenes of florid madness. They stress that this trend was influenced by the popularity of a more emotionally expressive style in the arts, as well as the early nineteenth century's growing commercialisation of opera. They mention that "Donizetti uses the resources of 19th-century music, including a wide range of dissonance, sudden contrast in tonality, wide vocal leaps, and so on, to deepen our understanding of the psychology of Lucia" (Durà-Vilà & Bentley 2009, 107).

In further discussion, they mention that madness in opera continues through the twentieth century, when a general fascination with how the mind works keeps on growing. This was epitomised by Freud and is noticeable in Strauss's *Elektra* and Berg's *Wozzeck*. Through investigation, Durà Vilà and Bentley (2009, 107) prove that both Wozzeck and Peter Grimes show the important "role that society—with its brutality and injustice—plays in the aetiology of mental illness" (Durà Vilà and Bentley 2009, 107).

In my research, I use performativity study – specifically a model developed by Margaret Kartomi – to conduct similar research. By looking at the persona that a character portrays, I subjectively read which mental illness each soprano approximates in performance. In this aspect, I have similar findings as Durà-Vilà and Bentley, in that different mental illnesses are observed with the three sopranos in my study.

Their mentioning of the expression of florid madness is another aspect as is found in the literature review – an aspect that I read as an interpretative tool through which the sopranos portray their different personas. While looking at the mental illnesses that the sopranos portray through my chosen theoretical framework, my findings correspond with findings in the literature – most especially a similarity in how society perceives mental illness and in how the chorus reacts to the sopranos' personas in the various approximations of psychosis.

In her thesis on Lucia's "mad Scene", Rachel Nicole Harris (2013) speaks of a character analysis in how to conduct the performance. She based the focus of the character analysis on what she drew from the libretto, Walter Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor*, historical facts, and her own imagination. After intending to investigate and perform various roles, she and her supervisors decided that Lucia's "mad scene" would be the most suitable. Her decision rested on the following ideas: First, it is based on a true story, as told by Walter Scott, coupled with her fascination with history and literature. Second, she was motivated by the superstition that surrounded the culture of the "unforgiving force that drove the story to its tragic conclusion" (Harris 2013, 7). The music itself was her third motivation for studying and performing, as Donizetti composed music that spans the gamut of emotions. This notion includes Lucia's dynamic emotional shifts of insanity during the "mad scene". Her final reason for choosing Lucia's "mad scene" was due to the presumed insanity of the character (Harris 2013, 8).

Harris found that the thematic material of the libretto had a strong connection to the storyline. Her attraction to this role included the idea of the naïve young woman and her place in society with her obligation to fulfil her brother's cruel requests to satisfy his own desires. She found that there were similarities to Hamlet in which characters lost control of their sanity (Harris 2013, 8). The idea of giving a convincing performance of a young bride who has murdered her husband fascinated her. Her preparation for this role included a

character analysis and prep (colloquial term).[5] It was important to her that her preparation of the role be thorough. Opposed to Stanislavski (Moore, 1984), who had a natural approach, she chose to use the Meisner technique in which emotions need to be well prepared to keep the character from being one-dimensional.

According to Moore (1984, 6), "the Stanislavski System is the science of theatre art" and is further explained to be a "science based on human functioning according to the laws of nature" (Moore 1984, 8). Stanislavski thus emphasises that the goal of art is spiritual communication with people, which then conveys the inner creative process to the audience. He developed this into a system called "elements of an action", to give actors certain aids in carrying out truthful, logical, concrete action to turn on subconsciously to enact the roles they study (Moore 1984, 25).

In using the Meisner technique it was important for Harris to use reliable scenarios for inspiration which should be realistic enough for the mind to accept as truth. Harris (2013) was conscious that if she spent too much time preparing, her singing would suffer because of her strong emotions. In other words, if she had allowed herself to give in to laughing, crying and other deep emotions, she would not have been able to sing as beautifully, which is a requirement for interpreting such a role.

She was afraid to confuse her audience with strange behaviour on stage and the absence of her singing. In order to avoid such a situation, she would stop prepping when the introduction of the music of the scene started to play. In that moment she would not analyse the character and was free to focus on the moment and not worry about technique. She also considered the words of Ronald David Lang, a Scottish psychiatrist who specializes in mental illness, who says that "madness needs not to be all breakdown, but could be breakthrough" (Harris 2013 ,54). For Harris, performing this role meant a breakthrough in which she had to let go of all shyness and self-consciousness which would hold her back from performing the scene. Applying a methodological method of "prepping" (preparing) to interpret Lucia, extended enough confidence to Harris to be connected to the character and to feel free to take risks.

[5] Preps are covered extensively in the Meisner Technique and are considered by some to be more directly related to a performance than a character analysis is. A character analysis stimulates the mind into creating a character, while the Prep engages the actor's emotions.

I am in full agreement with Harris in her “prepping” (preparation) for the character. This reading speaks of the reason for choosing this analysis, which reminds me of my own journey of choosing Lucia to be my topic of study. I have also found the vocal and dramatic techniques in performing this role of the utmost skill set and was curious to know how singers bring this to pass. It can be assumed that the sopranos I investigate did a fair amount of preparation for this role and could have used a combination of the techniques Harris speaks of. This however is a limitation of my study, as I read what they do in the final product of their performed interpretations. I do not conduct qualitative interviews with the singers to acquire this information.

In her honour’s degree thesis, Courtney Miller (2015) writes on the portrayal of insanity in opera. She observes that opera’s repeated use of insanity has raised it to a dramatic constant. Four shifts that are connected to specific time periods are observed: namely, early modern (before the eighteenth century), bel canto (eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century), romantic (nineteenth century) and the current period which began in the twentieth century.

Miller observes that, indirectly, the development of psychology could be a reason for the change. She observes that the emergence of psychology in opera started in the nineteenth century. She deduces that as concepts of real-life insanity evolved, so too did the use of madness in opera. Over time, the operatic depiction of madness changed with the understanding of madness in the public domain. With this she observes that madness was assigned to a specific gender and that madness was perceived against a certain societal background.

In summary, she considers that in widely held academic beliefs, the public perspective of insanity is indirectly responsible for the changing dramatic representations of insanity in opera. She analyses each period's representation and interpretation of madness, as well as the state of psychology at that time, to demonstrate the impact public perception had on the creation of operas with mad scenes (Miller 2015, 1-2).

I can relate my study to this work as I investigate the performance of the “mad scene” in three different decades or timeframes. Where it differs from Miller’s study is in the small difference there is in timeframes. I look at performance from the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s.

In discussing Lucia's "mad scene", Miller (2015, 15) considers it the "absolute peak of insanity in opera". She observes that Lucia's separation from reality has been complete from the very start, and that the resulting delusion she has constructed for herself combines insanity and beauty in an unparalleled way. Miller (2015, 15) observes that although Lucia had just murdered her bridegroom at the start of the "mad scene", there is no rage but an outwardly excessive happiness as she imagines that she is before the altar with her lover, Edgardo. As her thoughts come in fragments, the orchestra delicately supports her insane performance.

Miller (2015, 16) further states that "Lucia addresses Edgardo several times without ever hinting that he is not actually present". She concludes that Lucia cannot stand her reality and retreats into a dreamworld of being happily married to Edgardo and she ascribes her insanity to the rejection that Lucia feels from the man she desperately wanted to marry (Miller 2015, 16).

To this part of her discussion, I relate a certain aspect of the theoretical framework that I use to discuss how certain sopranos created a persona for their interpretation. The theme of the "happy mad women" comes up frequently in the literature, and I find similarities in how Catherine Clément also looked at the madness of Lucia (discussed in a later section).

According to many scholars such as Susan McClary (1991), Mary Ann Smart (1992), Roger Parker (2010) and Carolyn Abbate (2012), the "mad scene" is an important part of the opera. Parker (2010) refers to "the small industry of producers and arbiters of operatic fashion that might have grown up around Lucia's 'Mad Scene'" (Parker, 2010). He argues that "the main reason for its popularity across nearly two centuries, and also why audiences still flock to it today, rests on one moment" in the opera – i.e., the "mad scene" (Parker 2010).

Parker goes on to say that Donizetti produced a fantastic scenic opportunity by having Lucia's "mad scene" beset with orchestral motifs, some of which go back to earlier thematic material in the opera. Lucia then answers to them in tortured "vocal fragments" as she retreats, in her disturbed state, into delusions of a "happy union with her true love". Parker claims that her singing becomes increasingly florid as the scene progresses and that, towards the end, "she has transformed into a vocal, whirling dervish, gushing forth cascades of vocal display" in her disturbed state (Parker 2010).

Further discussion from Abbate and Parker (2012) observes that many have tried to convince us of what to understand of Lucia's "vocal extravagance", even though the music in the "mad scene" was the same musical material. One such thought is that the real world of operatic madness was called a "female malady" in the nineteenth century and that Lucia's "manic vocalism" could be seen as a "sign of her imprisonment in a cruel male world" (Abbate & Parker 2012, 226). An opposing thought could be that Lucia's florid singing speaks of "feminist victory" and to proudly refuse to obey the rules of male convention and authority as sung in the finale of her "mad scene" (Abbate and Parker 2012, 226).

The discussion further emphasises that there needed to be a relationship between the notes and their cultural meaning, by which Abbate and Parker (2012) concluded that in opera, "vocal ornament" was the convention of all operatic characters and that in the romantic period, "florid singing" was used as a "colourful costume" which started to mark female characters. They conclude that it was no wonder that those characters who contract the "female malady" displayed a characteristic symptom of "an uncontrollable excess of singing" (Abbate & Parker 2012, 226 – 227).

McClary (1991, 92) argues that Lucia's increasing "extravagant virtuosity" is a "manifestation" of her "madness": "She displays her deranged mind without inhibition as she relives erotically charged moments with Edgardo. She imagines that they are exchanging vows in marriage and anticipates her own death, burial and afterlife in heaven" (McClary 1991, 92). After careful analysis of the text, music as well as the biographical information of the composer, McClary classifies Lucia and her "mad scene" as "not only an instance of feminine dementia, despite the links of her plight with madness and sexual excess". She argues, however, that "in her revolt against patriarchal oppression and musical conformity, she is also a romantic hero whose energy defies social convention" (McClary 1991, 98).

In these interpretations of Abbate, Parker and McClary, one can recognise similar notions of uncontrollable excess of the female character and the extravagant virtuosity of the madness that defies the rules of convention.

Put in a different way, Smart (1992) interprets McClary as follows: reading "Lucia's madness as a potentially threatening eruption of erotic energy, represented by subversive elements like coloratura and chromaticism" and expounds that "this erotic 'excess' should not threaten the audience or the equilibrium of the work, but must be contained within a

frame made into an object of consumption for the gaze and ear of the male spectator"(Smart 1992, 120).

In the same way, McClary also refers to the chorus as a "restrictor of feminine madness," which stands for an unnamed group that acts as a middleman for the audience and responds to the soprano's outbursts with controlled statements of worry and sympathy (Smart 1992, 120). In this context, Smart ascribes certain frames that explain feminist theory – similar to how my own study investigates audience reactions via Kartomi's performativity model and the aspect of emotion and intersubjectivity.

Catherine Clément presents a contrasting view on the value of the mad scene. Her study lays foundational work on opera and feminine demise[6]. Her view is that madness shows a positive freedom and she finds that madness could be a way for the soprano to escape her decline towards death, as it could leap her into an excessively happy conscience: "The madwomen who sing are stubborn and determined in their song, and their intertwining voices scale the walls of reason, reaching higher than what is sensible, far higher than reality" (Clément 1989, 88). Thus, although the plot might indicate seduction and death, the soprano's madness could take her into another world. According to Clément, "Lucia dances with her desires. The voice rises, loses the words, sings itself out and finally rests, then it takes off again in a lively movement that is almost childish" (Clément 1989, 89).

My deduction is that when Clément observes Lucia, she sees a freedom of desires being characterised as she sees her lover in her mind's eye. There is joy and lightness and peacefulness about her, and no unhappiness is evident. Her statement of "who says anything about unhappiness? Mad Women's voices sing the most perfect happiness", convinces one of her notions of this positive outlook (Clément 1989, 89).

In my analysis of the three sopranos examined in this study, they show different ways of expressing the "mad scene". One that closely relates to Clément's notion of "perfect happiness" is that of Joan Sutherland.

According to Forbes (2014), the field of research on performativity has emphasised a "need for a musical analysis to recognize that the 'performative dimensions' of a musical work

[6] I am indebted to an external examiner for this perspective.

should be regarded as part of that work" (Forbes, 2014, 235). In this light, Forbes emphasises that as the broadening of scope might cause certain challenges to "methodologies and discourse", it may lead to a thorough "understanding of the musical work" (Forbes, 2014, 235).

I agree with Forbes, in that important performative information is gathered as one considers how the singer physically and emotionally interprets a vocal line through phrasing, enunciation of text and the application of other nuances of the voice and gestures. In these expressions we gain an understanding of the "effect and affect (emotional influence) of the resultant performance on the listener" (Forbes, 2014, 235-236). For this study it is important to mention that the difference between effect and affect is a theoretical one: effect has to do with the results of the enactment of agency and affect has to do with the things we feel or sense.

Finally, according to Forbes (2014), while music and text both have intrinsic emotional meaning, it is the performer who works as a conduit to the listener and carries the responsibility and artistic weight for allowing both the poet and the composer "to speak". This relates back to what Pipes in her analysis of six mad scenes said, in that the most important contribution to the success of the mad scene depends on the acting ability of the performer (Pipes 1990, 119).

According to Carolyn Abbate (2004, 505), Vladimir Jankélévitch made "one of the most passionate philosophical arguments" for performance in that "real music is music that exists in time and the material acoustic phenomenon." In other words, an argument that music exists in time and space and that this should be the state in which we investigate it. Here she refers to the drastic experience of music as it is composed, played, heard, and sung.

In this study, I relate the analysis of the performed music by applying performativity as the methodology and examine audio-visually recorded performances of three sopranos performing the "mad scene" in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. This will be a qualitative investigation, while using a phenomenological methodology in which I describe what I see and hear when engaging with the sopranos' performances. It therefore fits into the drastic description of Abbate, as it would refer to aesthetic and gestural elements that

constitute a convincing performance of Lucia's "mad scene".[7] It is for this reason that I chose performativity as a theoretical perspective to understand the "mad scene" performances of the three sopranos examined in this study.

After considering all the schools of thought regarding the "mad scene" in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, I have come to interpret performances of the "mad scene" as approximations of psychological episodes. This has led me to further investigation of Lucia's "mad scene", as performed by various acclaimed sopranos, and covering a period of 36 years from 1982 to 2018. The three performances I examine thoroughly in this study are those of Joan Sutherland, Mariella Devia and Lisette Oropesa. These sopranos were chosen because of how effectively one can discern or postulate diverse emotional states in their representations of the "mad scene" in *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

[7] I am indebted to an external examiner for this perspective.

CHAPTER THREE

PERFORMATIVITY STUDIES

3.1 Overview of performativity

I apply the theoretical framework of performativity studies as in my investigation of performances by three sopranos in the "mad scene" from *Lucia di Lammermoor*. In studying the "mad scene", there are various possible interpretations. However, in looking at the performances through the lens of performativity studies, one has a yardstick with which to compare the scenes to one another, and it is these insights into how the role of Lucia, in this pivotal scene of the opera, may be interpreted and portrayed.

My research investigates how music operates in the moment and could affect all participants, i.e., the audience, all performers on stage, and those working in the background. Abbate's writing has convinced me to consider performativity with an analytical approach when considering the performances of others.

Although Abbate (2004) describes what performativity is, she postulates no strategy on how an investigation on performativity may be conducted. In contrast, Margaret Kartomi (2014) describes a strategy that can be pursued to investigate the performances of the "mad scene" in *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

According to Jane Davidson (2014), the concept of performativity has gradually been introduced into music studies after first emerging in literary and language studies where "performativity" constituted "an epistemology of reality constituted both through languages as well as other physical acts which includes a gradual formation of acts that permit us to experience culture (in this case musical performance) as an interactive process" (Davidson 2014, 171).

Performativity guides my analyses of three sopranos' performances of the "mad scene" from *Lucia di Lammermoor*. The reason for using performativity studies as my methodology, is that I investigate the physical actions of the sopranos who interpret the character of Lucia and portray her "mad scene".

A brief overview of performativity is necessary to understand the relevance of this term and its applicability to music performance studies.

John Austin, a language philosopher, is credited with beginning performativity studies. Austin analysed performative utterances in three parts: locution, illocution and perlocution. He argued that a "performative utterance" is a speech act that creates events or relations in the world. By way of example, he says:

> Act (A) or Locution
> He said to me, "You can't do that."
>
> Act (B) or Illocution
> He protested against my doing it.
>
> Act (C. a) or Perlocution
> He pulled me up, checked me.
> (Austin 1965, 98-102)

If one considers the important parts of Austin's theory, one should attend to the distinctions between performance and performativity. According to Austin, "all utterances are performed, but not all utterances are performative. In meeting the social conventions an utterance has suitable acceptance making it into a performative that transforms" (Austin as quoted in Young, 2016).

Further when looking at Austin's work, "he proposed a three-level performative methodology for the study of language". He distinguishes between the actual words spoken in a locution, what the speaker is attempting to do in uttering in that locution and, lastly, the actual effect the speaker has on the converser by making that utterance in the locution". Sedgewick[8] in Kartomi (2014) proposed a fourth "peri-performative" level, which includes the participation of all the stakeholders in the success of a performative event (Kartomi 2014, 191).

Judith Butler (1988) explores the notion that speech does something beyond conveying intended semantic and syntactic meanings. As an example of performativity theory, Butler refers to gender as something naturalised, woven so tightly into the social

[8] John Austin's performative ideas have been extensively discussed in philosophy, literature, science, economics, social sciences and other interdisciplinary areas and led to the development of further innovative research. As example, Eve Kosovsky Sedgwick described queer performativity and language behaviour as an ongoing project for transforming the way we define, and break boundaries to identity (Kartomi 2004, 191).

fabric that it seems like a necessary part of reality. Butler (1988) argues that we do not invent gender roles, they are invented for us. She writes that gender identity "is a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo" and states that gender is an identity instituted through a "stylized repetition of acts" (Butler 1988, 519).

One point to note about Butler's theory is that "performativity", though it uses a theatrical metaphor, is not the same as "performance". For Butler, the technical term "performative" means an act that communicates and creates an identity. Through this interpretation, Butler perceives "performativity" as "that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constraints" (Butler in Davidson 2014, 179).

For my research I use the term performativity in the same way as Butler, in that I investigate which identities were created in performing Lucia's "mad scene".

Drawing these threads towards music studies, Davidson remarks that "[I]n music study generally, the concept of performativity has been introduced slowly; even though musicians deal with the competencies of performers as articulated and consolidated in repertoires, events and practices; in other words, performativities" (Davidson 2014, 179). For Davidson, performativity in music explores "what is embodied and brings to the fore the socio-cultural environments in which performances exist" (Davidson 2014, 179).

Another performativity scholar, Carolyn Abbate (2004, 534) imparts that music "leans towards having multiple different meanings which do not demand specificity". Thus, music can be seen as ambiguous in its meanings. In the converse we can use the same music and employ different emotions and dynamics to interpret it, thereby changing the meanings. The state of how we experience real music that happens in the moment is unintellectual, an experience common and familiar to performers and music lovers alike. This once again refers to the "drastic" experience of music. "For denying mystery, the perplexing event, the reticence such things may engender, means being prey to something that comes to call at its nocturnal worst, as coercive mysticism and morbid grandiloquence' (Abbate 2004, 534 - 535).

An example of such mysticism can be seen in a performance of Richard Wagner's *Meistersinger* by two tenors at the Metropolitan Opera House in December 2001. Ben Hepner was one of the tenors. Hepner lost his voice, but continued singing, showing utmost "courage and sangfroid" (Abbate 2004, 535). Abbate mentions how transfixed she was by his "heroism" and the show of "moral courage". The notion of "drastic knowledge" comes

to the fore. Abbate (2004) calls it the experience of a momentary "optical hallucination, a genuine neurological misfire" (Abbate 2004, 535). Abbate summarises that, on one level, "secret knowledge had decided to restage the performance".

This links to the performative practice in opera studies which is colloquially referred to as being "in the moment" or "in the zone". I would summarise Abbate's described experience as "the reason why casting one's lot with performance" is experiencing all in the first person, as well as communally with those who are in the audience.

Abbate further compares her own reaction to two different performances of *Meistersinger* as cumulative, as her experience of the first performance coloured her interpretation of the second performance she attended. "The drastic change has seemed difficult because there is no place to hide." This relates to the live performance where there is "no hideaway in the universalising endemic in academic discourse" (Abbate 2004, 536).

Kartomi (2014, 189-208) gives an overview of the concepts and methods she suggests be employed in performativity research, which is the basis of my reading of the performances of the "mad scene" by my three chosen sopranos. This is a four-pronged approach that distinguishes between the music performed, the execution of the music and factors affecting it, the effects of the performers on the audience and vice versa, and the contributions of all the stakeholders to the success of the event.

Music performance, according to Kartomi (2014, 189), is a universal human activity. But musicologists and performance scholars have only recently grappled with challenges such as describing the "magic" of an extraordinary performance. A live presentation of an event by musicians at a set time and location, usually in front of an audience, support personnel, and other stakeholders, is what she defines as a music performance. Kartomi describes performativity as a concept that describes and analyses all the aspects of a performer or group's ability or accomplishment, including sounds, movements, and gestures that they produce (Kartomi 2014, 190).

In this dissertation I use the term "performative" to apply to musical events that are performed by musicians, experienced directly by an audience, and exemplify performance-related issues and techniques. "In his or her mind, a performer may also imagine music performatively." They might imagine a new version of a song that inspires their conceptual approach to the performance, or a jazz musician might imagine a new version of a song that

informs “his or her conceptual approach to the performance” (Kartomi 2014, 190). In my study I also explore how the different sopranos interpret the “mad scene” differently, which gives a unique identity to each performance.

Kartomi (2014, 190) further expounds that “in performance situations, performativity refers to the artists’ persona, competence, approach, and, style while performing and generally factors that influence a performance, […] psychological approach to rehearsal and performance, and-in group performance – the interactiveness and inter-subjectivity (bonding) within the group, the use of cueing and improvisatory techniques, the desired degree of entrainment or groove (synchronous playing together). Other factors may include the acoustics and style of a venue, the arrangement of the performance arena and audience seating, and the reception of the audience […]. Even if a performance lacks a live audience, as in a recording studio or rehearsal, it can still be analysed in terms of the performers’ imagined audience.”

According to Kartomi (2014), the success or failure of any performance is determined by the contributions of several “stakeholders, including (where applicable) sound and lighting technicians, costume and make-up artists, backup artists, event organizers, entrepreneurs, patrons, musicologists, pre-concert lectures, critics, and the media” (Kartomi 2014, 190).

I believe the conceptual approach for describing a comprehensive methodology for research on music “performativity” must ultimately encompass the whole musical and socio-cultural process to encompass all spheres of the production. As my performativity study focuses on the performances of others, I have found the above literature of value in my own capacity as a bel canto performer. I identify those scholars who have contributed to my field of study, and I recognise that there are some with limited application to my study.

John Austin gives a good outline for a literary approach to performativity studies in his Harvard University lectures. However, he describes literary philosophy and not music. It therefore lacks the specificity one would need to apply his approach to a music study.

Judith Butler, in her key observations on gender and performativity, explores creating an identity in the performative milieu, with which I agree completely. As the studies around madness have mostly developed around the female portrayal of madness, one finds fruitful

avenues through which Butler could be interpreted for this research. She focuses on creating an identity in the performative space, and for the portrayal of the "mad scene" in *Lucia di Lammermoor* this identity creation is of the utmost importance. Her study is however limited in how one would go about such an investigation.

As Davidson focuses on the embodied performer in a socio-cultural environment, one cannot but look at madness and how it may be perceived in different historical eras. Aspects that Davidson explores are valuable to consider and are employed in my investigation of the embodied ways in which three sopranos perform the role of Lucia in three diverse settings.

There is much to explore in Carolyn Abbate's studies of music and its multiple meanings. Interestingly, she focuses on using the same musical material, which could have different meanings. I find that this could be an apt description of how to take the same material of the "mad scene" in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and see how the three sopranos in my study give it different interpretations. In applying Abbate's principles, it is interesting to study how these three performers engage with the music "in the moment" and how a performance may experience outside influences.

A notable limitation in my study is that one would have liked to experience these performances as real music "in the moment" and not to predict what will happen because I already know the music so well. I take cognisance of this research fatigue in my analyses. As mentioned before, although Abbate describes what performativity is, she does not provide a strategy as to how such an investigation may take place. Therefore, I have focussed on Margaret Kartomi's ideas about performativity both as conceptual framework and methodology to investigate my three chosen performances of the "mad scene" in *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

Kartomi (2014, 207) summarises that there are three main performativity research practises:

1. When performers themselves believe or write about their performances.
2. When music scholars, most of whom are former or current performers, write about others' performances.
3. When performer-scholars write about their own work.

My research focuses on the second performativity practice, in which I critique the work of other performers.

As a performer and a teacher of embodied performance (as opposed to predominantly cognitive ways of knowing) I am keenly interested to analyse what the performance of this role might entail. The question of what makes a plausible portrayal of a "mad scene" possible will be determined through a critical assessment of aspects and variables in artistic proficiency, as well as difficulties relating to the "performativity" of musical material from three opera artists, spanning intermittently 36 years of productions.

Kartomi's research model goes further and proposes select concepts to affirm relevance to studies in this field. Her model was the best suited for my study and I have chosen three categories of the model which have the closest alignment with my analysis, under the heading's "persona", "emotional and intersubjectivity", and "reception".

3.2 Kartomi's model of performativity

3.2.1 Persona

Individual musicians and groups, much like professional actors in a play or film, adopt their character when performing. Normally this identity differs from the one they are most comfortable with in real life. A persona is often developed with the support of "fellow artists, technologists, entrepreneurs, patrons, music reviewers, music academics, and listeners" (Kartomi 2014,197). In opera it is also common practice to do an intense character study in which a persona is created for the character the singer would portray. It is also common practice these days to do a psychological analysis of a character in order to give depth to the character portrayal. These performative acts are done for the audience to believe in the illusion that one creates for them.

Kartomi, herself a noted pianist at her peak, describes the concert pianist Lang Lang as having a powerful performance persona. Focusing on his encore piece by Franz Liszt*, Liebestraum* (Dream of Love) *Nocturne No. 3, Op. 62*, she claims that there are numerous, if not innumerable, factors that influence his performance. She notes Lang Lang's facial expression reveals muscular tension, his eyes closed with contracted facial muscles and his mouth open slightly. She recounts his body pushing backwards after the peak, and the downward octave melody is played with emphasis on every note. She continues to describe

his performance in terms of his persona, incorporating every sway in the drama his body is adding to his performance (Kartomi, 2014, 197-198).

Kartomi's interpretation of Lang Lang can be extrapolated to interpreting every action and voice that will occur on the stage during the "mad scene" in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. There is a great dramatic change in the libretto and action between Act 2 and Act 3, Scene II of *Lucia di Lammermoor*. During this break, the only fact we are certain of is that Arturo is dead. It can be postulated that Lucia committed this murder, as the nightgown she wears is bloodstained. In investigating the personas, the sopranos created for Lucia's "mad scene", one would establish to what extent their interpretations are personal or 'performative' occurrences, rather than dictated by the score and the libretto.

3.2.2 Emotion and intersubjectivity

According to Kartomi (2014), the aspect of emotion in music performance and listening has been one of the most thoroughly studied topics in music psychology. This involves "inter-subjectivity (shared subjective states) among members of performance groups, as well as audiences" (Kartomi, 2014, 202) and current research subjects. Most music experts, she claims, have long assumed that peoples' emotional responses to music are so unpredictable that they can't be studied methodically or empirically. Nevertheless, Brinner's study in Kartomi (2014) suggests that collaborative knowledge shared among ensemble groups plays a key role in creative performance (Kartomi, 2014, 202).

Performing ensembles may study their inter-subjectivity to find out how they "bond, depend on, and relate to one another before, during, and after performing, as well as how their empathy or inter-subjectivity contributes to their creativity" (Kartomi, 2014, 202). The goal of seeking an intersubjective perspective is to escape the problem of having either a completely objective or a completely subjective worldview. This can be accomplished by requiring individuals to compare their subjective interpretations to those of other participants. As a result, "inter-subjectivity builds a socio-cognitive framework for approaching agreement that transcends the individual subject's limitations" (Kartomi 2014, 202). In this aspect of performativity, it reflects on how relationships tune into established meanings within the socio-cultural context of the performance.

In the performance of the "mad scene"from *Lucia di Lammermoor* Lucia (soprano), Edgardo (baritone – Lucia's brother), Raimondo (bass – Lucia's mentor/priest) and the

chorus are on stage. In addition, there are unseen persons contributing to the performance, such as the conductor and the orchestra, and ultimately there is also the audience. All of these have an influence on how an individual may interpret this scene. "Performativity refers to all the describable and analysable aspects of a performer's or group's competence or accomplishment while performing, including the sound, movements and gestures that the artist(s) produce' (Kartomi 2014, 190).

Using Kartomi's parameters, it will be important to observe how the chorus, Lucia's brother, the priest (Raimondo) and the audience react to her once she enters the dance hall from her wedding chambers. All these performers and groups are supported by the conductor and orchestra, with all the stakeholders being actively involved. The limitation of this study is that none of the stakeholders could be interviewed. The analysis instead focuses on audio-visual recordings of the productions as seen on stage. One can however make reliable assumptions concerning the artistic director's notes, lighting cues, costume designers' creations and stage managers work, by looking at the movements of the singers and the atmosphere created on stage.

In Lucia's "mad scene", intersubjectivity refers to the way in which the community (or lack thereof) depicted on stage communicates a particular meaning within the socio-historical context of each production. In this the performative methodology takes account of how the directional decisions, such as the staging of crowd scenes, relate to the broader contextual attitudes towards femininity, patriarchal control, mental illness, and communal responsibility[9].

3.2.3 Reception

The response from the audience is the main and the immediate feedback that the artists receive. This refers to how a live audience perceives, listens to, and responds to a performance. The reaction of the audience, as well as their interpretation of the performance, are dependent on their personal experiences, which gives the performance personal meaning. A performance cannot be regarded as a success without the audience's shared understanding of the performance conventions and eager attention to what is happening on stage (Kartomi 2014).

[9] I am indebted to an external examiner for this perspective.

The other forms of feedback are the subsequent press and media reviews.

The cultural theorist Stuart Hall has proposed a theoretical framework for understanding how media messages are created, transmitted, and perceived. His framework maintains that unlike most creative work, the audience does not passively accept a music performance, but rather analyses it in the light of its dominant cultural contexts, thus allowing for negotiation and disagreement (Hall quoted in Kartomi 2014, 204). As madness is a social construct (apart from being a personal experience as well) with changed social effects over time, one could postulate that different audiences may have different reactions towards a showcasing of madness in the opera *Lucia di Lammermoor*. In this, various audiences would be influenced by the dominant cultural contexts and might react positively or negatively.

Audience engagement is in many instances something that occurs "in the moment". When one returns to investigate what happened at a certain performance, it will necessarily be difficult to recall – as audience engagement will be lacking. Although a recording might be available, an audience member would not be readily available, and to use one audience member would statistically skew the view when normalised across the audience.

In this instance, it could be a viable solution to use reviews about these performances to gauge what the reaction of the audience could have been. Although some reviews might read as the subjective way in which a critic looks at a performance, it can also include the audience's reaction. For this study it was important to incorporate various reviews to obtain an overall idea of audience reception.

3.3 Psychological aspects as discussed in the performances.

To conduct this study, I make use of the following argument or postulation to psychologically consider interpretations of the role of Lucia.

In examining three different interpretations of the "mad scene", I argue that each soprano uses identifiable dramatic and musical tools to approximate different psychopathy in interpreting and enacting Lucia's madness. As I read these performances, I argue that Joan Sutherland, Mariella Devia and Lisette Oropesa lean towards approximating manic behaviour, dissociative personality disorder and paranoid schizophrenic disorder respectively.

The following chapters now present that analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

JOAN SUTHERLAND'S MANIC LUCIA

4.1 Introduction

Joan Sutherland (1926-2010) was an Australian dramatic coloratura soprano. She is remembered for her ability to perform seemingly "effortless, stratospheric coloratura singing".[10] She began her operatic journey with singing the title role of Donizetti's melodrama at the Royal Opera House of Covent Garden in London on 17 February 1959. She performed the role 221 times, with debuts in the role at Paris Opéra, La Scala in Milan and the Metropolitan Opera house in New York.

For this study, I analyse the 1982 Metropolitan Opera recording.[11] In this performance, one notices important interpretive factors in her portrayal of this role. This particular recording was made when Sutherland was fifty-six, twenty-three years after her Metropolitan Opera debut. A reviewer, Henahan (1982), is of the opinion that this performance bears much interpretative similarity to that of her debut performance at the Metropolitan Opera House.

4.2 Persona

Piper (1990) postulates that in opera, the audience is led into the emotion or mood of a scene by the orchestration, the way the singer uses voice, be it in the bel canto style of singing and in his or her performance as an actor. Sutherland's interpretation of Lucia approximates a character demonstrating an elevated mood. This lasts throughout the "mad scene", where an almost uncontrollable excitement is tangible. This led to my interpretation of her enactment of the scene as that of a person suffering a manic episode.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) classifies a "Manic Episode" as "[…] a distinct period during which there is an abnormally and persistently elevated, expansive, or irritable mood" (DSM-IV, 1994, 328). "Mood is

[10] According to Classic FM she was one of the 20th century's great voices for which she was dubbed *La Stupenda*.

[11] **https://youtu.be/zVHLzFKA9NI** The YouTube recording is a selected excerpt of the "mad scene" from *Lucia di Lammermoor* as performed by Joan Sutherland in the 1982 Metropolitan Opera house production. The time indications provided in this chapter is as taken from this recording.

heightened out of proportion according to the individual's circumstances, and can range from carefree, to merry, to almost overwhelming excitement. Elation is accompanied with a surge in energy, which leads to excessive activity, a tendency to increased speaking pressure and speed, and a reduced need for sleep. Normal social inhibitions are curtailed, focus is difficult to retain, and distractibility is common" (ICD-10 Codes, 1992). According to other experts, mania may manifest itself as rapid mood elevations or expansions that feel or exhibit as exceptionally happy, ecstatic, or optimistic. A person experiencing a manic episode may also be restless or unable to arrange their efforts in a productive manner (Nevid et al, 1991, 250). In this manic state, they may easily become distracted, and their attention diverted to unrelated stimuli (Ibid., 250).

My view of Sutherland's performance draws on these diagnostic signs as tropes within her approximation of mania, to which one may now afford a closer reading. Sutherland's on-stage persona created for Lucia is suggestive of mania from the onset of the "mad scene".

The orchestral introduction starts and once the flute starts playing at 0'46" in the Introduction, she suddenly turns to the audience with fright at 0'53''. Her eyes are open wide and she wears a grimace on her face. Her hands are smeared with blood, and she is holding the dagger with which she allegedly stabbed Arturo. She first tilts her head upwards and then towards the audience as she smiles while singing the first lines of the scene, "Il dolce suono mi colpi di sua voce!" (The sweet sound of your voice struck me). As she sings the name of Edgardo at 1'32'', she starts moving forward, smiling, as if towards a spectre of him, which suggests a sense of delusion or hallucination. She looks afraid and uses her hands to call Edgardo to sit with her near the fountain. At 2'55'' to 3'03'', she sings an ascending line followed by a jump of an octave. It is as if ascending to the top notes adds to her expression of manic euphoria. Her gesturing suggests that she is still seeing Edgardo in her mind's eye, which maintains the sense of delusion in the portrayal of mania. In this case, it may be argued, that the mania is associated with visual and auditory hallucinations.

At the introduction of the Allegretto at 3'13'', the melodic material presented by the flute is a recalled, distorted copy of melodic material heard when Edgardo was singing earlier. Sutherland moves across the stage and sits down while studying her bloodstained hands. She maintains her smile but keeps her eyes closed. Instead of her portraying sadness, which might accompany a form of regret, Sutherland smiles throughout this part of the

drama, evidencing an opposite euphoric reaction to what is expected (Goodwin and Guze, 1996, 321-322).

When the ghost from the fountain from Act 1 appears, separating her from her delusion of seeing Edgardo, she has a shocked expression on her face. At 4’23’’, she hears the flute representing her internal thought world and starts hallucinating about her and Edgardo’s wedding preparations while singing the words “sparse di rose” (scattered are the roses). On seeing the scattering of the roses, she once again smiles gleefully. There follows another flute theme, representing a new thought or internal dialogue after which she sings the words “Un’armonia celestia di non ascolta” (Do you not hear the celestial harmony). It serves here to include the audience in her internal thought world, completely consisting of hallucinations or “celestial voices”. It is relevant here to note that religious or celestial experiences are often coupled with hallucinations or “hearing voices” (Goodwin and Guze, 1996, 323).

Mania is one of the possible ways to interpret the libretto coupled with her performative actions. Sutherland’s interpretation from this point forward is one of being happy, which is a possible symptom of mania and a complete escape from reality. All the physical and dramatic actions that she makes lead the audience to believe that as Lucia she has completely regressed into her own reality.

At the Andante from 5’08’’ to 5’35’’, she repeats how she hears the wedding hymns. In the orchestration, Donizetti uses cameos of themes used in the wedding scene being played on the glass harmonica or flute. She looks frantic as if she wants to convince everyone of what she is hearing. She first sings it softly, then builds up the line dramatically. She puts her hand on her chest while thinking of the wedding hymns, as if clutching at her heart at 5’16”. She looks up to the heavens at this point as if captivated by the emotion of hearing the hymns. In the interlude at 5’24’’ she runs forward and holds her bloodstained scarf to her chest as she hears their wedding hymn. She sings of her happiness with Edgardo. I postulate that this contributes to the approximation of manic euphoria. To echo her approximation of happiness, she sings a cadenza at 5’49’’ to 5’58’’ in an ascending pattern. In the Larghetto that follows, she places the bloodstained scarf on her head, as if Lucia was being betrothed again. Sutherland’s performance approximates elation as she sings of the incense that is burning as well as the sacred torches. Her expression once again refers to unusual euphoric notions of a manic episode.

One notices that from 6’16’’ she looks to the heavens as she sings of the wedding, putting her veil back over her head as though in anticipation. According to the libretto, in this moment Lucia is thinking of the moment in the wedding ceremony when the couple give each other the hands and celebrate a happy day. At the start of the Cavatina at 7’35” Lucia sings that at last she is his and he is hers. In this *piano* section Sutherland sings quietly and emotively whilst still facing upwards towards a presumed heaven. She ends the phrase when Lucia sings that God gave Edgardo to her, after which she looks to the floor and sits down on a chair. She wears the bloodstained scarf and stares at the floor. She moves down the stairs as if towards an imaginary image. She communicates further at 7’13’’ to 7’23’’ by giving her right hand and expressing further joy. Her elation is emphasised by a long, expressive orchestral tremolo at 7’24’’.

The flute represents the voice in Lucia’s head and evokes a myriad of emotions within her. From 9’03’’ the flute and Lucia have a duet that is filled with fioritura,[12] fast passages and movement in the music. Sutherland’s tone stays focused as she keeps the smile throughout the fioritura part. The four bars of the cadenza then follow. From 9’47’’ of the cadenza Lucia imitates the flute, like a bird with a fast tremolo at 9’28’’. At this point she is imagining the wedding, with the flute as a voice in her head.

Sutherland shows shock and then a friendly smile on her face as she imitates the flute, as her approximation of a manic episode continues. Her approximation of shock is due to Lucia being presented with an echo of Il fantasma (the ghost) and her approximation of elation is because Lucia is imagining her marriage to Edgardo. There is no indication in the libretto or any further action in the scene that would allow the audience insight into whom Lucia is seeing.

While singing sequences at 10’11’’ in thirds with the flute, Sutherland runs to the opposite side of the stage with arms wide at 10’14’’. She moves her arms in wide, frantic movements when she sings the first part of the sequence and then looks up with a smile on her face at 10’26’’, 10’28’’, 10’34’’ and 10’40’’. She also starts every phrase with the arms held sideways and shows her bloodstained hands. Sutherland clasps at her breast intermittently depicting a sign of insecurity. The frantic movement, use of her hands and

[12] An embellishment of a melody, especially as improvised by an operatic singer. (Oxford online dictionary.)

constant flit of emotions between shock and elated smiles are in line with her approximation of manic behaviour.

The coda is a particularly powerful moment at which to consider Sutherland's approximation of mania. At 10'22" of the cadenza there are four-note passages that repeat four times and then repeat softly at 10'50''. During the soft section she walks to the back of the stage and turns her back to the audience. It can thus be presumed that in walking to the back of the stage and standing with her back to the audience, she approximates a moment of lack of focus and pressured thoughts.

At the Andante, at 11'00", Sutherland walks forward, and the flute plays an arpeggio pattern parallel to her singing. Her face is open and smiling with some intensity shown in the eyebrows. From 11'40'' she moves frantically over the stage, musically imitating the flute and looking up with a smile of uncontrollable excitement and elation. This approximation coheres with the description of mania by the World Health Organization (WHO) publication Clinical Descriptions and Diagnostic Guide ICD10 Classification of Mental and Behavioural Disorders (1992, 114). The end of the cadenza, from 11'59'' to 12'07'' is emotionally captivating with a resounding E Flat 6. Her approximation of mania is literally noticeable in this moment as a form of heightened or elevated mood and joviality. (Ibid 1992, 114). This contributes to a climactic ending of the cadenza.

4.3 Emotion and intersubjectivity

In this performance of Sutherland, I can relate to the theory of feminist scholar Catherine Clément in which she suggests a positive or opposing stance on madness. Her statement stands out in this approximation of Lucia where she says "who says anything about unhappiness? Madwomen's voices sing the most perfect happiness" (Clément 1989, 89). In this Sutherland accentuated the freeing of the unhappy Lucia with the stratospheric singing.

Sutherland's reactions to depicted hallucinations show in her facial expressions, as she follows the libretto and further emphasises that she approximates manic behaviour. Just as Sutherland approximates manic behaviour in her persona of Lucia, this can be observed in the emotional and inter-subjective engagements with other members of the cast on stage. The "impaired social and occupational functioning" (Sue et al, 2006, 358) of Lucia in her manic state is highlighted by the performances of the chorus and fellow soloists on stage.

Throughout the scene, Lucia has episodes of sudden elevation or expansion of mood and unusual cheerfulness. Another observation noted previously is that Sutherland created Lucia to have a euphoric sense of madness, which suggests Lucia's manic behaviour.

Raimondo first notices Lucia and announces her arrival in the great hall. Raimondo exhibits sorrow and appears to pity Lucia (the action begins about 0'30''to 0'46''into the scene). His reaction spills over to the chorus in the singing of their initial entry. They are emotionally engaged throughout the scene with expressions of fright, shock, sorrow and empathy for Lucia. They set the scene for Lucia by surrounding and staring at her. Their expressions vary in terms of intensity, fluctuating from total shock to empathy for her character. During Lucia's manic episode, the chorus becomes expressionless.

At this point it is important to note that emotional and inter-subjectivity for Lucia is starting to break down. At 6'46'', at the start of the Larghetto, Lucia begins to sing of her hallucinations of her wedding with Edgardo. The chorus members are still staring at her, with expressionless faces. They are dressed in full Scottish formal attire, creating the image of a period painting. At 8'11'' the choir enters with lamenting lines, "Ambi in si crudo stato! Di lei signore, di pietà".[13] They sit around her and look at her seriously with the chorus sounding warm and empathetic. At 14'13'', Lucia's brother, Edgardo, enters and is greeted by Raimondo. He enters the scene angrily, with Raimondo concurring with this sentiment. Lucia pleads with him, but he shows no empathy. Throughout the scene the chorus displays an unforgiving attitude towards Lucia. As Sutherland repeats the Cavatina at 17'40'' the chorus remains unforgiving and staunchly demonstrate that they do not want anything to do with her. They continue to stare at her. This approximates a negative attitude, as many people in society show towards patients in an asylum[14].

Sutherland still approximates a sense of mania with a smile while holding the bloodstained scarf. At 18'53'', the chorus with Raimondo and Edgardo reacts to her movements and vocal expression in ensemble singing. Their reaction is stoic, and with hard facial expressions, which induces a fearful reaction from Lucia. At 20'33'' to 21'06'' the chorus interjects for the last time and avoids eye contact with Lucia. This is the final break of emotional communication with them; their outlook is cold and hard. Lucia searches the

[13] Directly translated it means "both in so crude state of her lord of pity".
[14] If one investigates the life of the composer of this opera, Donizetti, he too was cast aside by society and was taken to an asylum (Ashbrook, 1982).

room for warmth from any character. She turns to Raimondo, and he also steps back and leaves her coldly. She resorts to singing the last top note completely abandoned and collapses at the end of the scene.

If one considers how the scene is constructed, the emotional and inter-subjective connection of the chorus and the other soloists to Lucia moves from being empathetic to being completely broken down. They contribute largely to setting up the initial mood of the scene, but their reactions eventually become cold. They begin being fearful of her, move to pitying her, and eventually resort to distancing themselves from her. This leads to the total abandonment of Lucia in her mad, manic state. The emotional and inter-subjective connection to Lucia is completely shattered.

4.4 Reception

To evaluate how Sutherland's dramatic performance was understood, I have chosen to consider reviews of the specific scene as provided by pre-eminent reviewers in New York. In my definition of reception, I have mentioned that I may use the reviewers as my audience members. In this section I use the reviewers as my audience, as they don't refer to the audience directly; and as such I use their observations as I would of audience members. According to my analysis in the persona and emotional and inter-subjectivity section, there might be differences of opinion.

In its reception, one can observe a few themes that reviewers of this production make. One such reviewer is Henahan (1982) of the New York Times, who comments on the theme of Sutherland's "mellifluous, unforced tone" and the way she securely handles the "florid embellishments of the bel canto style". He continues to say that she sounds like a "rested singer and that her runs are cleanly articulated; and that her notes above the staff ring out excitingly". Further, he acknowledges that the "mad scene" is the "chief obstacle course of the opera" and that Sutherland "floats through it without effort" Henahan (1982).

In this same train of thought, another reviewer, Echert (1982), observes that Sutherland sings with "all the agility and style one remembers from her first performances". He continues further: "with the timbre and the range virtually intact, only a certain caution in her singing reminds us that it was more than 20 years ago that she exploded onto the New York opera scene with her electrifying Metropolitan debut in the same role" Echert

(1982). These observations lead me to believe that Sutherland coped well with the demands of Donizetti's score[15].

Henahan (1982) regards Sutherland as a singer who is not so much approximating derangement, as displaying a maidenly poignancy and gentleness in her interpretation. Her gentle approach to this could be indicative of Lucia seeing a heavenly host (Celestial Choir), and reliving the happy emotions of her wedding, characterised by Sutherland's donning of her bloody veil, as though Lucia is about to get married to Edgardo.

Another theme that reviewers mention is Sutherland's lack of acting in the scene. Henahan (1982) calls it "her shortcomings as an actress" and the fact that "casual operagoers long decided to rather focus on the beauty of her voice". In contrast, I believe this could be a contributing factor to her approximation of mania. It shows her detachment from the drama in the scene and her success in approximating the manic Lucia.

A further theme is Sutherland's matching of the flute in the cadenza of the "mad scene". Henahan (1982) praises her for matching the flute on every note in the cadenza while Simon Thomas (2020) differs from this opinion and compares the original eerie effect that Donizetti intended for the glass harmonica in the "mad scene" to the less effective accompaniment on the flute. As a result, the flute accompaniment is barely apparent to the fioritura Sutherland creates in her voice with her runs, trills, and high notes.

In this way I consider her approximation of mania, to reflect "the excessive optimism, increased energy and excitement the manic person may display at the height of the manic episode" (ICD 10 Codes, 1992, 114).

4.5 Summary

In this chapter, I considered the performative ways in which Sutherland portrayed the "mad scene" in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. I postulated that the persona she created for this role was one consistent with manic behaviour, largely because of her creation of Lucia to have a euphoric sense of madness, which defines manic behaviour, as mentioned in par 3.3 above. I compared that to the views of the pre-eminent reviewers of this specific production, which were all mostly agreeable in terms of her voice. There are a few scathing comments about her apparent lack of acting, which I interpret as a deliberate attempt to approximate Lucia's

[15] I am indebted to an external examiner for this perspective.

specific psychosis. Sutherland does receive two extended standing ovations which can be seen at 12’13’’ and 21’13’’.

In following Kartomi’s (2014) performance studies outline, I was able to apply this methodology of analysis to find the best fit between the actual performance and coherence with a representation of an identifiable mental illness.

CHAPTER FIVE

MARIELLA DEVIA'S DISSOCIATIVE LUCIA

5.1 Introduction

Mariella Devia, born on 12 April 1948, is considered one of the greatest bel canto interpreters of the twentieth century (Salazar, 2019). She was born in Chiusavecchia, Italy and trained at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome. She made her stage debut in the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Treviso in 1973, and has focused on performing operas composed by Donizetti, Rossini, and Bellini. Like Sutherland, Devia is experienced in performing the role of Lucia. Through examining her performance of the role in a 1992 performance of *Lucia di Lammermoor* at La Scala, aspects of performativity will be described.

5.2 Persona

My analysis shows that Devia approximates to elements of dissociative identity disorder to portray Lucia's "mad scene". Dissociation is a state of being disconnected from one's environment or oneself. "Dissociative disorders involve a separation, or dissociation, of some part of a person's consciousness, memory, or identity" (Sue et al.: 171). She uses her hands and arms expressively in the scene and gestures freely, almost as a ballet dancer would. She creates the atmosphere of floating and moving into a state that could be read as happening outside of the body.

Many scholars define the symptoms of dissociative disorders as "mental processing outside of conscious awareness". There can be a divide in the functioning of the individual's "complete concept of self" in some "'extreme cases of dissociation" (Oltmanns and Emery, 2015: 209). In this case, the dissociative disorder is specifically read as depersonalised. It is the characteristic feeling of "unreality concerning the self and the environment".

Persistent symptoms involving alterations in perception and a sense of being separated from one's own thoughts and body may also be present. Feelings of being in a "dreamlike", floating condition may accompany depersonalised dissociative illness (Sue et al: 172, 176). The dreamlike state refers to the dissociative fugue which is a variant of dissociative amnesia. It comprises of a rapid and unexpected journey along with amnesia regarding identity or essential facts (Oltmanns and Emery, 2015:210).

“Dissociative amnesia and fugue” commonly occur suddenly after trauma or extreme stress, followed by “rapid recovery of memory” (Oltmanns and Emery, 2015, 210). This visual and aural manifestation of dissociative identity disorder defines Mariella Devia’s approximation of the “mad scene” in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. This state usually manifests in reaction to trauma as a coping mechanism to allow a person to avoid bad memories. In this instance, the trauma is the actual murder that Lucia has committed, combined with the trauma of losing the man she loves.

As Devia starts the scene, her gaze is inward. In her approximation of the “mad scene” she uses her arms and her hands as her main tool of expression. At the beginning of the scene on the words, “Il dolce suono” (the sweet sound), she holds her hands forward. She is centre stage at the bottom of a large staircase. At 0’17’’ she extends her hands sideways as she moves forward. She lifts her hands to the skies on the word “descesa” (descends) and brings them down before she sings the name of Edgardo from 0’37’’ to 0’56’’, while holding her hands forward as if speaking to him.

Her eyes look sunken because of the lighting on stage, as she navigates through the scene. At 1’11’’ she holds her hands up in front of her face as if protecting herself and moves to the side, as if fleeing from something. Her words are “to son resa: fuggita io son da tuoi nemeci” (yes to you I surrender; I have fled your enemies) as she speaks to Edgardo. Devia brings her arms inward at 1’31’’ on the words “Un gelo mi serpeggia nel sen” (A wind chills my breast) as if protecting herself against chills from the wind. She trembles.

Interpreting the words sung by Lucia, Devia runs across towards the opposite side of the stage as she sings of her feet being unsteady, at 1’49’’. In this instant, Lucia becomes aware of Edgardo and invites him to sit with her at the fountain. Devia points downwards with her right hand and sings to Edgardo’s imaginary image that seems to be sitting down whilst she is standing over him. Her approximation is realistic as she lives in this dream and reaches for Edgardo. At this moment, Devia portrays Lucia seemingly completely removed from reality. She goes down on her knees at 2’36’’ with her arms to the side and with her eyes closed.

As the musical interlude of the Allegretto plays, Devia brings her arms close to her body once again. Perhaps Lucia imagines herself hugging Edgardo? Lucia’s dissociation in this instance could be a dreamlike state, as she closes her eyes and “sees” Edgardo.

At the introduction of the Allegro Vivace, Lucia goes into shock with the word "Ohime!" (Alas!) as the ghost appears. She approximates trying to hide, by moving away quickly on her knees at 2'55''and protecting her face from the ordeal. While singing "il fantasma" (the ghost) at 3'12'', she blocks her face with her right-hand while on her haunches. Lucia's disassociation here could be her reaction as she might be aware of this other part of her murderous self.

The existence of two or more personalities that coexist within a single individual, being a symptom of dissociative disorder, could be at play in this instance. As the words start on "Ohime!" Lucia becomes aware of the ghost that is now separating her from Edgardo. She sings to Edgardo to take shelter at the altar and welcomes him to sit with her. She sings the cadenza on the phrase "a pie dell'ara" 3'28'' to 3'48''. Here, Devia employs more of a *squillo*[16] sound for the end note in that phrase. By singing this note with more *squillo*, this could vocally approximate Lucia's personality split to another dimension.

Her expression approximates that of friendly enthusiasm as she prepares a place for Edgardo to come and take shelter with her on the words "sparsa e di rose" (strewn is it with roses). She starts looking to the heavens and from 4'24''to 4'30'' her body moves to the music in an un-rhythmical, nearly unfettered way. This approximation could indicate the dream state that constantly recurs in her dissociative behaviour.

From 4'39'' to 4'54'' Devia interacts with the flute and at the instrumental interlude starts running in short distances to the left and to the right approximating as if hearing and reacting to something supernatural. The interaction with the flute could indicate Lucia's transition to another personality in which she forms this physically active character. This is the start of the Andante and Devia gracefully dances in circles. She runs to centre stage and then turns back as she hears the flute again. Amused by it, Lucia asks it and the audience to hear the celestial choirs, as they would be performing at her and Edgardo's imaginary wedding. This happens while holding her arms to the heavens.

On the word "Ah", she anchors her body and sings centre stage. Devia still gives the imagery of Lucia physically floating, approximating as if she were floating in her delusions.

[16] 'With proper placement of sound, you achieve what is called *squillo della voice*, or the "ring of the voice", which is a bright, brilliant sound. *Squillo* is created by finding the correct space for Italian's bright vowels, your natural resonators and a solid *appoggio* – diaphragm support'. (https://www.musical-u.com/learn/vocal-technique-putting-it-all-together/ accessed 01 Dec 2021).

This creates a further image of moving outside of the body and her movements seem dance-like. Devia reacts physically in moving her body to every interlude or flute interjection. The auditory hallucinations Lucia experiences in her head can be linked to her reactions to the flute. Devia's further embodiment of Lucia incorporates holding her arms to the sides and the heavens as well as rocking her body from side to side.

At 4'37'' Devia holds her arms to the side on the word, "nozze" (marriage), where she turns in a circular movement and carries on singing the following line. Devia applies the musical term of "con forza" (with force) when she sings "Ah! Ah!" at 4'42'', runs to the chorus to house right and returns to centre stage. She gestures to the audience when calling Edgardo at 5'10''. When singing the cadenza from 5'10'' to 5'15'', she uses more *squillo* in the sound when going up to the high part of the phrase and returns to a warmer sound (incorporating more chest voice) when descending. Her vowels are open and clear. In doing so she creates a brightness of sound which could define her approximation happiness. The words she sings are "oh me felice" which translates to happiness.

I postulate that this brightness of sound approximates dissociation to a previous state when Edgardo sat with her at the fountain and brought Lucia happiness.

In the instrumental interlude at 5'20'' to 5'22'' Devia does a run to the house right with her arms to the side and starts singing at 5'24'', hugging herself. The words she sings are "oh gioja che si sente" (Oh the joy that I feel, but of which I don't speak). The dramatic meaning one can derive from her gestures is that of holding on to Edgardo. This could approximate a return to the physical persona in her dissociative state.

Devia performs an expressive cadenza from 5'32'' to 5'37'' on the word 'che', adding in extra notes resting on a top C5 and then descending the scale. She does a floating D4 from 5'42'' to 5'52'' and repeats the words "e non si dice" as Sutherland did at 5'55 to 6'02''. At 6'03'' to 6'08'' she moves centre stage and executes strong hand movements to the side on the first two pairs of introductory chords. She holds her arms to the heavens and moves in circular motion once more as if seeing the incense burning and the sacred torches in the heavens and all around her at the larghetto on the words "Ardon glíncensi".

Devia points to the chorus at 6'32 on the house left when showing where the minister is. She then reaches out her hand as she says the words "porgimi la destra" (give me your hand) at 6'44'' and goes on her knees as she sings of Lucia's happy day when repeating the words, "Oh lieto giorno!" (Oh, joyous day). All these movements can be

interpreted as approximations of escaping or dissociating into a different world where she and Edgardo join in a happy union.

At the beginning of the cavatina at 7' Devia starts singing on her knees with her hands open, floating the notes in a legato line. While singing legato, she particularly keeps the vowels bright and connected on the scales and melismas.[17] She closes her hands on the words "al fin sei mia" (at last you're mine) and crosses her chest. All the embellishments are sung while on her knees and while using her arms to gesture. She gets off her knees at the end of the Cavatina and still uses her arms, while her face has an expression of joy. One can in this approximation of Lucia interpret that she imagines seeing Edgardo and their life together. The *melismas* are performed on an "a" vowel from 7'27'' to 7'39''. In this bright *melisma*, Devia continues in her approximation of disassociation.

Her execution of the final cadenza is centre stage, where she holds her head and moves around all the time. She mostly stays with singing the traditional cadenza. At the pause, she adds in a sequence of 5ths where she has an interaction with the flute that moves in thirds below her. She sings a sustained E flat 6 at the end of the cadenza, with her hands lifted to the heavens. In the cadenza one gets a feeling of Lucia shielding herself from the world with her arms.

In the duet or interjection with the flute, Devia lifts her face to the sky, and one imagines that she perceives the flute sounds as coming from the heavens. The constant reference to the heavens could show that she acknowledges heavenly intervention in Lucia's plight. This heavenly look also relates to the conventional way of singing "mad scenes" in opera and can be noticeable with each soprano's rendition of the scene[18].

Devia's body movements are abrupt, and she dances in circles. She embodies the image of physically floating and at times rocks her body from side to side. In all these movements and sounds Devia approximates elements of dissociative personality disorder.

5.3 Emotion and intersubjectivity

As with persona, Devia's approximation shows dissociative personality disorder in the emotional and intersubjective engagements on stage. The circumstances created by the

[17] A group of notes sung to one syllable of text.
[18] I am indebted to an external examiner for this perspective.

chorus and fellow soloists influence the state of emotional and inter-subjective aspects on stage. In this section, I will discuss the chorus's participation in the scene.

From the beginning of the "mad scene" the chorus is placed on both sides of the stage with little light placed upon them. Their reaction to Lucia is slight and their presence is only noted at the chorus entrances in the music. Some light is shone on them during the cadenza at 10'24". Their reactions are static and minimalist and once again, the chorus is dressed in formal Scottish attire.

The stage is large, yet Devia remains mostly centre stage with limited movement to the back of the stage and to the sides. The emotion and inter-subjectivity of the chorus is detached in the first part of the "mad scene". The chorus shows more reaction in the second part of the scene.[19] Throughout this part of the scene the chorus is participatory. The chorus has pity on Lucia, but still has stoic expressions on their faces. Raimondo and Enrico are very accusatory in their dealings with her. In her approximation of Lucia, Devia looks lost between chorus and accusers.

At 2'58'' Devia's approximation shows dissociation in Lucia's personality as she starts the repeat of the cavatina. She flits from looking strong and in control to looking helpless when she thinks of Edgardo. She lifts her hand as if showing and walking to him and then suddenly gives up and looks pained. She moves across the stage as if floating and then sits on her knees as she repeats the theme of the cavatina at 3'36'' on the words: "Spargi d'amaro pianto" (You shed bitter tears). Her hands move from her face to the sides and at 4'19'' Devia is on her haunches and uses her arms as if flying. Her facial expression is of blissful anticipation as she sings Lucia's lines of how once she is in heaven; it will only be beautiful if Edgardo joins her. From 4'40'' to 4'47'' she sings her top notes lifting her hands and then brings them to her face with a smile. In this part it seems as if she is approximating a dreamlike state, which further speaks to Lucia's dissociative behaviour.

The chorus moves around and towards her on 4'48'' while singing their interjections and showing their discomfort with what is happening to Lucia. Their expressions vary from stillness in the face to worried looks, indicated by holding one side of the face. They are placed all over the stage with spaces in-between. This placement on stage with Enrico at

[19] https://youtu.be/iuObsp4OiCE (Il dolce suono (Lucia di Lammermoor) - Mariella Devia Part.2) - This is an excerpt of the second part of the 'Mad Scene ' as portrayed from the 1992 La Scala performance of Lucia di Lammermoor.

centre stage creates the tension in the action, as they display their worried expressions. At the end of the scene, when Lucia collapses, some of the chorus members rush to her aid to catch her when she falls. In this excerpt with Devia, the chorus moves from having a strained reaction to her in the scene to that of empathy. The emotional and inter-subjectivity of the chorus moved on a continuum from detached and broken to being involved and empathetic.

5.4 Reception

Devia's approximation of a dissociative identity disorder can be similarly read in the reception of her performance. According to Levine (1992), Devia's interpretation of the "mad scene" is of someone who is frantically running across the stage. He comments that "she runs left, runs right, falls down, gets up and opens her arms as if to implore and folds her arms over her chest crestfallen." His view on her interpretation of the "mad scene" is very mechanical, from an "old stock tradition with hand to heart movement". Another reviewer, Steane (2004) also mentions that her movements are "very conventional."

While these reviewers tend to be negative in their comments describing her movements, my reading of these statements is that Devia's use of frantic and stock movements makes use of stereotypical acting gestures to approximate metal illness[20].

Levine (1992) further remarks that Devia's "singing seldom varies from bright, and that the production is not memorable". The sound not moving from bright may refer to her use of the voice with a *squillo* sound on the "happy" phrases in the cadenzas. Steane (2004) mentions that Devia has a "more than usually ample supply of warmth and fullness in the middle register". According to Dalzon (2011), Devia "exhibits a warm, ample middle register, and exquisite tonal clarity in the upward range, as well as coloratura passages." One could infer that, by employing the two-tone qualities of very warm and *squillo*, she is vocally approximating the split in personality of the dissociative Lucia.

Dalzon (2011) sees Lucia as a "fragile, mentally unstable character" and regards Devia's portrayal as "credible with a unique dramatic shading". The dramatic shading and mental instability could be read as the variation between the "physically active" and the "dreamlike dissociative" personality Devia approximated in the role.

[20] I am indebted to an external examiner for this perspective.

Levine (1992) remarks that the chorus is kept in the shadows on either side of the stage, only muttering, with limited movement, which speaks to their emotional and inter-subjective connection to Lucia. He goes on to say that "the chorus-members look dead and walk like automatons, never changing their seemingly bored expressions". This could be their depiction of shock at the current events or could be connected to the emotional and inter-subjective reaction of the chorus of a break in communication and empathy towards Lucia. Steane (2004) also mentions the inaction of the chorus. He says that "they give the impression that they are not paid to act, and that the producer seems satisfied to get them into a straight line and keep them there." Their inaction once again possibly relates to the break in communication and pathos felt for Lucia.

Devia has the key abilities of the traditional coloratura soprano ("fluent passagework, a vast upward range, the incidental graces of trill and staccato, and, at the foundation of it all, an even line and beauty of tone"), according to Steane (2004). Her "pathos of the role" grows progressively, and the "mad scene's" characterisation has "tragic weight". Dalzon (2011) further sees that Devia refrains from taking risks in adding "trills, runs and cadenzas" like other bel canto artists and rather opts for what is written in the score. She therefore takes on a stereotypical and conventional approach to the "mad scene".

I perceive a parallel between this understanding of Devia keeping to tradition and the academic perspective of Smart (1992), who refers to the plot and music as the frame. She notes in this that the music limits Lucia, which relates to a feminist perspective on being silenced: "The vibrancy of the operatic heroine is partly due to the very presence of music, which adds a new dimension to her character, endowing her with the power and energy of voice. However, operatic representation also limits that power: all music is subject to restrictions since it must heed certain generic constraints to remain comprehensible". She concludes this notion that music can perhaps only offer complete escape or liberation when it is placed within the context of spoken language: (Smart 1992, 124).

5.5 Summary

In this chapter, I looked at the way Mariella Devia approximates the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor*. In the persona section of this chapter, I postulate that Devia's approach is that of approximating the portrayal of a character suffering from dissociative personality

disorder. She creates this persona on various levels by using her body and her voice in approximating dissociative states. When using her body, she varies from excessive movement to slow dreamlike gestures. In the use of her voice, she dissociates between a bright *squillo* sound and a warm, full voice. Reviewers picked up on a few aspects that were mentioned in the persona section of the writing. They make mention of her stock and frantic movement and her bright singing, as opposed to the warmth of the voice in other parts of her singing. The final observation was that Devia performed the music as written and did not stray from the score as other bel canto singers have done in the past.

Emotionally and inter-subjectively, Lucia is affected by the chorus moving from completely ignoring her to showing empathetic interest at the end of the "mad scene". The chorus went from having no interest in Lucia to becoming emotionally invested in her suffering. The Enrico and Raimondo characters in contrast abandon her. Their emotional and inter-subjective relationship towards Lucia is severed or broken.

It can be postulated that the reviewers, from within their own socio-cultural background, regard Devia's interpretation as a stereotypical depiction of madness and one can then derive that the reviewers might have their own modern take on the performance of the "mad scene".

In terms of the character study Devia did for this role, it can be postulated that in using the music she wanted to be different from other performers in that she didn't add any additional vocal fioritura to the "mad scene". Finally, the splitting of sound in *squillo* and warm, chest sound could have been intentional in her creating an approximation of the dissociative character.

CHAPTER SIX

LISETTE OROPESA'S PARANOID SCHIZOPHRENIC LUCIA

6.1 Introduction

Lisette Oropesa was born in 1983 in New Orleans, Louisiana, in the USA to Cuban parents. She attended Louisiana State University to study vocal performance. After her studies she was accepted into the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program and relocated to New York City, after winning the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. She has become a recognised artist for her generation since graduating from the artist development program in 2008. Her performances in the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor* include performances at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London in 2017, and El Teatro Real, Madrid, in 2018.

For this study, I analyse her performance of Lucia in the *Lucia di Lammermoor* production at El Teatro Real in Madrid. No specific date could be ascertained, except that the production was in 2018.

6.2 Persona

I argue that Lisette Oropesa's portrayal of the "mad scene" in *Lucia di Lammermoor* approximates to a character suffering from paranoid personality disorder, with a combination of schizophrenic tendencies. The approximation of paranoia lasts throughout the scene, but the approximation of schizophrenic behaviour appears in a form of hallucinatory, psychotic moments which appear toward the end of the scene. In her approximation Oropesa uses rapid eye movements. One denotes moments of Lucia constantly checking her environment, elements of hallucination and confusion of one person for another.

Among the essential characteristics of paranoid personality disorder "is a pattern of pervasive distrust and suspicion of others, such that their motives are interpreted as malicious" (DSM IV 1994, 634). Paranoid behaviour can also be described as "pervasive, suspiciousness, mistrust, preoccupation of loyalty of friends and others, finding others' behaviour as deliberately threatening or demeaning. These personalities remain hypervigilant, as if to lookout against any harm to be done to them" (Nevid et al 1991, 285). The presence of prominent delusions or auditory hallucinations in the setting of a relative

preservation of cognitive functioning and affect is defined as paranoid schizophrenia (DSM IV 1994, 287).

Oropesa starts the scene on a small stage set deeper on the main stage. Her body is partially covered in blood and her eyes frantically move from side to side. I argue that this behaviour approximates the first indication of paranoia.

The glass harmonica was the first instrument Donizetti prescribed to be used to accompany the soprano during Lucia's "mad scene".[21] The glass harmonica is positioned on stage. Lucia's face goes from startled to crying as she sings with the glass harmonica in accompaniment. Her gaze moves from being in her own world to being aware that another person is there.

Oropesa shows stillness in the first phrase: "Il dolce suono mi colpi di sua voce" (the sweet sound of your voice struck me) where it is noticeable that her expression is one of deep thought, as she sits on the side of the stage. At 0'39'' into the "mad scene" Oropesa is staring out in front of her. She floats[22] her voice on the phrase "me qui nel cor di-sce-sa" (that sweet voice that descends in my heart). This sudden flattening of movement and facial expression adds to the approximation and is symptomatic of schizophrenia.

After this, in her portrayal Oropesa changes her focus when singing Edgardo's name. It is as if Lucia sees him. Oropesa's actions flow when facing downstage, as if looking towards Edgardo in her mind's eye. In the phrase "ti son resa fuggita, io son da toui nemici" (yes to you I surrender, I have fled your enemies) in her portrayal she still stares into the

[21] The glass harmonica, also known as the glass armonica, glass harmonium, bowl organ, hydrocrystalophone, or simply the armonica or harmonica, is a type of musical instrument that uses a series of glass bowls or goblets graduated in size to produce musical tones by means of friction. (*Harper, Douglas. "harmonic". Online Etymology Dictionary., Liddell, Henry George; Scott, Robert; A Greek–English Lexicon at the Perseus Project.)*

'The armonica (or glass armonica) was invented by Benjamin Franklin in 1761 to simplify the playing of musical glasses. Franz Anton Mesmer purchased one of his instruments. Leopold and Wolfgang Mozart heard Mesmer play it, and Wolfgang was among several major composers (including Gluck, Beethoven, and Donizetti) who wrote compositions or parts for it. Nevertheless, the armonica quickly garnered a sinister reputation'. (Stanley Finger and David A. Gallo, 2004)

Finger and Gallo (2004, 207-235) explain this instrument's historic association with madness as follows: First, it was looked upon as a health hazard, the belief being that armonica players either went crazy, became physically ill, or even died from its unearthly sounds. Second, its music was used to promote images of madness, ghosts, and the crypt. And third, Mesmer used the instrument during his seances, ostensibly to promote healing by enhancing the flow of animal magnetism through the nerves. Although Franklin played the armonica and remained of sound mind throughout his own long life, he might have diminished the popularity of his own instrument by being extremely critical of Mesmer and his theories in his letters and in his committee's formal report of 1784 to the King of France.

[22] "To float one's voice in operatic singing: It is found in lyric and *leggiero (coloratura)* sopranos, occasionally mezzos, and consists of the innate ability to lighten the voice for quiet high notes and suspend them in spell-binding *pianissimo".* (Howlett, 2008) Posted on January 6, 2008.

abyss and sees Edgardo. As Oropesa sings the coloratura part on the words: “da tuoi ne mi”, in her portrayal Lucia’s mind sinks deeper into paranoia.

In this approximation Lucia’s behaviour varies from stealth to constantly looking around the room, which I read as signs of paranoia. Oropesa gives the voice a dark colour on the words “un gelo mi serpiggia nel sen” (a wind chills my breast) and her body shivers while she is still looking up and around the room. Her body trembles on “trema ogni fibra” (every fibre tremble). In the next section with “vacilla il pie” (my feet are unsteady) Oropesa leaps from the stage and almost hurts her foot, while acting this unsteady footing. She then sits on her haunches as she asks Edgardo to sit at the fountain with her. Here, the approximation of this movement is childlike and could speak to Lucia’s inner child that needs comfort in that moment. Oropesa’s voice is anchored, and she has a good mix of chiaroscuro[23] in the voice at this stage. By using the voice in this manner, it may be argued that she shows Lucia’s confidence in her belief that Edgardo is with her. In her approximation her hallucination of him is clear. I argue that this is a sign of her approximation of oncoming schizophrenic tendencies in the scene.

At the Allegro Vivace, at 3’11’’, in her portrayal Oropesa starts searching with her eyes and stands up like a marionette. Here her portrayal approximates anxiety as Lucia appears to see the ghost at the fountain again and sees that it makes a separation between her and Edgardo with “Óhime sorgi il tremendo fantasma, e ne separa! Ohime Edgardo! Ah!” (Alas the terrible ghost arises, and it separates us, Alas, Alas, Edgardo). Here Oropesa uses more *squillo* in the higher register of the voice as if to draw attention to the shock and fear that Lucia feels. At 3’37’’ Lucia again sings of the ghost that she sees that separates her from Edgardo.

In the recitative that follows, Lucia asks Edgardo to take shelter at the foot of the altar. Oropesa’s voice in this part is warm and well balanced. When she goes to the sustained F2, she makes use of a *messa di voce*[24] effect. At the end of the “Qui ricovriamo, Edgardo, a pie dell’ara” (Here take shelter Edgardo at the foot of the altar) she sings an embellishment, ending an octave above the written notes. The embellishment as a

[23] *Chiaroscuro* (Italian for “light-dark”) is part of bel canto, an originally Italian classical singing technique in which a brilliant sound referred to as *squillo* is coupled with a dark timbre called *scuro*.
[24] The singing of a gradual crescendo and decrescendo on a long-sustained tone – used of a vocal technique originating in 18th century bel canto (Merriam Webster online dictionary).

coloratura passage is possibly an addition to the approximation which I interpreted as Lucia slipping further into a paranoid schizophrenic state.

In the Larghetto section at 4'26'' the glass harmonica takes the lead. This instrument is known for depicting madness and influencing the listener to madness. Lucia is the listener here and it can be interpreted that her psychological state is influenced by this instrument. In her depiction, Oropesa sings the words "Sparsa e di rose" (scattered are the roses) and in her approximation paranoidly looks around, even when singing of hearing the celestial harmonies of Lucia's supposed wedding to Edgardo at 4'42''. She floats the voice and places it forward. In the following Andante section, at 5'07'', there is a constant reference back to hearing the wedding hymn and the preparation for the wedding and the happiness Lucia feels. Oropesa looks about constantly in her portrayal to see Edgardo in her own mind's eye. At 5'59'' Oropesa sings the high cadenza and employs more *squillo* in the voice.

The glass harmonica forms a duet with her singing. With employing more *squillo* it seems as if the voice is imitating the glass harmonica. Due to this, I make the assumption that in this approximation the Lucia character is transported into an approximation of a paranoid schizophrenic state. At 6'11'' Oropesa uses some characteristics of bel canto singing such as *chiaroscuro, messa di voce*, the use of embellishments and *fioritura* to the top C on 6'30'', before she descends the scale. This aids the approximation signifying Lucia's further descent into madness.

Oropesa's use of florid embellishments compares to the feminist theories of Susan McClary in which McClary (1991, 92) argues that Lucia's increasing "extravagant virtuosity" is a "manifestation" of her "madness". In Oropesa's portrayal her eyes move everywhere, which emphasises the paranoia Lucia is experiencing. On 7'20'' she looks up. Oropesa repeats this expression at the start of the Maestoso and Larghetto where Lucia is seeing incense burning as well as the sacred torches for the start of the wedding.

The glass harmonica is lively in its accompaniment and especially stands out in the parts where the voice is silent. The interesting observation is that Oropesa in a way copies and matches the sound of the glass harmonica as it moves up and down in pitch. This can be noticed especially in the higher register of both voice and glass harmonica. The lower parts of the voice are warm, but when ascending, the voice becomes thin and strained as is the sound of the glass harmonica in that range.

As this instrument is associated with madness, it is understandable that Oropesa uses this strained sound to embody the paranoid Lucia. In my experience as coloratura soprano, I posit that she simply takes the weight of the voice away and makes a very focused tone when ascending, which to the listener might sound strained and small. I posit Oropesa's depiction of paranoia is the creation of a purposefully stressed sound for this Lucia.

From 8'55'' Lucia declares her love to Edgardo and says that she will share everything pleasing and gracious with him. Oropesa portrays Lucia as completely delusional, as she moves back to the corpse of her betrothed, whom she has killed. She holds and rocks the corpse of Arturo back and forth. In her approximation her hallucination of seeing Edgardo becomes real as Lucia is now holding someone. I argue that Lucia's psychotic episode reaches its height in this section. At 9'48'' she says that life for them will be laughter. At the slight repetition of the cavatina at 9'49'' the music becomes increasingly florid with coloratura passages up to 10'58'', while Lucia is holding the corpse. In her approximation Oropesa uses frantic eye movements and looks up to the heavens. I postulate that in approximation the sense of paranoia settles deeper with every coloratura passage. The four bars of the cadenza follow.

Oropesa throws off the corpse and starts the cadenza by lying on her back holding his hand. The cadenza follows from 11'21'' through to 13'40''. In terms of sound quality, the glass harmonica and voice once again match each other during the imitation sections of the cadenza. Oropesa and the glass harmonica copy each other in dynamics in ascending and descending passages of music. The sound is strained and stressed in the higher register, and in this portrayal approximates an embodiment of schizophrenic paranoia. The *fioritura* and *staccato* sounds are made in conjunction with the sound of the glass harmonica and when performing the *tremolo* before the final E flat 6, Oropesa's voice once again vibrates synchronously with the glass harmonica. The final top note before the choir and other soloists join in reads as a focused, strained, and stressed-out tone coming from a stressed-out, possibly paranoid schizophrenic Lucia.

As Oropesa's approximation of a paranoid, schizophrenic state occurred during the first part of this scene, it perpetuates throughout the rest of the scene when the chorus and other soloists join in. One should then investigate how her relationship on stage with the choir and other soloists plays out. Considering this, it would be important to study the

emotional and intersubjective relationship between Lucia and the other singers on stage during the “mad scene”.

6.3 Emotion and intersubjectivity

By looking at the emotional and intersubjective participation of the chorus and soloists in the “mad scene”, it is important to mention the placement of the chorus in comparison to Lucia.

As the scene opens[25] Lucia’s brother, Enrico, is hunched over a chair with the chorus placed behind him. They start singing with him, with startled expressions and begin to move to the sides of the stage like statues or still forms. Their faces are expressionless, and they act as if completely cut off from the scene.

During the “mad scene”, as Oropesa prepares to move to the front of the stage, the choir opens a pathway for her to walk through and they move back and to the sides. It seems as if they want to move off stage. The group that moved stage right hides behind the glass harmonica. As previously mentioned, the glass harmonica contributes to giving an eerie feeling.

By 1’45’’ the chorus is completely off stage. As Oropesa jumps off the stage at 2’13’’, Enrico lifts his head from where he collapsed on the chair. On her words “Óhime, fantasma”, as Lucia sees the ghost (3’22’’), Enrico jumps up and runs to stage left and to the wall where he hides his head. At 7’19’’ the chorus re-enters with chairs, where they sit, statue-like. There is a complete collapse of empathetic feeling for Lucia from the other vocalists on stage at this point, both emotionally and interpersonally. At 7’40’’ on the words “porgi mi la destra” (in giving the right hand) Enrico moves closer to her and takes her hand. At this point Lucia is fully imagining that she sees Edgardo. Enrico holds her hand but looks away with his back to the audience. In this gesture it seems there is some investment of Enrico to the plight of Lucia, with a small amount of interpersonal contact.

As the choir interjects at 8’51’’, Lucia runs towards the corpse of Arturo and releases Enrico’s hand. He looks back at her in disdain and then to his hand, which is also now covered in blood. At this point there is a breakdown of emotional connection with Lucia.

[25] https://youtu.be/6De3Xjr7rBc An excerpt of the first part of the ‘Mad Scene’ as taken from the 2018 *Lucia di Lammermoor* performance at the Teatro Real in Madrid with Lisette Oropesa in the title role. This part starts from when the chorus participates. The time indications are presented and taken from this excerpt.

The chorus are now configured as an audience and watch Lucia as if she is a performer on stage. Through this action of the choir, one has the idea of distance and being removed from the situation. They are simply staring out in front of them and take no notice of Lucia as she moves back onto the small backstage and next to the corpse of Arturo. At 13'54'' Lucia has sung her top note, which ends the first part of the scene and the chorus remain seated as audience members and clap in slow motion with no expression on their faces.

At this point I use a different video posting on YouTube as this second part of the "mad scene" was only available in the full recording of the Teatro Réal's production. The time measures refer to this recording. At 2h15'37", in the second part[26] of the "mad scene", the audience and the chorus stop clapping, and the scene continues with the entrance of Raimondo. He had been seated as part of the chorus which served as an onstage audience. He moves forward and places a chair in front of the choir and sits and sings the trio with Lucia and Enrico, all the while not looking at her. In this gesture he makes his presence known and slowly shows his remorse for Lucia's situation and his contribution to it.

At 2h18'18" Raimondo stands up and positions himself centre stage, looking at the audience with a worried expression while singing of Lucia's plight. At 2h19'16" he turns back to her and puts his head on her lap as he shows his empathy. He looks at her and holds her as she sings "spargi d'amaro pianto" (you shed bitter tears). When she descends from the stage, he hugs her intimately as she sings of heaven, and that it will only be beautiful if Edgardo joins her. Her eyes are especially big in this part as one imagines that she might be seeing ghosts. In Oropesa's portrayal it would appear that Lucia's hallucinations are increasing towards the end of the scene.

At 2h20'54" Lucia rolls on the floor, Raimondo follows her and holds his hand over her as if to rid her of bad spirits. His attitude towards Lucia seems authentic, which weighs positively to his emotional and inter-subjectivity towards her. The chorus starts rocking from side to side with the ladies' dresses noticeable in this movement. It reminds one of when you are nervous or feeling uncomfortable or unstable, contributing to the mad atmosphere of the scene. Oropesa moves towards the chorus as they make this movement and starts singing the final repeat of the cavatina. They stop moving as she starts singing and stare out ahead of them again.

[26] https://youtu.be/iTh1LxFwefM

At 2h22’59” the chorus interjects once again, still looking straight forward with Raimondo joining them. Lucia moves amongst the choir looking for some form of contact or empathy, but none comes her way. She then climbs onto a chair and sings the final top note, lifting her arms to the sky. The lights over the chorus dim out completely and one only sees the silhouette of Lucia as she lifts her hands to the heavens. The emotional and intersubjective break with the chorus is final and Lucia finds herself alone. Her brother, and her adviser and mentor Raimondo have left her too, which emphasises a feeling of complete desertion.

In this *Lucia di Lammermoor* production, the director showed the relationship between Lucia and her community in the way the chorus and soloists were directed to deal with mental illness on stage. The chorus varies in levels of detachment to Lucia’s plight. In the first part they only have expressionless faces, which escalates into a scene where they are onlookers and completely removed from her. The final scene in the rocking motion of their dresses, emphasises Lucia’s paranoia and their disinterest in her. They follow a continuum of rejection towards her. Edgardo and Raimondo show some empathy towards the end of the scene, but then both desert her. Raimondo however shows more emotional and inter-subjective contact with her towards the end, but in the end leaves her completely.

6.4 Reception

To conclude my performativity study of Oropesa, I examine the reception of her performance. As it is not possible to obtain a perspective from the audience, I have studied what reviewers wrote about her performance. Zahr (2019) concludes that Oropesa constructed this part through careful analysis of prior performers, resulting in a distinct interpretation of the role. It is common practice for opera singers (like method actors) to prepare roles by doing an extensive character analysis.

In the reception of Lucia a few themes stand out from the comments of reviewers. There are those who admire the audience’s reaction at the end of the “mad scene” and those who think that there is some dramatic sound missing in Oropesa’s voice and find the audience’s standing ovation excessive. According to Zahr (2019) “the audience lost their collective mind every night after the ‘Mad Scene’.” He sees that tears were welling up as the soprano waited for the crowd to subside while still staying in character. She later remarked to him that she was holding back the tears and that her eyes were stinging. In this moment

one is reminded of Abbate's findings (Abbate 2004, 535) when the tenor (*Heppner in Meistersinger)* was trying not to break persona in the role.

Irurzun (2018) regards Oropesa as a much lighter soprano, remarkable and even outstanding, but still a light soprano. In this he would be referring to her Fach, which is a light lyrical coloratura soprano as opposed to being a dramatic coloratura soprano, such as Joan Sutherland. He remarks that "in the 'Mad Scene', where Lucia twice refers to the ghost, she must show that her voice has power down below, which is missing with Oropesa". Because of this lack of drama in the voice he postulates that it is not warranted for the crowd to come to their feet and give her a standing ovation.

The reviewers all admire her dramatic expression and her skills as an excellent actress for the "mad scene". Although the reviewers had varied ideas about the success of her portrayal, the audience showed that she was successful. In this instance it is reasonable to conclude that the reviewers might have their own cultural conventions from which they asses the performance[27]. The audience jumped to their feet to give her an ovation and her dramatic expression of Lucia solicited a strong reaction from them. My reading of this audience reaction is that they might have been emotionally more invested than the reviewers. I would postulate that Oropesa intentionally used her voice in this manner, because it was on these occasions of "light singing" that she was imitating the glass harmonica to create the madness of the scene.

Other reviewers have focused on the excessive bloodiness of the scene. Eisenbeier (2018) remarks that "her Mad Scene is bloodier than most". For him the combination with the glass harmonica accompaniment contributes to a more haunting scene, opposed to the use of the flute. For Irurzun (2019) the "mad scene" develops with Arturo's corpse in the background, which Lucia approaches at the end. He also claims that "someone threw too much red paint everywhere," plus the fact that such a large amount of blood could not have come from a single victim. The reference to the excessive blood in the scene relates to the excessive lengths that have been taken to make the scene exaggerated.

Oropesa uses this bloody scene to show Lucia's complete delusional behaviour. The fact that she flits between holding the corpse and discarding it, can also be read as a contributing factor in this approximation of the paranoid nature of Lucia's character of not

[27] I am indebted to an external examiner for this perspective.

trusting herself and being completely fearful. This all seems to speak to a type of excess, which is reflected in the audience reaction, but which can be read in the excess of Oropesa's approximation of paranoia.

To further provide an explanation for the excess in the scene, one may consider the director chosen to produce the piece. David Alden, who is a prolific theatre and film activist director, is known for his post-modernist operatic productions. Activist directors or artists are known for their expression of rage at the human condition. In this case it seems that the rage was expressed in the excessiveness of the bloody scene. One could argue that he brings the message to the audience of how intense this madness of Lucia was, by showing the brutality she committed.

One can relate this to the previous theme of the excessive bloodiness and excessiveness of the scene. Eisenbeiss (2018) mentions his "use of the monochromatic and sparse sets, which work wonders in setting the asphyxiating tone". He also notices the prudish Victorian black and white costumes which for him "accentuate the oppressive atmosphere of church, family, discipline and rigor". This speaks to a certain socio-cultural setting. For Eisenbeiss (2018), the activist director met a Madrid cast that agrees with his ideas. The cast was young, followed direction in detail, would seize upon fight scenes, crash in through windows, jump down from tables, sing on their knees, roll on the floor, spit, grope, and roar, if need be. In this, the total commitment of Oropesa to the character could be seen as she sat with the corpse at the end of the "Mad Scene", with blood splattered all over. I interpret the excessive direction in the scene with blood and holding a dead body, as Oropesa successfully approximating the atmosphere for Lucia's paranoid schizophrenic behaviour.

In my studies and experience of working with the higher register of the voice, it is often associated with setting intense emotions free. For the purpose of this study, one can mention that these notes might come out in a warm and free sound or in a strained sound. With Oropesa it seems that she created a strained human being in the use of her voice with her expression of Lucia. As her approximations of emotions in this "mad scene" is highly strained, one could interpret that her use of the voice in this way could have been intentional.

The noticeable theme from reviewers is the comments on her voice in the high register. Her *fioritura* and *coloratura* come across as being highly admired, but it's the

colour of the voice in the high register that most felt necessary to comment upon. Remiro (2018) feels that despite giving all the high Es, her instrument tends to sound more tense in the higher register. Despite this he says that she is magnetic, her phrasing is subtle, and her trills are perfect with an astonishing *fiato* (breath control) in the long arcs. Irurzun (2018) says that in the "mad scene", where Lucia twice refers to the ghost, she has to show that her voice has power down below, which is not the case with Oropesa. He feels that her very top notes are too metallic and reduced in size. The reduction in size of her voice might refer to a thin and strained sound of the voice in the top range. As these reviewers notice these characteristics of her voice, one must also consider the likelihood that Oropesa set it to be done so intentionally. The strained, cold feeling one gets from these high notes could be related to Lucia's emotional outpourings and relate back to her created persona for Lucia, in which she imitates the glass harmonica.

6.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have argued that Oropesa's performance of Lucia approximates to a persona who suffers from paranoid schizophrenic behaviour. In this, I use Oropesa as a vehicle to frame this psychological interpretation which is standard practice in character analysis in opera performance. This is my interpretation, and I am not ascribing these ideas to her, but I interpret what she does and what it looks like to me.

Through certain vocal and dramatic techniques that she employs, I read that she developed a specific persona for Lucia. She uses her eyes and facial expressions to bring this to the fore. One of the key factors I observe in her approximation of paranoia is when she rolls her eyes frantically from side to side. Her movement varies, from keeping her body very still to uncomfortably scanning the room. To show heightened tension in the voice, she uses the *squillo* part of her voice in the higher register and *coloratura* passages. In this, I interpret that it shows how Lucia's psyche dips deeper into madness and paranoia.

In terms of sound, Oropesa's Lucia especially develops a close relationship with the glass harmonica. The sound of the instrument brings out startled and crying facial expressions to her. The glass harmonica is known for inducing madness and influencing its listener. By employing the *squillo* part of her voice, Oropesa starts imitating the glass harmonica in the high register. She floats the voice on occasion and uses bel canto principles such as *messa di voce* and *fioritura* in the *coloratura* sections to further depict madness.

The approximation of a paranoid schizophrenic atmosphere continues and may be noted in the emotional and inter-subjective elements on stage. The chorus, her brother, Enrico and her teacher and adviser, Raimondo, all participate in creating an atmosphere conducive to the depiction of emotional and inter-subjective elements of the paranoid state. On occasion during the scene, they all show interest in her, and then discard her to fend for herself. This creates such heightened fear in Lucia, which I read as intensifying her state of a paranoid personality disorder.

I also interpret that her psychological state can be read in the reception when reviewers focus on the following issues. In the first instance, they focus on the excessive bloodiness of the scene, which I interpret as contributing to the excessive paranoid behaviour that is depicted. In the second instance, they refer to the way she uses her voice. The reviewers are very positive about her dramatic skills but question her vocal ability in the higher range of her voice. As these reviewers notice these characteristics of her voice, one must also consider that this was an intentional vocal interpretation and not merely one that arose out of the limitations of Oropesa's voice.

The strained, cold, feeling one gets from these high notes can be related to emotional outpourings of a paranoid schizophrenic Lucia, who is imitating an instrument known in history and folklore to also lead people to madness.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

7.1 General summary

7.1.1 Persona

At first, when looking at these forms of behaviour I thought that the three depictions of the Mad Scene would not overlap, but, on the contrary, I found them to overlap greatly. I ascribe this to acting conventions of mental illness in which directors might have overlapping ideas. In my findings, I discovered that the three sopranos depicted approximations of possibly different forms of mental breakdown in their depictions of a persona for Lucia. I based these arguments on research done into psychological disorders using a diagnostic description approach. I have compared these findings to definitions of mental breakdown and have come across the following:

In the performance of Joan Sutherland, I noticed notions of the "happy madwoman", which I approximated to manic behaviour. I therefore assessed her performance in this performativity model as showing mania in her representation of Lucia's mental breakdown. In the performance of Mariella Devia, I assessed her dramatic expression and movements on stage to approximate to dissociative personality disorder for Lucia. And in the performance of Lisette Oropesa, I found her representation of madness to approximate to notions of paranoia coupled with schizophrenia.

The drama and music were deployed in the following ways to portray this representation:

1.) Joan Sutherland portrays the symptoms of a manic Lucia. She approximates the signs of an elated mood and excitement. She is constantly smiling throughout the scene and moves her arms frantically to the side. Another symptom is that of constantly looking to the heavens. Further her frantic movement, use of her hands and constant flit of emotions between shock and elated smiles are read as her approximation of manic behaviour. In this I found that Sutherland approximated signs of mania, going to hypomania.

The mania was read in the way in which she constantly approximated excitement. Hypomania was ascribed to the frantic ways in how she moved on stage, whilst approximating hearing a voice in her head, represented by the flute. In terms of the musical

representation, her reactions to the flute show how the musical representation of madness can be used to enhance the soprano's performance. Sutherland also shows varied approximated forms of her manic state when reacting to previously featured melodic material of the ghost at the fountain, Lucia's duet with Edgardo and her wedding, which is a juxtaposition of the two weddings with Arturo and Lucia's imagined wedding with Edgardo.

Sutherland, like the other sopranos constantly showed gazes at the heavens in Lucia's reactions to hallucinations depicted in her 'seeing' the wedding minister and her marriage to Edgardo as well as hearing a celestial choir. These gazes to the heavens can be ascribed to the conventional acting skills applied when portraying an approximation of madness in opera.

2.) The way Mariella Devia enacted her Persona was akin to that of someone with dissociative personality disorder. Devia used her body, facial expressions, and her voice to enact her madness in the scene. She constantly used her hands and arms by lifting them to the skies, as well as waving them around during the scene. Her body movements were abrupt, moving from side to side in a non-rhythmical manner, and a little bit out of control as she danced in circles moving from one side of the stage to the other. This could be read as floating in an approximation of a dreamlike state which shows a form of dissociation. She embodies the image of physically floating and at times rocks her body from side to side. Her reaction to the melodic material of the flute also speaks of dancelike motions.

Devia portrayed her Lucia with an inward gaze and sunken eyes, which I interpreted as contributing to the view of her approximating Lucia going into a dream state and being removed from reality. Her unique use of her voice between *squillo* and warm, chest tones I read as an indicator of an approximation of dissociation in personality. This movement between vocal characteristics and body movement was interpreted as another portrayal of a dissociative personality. She fell to her knees at times and looked heavenward, cowering away from the ghost that so terrifies Lucia, and protecting her face with her hands. In this part of her performance, I noticed the conventional acting style of madness as with Sutherland.

3.) Lisette Oropesa enacted her Lucia persona as approximating that of a paranoid personality disorder with schizophrenic tendencies. In her portrayal her eyes were constantly moving from side to side with moments of stealth in between. I postulate that an approximation of paranoia settles deeper with every *coloratura* passage that she sings.

Paranoia is an overstressed state and I read that Oropesa displays this in the tone of her voice. Lucia's delusions of seeing Edgardo come across strongly when Oropesa uses her voice in this dramatic way. Another factor that makes Oropesa's interpretation of Lucia appear completely delusional, and schizophrenic is when she moves back to the "corpse" of Arturo and starts rocking it whilst singing of Lucia's love for Edgardo. This could be read as the pinnacle in her interpretation of the "mad scene".

In terms of sound quality, in Oropesa's interpretation the glass harmonica and voice match each other during the imitation sections of Lucia's cadenza. It is significant that the glass harmonica was used as accompaniment throughout the opera. Oropesa appears to be replicating the sound of the glass harmonica during the "mad scene". This instrument is known through history and folklore for depicting madness and making the listener conducive to madness. She seems to be imitating the instrument mostly in the higher register, where the sound of the glass harmonica is thin and eerie.

Oropesa and the glass harmonica copy each other in dynamics in ascending and descending passages of music. The sound is strained and stressed in the higher register, which reads to me as the embodied approximation of schizophrenic paranoia. She makes fioritura and staccato sounds in conjunction with the sound of the glass harmonica. Her mirroring and imitation of this instrument is notable throughout her performance. Dramatically and musically she also used her eyes and voice quality to great effect throughout the scene.

7.1.2 Emotion and intersubjectivity

This aspect of performativity speaks to the emotional cohesion or connection between performers on stage and how subjective performances are intertwined to form a cohesive intersubjective relationship between the performers on stage. Various ways of representation were showed in how directors wanted these scenes to play out. This directly relates to the sociocultural attitude of a specific society to madness.

1.) In Sutherland's Lucia the direction of the Chorus goes from starting out of being fearful of Lucia, moving to pitying her and eventually resorting to distancing themselves from her. The emotional and intersubjective aspects of their reactions move from empathetic to completely broken down.

2.) In the excerpt with Devia, the chorus moves from having a strained reaction to Lucia in the scene to that of empathy. The emotional and intersubjectivity of the chorus changed on a continuum from being detached and broken towards being involved and empathetic. As I read Devia approximating the dissociative personality for Lucia, the chorus's reaction shows me that the perception in that time for such a disorder could be that of fascination and pity. In other words, the Lucia they knew at the beginning of the opera, was not the same as at the end and they could have felt a deep compassion for her. This speaks to their sense of communal sensibility.

3.) In the Oropesa performance the chorus varies in levels of detachment to Lucia's plight. In the first part they only have expressionless faces, which escalates into a scene where they are onlookers and completely removed from her. Their reactions are of clapping in slow motion, rocking from side to side and staring blankly in front of them. I interpret that the chorus exacerbates Lucia's disconnection with reality. Their emotional and intersubjective reaction to Lucia is completely broken down throughout the scene. Their ways of distancing themselves from the scene shows how society might treat a person with mental illness, which is that of being completely removed and ignored.

The final scene in the rocking motion of their dresses they show disinterest and follow a continuum of rejection towards her. As one investigates Oropesa's emotional and intersubjective aspects, it is noticeable that Enrico and Raimondo were very sympathetic to Lucia at the start of the "mad scene". As the scene progresses, they seem to give up on her and leave her in their way of engagement.

In these findings I read a correlation with society's regressive stigma for mentally ill people. Phelan et al (2000) did a study investigating the following: 'Public conceptions of mental illness in 1950 and 1996: What is mental illness and is it to be feared?'. It was found that the mentally ill were regarded by the public as more of a threat than they were in preceding decades. According to a different study by Rossler (2016), crimes and acts of violence performed by people with these disorders attract far more attention than crimes committed by those people thought to be in good mental health, because of sensationalistic media reporting. This speaks to the prejudicial perception of people with mental illnesses as posing threats to society more in later years than in earlier decades.

7.1.3 Reception

Reception records may show how choices made during the performance are perceived in relation to the sociocultural and historical setting of the performance.[28] This also speaks to the socio-cultural stance of the receptor. In this study, I have used the commentary of various reviewers to gain an impression of how the audiences perceived the studied performances. Most reviewers had unique and seemingly limited ways of expressing their views on the performances, which in terms of reception studies relates to their own encultured perception on opera and specifically on what they expect from Lucia.

1.) For Joan Sutherland, her approximation of manic episodes was noticed in her way of using the voice floridly with embellishments and a mellifluous tone, which I interpreted to be like manic patients with accelerated speech. Another noteworthy observation is her voice matching the flute throughout the scene, as well as the audience's reaction throughout and after the "mad scene". Henahan (1982) describes the audience leaping from their seats mid-scene and at the end of the "mad scene", because her voice matched the flute. Sutherland sang over the flute in her embellishments, according to Thomas (2020) and he feels the flute was barely noticeable next to the vocal *fioritura*. Both make a point about the audience members who leap to their feet. Their observation speaks of their own socio-cultural understanding of opera conventions in which such a reaction is perceived as a triumph in a performance. One could postulate that Sutherland's interpretation of Lucia is that of extreme optimism and enhanced energy which had an influence on the audience as well.

2.) In the case of Mariella Devia, the reviewers commented on a few aspects that were mentioned in the persona section of the writing. Her stock and frenzied motions are mentioned. Another aspect of singing is the bright (*squillo*) singing, which contrasts with the warmth of the voice in other sections of the "mad scene". I interpret this as a deliberate way to approximate psychological disassociation using her voice. The final point was that she performed the piece exactly as written, not deviating from the score as other bel canto singers have done in the past. I relate this to Devia's use of stereotypical acting gestures to portray mental illness. But it also has to do with how certain singers seldomly deviate from the score and stick to the convention of following the composer meticulously. This speaks to

[28] I am indebted to an external examiner for this perspective.

encultured conventions understood by the reviewers and those opera singers. By making this observation, these reviewers have become accustomed to florid improvisations which are known and expected for Lucia's "mad scene".

3.) Reviewers comment on Lisette Oropesa's performance, which emphasises excessive bloodiness and the unique way in which she uses her voice. Her theatrical abilities are praised, but her vocal talent in the higher range of the voice is questioned. They speak of a thin strained sound. As these reviews point out these aspects of her voice, I postulate that she employed this vocal interpretation on purpose. The strained, icy feeling one gets from these high notes could be understood as portraying Lucia's paranoid, delusional, emotional outpourings. In this one perceives how artists may choose to wield socially conditioned ways of listening (and conventional measures of technical proficiency) as aesthetic tools with which to add nuance to their characters[29].

7.2 Concluding interpretation.

The knowledge I gained in this study was achieved through reading the different ways in which three sopranos performed the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor*. The whole point of taking such a performative reading route was to closely investigate the vocal and dramatic techniques the three sopranos use to portray the "mad scene". Other stakeholders like directors and the audiences were factored into my interpretations. The audiences were represented by reviewers or critics.

In using the performativity model of Margaret Kartomi (2014) (which focuses on persona, emotion and intersubjectivity, and reception), I discussed the different ways in which the three sopranos approximated madness in their depictions of Lucia in the "mad scene" from *Lucia di Lammermoor*. One way in which the research differs from other scholars is in the comparison of three different sopranos' performances through detailed audio-visual analysis. Similar detailed performance analyses have been conducted for performers in other roles or instrument classes, but not for singers performing the role of Lucia[30].

In creating such distinct personae for their own Lucia's, the three sopranos have contrasting and similar ways in enacting the "mad scene". Sutherland enacts an

[29] I am indebted to an external examiner for this perspective.
[30] I am indebted to an external examiner for this perspective.

approximation of mania through her extreme happiness in her elated mood. Devia enacts an approximation of dissociative personality disorder through showing a dreamlike state and body movements. She also uses her voice uniquely in sometimes splitting it between *squillo* sound and warm, dark sounds. Both Sutherland and Devia use heavenward gazes as ways of depicting madness. For Oropesa, her approximation of a paranoid schizophrenic Lucia is displayed by eye moments and using her voice in a distinct way when she imitates the glass harmonica. Just like Devia, I read Oropesa as using the voice in an unusual or even an aesthetically unpleasing way (for some critics), to depict madness.

The common denominator in all three sopranos' "mad scenes" is that the directors of these scenes show how the mental breakdown of Lucia gets ignored at certain times in the scene. For Sutherland it is at the end of the scene, for Devia it is at the beginning of the scene and for Oropesa it is throughout. I posit that this emphasises the success of the scene and how the different interpreters can choose to portray madness.

This thesis has been a journey of exploration between the disciplines of musicology and psychology. In reading the performances of the sopranos I compared it to some of the work of theorists of performativity studies. John Austin proposed a three- level performativity methodology in which he speaks of the actual words spoken, what the speaker is trying to achieve in that space and the effect the speaker has on the audience or receiver of the message. This relates to what the sopranos set out to achieve. Each of them used the same musical score, then added embellishments and bel canto techniques, as well as acting techniques, so that they could create the different personas for their unique interpretations of Lucia.

Further, they elicited reactions from their audiences – responses that were recorded by reviewers of their performances. This relates to how Kartomi envisioned a performance. She speaks of a four-pronged approach, which includes the music performed, the execution of the music and the factors affecting it. This would thus include the effects of the performers on the audience, the audience on the performers and the contribution of all the stakeholders to the success of the event (Kartomi 2014, 189 – 208).

There are similarities in Kartomi's writing and that of Austin, in that musical and dramatic interpretations of Lucia's "mad scene", the execution of the music and the factors affecting it all speak to the different psychoses of the personas that were created by the

sopranos. The contribution of all stakeholders is related to the differentiated reactions of the chorus to each persona. The orchestra and conductor were also important stakeholders in each case. In some instances, stakeholders such as directors contributed, and were mentioned, as well as make-up artists who contributed to the bloody scenes on stage. (The limitations of my research made it impossible to also comment in depth on the directors, lighting directors, conductors, and make-up artists.)

Judith Butler, in her statement of "gender theory" as something naturalised and woven into the fabric of society and reality, speaks to the feminine madness that is addressed in this opera (Butler 1988, 519). Through reading the "mad scene" in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, it was noted that "female malady" was emphasised with coloratura scenes and bel canto embellishments, as well as the fact that this role is interpreted by a light lyrical or dramatic coloratura soprano. A further comment on Butler (Davidson, 2014) is in her naming of "the performative" – the meaning of which is an act that communicates and creates an identity. In this regard, I read that the sopranos created personas that could be seen as female identities for the "mad scene".

Davidson speaks of an embodiment in music that incorporates the sociocultural environments in which performances exist (2014, 179). In this way, I find that each soprano embodied the role of Lucia by giving her a different psychosis. In terms of psychological expression, I found in looking at different eras of performing mental illness, that there is a great expansion as to what audiences are exposed to.

In 1982, with the Sutherland recording, the soprano approximated mania but with limited forms of expression. The voice was the strongest component at play. In 1992, with the Devia performance, the expansion and use of the body and voice grew in forms of characterisation. In 2018, with the Oropesa performance, the world of psychology has become more well-known and accessible to portray.

According to Abbate (2004, 534), music may have "multiple different meanings, which do not demand specificity", a type of ambiguity in which the same music may be employed in which different emotions and dynamics might be used to interpret it. Similarly, the three sopranos in this study applied the same music and found different personas to interpret it. A further important point to mention here would be Abbate's concept of coercive mysticism, which is the idea of a drastic moment with no place to hide. Such a moment occurred in the performance of Lisette Oropesa when she unexpectedly needed to

wait to continue singing during the scene. Abbate would call it a moment of 'heroism', when the audience unexpectedly refused to stop clapping in the middle of the scene.

Although the above theorists agree on most areas of performativity research, the only limitations found were their means of finding a workable way of analysing such performances. I found that the performativity model of Kartomi (2014) rendered a good basis to investigate the interpretations and performative states of the three sopranos. The limitations I found with this model were that I could not apply all concepts and terms that make up the model, and thus thought it appropriate to choose only three concepts, namely "persona", "emotion and intersubjectivity" and "reception".

In summarising my findings, I learned that one can decide which psychotic or emotional state one would like to portray in depicting a "mad scene" like the one in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. In reading what these three sopranos interpreted into the role and specifically into the "mad scene", I found that various parts of the body can be used to incline the audience to feel a certain way.

The sopranos specifically demonstrated that using coloratura, fioritura and embellishment techniques can depict an approximation into a descent into madness. Facial expressions, such as overtly smiling, shocked looks and stark expressions may show various emotional states which could be read as various states of psychosis. Splitting the voice into the *squillo* and warm parts of the bel canto chiaroscuro technique is another way of controlling how the voice can show an array of emotional states. Furthermore, the voice can be used as an imitator of instruments such as the flute or the glass harmonica to depict an eerie or overly excitable state. Dramatically the body can be used to show frantic movements, in a manic way, as well as dancelike movements to convey a dreamlike state or dissociation. In using the body in rocking from side to side one may further portray an abnormal emotional state.

The role of Lucia will likely be performed for a long time to come. This research contributes to the musicological discourse surrounding this character and the opera in which she features. But it also contributes to performativity studies, in that it foregrounds subjective interpretation as a means to build psychological character studies – something that is indispensable to any musical performer's work. Lucia is one of the greatest characters in operatic history. Understanding the creative possibilities of interpreting and portraying

her story is necessary and important work – but also ongoing, in that each new performer will bring a new creative madness to the role.

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Lucia di Lammermoor: dramma tragico in due parti, by Donizetti, Gaetano; Cammarano, Salvatore; Bruson, Renato; Devia, Mariella; La Scola, Vincenzo; Berti,Marco; Colombara, Carlo; Sovilla, Floriana; Gavazzi, Ernesto; Ranzani, Stefano; Scott, Walter; Teatro alla Scala DVD video, {Italian}: La Scala House of Opera, 1992. https://youtu.be/7NMVUXhzy9U and https://youtu.be/iuObsp4OiCE

Lucia di Lammermoor, by Gaetano Donizetti, performed live in 2018 at the Teatro Real, sung by Lisette Oropesa, Javier Camarena, Artur Rucinski, Roberto Tagliavini, Yijie Shi, Marina Pinchuk, Alejandro del Cerro, directed by David Alden, Includes the Chorus Teatro Real and Orchestra Teatro Real, Recorded by Opera Vision, Published17 Nov 2020

Mad Scene Excerpts for Oropesa

https://youtu.be/VtUcTREkLFo and https://youtu.be/6De3Xjr7rBc

Full Opera featuring Oropesa: https://youtu.be/iTh1LxFwefM

APPENDIX

Tables of terms

Table 1

Terms	Definitions	Sources
Fiato	Breath control	Collins online Dictionary
Staccato	Music performed with each note sharply detached or separated from the others.	Oxford online dictionary
Melisma	A group of notes sung to one syllable of text or 'an expressive vocal phrase or passage consisting of several notes sung to one syllable'	Collins online dictionary
Come scritto	As is written	RiversoContext https://context.reverso.net/translation/italian-english/come+scritto
Libretto	The text of an opera or other long vocal work.	Oxford online dictionary
Cavatina	In opera the cavatina is an aria, generally of brilliant character, sung in one or two sections without repeats.	Britannica https://www.britannica.com/art/cavatina
Fioritura	An embellishment of a melody, especially as improvised by an operatic singer.	Oxford online dictionary
Coloratura	Elaborate ornamentation of a vocal melody, especially in operatic singing. This can also refer to a soprano skilled in coloratura singing.	Oxford online dictionary
Cadenza	A virtuoso solo passage inserted into a movement in a concerto or other musical work, typically near the end.	Oxford online dictionary
Tremolo	A wavering effect in a musical tone, produced either by rapid reiteration of a note, by rapid repeated slight variation in the pitch of a note, or by sounding two notes of slightly different pitches to produce prominent overtones.	Oxford online dictionary

Table 2

Terms	Definitions	Sources
Bel Canto	(It.: 'beautiful singing') Generally understood, the term 'bel canto' refers to the Italian vocal style of the 18th and early 19th centuries, the qualities of which include perfect legato production throughout the range, the use of a light tone in the higher registers and agile and	Grove Music Online – Owen Jander, revised by Ellen T. Harris.

	flexible delivery. More narrowly, it is sometimes applied exclusively to Italian opera of the time of Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti. In either case, 'bel canto' is usually set in opposition to the development of a weightier, more powerful and speech-inflected style associated with German opera and Wagner in particular. Wagner himself decried the Italian singing model that was concerned merely with 'whether that G or A♭ will come out roundly' and proposed a German school of singing that would draw 'the spiritually energetic and profoundly passionate into the orbit of its matchless Expression'	
Chiaroscuro	(Italian for "light-dark") is part of bel canto, an originally Italian classical singing technique in which a brilliant sound referred to as squillo is coupled with a dark timbre called scuro. "The combination of the bright 'ping' and the dark roundness creates expressive colours associated with the old Italian school of singing, relevant in past centuries and still relevant for modern-day classical singers."	Orchard, 2019, 44.
Squillo	"You achieve what is called squillo della voice, or the 'ring of the voice', which is a bright, brilliant sound. Squillo is created by finding the correct space for Italian's bright vowels, your natural resonators and a solid appoggio – diaphragm support."	Marisa Balistreri - Musical U.
Messa di Voce	the singing of a gradual crescendo and decrescendo on a long-sustained tone —used of a vocal technique originating in 18th century bel canto	Merriam Webster online dictionary.
Glass Harmonica	The glass harmonica, also known as the glass armonica, glass harmonium, bowl organ, hydrocrystalophone, or simply the armonica or harmonica, is a type of musical instrument that uses a series of glass bowls or goblets graduated in size to produce musical tones by means of friction.	Harper, Douglas. "harmonic". Online Etymology Dictionary., Liddell, Henry George; Scott, Robert; A Greek–English Lexicon at the Perseus Project.
Fach	The Fach (pl. Fächer) system is a method of classifying singers, primarily opera singers, by the range, weight, and colour of their voices. If a singer signed a contract with a company to sing a certain Fach in the company, that singer would be responsible for singing all roles for the company that	Nina Scott-Stoddart, 2021.

	were designated for that Fach. For that reason, Fach is more specific than the voice part and can be a better way of classifying voices.	
Mania	Mental illness that is marked by periods of great excitement or euphoria, delusions, and overactivity. Many people suffering from mania do not think anything is wrong. An excessive enthusiasm or desire; an obsession.	Oxford dictionary online.
Schizoaffective disorder	The specific DSM-5 criteria for schizoaffective disorder are as follows: A. An uninterrupted duration of illness during which there is a major mood episode (manic or depressive) in addition to criterion A for schizophrenia; the major depressive episode must include depressed mood. Criterion A for schizophrenia is as follows: Two or more of the following presentations, each present for a significant amount of time during a 1-month period (or less if successfully treated). At least one of these must be from the first three below. Delusions Hallucinations Disorganized speech (e.g., frequent derailment or incoherence). Grossly disorganized or catatonic behaviour. Negative symptoms (i.e. diminished emotional expression or avolition.)	Tom Joshua P. Wy; Abdolreza Saadabadi.
Dissociative Personality Disorder	"Dissociative disorders involve a separation, or dissociation, of some part of a person's consciousness, memory, or identity."	(Sue et al. 2006, 171)
Paranoid Schizophrenic Behaviour	Paranoid behaviour can be described as "pervasive, suspiciousness, mistrust, preoccupation of loyalty of friends and others, finding others' behaviour as deliberately threatening or demeaning. These personalities remain hypervigilant, as if to lookout against any harm to be done to them."	(Nevid et al. 1991, 285)