

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think? Complementary Rhetorical Devices in *Romeo and Juliet* (4.5) and Byrd's *O that most rare breast*

Jeremy L. Smith

In the aftermath of Romeo and Juliet's tragic double suicide, the ruling Prince of Verona presides over his subjects' collective mourning activities at the site of a future memorial.¹ As an approach to death this denouement stands in sharp contrast to a much more ambiguous and chaotic earlier scene, when a select group of characters first confront the idea of Juliet's demise. Specifically, it is at the very onset of the ostensibly happy (but the audience knows to be actually wretched) day Juliet is to marry the noble County (Count) Paris when he, her parents, her Nurse, a Friar, and, most oddly, a set of Musicians, initially discover and react to her apparent but simulated death (4.5). The purpose of this article is to relate this troubling and strangely populated scene to a song of William Byrd's, *O that most rare breast*.²

Byrd's song also confronts with special musical resonances (although offstage in the real world) the difficult loss of a publically mourned figure, Sir Philip Sidney. Even though Shakespeare did not name Byrd's song in the play, it was as though by imitating Byrd's compositional techniques that he expressed the "uncomfortable [dramatic] time" (4.5.60) of these so-called "false lamentations." And, while recognizing that the evidence provided here to suggest that Byrd's work served as a model for the playwright remains entirely circumstantial, a comparison of the two works along those lines helps uncover how each

¹ William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, in *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. David Bevington, 7th ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2014), 5.3.321-26. Subsequent references to the works of Shakespeare will be taken from this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text by act, scene, and line.

² William Byrd's *O that most rare breast* appears in his *Psalmes, Sonets, & songs of sadnes and pietie* (London, 1588), no. 35; for a modern edition see Byrd, *Psalmes, Sonets, and Songs (1588)*, ed. Jeremy Smith, in *The Byrd Edition*, gen. ed., Philip Brett, vol. 12 (London: Stainer & Bell, 2004), 158-70.

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

explored specific, interdisciplinary, forms of rhetoric, and, in Shakespeare's case, perhaps not independently. This scene has puzzled dramatists for a long time. Often, they simply cut it. In recent years, however, efforts to stage it have relied on the musical aspect to redeem it. For such directors the comparison offered here should be of special value. Indeed, for those willing to follow this article's arguments closely, a specific direction will emerge: that the Musicians should be rehearsing Byrd's dirge on stage at the close of the fourth act.³

Byrd and Shakespeare would not ordinarily be thought of as members of a common social circle, but they actually had significant personal and professional connections, including, most notably, a number that relate to the book trade. In 1575 the émigré Huguenot printer Thomas Vautrollier produced Byrd's first musical edition, *Cantiones, quae ab argumento sacrae vocatur*, which the composer co-authored with his prominent elder colleague, Thomas Tallis, and dedicated to their queen.⁴ Vautrollier's most successful apprentice and successor, in turn, was the Stratford-born printer, Richard Field, who produced Shakespeare's first two published works of literature. Because of the Stratford connection, Shakespeareans have often speculated that their subject was familiar with Vautrollier and his

³ Byrd's song could then be formally performed in full at the end of the play as "exit music," to adopt a term from the band Radiohead. Although the latter staging option is not defended in this article, it is worth noting that there is a long performance tradition of ending the entire play with a dirge of some kind, see Charles Haywood, "William Boyce's 'Solemn Dirge' in Garrick's Romeo and Juliet Production of 1750," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 11/2 (Spring 1960), 173-87. For so generously working with me on these interdisciplinary staging ideas, very special thanks are due to Shirley Carnahan, members of the Boulder Shakespeare Oratorio Society, Elizabeth Farr, and members of the University of Colorado Early Music Ensemble. For their encouragement, comments, and incisive critiques of earlier versions of this study, I also wish warmly to thank Linda Austern, Graeme Boone, Hannibal Hamlin, Sarah Neville, the general editor of the present journal, and all the anonymous reviewers.

⁴ See John Milsom (ed.), *William Byrd & Thomas Tallis: Cantiones sacrae 1575*, Early English Church Music, 56 (London: Stainer & Bell, 2014).

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

printed work. A number have suggested it was actually at Vautrollier's establishment where the playwright first took up residence in London.⁵

In a rich and diverse career, Vautrollier produced only two music editions. Thus it is difficult to know if Shakespeare ever noticed them. However, Byrd's subsequent printer, Thomas East, whose wife was Field's grand aunt, took over the music printing trade at the same time that Field took over Vautrollier's and thus Shakespeare may have been aware of the events that led to a notable increase in music production. East, who basically devoted his press to Byrd and his field, would produce a robust set of music editions at the time Shakespeare was writing *Romeo and Juliet*.⁶ The most popular of these was Byrd's first solo edition, the *Psalmes, sonets & songs*.

Even were Shakespeare not familiar with East's press, he was likely to have encountered Byrd's *Psalmes*, as it went into an extraordinary three editions in a single year, of 1588.⁷ It was in this collection that Byrd placed last and highlighted his *O that most rare breast*, taking special care to note in a prominent header that it concerned the death of Sidney, an event that was commemorated in London with the era's most attended, and expensive, funeral on record.⁸

⁵ On Vautrollier, Field, and East, cf. Carol Chillington Rutter, "Schoolfriend, Publisher, and Printer Richard Field," in *The Shakespeare Circle: An Alternative Biography*, ed. Paul Edmondson and Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 161-73 and Jeremy L. Smith, *Thomas East and Music Publishing in Renaissance England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 146-47.

⁶ Smith, *Thomas East*, 55-95. On the conjectural dates for the conception of the play, which range from 1591 to 1596, see Andrew Gurr, "The Date and the Expected Venue of *Romeo and Juliet*," *Shakespeare Survey* 49 (1996), 15-25.

⁷ Smith, *Thomas East*, 49-55.

⁸ Sander Bos, Marianne Lange-Meyes, and Jeanine Six, "Sidney's Funeral Portrayed," in *Sir Philip Sidney: 1586 and the Creation of a Legend*, ed. Jan Adrianus van Dorsten, Dominic Baker-Smith, and Arthur F. Kinney (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 38-61.

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

Most importantly among Byrd and Shakespeare's book trade connections was the figure Henry Carey, 1st Baron Hunsdon, Lord Chamberlain and Master of the Revels. Carey was Byrd's dedicatee for his next set of 1589, his *Songs of sundrie natures*. In his dedication Byrd made clear that "through the honorable office which you exercise about her Maiesties person ... both my self (for my place of service) & all other her highness Musitions are to be commanded, and under your high authoritie to be protected."⁹ As a member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men theatrical troupe, Shakespeare too worked under Carey's protection. As patrons, Carey and his son George could not have been more important to Shakespeare during the mid-1590s when he conceived and staged *Romeo and Juliet*.¹⁰

Before moving further into this argument, based necessarily on circumstantial evidence, the following needs here to be emphasized: because Shakespeare never mentioned Byrd or his song, even if there was indeed some form of modeling involved, as this article hopes to suggest, it would not have been created to delight an entire appreciative audience. Rather, it would almost have had to have been designed as an "in joke": the kind of cryptic allusion, rather common in the era, that would register only with the cognoscenti, in this case the musically literate.

As Ross Duffin and many others have amply shown, Shakespeare made generous references to specific musical works in his plays, often surely as a way to engage a very general audience who could be counted on to know the most popular music of the day.¹¹ Never shy of specialist vocabulary, however, Shakespeare also delved into the intricacies, as well as some of the obvious features, of music pedagogy, balladry, genres, Boethian concepts of music's universality, musico-political metaphors of "concord," etc. throughout his plays,

⁹ William Byrd, *Songs of Sundrie natures* (London, 1589), [A]1v.

¹⁰ Arthur Gurr, *The Shakespeare Company, 1594-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1-10.

¹¹ Ross W. Duffin, *Shakespeare's Songbook*, foreword by Stephen Orgel (New York: Norton, 2004).

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

sometimes focusing in on one arcane idea about music, such as *musica speculativa*, in a particular scene, or act, or even arguably an entire play.¹² *Romeo and Juliet*, this article hopes to establish, is where the playwright showed himself most willing to use words and concepts that a musically literate composer and performer would comprehend better than others and therefore feel privileged, as an audience member, to hear spoken on stage (or read in a play text).

In addition to the word “note” (which not surprisingly appears often in the plays), there are unique instances of “crotchet” (quarter-note in American usage) and “minim” (half-note in American usage), as well as “beat” (also in *Henry IV* and *King Lear*), “rest” (also in *Hamlet*) and “sharp” (also in *Troilus and Cressida*) among the thirty-six musical terms identified in *Romeo and Juliet*.¹³ As these terms all fall under the general rubric of “notation,” it is fitting that the play is also the only one of Shakespeare’s to include the word “pricksong,” the early modern term for notated art song that often refers to the whole of polyphonic musical composition.¹⁴

¹² See *inter alia* David Lindley, *Shakespeare and Music*, Arden Critical Companions (London: Thompson Learning, 2006); Joseph, M. Ortiz, *Broken Harmony: Shakespeare and the Politics of Music* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); and Chantal Schütz, “Love’s Labour’s Music: The Song-contest of the Cuckoo and the Owl,” *Actes des congrès de la Société française Shakespeare* [online], 32 (2015), <http://shakespeare.revues.org/3256>, accessed, 20 March 2017. See also John H. Long, *Shakespeare’s Use of Music*, 2 vols (Miami: University of Florida Press, 1955, 1961). Other funeral songs that are interspersed throughout Shakespeare’s plays would make for an interesting further study, including one in *Cymbeline* (4.2.258-82) that contains elements that could well be compared to the scene in *Romeo and Juliet* 4.5. I wish to thank an anonymous reviewer for calling the *Cymbeline* example to my attention. I have also found inviting parallels in the fascinating way death, “silenced music,” and Catholic traditions were evoked in *Hamlet*, see Maurice J. Quinlan’s “Shakespeare and the Catholic Burial Services,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 5/3 (Summer 1954), 303-06.

¹³ See Christopher R. Wilson and Michela Calore, *Music in Shakespeare: A Dictionary* (London and New York: Continuum, 2005), sv. “Index: Shakespearean Works.”

¹⁴ Wilson and Calore, *Music in Shakespeare*, sv. “pricksong.”

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

Exceptional too, if viewed in a certain way, is Byrd's *O that most rare breast*, at least to the extent that the composer seemed determined to make his musical points observable and relevant to someone outside his field, in this case, for example, to a literary master like Shakespeare. Whereas composers generally did not concern themselves with the way a notated setting would appear on the page to any other than a printer or a performer, Byrd made sure that the most rhetorically important of the musical effects on the texts he created are obviously and precisely represented (see Figure 1). As the subject of his song was yet another great figure of the English literary renaissance, Sidney, it was fitting of Byrd to adopt this writerly approach in this case. Byrd was surely well aware that Sidney was not only the most admired poet of his time, but he was also the one who had thought most deeply about music and literature in combination.¹⁵

One of literary history's more attractive and thought-provoking speculations is that *Romeo and Juliet* stands as Shakespeare's first and fullest staged response to Sidney's poetic achievement.¹⁶ That Byrd, England's "greatest and most famous composer," also reflected on Sidney's achievement brings out a possibility that the composer stood as something of a mediating figure between Sidney and Shakespeare.¹⁷ The following close readings of a musically-enriched scene and a literary-minded song, in combination, are designed to argue for such a connection even as they provide historically grounded subtexts for the Musician

¹⁵ See Alexander Gavin, "The Musical Sidneys," *John Donne Journal* 25 (2006), 65-105 and John Stevens, "Sir Philip Sidney and 'Versified music': Melodies for Courtly Songs," in *The Well Enchanting Skill: Music, Poetry and Drama in the Culture of the Renaissance*, ed. John Caldwell, et. al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 153-69.

¹⁶ See Alan Hager, *Understanding Romeo and Juliet: A Student Casebook to Issues, Sources, and Historical Documents* (Westport CT and London: Greenwood, 1999), 93-115.

¹⁷ Joseph Kerman, *The Elizabethan Madrigal: A Comparative Study* (New York: American Musicological Society, 1962), 10.

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

characters of two highly criticized scenes of one of Shakespeare's most famous plays, to which we now return.

A Conceited Tragedie and an Unliterary Composer

As she approaches her apparently dead charge, Nurse captures the transitional moment of Act 4 scene 5, moving swiftly from sexual banter appropriate for a wedding day to expressions of grief so extreme that Lady Capulet, the first to hear them, calls them “noise” (4.5.17).¹⁸ Juliet's parents, along with Paris, the disappointed suitor, then join in with four full-blown six-line speeches so packed with clamorous “O”s and “woes” that critics have thereafter also deplored their rhetorical excessiveness (4.5.41-64, see Table 1). Jarring by all accounts, it would have been fitting for a musician, trained to avoid unwanted sounds, to make some hand gesture to bring it all to a close. Paris brings Musicians along from his court for the nuptials (4.4.22-23), so some are represented on stage.¹⁹ It is left, though, to Friar Lawrence—the one responsible for the potion that made Juliet appear dead in the first place—to exclaim “Peace ho, for shame” and cast their “cries” as “confusions” in an attempt to allay the outbursts (4.5.65-66).

¹⁸ On noise in Shakespeare see Kenneth Gross, *Shakespeare's Noise* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001) and Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001). As far as dramatic dissonance is concerned, Nurse's repetition of vocative Os at this turning point would likely have uncomfortably recalled her (and other characters') earlier puns on O as a vaginal orifice, as in her “rise and stand. Why should you fall into so deep an O?” (3.3.89), see Gordon Williams, *Shakespeare's Sexual Language: A Glossary* (London: Continuum, 2006), 221.

¹⁹ It is a matter of debate whether Musicians are then on stage. Richard Hosley asserts that the Musicians enter Juliet's bedroom not with Paris (4.5.33) in time for the “false lamentations” scene, but rather with Peter (4.5.95) at the front of the stage, for the burlesque that ends the act, see “A Stage Direction in *Romeo and Juliet*,” *Times Literary Supplement*, 13 June 1952, 13. Most editors, however, place them within the lamentations scene, a staging option that is confirmed by directions in other authoritative sources and supported by the text, see, for example, Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. Bevington (4.5.33).

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

The Friar stops the “noise” but his ploy does not end the act. Instead, the same Musicians who had no lines to speak before now take over the stage with the servant Peter to engage in clownish repartee, getting the chance, at last, to react to the idea of Juliet’s death and the “uncomfortable time” of extreme rhetoric just experienced, ... or at least they *would* get the chance, if these scenes weren’t so often cut.²⁰ Criticism of the scenes involving Musicians in 4.5 ranges from Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s mid-19th century view that it provides “a strong warning to minor dramatists not to introduce at one time many characters agitated by the same circumstances” to a late-20th century claim by Robin Headlam Wells that it epitomizes a distinctly Shakespearean brand of “Neo-Petrarchan kitsch.”²¹

Literary historians, however, have also shown how those tropes, figures, and other classically derived rhetorical devices often dismissed as conceits can inform the structure of an early modern work.²² Patricia Parker, for example, claims Shakespeare’s plots with “changelings, exchangeable twins, disguises, usurpation, illegitimacy,” constitute “virtual

²⁰ See Jay L. Halio, “*Romeo and Juliet* in Performance,” in *Shakespeare in Performance: A Collection of Essays*, ed. Frank Occhiogrosso (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003), 61.

²¹ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Notes and Lectures Upon Shakespeare and Some of the Old Poets*, ed. H. N. Coleridge, 2 vols (London: William Pickering, 1849), 1:160; Robin Headlam Wells, “Neo-Petrarchan Kitsch in *Romeo and Juliet*,” *Modern Language Review* 93/4 (October 1998), 917. Charles B. Lower viewed the scene as so semantically trivial (a “hyperbolic hubbub”) that it made better sense dramatically, he claimed, for all the characters to say their lines simultaneously in “comic ... cacophony,” “*Romeo and Juliet*, IV.v: A Stage Direction and Purposeful Comedy,” *Shakespeare Studies* 8 (1975), 178. Thomas Moisan effectively deconstructed the scene to reveal its “ironic ... force” and “subversive ... ramification[s]” in “Rhetoric and the Rehearsal of Death: The ‘Lamentations’ Scene in *Romeo and Juliet*,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 34/4 (Winter 1983), 90.

²² “Conceit” as a “fanciful, ingenious, or witty expression, metaphor, turn of thought, etc.; a stylistic affectation ... ingenious artistic device or concept” (*Oxford English Dictionary*, sv. “conceit,” 10b) “does not feature in the rhetoric of logic textbooks of the early modern period” and when it is defined and discussed, in the mid-17th century, it became nearly synonymous with the catachresis, in its “far-flung” aspect, see Katrin Ettenhuber, “Comparisons are Odious? Revisiting the Metaphysical Conceit in Donne,” *Review of English Studies* 62 (2011), 399-400.

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

mises-en-scène of the activity of rhetorical tropes” and, in recent studies of many of the same early modern devices that appear in the era’s poetry, Gavin Alexander, Janel Mueller, and David Lindley, among others, find parallel structures in music of the era and also measure and assess the rhetorical effect of precisely defined rhythms in the cases when certain verse was rendered into song.²³ Overall, because *Romeo and Juliet* was first advertised as a “conceited tragedy” it does seem likely that this scene in particular suffers or (conversely) benefits dramaturgically from Shakespeare’s use of a device.²⁴ As Thomas Moison, Robert O. Evans, and Jill L. Levenson have shown, in these lines there is a virtual panoply of specific and definable rhetorical figures, including epizeusis, onedismus, pleonasmus, and synoeciosi, etc., which run at a rate of nearly one per couplet.²⁵

In 1588, when Byrd published *O that most rare breast*, a stirring “funerall” tribute to “that honorable Gentleman Syr Phillip Sidney, Knight (d. 1586),” he brought forth a work that has hardly been treated thereafter as “noise,” even though its verse features plenty of vocative Os and a concentrated, perhaps excessive, rhetoric. Praised for the “purely musical” qualities of his songs, Byrd tends, ironically, to be chided for his “lack” of conceits— his apparently stubborn refusal to react musically to the clever devices planted within the poems

²³ Patricia A. Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property* (London and New York: Methuen, 1987), 39. See essays by Mueller, Alexander and others in *Renaissance Figures of Speech*, ed. Sylvia Adamson, Gavin Alexander and Katrin Ettenhuber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) and David Lindley, “Words for Music, Perhaps,” in *The Lyric Poem: Formulations and Transformation*, ed. Marion Thain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

²⁴ William Shakespeare, *An Excellent conceited Tragedie of Romeo and Iuliet* (London, 1597), [A]1r.

²⁵ Robert O. Evans, *The Osier’s Cage: Rhetorical Devices in Romeo & Juliet* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1966), 63; Jill Levenson, “*Romeo and Juliet*: The Places of Invention,” *Shakespeare Survey* 49 (1996), 49. Moison, “Rhetoric and the Rehearsal,” 392, remarks, “throughout *Romeo and Juliet* Juliet’s death is ‘confronted’ ... by being worked into various rhetorical figures.”

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

he sets.²⁶ And yet *O that most rare breast* contains an interdisciplinary gesture that stands in a precisely reciprocal relationship to Shakespeare's scenes featuring musicians. For hidden within the verse Byrd set, in its original version, was the name of the poet Edward Dyer, who elsewhere alluded to himself with the conceit of a pun on his own name, reflecting one of his and Sidney's shared interests in semi-cryptic identification through the literary device of paronomasia.²⁷ The following analysis will suggest that Shakespeare and Byrd crisscrossed respective disciplines in this way for the sake of a rhetorical kind of imitation, specifically in order to apply and embody in their works two modern devices derived from ancient models, namely catachresis (necessary abuse) in Shakespeare's case, and eristic imitation (to surpass one's model) in Byrd's.²⁸

²⁶ See, for example, David Brown, "William Byrd's 1588 Volume," *Music & Letters* 38/4 (October 1957), 372: "Byrd has little interest in the expression of details of the text. He is not 'literary minded,' and purely musical values always guide his inspiration"; H. K. Andrews, *The Technique of Byrd's Vocal Polyphony* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 264: "[Byrd's] tendency [is] to force some poetic structure into a musical mold[, which] sometimes produces extraordinarily inept word setting"; Bruce Pattison, *Music and Poetry of the English Renaissance*, 2nd ed. (London: Methuen, 1970), 86: "Byrd is a very unliterary musician. His inspiration is entirely musical." Philip Brett aptly responded to the critical tone as well as some of the misleading aspects of these restrictively binary comments in "Word Setting in the Songs of Byrd," in *William Byrd and His Contemporaries: Essays and a Monograph*, ed. Joseph Kerman and Davitt Moroney (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 106.

²⁷ See Marcy L. North, "Anonymity's Revelations in 'The Arte of English Poesie,'" *Studies in English Literature* 39/1 (Winter 1999), 1-18 and Judith Dundas, "A Light and Illuding Form?: Sidney's Use of Paronomasia," *The Modern Language Review* 92/2 (April 1997), 273-81. When he included them in his 1588 and 1589 volumes, Byrd was the first to publish a set of poems that used Sidney's own method of cryptically identifying his muse, Penelope Rich, via paronomasia (as "rich" in two conflicting ways), see John Milsom, "Byrd, Sidney, and the Art of Melting," *Early Music* 31/3 (August 2003), 437-48.

²⁸ On the catachresis see Ettenhuber, "Comparisons are Odious," 395-413 (whose references to its use in the early modern era surpass the *Oxford English Dictionary*); Patricia Parker, "Metaphor and Catachresis," in *The Ends of Rhetoric: History, Theory, Practice*, ed. John Bender and David E. Wellbery (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 60-73; and Lisa Freinkel, *Reading Shakespeare's Will: The Theology of Figure from Augustine to the Sonnets* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 160-67. On eristic imitation see George Pigman III, "Versions of

Solemn hymns to sullen dirges change

Why are Musicians present in the “false lamentations” scene? The answer probably lies in what Shakespeare discovered in his main source of the play, Arthur Brooke’s *The Tragical History of Romeus and Iuliet*. Although Brooke did not place musicians into the story at this point in his narrative poem, he did metaphorically mention two musical genres, a [wedding] “Hymene [hymn]” and [funeral] “Dyrge.”²⁹ Since Shakespeare adopted this rhetorical device of Brooke’s it follows that if he wished to expand on the metaphor he discovered in his source, he might bring actual musicians to the scene, especially if their presence there could provide him with an opportunity to create a “virtual *mise-en-scène* of the activity [or embodiment] of [a] rhetorical trope.”

Although they arrived at the Capulets that day prepared to perform wedding music, what the Musicians witness in 4.5 suggests they will soon need to furnish music for a funeral instead. Thus they function, as do the Gravediggers in *Hamlet*, as distanced and slightly callous professionals confronting the matter of death.³⁰ It is this simple but dramatically vital realization, normal surely for any working musician, that provides the hitherto unnoticed

Imitation in the Renaissance,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 33/1 (Spring 1980), 1-32; Bartolomeo Ricci, *De imitatione libri tres* ... (Paris, 1557), 43v; and, for a rich study on musical examples, David J. Burn, “‘Nam erit haec quoque laus eorum’: Imitation, Competition and the ‘L’homme armé’ Tradition,” *Revue de Musicologie* 87 (2001), 249-87.

²⁹ Arthur Brooke, *The Tragical History of Romeus and Iuliet* (London, 1563; rpt. 1567, 1587), “And now the wedding weedes for mourning weedes they change / And Hymene into a Dyrge, alas it seemeth straunge,” li. 2708-09. I wish to extend special thanks to an anonymous reviewer for calling my attention to this crucial line in Shakespeare’s source.

³⁰ See Maurice Hunt, “Hamlet, the Gravedigger, and Indecorous Decorum,” *College Literature* 11/2 (Spring 1984), 141-50.

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

subtext for the scenes that end Act 4: that here musicians, engaged for a wedding ceremony, discover the unexpected need to perform music for Juliet's memorial.³¹

The Musicians, then, are there to embody and expand on a conceit Shakespeare found in Brooke. To make this clear in the play, Shakespeare used the literary form that music and plays often share, namely verse. Such a possibility has occurred to a number of literary critics over the years, although the verse *type* they settle on, which musicologists tend to discuss in terms of *genre*, has varied significantly. The discerning critic Harry Levin, for example, has been applauded for briefly comparing the four outcries to an "operatic quartet."³² Richard Flatter claims, "what we hear is a four-part madrigal ... a remarkable portrait of Italian[s] ... wailing in an unrestrained manner."³³ Theories such as these have given rise to effective staging solutions as they also show the extent to which music itself has long seemed somehow vital to the scene.³⁴ This article seeks to add to this successful staging tradition only greater precision about what the genres involved were likely to have been, as there are two specifically mentioned by Brooke and Shakespeare. As to the latter, after the

³¹ Harry Levin effectively describes the Musicians as "hiringlings," "Form and Formality in *Romeo and Juliet*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 11/1 (Winter 1960), 11.

³² Levin, "Form and Formality," 10.

³³ Richard Flatter, *Shakespeare's Producing Hand: A Study of His Marks of Expression to be Found in the First Folio* (New York: Norton, 1948), 69.

³⁴ For endorsements of the operatic quartet metaphor see Moison, "Rhetoric and the Rehearsal," 394 and Richard David, *Shakespeare in the Theater* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 113, who commends the Royal Shakespeare Company's musically-influenced staging in 1973. Giorgio Melchiori discusses opera and madrigal models for the scene (but does not mention Levin or Flatter) in "The Music of Words. From Madrigal to Drama and Beyond: Shakespeare Foreshadowing an Operatic Technique," in *Italian Culture in Early Modern English Drama: Rewriting, Remaking, Refashioning*, ed. Michele Marrapodi (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 241-50. Melchiori was wise to choose the word "foreshadowing" in the title of his study. In the 1590s opera was arguably yet to be "invented" on Italian soil, see Claude V. Palisca, *The Florentine Camerata: Studies and Documentary Translations* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989).

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

knowing friar calms everyone down, Capulet is the first to agree to “turn ... our instruments to melancholy bells ... [o]ur solemn *hymns* to sullen *dirges* change” (4.5.88, italics added).

In most discussions of the hymns of Shakespeare’s time and thereafter they are almost invariably thought to be, if not explicitly described as, strophic, where each verse consists of a series of stanzas so uniform in metrical structure that they may all be sung successively to the same music.³⁵ Not all hymns were strophic, but for Shakespeare to mention the word “hymn” as he imitates strophic verse, as we shall soon discover he did, would seem sufficient to suggest that he believed that that specific trait was something he could effectively use to signal the specific musical kind or verse type.

O that most rare breast, as it happens, is a “dirge” and, as far as terminology is concerned, dirges are quite a different matter. Although “derived from the ... opening antiphon of the Latin funeral liturgy,” by Shakespeare’s time the term “dirge” was “general[ly]... used for any song or lament in the vernacular sung at a funeral, particularly the funeral procession or burial itself.”³⁶ Capulet’s line is cited in dictionaries as exemplifying Shakespeare’s use of the term in this “general” sense and Byrd’s *O that most rare breast* fits the definition to a tee.

It is important to distinguish the “dirge” from the “elegy” and other kinds of memorial song. Thanks in no small part to Byrd’s efforts, there would be a notable vogue in musical elegies for important figures in the late 1580s onward, many of which went to print. These works definitely concern death, but they were not necessarily, and probably were in

³⁵ Stuart Curran aptly describes the strophic verse type as “construed as a series of like stanzas suited by their uniformity to a repeated musical setting” and casts this as the first “distinguishing attribute ... of a hymn,” *Poetic Form and British Romanticism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 58. In Wilson and Calore, *Music in Shakespeare*, s.v “hymn,” the authors link the hymn in Shakespeare to the musically noted psalms in meter, many of which were indeed strophic.

³⁶ Wilson and Calore, *Music in Shakespeare*, s.v “dirge.”

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

fact not, “dirges,” because they did not serve the specific function of being sung at a funeral (or burial). Remarkably, Byrd’s *O that most rare*, together with the song he placed alongside it in the edition, are the *only* art songs in print in the late-Elizabethan era that provide any published evidence to assure anyone that they were specifically designed as a work intended for a burial per se. As they alone contained a specific tag announcing they were intended for a “funerall,” technically, Byrd’s were the only two dirges anyone relying on print culture could point to as reflecting anything musical about the style.

Under these conditions, what is of immediate interest is the evidence that, in the twenty-four lines of “false lamentations,” Shakespeare dramatizes the very process whereby a strophic hymn might “to a sullen dirge change.” The even-handed distribution of these lines, at six per character, has come to critical notice, perhaps because it is otherwise rare throughout the play (see Table 1).³⁷ Such symmetry would be necessary, of course, for any text to be rendered musically in a strophic setting.³⁸ To further suggest the hymn, Shakespeare not only emphasizes rhythmic similarities in his texts, via punctuation and accentuation (see “Beguiled, divorced/Despised, distressed,” etc. in Example 1, line 1), he also repeats certain words that would recur at a similar point if they were set to music strophically (see “Most/ Most/ Most” in Example 1, line 2 and “ever, ever/ cruel, cruel/ murder, murder” in Example 1, line 3). All of these qualities in the lines evoke the hymn. Perhaps if the characters would say them successively, critics would have grasped this long

³⁷ See Lower, “*Romeo and Juliet*,” 179; Melchiori, “Music of Words,” 247.

³⁸ Significantly, only seven of the thirty-five songs of Byrd’s *Psalmes* collection are *not* strophic, with the exceptions being three metrical psalm settings (nos. 1, 9, and 10), all three single-stanza sonnets (nos. 18, 21, and 35), and Byrd’s famous, and only Italian-texted work, *La virginella* (no. 29). As a practice, Byrd placed the text under his notes for the first stanza of strophic songs and put the additional stanzas together either under the music on the same page or on an adjacent page, see, for example, Figure 2.

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

ago.³⁹ But there is a glitch. If a comparison suggests Shakespeare wished to create line-by-line correspondences in the characters' respective speeches, they do remain dissimilar in one aspect: of the four stanzas, Paris ends his speech with a short, short, long pattern (see "O love! [short] O life! [short] Not life, but love in death" [long], Example 1, line 4) whereas all but Paris have that rhythm on the fourth line of their six-line speeches (see Capulet's "O child [short], O child [short], My soul, and not my child [long]," and other underlined text in Table 1).

Had Paris put his two lines in the same place as the others, the whole set of twenty-four could have been treated musically as four fully realizable six-line stanzas of a single hymn or strophic song. But Shakespeare had turned things around to make this into a more elaborate structure that suggested certain musical procedures but that still would have initially confused any composer of the time whose task it was to create a strophic setting out of these lines (see strikeouts and italics in Table 1). Thus when Capulet pronounces after the friar's admonitions that all should "change ... [their] solemn hymns to sullen dirges" he probably does not realize that this process had already begun, as Shakespeare was already by then shifting the text from a strophic-like to a non-strophic type of structure. It therefore behooved Shakespeare to have had on stage at this key moment an additional audience of Musicians who could reflect in their dramatic reactions how things had suddenly become so "uncomfortable."

In rhetorical terms, with these twenty-four lines of "false lamentations" of Act 4, scene 5, Shakespeare created a special type of interdisciplinary catachresis, which he based on works of the so-called English "figurists," including George Puttenham's influential 1589

³⁹ See Melchiori, "Music of Words," 249-50.

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

Arte of English poesie.⁴⁰ From the mid-17th century to this day “catachresis” is often defined as a “far-flung metaphor” and quintessential conceit.⁴¹ But, as Patricia Parker establishes, the figurists of Shakespeare’s time were careful to distinguish the catachresis from the metaphor. Both tropes involve the transferal of a term or expression from one plane to another, but whereas the metaphor, as Parker notes, is “a transfer or substitution employed when a proper term does *already* exist ... (e.g. a *bloody* moon, when it could just as easily be described as *red*), catachresis is a transfer of terms ... when *no* proper word exists” (italics added).⁴² Today, when this type of catachresis is recognized as distinguishable from the “far-flung metaphor” it is sometimes called a *necessary* abuse, and examples include modern additions to the English vocabulary such as a computer’s “mouse pad.”⁴³

In this light, Shakespeare followed the non-pejorative definition of catachresis closely. Purposely creating a scene that overtaxed the normal means of communicating ideas in a play—namely, the spoken words and actions of the recognized characters—he uses Musicians he places on stage to provide the necessary means to define the nature of the scene for both the characters and the audience. The latter must try to perceive the misuse it witnesses—namely the errant strophic rendition of the “false lamentations”—from the perspective of musicians watching non-musicians enact it, and then translate what might be

⁴⁰ George Puttenham, *The Arte of English poesie* (London, 1589), 150. Classic studies of Shakespeare and the works of the so-called English figurists—namely, Angel Day, Abraham Fraunce, John Hoskins, Richard Sherry, Thomas Wilson, et al.—include T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakespere’s Small Latine and Lesse Greeke*. 2 vols. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1944) and Sister Miriam Joseph, *Shakespeare’s Use of the Arts of Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947). For more a list of more recent studies, see *Renaissance Figures*, 291-94.

⁴¹ See Ettenhuber, “Comparisons are Odious,” 395-413.

⁴² Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies*, 60.

⁴³ Elzbieta Chrzanowska-Kluczewska, “Catachresis—A Metaphor or a Figure in Its Own Right?” in *Beyond Cognitive Metaphor Theory: Perspectives on Literary Metaphor*, ed. Monika Fludernik (New York: Routledge, 2011), 50.

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

gained from that perception back onto the action at hand, just as tropes are designed to transfer words or ideas from one plane to another.

It is at this point in the play that the Musicians grapple with the realization that their services will no longer be required for a wedding. Although they will later discover a way to salvage the situation, with dirges for Juliet's funeral, at this point they are thrust into the "uncomfortable time" of adjustment. Crucially, the Musicians mirror the self-interest expressed by the characters around them. In a penetrating deconstruction of the "false lamentations," Thomas Moison shows that the first reactions of the four characters who also believe Juliet is dead are decidedly selfish in nature.⁴⁴ None concern themselves with Juliet herself. Instead they reveal just how invested they themselves had been in the benefits that would have come with her wedding to Paris. As the Act comes to an end, however, the characters, as well as the audience, begin to develop a more considered and proper response to the tragic elements here anticipated.

One benefit of this reading is that it suggests Shakespeare had full control of the characters he cast in his play. It also brings out a certain irony in the reception history of this scene, as it is typical of the many critics of Act 4, scene 5 to suggest this was something that simply got the better of the playwright: that here he found himself incapable of handling the complexity of a dramatic situation where characters mistakenly mourn the death of someone the Friar and the audience know still to be alive.⁴⁵ But when critics make the dramatic difficulties seem real they actually bring into focus the justification for Shakespeare's use of a

⁴⁴ Moison, "Rhetoric and the Rehearsal," 395.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 390; Levenson, "*Romeo and Juliet*," 49-50; Lower, "*Romeo and Juliet*," 183-84; Coleridge, *Notes and Lectures*, 1:160. Both Moison and Levenson, it should be noted, astutely see through the apparent ineptitude and point to the likelihood that the mishandled element was purposeful.

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

rhetorical device that treated silent musicians as a signal that something had gone wrong, but whose consequence was yet to be clarified.

Indeed, to stage a catachresis of the “necessary abuse” variety, Shakespeare all too obviously walks into the seeming trap that Coleridge described as a “warning to minor playwrights”: creating a scenario whereby too many characters are “agitated by the same circumstances.”⁴⁶ Realizing the near impossibility of communicating this on the stage with the limited means of his five speaking characters on hand, Shakespeare reaches out to a group of participants in the action who stand somewhere between the audience and the main characters—individuals (known by their musical skills only) an audience would see on stage, but whose thoughts and reactions they have been trained to ignore, as most often musicians serve the same basic functionary roles *in* the play as they do elsewhere, such as when they perform at actual weddings and funerals. When these ambiguously-defined Musicians endure a parallel experience from a much different, and thus nearly “far-flung” distance, Shakespeare clarifies for the audience with some precision his desired dramatic goal, to establish that the “lamentations” heard at this time have yet to deepen into the kind that would seem proper for the death of the play’s heroine. The device is thereby justified by its dramatic efficacy. And if this embodied catachresis might seem superficial— since Shakespeare could obviously have used other methods to depict the situation on stage— such conceits were en vogue at the time mainly because “right poets” like Sidney had pointed the way to new and creative ways they might be reformulated.⁴⁷ Thus Puttenham,

⁴⁶ Coleridge, *Notes and Lectures*, 1:160.

⁴⁷ See Robert E. Stillman, “Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defense of Poesy*,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Sidneys, 1500–1700*, vol. 2. *Literature*, ed. Michael G Brennan, Margaret P Hannay, and Mary Ellen Lamb (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 153-58.

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

responding to Sidney, might pronounce with some confidence that “a figure is ever used to a purpose, either of beautie or efficacie.”⁴⁸

What seems particularly efficacious about Shakespeare’s device is its interdisciplinary aspect: the way it moves beyond planes of language into theatrical planes of character type involving the sister art of music. Herein lies its value, for whereas Shakespeare appears to be focusing on what musicians generally *do*— which everyone understands to be *play music at weddings and funerals*— what he actually poses is a question that few then or now like to ask, or even to ponder, which is, What do musicians *think*?

Off-stage, musicians are so often cast in the role of nearly invisible functionaries that audiences tend almost automatically to see them, when positioned on-stage, as about as unreflective as the instruments they play. If not fully absorbed in controlling the breath, hand, arm, and finger movements that produce the organized sound that audiences mentally process on their own terms, they assume the musicians seen before them in the theater are mentally idle, e.g., “on ... stage with their hands hanging,” as the influential mid-20th century theater historian Richard Hosley quipped in assessing the scene under question.⁴⁹ Even though they are cast as *characters*, Hosley never stopped to consider that these Musicians might express themselves via mimed actions that would portray thoughts of dramatic value. He supposed instead that whatever notions they might have been entertaining in their minds would almost by nature be immaterial to the story that is unfolding around them; and in an apparent amplification of Hosley’s view, it would seem, others have gone so far as to call the Musicians of this scene “brainless” ... as well as “stooges,”⁵⁰ just as there are critics who see

⁴⁸ Puttenham, *Arte of English poesie*, 169.

⁴⁹ Hosley, “Stage Direction.”

⁵⁰ Kenneth Cartwright, *Shakespearean Tragedy and Its Double: The Rhythms of Audience Response* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), 77; David Wiles, *Shakespeare’s Clown: Actor and Text in the Elizabethan*

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

the Gravediggers of *Hamlet* and the “rude mechanicals” of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* as simple foils rather than conduits for meta-theatricality (creating anti-illusory “plays-within-plays” and the like).⁵¹

Shakespeare seems to have captured something universal about audiences’ approach to the mind of a functioning musician. Yet there was an in-joke involved as well. The early modern era’s musically literate, along with all those educated in the Quadrivium, were trained to see certain types of musicians in a similar “brainless” light.⁵² The late-Medieval theorist, Boethius, whom the composer and Shakespearean contemporary Thomas Morley listed prominently among the “ancient philosophers” of music, famously distinguished the following “three classes of those who are engaged in the musical art:”

Those of the class which is dependent on instruments and who spend their entire effort there ... are excluded from comprehension of musical knowledge, since ... they act as slaves. None of them makes use of reason; rather, they are totally lacking in thought.

Playhouse (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 88. Even an expert in music and Shakespeare as thoroughgoing as F. W. Sternfeld trivialized the exchange in his claim that, “the clown underlines the unsuitable presence of merry musicians,” *Music in Shakespearean Tragedy* (London: Routledge, 1963), 102.

⁵¹ See, for an appreciation of these roles, Andrew Gurr, “Metatheatre and the Fear of Playing,” in *Neo-Historicism: Studies in English Renaissance Literature, History and Politics*, ed by Robin Headlam Wells, Glenn Burgess, and Rowland Wymer (Cambridge: Brewer, 2000), 91-110 and, for music and meta-theater especially, Linda Austern, “Music, its Histories, and Shakespearean (Inter-)Theatricality in Beaumont’s *Knight of the Burning Pestle*,” in *Shakespeare, Music and Performance*, ed. Bill Barclay and David Lindley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 71-83. I wish to thank Professor Austern for kindly sharing this work with me prior to publication. On various critical responses to the “rude mechanicals” and Gravediggers see Matthew Kendrick, *At Work in the Early Modern English Theater: Valuing Labor* (Madison NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2015), 131-35 and Hunt, “Hamlet, the Gravedigger,” 141, respectively.

⁵² On the musical worlds of Shakespeare’s era see, generally, for popular styles, Christopher Marsh, *Music and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) and, for the most elite, Katherine Butler, *Music in Elizabethan Court Politics* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2015). Equally valuable are studies of the life and works of prominent individual composers, such as Thomas Morley and Byrd himself, including, most recently, Tessa Murray, *Thomas Morley: Elizabethan Music Publisher* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2014) and Kerry McCarthy, *Byrd* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

The second class [consists] of those who compose songs ... a class led to song not so much by thought and reason as by a certain natural instinct ... This class, too, is separated from music.

The third class is that which acquires an ability for judging, so that it can carefully weigh rhythms and melodies and the composition as a whole. This class, since it is totally grounded in reason and thought, will rightly be esteemed as musical That person is a musician [*musicus*] who exhibits the faculty of forming judgments according to speculation or reason relative and appropriate to music.⁵³

That a musician could be “totally lacking in thought” was something Morley rails against in a treatise on “practicall” music he had prepared for the press by 1596 and published in 1597.⁵⁴

Morley made it “plaine” too that “those who compose songs” should not do so only by “natural instinct” but rather after carefully applying their considered “thought and reason.” As a model for a composer of the latter kind, Morley cited his teacher, Byrd, and as Roger Bray has noted, Morley’s purpose was to imbue the English unthinking “practicall” musician with the kind of understanding Boethius associated with a figure he termed a *musicus*.⁵⁵

That Shakespeare was aware of Boethius’s view is actually well supported by the scenes of several plays.⁵⁶ Whether he was aware of Morley’s position against “Ignorant Asses” and his championing of Byrd is a much more difficult question to answer.⁵⁷ But had Shakespeare studied the music printed in the late-1580s and early 1590s, he probably would have gathered that composers had at this time taken a striking new approach to the same

⁵³ Manlius Severinus Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music [De institutione musica]*, trans. Calvin M. Bower, ed. Claude V. Palisca (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 6-7. See also the discussion in Roger Bray, “Music and the Quadrivium in Early Tudor England,” *Music & Letters* 76/1 (February 1995), 5.

⁵⁴ Thomas Morley, *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* (London, 1597). In speaking of Boethius, Morley claimed, “if it had not beene for him the knowledge of musicke [might have] not yet come into our Westerne part of the world,” [184] and lists him second among “ancient philosophers” music students should study [218]. I must thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out this Boethian connection to me.

⁵⁵ Bray, “Music and the Quadrivium,” 10. On Morley’s treatment of Byrd as a *musicus*-like figure see *Plaine and Easie*, [A]1v, 103, 114-15, 151, 176, [218].

⁵⁶ See, most recently, Schütz, “Love’s Labour’s Music.”

⁵⁷ Morley, *Plaine and Easie*, B1v.

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

literary type, verse, that he dealt with in his own poems and plays, and that here was a place where a musician could distinguish himself as someone of either the second, or higher, third Boethian class.

O, O that, O that most rare ...

One way the era's composers tended to approach texts in late-1580s early 90s was known then and now as Italianate and is best represented in English print culture by the English madrigal and, less frequently, the Latin-texted motet.⁵⁸ In this case the composer treats the words mainly as vehicles for mimetic musical expressive devices, often called conceits. An ideal text would provide a series of inviting lexical opportunities or *madrigalisms*— “fly,” “descend,” “stop,” etc.— through which a musician could readily develop various melodic, rhythmic, textural, or harmonic musical gestures that conjure up the intended ideas in sound. Throughout Europe composers of the time inclined to this style of word setting sought out Petrarchan and Neo-Petrarchan verse, usually looking for single-stanza poems packed with opportunities for madrigalesque word-painting. It was not unusual for madrigal composers to select illustrious verse, but they were arguably just as, if not more, content with the more congenial, if less exalted, *poesie per musica* variety. In the latter, a given poet had conveniently laid aside any literary pretensions or aspirations and thus could be relied upon to supply as many word-painting opportunities for the composer as space permitted.

The other approach in setting texts to music was to follow meticulously a poet's formal decisions, paying careful attention to matters of line length and meter via the application of well-tested musical analogues, such as the varied repeat and line-mirroring cadence. This word setting approach was well suited for the most refined verse, although in practice the poetry set in this way varied just as much in quality as the Italianate. As far as

⁵⁸ Kerman, *Elizabethan Madrigal*, 1-28.

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

genres are concerned, in England it was the vernacular song, usually with multiple strophes, that became associated most often with this approach, and thanks to his special focus on this variety of verse, Byrd is the composer rightly credited as the main proponent of this form-sensitive style.⁵⁹

For the reasons noted above, the Italianate and native approaches are usually contrasted in discussions of English-texted song and English madrigal.⁶⁰ But there were times when a text held certain formal attributes that could themselves be treated as conceits of a kind, as they might be understood only with a special insider's view of their properties. The text of one of Byrd's tributes to Sidney, *Come to me grief*, for example, represents a calculated poetic gesture with musical implications, as it involves Sidney's famous experiments with quantitative meter, which were themselves based to some extent on French academic experiments in *musique mesurée à l'antique* that united poets and musicians in the innovative effort.⁶¹ When he published his setting of this song, Byrd seized the opportunity to place it under the header "funerall songs for Syr Philip Sidney" as the penultimate offering of the collection.⁶² Sometime earlier, the unattributed author (the best contenders for authorship are Sir Edward Dyer and Thomas Watson) discovered that the

⁵⁹ Kerman, *Elizabethan Madrigal*, 29-34. See also Brett, "Word Setting"; Oliver Neighbour, "Byrd's Treatment of Verse in His Partsongs," *Early Music* 31/3 (August 2003), 413-22. The early Tudor song, which Brett and others view as a direct predecessor to Byrd's approach, is the subject of John Stevens's classic *Music and Poetry of the Early Tudor Court* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963).

⁶⁰ See, for example, Kerman, *Elizabethan Madrigal*, 10: "although Byrd was the greatest and most famous composer in England, he was the one who most stubbornly resisted madrigalism, the Petrarchan fashion in music. [Instead,] the conservative master maintained his own antiquated style, which contradicts the premises of madrigal writing at every step."

⁶¹ On *musique mesurée* see D. P. Walker, "The Aims of Baiſ's *Académie de Poésie et de Musique*," *Journal of Renaissance and Baroque Music* 1/2 (June 1946), 91-100. See also Gavin Alexander, "Elizabethan Lyric as Contrafactum: Robert Sidney's 'French tune' Identified," *Music & Letters* 84/3 (August 2003), 384-91.

⁶² Byrd, *Psalmes*, G1r.

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

quantitative experiment provided the means to establish a special familiarity with Sidney on several levels. This *Come to me grief* verse not only follows the novel form of accentuation Sidney had helped develop, it is also based on one of Sidney's own works, *When to my deathlie pleasure*, which, crucially, was itself modeled on an ode of Horace's, *Lydia, dic per omnes*, lamenting the absence of a friend. All three poems follow the same Aristophanic meter.⁶³

Byrd, of course, had little to do with this elaborate poetic modeling scheme. But in setting the poem to music he found he could position himself as every bit as close to Sidney as was his poet simply by faithfully representing the accented longs and unaccented shorts of the quantitative system in his musical rhythms. Thus Byrd's "first singing part" of *Come to me grief*, with its carefully managed notes of relatively short and long duration, put forward his own claim to stand among the privileged few of Sidney's artistic coterie (see Figure 2).

As with *Come to me grief*, *O that most rare breast* has as its subject Sidney's burial, and, with its mention of "thy Noble Tomb" and "hearse," the latter song is much more explicit about the topic (see Table 2, lines 6 and 9). As momentous as any other comparable event of the late Elizabethan era, Sidney's funeral was so well known to the general populace at large as to be of obvious topical interest to any playwright of the time. It also focused on the demise of a valued figure, involved the combined efforts of poets and musicians, and evoked literary kinds such as the sonnet, as we shall soon discover. As such this memorial to the fallen soldier poet forms the nexus of this study.

If Sidney's funeral had a theme, it was magnificence. Mounted by Sir Frances Walsingham, Sidney's father-in-law, at the nearly ruinous cost of over £6,000, the engraver, Thomas Lant (who depicted the entire scene in an extraordinary lengthy series of panels)

⁶³ Derek Attridge, *Well-weighed Syllables: Elizabethan Verse in Classical Metres* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 131-32, 210; James Applegate, "Sidney's Classical Meters," *Modern Language Notes* 70/4 (April 1955), 254-55.

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

calculated that 700 or so were involved in the burial procession and claimed “the streets were so thronged with people that ye mourners had scarcely ro[o]me to pass.”⁶⁴ As Byrd did nothing to suggest otherwise, he may have wished it to appear that his funeral songs for Sidney were performed on the day, which they conceivably were. It seems fair to conjecture that some acquired their copy of Byrd’s *Psalmes* with the idea, at least, that the book contained the very music and vernacular texts heard at a fully sanctioned and widely attended Elizabethan burial.

Public interest in Sidney obviously ran high during his funeral, and it was slow to diminish afterward. In subsequent years, institutions and individuals as notable as Oxford and Cambridge universities and the reigning Scottish king, James VI, rose to the task of venerating the fallen poet soldier further in verse, as if it were something of a literary concern.⁶⁵ In the process, almost all exploited the mirroring effect of this type of praise, well recognizing that in extolling Sidney’s particular virtues an author showed an intimacy with the subject that elevated the stature of all involved. In this regard, *O that most rare breast* is a special case. While there is no certain attribution, within the poem itself a prominent poet and intimate friend of Sidney’s, Sir Edmund Dyer, is likely evoked in the phrase “thy dier [i.e., Dyer] living dieth” (see Table 2, line 14).⁶⁶ Furthermore, although the poetic speaker’s intimacy with the subject of veneration is emphasized pointedly and poignantly throughout, the pun itself turns the question of who speaks in (or wrote the) poem into

⁶⁴ Thomas de Lant, *Sequitur e pompa funebris quemadmodi ...* (London, 1587), f.29. See Bos, Lange-Meyes, and Six, “Sidney’s Funeral,” 58.

⁶⁵ Dominic Baker-Smith, “‘Great Expectation’: Sidney’s Death and the Poets,” in *Sir Philip Sidney: 1586 and the Creation of a Legend*, ed. Jan Adrianus van Dorsten, Dominic Baker-Smith, and Arthur F. Kinney (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 83-103.

⁶⁶ Philip Brett, “The Consort Song, 1575-1625,” *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 88 (1961-62), 82; Jeremy L. Smith, *Verse and Voice in Byrd’s Song Collections of 1588 and 1589* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2016), 49-50, 130.

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

something of a riddle. If at first this evasiveness might seem self effacing, in the context of courtly verse of the time it actually creates a further poetic bond with Sidney, who similarly drew readers into his personal life, using similar devices to hint at, and yet at the same time shield from certainty, his relationship to the speakers in his poems.⁶⁷ Even in the act of hiding one's identity a poet of this time could engage in a process of self-promotion thanks to the unfading light of Sidney's literary accomplishments.

Thus when Byrd set *O that most rare breast* to music—surely realizing it might be put to prominent use in Sidney's burial and with every intention of bringing it to the press—the composer almost naturally raised the question of where he himself stood in the self-glorifying process. One matter concerning the punning phrase “thy dier [Dyer] living dieth” is worth noting. These words were what Byrd set originally, as manuscripts attest. But when Byrd published his song, he quietly changed the phrase to “thy friend here living dieth” (cf. Table 2 and Table 3).⁶⁸ It would seem likely that this “poet-erasing” gesture of Byrd's would have been too subtle to register notice from anyone outside the Sidney coterie. Yet it could be construed as one of many of the composer's calculated efforts to keep all of his auditors' attention focused on his own accomplishment, violating the passive behavior expected of the typical composer-as-poet's-subordinate to advance a case for his own intimacy with the deceased.

Could Byrd have regarded the “dier” pun as a special challenge, one where the original presence of a poet's name hidden within—Sidney's close friend, Dyer—spurred a strong sense of competition? Arguably as involved as any poet was in Sidney's literary life, Byrd had every reason to see the persona in the verse as standing in the way of his own

⁶⁷ Alan Sinfield, “Sidney and Astrophil,” *Studies in English Literature* 20/1 (Winter 1980), 25-41.

⁶⁸ Brett, “Consort Song,” 82.

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

assertion of privileged intimacy with the fallen hero. Not only was Byrd the first to publish several of Sidney's poems, he also highlighted the poet's special interests in music and metrics as well as the sonnet form that Sidney did so much then to popularize— setting a number of sonnets and arguably using the form as a means of organizing the book overall, with the funeral songs for Sidney as a grand final couplet.⁶⁹ All of this called for what G. W. Pigman III described as the most prized form of modeling: “eristic imitation.” Unlike most other mimetic rhetorical devices, which encouraged concealment or disguise, the eristic type involved “an open struggle with the model for preeminence.”⁷⁰

Byrd often engaged in purely musical forms of imitation with other composers, which may be found especially, but not exclusively, in his Latin-texted works. Some of his acts of “friendly aemulation” or “virtuous contentions in love” were not only recognized but also actually celebrated by a notable student of Byrd's, the aforementioned Morley, and a notable English figurist, Henry Peacham.⁷¹ But in the case of *O that most rare breast* Byrd arguably approached the sonnet form itself as a compositional challenge, treating it as the material upon which he could demonstrate his full grasp of his poet's rhetorical purposes and, more importantly, his own desire and capacity to surpass them.

⁶⁹ On Byrd's settings of poems by Sidney see Milsom, “Byrd, Sidney.” Byrd suggests a sonnet-like tripartite division within his book as follows: he announces “psalmes,” “sonetts” and “songs of sadness and piety” on the title page; marks the first two sections with a header “here endeth the Psalmes and beginneth the Sonnets”; marks the third with a header “here endeth the Sonnets and beginneth Songs of Sadness and Piety”; and then provides an additional header for the last two (funeral) songs that appear within the last section, as a couplet. See Byrd, *Psalmes*, [A]1r, D1r, F1r, and G1r. On the largest structural level, Byrd does not adhere structurally to any obvious numerical equivalent for the quatrain or sestet. He does, however, follow consistently a four-song grouping within the “sonets” section, see Smith, *Verse and Voice*, 290-91.

⁷⁰ Pigman III, “Versions of Imitation,” 4.

⁷¹ Susan Hankey, “The Compleat Gentleman's Music,” *Music & Letters* 62/2 (April 1981), 152.

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

In the set of 1588 all of Byrd's sonnets stand out for their ambitious scope, music-wise.⁷² But at 153 modern measures nothing in the collection comes close to Byrd's *O that most rare brest* in terms of sheer length. As it was a convention of song composition to repeat a final couplet, the added length there would not have been so noteworthy. But when Byrd repeated the last two lines of each of the first two quatrains and also repeated the music he composed for the entire extended first quatrain to serve the text of the second, Byrd did create something rather conspicuous: an elaborate song-within-a-song edifice that expanded the sonnet out from fourteen to twenty lines of text (see Figure 1 and Table 3). Changes of this magnitude would surely have come to a sonneteer's notice, and, if they believed that the proper role for a composer was simply to follow a poet's formal path, the same sonneteer might possibly have taken Byrd's gesture as something of an affront or transgression. Thus, if at first his text repetitions seem governed by the dictates of text and convention, they soon begin to stand out as reflecting the willfully created rhetorical device of a reasoning mind.

Especially noticeable to a sonneteer reading through the text underlay in the song's superius "first singing part" would have been word repetitions that Byrd imposed on structurally important lines. Specifically, to bring a three-pronged, short, short, long idea to the surface, Byrd changed his poet's first line, "O that most rare brest, christalline sincere," to an expanded "O, O that, O that most rare brest, etc." and followed suit with the fifth line to fit his strophic needs. Then, Byrd similarly altered the first line of the final couplet: turning the phrase, "O heavie time, that my daies draw behind thee" into an elaborate "O *heavie time, O heavie time, O heavie time, that my daies etc.,*" which becomes a line of nineteen syllables. Finally, with an extended melisma on the word "dieth," which he repeated four times, Byrd drew the work to a close with an almost purely *musical* version of the same short,

⁷² See Smith, *Verse and Voice*, 130-31.

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

short, long idea that also turns what had once been a hendecasyllabic (eleven-syllable) line into another one of nineteen syllables: and so, despite their extravagant extensions, the last two lines retain the symmetry of a final couplet (see Figure 1 and Table 3).⁷³ Overall, because he usually kept himself confined to syllabic settings in his songs, *O that most rare breast* stands out as a notable case where Byrd extensively and calculatedly used text repetitions for rhetorical effect, well aware that he was pushing the sonnet structure of the poem at hand far beyond its formal, literary, boundaries.

In his set of 1588, Byrd demonstrated literary-oriented but decidedly non-slavish capabilities of a thinking musician in ways that Shakespeare might well have noticed. And had Shakespeare consulted Byrd's book, the funeral tribute to Sidney would almost certainly have attracted his attention.⁷⁴ Lined up as a sonnet, but cast in blank verse (non-rhyming lines of iambic pentameter), *O that most rare breast* is a true rarity in the song literature, even though it combines the two forms Shakespeare used most often for poems and plays, respectively (see Table 2). *Romeo and Juliet*, which opens with a sonnet and ends with its own grand final couplet, has long been recognized as the very play where Shakespeare made the most extensive use of the sonnet form in a generally blank verse context, all as part of a response to Sidney's poetic achievement, as literary historians contend.⁷⁵ In certain ways,

⁷³ As the "Balassi stanza" featured lines of nineteen syllables, Byrd may not have randomly extended his lines out to that length. Sidney famously met the Hungarian soldier poet Bálint Balassi on his European tour of 1572-73. See George Gömöri, "Sir Philip Sidney's Hungarian and Polish Connections," *Oxford Slavonic Papers* 24 (1991), 23-31.

⁷⁴ As an anonymous reviewer astutely reminded me, Shakespeare's interest in the song text might also reflect his interest in its emphasis on the O, and the potential use he could see for it—as an indecorous double entendre.

⁷⁵ See Gayle Whittier, "The Sonnet's Body and the Body Sonnetized in *Romeo and Juliet*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40/1 (Spring 1989), 27-41.

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

then, in his setting Byrd, a fellow Carey-supported artist, although from the musical side, had gone to the very heart of Shakespeare's literary territory.

One, two, and the third ... But one, poor one, one poor and loving ...

Byrd used the short, short, long idea as the means to extend and thereby take over the rhetoric of the sonnet he set to music in eristic fashion. Shakespeare, I believe, may well have fully grasped how Byrd developed that short, short, long pattern, by alluding to it earlier in *Romeo and Juliet*, in a gritty scene when Romeo's friend Mercutio describes his enemy Tybalt belittlingly as an artificial stylist who

fights as you sing pricksong, keeps time, distance, and proportion: he rests his minim rests— one, two, and the third in your bosom. (2.4.20-23)

From a dramatist's point of view Mercutio's line describes well the opening gambit of Byrd's funeral song for Sidney, even to the point of equating "bosom" and "brest" (see Figure 3).

Perhaps more readily appreciated is the fact that the phrase "one, two, and the third" mimics the essential rhythmic idea that Byrd developed in *O that most rare breast* overall, and, in the false lamentations scene all four speaking characters perform the rhythm at least once, as in Lady Capulet's "But one [short], poor one [short], one poor and loving child [long]" (4.5.46 and see Table 1). Furthermore, all the lines in the scene except Lady Capulet's that contain the short, short, long rhythm also feature the "O"s and "woes" so frequently discussed by critics, as in Capulet's "O love! [short] O life! [short] Not life, but love in death! [long]" (see Table 1). Byrd and his poet, however, used the same vocative Os to emphasize the same rhythm. Because the lines of both the song and the scene combine O with the same short, short, long rhythm, I contend that Capulet's "sullen dirge" to which he claimed a "solemn hymn" would change was a theatrical entity conceivably modeled on Byrd's *O that most rare breast*. Shakespeare's passage indeed contains some strophic elements of the hymn,

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

but also features the rhetoric excess, the Os, and the short, short, long rhythm of Byrd's dirge. Because no other composer of Byrd's time published a song unambiguously intended for a burial or included the word "funeral" in a subtitled header, as mentioned above, there is external and internal evidence to support such a theory. And it was in the remainder of Act 4 where Shakespeare surreptitiously confirmed, I argue, that his model for cross-disciplinary imitation was Byrd's song.

Here, once again, it is important to note that there is no direct evidence that Shakespeare consulted Byrd's song. But to consider it as a potential model for the play, based on mutual rhetorical gestures and its obvious, nearly unique, and well-known function as a dirge, helps shed light on the dramaturgical purpose of the last scene of Act 4, when the Musicians finally convey to the audience their reactions to the troubling scene where Juliet seems to have died on the day she was to be married.

Dramatically, at the end of the false lamentations scene, if my reading is correct, the audience is left wondering what the musicians onstage are thinking. In the Peter and the Musicians scene to follow Shakespeare provides a deceptively simple answer. As the Nurse sets again the low tone with double-entendres about male "pipes" and a female music "case," the First Musician realizes it is now time to prepare music for a funeral, and thus "amend" the "case" of having no wedding at which to perform (4.5.96-99).⁷⁶

In order to have music at the ready for this unexpected, upcoming memorial service, the Musicians obviously need to rehearse. But instead of enjoying the benefit of some uninterrupted time and space to pull the music together, they must contend with the irksome Peter, who is identified in the second quarto as the famous clown Will Kemp and who tries

⁷⁶ On the sexual puns for "pipes" and "case" see Williams, *Shakespeare's Sexual Language*, 66, 236. Typically, Nurse voices the latter pun earlier in the play (3.3.84).

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

unsuccessfully to induce the musicians now to perform music of his own choosing.⁷⁷ When they refuse, insults flow and the Musicians take as much offense at being called socially inferior “minstrels” (4.5.114) as Peter takes at being called a “serving-creature” (4.5.115-16). Peter takes then a new tack, quizzing the group pointedly in an attempt to prove that food and compensation are what musicians think about more often than not. When the Musicians betray a special interest in “silver” and the whole scene ends with them planning their post-performance dinner (4.5.127, 145), it would seem that the clown proved his point, all of which helps establish for the audience the stereotypical view of musicians as brainless functionaries.⁷⁸

But there is more to this scene than meets the ear and eye. The subject of Peter’s mini symposium is the song *When griping grief* by Richard Edwards, who was once a Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal.⁷⁹ As did Byrd well up until the time of his landmark 1588 *Psalms*, collection, Edwards wrote songs almost exclusively for four viol players and a singer, the standard ensemble for the boy musician/actors serving the queen. So when Peter tells the musicians to answer his questions “like men” (4.5.125) we discover why he here found common ground: these players are boys (or represent them); and when he calls them “Catling,” “Rebeck,” and “Soundpost” (4.5.130, 133, 136), we recognize them too as string players. By this point it would seem that the Verona setting has momentarily vanished.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Elizabeth Ford, “Will Kemp, Shakespeare, and the Composition of *Romeo and Juliet*,” *Early Theatre* 13/2 (2010), 162-64.

⁷⁸ It is under Juliet’s spellbinding window where music is first commended for its “silver sweet[ness]” (2.2.164).

⁷⁹ Ros King, *The Collected Works of Richard Edwards: Politics, Poetry and Performance in Sixteenth-Century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 216.

⁸⁰ In keeping with the shift in setting from Verona to England, Peter and the musicians express themselves in decidedly English terms, mentioning “crotchets,” “dumps,” and “minstrels” (4.5.105-14) and they mention two specific English ballads *Heart’s ease* and *My heart is full of woe* (4.5.100-05). On these ballads and their associated tunes see Duffin, *Shakespeare’s Songbook*, 189-91.

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

Comically taking on the role of the boys' music master, Kemp, our esteemed *musicus*, conducts a thoroughly carnivaleque lesson on classical conceptions of music's healing powers in times of woe.⁸¹ Even when burlesqued, the platitudes diffuse the tension—and yet all the while Shakespeare had drawn for those still attentive to his devices about as exact a profile of the musicians who performed the songs of Byrd as could be found under the circumstances.⁸²

Turning back to the taunting phase of this satirized music lesson, one discovers particular musical evidence that Byrd's *O that most rare breast* could have served as the model for Shakespeare's scene, at least if the subtext could be construed as a "makeshift dirge rehearsal, rudely interrupted," as argued above. Specifically, when Peter threatens to "lay the serving-creature's dagger on [the First Musician's] pate [and warns] I will carry no crotchets. I'll re you, I'll fa you. Do you note me?" (4.5.119) he lists a number of musical terms, including two that allude to the "pricking" of "song" ("crotchet" and "note") along with the solmization symbols "re" and "fa." These syllables, which Julie Andrews and Shakespeare have together put deeply into the minds of general audiences, outline a specific interval, a minor third.⁸³ Byrd featured a re fa minor third at the beginnings of all the major sections of

⁸¹ Peter's parody lesson begins on a well-chosen theme, the spiritual and emotional "power of music." For a well-glossed edition and discussion of the poem and its musical setting see King, *Collected Works of Richard Edwards*, 40, 216, 241-42.

⁸² David Lindley suggests that adult London Waits played the parts of Musicians, see *Shakespeare and Music*, 62. Were this the case, for my reading to work, they would have needed simply to *act* as if they were boy musician/actors of a court, and thus clownishly pretend to be members of an institution like the Chapel Royal.

⁸³ In his discussion of the syllables, Christopher R. Wilson points out that in Q1 Shakespeare first used the syllable sol instead of fa (outlining a re sol perfect fourth), *Shakespeare's Musical Imagery* (New York: Continuum, 2011), 144. In this light, I would argue that someone involved with the play corrected this sol to a fa to bring the play more in line with the song. See also Frank Fabry, "Shakespeare's Witty Musician: *Romeo and Juliet*, Iv.v. 114-17," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 33/2 (Summer 1982), 182-83, and, for a discussion of the more famous

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

O that most rare breast and saturated the grand final couplet with the motive.⁸⁴ Furthermore, when the First Musician repeats the musical interval in his retort “An you re us you fa us, you note us,” he does so in the way that Byrd’s *Superius* “first singing part” consistently follows the Tenor’s musical lead at every major juncture in the song.

Once we recognize that when first approaching a work to be performed it was then standard practice for musicians to sing the solmization syllables before articulating the words, and that Shakespeare demonstrated how well he understood this technique in *The Taming of the Shrew* (3.1.72-77), a purpose for all this interdisciplinary imitation emerges. For if the musicians are trying to rehearse Byrd’s *O that most rare breast* while Peter, the “pestilent knave” (4.5.143), is needling them it is easy to work things out on stage so that the spoken and sung versions of re fa happen at once (see Examples 2a-b), turning this scene into a rudely interrupted music rehearsal that, if staged, could offer the audience sonic enrichment as well some apparently much-needed dramaturgical coherence, especially as the audience must now start preparing for what they know to be looming ahead: the full, well anticipated, realization of Juliet’s actual demise.

Had Shakespeare kept his musical conceit confined to Peter’s clowning activities, it might not have mattered so much to the play overall. But, as discussed above, Shakespeare made similarly specific references to music composition when describing swordsmanship.⁸⁵

solmization scene in *Taming of the Shrew* with mention of Andrews and *The Sound of Music*, Leslie O’Dell, *Shakespearean Scholarship: A Guide for Actors and Students* (Westport, CN: Greenwood, 2002), 262.

⁸⁴ Modern sight-singers approaching this music should note that an ut mi rendering of the G Bb would not be possible then, as the syllables could not then be altered to create a minor third. Although mi sol preserves the minor third (and may explain the sol in Q1), the lines reach too high for this combination to work as well as re fa in a rehearsal of Byrd’s song. I wish to thank Professors Alejandro E. Planchart and Gabrielle Dietrich for kindly consulting with me about the solmization possibilities.

⁸⁵ Music plays a notable role in other scenes of *Romeo and Juliet* as well. Romeo meets Juliet as music plays (1.5.86). After their night together, Romeo claims to hear a nightingale singing, but Juliet realistically identifies

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

He also brought the idea back at the end. In the final moments, after discovering the tragic sequence of events that led to Juliet and Romeo's actual demise, the governing Prince

Escalus cries out

Where be these enemies? Capulet, Montague,
See what a scourge is laid upon your hate,
That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love ...

before reflecting,

And I, for winking at your *discords*, too
Have lost a brace of kinsmen. All are punished. (5.3.291-95, italics added)

Thanks to Mercutio, we know Shakespeare associated “discord” not simply with some kind of “universal harmony” that had been disturbed, but also with that specific type of multipart pricksong where actual dissonance might appear.⁸⁶ It was a particular idea about the art of musical *composition*, then, that Shakespeare drew upon to make his points at pivotal moments of the play—namely, in the escalation toward Mercutio's fatal altercation, at the point when

the sound as that of a lark at dawn, signaling the need for them to part (3.5.1-36). Although Byrd's *The Nightingale* was featured in his 1589 publication (see Smith, *Verse and Voice*, 155-59), in these scenes, which Jill Colaco has likened to folk traditions of the Night Visit and Dawn Song (aubade or alba), Shakespeare was no doubt “fishing in the same deep pool of images as the ballad-makers” rather than looking to Byrd. It may be only a coincidence, then, that Byrd had by that time composed variations on the *Hunt's up* ground Shakespeare identifies in the play (3.5.34), as well as *Go from my window*, which Colaco discusses extensively as the likely popular source for the balcony scene, even to the point of noting the connection to Sidney's Eleventh Song of his *Astrophil & Stella* sequence that Byrd, who set two of its song texts, apparently knew well. See Jill Colaco, “The Window Scenes in *Romeo and Juliet* and Folk Songs of the Night Visit,” *Studies in Philology* 83/2 (Spring 1986), 146, 155; John M. Ward, “The Hunt's Up,” *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 106 (1979-80), 1-25.

⁸⁶ Studies of the universal harmony concept in Shakespeare have rightly focused on the comedies and, particularly, on *The Tempest*, see Catherine Dunn, “The Function of Music in Shakespeare's Romances,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 20/4 (Autumn 1969), 391-405. Erin Minear, *Reverberating Song in Shakespeare and Milton: Language Memory and Musical Representation* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), sees music functioning not only as a “symbol of order” but also as a dramatic “method of manipulation,” 114.

What Do Shakespearean Musicians Think?

Juliet's death is first mourned, and then, after she and Romeo have both committed suicide, when the consequences of it all are being reckoned.

In new readings by Joseph Ortiz and Erin Minear, Shakespeare approaches music freed of many unnecessarily imposed restraints. In these new readings, as with the old, however, music is usually by necessity treated as a distant and disembodied substance with no specific pitch content, rhythms, harmonies, or musico-textual structures. Even if *Romeo and Juliet* is not wholly exceptional in this regard, Shakespeare, I argue, made a fitting choice in selecting Byrd's *O that most rare breast* as the source for a major figurative foray into the nuts and bolts of a particular music composition.⁸⁷ In this song Byrd audaciously set out openly to outdo what his poet had created rhetorically and, via sequencing techniques, used musical means to create narratives of a kind we tend to associate only with literary works, specifically those of Sidney, the great founder of the sonnet cycle fashion in England. It was with these cross-disciplinary accomplishments of Byrd's in mind that Shakespeare, I contend, created one of the "excellent conceits" of *Romeo and Juliet*— a catachrestic representation of music reflecting the "uncomfortable time" of misplaced grief and mourning.

⁸⁷ For an illuminating discussion of how Shakespeare evoked William Cornysh Jr.'s *Ab, Robin*, in *Twelfth Night*, via a suggestive *rota*-like distribution of the lines, see Duffin, *Shakespeare's Songbook*, 48.